OCCUPY POPULISM:

social movements of the Great Recession in comparative perspective

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Introduction

The year 2011 was a year of profound political and economic crisis for many nations of the Western world. The collapse of the Lehman brothers in September 2008 had already sent global shockwaves; markets collapsed, and huge financial institutions received bailouts from tax-payers in order to stay afloat. A little more than a year later, the next episode of the crisis was making headlines: a number of Eurozone governments were found to have amassed pile of sovereign debt which they were unable to sustain anymore. Austerity became the norm, and the disaffection of citizens grew by the day. Then, near the end of 2010, North Africa erupted, with people rebelling against their authoritarian leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere, in what came to be known as the *Arab Spring*.

Undoubtedly influenced by these developments, the people of several European states suffering most from austerity measures, started taking to the streets. First Portugal in March, then Spain and Greece in May. In July it was time for Israelis to flood the squares of Tel Aviv and other cities of the country, and in September, this wave of contention crossed over to the other side of the Atlantic. The movement of *Occupy Wall Street* reverberated across the globe, breathing new life into this series of mobilizations.

The Movements of the Great Recession, as I have chosen to name these incidents, illustrated specific patterns of mobilization. A leaderless General Assembly with horizontal decision making procedures, a tent camp in a central city square, the formation of working groups to thoroughly discuss specific issues, and the regular use of social media platforms to recruit new members and disseminate ideas. However, analysts with deep knowledge of the mechanisms of populist political mobilization would also identify another, even more important, pattern among these movements.

However, it is now widely acknowledged that grievances are ubiquitous and cannot account for mobilization *per se*. The cultural turn in social movement studies has ushered a new perspective that allow us to uncover variables of a non-structural form. Hence, a cursory glance at the slogans, claims, and declarations of the Great Recession movements reveals a heavy usage of populist discursive themes. The European *indignados* and the Americans of *Occupy Wall Street* would repeatedly speak on behalf of a purported "People", broadcasting messages that presented this subjectivity as a monolithic, overwhelming agent,

against which stood the powers of immoral elite minorities. The latter were deemed responsible for the toils of the People, which came not as a product of unavoidable financial difficulties, but as the outcome of the self-serving, people-harming activities of select individuals and institutions in the financial and political realm. The movements demanded redemption and the return of political sovereignty into the hands of those who rightfully possess it and had now been betrayed: the People. They claimed that "another world is possible", and demanded the restoration of popular authority, the restitution of "real democracy" into their societies.

This similarity between transnational non-institutional political contention during the Great Recession and the type of discourse which is regularly labeled "populist" when observed in institutional settings such as political party activity, led me to undertake their research through the lens of populism theory. Hence the formation of the research question which underpins this work: *Were the Great Recession movements instances of populist mobilization?* Furthermore, can we surmise that this could lead to the need to revisit the category of populist social movements in order to provide more analytical substance and illustrate their significance? And, on a comparative level, could we identify variation on the intensity of populist discourse among these movements?

These reflections led to the creation of a theoretical framework for populist mobilization which delineates the boundaries of a category of political contention named Populist Social Movements, providing a social psychological explanation for their emergence which bridges the macro and micro levels by stressing the significance of the politicization of the social identity of citizenship by skillful movement entrepreneurs. The fact that this theoretical framework employs two seemingly disparate strands of literature, populism theory and social movement theory, poses some problems in following a typical thesis structure. However, the cross-fertilization of these two bodies of literature is one of the basic objectives of this doctoral thesis and hence significant effort has been invested in illustrating areas where they are found to overlap.

Therefore, the first chapter takes up the first plank and presents an overview of how populism is understood by scholars who apply the term on institutional political phenomena such as political parties and political leaders. After a critique of the dominant ideological strand originating in the work of Cas Mudde and the analysis of its deficiencies in handling my research questions, I argue in favor of a discursive approach towards populist phenomena, partly drawing on

the work of Ernesto Laclau. In the second chapter I illustrate what the various schools of thought in social movement studies have to offer, by following the conceptual evolution of the field in order to discern which approach fits best with my research question. I conclude in favor of using the framing approach, as elaborated by David Snow and his associates, as the ideal conceptual and methodological perspective to study the workings of Populist Social Movements.

In the third chapter I unfold the core of the theoretical framework that draws from the previous parts to inform the study of the Great Recession movements under the lens of populism theory. I present a short account of how these movements came to life during the year 2011, and then state my research question and precise hypotheses as follows:

> **H1:** The manifestos of Great Recession movements exhibit a considerable degree of populist discourse compared to other types of movements.
>
> **H2:** The movements of the Great Recession mainly employed populist discourse in order to construct a common identity and mobilize their constituencies.
>
> **H3:** Great Recession movement entrepreneurs deliberately and strategically employed populist discourse in order to maximize and sustain mobilization.

Moreover, I clearly exhibit the methodology I use for my empirical analysis in order to test these hypotheses, as well as the data that I employ towards that aim.

The explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach that has been chosen as my research design rests on a quantitative part which is triangulated by a qualitative empirical section. Chapter 4 is dedicated to the quantitative analysis, and furnishes a second important contribution of this thesis to the wider study of populism: a novel instrument to measure the degree of populist discourse in political texts. In this chapter, I use a technique inspired from clause-based semantic text analysis in order to build an index of populist discourse which can uncover variation and lead to more nuanced decisions on classifying phenomena as populist. I then apply this method on the manifestos of the Great Recession movements and assess their populist content in order to answer my first hypothesis.

The conclusions from the quantitative text analysis are triangulated by qualitative empirical results provided in Chapter 5. This second stage of analysis

is itself split into two parts. The first part is a comparative analysis of archival material from the three most important movements of the Great Recession: the Spanish *indignados*, the Greek *aganaktismenoi*, and *Occupy Wall Street*, which helps to answer whether populism was the most distinctive feature of this wave of mobilization and answer hypothesis 2.[1] The second part comprises of an in-depth case study of the Thessaloniki *indignados* which builds on twenty-one semi-structured interviews with key informants of the movement in order to investigate the strategies of local movement entrepreneurs and their commensurability with populism. This analysis answers the third and final hypothesis. The remainder of this chapter discusses empirical results in a comprehensive manner to reach the verdict that indeed, the Movements of the Great Recession are best classified as a wave of Populist Social Movements, and to ask for further research on this interesting category of social mobilization.

In order to stress the significance of populist mobilization, their political repercussions need to be assessed. Therefore, as a last chapter, the thesis incorporates a case study analysis of the impact of the Greek indignados on Greek politics. This analysis answers the call to highlight the overlap between the study of non-institutional contention and its reflection on institutional, mainstream politics, and proceeds to investigate how the Greek indignados influenced the political setting in two respects: the alteration of public opinion, and the discourse of political parties.

This multi-tiered doctoral thesis rests on the empirical backdrop of the Great Recession movements, aiming at three different scientific contributions. It first takes upon the dominant theoretical paradigm of populism-*qua*-ideology to claim that its false foundations insert a normative bias that inhibits the proper analysis of the term. At a second step, it suggest that populism is best understood as a discourse, which can reliably measured and quantified through a novel content analysis instrument based on semantic text analysis. Third, it debates with current paradigms in social movement theory to clearly carve out the conceptual category of Populist Social Movements, placing it alongside other types of social mobilization, as a legitimate and significant element of political contention which has so far been understudied.

[1] In the remainder of this thesis, both movements in Spain and Greece will be referred to as "*indignados*" for reasons of simplicity.

Part 1

Populist Social Movements

Chapter 1

Conceptualizing populism as a discourse

At least since the inaugural volume of Ionescu and Gellner (1969), the field of populism studies has been plagued by an ongoing war over contending definitions of the term.[2] Currently, we observe two main opposing camps: those scholars who tend to see populism as some kind of ideology, and those who see it as a type of discourse. Even though the use of different definitions does not preclude collaboration between these two camps, each side is burdened by a distinct set of ontological and methodological choices that have important repercussions on how researchers formulate their research questions and handle their data. Therefore, before I begin to apply populism as an analytical category on my subject matter, it is pertinent to declare a specific position with regards to this conceptual landscape. In this chapter I set out to explore the conceptual landscape of populism by analyzing the conceptual structure of the most influential contributions to the field. After concluding this overview, I argue that the ideological treatment of populism entails strong and unfounded claims and I side with favoring a discursive approach as the most rigid and productive way to conceptualize and measure populist phenomena.

FORMING CONCEPTS

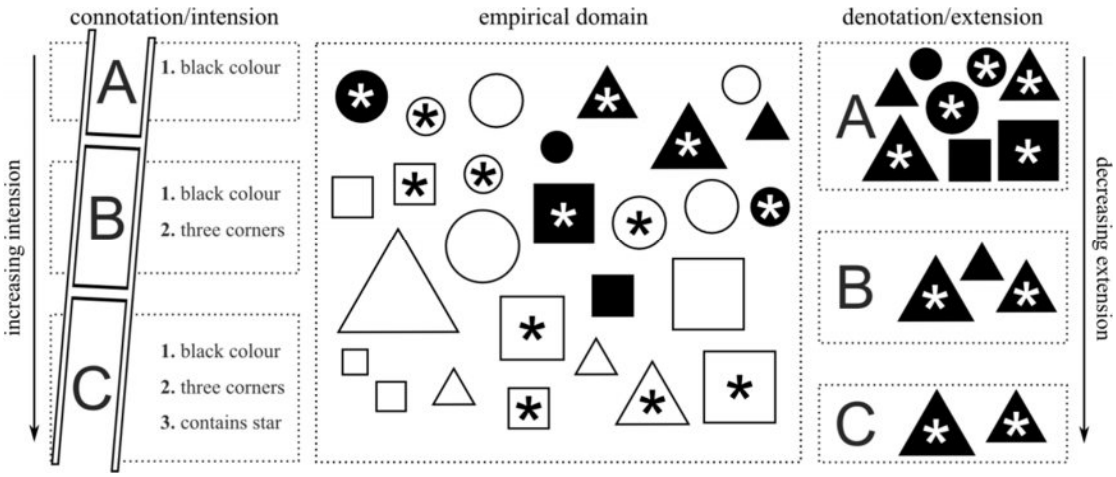
To be sure, the task of firmly establishing a concept prior to classifying its empirical referents is laden with significant theoretical and empirical difficulties. The concept-builder usually starts with a definition of the term at hand which needs to be explicitly delineated, has to respect the semantic field within which the term operates (Sartori 1984), and should ideally contain elements relevant for explanatory hypothesis building, based on causal mechanisms (Goertz 2006). A crucial part of any such endeavor is to produce a clear concept structure that can function as a taxonomical device for the empirical instances that correspond to the definition at hand. Three main types of concept structure are standardly employed: (a) classical concepts, (b) family resemblance concepts, and (c) radial concepts.

[2] While there is a large amount of scholarship by Spanish-speaking and French scholars, these works tend to be geographically confined, mainly analyzing populist case studies in Latin America and France, respectively. Since I am here interested in drawing general conceptual inferences, I have mostly incorporated literature published in English which aims at a broader scope.

Classical concepts

Within this genre one abides by a *per genus et differentia* mode of analysis (Sartori 1970), where a concept is defined by a set of necessary and sufficient properties (Goertz 2006). These properties stand for the connotation, or intension of the concept while the set of entities which can be classified under its scope corresponds to its denotation, or extension.

Graph 1: A geometrical illustration of Giovanni Sartori's ladder of abstraction



Employing Sartori's ladder of abstraction, it is straightforward to understand how specific differences create species and sub-species of a genus (Sartori 1984; Copi and Cohen 2009). By moving one step down the ladder, e.g. from step A to step B in Graph 1, we increase intension by adding a necessary property, thus decreasing extension: our net seizes fewer objects than before – it becomes more demanding. Moving up the ladder is to employ a looser net: we distance ourselves from the empirical landscape beneath our feet, which is blurred by one level, since we have discarded the weight of one necessary characteristic during our upward movement. For instance, a movement from step C to step B in Graph 1 entails that while we were able to indicate "black three-cornered shapes with a star", by dropping the third indicator we can now only seize "black three-cornered shapes" in general. Our extension has increased (we catch both starred and unstarred shapes), while our intension has decreased (we have dropped the star indicator); Sartori (1970) warns us that to do otherwise – to increase extension without decreasing intension – is to commit the sin of *conceptual stretching*. The upward move should always bring us closer to the genus, while the downward one creates classical subtypes. A solid conceptualization further

requires that our dimensions are independently necessary and jointly sufficient to seize the object (Goertz 2006). Usually, three levels of abstraction (genus, species, sub-species) are adequate for comparative politics work (Sartori 1970).[3]

Family resemblance concepts

This category classifies referents based on a set of characteristics none of which is a necessary feature; the Sartorian ladder does not work here. However, we still abide by a sufficiency clause: drawing from a specific pool of *n* dimensions, we classify objects into our concept when they contain an agreed *m* of these *n* features. Instances need to resemble each other to a certain degree to be considered equal members of the family, even though no single feature is common to all. Like with a familiar tune [concept] from which we gradually remove random notes [dimensions], there comes a point when the tune is no longer recognizable. This flexible concept structure dates back to Wittgenstein and can potentially provide a solution to gridlocks resulting from the strict demands of classical concepts, since adding characteristics can actually increase extension (Collier and Mahon 1993, but see Goertz 2006).

Radial concepts

The idea behind this third type is that even when an *ideal type* can be described, comprised of *n* necessary features, this does not mean that if a referent in the real world is missing one (or more) of these features it does not still belong to the family. These "incomplete" instances are labelled diminished subtypes (Collier and Levitsky 1997), standing at a lower level than the "real thing", yet still legitimate.[4] The main difference with the family resemblance structure is the existence of the ideal type, and the relegated nature of diminished subtypes.[5]

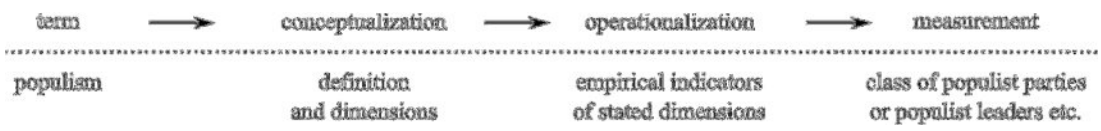
Even though a few other strategies of conceptualization are in circulation, most social scientists implicitly or explicitly build their concepts according to one of the structures above.[6] If they are not doing so, chances are their conceptualization is flawed and hardly useful for scientific inference. This is

[3] Of course, this is a simplification. Actually, intension may increase while extension remains stable, such as the case between "dog" and "dog with a bone structure". Thus, the correct formulation would be that "if extensions vary, they will vary inversely with the intensions" (Copi and Cohen 2009: 98).
[4] Contrast diminished subtypes to classical subtypes: the latter are born by adding a dimension.
[5] Note Goertz's (2006) criticism on Collier and Levitsky (1997) that diminished subtypes actually belong to a higher, not a lower level of abstraction, since they are deprived a feature and their intension has decreased.
[6] For instance, we could refer to Gerring and Barresi's (2003) "min-max strategy", or Levitsky and Loxton's (2013) "semi-radial" category.

equally true for qualitative or quantitative exercises, as well as dichotomous or continuous understandings of social science terms. These secondary issues are not dealt with in this study.

Still, a proper concept structure is only the beginning. We further need to respect the consecutive steps of scientific methodology and measurement. According to Adcock and Collier (2001), the task of conceptualization lifts us from the level of background concept or term, which in our case is populism, and lands us into the level of the systematized concept. We now have a formulation with a set of dimensions which broadly paint the extensional limits of our concept, such as, for instance, the existence of a charismatic leader, policies of redistribution towards excluded citizens etc.

Graph 2: Proper Methodological Trajectory (Adcock and Collier 2001; Goertz 2006)



The basic concept and its dimensions are still of a somewhat abstract fashion at this stage. Since, eventually, we aspire to seize the proper objects out there in a systematic fashion, the next step is to operationalize our definition by providing specific indicators for our dimensions, to be used as yardsticks for identifying referents in the world out there (Graph 2).[7] These indicators need to be sharp enough to protect from misclassifications and should be chosen with an eye to established methodologies which can provide a framework for applied research.[8]

Having quickly gone over the standard features of proper concept building and measurement, we have concluded this introductory section and can now move on to explore whether these guidelines have been respected in the literature of populism.

[7] We could have also followed Goertz's (2006) "three-level" framework, where the concept of populism would be situated at the basic level, its definition and dimensions at the secondary level, and its indicators at the indicator/data level. Both approaches are equally valid.
[8] As an illustration, the dimension of "curviness" in Graph 1 can be operationalized by a continuous variable which reports the number of corners in a given shape.

OVERVIEW OF POPULISM LITERATURE

Even though the task of this thesis is to explore the nature of non-institutional phenomena such as the movements of the Great Recession, the necessity to provide a solid conceptual basis entails that we look into how populism has been so far studied within institutional political phenomena, mainly, political parties and their leadership. In order to make the task of this section more intuitive, I divide the scholarship into two large chronological periods, produced by the crucial academic rupture that took place after the early '90s, following empirical developments that did not conform to the classical conceptualization of populism. New populist actors such as Fujimori, Menem, and Collor emerged in the political scene of Latin America, bearing striking family resemblances to earlier populists, save a twist: instead of implementing the usual – "populist" – expansionist, fiscally reckless economic policies (Sachs 1989; Dornbusch and Edwards 1991; Edwards 2010), they were stern advocates of free market interventions in their national economies. The dimension of economic policy as a necessary condition of populism suddenly lost its ground.

Undoubtedly, even before the paradigm shift, populism was a notoriously contested concept, as it has been documented with frustrating frequency. However, a large majority of analysts adhered to a structural-functional view which drew from the dominant sociopolitical academic currents of the time: modernization and dependency theories. In short, and since this topic has already been exhausted in the literature, most theories either saw populism essentially as a movement of those left behind when forces of modernization disrupted social balance (e.g. Germani 1978), or considered populism a phenomenon inherent to "dependent" countries of the capitalist periphery, especially relevant to import-substitution industrialization (ISI) policies (e.g. Vilas 1992). Nonetheless, Roberts (1995), Weyland (1996; 2001), and many others, have scrutinized and discarded such grand theories with persuasive detail. Despite the fact that a handful of nostalgic scholars of "pure" populism still roam the field,[9] I will consider these approaches as long deceased and focus only on those perspectives which have survived the paradigm shift.

Fiscal policy aside then, a range of other features populate our conceptualizations of the term. It is instructive, before I go on, to reveal at this point a central tendency which becomes evident by studying the term's evolution: populism's intension is gradually diminishing. Cumulative definitions

[9] See recently, Schamis (2013).

of the past (Weyland 2001), where dimensions of populism were freely drawn from a large set of domains such as economic policy, sociological features of the constituency, socioeconomic background conditions, political ideology, and so on, have ceased to be in vogue. The academic community has tended to discard several dimensions in face of empirical developments, rather than add new ones to the old mix. Definitions have become more modest and intension is decreasing, perhaps in order to cater for the increasing needs of extension. We will see where this has led us in the following pages.

Mapping the conceptual field of populism is a hard task since usually writers exhibit considerable analytical sloppiness. They seldom state a certain concept structure explicitly or testify a specific trajectory from conceptualization to operationalization and measurement. However, this is not a unique feature of our field; the same is true for almost every other area of social science. Most frequently, the concept structure – if there is one – has to be *inferred* from the text (Goertz 2006). Accordingly, in this section, I will try to limit myself exclusively to self-conscious, comprehensive efforts at conceptualizing populism which still exert influence over modern thinkers.

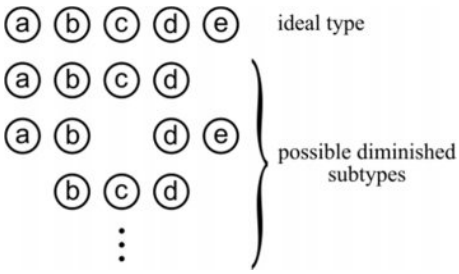
We can start by observing the conceptual developments that followed the 1990s watershed moment. Two different reactions were possible back then: scholars either had to stick to the hegemonic connotation of the concept and deny that these new manifestations constituted populism, or proceed to devise a strategy of incorporation into a new, extensionally larger conceptual framework. While some hard-liners opted to fortify themselves behind old walls and accuse heretics of conceptual stretching, most researchers decided to shift the paradigm.[10] When something like this happens, people tend to cater for newcomers by following one of the three strategies of reconceptualization submitted by Collier and Levitsky (1997). They either: (a) create diminished subtypes, (b) precise the definition, or (c) shift the overarching concept. The remainder of this section is organized according to the character of these post-rupture reactions by the academic community.

Roberts (1995) was a pioneering academic in this respect. Inspired by Collier and Mahon (1993) and unsatisfied by extant classical frameworks, he decided to reconceptualize populism into a radial category, aggregating five core dimensions: (a) personalistic leadership, (b) multiclass political coalition, (c) top-down mobilization, (d) anti-elitist and/or antiestablishment discourse, and

[10] See Weyland (2003) for a short account of the arguments of the former group.

(e) fiscal profligacy, rendering the latter category an optional, rather than a necessary dimension, thus solving the riddle. These dimensions incorporated all the dominant approaches of the era into a new mix, allowing for the production of diminished subtypes which satisfy seemingly irreconcilable opinions (Graph 3). The ideal type which, for Roberts, constitutes a "prototypical populist experience" is the Argentinian case, under Peron, wherefrom all other types seem to radiate (Roberts 1995: 88).

Graph 3: Roberts' (1995) concept structure



Roberts' contribution was an ambitious attempt to settle the dissenting voices. However, we can identify three main problems: (a) while he purports to establish a radial structure, he proceeds to employ classical subtypes (e.g. "liberal" populism) thus confusing the reader on which and how many dimensions are necessary, (b) some of these dimensions are contingent rather than core properties of populism, as Roberts (2007) later acknowledged, and subsequently, (c) elements of conceptual stretching abound, a limitation inherent in radial concepts (Weyland 2001). In general, his structure suggests *too much* of a compromise: Roberts is trying too hard to keep everyone in the game. The problem thus becomes not so much one of conceptual stretching, as of lack of parsimony, to a level that hinders conceptual sharpness.

Most of the dimensions advanced in Roberts (1995) are no longer considered core properties of populism. The same author later moved on to reduce populism's intension by narrowing populism down to a "top-down political mobilization of mass constituencies by personalistic leaders who challenge elite groups on behalf of an ill-defined pueblo, or 'the people'" (Roberts 2007: 5), effectively utilizing a classical structure with three necessary conditions. These conditions are not operationalized, and generally this conceptualization is unable to travel outside Latin America since, to take Europe as an example, populism

never managed to mobilize mass constituencies in its modern history, with only marginal exceptions to this rule.[11]

Conclusively, and with regard to the three strategies of reconceptualization mentioned by Collier and Levitsky (1997), Roberts initially tried to confront empirical developments by increasing extension via the creation of diminished subtypes, only to later give up on this approach in favor of classical, minimal conceptualizations with limited intension. No scholar seems to have actually tried the second strategy of precising the definition, since that would entail ignoring the reductionist urge and proceeding to the addition of extra defining properties (Collier and Levitsky 1997) into what already seemed like an overly populated dimensional space. However, the extension could still be increased to accommodate the Latin American "neopopulists" by means of the third strategy: shifting the overarching concept.

Weyland (1996) was probably the first one to try this, rejecting explicit associations of populism with specific economic policies, and reconceptualizing the term as a "purely political notion" (p. 5), taking populism away from the subject matter of economists and delivering it to political science. Weyland shifted the overarching concept of which populism is seen as an instance, from the policy realm to the genus of *political strategy*, systematizing it along three dimensions of a classical concept structure: (a) a personalistic leader appealing to heterogeneous masses, (b) a direct linkage between the two, and (c) low levels of populist party institutionalization. He further suggested that socioeconomic policy could still be employed to produce classical subtypes. The implementation of free market recipes by populist politicians is thus classified as the classical subtype of "neoliberal populism", retaining the core and adding the extra element of free market reform, thus descending one step down the ladder of abstraction.[12]

Weyland later reiterated his conceptualization, minimally defining populism as "a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers" (2001: 14). Again, a number of necessary conditions are evident, but never operationalized, leaving us in doubt on what indicates a "personalistic leader", how "large" should the number of followers be, how do we tell "mostly organized" followers from

[11] One exception that comes to mind is Greece under the influence of Andreas Papandreou in the late '70s and during the '80s.
[12] As an analogy, think of presidential and parliamentary democracy as subtypes of democracy.

mostly unorganized ones, and what jointly constitutes "direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized" support.

To conclude, we need to stress that in order to increase extension, Weyland did not go up Sartori's ladder: he shifted the overarching concept, effectively jumping over to a different ladder of abstraction and positioning himself at a much higher level of generality. He achieved this by discarding a host of variables, trimming populism's conceptual scope, and limiting its intension to strictly political dimensions. As innovative as this may today seem, further reduction was already taking place. Scholars such as Ernesto Laclau (1977) had proceeded to trim populism all the way down to political discourse (see later section).

Margaret Canovan also entertained the notion of populism as discursive practice in her own work. Initially, she split the task of observation into two strategies: an essentialist one where fundamental similarities across cases as well as conditions of populism are explored, and a phenomenological-naturalistic one which aims at a classification of populist instances (Canovan 1982). Importantly, she dismisses the first strategy as futile and declares that populism can only be treated within a family resemblance framework (Canovan 1981). Unfortunately, she does not provide a list of dimensions which can be tested against empirical instances. In reality, she yields a descriptive unidimensional typology of populist phenomena, comprising of seven nominal categories. This typology suffers crucially from not providing any specific dimensions on which it is built, committing the common error of employing "nonequivalent criteria" found in certain faulty typologies (Collier, LaPorte, and Seawright 2012: 224). In order for a classification to make sense, a similarity must exist between the members, which is derived through comparison in a certain respect (Sartori 1991); if this criterion of comparability is missing, the treatment becomes nonsensical. We are unable to discern the specific difference that produces the classes of farmers' radicalism, peasant movements, intellectual agrarian socialism, populist dictatorship, populist democracy, reactionary populism, and politicians' populism than Canovan (1981: 13) lists; the classification is effectively *ad hoc* (Laclau 2005a).

Actually, if one looks closely at Canovan's categories, it seems that they are presented in a broad chronological order of historical appearance, thus constituting a typology that aims to describe the empirical-historical evolution of the phenomenon, rather than point to core features, similar to what Gerring

(2012) terms a "temporal typology".[13] Useful as this may be, it provides no conceptual refinement and does not act as an explanatory building block (Collier et al. 2012). Canovan does eventually point, albeit reluctantly, to a common underlying element, claiming that "[a]ll forms of populism without exception involve some kind of exaltation of and appeal to 'the people,' and all are in one sense or another antielitist" (Canovan 1981: 294). Elsewhere, she provides the genre of this common dimension, depicting it as a "common rhetoric" (Canovan 1982: 552) and a "rhetorical style" (Canovan 1984: 313). However, she dismisses these core features as "vague and ambiguous" (Canovan 1981: 294), reserving some merit only for the category of antielitism. Canovan never systematized these intuitions since apparently she considered them trivial manifestations of yet more important underlying concepts that constitute populist ideology.

Moving on to the influential work by Taggart (2004), we see an ideal type of populism which consists of five characteristic features:[14] (a) it is only instantiated in the context of representative politics, (b) it tends to identify itself with a "heartland" - an idealized conception of community, (c) it lacks core values, (d) it emerges only when there is a sense of urgent crisis, and (e) it has a self-limiting quality. Taggart repeatedly stresses the contextual nature of populism but does not perform an operationalization of his dimensions, nor does he proceed to explicit classification or the development of a scoring scheme. This conceptualization follows a radial type of concept structure where the ideal type never materializes in whole. However, some of these dimensions are either trivial, such as (a), refer to antecedent and not defining variables, such as (a) and (d), are ex-post (e), or are intrinsically hard to operationalize (c). Consequently, this set does not seem capable of adequately seizing the object, a limitation which obviously derives from the fact that a classificatory or other kind of taxonomic endeavor was alien to the purposes of the author, who focused more on causes and effects, rather than definitional characteristics.

Hawkins is another influential contemporary scholar of populism who follows the trend of shifting the overarching concept towards a political understanding of populism, arguing in favor of two core characteristics which, if I am correctly interpreting his method, should be considered individually necessary and jointly sufficient: (a) "the presence of a charismatic mode of linkage between voters and politicians", and (b) "a democratic discourse that relies on the idea of a popular

[13] Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013) perform a similar historical classification into agrarian, socioeconomic, and xenophobic populism.

[14] In earlier work, Taggart had similarly identified six "key themes" (2000: 2) that largely correspond to those in Taggart (2004).

will and a struggle between 'the people' and 'the elite'" (Hawkins 2003: 1138). Interestingly, he proceeds to relegate the mass electoral support clause to a "corollary attribute" (p. 1140), along with the tendency to undermine democratic institutions. He thus explicitly distinguishes between core aspects of populism and purportedly inevitable derivatives of the former.

Hawkins (2003) does not operationalize his dimensions but rather focuses on a descriptive case study of Hugo Chavez. The main problem arises with the dimension of charisma, another contested concept which has plagued the literature of populism.[15] The author seems content with referring to secondary sources (books, interviews etc.) which acclaim Chavez as a charismatic individual. Perhaps, since a large majority of accounts portrays an individual as charismatic, then this suffices for the existence of charisma. Such an approach, however, requires sound theorizing and suffers from all the ills of outright constructivism. Unfortunately, charisma is one of those latent properties that cannot be associated with any tangible, directly observable indicator. Things are better for his second dimension, discourse, since there is a considerable amount of primary sources such as interviews and speeches that Hawkins analyzes to locate the people vs. elites distinction. However, he illustrates this distinction not through a systematic content analysis but rather by a qualitative illustration of paradigmatic excerpts.

Hawkins realized the limitations of his theoretical framework, and later shifted his attention away from the role of charismatic leadership, which he relegated to a facilitating variable, focusing squarely on populism as a worldview, a "set of fundamental beliefs about the nature of the political world" (Hawkins 2010: 5) which is expressed through a specific Manichean discourse. The methodological treatment of this discourse is central to his research project. Arguing that to provide descriptive elements in terms of snippets of text within case study approaches constitutes thin evidence, he engages in an ambitious cross-national measurement project where he employs *holistic grading* to analyze political texts. In holistic grading, a team of readers undergoes training and subsequently assigns scores to sampled texts in order to measure populism (Hawkins 2009). Even though this approach also displays limitations, such as weak dynamic range and occasionally low intercoder reliability performance, Hawkins goes a long way towards a systematic analysis of the actual phenomenon of populist discourse, providing a scoring scheme which lends significant credence and validity to his conceptualization.

[15] For a discussion of the role of charisma in populism, see Pantazopoulos (2013).

Two significant scholars of populism have been not been dealt with so far, Cas Mudde and Ernesto Laclau, who respectively represent the two main opposing camps in the current literature of populism. The school represented by Mudde conceptualizes populism as an ideology, while Laclau places its genus under discourse. These two schools will now be dealt with in more detail, before I proceed to present my own position on the topic. However, we can already point out the main misconceptions found in the literature of populism and use them as a yardstick to analyze the schools of Mudde and Laclau.

THREE COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

With reference to the methodological guidelines outlined in the starting section, a series of conceptual and methodological lapses can be identified within the literature of populism. While an exhaustive account would not be feasible here, we can still adequately discuss the three most common categories of deficient methodology and reasoning: (a) absence of operationalization, (b) succumbing to contextual determination, and (c) conflating populism with its causes and/or effects.

Absence of operationalization

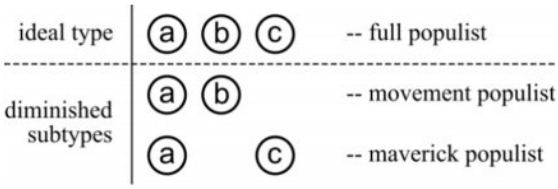
The first category is a criticism of the overly descriptive nature of the majority of works. It is more than common that after a definition of populism is suggested and its dimensions presented at a theoretical level, the crucial step of operationalization is neglected, the writer proceeding to classify instances (leaders, parties, etc.) as populist, without reference to specific indicators drawn from empirical observation. Usually, the labelling is justified through descriptive, idiosyncratic narratives of the historical evolution of the populist phenomenon at hand, an approach purportedly taken to constitute adequate evidence. Unfortunately, this method deprives these works of much validity, since we are unable to review classificatory decisions, lacking information on the grounds on which they were made.

This criticism by no means aspires to undermine the importance of description in social science, and its ability to answer "*what* questions" (Gerring 2012). However, the use of the descriptive case study as a historical account is best employed to scrutinize processes and mechanisms, rather than answer issues of definition. For the latter, we need strict rules, not abstract judgment, even one that comes from the pen of an expert of the case in hand. As Laclau puts it, analysts of populism rely too much on intuitive perceptions of the concept and

perform a "peculiar transfer of meaning" (Laclau 1977: 145), labelling politicians and movements as populist without due respect to the classificatory commitments made during the conceptualization step, but rather by comparison to other phenomena which have been previously classified as such. In effect, most authors implicitly adopt an idiosyncratic family resemblance conceptual framework, without ever indulging in specifying their method or dimensions of choice, let alone solid indicators. Recently, a number of authors have made attempts to overcome this problem, with Hawkins (2009; 2010), Rooduijn et al. (2014), Pauwels (2011), and others employing various content analysis methodologies to overcome abstract theorizing and increase the reliability and validity of their inferences.

As a further example of a recent work which remains free of such misconceptions we can turn to Levitsky and Loxton (2013), where a straightforward qualitative operationalization of populism is suggested. The authors select the individual political leader as their unit of analysis and distinguish between three dimensions, drawing considerably from Barr (2009), treating the concept as a *semi-radial* category, a rare combination of a classical and a radial concept structure. This means that though they acknowledge "anti-establishment appeals" (a) as the single necessary condition of populism, operationalized as a Manichean and anti-elite appeal, they subsequently attach two further radial dimensions. The first one is the status of the populist actor as a political outsider (b), operationalized on the origin of the leader with respect to the party system. The second one is the existence of a personalistic linkage between leader and voters (c), indicated by whether the leader has ran for president with a party founded and dominated upon by him/herself. At any time, at least one of these two radial dimensions has to coexist with the necessary one in order to classify a leader as a populist.

Graph 4: Levitsky and Loxton's (2013) semi-radial structure



The authors assign the label of "full populist" to leaders who present all three characteristics (e.g. Chavez) and employ the capacity of their concept structure

to construct two diminished subtypes: "movement populists", for those lacking personalistic linkages (e.g. Morales), and "maverick populists", for non-outsiders (e.g. Collor). Those who lack both radial dimensions are categorized as "radical opposition" (e.g. Allende), since anti-establishment appeals are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for populism. Even though one may hold considerable reservations with regards to the theoretical problems of radial, the contextual specifity to Latin American presidential systems, the value of objectively defining outsider status, and the limitations of the chosen unit of analysis, admittedly, their solid methodological approach as well as the effort they put towards providing a grounded operationalization of their dimensions before proceeding to the careful classification of empirical cases, render their work a fine example of how proper research is designed and conducted from beginning to end. The study could however benefit methodologically from grounding the operationalization of its necessary condition on a content analysis of sampled textual data.

Succumbing to contextual determination

Almost every student of populism carries strong empirical images of populism either from the national political background in which she was socialized or from the case study with which she has become most familiar during her academic career. Unfortunately, our experience sometimes indulges us into thinking that *our* homegrown populist case is the paradigmatic one, and everything else is discarded as *ersatz*. Since populism has emerged most prominently as a political phenomenon in the region of Latin America than anywhere else in the world, it is conceptualizations by analysts of this region that tend to display significant contextualization, having trouble travelling outside their geographical confines. Understandably, populism has been ubiquitous for almost a century in Latin America, with populist leaders rising to become presidents and rule their countries for successive terms (Weyland 2003). This *does* explain the proneness to entertain a picture of populism as a top-down massive project which dominates the national party system under the leadership of a strong leader, who wins elections and implements expansionist policies for his "people". However, capturing power is not the sole outcome of a given populist mobilization; we need to allow the incorporation of failed populist attempts into our models. It is flawed to define populism based exclusively on its highly successful instances, since this constitutes a tremendous bias. The usual clause of "mass mobilization", for instance, forbids this, inasmuch as massive

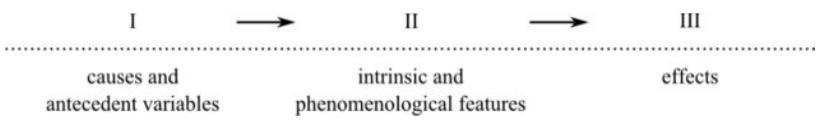
mobilizations usually end up installing their leader into office deterministically, at least within the context of free elections.

Furthermore, there is a very large grey zone. Populist parties in Europe usually score around 10% of the ballot or significantly lower, and seldom if ever enjoy the opportunity to enter a coalition government or rule alone (Mudde 2007). They are still classified as populist though, and justifiably so. Last but not least, the strictly top-down approach misses a significant class of bottom-up, grassroots populist mobilizations (e.g. the Russian *narodniki*, the European *indignados*, Occupy Wall Street, the Tea Party etc.), or institutionalized populist instances without a clearly leading, "charismatic" personality, like the US People's Party and several European cases. Clearly, students of Latin American populism either have to confront these contradictions, or declare their approaches to be context-specific, in the same way as Gerring (1997) has suggested regarding the concept of ideology.

Conflating populism with its causes and/or effects

Hawkins has strongly criticized the use of certain attributes as core properties of populism when in reality they are merely "logical corollaries of the worldview" (2010: 8). Take clientelism for instance; while there are authors who incorporate clientelism as a constitutive dimension of populism (Roberts 1995), others consider it a contingent effect (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013a). Similarly, during the era of "classical populism", the phenomenon was identified with larger socioeconomic shifts due to modernization, while now these are occasionally understood as contingent causes of populism (Hawkins 2010). As Taggart argues, "it is in the reaction and not the development of that reaction that we find the essence of populism" (2000: 14).

Graph 5: Intrinsic features of populism relative to causes and effects



The misunderstanding mainly stems from failing to adequately establish the *genus* of populism in a given study, the occasional lack of parsimony in choosing the phenomena which constitute identity with populism rather than cause or effect. If, as Weyland (2001), we see populism as *strategy*, then strategy is not a

cause of populism: populism *is* strategy. If we admit *discourse* as its genus (Laclau, 2005b), then populism *is* discourse, the latter is not one of its effects. However, when functional approaches prevail, for example seeing populism as "the effort to destroy established institutions of interest intermediation and elite control and to put in their place some kind of 'direct' voice of the people, embodied in the leader of the populist party" (Kitschelt and McGann 1995: 160), then we should be cautious of conflating populism with its causes. When we analyze how populist leaders conduct their policies *after* they have already assumed power (e.g. Sachs 1989), then we are prone to conflate populism with its effects.

However, it is standard practice to have authors adopting a minimal definition of populism according to a set of implicit or explicit necessary conditions, only to subsequently have them engaging in exhaustive depictions of further – non essential – facets of the political conduct of their subjects. More often than not, these extra facets are causes or effects of populism which have been inserted into the text in order to somehow strengthen the legitimacy of the classification of the subject into populism. In reality, this consists of a bait-and-switch tactic (Coppedge 1999); researchers declare that they abide by definition X, and then proceed to incorporate argumentation regarding indicators which are irrelevant to this definition. Justified as this persuasive urge may be, it is not fair play.

For this reason, it is important that authors always clarify their position with regards to the causal status of their chosen dimensions. As Goertz exclaims, concept-builders should "clearly examine the causal relationships between indicators and secondary- and basic-level factors. Identify clearly those indicators which are the *effects* of the phenomenon or *cues* that signal the presence of the phenomenon" (Goertz 2006: 58). With regards to extant literature, what needs to be clarified better is the choice of genus, and, most importantly, the methodological treatment of populist discourse. In this respect, the previous sections have prepared us to better assess the advantages and disadvantages of the main current schools of thought and discuss the highly important topic of how populist discourse is, or should be, incorporated into the conceptual frameworks of populism research. We will start this endeavor with the work of Cas Mudde and then proceed to that of Ernesto Laclau.

THE DOMINANT PARADIGM: POPULISM AS IDEOLOGY

Mudde paid scant attention to the conceptual troubles of populism in his early work on the European extreme right (e.g. Mudde 2000a), or at best provided a loose typology (2000b) which displayed all the shortcomings mentioned above with regards to Canovan (1981). However, he later reconceptualized populism to define it minimally as:

> "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2004: 543).[16]

Evidently, populism is understood as a classical concept, assigned to the genus of (thin-centred) ideology, with three necessary dimensions: the existence of a "people", an "elite", and an appeal to the general will (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013a). This ideological or "ideational" definition has since been employed widely in the scholarship, especially within European academia, having today reached a status of hegemony over its competitors (Pauwels 2011). Hawkins (2009), however, insists on classifying it as "discursive", while Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012a: 9) acknowledge that its distance with other definitions based on populism as discourse, strategy, or style, is rather small.

This minimal definition discards several older variables, such as charismatic leadership, clientelism, and unmediated communication between leader and people, as facilitating or totally irrelevant conditions (Mudde 2004; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013a). In general, Mudde firmly follows the guidelines of constructing minimal definitions, relegating all secondary properties as amenable to verification, not elements declared true by definition (Sartori 1976). Moreover, this definition is far from abstract, covering significant ground towards operationalization, a valuable characteristic that has earned it a lot of praise in the literature. However, Mudde, in his most comprehensive and influential contributions on the topic (Mudde 2007; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012b), does not attempt to extract specific indicators for his dimensions, and proceeds to a rather ostensive identification of political parties as populist, frequently based on secondary sources, as he also acknowledges (Mudde 2007: 5).

[16] In Mudde (2007: 23), the author slightly amended his definition to explicitly qualify populist ideology as a "thin-centred" one, and this is the version he has systematically employed since.

Populism, according to Mudde (2004), is a "thin-centred" rather than a full-fledged ideology. Irrespective of its "thin" or "thick" treatment, employing Mudde's definition evidently subscribes the genus of populism to ideology. As I elaborate in the following paragraphs, the assignment of populism to ideology is an incorrect choice that, apart from bearing poor analytical foundations, it also unnecessarily burdens the study of populist phenomena with exceedingly strong claims that hinder its proper analysis. In order to demonstrate this conceptual inaccuracy, we must look into the conceptualization of ideology.

Ideology is a hotly contested term in the social sciences. Gerring (1997), in a comprehensive survey of the literature, concludes that not only is it a far-flung notion but its various conceptualizations usually encompass contradictory traits. This verdict already points to the realization that establishing the definition of yet another contested term – populism – on the shaky conceptual grounds of ideology is a rather inapposite approach. Apparently, this is exactly what has happened. An overview of the conceptual field and a critical analysis of how Mudde (2004, 2007) justifies this choice of genus for populism, will provide better insight.

Mullins (1974) describes ideology as "a logically coherent system of symbols which … links the cognitive and evaluative perception of ones social condition … to a program of collective action for the maintenance, alteration, or transformation of society" (p. 235). For Talcott Parsons, ideology is "a system of beliefs, held in common by the members of a collectivity" (1951: 235), Campbell et al. label it "a particularly elaborate, close-woven, and far-ranging structure of attitude" (1960: 192), and Sartori claims it represents "a typically dogmatic, i.e., rigid and impermeable, approach to politics" (1969: 402). The systematic and consistent nature of ideological dispositions seems therefore to be what distinguishes them from a haphazard appeal to loose "values" or disconnected "beliefs". It is no accident that in his survey, Gerring (1997) lists thirty-five attributes regularly associated with ideology to reach the conclusion that just a single one enjoys universal agreement and remains unchallenged: *coherence*.

It would therefore seem legitimate to claim that the simplest litmus test for accepting a political term as a representative of the genus of ideology would be its level of coherence. Established notions such as socialism or liberalism would easily pass this test, but the same cannot be said for populism. On the contrary, one of the most recurrent features of the literature is when scholars of populism take great pains to show that much of its power and relevance lies exactly in its

inherently "chameleonic" nature, its ability to change face according to context (Taggart 2000; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013b). Hence, we see populism employed throughout modern political history, from the American Populist Party and the Russian Narodniki in the 19th century, to Peronism in Argentina and the French Poujadists in the '50s; from left-wingers such as Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales all the way to the likes of Jean-Marie Lepen and the Tea Partiers.

Can a semblance of ideological coherence be substantiated in such diverse political phenomena? Arguably, there is not a single policy area where two populist actors could not be found at loggerheads. Betz (1994: 107) testifies that "populist parties are generally held to lack grand visions or comprehensive ideological projects", and, as it has been repeatedly stressed, there is no Populist International, no sacred texts upon which populist disciples can draw inspiration, no universally revered populist icons, and no acknowledged historical continuity among populist manifestations (Worsley 1969; Stanley 2008; Bale et al. 2011; Moffitt and Tormey 2014). Unsurprisingly, rarely if ever can you find a political actor proudly bearing the populist label.

Populism thus miserably fails the litmus test of ideology, and that is final. To repeat Taguieff (1995: 9), populism does not "define a particular ideological content" (see also Fieschi 2004). Hence, Mudde may be right in that populists consider society "to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite'" and uphold that "politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (2004: 547), but this populist behavior does not constitute an ideology by any reasonable and scientifically established measure.

Populism as "thin-centred" ideology

Populism theorists today are mostly aware of these limitations and rarely place populism on equal footing with established ideologies; however, the ideological clause still exhibits a peculiar resilience. Many scholars feel the need to emphasize the ideological part of Mudde's (2004) definition, even when, like March (2007) they hasten to explain that "defining populism as an ideology should certainly not imply intellectual robustness or consistency" (p. 64), in what is a rather self-contradictory statement.

The element that has been employed in order to overcome criticism and justify the recurrent association between ideology and populism is the invocation of ideological "thinness". Thus, it is claimed that, no matter the obvious fuzziness

among empirical instances, populism is still a legitimate ideology; fuzziness is explained by populism's "thin" core. So, as the argument goes, populism *is* an ideology, but not exactly; it is a "thin-centered" ideology (Canovan 2002; Mudde 2004; Abts and Rummens 2007; Stanley 2008).

This conceptualization, which is considered today as the dominant theoretical paradigm (Moffitt and Tormey 2014) draws its authority from Michael Freeden's "morphological approach" on ideology (Freeden 1996; 1998). Freeden claims that a thin-centred ideology "is one that arbitrarily severs itself from wider ideational contexts, by the deliberate removal and replacement of concepts" and exhibits "a restricted core attached to a narrower range of political concepts" (Freeden 1998: 750). According to proponents of populism as thin-centred ideology, thinness explains populism's malleability and tendency to attach itself to other "thick" or "thin" ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, ecologism and nationalism (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012b).

There are three main problems with the attempt to retain ideology as populism's genus by resorting to its alleged thinness. First, the very notion of thinness is conceptually spurious; second, this position involves significant methodological inconsistencies in the framework of its proponents; and third, its essentialist connotations erect insurmountable obstacles with regards to quantification and measurement. I take upon these problems in turn.

Complications of "thin-ness"

Freeden (1996) describes the morphology of ideologies as a three-tiered structure which contains core, adjacent, and peripheral concepts and is determined by means of elaborate proximities and weights which are idiosyncratic to each ideological variant. For instance, liberalism may be said to have liberty at its core, human rights, democracy, and equality adjacent to the core, and nationalism on the periphery. Every belief that stems from an ideology travels from core to periphery along a specific route, acquiring elements from conceptual nodes along the way. Core concepts are present "in all known cases of the ideology in question" (Freeden 2013: 125), as with liberty in liberalism. So, a purported instance of liberalism which lacks liberty at its core would "raise profound doubts about whether that case is indeed a member of the liberal family" (ibid.).

How do thin-centred ideologies differ from this basic type? Sine Freeden has unfortunately failed to provide a precise elaboration of what is otherwise a

significant plank in his larger theoretical framework, we can only surmise his view by collecting various fragments found scattered throughout his work. Hence, thin-centred ideologies such as nationalism, feminism, and ecologism[17] are seen by Freeden as ephemeral "groupings of political thought" which display a "decreased internal integration" (1996: 485), and "a restricted core attached to a narrower range of political concepts" (1998: 750), failing to exhibit "the full or broad range of concepts and political positions normally to be found within the mainstream ideological families" (2001: 203). A thin-centred ideology is "limited in ideational ambitions and scope" and thus unable to provide a "reasonably broad, if not comprehensive, range of answers to the political questions that societies generate" (1998: 750). Moreover, the "cohesive intricacy of the ideological product" as well as the existence and spread of "a unifying system among[,] its ideological producers" set a thick ideology apart from a thin one (1996: 545-6).

Evidently then, Freeden assigns – *ex negativo* – a number of attributes to thick ideologies: substantial internal integration, a rich core attached to a wide range of political concepts, the capacity to exhibit a broad range of concepts and political positions, a reasonably broad range of answers to the political questions of society, far-reaching ideational ambitions and scope, a sufficiently cohesive and intricate ideological product, and unity among ideological producers, are those we can surmise from his texts, since a systematic account is lacking. Thin ideologies, while belonging to the same genus as thick ideologies, convey a subordinate morphology and do not illustrate these necessary attributes.

Following these leads, it is safely inferred that Freeden is conceptualizing thin-centred ideologies as inferior instances of a superordinate category, as diminished subtypes of an ideal type of ideology, thus actually employing a radial structure for the concept of ideology. In radial categories, the existence of all defining attributes signifies a full instance of the concept (e.g. thick ideologies), with diminished subtypes illustrating only a subset of these attributes (e.g. thin ideologies) (see Collier and Mahon 1993; Collier and Levitsky 1997; Gerring 2012).

To distinguish between full instances and diminished subtypes, defining attributes need to be clearly stated and operationalized so that tests of inclusion or exclusion can be performed and replicated independently. Freeden does not

[17] Freeden has never specifically mentioned populism as a thin-centred ideology in his numerous publications.

provide a comprehensive set of defining attributes for full (thick) ideologies, and neither does he provide any operationalization. Hence, he never becomes straightforward on how exactly thin ideologies are subordinate. Which "range of concepts" and how wide a "scope" makes for a thick ideology? How does a "restricted core" have to look like? Which degree of "integration", "ambition" and "cohesive intricacy" is required? How many "political positions" and how "unified" a system among ideological producers would be adequate? These and other questions are left unanswered, rendering us unable to distinguish between thick and thin ideologies if we are unwilling to rely on arguments from authority. Humphrey (2013), for instance, in his contribution to *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies* that Freeden has co-edited, applies the morphological approach to claim that ecologism can plausibly be perceived as a thick ideology, and not a thin one as Freeden asserts. Who is to tell, when all these loose dimensions remain barren? As Humphrey concludes, the choice is "always a matter of emphasis and interpretation" (2013: 436).

Obviously, there is no way out of the conceptual apparatus that Freeden has devised; almost any political notion can acquire the status of a thin-centred ideology, as long as it contains a purported "small" number of core concepts which the claimant perceives as unable to supply a comprehensive package of policy proposals. After all, a "small" set of core attributes is always necessary in order to define something. Then racism, anti-immigration, sexism, Islamism, capitalism, radicalism, multiculturalism, technocracy, cosmopolitanism, neoliberalism, Euroscepticism, globalization, anti-globalization, religious fundamentalism, authoritarianism, anti-Semitism, militarism, neoconservatism, Keynesianism, consumerism, are all thin-centred ideologies; the list can have no end. We could also claim that populism's core features, anti-elitism, people-centrism, and popular sovereignty (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013a), are all thin ideologies of their own standing. In other words, Freeden professes a conceptual exceptionalism for ideology which is methodologically unwarranted. No notion, and populism in particular, can bear fruit when planted on such slippery conceptual ground.

Methodological inconsistencies

The spurious conceptual structure produced by the "thin-centred ideology" stratagem is evident in Mudde's attempt to draw opposites for populism. Mudde (2004; also Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013a, 2013b) posits two direct opposites for populism: elitism and pluralism. However, rudimentary

methodological consistency dictates that when discussing antithetical concepts, we compare concepts of the same order, coexisting at the same level of conceptual hierarchy. Since populism is a (thin-centred) ideology, that would entail that elitism and pluralism are also ideologies, thin-centred or otherwise. Obviously, this is hardly the case. Consequently, Mudde would need to revise populism's genus to identify with the one taken to account for elitism and pluralism. Pappas (2013), to take an example, is more cognizant of such hierarchical consistency requirements, conceptualizing populism as *democratic illiberalism*, "the polar opposite of political liberalism" (p. 33), treating populism at the same level with other ideologies.

Furthermore, the dependence on the ideological genus has pushed Mudde and his associates into one more conceptual inconsistency. Previously, it was illustrated how Freeden employs thin ideologies as diminished subtypes of a radial concept structure. However, radial categories have been widely challenged for being prone to conceptual stretching. More precisely, they have been accused of fostering a "pseudo-consensus" by collapsing different concepts under the same term, thus actually perpetuating rather than reducing confusion (Weyland 2001; Møller and Skaaning 2010). While methodologists might agree or disagree with this premise, interestingly, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2012a) also severely criticize the application of radial categories, opting for a classical categorization of populism as the best way to foster conceptual clarity and knowledge accumulation. Having earlier assigned their concept's genus to thin-centered ideology – a radial category – they have obviously failed to employ consistently high standards across their methodological decisions.

Betrayed by "degreeism"

Allegiance to an ideology is usually perceived as a dichotomous exercise; one subscribes to an ideology, or refrains from doing so. For most people, there is no sense in speaking of "degrees" of socialism, Marxism, or liberalism, since the normative political concepts that undergird such ideologies are of a "take it or leave it" nature. You either acknowledge the overarching significance of class struggle, or place liberty at the center of your moral compass, or you do not. When core concepts of an ideology are contested, the normal outcome is the birth of a subtype of the original ideology; you can have social liberals, libertarians, conservative liberals, and hundreds of other subtypes of liberalism, but there is no sense in speaking of or measuring degrees of an original

liberalism. This is commensurate with the radial categorization of ideologies that Freeden employs.

Treating populism as an ideology necessarily reverberates this essentialist perspective. Hence, for this school of thought, a political party or leader can or cannot be populist, there is no grey zone. At best, as Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013a, 2013b) advise, we can proceed to naming subtypes of populism such as neoliberal populism, inclusionary populism, national populism, agrarian populism, and so on.[18] Therefore, measurement becomes a process of pigeonholing, a qualitative classification into populist and non-populist phenomena. The essentialist ideological perspective inherently abhors "degreeism" and refrains from any quantification of the phenomenon that could expose intragroup variation; variation can only produce subtypes.

Surprisingly, or maybe not so, there has recently been a surge of quantitative research which, on the contrary, acknowledges degrees of populism. Works such as Jagers and Walgrave (2007), Hawkins (2009), Deegan-Krause and Haughton (2009), Reungoat (2010), Pauwels (2011), Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011), March (2012), Vasilopoulou et al. (2014), Rooduijn et al. (2014), Bernhard et al. (2015), Pauwels and Rooduijn (2015), have distilled necessary dimensions of populism and operationalized them using various methodologies to arrive at interesting conclusions which illustrate variation across the unit of analysis (political parties, leaders, etc.).

As a matter of fact, most of these researchers rely explicitly or implicitly on the ideological definition provided by Mudde (2004) in order to discern and operationalize necessary dimensions. This is not unexpected at all; operationalizability is probably the strongest aspect of this specific definition. All three dimensions that Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013a) suggest as necessary and sufficient conditions of populism – the exaltation of a "noble people", the condemnation of "corrupt elites", the appeal to the value of popular sovereignty – share two qualities which render them ideal for quantitative work. First, if properly operationalized, they can be identified within discursive data produced by political actors (electoral manifestos, speeches, interviews, etc.). Second, they are of a continuous rather than categorical nature, measured by the frequency of appearance within a given data unit. Hence, since the necessary dimensions of the concept can vary, surely, the concept itself can vary accordingly. These realizations have led researchers to devise several coding schemes and

[18] See also subtypes in Taguieff (1989).

dictionaries to perform manual or automated measurements of populist discourse. Therefore, to decry "degreeism" and insist on a dichotomous qualitative perspective when there is such a large body of research pointing to the merits of investigating variability, can only be understood as actually employing an idiosyncratic cut-off threshold over which inclusion is justified, without ever disclosing that threshold or the precise means to define it.

On a more general note, Giovanni Sartori's supposed insistence on the perils of degreeism, widely cited as reason enough to adhere to dichotomous concepts, is but an enduring myth. In reality, Sartori welcomed variations in degree; "Classes", he argued "do not impute 'real sameness', but similarity. The objects that fall into a same class are more similar among themselves - with respect to the criterion of the sorting - than to the objects that fall into other classes" (Sartori 1991: 246). He becomes even more precise: "[a]ny class, no matter how minute, allows for intra-class variations (at least of degree); and it is up to the classifier to decide how much his classes are to be inclusive (broad) or discriminating (narrow)" (ibid.: 246). What Sartori takes issue with when unfavorably referring to degreeism is the "abuse (uncritical use) of the maxim that differences in kind are best conceived as differences of degree, and that dichotomous treatments are invariably best replaced by continuous ones" (ibid.: 248). The empirical research on measuring populism has already provided ample evidence that there is no such abuse at work.

Undoubtedly, the question over the dichotomous or graded nature of political concepts is not a new debate. The same contention has been elaborated at length with regards to degrees of democracy (see Collier and Adcock 1999). However, sophisticated indices of democracy such as *Freedom House* and *Polity IV* have been devised and a range of quantitative analyses have drawn from these datasets (see Munck and Verkuilen 2002 for an evaluation). These efforts have their own problems, but one cannot see why it is not legitimate to build corresponding indices for populism, when its allegedly dichotomous nature has repeatedly been undermined by empirical reality. The burden of proof is now squarely with those who deny the merits of quantification.

POPULISM AS DISCOURSE

So if populism is not an ideology, what is it? Two – somewhat interrelated – perspectives can be debated: populism as strategy, and populism as discourse. Kurt Weyland (1996; 2001) has repeatedly emphasized that populism is best

seen as a strategy, or more precisely, "a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers" (Weyland 2001: 14). Betz (2002) also shares this opinion, claiming that "populism is primarily a political strategy, whose political rhetoric is the evocation of latent grievances and the appeal to emotions provoked by them, rather than an ideology" (p. 198).

These authors may be right that populism is strategically employed by political actors, and indeed, few scholars would disagree. However, this is something totally detached from the genus of populism, since, whatever populism is, it can be used instrumentally as a strategy; even ideology can be used strategically by "opportunistic" actors. A concept can be employed as a tool for all sorts of strategic work, but that does not tell us much about its actual nature. Moreover, as Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser stress, "whether the populist really believes in the message distributed or whether populism is a strategic tool is largely an empirical question, which is often almost impossible to answer conclusively (without getting into the populist's head)" (2012a: 9). Strategy is inherent in political activity, and such behavior is compatible with almost any type of political notion. Therefore, strategy cannot provide the conceptual depth we are looking for, unless it acquires a more nuanced perspective.

Discourse, on the other hand, is a more becoming contender for the populist genus. Actually, if we do away with the unnecessary ideological clause in Mudde's (2004) formulation, we are left with a purely discursive definition, something that has drawn the attention of a series of authors (e.g. Hawkins 2010; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014). Populism simply becomes a discourse which invokes the supremacy of popular sovereignty to claim that corrupt elites are defrauding the noble people of their rightful political authority. This is – more or less – how the concept has been operationalized in the growing empirical literature mentioned earlier, a body of work that will be revisited more thoroughly in Chapter 4. The methodological implications of this operationalization uncover the discursive nature of populism, since even those researchers who abide by Mudde's ideological clause rely on purely non-ideological dimensions. They do not go out to study programmatic commitments, organizational structures, stances on immigration, economy, welfare, foreign affairs, human rights, environmental practices, and other indicators of ideological disposition, as, for instance, researchers of the Comparative Manifesto Project would do (see Budge et al. 2011). For populism, it has been

found adequate to meticulously analyze the discourse of the political actors and see if the discursive practice of exalting the "noble people" and condemning the "corrupt elites" in the name of popular sovereignty is there, and how much of it.

Undoubtedly, many would decry this perspective as overly behaviorist, but the fact remains that populism is a systematically recurring political phenomenon which can be empirically located within political discourse. On the other hand, claims for the existence of an ideology, or even a strategy, purport to have looked inside the "populist's head" and discovered the motive for this type of discursive behavior, as if "sincerity" or "'ideological devotion" is something that could actually be deduced. Evidently, the burden of proof lies with those who stand by such strong claims.

The discursive strand in populist scholarship has been around at least since Ernesto Laclau's (1977) first take on populism, later elaborated in Laclau (2005a) and Laclau (2005b). This post-structuralist corpus is not for the faint of heart, but is nonetheless very rewarding. Laclau pioneered efforts to discard nonessential dimensions (economic, social, etc.) that contaminated the literature, and shifted the focus towards the discursive construction of populist appeals. Rather reasonably, the enduring drift towards acknowledging the discursive nature of populism has led some of his contemporary disciples to celebrate Laclau's eventual vindication (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014).

Laclau (1977) pioneered an interesting point of view since the start: the insistence on the importance of *form* rather than *content* in populist discourse. Shifting the overarching concept and stripping away most of its older dimensions, populism becomes a *mode of articulation*, expressed through the juxtaposition of "the people" versus the "power bloc". Importantly, for Laclau (1977), the agent of populism had to be a specific class.

In his later writings, Laclau is much more elaborate (2005a; 2005b). He remains highly critical of the chaotic situation in dealing with the conceptualization of populism, rightly claiming that most attempts constitute "descriptive enumerations of a variety of 'relevant features' - a relevance which is undermined, in the very gesture which asserts it, by reference to a proliferation of exceptions" (2005a, p. 3). He now dismisses any attempts to assign populism to specific social groups or ideologies and abandons a strict class-based analysis. In his own view, the genus of populism is *discourse* (2005b), a genus that sits higher than "ideology" or "movement". Laclau insists on focusing on the *form* of populism as discourse, rather than its specific, "ontic" content. He maintains that

the social content that populism expresses is elusive and discontinuous, while the form of expression is the element that provides coherence to the concept. In his own words:

> "a movement is not populist because in its politics or ideology it presents actual *contents* identifiable as populistic, but because it shows a particular *logic of articulation* of those contents – whatever those contents are" (Laclau 2005b: 33).

Laclau dismisses all other dimensions of populism in favor of a formal approach, where populism is identified with a specific kind of political discourse that pits the people against those in power, irrespective of what the popular claims consist of, or how the two constitutive social actors (people and power bloc) are defined. This "displacement of the conceptualization, from contents to form" (Laclau 2005b: 44) is groundbreaking, and its impact can be seen on almost all current theories of populism. Laclau is unique in pointing directly to populist discursive practice as the core essence of the phenomenon, avoiding the contextual particularities that have trapped a range of scholars before him. Sadly, his explicit distaste for methodological individualism cripples his work and leaves it incomplete, since processes and individual agency are not sufficiently accounted for (cf. Hedström and Swedberg 1998).[19] The absence of an agentic perspective leads to a failure to establish the temporal succession or causal direction of his two main factors: the existence of an internal frontier which divides society into two blocks, and the artificial construction of the popular subject.

Consequently, even though he criticizes the old habit of seeing populism as an epiphenomenon of socioeconomic structural factors, his approach is victim to the same accusation.[20] We are not sure whether for Laclau populism naturally "comes about" when times are ripe, or whether strategic agency by conscious political entrepreneurs is the culprit, since "group demands", Laclau's privileged mechanisms of change, are not sufficiently broken down to their constitutive elements. We are also never told who builds the popular subject or the "empty signifiers" that facilitate its birth, who does all the "meaning-work".

Laclau implicitly eliminates every alternative causal path towards populism, preserving only the grassroots variation, the social movement type of bottom-up populism, rejecting equifinal scenarios of populist mobilization. In that, Laclau

[19] "The very notion of 'individual' does not make sense", Laclau claims (2005b: 35).
[20] See Canovan (1982: 549) for an early criticism on this point.

suffers from the disease shared among most (Latin) American scholars of populism, described as contextual determination in a previous section: the association of populism with mass popular movements led by strong personalistic leaders who emerge to dominate the party system and eventually conquer power. This grandiose vision of populism may at times fit Latin America, but it cannot account for failed attempts at instigating populist mobilization, or moderately successful cases, such as those found in Europe. Laclau's model is also unable to explain populist discourse on the aftermath of a populist victory, since, from the moment "the people" have risen to power, "a logic of equivalence" ceases to function.

And while he presents a picture of an escalation of populist development, he does not elaborate on indicators or suggest methods of measurement, even though content analysis seems an obvious candidate for the job. Laclau has also been strongly accused for indulging in conceptual stretching since his analysis proceeds to declare populism as *equivalent* with politics, rendering the extension of the concept inclusive of *any* political phenomenon (Mouzelis 1985; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012a). This criticism is of course legitimate, however, it goes a long way from rejecting the theoretical excesses of Laclau to discarding his discursive approach altogether.

Therefore, subscribing to a discursive view of populism does not necessarily entail a wholesale commitment to the Laclauian theoretical edifice or the Essex school of discourse analysis. On the contrary, for all its merits, Laclau's approach exhibits several limitations which inhibit it from reverberating considerably outside post-structuralist circles. While the Essex school of discourse analysis is a paradigm which can contribute to holistic case study appraisals, it fails to provide for nuanced, objective comparative analysis. For example, while Laclau explicitly sees populism as a graded concept, he never provides concrete means to operationalize indicators which would reveal such differences in some detail; he only vaguely states that the degree of populism "will depend on the depth of the chasm separating political alternatives" (Laclau 2005b: 47). Quantification of the phenomenon is dismissed as irrelevant and precise analytical methods tend at times to remain esoteric, a feature which generally reflects the Essex school of discourse analysis. Discourse analytic applications purport to answer whether the discourse of a certain actor is populist by assessing the manifestation of Laclau's two criteria, "a central reference to 'the people' and an equivalential, antagonistic discursive logic" (Stavrakakis 2004: 259), which is an abstruse way of simply claiming to be collecting snippets of people-centric and anti-elitist

appeals, a hardly innovative approach which does not exhibit the orderliness of competing qualitative methods. Hence, discourse analysis is rather prone to subjective interpretation and frequently resembles descriptive case-study narrative.

What we should therefore keep from the Laclauian perspective on populism is the crucial shift away from being overtaken by the contingencies of populist discourse. His shift from studying contents to studying the form of populist discourse, remains his most formidable contribution. The populist form pits a certain "people" against a certain "power bloc", but both these notions are "empty signifiers", symbolic vessels which can be supplied with particular content depending on the specifics of the situation in which they are invoked and the cultural toolbox at work. The formal component of populist discourse accounts for that – almost instinctive – affinity we perceive among the varying phenomena we tend to see as carrying the populist mark; at the same time the flexibility of its contents explains the very possibility of this colorful ecosystem.

Without doubt, formal discursive implications are inherent in Mudde's (2004) ideological definition, as pointed earlier. It is these structural qualities of populist discourse that quantitative researchers are implicitly exploiting in pursuance of reliable evidence of the phenomenon. In order to capitalize on the progress we have made so far, and infuse Laclau's and Mudde's insights with a more positivist outlook, I suggest the introduction of the notion of the *populist frame*. As it will be argued, frame analysis comprises a vantage point which is much more productive than discourse theory, geared firmly towards empirical analysis and devoid of any ideological complications. But before I move on, it is necessary to point out why the debate on the genus of populism matters, as a conclusion of the overview that has been made in the previous pages.

WHY THE GENUS DEBATE MATTERS

The successful attempts in measuring populism has led some researchers to call the debate over the genus of populism a moot point (van Kessel 2014). The argument is that since we can more or less agree on how to measure populism, there is no more sense in arguing about its genus. However, that would require that we, as scientists, for "practical reasons", give up the most revered duty of scientific work, the falsification of deficient theories, a rather ignominious compromise. But practical reasons are also at stake here. The misclassification of populism into ideology raises significant problems for the proper analysis of the

phenomenon because of the normative elements that essentialist accounts force on the study of populism.

Ideologies are strong claims which almost always force us to take sides. Portraying populism as an ideology has the same effect. The normative implications of populism have plagued the literature and crippled its evolution into a respectful theory. Coupled with the strongly pejorative connotations it receives from journalists, politicians and intellectuals, the situation barely allows calm and analytical handling (Taguieff 1995). More often than not, scholars of populism tend to write as if they are loyal opponents or supporters of a political cause, rather than objective observers. This, of course, is no coincidence, since populism was (re)introduced to us preloaded with normative baggage. As Allcock (1971) testifies, it was Edward Shils who first recoined the term in 1954, in such a way as to portray populism as an ideological phenomenon which consists a threat to the rule of law, a threat to democracy. Taguieff (1995) rightly complained twenty years ago that populism has been widely employed as a "delegitimizing term" and any "doctrine, movement or government considered questionable, despicable or even intolerable is branded 'populist'" (p. 9). These normative connotations linger on to this day, and that would still be acceptable if scholars refrained from allowing personal feelings influence judgment when classifying political phenomena as populist.

Contemporary scholarship is thus roughly divided into two main camps, according to the normative valence assigned to populism. The first camp comprises of liberal-minded researchers emphasizing – with varying intensity – the negative effects of populism on liberal democracy. Populism is accused of corroding democratic institutions, undermining checks and balances, paving the way to some form of authoritarianism. The opposite camp is populated by scholars who are more to the left, themselves divided in two groups: the first group, influenced by mainstream liberal literature, strives to insulate esteemed left-wing political projects, claiming that the populist label should be used only for radical right wing phenomena; the second group, mainly comprised of post-marxists, reverses the normative sign and upholds populism not as an accusation but rather as an originally progressive political outlook, refusing the legitimacy of using it to characterize right-wing episodes. As always, there is a large gray zone, plus a few on the left, like D' Eramo (2013), who insist that populism is nothing more than an Cold War era insult employed to reinforce the "theory of the two extremes", the equation of communism with fascism. As a result,

academic production during the past decades tends to dovetail with political trends.

Just to give an example of the deleterious effects of the normative walls that delineate the field, let us observe academic opinion on two recent social movements in the United States, the Tea Party, and Occupy Wall Street. Scholars who see populism in a pejorative sense tend to apply the term on the movement they dislike, and protect their favorite from the ominous association. On the other side, supporters of populism as a progressive notion happily assign the label to the movement they feel dear to, and refuse to bestow it to "reactionary" ones. In both cases, *ad hoc* dimensions are added to justify these choices.

So, Nadia Urbinati (2014), while acknowledging that both movements employ populist discourse, claims that Occupy is not populist while the Tea Party is, since populism requires a leader, a "vertical and unified structure" (p. 130). Even though the Tea Party also lacks such hierarchical features, Urbinati adds that this absence is accidental, since Tea Partiers were actually in active search of a leader through whom to take over the Republican Party. The Tea Party wanted to be more than merely a protest movement; Occupy apparently did not. Hence, the Tea Party is a populist movement and Occupy is a "popular" movement. Charles Postel (2012a) on the other hand, celebrates Occupy as a "most strikingly populist response to the present crisis … old Populists would be proud of". At the same time, the Tea Party is refused the label, since Tea Partiers are actually conservatives whose "moral center is the market and the supposed freedom of the marketplace" (Postel 2012b: 33), being anti-elitist only against those elites they disagree with.

Surely this was an extreme example of the contradiction inherent within the essentialist perspective, but the elevation of populism into an ideology has reverberated similar effects widely. Recently, several efforts have been made towards a more balanced assessment of the impact of populism on democracy, the issue that seems to capture most of the energy researchers put into analyzing populism as an independent variable (Taguieff 1995). For instance, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2012b) have edited a comparative volume in search of an answer to whether populism is a threat or a corrective to (liberal) democracy, producing nuanced insights rather than black or white aphorisms. However, the clout of ideology and its essentialist connotations always leaves qualitative classificatory exercises open to debate, since dimensions of populism remain unoperationalized within its strict framework.

Taking account of these shortcomings, Gemenis et al. (forthcoming) complain that "the term populist is used so often and in a derogatory way that its empirical measurement has largely escaped scholarly attention" (p.3). A move away from essentialism, and the acknowledgement of the graded nature of populism can put an end to this bias, and this is why this debate matters. A graded approach will shift the focus from assigning the populist label to parties themselves towards describing a certain portion of their appeals and tactics (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009). It may also reveal that populist discourse is employed by most – if not all – parties to some extent, and that its usage varies in time, undermining arguments that populist practices are the exclusive domain of enemies of (liberal) democracy.

To picture a more positivist, value-free conceptualization of populism, we can benefit from an analogy with the "hard" sciences, considering the example of *temperature* as a property of matter. Physicists do not report temperature in nominal, value-ridden fashion as in "hot" or "cold": they state their findings in agreed metric terms, in degrees Kelvin (or Celsius, or Fahrenheit), since "hotness" or "coldness" are rather subjective judgments which depend on context. Regarding populism, we may well agree on selecting a given threshold X, a score over which would signify a "truly populist" party; however, we would first require reliable measurements of political discourse in "degrees populism". Scholars who are interested in the normative implications of populism could then proceed to argue the damage that "hot" populist parties inflict on the soft skin of liberal democracy or, maybe, their soothing effect. But first, we need to agree on the actual temperature.

In the next section I provide an avenue towards this objective, by means of employing the discursive frame as a way to more precisely capture the discursive essence of populism.

POPULISM AS A DISCURSIVE *FRAME*

Post-structuralists understand discourse in an inflated sense, as an "ensemble of the phenomena in and through which social production of meaning takes place" (Laclau 1980: 86) that plausibly subsumes the whole of social experience. I see this as an overly broad scope, which would even overtake ideology, therefore not contributing to a process of scientific reduction.[21] Even though secondary

[21] Laclau explicitly states that the common genus of ideology and movement is discourse (2005b: 47) and therefore populism is synonymous with politics; a testimony of the perilous inflation of discourse.

elements, such as gestures, dress and other performative repertoires do contribute to the overall image of a political actor (see Moffitt and Tormey 2014 for an interesting discussion), by discourse I here simply mean language, textual data, written or spoken, which I regard as sufficient material to denote the existence or absence of populism. If we cannot find populism within a political actor's textual production, it is highly unlikely that we can find it in other areas of symbolic action.

Therefore, I argue that the formal elements of populist discourse are better conceptualized as a *frame*, rather than an ideology. Thinking of populism as a discursive frame exhibits two advantages: (a) it resonates better with the cognitive aspects of the populist argument and (b) it provides a solid theoretical foundation for empirical projects.

Frames, as introduced in the social sciences by Erving Goffman, are "schemata of interpretation" which allow their users "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" complex events that take place in daily life (Goffman 1974: 21). In their influential work, David Snow and his associates have employed Goffman's insights to analyze how frames are important for social mobilization. As they explain, collective action frames are employed to provide meaning to events and occurrences out there, "to organize experience and guide action" (Snow et al., 1986, p. 464). Therefore, frames may not be elaborate and comprehensive structures like ideologies, but can nevertheless convey coherent meaning in certain situations. Since reality can be presented and understood in a variety of ways, frames enable us to select a certain perspective and make sense of experience through a constructed interpretation of reality. As Hänggli and Kriesi assert, "to frame is to actively construct the meaning of the reality in question" (2010: 142). The impact of framing on influencing individual judgment has been repeatedly proven empirically in the aftermath of the Nobel-winning work of Kahneman and Tversky (1984) in cognitive science, and a series of primers have been published to take advantage of properly framing issues in political communication (e.g. Lakoff 2004; Luntz 2007).

Moreover, Snow and Benford (1988) have pointed to the *core framing tasks* at work. Frames provide a *diagnosis* by identifying "some event or aspect of social life as problematic and in need of alteration", proceeding to suggest a prognosis, "a proposed solution to the diagnosed problem that specifies what needs to be done" (p. 199), and conclude by circulating a *motivational* urgency to take corrective action. This theoretical framework has been extensively employed in

social movement studies, but also resonates strongly with the workings of populism. Populist discourse can be perceived as the systematic dissemination of a frame which diagnoses reality as problematic because corrupt "elites" have unjustly usurped the sovereign authority of the "people", and maintains that the solution to the problem resides in a confrontation to restore power to its rightful owners. This, therefore, can be labelled the *populist frame*, the "subatomic matter" that constitutes populist discourse.

Seeing populist discourse in this light can accommodate all other contesting perspectives. Populist frames, as formal entities, readily contain those ideational elements which have been mistaken for constituting an ideology. As Gamson (1995) explains, collective action frames are both adversarial and aggregative in their demonstration of a collective "we" in opposition to some "they"; this quality explains the largely accepted Manichean nature of populism (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2013a, 2013b; Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009; Pantazopoulos 2013). The fact that frames are rather simplistic forms, bereft of the nuances and intricacies of ideologies, is indicative that the simplistic and Manichean nature of populist discourse fits better with frames rather than ideologies. Moreover, the diagnostic function of the populist frame explains why populism has been frequently associated with a sense of crisis (Taggart 2000; Moffitt 2014), since a sense of crisis is inherent in presenting a situation as gravely problematic during the diagnostic stage.

Passing from *frames* as formal elements to *framing* as a conscious activity (Benford 1997), we see that the conscious dissemination of frames accounts for the strategic implications that many authors have discerned. As Benford and Snow (2000) exclaim, political entrepreneurs engage in strategic framing in order to persuade audiences to tune into their own representation of reality, something that reverberates strongly with Kazin's (1995: 3) understanding of populism as a "flexible mode of persuasion" and Laclau's (2005b: 41) insistence that "antagonistic political strategies would be based on different ways of creating political frontiers". Successful framing strategies are those that manage to rearticulate the current state of affairs by tapping into existing values, skillfully employing elements of the "cultural toolkit" (Swidler 1986) which audiences are accustomed to recognize. This way, the importance of agency is acknowledged, but strategic intent is freed from normative implications of "opportunism"; since political reality is negotiable, framing becomes a *sine-qua-non* of politics and those who employ populist frames are as guilty of framing reality as anybody else.

The cognitive fit between frame theory and populism is one aspect of the value of this thesis. The other equally valuable aspect is how this understanding can foster empirical work. Frame analysis has been employed in diverse fields of science with tremendous success. Its application has reinvigorated social movement studies (Snow et al. 2014), as well as media and political communication studies (de Vreese 2012), producing an immense amount of qualitative and quantitative work. Unfortunately, the application of frame theory on populism has been extremely scarce and disconnected from a broader research agenda. Lee (2006) and Tsatsanis (2011) have produced qualitative papers, while Jagers and Walgrave (2007), Ruzza and Fella (2011) and Vasilopoulou et al. (2014), have used frames for quantitative work, with Caiani and della Porta (2011) providing the most advanced approach so far. These applications have certainly proven the viability of frame analysis for populism theory, however, they remain severely undertheorized, failing to comprise a comprehensive theoretical and methodological framework which firmly incorporates frame analysis within populism theory.

Such a framework, as it has been presented in the preceding paragraphs, has the potential to reinvigorate populism studies into a quantitative direction, in the same way that frame analysis has benefitted research in other scientific subdisciplines. Frame analysis can foster comparative work in cooperation with neighboring fields, shed light on borderline cases of populism, uncover yet unidentified instances of populism, and facilitate the construction of large datasets to analyze the impact of populism as an independent variable. This is especially so, since the majority of extant quantitative approaches to populism already implicitly analyze populism as a discursive frame, remaining indifferent towards ideological or other implications, as explained previously. Employing the populist frame as the coding unit of choice to capture the denotational features of populism provides analytical grounding to empirical applications and enhances reliability and validity. Such an approach will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

In this chapter it was proven that assigning populism to ideology is not only conceptually and analytically mistaken, but also hinders the concept's career. Even if one does not side with Sartori's condemnation of ideology as an "excellent instance of a concept deprived of all heuristic validity, let alone testability, by having been stretched to a point of meaninglessness" (Sartori 1991: 249), still, populism fails to rise to the standards of most, if not all, conceptualizations of ideology. Furthermore, it was shown that the invocation of

a “thin” ideological core cannot save the argument, since it points to a conceptually spurious category which inflicts significant methodological inconsistencies. It was also illustrated that this theoretical framework ushers considerable normative baggage into the study of populism, producing strongly biased opinions which do not fit scientific analysis.

In place of ideology, and in light of the implications of how Mudde’s ideological definition (2004) is actually operationalized in empirical work, it was suggested as a second point that populism is better conceptualized as a discourse. Following Ernesto Laclau, the benefits of a formal approach to populism where underscored, where the structural character of populist discourse (people vs. elites on the backdrop of popular sovereignty) was found to account for the similarities between populist instances, while differences are reflected in the circumstantial content of these constructed subjectivities.

However, a discursive view of populism does not entail a full surrender to Laclau’s theoretical edifice and its accompanying methodology. On the contrary, several important deficiencies were identified, which inhibit its ability to travel outside the post-structuralist paradigm. Therefore, it was suggested that frame theory can be applied to populist discourse, both as a means to account for the cognitive aspects of populist argumentation and stress the significance of agency, as well as to solidify an analytical foundation that fosters empirical work, and quantitative analyses in particular, opening avenues for collaboration with neighboring literatures within a broad interdisciplinary research project.

Chapter 2

Insights from social movement theory

In the previous chapter we became acquainted with the burgeoning literature on populism through an overview of the development of the concept and the changes brought by the watershed moment of the rise to power of "neoliberal" populists in Latin America during the 1990s, which effected a significant change in the conceptualization of the term. Moreover, we surveyed the current literature and identified the main schools of thought, assessing advantages and disadvantages, and siding with discourse as the proper field within which to generally study the analytical domain where populism is active.

Populism theory in one of the two planks on which this doctoral thesis rests. In order to study the populist features of the Great Recession movements, we need to incorporate theoretical insights from the literature on social movements, and especially that part which can most aptly address the discursive behavior of social mobilization. This chapter is dedicated to this objective.

Contemporary societies are accustomed to the emergence and decline of social movements. Images of protests, demonstrations, sit-ins, and picket lines are an almost pervasive ingredient of our daily media soup. Surveys show that participation in protest is clearly on the rise in most western countries after the 1980s (Norris 2002). The standard, knee-jerk public reaction in terms of explaining such instances assumes that people take to the streets in answer to specific grievances they are facing in their daily lives. This assumption is reinforced by the media which carry a knack for making this kind of correlation explicit in their reports, trying to answer the "why" of another demonstration disrupting daily routine. However, decades of hard work in the social movement literature have by now demonstrated that this is a somewhat naïve or at least simplistic interpretation of mobilization. Grievances are *always* there in some form or the other, varying in degree and substance, but still, ubiquitous. It takes more than mere feelings of frustration or disaffection to persuade an individual to sacrifice a fair share of her spare time with family and friends, choose to don the outfit of the demonstrator, and run pickets in a cold winter day, bearing the risk of police repression or social disapprobation along the way.

However, this tendency to explain organized protest by referring to standard reactions against imposed grievances is a rather modern habit. Before the

dramatic emergence of postmaterialist activism in the late 60s and early 70s, protest was regarded as the visible outcome of bursts of irrational attitude on the part of a frenzied citizenry. This description would not only account for the media's take on explaining protest; it was also considered state of the art in the ranks of social scientists now usually referred to as "collective behavior" theorists. Since most reviews of the social movement literature take this school as their starting point, I will follow along and start my own account with its contribution.

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Lumped under the rubric of "collective behavior" lay at least three separate theoretical strands that were unlucky enough to have emerged before the activists of the 60s and 70s grew up to become scholars and build paradigms of their own. The three are: mass society theory, collective behavior, and relative deprivation, all of which (as the lumping maintains) explain mobilization by focusing on psychological and affective factors, by means of some sort of rare increase in individual grievances which leads to social strain and transitory instances of irrational behavior at a mass level (Jenkins 1983). I will briefly address these three strands in what follows.

Mass society theory

In the Durkheimian mindset, on which most variants of collective behavior are rooted (Tilly 1978), social conflict is seen as the outcome of "anomie" and social disorganization, which in turn arise due to strains inherent in the rapid process of industrialization and specialization of labor and the stress that comes with the destabilization of entrenched social identities. Abnormal collective behavior is the outcome of social breakdown, of historical instances when the morally defined social fabric that usually withholds such diverging attitudes is ripped. The chain of developments that leads to breakdown can be sketched out in an almost deterministic fashion – movements, riots, panics et cetera are just the final (and transient) manifestation. Marxist interpretations of collective action based on the inevitable conflict of classes fit well within this characteristically structuralist line of reasoning.

Mass society theories postulated that people are drawn to participation in social movements due to feelings of marginalization and alienation; they feel isolated because they are not able to find institutionalized channels of political integration and participation and thus resort to collective action in order to

alleviate these negative feelings (McAdam 1982). A major implication of this proposition, one that is of course quite vulnerable to criticism, is that protest is an activity that pertains solely to marginalized, socially atomized individuals (Buechler 1993). The influence of the works of Kornhauser (1959) and Arendt (1951) are evident in this line of reasoning.

Collective behavior

Collective behavior theory was probably the dominant strand just before the early '70s and this is why its name is used as a blanket term to cover all variants of "classical theories" that ran parallel in that era. Most theorists cite Turner and Killian (1957) and Smelser (1962) as the most characteristic illustrations of the theory; descriptions routinely recite the insistence on crowd mentality and the fact that collective action was seen as a set of *extrainstitutional* phenomena which contain spontaneous, unorganized and contagious emotional reactions to fads, collective excitement, hysterias, rumors, crazes, riots and other "emergent", unstructured collective attitudes (Tarrow 1998; Snow and Oliver 1995).

The intellectual tradition of this school goes back to Gustave LeBon, Freud, and Durkheim who sought social psychological explanations, treating mobilization as the visible manifestation of 'social breakdown' which comes about due to faltering mechanisms of social control and the loss of their normal restraining power (Useem 1998; Snow and Oliver 1995). The Chicago school, with sociologists such as Robert Park and Herbert Blumer, produced a more elaborate theory which culminated with Smelser (Zald 1996) who acknowledged the impact of psychological variables, mediated however by specific social conditions which bring them to surface. Protest is irrational behavior on the part of, again, "atomized individuals" who react to abrupt changes in the social fabric.

Smelser's functionalist framework suggests four "important determinants" of collective behavior: structural conduciveness, structural strain, growth and spread of a generalized belief, as well as precipitating factors (Smelser 1962: 15-16). Most of the critique against Smelser's work is aimed at his use of theoretical elements such as structural strain and generalized belief, since these are partly explained by the author in terms of irrational assessments on the part of participants. However, his theory is not limited to those elements and clearly carries seeds that would later bare fruits in the form of now accredited theories. The transformation of his idea of "structural conduciveness" into (political) opportunity and "strain" into "injustice" are just two examples. Buechler (2004)

has also observed considerable overlaps between "breakdown" and "opportunity".

Deprivation

Gurr (1970), while maintaining the role of structure implicit, moves closer to the realm of modern social psychology, basing his work on the frustration-aggression paradigm (Kerbo 1982). In his effort to switch from macro to micro levels of analysis and focus on individual incentives for "political violence" which he apparently considered as pivotal explanatory variables, he employed the already established notion of "relative deprivation". Again, discontent is the main idea, but this time it is not the immediate product of general social change, but becomes more qualified as arising from the increasing discrepancy between the level of wellbeing which is perceived as appropriate, expected, or deserved, and the actual level experienced in everyday life. The point is easily taken in by sociologists, since it contains obvious analogies with notions found in the Marxian opus, and especially his "emiseration thesis" (Gurney and Tierney 1982).

Relative deprivation theory attempted to explain the increasingly salient observation that contention usually arises, quite peculiarly, from within the ranks of the well-to-do, rather than from the impoverished strands of society (Snow and Oliver 1995). Those individuals who were accustomed to a stable increase of their wellbeing are the first to take to the streets when deprivation kicks in, not the ones who have nothing to lose. Gurr and his predecessors were in effect taking the social strain rationale one step further and discussing the specific social psychological mechanisms that produce discontent.

Relative deprivation still holds considerable currency among modern students of social movements, but its severe limitations are now taken into account. Space prohibits a full overview (see Gurney and Tierney 1982 for a comprehensive study), however, one of the most serious limitations which unfortunately manages to creep into otherwise ambitious studies is the tendency to interpret correlations between statistical figures that point to deprivation (such as abrupt declines of GDP per capita or increased income inequality) and feelings of frustration expressed by the public, as evidence of a causal link between the two (Auvinen 1996 is one illustration of such practice). Frustration can develop without relative deprivation (such as in the '60s and '70s) and at the same time deprivation might not lead to frustration if reality is not depicted accordingly by movement actors. We cannot jump from macro to micro with such naïve ease –

we need to explain all that takes place in between. Correlation, does not entail causation; a complete theory would have to illustrate the function of mediating mechanisms.

For instance, regarding the Great Recession movements, the so called PIIGS countries (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, and Spain), all suffered from recession and some form of austerity after 2009. However, while social mobilization was strong in Portugal, Greece, and Spain, the other two countries in the PIIGS set, Italy and Ireland, did not manifest a significant level of popular contestation. While a range of explanation have been given for these "discrepancies", ranging from cultural ones on Ireland versus Greece (Pappas and O'Malley 2014) or resource-based ones on Italy (Zamponi 2012), it is apparent that relative deprivation cannot supply a comprehensive theoretical rationale that explains the full spectrum of cases.

On a more general note, and thinking in retrospect, collective behaviorists were preoccupied with answering *why* movements and riots erupted; they took little notice of the *how*, of the mechanisms that brought mobilization about. Having been reared with images of crowd behavior in historically condemned mass movements such as fascism and Nazism, they tended to overemphasize the irrationality of the mob in standard LeBonian fashion, and regard protest as a largely pathological, undesirable "intrusion" into politics, which should be explained in order to be eliminated (Meyer 2004; Oliver et al. 2003). Relative deprivation theory was an early attempt to break this mold and start rationalizing about collective action, but still, it was crippled in this effort by its collective behavioral origins. The dismissal of protest as normal political behavior would serve as one of the main triggers of the "insurgency" against collective behavior in the years to come.

Moreover, collective behavior theories largely neglected the role of agency. McAdam is justified in claiming that this old line of scholars evidently contended that "[t]he social movement is effective not as political action but as therapy" (1982: 10). Strategy and deliberate, organized action never grew to become part of their rationale: collective action was almost exclusively a quasi-metaphysical, grassroots, spontaneous phenomenon which came and went in automatic outbursts and equally rapid declines.

Finally, another serious flaw in this long list is revealed by the empirical refutation of the claim that collective behavior incidents are populated by atomized, "malintegrated" individuals. Quite to the contrary, empirical evidence

has shown what by now is common sense: that membership in social movements is usually comprised of the more well off and not some marginalized sector of society. Indeed, so many nails have been driven into collective behavior's coffin that by now we can safely assume it is perfectly shut.

However, before we leave these "old" and "obsolete" theories behind us, it would be fair to give them some deserved credit. By that, I mean that most of the accusations against them are straw-man arguments, erecting a theory in such a way as to exactly be made to appear outdated, in order for the new paradigm to seem more novel. Klandermans (1997) explicitly expresses his own frustration over this "caricature" in his overview of the literature. When anyone cares to delve into these classic writings, it becomes obvious that the arguments are not all black and white. Let' s briefly consider Smelser, for instance, who, in the introduction to his first chapter, strongly criticizes the tendency of older collective behavior theorists to suggest "mysterious forces" at work behind episodes of collective action, and promises to "reduce the residue of indeterminacy" that they enforce (1962: 1). He even declares that:

> The defining characteristics of collective behavior are not *psychological*. The definition we have presented does not, by itself, involve any assumptions that the persons involved in an episode are irrational, that they lose their critical faculties, that they experience psychological regression, that they revert to some animal state, or whatever (Smelser 1962: 11).

Further on he again returns to this theme to suggest that:

> Our outline of determinants departs radically from the social psychological tradition of the analysis of crowds and other collective behavior–the tradition of Tarde, Le Bon, Ross, Freud, Martin, F.A. Allport, MacDougall and others (Smelser 1962: 20).

Of course, he then goes on to reiterate the explanatory force of "perceived structural strain at the social level" and exercise his commitment on "panic responses", "crazes", "fads", "religious revivals", and "political and religious revolution" which are based on "generalized beliefs … akin to magical beliefs" (Smelser 1962: 8). In sum, he does acknowledge the force of psychological variables but he sees them as partly dependent on "social determinants", thus he transfers analytical capacity from the micro, strictly individual-psychological level to the macro-structural level of society. Maybe there is a specific reason for this discrepancy as we will see later on.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION THEORY

When the "new social movements" of the late '60s and early '70s emerged, the mere hinting at mobilization as an irrational act of unorganized mobs was considered hubris. It was only a matter of time until Olson's insights on the rationality of collective action would be combined with novel ideas to construct an alternative paradigm. A new generation of sociology graduates, "insiders" of the revolutionary fervor, would then hurriedly flock under its wings and merrily stop having to pay heed to the "ideologically and substantively flawed" (McAdam 1982: 1) or "antidemocratic" (Gamson 1992a: 53) collective behavior masters. The die was cast with McCarthy and Zald's (1973; 1977) formulation of the *resource mobilization* theory which salvaged the act of protest from the smear of irregularity and forever restored it as a *normal,* organized activity in which ordinary, rational individuals can legitimately engage.

Olson's grand theory which so unexpectedly influenced the direction of social movement studies deserves a closer look. Mancur Olson, an economist, in his seminal treatise, *The Logic of Collective Action,* originally published in 1965, challenged the conventional wisdom of assuming that likeminded individuals will inevitably associate in order to pursue a common cause. He took interest in associations between individuals struggling for the realization of a common cause, a good which once possessed by one member of the association would then be freely available to all other members. Think for instance of a professional guild (e.g. bakers or motorists) lobbying for a tax break, or a village committee raising money to build a memorial for the local war hero. This kind of good is termed a "public good" in economics, since no one can be formally excluded of its use after its acquisition.

Olson's discovery and main argument was that "*rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests"* (Olson 1965: 2, emphasis by the author). In short, why should anyone, as a member of an association, contribute resources towards the realization of a public good when its fulfillment could come about anyway, despite the absence of her tiny and perhaps insignificant personal contribution? The fact that there is a common and reasonably feasible interest within a certain group does not lead directly to the participation of all of its members toward its attainment. There will always be

enough *free-riders* who will take advantage of the collective effort of others and reap the benefits of the common good without breaking a sweat.

Free-riders will always be a problem, unless of course they are persuaded through the provision of exclusive "selective incentives" to those who *do* participate, or "persuaded" through the use of coercion. This powerful insight then led to a thorough understanding of the existence of such incentives and coercive provisions within numerous human associations that were studied on those grounds, most notably, labor unions and business lobbies.

Olson's analysis was on the larger phenomenon of interest group "collective action" and he did not specifically intend to turn the tables in the social movement literature (Marwell and Oliver 1984), but the application of his theory by social movement theorists helped breaking away from collective behavior approaches, first and foremost by treating collective action actors as rational individuals who can calculate the costs and benefits of their participation, not irrational cranks who just go with the flow. He also helped by laying emphasis on observing human associations as strategic competing enterprises, suggesting striking analogies with the functioning of firms in the market.

These advancements in theory were internalized by a new generation of sociologists and were coupled with living experiences in the activism of the late '60s, opening new avenues for social movement theorizing. A classic paradigm shift took place, laying great emphasis on fully rational aspects of collective action, most importantly the availability and mobilization of resources and the role of organization and networks (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Oberschall 1973); thus, the resource mobilization school was born. The role of psychology and personal traits was reduced in favor of macro and meso level forces that were considered as prerequisites of successful mobilization, always stressing the importance of rational movement entrepreneurs who, only through careful, strategic calculation of costs and benefits, are able to select those tactics that promise to meet demand and deliver the goods. Protest, they claimed, is not an automatic response to social and psychological strain: it requires an organizational mindset which can facilitate the successful allocation of resources required for mobilization.

So how did resource mobilization demolish the basic tenets of collective behavior? This was primarily accomplished by attacking the core assumption of the causal centrality of grievances: the resource mobilization argument was that grievances are ubiquitous; structural forces of society produce a somewhat

standard substrate of grievances over which forces related to changes in the capacity to raise resources and organize effectively come into play and define whether mobilization takes place (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Kerbo 1982; Jenkins 1983). Grievances are always there, so how can we explain the fact that we are *not* in a constant state of mobilization? Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that there are numerous instances where no correlation can be found between increased discontent and social movement emergence, let alone a clearly directional causal link (McCarthy and Zald 1977). However, resource mobilization did not altogether eliminate grievances; they were only stripped of the largest part of their causal weight, and cast in the shadows of their new antagonists, resources and organization, assuming the status of "secondary component in the generation of social movements" (ibid: 1215).

Resources are thus seen as the *sine qua non* of successful mobilization. Social movement organizations (SMOs) cannot grow on shared beliefs alone, no matter how strong these beliefs are. Money is required in order to rent offices and other facilities, purchase picket signs, print posters and flyers and buy all kinds of protest paraphernalia required to gather attention and get the message across. Labor is also required to operate all these resources; members (resources themselves) are needed to populate picket lines, shout slogans, recruit new members, occupy squares and build tents. These are time consuming activities which take a lot of commitment to pull through. However, money, labour, and time are not the only kinds of valuable resources: social networks and friends in government or the media are also mobilized by social movement entrepreneurs in order to achieve their goals. Of course there is grave danger here: almost anything can be considered as a resource and this flexibility can lead to misunderstandings, a shortcoming which has been widely employed as criticism against resource mobilization theory. Oberschall's definition of resources as "anything from material resources–jobs, income, savings, and the right to material goods and services–to nonmaterial resources–authority, moral commitment, trust, friendship, skills, habits of industry, and so on" (1973: 28) is illustrative of this peril.

Resources are scarce and social movements are in need of a mastermind who can put them to efficient use, assigning tasks to members and taking responsibility for decisions regarding their most productive allocation; this is why social movement organizations are so crucial (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Formal organization is therefore greatly appreciated alongside resources in resource mobilization theory and the workings of the SMO are within the most direct

preoccupations of resource mobilization scholars. Agency was brought to the fore and protest was never seen again as an automatic response to grievances after the advent of resource mobilization theory.

One other crucial element in the paradigm is the significance of social networks and *preexisting* organization (Oberschall 1973; McAdam 1982, 1986). Networks can provide the means for sustaining a constant flux of energy required for long-term mobilization and the infrastructure to facilitate the proper use of other resources and especially the linking together of fragments of mobilizing agents into a coherent whole. Moreover, they provide "solidary incentives" (Friedman and McAdam 1992) and are also responsible for what Oberschall (1973) has termed "bloc recruitment", that is, the rapid expansion of a movement through building a coalition of smaller, already existing collectivities which are recruited *en masse* in the face of a common cause circulated through shared networking agents, contrary to assuming a slow process of enlisting "isolated and solitary individuals" (ibid.: 125).

Resource mobilization theory was developed as a reaction to the deficiencies of collective behavior theories, most crucially their overly psychological viewpoint and their obvious failure to account for contemporary forms of collective action. However, it would not be so long until resource mobilization theorists would get a taste of their own medicine. The "Young Turks" of resource mobilization, as Oliver et al. (2003) have so fittingly labeled them, championed the rationality of movement actors to the degree that this was soon considered an overly economistic and entrepreneurial approach to social movement formation (Jenkins 1983; Tarrow 1998). The newly crafted concepts of SMOs, SMIs, and SMSs (social movement organizations/industries/ sectors) resembled movements to companies vying for a stake in the people's hearts and minds in the context of market competition within an institutional context. Individual choices were explained in a cost-benefit (resource mobilization theorists use "reward" instead of "benefit") calculation approach much like rational choice formulations, stressing the need for incentives and/or coercion in order to achieve mobilization.

POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL

The *political process* tradition, along with its sibling, *political opportunity structure*, emerged, indeed, as a reaction to the deficiencies of resource mobilization, especially in terms of its exaggeration of the role of resources, its

bias in favor of the power of elites in shaping mobilization, and most importantly the failure to assign a central role to the *political* factors in the wider context that influence grievances, resources, and opportunities (McAdam 1982; Meyer 1999). Political process lays particularly heavy emphasis on seeing mobilization as another form, another expression of politics, not hostile to, but closely intertwined with traditional institutional forms, overcoming the limitations of older collective behavior theories which would consider mobilization and politics as two clearly distinct fields (Oliver et al. 2003; Meyer 2004; Useem 1998; Jenkins 1983). Movements are not irrational mobs, but they are not the mere outcome of entrepreneurial calculation of resources, either. They provide yet another link between the people and political institutions (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996) - they *are* politics.

The notion of *opportunity* is the fulcrum of political process theory and the element that most strongly sets it apart from other approaches. Eisinger's (1973) cross-sectional study on the frequency of riots in several American cities was the first of its kind to proclaim 'political opportunity structure' as the major determinant of movement strategy variance. The term has been later elaborated by Tarrow as "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations of success and failure" (Tarrow 1998: 85). Expanding political opportunities (as well as shifts in their flip sides: threats and constraints), such as divisions between elites or diminishing capacities for repression, account for the most important determinant of collective action, since they provide signals to challengers for moving forward or refraining from action (Tilly 1978; McAdam 1996; Tarrow 1998; Giugni 2011); in other words, the structure of political opportunity, the nature of institutionalized political systems, carries the bulk of the explanatory potential amongst all variables of contention, since it sets the stage upon which movement actors interact with their allies and opponents (Jenkins 1983; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996; Lichbach 1998a). The implied stream of causality flows from political systems to 'expanding' opportunities to mobilization.

McAdam (1982) is credited with the synthesis that bears the name "political process model", incorporating "political opportunity structure" with resources and organizational considerations, establishing a school of thought that still remains a central pillar next to those of rational choice adherents and cultural enthusiasts. Certain broad social processes may lead to insurgency since they

alter existing power relations, providing opportunity for action by strengthening the status of the potential insurgents and raising the costs of their repression. However, opportunity is not an objective fact – it has to be perceived that way through a transformation of consciousness among challengers that McAdam (1982) terms "cognitive liberation". Indeed, a rational-choice hum is still audible in the background of the theory, since opportunity is seen as feeding the cost-benefit function of movement actors, lowering or raising (in the case of threats or constraints) the costs and rewards of mobilization.

Even though political process considers a set of independent variables of mobilization which is to a large extent different from the one resource mobilization theory employs, mainly due to a shift of focus from meso to macro level explanations, the two theories were consciously conflated early on in the writings of various influential scholars. This consolidation is encouraged by clumsy tendencies to treat opportunities as resources and also resources as opportunities (see Opp 2009a: 177-178 for a short discussion on this topic). Opportunity is thus still the standard instrument in explaining collective action, linked with classic resource mobilization theory through the consideration of opportunities as mobilized *external* resources for movement entrepreneurs as opposed to the standard *internal* resources with which resource mobilization theory is normally preoccupied (see Tarrow 1998: 77 on this last argument). McAdam warned us against arguing "that political opportunities were simply one of many resources whose availability generally keyed the emergence and development of social movements" (1996: 26), however, several years later Meyer still provided a vivid illustration of this mishandling, where one only needs to substitute "means" for "resources":

> "The 'structure of political opportunities,' analogous to the structure of career opportunities individuals face, explicitly considered the available means for a constituency to lodge claims against authorities" (Meyer 2004: 127).

Jenkins (1983) had already conceptually incorporated resource mobilization into political process (or the other way around) when he declared that the future development of resource mobilization theory would partly lie in extending Tilly's (1978) polity theory "to deal with different states and regimes" (Jenkins 1983: 527), a declaration that was fulfilled as one part of the model's research agenda which bore comparative works such as Kriesi et al. (1992) and Kitschelt (1986).This stronger capacity for comparative analysis across regions and time,

was considered as lacking from the work of early resource mobilization theorists (Meyer 2004).

The case of Charles Tilly's work is representative of the confusion, since he is considered to be both among the fathers of the political process model (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996), as well as "one of the architects of resource mobilization" (Useem 1998: 216, see also Snow and Oliver 1995), while his famous book, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (1978), is regularly cited both as a classic of resource mobilization theory (e.g. Jenkins 1983; Mueller 1992; Buechler 1995), as well as the founding stone of political opportunity structure (McAdam 1996; Tarrow 1998; Giugni 2011). Tilly attributed collective action to the outcome of changes in the combination of four variables: interests (a Marxist-inspired approach to gains and losses which stem from the organization of production), organization, mobilization (including resources), and opportunity. His "polity model", later incorporated into political process, is concerned with the links and political alliances between social movements and institutional actors through the notion of political opportunity structure regulating polity access.

However, the issue of identifying which kinds of opportunities are most crucial has haunted political process theory and remains its Achilles' heel (see for instance Gamson and Meyer 1996). Divisions among political elites, the existence of elite allies, declining capacity of state repression, and opening spaces in the political system are usually acknowledged as crucial categories of opportunity for most theorists (McAdam 1996; Morris 2000). Obviously, the lack of a solid theoretical background which would inform the choice of specific instances which 'count' as opportunity, undermines the analytical utility of the term.

Mobilizing structures, "those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action" (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996) later emerged as another central element of political process theory, next to that of political opportunity structure, providing the organizational dimension that mediates opportunity by mobilizing networks and resources and producing collective action. This second pillar of the political process model is the one which now mainly incorporates the lessons drawn from resource mobilization. The existence and agency of mobilizing structures refute the claims of collective behavior theories on the spontaneity of mobilization, and promote collective action to the status of a deliberate, well organized process, brought about by purposive, rational *political* activism.

However, criticism regarding the shortcomings of the model was mounting. Around the mid-90s, political process theorists had finally been persuaded to incorporate cultural dynamics into their model in a desperate attempt to save the paradigm from collapsing under this obvious omission. Thus, contemporary reviews of the model usually proclaim framing approaches as its third and last pillar (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996; Lichbach 1998a; Goodwin and Jasper 1999; Morris 2000). Interestingly, though, framing approaches to social movements appeared in the early-to-mid '80s, when resource mobilization/political process theories already exerted hegemony over the field. The new approach stressed the importance of meaning construction, strategic framing of grievances, symbolic discourse, and micromobilization processes, all of which were alien to the standard tool kit of political process methodology. Thus, it is safe to claim that the framing approach was not born from within the ranks of the dominant paradigm, while the fact that prominent process scholars contributed to its development is not sufficient in order for them to claim ownership over this line of approach. Proponents of the reintroduction of culture, for instance, into social movement theorizing have used frame theory quite independently of resource mobilization theory (Jasper 1998). This is why framing will be assessed in the context of social constructionism, an area within which it fits more comfortably,

In sum, by "political process model" the scholarly community nowadays refers to a synthetic creation which consists of a loose combination of three separate theoretical models: political opportunity structure at the center, resource mobilization and frame theory at the periphery (Koopmans 1999). It would be fair to claim that political process has gradually absorbed insights from resource mobilization (Morris 2000), while maintaining an uneasy relationship with framing approaches which are only sporadically incorporated. The laxity in the way the three are combined within a random study together with the hegemony of the model in the scholarship accounts for the fact that most researchers feel comfortable using the political process label without paying due attention to the specifics of their personal approach.

The problems with political process theory are twofold. First and foremost, the definitions it provides, when it actually cares to do so, are unsatisfactory in terms of clarity and parsimony. The paradigm suffered a famously ferocious critique by Jasper and Goodwin (1999) on these terms, a critique that hasn't yet been countered in a comprehensive manner. Organizations of previous challengers, the openness and ideological positions of political parties, changes in public

policy, international alliances and the constraints on state policy, state capacity, the geographic scope and repressive capacity of governments, the activities of countermovement opponents, potential activists' perceptions of political opportunity, prospects for personal affiliation s– this is a laundry list of instances of "opportunity" taken from the literature and it is far from complete (Meyer 2004). Almost everything has been taken to account for it, leading to an overextended notion that confuses more than explains; "[a]ny environmental factor that facilitated movement activity was apt to be conceptualized as a political opportunity", McAdam concurs (1996: 25). Moreover, the empirical findings in the literature do not support the overarching role of opportunity, as Goodwin illustrates in a study cited in Meyer (2004); grievances and resources have at times played a role greater than that of opportunity in the production of contention.

The second line of criticism has to do with the insistence of the model in seeing political opportunity as a *necessary* prerequisite of social mobilization even though there are examples when this does not seem to be so (e.g. religious or subcultural movements). In the same line of reasoning lies the strict viewing of social movements as "simply 'politics by other means'" (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988: 699). As Koopmans (1999: 101) notes, the criticism regarding the overly political approach on social movements that political process theorists suggest, is indeed fair: "[o]pportunity is not always political opportunity, and political opportunity is not always structural." Useem (1998: 235) attacks this same prejudice when he claims that "[t]o argue that all collective action is part and parcel of political struggle is to exaggerate the centrality of power and impute an ideology of social change where none may exist." This turns the role of opportunity into an assumption rather than an empirical question and constrains researchers to always look for the opportunity behind a certain instance of mobilization; given the free hand they are allowed in defining almost anything as such, they are led into practicing bad science (Jasper and Goodwin 1999).

Taking all this into account, the best way to look at political process theory today is to think of it as a theory about how the nature and level of mobilization is *influenced* by the larger context which defines grievances and opens or closes windows of opportunity (Koopmans 1999; Meyer 1999). Agency can only be fully understood in the context of structure or, in simple terms, structure accounts for much of agency (Meyer 2004). Hardly any social scientist would deny this, but rather than taking a dismissive stance against this fairly

tautological claim, one would benefit by understanding it as an angle or perspective, as a starting point which balances the opposite tendency to overlook the role of structure. Opportunities do not amount to a full explanation of collective action, indeed; however, the variance in protest activity in terms of frequency and form can to a large extent be attributed to them (Meyer and Minkoff 2004).

Before moving on to the next section, it is interesting to reflect if the simple explanation for the differences between collective behavior theories and resource mobilization/political process theories is that they put different *types* of movements under their lenses as Eyerman and Jamison (1991) as well as Useem (1998) have actually claimed. Jenkins (1983) had also explicitly pointed to this fact, holding that resource mobilization theory is customized for movements of "institutional change" and not those of "personal change", such as religious sects. After all, the whole idea behind political process was the consideration that social movements were another branch of institutional politics, with specific social or policy objectives put forward by rational movement actors, as opposed to spontaneous and unorganized riots that collective behavior theories seemed more comfortable in explaining. In a similar vein, Kerbo (1982) makes a case for social strain/deprivation theories (two more names for the "collective behavior" approach) as fit to explain "movements of crisis" where deprivation is the most salient variable, while resource mobilization theory is best suited to "movements of affluence" which do not mainly comprise of claims regarding threats against basic material needs of their constituents. Useem (1998) argues along the same lines, holding "breakdown theories" accountable only for "nonroutine" collective action such as riots, rebellion, and civil violence, while maintaining that resource mobilization can only explain "routine collective action". Smelser's (1962) refusal to classify "general social movements" or movements of "public opinion" as he calls such instances as the labor movement, the peace movement, the humanitarian movement, and feminism in the same lot as other "collective outbursts", seems to imply that he considered panics, crazes, hostile outbursts and the like as his subject matter, rather than the more organized phenomena we are nowadays accustomed in labeling "social movements". It looks like Piven and Cloward's argument that the "malintegration" tradition "is being dismissed for an argument it never made" (1992: 306) holds at least a grain of truth.

Besides, the fact that scholars cannot agree on a common definition for the term "social movement" is also conducive to the same insight. To quote just one example, McAdam defines them as "organized efforts, on the part of excluded

groups, to promote or resist changes in the structure of society that involve recourse to noninstitutional forms of political participation" (1982: 25). The insistence on "excluded" groups, in contrast to more institutionalized ones is revealing of his will to prioritize grassroots, lower class mass movements and disregard "reformist" or interest group mobilization, thus again carving a distinct area of application for his theory.

However, as the resource mobilization body of literature swelled in the 80s and 90s and resource mobilization/political process theory towered high above any alternative paradigm, its proponents seldom remembered to notify us of this division of labor, usually claiming that their theory stands well as a general model and even striving to widen its explanatory scope, most famously with the introduction of the notion of 'contentious politics' (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001). In addition, such a level of analytical modesty was never apparent in their definitions of the concept of social movement, as Jasper and Goodwin (1999) sharply point out.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Instead of ruminating the old accusation of a "structural bias" inherent in resource mobilization and political process theories (McAdam 1994), it would be interesting to take an even more provocative stance and argue that the problem with these theories is not so much their structuralism but their *determinism*. In the case of resource mobilization, determinism flows from the inside (if resources are there, mobilization will follow), while in the case of political process theory, it flows from the outside (if opportunities are favorable, collective action will occur). Nowhere is there much room for choice, agency, or failure.

A number of resource mobilization and political process scholars had early on realized these deficiencies and the need to (re)incorporate insights from social psychology into their models, addressing processes at the micro level which run parallel to those in the macro-institutional context (e.g. McAdam 1982, see esp. his concept of "cognitive liberation"; Jenkins 1983). A first, careful, insiders' attempt at reconciling resource mobilization with social psychological insights came with the now classic *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* volume, edited by Morris and Mueller (1992). However, this line of self-criticism was more easily articulated programmatically than undertaken in reality, and did not grow into a full blown crisis for the peremptory and comfortably dominant paradigm until at

least the late 90s when criticism for this still gaping inadequacy mounted, most famously through Goodwin and Jasper's (1999) vehement critique.

The main lines of criticism at this level are two. First and foremost, critics argue that the rigid structural character of political process theory suffocates human agency by appointing too much causal significance on the political system and its opportunity-opening/closing function, to the point of determinism (Benford 1997). In the words of Snow and Oliver,

> "The macro forces of politics and organization were seen as creating the structures and resources that enabled people to act collectively, while the link between objective conditions and subjective perceptions or grievances was seen as unproblematic" (1995: 573).

Secondly, they express deep frustration with its neglect of non-cognitive aspects of mobilization such as culture and emotions, in other words, they accuse it of a "rationalistic bias" (Morris 2000).

The necessary corrective was identified in the need to re-incorporate elements of social psychology. The new foundations were built along constructionist lines, stressing the role of symbolic elements and recognizing the need to link macro and meso viewpoints to forces at work at the micro level. The rationale is that collective action has to follow an explanatory chain that runs all the way down to the individual. People, *real* people, have to be *persuaded* one after the other that a certain situation requires remedy and this remedy entails that they take to the streets (Klandermans 1984). While resource mobilization indeed stressed the top-down path of explaining mobilization through the rational, strategic actions of movement entrepreneurs, social constructionists keep contributing to the same pool but at the same time attempt to add insight from a bottom-up approach which investigates the part of the receiver and how the carefully constructed message of the entrepreneur is able to mobilize individuals into action.

Absorbing the lessons of the earlier social psychological paradigms, the younger generation reincorporated grievances into the logic of mobilization, but this time proclaimed that grievances need to be skillfully *constructed* in such a way as to bring about action. Thus, constructionists start with the rather cynical claim that *perceived*, not "objective" reality is what matters to the potential movement constituent. So, the next step is to understand *how* reality can be successfully constructed in ways that lead to the production of social movements.

In what follows, I split the social constructionist milieu into four distinct areas following the suggestion of Oliver et al. (2003): emotions, framing, collective identity, and culture.

Emotions

It is common knowledge that, despite its latest efforts, resource mobilization neglected the crucial role of emotions in building social movements (Zurcher and Snow 1981; Benford 1997). Of course, this omission had a legitimate motive: the urge to do away with the non-cognitive obsessions of 'collective behavior' theories which resource mobilization sought to displace; emotions were forced to play the unfortunate role of the baby thrown away with the bath water.

However, emotions are back since the 90s, and they are here to stay. Their role and influence in movement formation are acknowledged beyond doubt. Anger, injustice, indignation, empathy, are taken into account as elements of an emotional causal mechanism that contributes to mobilization. Especially in terms of political mobilization, the genre of "moral emotions" (Jasper 2011) comes into play, since it ties very well with strategic concerns of movement entrepreneurs who aim at stirring or arousing those emotions in order to transform idle onlookers into active participants. Moreover, James M. Jasper (1998, 2011), probably the leading scholar of the field, has pointed out the significance of emotions in explaining what lies behind seemingly cognitive processes by which *motivational framing*, *frame alignment* and the construction of *collective identities* can be successful (see next sections) partly through what he calls a "moral battery" of positive and negative feelings working in tandem to produce the desired incentive for mobilization.

Emotions are many things. They certainly can prove to be valuable resources in the form of "cultural accomplishments" (Goodwin et al. 2004: 416) by agile social movement entrepreneurs who know how to construct them, bring them to surface and manipulate them. This is the perspective which justifies the incorporation of emotions within a section dedicated to social constructionism. However, there are times when emotions erupt first, and movement entrepreneurs scramble to align their collective action frames to them; but usually, emotions are constructed – maybe not from scratch, but a certain amplification procedure is nonetheless employed in most cases. The "hot-cognition" of emotion-laden injustice is crucial in this process (Gamson 1995).

Framing

The framing approach (or "frame theory") is both a theoretical contribution as well as an important methodological tool and will thus occupy a somewhat larger share of this chapter. The theory provides insight on how "meaning-work", "the struggle over the production of ideas and meanings" (Snow and Benford 1992: 136) takes place in the context of social movements: it claims that meaning, a set of opinions on what reality is about, what is actually taking place around us, is not automatically attached to the developments of our surroundings, it is not born "spontaneously" in the mind of the individual – quite the contrary: it is usually constructed by meaning entrepreneurs who struggle to put together a persuasive package of interpretation which the individual can accept as valid (Benford and Snow 2000; Tarrow 1998). This "symbolic interactionist" perspective rests on the understanding that meaning is negotiated, it is not just there in a single form for all to accept. Meaning is also *contested* among various transmitters of interpretation; a range of factors will decide which one of those transmitters will triumph over its antagonists as the most resonant one, the one that most people will be more comfortable in attuning to.

This process of interpretation – and slowly we move closer to the realm of social movements – has to be articulated, usually through discourse but also through gestures, icons, attire or other forms of communication. Grievances, for instance, require strategic interpretation in order to lead to action, and a successful one to start with (Oliver et al. 2003); if we do not acknowledge this qualification we are led back to deterministic evaluations of collective action. In matters of textual or verbal discourse, the negotiation of meaning takes place through the purposive articulation of specific *frames*. Many definitions of what a frame exactly is have been suggested in the burgeoning literature of frame theory which is not applied solely to social movements but also (and mainly) to media studies, as well as discourse analysis, political science, IR theory, political communication etc. Heavily influenced by Ervin Goffman's (1974) work, Snow and Benford have provided a definition which is thoroughly used in the literature of social movements, whereby a frame is described as:

> "an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment" (Snow and Benford 1992: 137).

An example is most illuminating at this point. Let's consider illegal immigration; the reality of illegal immigration can be framed differently, according to the

motives of the political entrepreneur: it can be illustrated as "poor creatures, who had no choice but to leave home and family behind and went through untold hardships in order to reach a safe place where they can work hard to acquire the means of survival", or it can very well be portrayed as "illicit aliens, who have broken national laws by entering the country illegally, and survive by either stealing jobs away from the legitimate, hard-working taxpayers or by engaging in criminal activities against the local population". Reality is all the same, it is just *framed* differently in each case.

Frames, or in social movement lingo, "collective action frames", are widely used by social movement entrepreneurs in order to mobilize constituencies. David Snow and Robert Benford (1988), the most prominent scholars of frame theory in the social movement literature, have analyzed mobilization as a three-step process involving:

diagnostic framing: where entrepreneurs construct their own interpretation (diagnosis) of what seems to be the problem which requires remedy, as well attribute blame to the culprits (individuals, groups, institutions, etc.)

prognostic framing: where a way out of the problem is suggested, a viable solution to alleviate or eliminate the undesirable situation that is being experienced

motivational framing: where a rationale for action is provided in order to explain why mobilization on the part of constituents is required, why it makes sense to react, and how engagement with collective action can indeed be the answer to shared problems

The "strategic framing" dimension enters with the realization that these frames are constructed by self-conscious movement entrepreneurs with the goal of maximizing participation (Westby 2002). The process used is *frame alignment*, through which entrepreneurs attempt to link individual and SMO interpretations with each other and reach common definitions "such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary" (Snow et al. 1986: 464).

William Gamson has worked on the same Goffmanian frame theoretical framework and has come up with three alternative components of collective action frames: injustice, identity, and agency (Gamson 1992b). The first element, the injustice frame, is considered by many scholars as crucial in the formation of

collective action (Benford 1997). Gamson (1992a) has even gone so far as to suggest that *all* successful movements employ an injustice frame. Even though Snow and Benford (2000) have successfully refuted this claim by mentioning religious, self-help, and other movements, still, Gamson's insight remains relevant. Grievances have to be articulated through social construction and made to imply a "moral indignation" about something in the current state of affairs which is considered unjust and in need of change (Klandermans 1997).

The ubiquity of injustice frames in social movements bares striking analogies with the use of 'strain' in collective behavior theories. "Some form of strain must be present if an episode of collective behavior is to occur" (Smelser 1962: 48) is very similar to "[b]efore collective action is likely to occur, a critical mass of people must socially construct a sense of injustice" (Benford 1997: 415), if we disregard the issue of social construction. In both cases, strain and injustice are necessary conditions of mobilization. Moreover, strain *implies* injustice to a large extent; most of the examples provided by collective behavior theorists point that way. However, it would be fair to acknowledge that injustice, or more precisely, *perceived injustice*, is a far more useful and robust analytical entity which can be more readily operationalized by simply referring to instances were social movement entrepreneurs or participants describe a certain situation as "unjust", thus providing a moral excuse for their actions. Seldom will a normal person refer to "strains"; this term was born and raised in sociological laboratories and never managed to escape into the real world. Moreover, "injustice" transfers the explanatory focus from the macro level of "strain" to the more useful micro level, providing microfoundational accounts of successful mobilization.

The *identity* component will be discussed more thoroughly in the next section. Gamson refers to the "we-ness" of collective mobilization; the definition of a collective identity which unites movement adherents and distinguishes them from those outside, be they enemies or indifferent bystanders. Identity is crucial in producing solidarity among members, and a consciousness of common struggle for a special cause. Too often a "they" is required in order to define a "we"; the collective is defined negatively, by excluding a "they" from the whole and assuming the remainder as a potential "we". The antithesis is utilized in order to attribute blame and provide a causal direction, since "they" are usually responsible for "our" grievances. The delineation of this boundary between friend and foe is a crucial function of collective identity and its inclusionary scope is a very serious decision for the future success of the movement (Friedman and McAdam 1992).

The *agency* component is very similar to Snow and Benford's "mobilization framing" or the notion of "action mobilization" in the work of Klandermans (1984), since it refers to the process of amplifying the realization of the capacity of personal involvement to alter conditions. Injustice and identity have to be framed in ways that lead to actual mobilization. Movement actors need to persuade their potential adherents that their contribution matters and that collective action can indeed bring about the desired change. Going back to Olson, only by instilling a belief in collective efficacy can free-riders be shamed into participating.

The pioneers of frame theory in social movement studies originated from the resource mobilization/political process milieu; Snow et al. suggested the use of frame alignment as "a conceptual bridge linking social psychological and resource mobilization views on movement participation" (1986: 464), while Gamson and Meyer (1996) understand the movement framing process as a way to analyze the volatile end of political opportunity, while keeping the old, political process theory tools for the stable part. This blend can be seen as a social constructionist twist on political process theory – a suggestion that opportunities can also be constructed. However, frame theory has developed to the point where it does not have to come part and parcel with the core assumptions of political process or resource mobilization theories anymore. Social constructionism is considered by many as an *alternative* to resource mobilization (e.g. Buechler 1995). Moreover, social constructionist themes can very well be incorporated within a rational choice framework of collective action, as mechanisms of influencing perceptions about preferences at the individual level. McAdam, McCarthy and Zald have defined framing processes as "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action" (1996: 6); this formulation would tie neatly with a non-structural, agentic perspective of mobilization in classic rational choice fashion.

The methodological contribution of frame theory lies in being able to provide empirical legitimacy by physically identifying frames used in speech or text, counting their occurrences and thus deriving empirical evidence for discursive tactics. Frame analysis is similar to content analysis, with a few twists that set it somewhat apart from other approaches. Hank Johnston's "Comparative Frame Analysis" (Johnston 2005) is one important attempt to agree on an approach in this field which can yield considerable comparative insight. Of course, herein lay many problems, since the process of identifying a frame is itself a process of

interpretation, a fact that casts shadows on the objectivity of the researcher's findings. Moreover, a flurry of frames have been cited (see Benford 1997 for an incomplete yet already long listing), and it is only a matter of researcher fiat to decide which of these creatures are indeed real and which are fictional.

Identity

The role of identity in collective action was not raised widely until the advent of a distinctly European strand of social movement literature that we came to know as "New Social Movement" (NSM) theory. Among the NSM scholars, Alberto Melucci stands as the one who has fared best in inserting his insights into the mainstream: he describes the construction of collective identity as one of the most crucial tasks agents of mobilization have to face, as "a process in which the actors produce the common cognitive frameworks that enable them to assess the environment and to calculate the costs and benefits of the action" (Melucci 1988: 343).

The negotiation of collective identity is both a goal and a means. Movement activists struggle to forge the still inchoate affective emotions of early participants into a solid collective identity as a means to maximize and sustain participation. Through meaning work on the field or by way of textual and dramaturgical tactics they engage in an attempt to enlarge the personal identities of (potential) participants "to include the relevant collective identity as part of their definition of self" (Gamson 1992a: 60). At the same time, converts may end up participating not so much in their belief that their own contribution will help the movement achieve its cause (e.g. legalize marijuana or ban chemical weapons), but for the significant pleasure that is derived from being and feeling a part of this collective membership, by being provided with "fulfillment and realization of self" (ibid.: 56). Needless to say yet hard to admit, movement leaders are well aware of the powerful twin features of collective identity formation, and the fact that certain members are able to reap the benefits of the constructed collective identity, which is a public good, without actively contributing to the movement's cause is "a form of free riding that is virtually impossible to overcome" (Friedman and McAdam 1992: 167).

The nature of the constructed identity is crucial. Only identities that carry political relevance can be said to matter for the creation of a social movement. This proposition can of course be attacked on the grounds that it reveals a political bias which neglects significant identities that are not strictly political, such as sports affinities, subcultural identities and so on. However, it is true that

in order to construct a powerful collective identity which can generate mobilization, the 'we' of the in-group has to be coupled with a "they", an out-group against which action can be directed (Klandermans 1997).

Collective identities can still hold considerable currency even *after* a movement has ceased to exist. The strong affections that they carry, hard-won in the streets, assemblies and picket lines, does not wear off so rapidly – sometimes they don't wear off at all. Identities can sustain in "abeyance structures" (Taylor 1989, see also McAdam 1994) only to be reactivated when the context is again favorable. Good brand names such as, for instance, the "indignados", are never a waste – they are expensive constructions which save movement activists from having to reinvent the wheel every time a new cycle of contention emerges; what it takes is a successful frame (re)alignment that helps them adapt to the new situation.

Culture

A common vein runs through all the previous sections which comprise of the social constructionist school; culture. Culture makes up a large part of the substrate upon which framing, collective identity, and even emotions are able to function. The most cited explanation of the centrality of culture is Ann Swidler's (1986) understanding of culture as a *tool kit*. Each society, she explains, is equipped with a distinct cultural tool kit from which movement entrepreneurs have to draw in order to construct resonant frames and collective identities

The cultural tool kit is laden with symbols, icons, traditions, narratives, habits, styles, social norms, or even heroic figures and events. Their message is powerful because it hinges on the way the individuals have been socialized through family, school, social norms, beliefs, and values. Our environment is shaped by such institutions and we are expected to adhere to 'normal' behavioral patterns. Our environment determines the way we communicate and understand the world around us and in most cases, "[c]ollective beliefs and identities alike are formed and transformed through public discourse" (Klandermans 1992: 93).

The influence of culture contextualizes repertoires of mobilization. "Strategies of action" (Swidler 1986: 276) are limited by culture, since they have to rely on resonant cultural themes if they want their repertoire to stand a chance in being successful with the public (Oliver et al. 2003; Jenkins 1983). A successful strategy in the United States cannot just be copied and pasted into the French context and be expected to work out of the box (or vice versa). Movement entrepreneurs thoroughly understand that they need to adapt, to take into account the

mediation of the dominant culture, they need to customize strategies, slogans, repertoires in such a way that they are aligned with the internalized norms of the target population (see Meyer 1999 for a similar case on Martin Luther King Jr.).

Reality, facts, hard data do matter, but not all the way – the trick is to play your cards right and devise a resonant "reality" which rings better to the hearts and minds of the people; if solid, "objective" facts can be used along to enhance the new perception of reality, so much the better – but they are not necessarily required. Appealing to cognition and reason is only one part of the game, and it is seldom sufficient in mobilizing the public without appealing to cultural elements which activate social psychological mechanisms. Social movements and their actors are not passive channels of public disaffection, they are active producers of meaning who engage in "agency and contention at the level of reality construction" (Snow and Benford 1992: 136).

RATIONAL CHOICE

Rational choice approaches are both loved and loathed by social movement scholars. Their influence, filtered through the work of Olson, is more than obvious in early resource mobilization theory, and it is widely acknowledged that infusing rationality in the individual protester paved the way to shake off older understandings of collective action as an irrational mob-like activity. The debt to rational choice was however thought to have been paid in full; a reaction was bound to take place sooner rather than later, a backlash which largely holds to this day, where a fair majority of theorists loves to hate rational choice approaches as cold, mechanistic, cynical interpretations of human agency which do not account to reality. Some have even labeled the model of rationality a "Trojan horse" in the ranks of the resource mobilization perspective (Ferree 1992: 30). Attacks originate both from macro premises where the role of agency is belittled in the face of structure, as well as from micro ones, with emotions and culture (i.e. non-cognitive, non-material factors) deemed as obviously incompatible with a rational choice framework.

In a nutshell, rational choice theory rests on the hypothesis that "individuals choose the action that is least costly and most beneficial for them" (Opp 2009a: 11); or, more elaborately put by Snow and Oliver:

> "The central assumptions of all instrumentalist, rational choice, or subjective expected utility models are (1) that people seek to obtain benefits and minimize costs, and (2) that they cognitively process information about the

> likely benefits and costs of various courses of action and then make a conscious choice about their behavior" (1995: 583).

Most rational choice formulations for collective action are based on some variant of the value-expectancy model. The individual is by design the agent of choice. She chooses to participate or abstain from action based on a set of variables, starting with the calculation of the value of the collective good that is pursued, times the expected probability of obtaining it. To this are added the benefits of selective incentives, minus the costs of participation (Oberschall 1994). By calculating the value of alternative choices, the individual selects the one that ranks first in terms of providing the highest utility (Moore 1995). For instance, participating in an anti-nuclear power movement depends on how strongly the individual values a nuclear-free environment, the personal efficacy of involvement in such action (does the movement stand a chance in shutting down the local power plant?), the selective incentives provided (for instance, benefits of the collective identity of a fighter against nuclear pollution), and the costs of participation (e.g. police repression).

Many rational choice theorists derive their insights from abstract, experimental, game-theoretical examinations of collective action, devising formal mathematical models and networks in order to reach conclusions about general patterns of mobilization (Marwell and Oliver 1984). Game theory inserts the social dimension in rational choice, since the behavior of other individuals is also calculated, thus countering accusations that rational choice does not pertain to reality because it assumes isolated individuals, disconnected from their context. This methodology is strikingly different from the descriptive case study or small scale comparative approach used in the more traditional sociological schools of thought.

A number of insightful models have been put forward for the study of collective action, among which Hardin's (1971) n-player prisoner's dilemma, Marwell and Oliver's (1993) critical mass theory, Granovetter's (1978) threshold models, Oberschall's (1994) production functions, Lichbach's (1998b) market-community-contract-hierarchy model and of course Olson's (1965) model for the provision of collective goods. Even though, as Marwell and Oliver (1984) have warned, collective action and social movements cannot be analytically equated since they refer to different levels of analysis (let's consider the latter as a subgroup of the former), many of these models have been applied to the study of social movements.

Opp reminds us that "theories provide general information about the *kinds* of factors that are causes for certain types of phenomena" (2009a: 11). Each theory we analyzed so far carries its own set of independent variables, and each one believes to have nailed it down to the most crucial ones. Bright, scholarly minds have struggled for years upon years to come up with these theories, yet they still disagree in fundamental ways. Are psychological traits of the individual, mediated by social structure, the crucial factor that explains protest, as collective behavior theorists claim? Or is it the existence of resources and networks in the hands of movement entrepreneurs the culprit, as resource mobilization student would have it? Or is the expansion of political opportunities the *sine qua non* of collective action? How about culture, the framing of grievances, emotions, and collective identity? Aren't they relevant variables as well?

Rational choice responds by claiming to provide a framework where all these variables can feed into a conclusion. This does not necessarily entail recourse to a "factor explanation" (Opp 2009a: 21) where "anything goes". The choice of independent variables has to follow a *theory* which accounts for choosing *a* or *b* over *c* or *d*; rational choice theory provides such a framework by declaring that only those variables should be chosen which influence the cost/benefit balance at the level of the individual, thus avoiding the *ad hoc* trap.

The standard critique against rational choice approaches is its alleged limitation when it comes to the significance appointed to material incentives. Very frequently, critics claim, decisions are made by individuals to go forward with a certain action even if odds of acquiring personal material benefits are slim, if not downright negative. However, nothing restrains rational choice theory into exclusively employing material weights in order to tip its cost-benefit scale. Many proponents of a "wider" view of rational choice theory have built models where apart from economic incentives, they have also incorporated *social* selective incentives in their equations, overcoming Olson's apparent limitations.

Emotions, for instance, can easily fit this picture, since emotional risks, costs and benefits are integral parts of the decision making process of the individual, routinely calculated along material benefits (Oberschall 1994; Jasper 2011). Admitting that people partly act on emotion does not render them irrational – emotional calculation is perfectly compatible with rationality (Jasper 1998). Emotions can indeed be goals in themselves; what does the enshrined "pursuit of happiness" imply other than conscious choices in our life course that are taken to achieve this specific emotional goal? Besides, emotions in terms of reactions to

specific stimuli can largely be predicted, a fact which strips away a significant part of the validity of the irrationality clause (Jasper 1998). Collective identity can also be seen in the same light, as providing solidary incentives for collective action through the mechanism of "social approval and disapproval of friends and family" (Marwell and Oliver 1984: 21).

Conclusively, it seems like the pendulum swung from the social psychological explanations of collective behavior all the way to the other end – political process – and then back to social psychology, only this time incorporating the lessons drawn from the past and avoiding crude psychological interpretations of an admittedly complex phenomenon. Now that there is a clear overview of the landscape of both populism theory and social movement studies, we can proceed to laying down a precise theoretical framework to address the research question which inform the study of the Great Recession movements under the lens of populist discourse. This will be undertaken in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

A mixed-methods study of Great Recession movements

In 2011 everything was in turmoil, with several European states suffering the consequences of a Great Recession that had spread across the globe. National governments were languishing, sovereign debt was spiraling out of control, millions of jobs had been lost and wages slashed. It was in this context that, following the outbreak of the *Arab Spring*, a series of unforeseen protests erupted in numerous European cities and other parts of the world, culminating with the famous Spanish and Greek *indignados* and, later, *Occupy Wall Street*.

These social movements claimed to represent the "99 Percent", the People as sole legitimate source of authority, against the corrupt "1 Percent" that had taken over power in order to serve its narrow interests. They castigated non-democratic centers of power for appropriating popular sovereignty, questioned the legitimacy of national governments, rejected austerity as a solution to the Great Recession, and demanded "real democracy" where people would enjoy a stronger voice vis-a-vis power holders. *Puerta del Sol*, *Syntagma Square*, *Zuccotti Park*, all became landmarks of a transnational mobilization with far-reaching repercussions, obliging *Time* magazine to name "The Protester" person of the year for 2011. Activists occupied central city squares and set up tent camps, made heavy use of social media platforms to disseminate their ideas, formed thematic and working groups, devised a system of hand gestures to facilitate debate, and exercised horizontal decision making procedures in open General Assemblies.

While such features point to significant patterns in repertoire and diffusion which have earned the attention of various analysts (e.g. della Porta and Mattoni 2014), they fail to compose a shared *cognitive* frame of reference for this wave of contention. Therefore, in this chapter I unfold a theoretical framework where, following Tarrow (2013), I acknowledge the central role of language in contentious interaction, and shift the analytical focus to discursive patterns to argue that the mobilizations of the Great Recession can best be understood as a wave of *Populist Social Movements* (PSMs), instigated via the politicization of citizen identity. Subscribing these movements into a larger family of mobilization, I aspire to enhance causal theorizing capacity and foster further empirical research within a more comprehensive framework.

POPULIST MOBILIZATION

As it has become evident in the first two chapters, populism theory and social movement studies comprise separate scholarly traditions. However, several authors have pointed to glaring overlaps, appealing for a degree of cross-fertilization between the two fields (e.g. Jansen 2011; Roberts 2015). Indeed, while much talk is made generally of populist movements, no serious effort has been invested into systematizing the features of this subtype of mobilization into a coherent analytical framework. On the contrary, the term has been invoked carelessly and inconsistently by students of both fields.

In social movement studies, populist movements have earned a place in respected encyclopedias (e.g. Caiani 2012), with scholars regularly classifying the American *Tea Party* as such in recent years (e.g. Skocpol and Williamson 2012). In the past, Redding (1992) studied populist mobilization in the *Farmers' Alliance* of the 19th century, Soule (1992) investigated relations between the rise of the Populist movement in America and black lynching, and Amenta, Dunleavy, and Bernstein (1994: 679) committed Huey Long's *Share Our Wealth* to a set of social movements termed "depression-era neopopulism". In Europe, Diani (1996: 1056) has contrasted "democratic populist" social movements with Italian regional populist parties, a topic revisited in Ruzza and Fella (2011). Moreover, Szasz (1994), Lichterman (1995), and HuangFu and Singer (2012), have studied populist environmental activism ("eco-populism"), Bretherton (2012) has contended that Saul Alinsky constitutes an extension and development of classical American populism, and Zuo and Benford (1995) have emphasized the populist tactics of the 1989 Chinese student movement. The Polish *Solidarity* movement has been termed "a populist type of movement" by Di Tella (1997: 192) and a genuine "grass roots movement of the People" by Canovan (2005: 136), while Kriesi (1999) has assigned the populist label to various European movements of the radical right and Caiani, della Porta, and Wagemann (2012) have examined populism as a constitutive element of extreme right social movements in three western countries.

Craig Calhoun's book, *The Question of Class Struggle,* published in 1982, significantly elevated the importance of populism for social mobilization, claiming that "the most widespread, powerful, and radical social movements in the modern world have been of a type we may call 'populist'" (1982: vii; see also Calhoun 2012). Calhoun thoroughly studied the British movements of the Industrial Revolution, arguing in favor of their populist rather than working-

class nature (cf. Canovan 2005). He further clarified that "populist" is not a derogatory term, and levelled a strong critique against Marxists who define class-consciousness so strictly that class becomes an exclusive club with all "the common people" left outside.

Historians have also had their say; they were actually alone in grappling with populist movements until the mid-'60s when sociologists took over, having contributed mainly on the *Populist Movement* of the American Gilded Age (see Allcock 1971 for an old review). Contemporary historians have followed suit. Postel (2007) conceptualizes the American Populists as both a social and a political movement, and Formisano (2008: 3) inquires further into the past, contending that "authentically populist social movements and parties have played important roles at critical times" over more than two centuries of American history. Similarly, in a widely acclaimed work, Michael Kazin offers a comprehensive history of left-wing and right-wing populist mobilization, beginning with the *Populist Party* as "the spearhead of a social movement" (1995: 45) and moving on to the *Prohibitionists*, Huey Long, *America First*, George Wallace, and other significant populist icons of the 20th century. Most of these American phenomena had already been treated as "extremist populist movements" in Lipset (1960). Apart from the US, historians have also produced important studies of the Russian utopian socialist movement of *Narodnichestvo* in the 1870s as a populist social movement (e.g. Wortman 1967).

Political scientists who study populism regularly encroach deep into social movement territory. One of the most prominent academics of this field, Margaret Canovan, even briefly entertained an elaborate conceptualization of populism as a spontaneous social movement built around the collective identity of "the sovereign people" (2005: 135-137). However, already since the early days of the founding volume of the field, two chapters had been dedicated to populism as a type of social movement (Minogue 1969; Stewart 1969) since it, too, was seen as undertaking "to re-form the existing social structure" (Stewart 1969: 189). Back to modern literature, while Collier clearly speaks of "populist mass movements" (2001: 11815) the term generally remains ambiguous, since there is a recurring tendency to apply it haphazardly, switching between "populist movement" and "populist party" on an *ad hoc* basis (e.g. Roberts 2006; Barr 2009; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013a).

Undoubtedly, populism straddles the divide between social movements and electoral politics; frequently, this allows for confusion. Developments in Latin

America that produce shifts in electoral behavior and establish populist political leaders in power have been labeled "populist movements" (Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; di Tella 1997; Laclau 2005), "populist social movements" (de la Torre 1992: 396) or "populist protest movements" (Weyland 2009: 154). Hawkins contends that such events do indeed constitute populist movements, since they are "highly uninstitutionalised and often bring together a heterogeneous group of individuals and organisations tied to each other only by a common allegiance to their leader" (2003: 1139). A similar trend is observed towards the significant electoral upsurge of radical right-wing parties in Western and Eastern Europe in the past three decades; again, a vast literature conceptualizes these developments as populist movements (e.g. Canovan 1999; Betz and Immerfall 1998; Taggart 1995; Eatwell and Mudde 2004; Hainsworth 2008).

An abundance of important studies could be further added to this survey; however, the previous paragraphs suffice to realize that while PSMs have in no sense been neglected, we are desperately lacking a clear conceptual framework. The present state of affairs allows for a great deal of ambiguity and the insertion of highly normative considerations; depending on the influence of their political compass and whether they see populism as a progressive or a backward force, some authors acknowledge the existence of populist movements where others do not, and vice versa (see Müller 2014; Finchelstein 2014). At times, this ambiguity is forcefully demonstrated. Consider, for instance, Mény and Surel's dictum that "populism cannot be labelled as a social movement given its preference for political action via the channels provided by the political system such as elections, referenda, and so forth" (2002: 18) when a few pages down the same volume of which they are editors, we find a section devoted to an Italian populist party of the radical right, titled "The *Lega Nord*: populism as a social movement" (Tarchi 2002: 126). Another glaring demonstration is when Roberts (2015) denies the status of European radical right-wing parties as populist movements and Caiani (2012) argues that they constitute the most striking contemporary example. Similarly, in a recent volume by Rosenthal and Trost (2012) on the *Tea Party*, the populist identity of the movement is both vehemently denied and straightforwardly confirmed between the various contributing authors. There is no doubt we are dealing with a conceptual mess.

Instead of functioning as a source of confusion, the obvious relation between social movements and electoral politics should serve as an open field for the rapprochement of social movement and populism theorists. Indeed, in their quest to better understand the broader political context of contention, many

influential authors have recently affirmed the need to bridge this gap (e.g. McAdam and Tarrow 2010; Hutter and Kriesi 2013); since PSMs are a paradigmatic case of social mobilization with electoral implications, there is great potential in studying them through this lens. Enter the movements of the Great Recession.

Empirical developments such as *Occupy Wall Street* and the Greek and Spanish *indignados* highlight the shortcomings over the hollow conceptualization of PSMs. The conceptual fog leads to widely varied opinions over the populist nature of these collective phenomena, again mostly due to the normative implications that have plagued the term. Roberts (2015) is rather reluctantly claiming that the absence of a clear leader is reason enough to strip these movements of a definitive populist label, but, to take *Occupy*, Lowndes and Warren (2011) positively characterize it as "the first major populist movement on the U.S. left since the 1930s" and Postel (2012) describes it as a "most strikingly populist response to the present crisis … old Populists would be proud of". Plotke (2012) sees *Occupy* as expressing "historic themes of American populism", and Calhoun labels it "a populist mobilization" (2013: 34) branding a brilliantly framed "populist message" (ibid: 33) embodied in the famous "99 Percent" motto. Still, Urbinati (2014) presses the claim that while *Occupy*'s discourse is indeed populist, the movement itself is popul*ar* rather than popul*ist* (see also the discussion in chapter 1).

In light of these observations, this chapter revisits the concept of PSMs to establish a novel conceptual framework which will be applied to the empirical study of the 2011 wave of Occupy-styled mobilizations in the next chapters.

DEFINING *POPULIST SOCIAL MOVEMENTS*

To cater for a systematic analysis of PSMs, we first need to provide a working definition, drawing insights from the two academic traditions that combine to form our concept, as analyzed in depth in the first two chapters. The definitional terrain for populism has been presented in Chapter 1 and Mudde's (2004) formulation has been found to outperform other attempts so far. Therefore, stripping this formulation of its ideological clause for reasons explained previously, I define populism as a discourse that "considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2004:

543). In yet simpler words, populism will be here treated as an *anti-elite rhetoric in the name of the people*. Since we are dealing with rhetoric, apparently, populism can also be employed by non-institutional actors such as social movement activists-entrepreneurs who struggle to maximize participation. Evidently, it is this discursive core of populism that provides the widely perceived overlap between the phenomena of populism and social movements.

Dealing with the definition of the latter phenomena is yet another challenging endeavor (Diani 1992); yet many would still be content with Charles Tilly's conceptualization of social movements as a:

> "sustained series of interactions between power holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which those persons make publicly visible demands for changes in the distribution or exercise of power, and back those demands with public demonstrations of support" (Tilly 1984: 306).

To accommodate for a more comprehensive perspective, Snow, Soule, and Kriesi have assigned five radial dimensions to the term:

> "collective or joint action; change-oriented goals or claims; some extra- or non-institutional collective action; some degree of organization; and some degree of temporal continuity" (Snow et al. 2004: 6).

Combining elements from these conceptualizations, I therefore minimally define a Populist Social Movement as non-institutional collective mobilization which imputes existing grievances to a society ultimately separated in two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite", and claims to speak on behalf of the former in demanding the restoration of political authority into the hands of the people as rightful sovereigns.

This amalgamatic formulation can cater for all the defining features of populism as they become manifest in social mobilization, pointing to the existence of a continuum of political contention, from social movements to political parties, on the basis of decreased or increased institutionalization. Having provided a definitional perspective, we need to make the theoretical framework complete by describing the processes inherent in the construction and development of PSMs. For this, we need to turn to insights from social psychology. The significance of social psychological perspectives for populism has been so far widely under-researched. This thesis aims to explicitly elevate the importance of

inviting social psychologists to contribute towards an explanatory framework for studying populist phenomena. The following section can be seen as an original contribution towards the establishment of this cross-fertilization.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF POPULIST MOBILIZATION

As it was illustrated in the previous chapter, the rationalist hegemony of the '70s and '80s in social movement scholarship constituted a backlash against earlier theories which portrayed mobilization as some sort of irrational crowd behavior. However, in recent years, the pendulum has been found to be gradually swinging back towards carefully encompassing cultural and psychological factors into theories of social mobilization (Stryker, Owens, and White 2000). One of the early and most important developments in this respect was the notion of *collective identity*, introduced through the path-breaking work of Alberto Melucci (1989), and later defined as a "shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences, and solidarity" (Taylor and Whittier 1992: 170). Collective identity has evolved today to be acknowledged as a prerequisite for the development of any successful social movement (Bernstein 2008) with many scholars proceeding to endorse Melucci's (1989) claim that the negotiation and construction of identities is actually the very essence of social movement activity.

Social psychological factors inform our study of populist social movements in very important ways. So far, even though regularly implied, the issue of collective identity has largely failed to attach itself to mainstream populism theories, with the significant exception of a small company of post-structuralist authors (e.g. Panizza 2005; Westlind 1996). As depicted in detail in the first chapter, these scholars, spearheaded by Ernesto Laclau (1977, 2005a, 2005b), have employed the notion of popular identity to erect a highly elaborate conceptual edifice, explaining populist mobilization as the discursive process in which a chain of equivalent grievances among diverse social groups are collected under the "empty signifier" of the People, and then targeted against the power-bloc. Instead of reiterating the somewhat cryptic jargon of the Essex school, we could simply use the existing vocabulary of social movement theories to reduce their thesis to one that sees populist mobilization as the adoption of grievances coming from various social groups and their assemblage under an adversarial collective identity which is framed - in broad terms – as a struggle between "us, the noble people" and "them, the corrupt elites". However, while the Essex school rightly focuses on the centrality of identity building for populism, their work is rendered

incomplete due to the inherent limitations of the post-structuralist framework in encompassing elements of strategic agency and explaining individual mobilization.

These blind spots can be summed up as a level of analysis problem: while Laclau purports to explain decisions at the individual level (vote choice for populist parties or participation in populist movements), he does so by examining meso level procedures (aggregate demands) or macro-structural developments, without pointing to mechanisms which allow the dynamics of contention to travel across the spectrum. Therefore, while post-structuralists have indeed covered much ground towards bringing populism closer to social movement theory, their work requires the infusion of a sound social psychological theoretical framework in order to bridge analytical gaps. Though this addition draws the focus of this study, it is not to say that lessons from resource mobilization, political opportunity, and rational choice theories do not apply or cannot help in couching causal inferences within a more general framework (cf. Opp 2009a). Nevertheless, a specific mechanism of identity construction explains much of what takes place in PSMs, and deserves our focused attention.

To be sure, identity work is a core task of movement entrepreneurship, highlighting the fact that any interaction between social actors presupposes the existence of identities as vantage points (Hunt et al. 1994; Bernstein 1997; Snow and McAdam 2000; Snow 2001). In order to explain this more thoroughly, we need to expand on the introduction provided in chapter 2 and provide all the necessary clues that work towards explaining the mechanism of populist mobilization. Success and longevity of social mobilization rests partly on the construction of a resonant collective identity by activists in charge of strategic deployment, and its reaffirmation throughout the life-cycle of the mobilization (Gamson 1991; Snow and McAdam 2000). In order to achieve this, social movements laboriously engage in the cultivation of an oppositional consciousness on *boundaries* delineated by a sense of "we-ness" – a collective unity based on a shared understanding – contrasted against a set of opponents, a social "they" located outside the movement and/or its potential adherents (Gamson 1992a; Taylor and Whittier 1992; Snow and McAdam 2000; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Gamson 1997).

This *boundary framing* exercise (Hunt and Benford 1994) carries decisive strategic implications. Depending on the goals of the movement, identity construction oscillates between exclaiming a *similarity* to the majority out there

and celebrating a *difference* against it, leading to the construction of an *in-group* and an *out-group* (Bernstein 1997). According to Einwohner, Reger, and Myers' (2008) *identity workload* framework, while most movements focus exclusively on either exclaiming similarity or difference, some decide to engage in "hard work", performing both tasks simultaneously. This "hard" identity work comes into play "when movements speak for diverse populations and when different factions within movements struggle to have their voices heard" (Einwohner et al. 2008: 6) or similarly "when activists work to create solidarity among diverse constituencies or struggle with having to publicly present themselves as similar to those whom they oppose in private" (ibid.: 8).

Populist movement entrepreneurs are paradigmatic agents of this type of identity workload, weaving processes of emphasizing sameness (among the People) and proclaiming difference (against the elite) into a self-sustaining feedback loop; this Manichean quality of populist discourse that constructs clear-cut boundaries between friend and foe is arguably the most familiar theme in populism theory (Mudde 2004; Hawkins 2010). The way boundaries are drawn becomes a distinctive feature of PSMs, since populist discourse is rendered complete only when frontiers between "pure" People and "corrupt" elites are instantiated. While the former provide the basis for a collective identity, the latter are taken to consist the *out-group*, a necessarily slim minority of power holders, enumerated as a set of distinct actors or collapsed discursively under the label of "elites", "the establishment", "the system", or any other equivalent notion which carries "symbolic resonance" (Tarrow 2013) for a given audience. When hard work succeeds in forging a collective identity, the end-result is extremely rewarding. As Snow argues,

> "a collective identity in which the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are unambiguously drawn, in which there is strong feeling about those differences, and in which there is a sense of moral virtue associated with both the perceptions and feelings, should be a more potent collective identity than one in which either the emotional or moral dimensions are weakly developed" (2001: 2218).

Thus, in populist mobilization, the end-result of identity work is the collective identity of "the People as sovereign" which functions as the primary mobilizing factor (Canovan 2005; Westlind 1996). The strong formal elements of populist collective identity render it a compelling force and facilitate capturing a high moral ground against counter-framing activity by opponents; participants are

empowered by justifying their diagnosis of the situation upon the legitimizing values of majority rule and popular sovereignty which no opponent can carelessly defy.

At this stage, the idiosyncratic nature of populist collective identity differentiates PSMs from other types of social movements in two main respects: their *level of inclusiveness* and their *area of prescription*.

Level of inclusiveness

Identity in PSMs is much broader than the average movement, stretching to cover the near totality of the available audience. The *in-group* is not a small social minority (e.g. transsexuals, immigrants) or even a somewhat larger swath of society (e.g. women, workers, the poor, pensioners, students, etc.); it is the people as a whole, save the vastly outnumbered elites. For instance, this feature draws a clear line vis-a-vis labor movements which would normally exclude the bourgeoisie and the upper class from their in-group.

Area of prescription

The invocation of the People as the only source of political authority stresses that PSMs do not aim at reforming a limited sector of policy-making as most movements do. As Canovan exclaims, "the perennial cry of populists is that power has been stolen from the people by politicians and special interests" (2005: 5); thus, the goal of populist mobilization is just short of a revolution, demanding a wholesale transformation of the political process in such a way as to (re)instate popular sovereignty at the locus of power. This feature distinguishes PSMs from most rights-based, millennial, and distributionist movements, or environmental activism and other single-issue causes.

Table 1: A 2x2 typology of social movements

		Level of Inclusiveness	
		Sectional	**Catch-all**
Area of Prescription	**Broad**	e.g. Labor Movements	Populist Social Movements
	Narrow	e.g. New Social Movements	e.g. Eco-populist Movements

The combination of these two areas of differentiation produces a 2×2 typology (Table 1) which, while unable to account for differences in degree, it can nevertheless provide for a tentative classification of the various forms of social mobilization.

The collective identity of "the sovereign People" is a closely guarded achievement in PSMs and no secondary attachment is allowed to take precedence, given that competing identities can potentially apply centrifugal pressures or uncover intramural fault lines. No room is there even for a full deployment of *identity fields* (Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994). Mobilized activists in PSMs refrain from any kind of boundary framing *between* protagonists (themselves) and audiences (the wider people); audiences are duly incorporated in the "overwhelming majority" that opposes the antagonists-elites. This allows PSM entrepreneurs to proceed by focusing on what unites the People, taking advantage of the vague inclusiveness of the shared identity in order to underplay the significance of factions. Moreover, the catch-all nature of populist identity allows PSMs to channel their discourse freely, reaching the maximum audience out there; the way a collective identity is framed is instrumental to the level of support the movement aspires to garner from the public and PSMs aim at the broadest attainable level.

This analysis of the strategic use of populism by social movement entrepreneurs has already revealed core facets of populist mobilization, such as the interplay of the Manichean qualities of populist discourse with boundary framing and strategic identity construction. However, the meso-level analysis is but one side of the argument. To render it complete, we need to turn to how processes unfold at the level of the individual, since, according to Friedman and McAdam (1992), successful movements construct emerging activist identities by redefining one or more existing roles of individuals, much like in the way the civil rights movement in the United States redefined church member status into civil rights activist (Snow and McAdam 2000). Tarrow similarly argues that "a movement is far more likely to bridge, extend, or amplify existing frames in the political culture than to create a wholly new one that may have no resonance in the existing culture" (1992: 190), and Snow and McAdam (2000) find that an identity must already be part of a person's biography to become sufficiently salient and incite mobilization; it must "dovetail" with the movement's collective identity. Therefore, we need to shift our focus from meso to micro processes to see how the collective identity of "the People as sovereign" works at the individual level, or more precisely, to discover which identity becomes salient in the case of PSMs.

In the next section, populism theory is infused with insights drawn from Sheldon Stryker's *identity theory* to argue that the identity which becomes relevant for populism is *citizenship*.

POPULISM AS THE POLITICIZATION OF CITIZEN IDENTITY

Stryker's identity theory (Stryker 1980, 2000) is a structural symbolic interactionist theory of role choice. It posits that each person carries a set of identities which combine to form the *self*. Every identity is associated with a role enacted within the network of social relationships and individuals are expected to have as many identities as sets of role relationships in which they take part (e.g. teacher, father, church member, biker etc.). The self organizes identities into a hierarchy with each member occupying a position of relative *identity salience*. Since the individual retains a degree of freedom of choice between alternative behaviors in daily life, the salience of an identity is expected to affect role choice. At the same time, identity salience is itself affected by *commitment* to a group or social network, which entails the expectation to enact a certain role in a given situation. Thus, the central proposition of identity theory becomes "commitment affects identity salience affects role choice" (Stryker 2000: 27). Identity theory also distinguishes between *groups* and *categories*; while the former are based on actual relationships between individuals which provide opportunities to enact roles (e.g. family), the latter have a somewhat involuntary nature which does not necessarily require social interaction (e.g. ethnicity). Obviously, social movements, as paradigmatic cases of social interaction and role enactment, are groups and not categories.

Identity theory explains individual mobilization by pointing to the salience of an identity within the personal hierarchy of the self. The higher we find the identity invoked by the movement within this hierarchy, the higher the likelihood that the person will enact the role expected and mobilize. While neglected for many years, this cross-fertilization potential of identity theory with social movement studies is now an established area of study, having produced an authoritative edited volume by Stryker et al. (2000) which is increasingly influencing academic research. Hence, applying identity theory to PSMs, I contend that the identity which becomes salient in the case of PSMs is that of *citizenship*.

Taken at face value, citizenship reflects membership in a community, the benefits and rights this membership entails, and an abstract level of participation in institutional processes (Bellamy 2008). Tilly (1999: 253) sees it as a kind of

contract, "a set of mutually enforceable claims relating categories of persons to agents of governments . . . sufficiently defined that either party is likely to express indignation and take corrective action when the other fails to meet expectations built into the relationship". Seen in its strictly legal capacity, citizenship does not presuppose political engagement; it allows citizens to refrain from political acts in their daily lives and confine their behavior within the sphere of civic activity (Conover 1995). However, through schooling, media exposure, and other types of socialization, citizens may under circumstances cultivate an appreciation of themselves as more than "mere subjects", or acquire a feeling that their political will cannot be subjugated by unaccountable sovereigns, and realize that citizenship can mean much more than a simple legalistic relationship with authority. Awareness of this common membership in a social group of citizens and the values and affective significance attached, render citizenship a social identity (Tajfel 1981) which may foster commitment and develop as part of the identity hierarchy of the self. At the same time, the realization of the political power content of citizenship becomes a source of legitimate reaction against perceived attempts to compromise this entitlement.

Michael Walzer (1989) thus goes on to distinguish between a *republican* and a *liberal* perspective of citizenship. The former draws from ancient Athens and the French revolution to see citizenship as "an office, a responsibility, a burden proudly assumed", while the latter draws from ancient Rome to see it as "a status, an entitlement, a right or set of rights passively enjoyed" (p. 216). Walzer delineates these differences further in a subsequent passage:

> "the first makes citizenship the core of our life, the second makes it its outer frame. The first assumes a closely knit body of citizens, its members committed to one another; the second assumes a diverse and loosely connected body, its members (mostly) committed elsewhere. According to the first, the citizen is the primary political actor, law-making and administration his everyday business. According to the second, law-making and administration are someone else's business; the citizen's business is private" (1989: 216).

If we picture the *liberal* and the *republican* type at the two extremes of how an individual may grasp citizenship, populist mobilization can then be envisioned as a transition from the passive status of the former to a radical activation of the latter, as a transfiguration of the "ordinary people" into the People, a reification of an authority which had been dwelling in reserve (Canovan 2005). In other

words, populism is latent within citizenship; when political opportunity structure is perceived as conducive, populist entrepreneurs attempt to take advantage of an existing substrate of commitment and engage audiences into a psychological process which elevates citizen identity within the hierarchy of the self, dominating self-interpretation and connecting the individual to the social (cf. Simon 2004). When successful, the social identity of citizen becomes the collective identity of "the sovereign People", a process that Laclau (1977) has metaphorically associated with Jacobinism.

Conclusively, populism requires a fundamental qualitative transformation of citizen identity: it requires its *politicization*. Simon and Klandermans identify a *politicized collective identity* whenever group members "intentionally engage, as a mindful and self-conscious collective (or as representatives thereof), in a power struggle knowing that it is the wider, more inclusive societal context in which this struggle takes place and needs to be orchestrated accordingly" (2001: 323). Similarly, Klandermans and de Weerd (2000) argue that collective identities usually remain politically neutral and become politicized when a "they" which denotes an unresponsive authority is pitted against the righteous claims of a "we".

In this light, populism can be perceived as a conscious effort to achieve the *politicization of citizen identity*; it seeks to morph the static, rigidly formal citizen identity into a fluid and affective "sovereign People", introducing the individual into a resurrected *imagined community* (Anderson 1983) where joint action takes its cue from an alleged historical continuity with other mobilized "Peoples" of a past milieu, a populist "heartland" in Taggart's (2000) words. Populist entrepreneurs attempt to achieve politicization by diagnosing reality as the unjust outcome of a failure of politics as usual (Snow and Benford 1988), invoking citizen identity as the cognitive schema of choice, the vantage point from which to perform this diagnosis. In identity theory terms, the activation of commitment to citizenship in the republican sense increases the salience of citizen identity and results in a higher probability of enacting the role associated with citizenship, thus a higher probability of mobilization. From holding a passive citizen identity as members of a *category*, PSM participants become a *group*. Moreover, since identities are self-reinforcing, the enactment of the role buttresses the belief in being "this kind of person", further bolstering the salience of the identity and sustaining mobilization.

From a similar perspective, Snow and McAdam have explained politicization processes through the notion of *identity amplification* which "involves the embellishment and strengthening of an existing identity that is congruent with a movement's collective identity but not sufficiently salient to ensure participation and activism" (Snow and McAdam 2000: 49). Identity amplification, at a practical level, frequently rests on historicizing popular struggle, drawing elements from the cultural or political tradition of the constituency to stress that citizens are expected to deliver on their redemptive role as "the sovereign People", to "once more" emerge into the limelight of history to claim what is rightfully their own.

For instance, regarding British political culture, Billig claims that "a populist history depicting the nation's past in terms of the struggle between the people and privileged tyranny is part of the cultural common sense", and that "this history can be drawn upon to make critical sense of the present" (Billig 1995: 77). However, it is Anthony Oberschall who has bestowed us with probably the most striking account of the politicization of citizen identity into the People, in his depiction of Eastern European revolts against communist rule in 1989:

> "The Eastern European regimes had for forty years propagandized the party-state and socialism in education, in cultural life, in the mass media. By 1989, it had long been empty rhetoric and meaningless symbolism. Loss of legitimacy had discredited the regime's discourse.
>
> The lack of a credible Communist frame in the confrontations enabled the rapid formation of a collective identity among hundreds of thousands of hitherto apolitical citizens. In the Leipzig Monday evening marches, the shared identity of 'We are the people' is constructed against 'Them, the Communists' during the demonstrations. Elsewhere, in Czechoslovakia, that identity is created overnight, and symbolized by the ringing of keys in unison, meaning 'The time has come for you the communists to resign; your time is up.' When the Communist rulers' claim of representing the people exclusively is denied, not just questioned - that is, when the regime's legitimacy is denied - public discourse compels the recognition of other groups and institutions as legitimate representatives of the people and the nation. In the absence of any other representation, that could only be the people themselves. The 'we-they' dichotomy was embedded in the very fabric of the Communist party-state. And because 'we' are from all classes, ages, regions, and religions, that 'we' is indeed 'the people.' The proof was the thousands of demonstrators from all walks of life. Despite years of apathy and atomization, bereft of a

> civic culture, a collective identity formed in the streets and squares" (Oberschall 1996: 99-100).

Conclusively, to provide a useful mental image, the identity politicization process in the case of PSMs is akin to a familiar Marxian theme, a transformation from a "people-in-itself" to a "people-for-itself", to the acquisition of an all-inclusive, *oppositional* political consciousness as a springboard for action (cf. Westlind 1996; Simon and Klandermans 2001).

At this stage, I have elaborated a comprehensive theoretical framework for the study of Populist Social Movements, providing the necessary foundations for an empirical study which aspires to answer the research question of whether the movements of the Great Recession costituted instances of populist mobilization. Chapters 1 and 2 have thoroughly investigated the theoretical underpinning of the two main analytical planks, populism theory, and social movement studies, and Chapter 3 have proceeded to a cross-fertilization of the two fields in order to define Populist Social Movements and provide an explanatory mechanism for their emergence which rests on conceptualizing populism a politicization of citizen identity upon the Manichean and morally laden distinction between People and elites.

Moving on to the empirical part of this doctoral thesis, I apply this theoretical framework to study the movements of the Great Recession in depth. I employ an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell 2014) which comprises of a quantitative part in which I perform a quantitative comparative content analysis of movement manifestos, and a qualitative part where I triangulate my initial findings with a qualitative analysis. The qualitative phase is itself split into two parts: the first part is a qualitative comparative analysis of archival sources from the Great Recession movements, such as manifestos, press releases, video and audio material, pictures, and minutes of meetings; the second part consists of an in-depth case study analysis of the Greek indignados, building on more than twenty interviews with key informants of the Thessaloniki chapter.

The quantitative assessment is elaborated in the next chapter, where an innovative method of measuring populist discourse is applied to the official manifestos of the Great Recession movements. The research question produces the first hypothesis for this stage:

> **H1:** The manifestos of Great Recession movements exhibit a considerable degree of populist discourse compared to other types of movements.

The first part of the qualitative empirical study (Chapter 5) has the objective to uncover discursive themes which cannot be captured by content analysis methods, and is driven by a second hypothesis:

> **H2:** The movements of the Great Recession mainly employed populist discourse in order to construct a common identity and mobilize their constituencies.

The second qualitative phase (Chapter 6) aims at investigating deeper into the motives of movement entrepreneurs in order to answer a third, interrelated hypothesis:

> **H3:** Great Recession movement entrepreneurs deliberately and strategically employed populist discourse in order to maximize and sustain mobilization.

The mixed-methods approach concludes with an overall assessment of findings and then I proceed to assess the impact of populist mobilization on the institutional political sphere, with Greece as a case study (Chapter 7).

Part 2

Movements of the Great Recession

Chapter 4

Measuring populism with clause-based semantic text analysis

Diverging strongly from the standard course of academic work in most areas of political science and sociology during the past few decades, the study of populism remains a largely qualitative endeavor. The field is populated by scholars who exercise their expert knowledge on particular national party systems in order to single out specific parties or party leaders and assign the populist label by means of a qualitative survey of party manifestos, speeches, or other – usually discursive – elements of political behavior. However, this dichotomous classification and the gate-keeping conduct of academic experts bear many disadvantages. Since analysts still quibble over the minimal defining features of populism, classification tends to be disorderly and unsystematic, while final judgments remain vulnerable to normative biases. The barriers of language and the use of varying or undocumented conditions for case selection seriously inhibit comparative work or render it totally meaningless when covering geographical areas larger than what a small research team can efficiently muster.

In order to overcome these limitations, the study of populism needs to leap forward and apply objective, quantifiable criteria on its subject matter. This development will allow valid and reliable classification of populism phenomena around the world, it will uncover interesting variation across cases, and it will greatly expand the analytical utility of the term by spurring statistical analysis, causal inference, and cross-fertilization with neighboring concepts. A small range of innovative attempts towards such an objective have already been registered in the academic literature, employing a variety of manual and computer-assisted quantitative content analysis techniques. In what follows, the innovations and constraints of extant efforts are critically debated, and a novel methodological framework which incorporates insights from *clause-based semantic text analysis* is introduced as an alternative perspective that better addresses current requirements. This method is then applied to the manifestos of the Great Recession in order to test the first hypothesis posited in the previous chapter.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES OF POPULISM

Quantitative content analysis denotes the quantitative analysis of qualitative data (Bernard and Ryan 2010). Practically, it is a scientific method of extracting

information to use in mapping non-numeric artifacts into a two-dimensional array, with themes heading columns, coding units heading rows, and counts of theme occurrences populating cells (Roberts 2001). Text analysis, the most typical application, rests on the construction of a coding frame as an instrument of comparison that consists of a set of codes applied to the material (Bauer 2000). As Popping (2000: 1) explains, text analysis "is used in bringing structure to an enormous amount of rather unstructured information [allowing] the investigator to make explicit various aspects that might not be noticed by a lay observer". This systematic process depends upon precise definitions, explicitness of procedure, and proper training, to produce reliable, valid, and replicable findings (Franzosi 2008). These provisions guarantee that the impact of human interpretation is constrained, a requirement verified through statistical intercoder reliability tests which are paramount to assess the usability of content analysis measures (Neuendorf 2002).

In recent years, a new generation of scholars has been investigating the application of content analysis techniques to quantify the graded use of populist discourse by political actors, thus breaking with mainstream approaches which restrict empirical scrutiny to substantive, qualitative examinations. These authors insist that to merely divide the political spectrum into populists and non-populists is to lose sight of a wealth of meaningful information. Even if they do not follow on the heels of those who subscribe to the extreme position that equates all politics with populism, they do generally agree with Laclau's encouragement towards moving "from contents to form" (Laclau 2005a: 44) when studying populism. Since it is increasingly observed that most politicians now and then exhibit some degree of populist behavior and since populist discourse varies considerably among cases, it naturally follows that we desperately need a device to capture this fluctuation of populist energy and put it to good use.

Consequently, the graded manifestation of a particular behavior entails that even if we merely aspire to answer the substantive question of whether a political actor should be classified as populist, our argument must necessarily be comparative: *populist compared to what?* Our judgment must somehow compare against a standard metric that taps into the rich source of information that political discourse represents and measures *how much* populism is employed by specific actors, before supporting a certain verdict. If we want to stop cramming square pegs into round holes, we need to recruit quantitative methods and benchmarks in order to overcome bias and reach reliable outcomes that eschew

researcher fiat.[22] Only quantitative data can show whether political party X is *more* populist than political party Y, and if their distance justifies inclusion into different sets, or reveal whether populist overtones in a leader's repertoire have increased during her career. Quantification is the only way to encourage tests of statistical significance.

The gears of the quantitative shift in the study of populism have already started to turn, giving birth to a set of impressive studies that prove the utility of studying gradations within a concept typically manipulated in dichotomous terms. However, researchers are still working hard to develop solid text analysis methodologies that can generate large datasets and stimulate causal theorizing. Before I contribute my own perspective, it is necessary to illustrate best practices and indicate limitations within the current state of the art. Towards this aim, Table 2 presents a summary of extant content analysis applications that produce ratio scales of populist discourse. These can be divided into three broad categories: dictionary-based automated methods, holistic grading, and traditional thematic text analysis.

Pauwels (2011) and Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) have assembled special-purpose dictionaries and recruited the processing power of computers to measure populism. Operationalizing Mudde's (2004) definition they distilled two necessary dimensions for the concept, *people-centrism* and *anti-elitism*. Refraining from manually locating these two latent themes within text, they set out to derive equally valid results by counting frequencies of words carefully chosen to indicate their traces. However, they soon discovered that measuring *people-centrism* this way was "nearly impossible" (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011: 1275), and settled with measuring words that stand for *anti-elitism* alone. While results exhibit some level of validity, these methodological choices obviously amount to a weighty discount of analytical value, since populism is effectively equated with anti-elitism, a decision inevitably undermining their theoretical premises and eroding the significance of findings.

Computer-assisted text analysis guarantees perfect reliability. However, validity depends crucially on the contents of dictionaries. Therefore, the unwelcome interpretative bias of manual approaches is still at work, concealed within the preparatory stage of choosing words to populate dictionaries (Shapiro and Markoff 1998); this stage invariably eschews tests of reliability. For instance,

[22] Most certainly, after the acquisition of reliable quantitative data, a given level of populist discourse can be agreed upon as an *ad hoc* threshold to separate populist from non-populist actors.

Pauwels (2011) includes all the usual suspects such as *people* and *elites* in his dictionary, but also adds various words and phrases such as *absurd*, *admit*, *freedom of expression, politic**, *propaganda, ruling**, *tradition**, *truth*, and *arrogant*, choices which hardly constitute indicative elements of populist discourse.

Moreover, in their cross-national study, Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) have had to include "context-specific words", since each political culture uses idiosyncratic expressions that cannot transcend linguistic barriers, a problem similar to what Popping (2000) describes as "idiomatic ambiguity".[23] The significance of the word *regenten* (ibid.: endnote 9) for Dutch populism, or *katestimeno* (Pappas and Aslanidis 2015) for Greek populism are telling illustrations of this problem. The dictionary for the Netherlands in Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) was made to contain fourteen "core" words and seven "context" words, thus proving that contextual impact is far from negligible when analyzing text (Krippendorf 2004). In all, methodological details reveal that these researchers had already performed an extensive qualitative analysis of discursive patterns within their subject matter, coming up with *ad hoc*, special-purposed dictionaries. Importantly, the considerable effort invested in this preparatory step does not justify the characterization of dictionary-based methods as less labor intensive than rival, human-coding approaches (Franzosi 2008).

To use dictionaries for measuring a concept such as populism is to broad-brush political text; findings will inevitably be of limited validity due to the detrimental effects of decontextualization. As Hawkins argues, "we cannot gauge a broad, latent set of meanings in a text—a discourse—simply by counting words" (2009: 1049); Shapiro and Markoff (1998) evaluate automated methods as hobbling rather than encouraging research, and Bauer (2000) goes as far as to proclaim them simply absurd. However, these are rather hasty dismissals of an otherwise useful approach. Despite shortcomings, dictionaries can, for instance, be readily employed as an initial step in triangulating more valid methods (see Pauwels 2014). Future developments in information theory are expected to improve automated analyses, and social scientists must remain willing to incorporate these novelties within their methodological toolkit.

Shifting to the category of human-coded methods, Hawkins (2009) has crossed over to the other extreme, employing the technique of *holistic grading* to

[23] For a thorough discussion on the problems of idiosyncratic, illocutionary, and relevance ambiguity in text analysis, see Roberts and Popping (1996).

measure populist discourse within political speeches. The most important thing to note about holistic grading methods is that the sampling unit coincides with the coding unit. Coders are meticulously trained in identifying populism and are handed a set of speeches by chief political executives to study and grade according to a 3-point scale of either 0 (non-populist), 1 (mixed), or 2 (populist). With sufficient training, this technique can produce much more valid results than automated methods, but is predicated upon two inherent limitations.

First, reliability; Hawkins (2009) reports an acceptable Cohen's *kappa* of 0.68 for the first coding stage, and a much lower score of 0.44 for the second stage. This moderate performance is attributed to the large number of coders, the small set of speeches, and the limited experience of coders in reading political texts (Hawkins 2009). However, it must be said that these tests fail to reflect the ordinal nature of the grading scale which somewhat ameliorates reliability. Without doubt, to demand impeccable reliability scores when measuring latent meanings such as populism is a rather nonsensical requirement. Unimpressive scores are indeed a nuisance, but they would not become a grave issue if they did not affect scoring schemes. Unfortunately, the need to achieve acceptable reliability levels forced Hawkins (2009) to employ an ordinal scale with only three levels of differentiation. This yields a very low dynamic range of measurement, insufficient to capture variation among cases, especially in small samples; the low resolution coding scheme adds a mere extra level to the dichotomous "either-or" approach it purports to overcome. On another note, holistic grading fails to offer any secondary quantitative or qualitative information such as frequency of specific themes or references to social actors, so as to facilitate a more comprehensive analysis of populist discourse. As a conclusion, while holistic grading is arguably the best method in terms of reaching a compromise between validity and speed, problems with moderate reliability and low resolution undermine its analytical utility.

Bernhard et al. (2015) have also opted not to segment their sample units, and hence their approach is quite similar to Hawkins (2009). Nevertheless, they differ in constructing a coding scheme which relies on March (2012) and includes three dimensions of populism: *people-centrism*, *anti-elitism*, and *popular sovereignty*, with the overall score for each sample unit resulting from a combination of the three. They have applied this scheme on press releases, press conferences, party newspapers, and political ads of the Swiss SVP, thus greatly expanding the pool of available data for analysis. However, coding of populist

dimensions was performed exclusively by a contributing author and therefore its reliability cannot be assessed.[24]

Apart from dictionary-based and holistic studies, the remaining contributions in Table 2 rely on more "traditional" thematic text analysis methods. Typically, they identify specific themes derived from operationalizing a certain definition of populism and build coding schemes to reliably measure populist occurrences within systematically delineated segments (coding units) of original text. Scores result by dividing occurrences with the total number of segments.

In their groundbreaking analysis, Jagers and Walgrave (2007) defined populism as a political communication style used strategically to mobilize support, and analyzed its manifestation within transcripts from televised messages of Belgian political parties. However, adding the dimension of *exclusivity* resulted in a bias towards capturing exclusively right-wing populism (Rooduijn 2014). Moreover, Jagers and Walgrave (2007) tended to overcode people-centrism, performing a blanket identification of all references to "the people" as constitutive of populism. They also employed a highly complex presentation scheme, weighting and scoring calculations involving two levels of coding, distinguishing between "thin" and "thick" populism. Their use of vague "excerpts" as coding units is highly arbitrary and issues of reliability are not dealt with at all.

Reungoat (2010) made several changes to this original coding scheme in studying French euromanifestos, swapping the problematic *exclusivity-index* for a *claim-for-democracy* index. Unfortunately, coding *people-centrism* is overly inclusive since it incorporates references to any "group[s] of people having explicit constant features in common" (ibid.: 311), which even applies to the "community of European peoples" (ibid.: 296). Similarly, the *claim-for-democracy* index seems to capture a lot more than appeals for unmediated access of people to power which distinguishes populism from more general democratic appeals. Finally, criticizing the French left has been included in the *anti-elite* index, conflating typical oppositional rhetoric with populist, morally-laden, anti-establishment discourse. As with Jagers and Walgrave (2007), Reungoat (2010) employs "excerpts" as the coding unit and omits any discussion of reliability.

Vasilopoulou et al. (2014) employ a quite robust segmentation approach, dissecting a dataset of Greek parliamentary speeches into "core-sentences". However, they have opted for an idiosyncratic conceptualization of populism

[24] Personal communication with authors.

which diverges considerably from the accumulated wisdom of the field, failing to incorporate the basic dimension of an appeal to the notion of the people. While they employ a novel coding scheme to construct *blame-shifting* and *exclusivity* indices, it is mostly anti-elitism that they actually manage to capture, rather than populism. They explicitly refrain from coding "we" sentences that would exhibit the populist tendency of speaking on behalf of "the people", and as in Reungoat (2010), they do not distinguish between mere oppositional rhetoric among political parties and standard populist discourse against elites which is expressed in the name of the people. Since coding was performed exclusively by the first author, the reliability of the method cannot be assessed.[25]

In probably the most solid approaches so far, Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) and Rooduijn et al. (2014) have relied on paragraphs as their coding unit and election manifestos as their sampling unit to identify Western European populist parties and investigate whether mainstream parties have become more populist over the years, respectively. They justify their degreeist approach claiming that populism is "a property of a message rather than a property of the actor sending the message" (ibid.: 565), and train coders to identify *people-centric* and *anti-elitist* themes, yielding Krippendorf's *alpha* reliability scores of approximately 0.70.[26] Remaining loyal to their operationalization of Mudde's (2004) definition, they identify populism only when a paragraph contains both *people-centric* and *anti-elitist* claims. However, in Rooduijn et al. (2014), scores of "introductory paragraphs" of election manifestos are doubled and paragraphs in long manifestos receive different weights than those in shorter ones, thus employing a non-linear coding scheme.

The line of criticism against the otherwise rigorous text analyses that Rooduijn and his associates have conducted focuses on the choice of paragraphs as coding units. While it seems quite legitimate, this choice surrenders researchers to the semantic segmentation imposed on texts by their original authors. Slicing text into paragraphs is bound to be arbitrary since paragraph length varies considerably among party manifestos and we often find bullet-pointed lists and short motivational sentences or quotes, features which destroy comparability among coding units. Other sources of political rhetoric such as speeches, interviews, and parliamentary debates are also problematic in a different respect, since there is no systematic method to segment transcribed text into

[25] Personal communication with first author.
[26] The same method is applied to newspaper opinion articles in Rooduijn (2014) with better reliability scores.

paragraphs. Additionally, while far superior to holistic grading, coding paragraphs still involves a discount in semantic resolution, since mildly populist paragraphs receive identical scores with intensely populist ones that carry greater informative content.

As a summary of this survey, Table 3 provides an assessment of extant methods in terms of validity, reliability, and resolution. So far, this overview has revealed that a growing number of researchers see value in complementing substantive evaluations of populism with relative ones. The building momentum justifies optimism: notwithstanding reliability issues in some approaches, it is evident that the quantification of populism is indeed feasible, and future efforts, supported by larger teams of coders and sufficient funding, are destined to produce richer and more reliable results. It is perhaps no exaggeration to claim that the quantitative turn in the study of populism is a breakthrough development that contributes a wealth of beneficial effects.

Thus, objective empirical studies of populism will shun accusations of researcher fiat and normative bias hauled against qualitative approaches that have dulled the sheen of this useful political term (e.g. D'Eramo 2013). Construction of datasets will foster cooperation, providing new tools for comparative examinations. Furthermore, probing random political texts will uncover new instances of populism which have not yet drawn attention. Statistical analysis can greatly benefit, facilitating causal analysis and hypothesis testing in areas hitherto dealt with in a purely qualitative manner, such as the relationship between populism and liberal democracy.

Table 2: Original scholarship on quantitative content analysis of populism by reverse chronological order[27]

Author(s)	Operational definition	Sampling unit(s)	Coding unit	Themes/index	Reliability scores
Bernhard, Kriesi, and Weber (2015)	March (2012), based on Mudde (2004)	press releases, press conferences, party newspaper, political ads	eq. sampling unit	1. people-centrism 2. anti-elitism 3. popular sovereignty	*absent*
Rooduijn (2014)	Mudde (2004)	newspaper opinion articles	paragraph	1. people-centrism 2. anti-elitism	α=0.81 α=0.72
Rooduijn, de Lange, and van der Brug (2014)	Mudde (2004)	party manifestos	paragraph	1. people-centrism 2. anti-elitism	α=0.72 α=0.69
Vasilopoulou, Halikiopoulou, and Exadaktylos (2014)	Vasilopoulou, Halikiopoulou, and Exadaktylos (2014)	party leader parliamentary speeches	core-sentence	1. blame-shifting index 2. exclusivity index	*absent*
Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011)	based on Mudde (2004)	party manifestos	I. paragraph II. word	I. 1. people-centrism 2. anti-elitism II. dictionary-based	I. α=0.73 α=0.70 II. *N/A*
Pauwels (2011)	based on Mudde (2004)	party manifestos, party magazines	word	dictionary-based	*N/A*
Reungoat (2010)	Reungoat (2010)	European election manifestos	excerpt	1. people-index 2. anti-elite index 3. claim for democracy index	*absent*
Hawkins (2009)	Hawkins (2009)	speeches of chief executives	eq. sampling unit	none (holistic grading)	stage 1: κ=0.68 stage 2: κ=0.44
Jagers and Walgrave (2007)	Jagers and Walgrave (2007)	10 min. TV broadcasts	excerpt	1. people-index 2. anti-establishment index 3. exclusivity-index	*absent*

[27] There is a set of further works which use content analysis to study populism, without however aiming to produce a ratio scale of populist discourse, but rather investigate qualitative facets of populist themes; see Deegan-Krause and Haughton (2009), Ruzza and Fella (2011), Caiani and della Porta (2011), and Bruhn (2012). Moreover, some authors consider Armony and Armony (2005) as an early example of quantitative content analysis of populism; this is mistaken, since it is simply a content analysis of answers to the question "In spite of the current situation, do you feel proud to be Argentine? Why?" taken from an Argentine online forum.

Conclusively, there is no sense in downplaying the merits of quantifying populism; similar debates in neighboring concepts have been settled long ago (Collier and Adcock 1999). Given the limitations of current methods, we need to pursue a middle way between perfectly reliable but rather crude dictionary-based approaches and holistic assessments that infuse valuable interpretative judgment at the cost of poor grading scales. At the same time, we need to tweak coding units away from rigidity and arbitrariness. In what follows I submit a novel approach which hopefully caters for these considerations, incorporating best practices while avoiding pitfalls.

Table 3: Assessment of quantitative literature on measuring populism in terms of validity, reliability, and resolution

Content analysis study	Validity	Reliability	Resolution
Bernhard et al. (2015)	high	low	low
Rooduijn (2014)	high	high	moderate
Rooduijn et al. (2014)	high	moderate	moderate
Vasilopoulou et al. (2014)	low	low	high
Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011)	high	moderate	moderate
Pauwels (2011)	moderate	high	high
Reungoat (2010)	low	low	high
Hawkins (2009)	high	moderate	low
Jagers and Walgrave (2007)	low	low	high

CLAUSE-BASED SEMANTIC TEXT ANALYSIS

The goal is to introduce a content analytical method for coding populism that serves two fundamental objectives: first, to provide a reliable ratio metric for populist content found in political texts; second, to preserve qualitative elements of populist discourse for further analysis. This can only be accomplished if the method illustrates the following characteristics:

Req. #1: it includes a minimal set of dimensions capable of capturing populism

Req. #2: it employs a coding unit which strikes a balance between absorbing context and providing semantic resolution

Req. #3: it utilizes a coding and scoring scheme which captures frequency reliably, without discarding the qualitative content of the coding unit

For reasons discussed previously, automated dictionaries and holistic grading cannot satisfy these requirements. Methods that fall in-between come closer to the target; the approach of Rooduijn and his associates fulfills the first

requirement, but only partly satisfies the second one, and does not rise up to the standards of the last element in the list. Hence, to fully reach these objectives, I suggest that we turn to a variant of quantitative text analysis: *clause-based semantic text analysis.*

Clause-based semantic text analysis (Popping and Roberts 2015) is a method which diverges in a number of ways from simply counting word or phrase occurrences within heaps of textual elements, as classical content analysis does. Its most characteristic feature is the use of a *semantic grammar* which reformulates the original text into a succession of *semantic triplets*. The semantic triplet, also called SVO triplet (Franzosi 2012), is comprised of the main syntactic components of language, *subject*, *verb*, and *object*, and is considered a superior coding unit in many respects (Shapiro and Markoff 1998). Originally developed by linguists, the significant value of the semantic grammar approach for text analysis is now widely acknowledged (Roberts 1997a; Johnston and Oliver 2000; Franzosi 2004). Its advantages for measuring populism are threefold: reliability, increased resolution, and structural commensurability.

First, semantic triplets are inherently reliable coding units. They restore control of the text back to the researcher without loss of fidelity, taking advantage of structural grammatical features of language. They are preferable to the arbitrary segmentation dictated by typographical clues (sentences or, worse, paragraphs) found in ready-made political texts such as manifestos, or the necessarily unsystematic choices researchers make when transcribing oral artifacts such as speeches and interviews. The strict rules of grammar guarantee rigorous and systematic handling of textual material, producing perfectly comparable coding units in *subject-verb-object* format, in any possible language. Apart from the option of manually identifying SVO triplets, computer programs have also been developed to automatically parse text for syntactical elements;[28] with improved tools, we can expect increased reliability and even lower processing costs.

Second, semantic triplets offer increased resolution compared to both paragraphs and sentences. As explained earlier, coding whole paragraphs fails to account for differences in degree *between* these usually large coding units; paragraphs are treated dichotomously, in an either-or fashion, irrespective of their length. This is a substantial compromise: coding short sample units of, say, three or four paragraphs would not be much different than using a holistic

[28] See the discussion on applications of two automated parsers (KEDS, IDEA) in Franzosi (2010: 62-63). Also see Popping (2000: 78-79, 195) on KEDS.

approach. Sentences, or quasi-sentences, on the other hand, are much smaller units that avoid these limitations. Yet, semantic triplets can perform even better and provide higher resolution, since a natural sentence usually produces an increased number of semantic triplets. Therefore, clause-based semantic text analysis overshadows other methods in terms of handling sources of political discourse, treating long texts and small containers of political information (e.g. slogans, tweets etc.) in an equally rigorous manner; as long as a verb exists in the sample unit, a semantic triplet can be extracted and the method applies. To compensate for contextualization, coders can be instructed to draw judgment from much larger *context* units, or even the entire text, before appending codes (Krippendorf 2004).

Third, semantic triplets are ideal measurement instruments due to their perfect structural commensurability with the formal features of populist discourse. According to Mudde's (2004) definition, employed by most content analysts and generally enjoying recognition in the literature, populism denotes a morally laden political antagonism between "people" and "elites"; or as Canovan exclaims, "the perennial cry of populists is that power has been stolen from the people by politicians and special interests" (2005: 5). These insights are minimally operationalized into two familiar populist dimensions: *people-centrism* and *anti-elitism*. Therefore, the populist message is expected to contain references to two symbolic categories of social actors (people, elites) and narrate actions of the latter against the former, or demands in the opposite direction. These formal characteristics of populist discourse (Laclau 2005b) are perfectly commensurable with the syntactic form of semantic triplets, where people (*people-centrism*) and elites (*anti-elitism*) are expected to function as subjects (and/or objects) of clauses, with their interaction denoted through verbs. Hence, semantic triplets are excellent vessels for carrying and inspecting the full essence of populist form.

Apart from fulfilling these conditions, semantic text analysis has the extra advantage of optionally allowing for the preservation of the qualitative features of populist discourse. This feature can facilitate a further stage of analysis in order to increase validity of findings, since qualitative content can be captured during the coding process into datasets comprised of the semantic elements (subject, verb, object) employed. The most impressive application of semantic analysis in this respect is Shapiro and Markoff's (1998) lengthy study of the *Cahiers de doléances* archives from 1789 France where the coding of grievances expressed by citizens towards King Louis XVI produced a database of French

public opinion. Similarly, Franzosi (1999) and Franzosi et al. (2012) have used semantic text analysis to derive both quantitative and qualitative inferences regarding various social phenomena such as postwar Italian strike activity and newspaper stories of lynchings in Georgia between 1875 and 1930. Roberts (1997b) has applied the same methodology to study how East and West Berlin radio stations covered two brief military conflicts during the spring of 1979, Roberts et al. (2010) have used semantic analysis to distinguish between Islamic and Hindu cultural traits in newspapers, and Johnston and Alimi (2013) have used SVO triplets to study Palestinian nationalism. In all these cases, coders registered semantic triplets into a database which was then probed to identify qualitative features and/or frequencies of social actors expressed as subjects and objects, as well as the actions that took place between them and expressed through verbs. Some authors (e.g. Franzosi 2004) have further used this information to build informative networks graphs illustrating interaction among social actors.

In the same vein, scholars interested in populism can proceed to build databases of "populist semantic triplets" where social actors denoting "the people" interact with various "elite" actors. Since these references are expected to be found in a limited portion of the material, this would be a far simpler endeavor than the exhaustive scanning of text required in larger projects. Semantic triplets that contain populist elements can populate a database with three relevant datasets. Capturing *subjects* and *objects* within SVO clauses we can construct a **{people-centrism}** actor-set to contain all types of invocations of "the people", and an **{anti-elitism**} actor-set to contain all references to "elites"; these sets can report frequency through their member count and provide qualitative information on which social actors are typically taken to constitute "the people" and their enemies. The *verb* part can populate an **{interaction}** set to supply qualitative information on what type of action takes place between members of the two actor-sets.

As a simple example, imagine a sample unit (e.g. a speech) parsed into a sequence of SVO clauses which includes the clause *"Politicians have betrayed the people"*. If correctly interpreted as constitutive of populism, the coder will register the following lines in the respective datasets:

{people-centrism}	+=	{"people"}
{anti-elitism}	+=	{"politicians"}
{interaction}	+=	{"betrayed"}

where the notation **+ =** denotes addition of the textual element in the rightmost column to the dataset of the first column, which is in turn represented by a label within brackets. The coding of further populist semantic clauses will add more elements into the three datasets, until the sample is exhausted. This way, apart from producing overall frequency scores of populist discourse in the sample unit, we can also utilize findings to answer secondary quantitative and qualitative questions (cf. Popping 2000). For instance, the **{anti-elitism}** dataset can be queried to answer questions such as *"Which actor is mostly portrayed as the elite?"*, while the **{interaction}** set can answer qualitative inquiries of the type *"Which grievances do the people express towards elites?"* Data from different national party systems or time periods can be employed to reach very interesting comparative conclusions that have so far been addressed in a predominantly descriptive and far from rigorous manner.

A very first attempt to apply a semantic grammar to the study of populism has been published by Caiani and della Porta (2011) with the objective to study populist frames in the discourse of extreme right organizations in Italy and Germany. Their methodology does not provide an overall metric for the presence of populism within an identified sample unit, but rather applies a story grammar to locate subject-actors in a heap of data and report frequencies and qualitative characteristics. Therefore, while they construct separate indexes for "identity actors" and "oppositional actors", these do not seamlessly overlap with *people-centrism* and *anti-elitism* as one expects of a quantitative analysis of populism with a specific scoring scheme.

What Caiani and della Porta (2011) were mostly interested in was to extract qualitative inferences from references to "the people" and their enemies from a body of text which was already taken to constitute populist discourse. Their approach did not take into account issues of reliability, since the textual material was split between two individuals of which one was the first author, and no reliability test was performed.[29] Moreover, their use of the "statement" as a coding unit was too vaguely described in the paper, and they opted for a standardized, *a priori* codebook of actors rather than allowing for their database to be populated in an inductive, emergent manner, as semantic text analysis usually prescribes.

However, the fact that Caiani and della Porta (2011) employed a semantic grammar and managed to build datasets containing references to the people and

[29] Personal communication with first author.

their enemies, preserving the qualitative content of their interactions, is testimony of the feasibility of using clause-based semantic text analysis for the study of populism. In the next section, I contribute an example of my own application of the method which overcomes the limitations of extant approaches and hopefully fulfills all the objectives that have been posited at the start of this section.

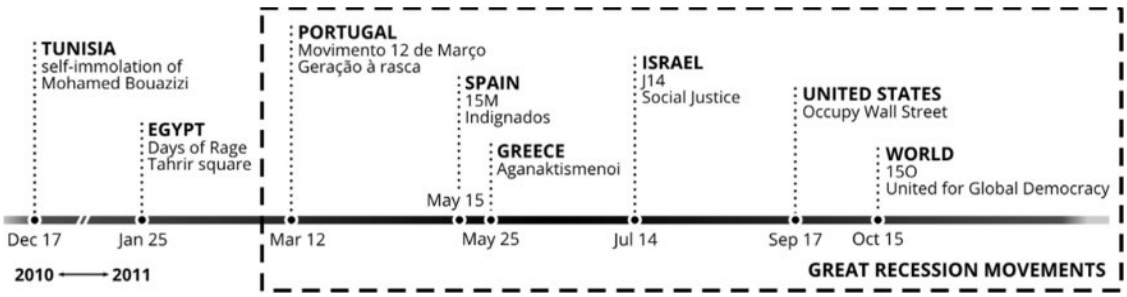
SEMANTIC TEXT ANALYSIS OF GREAT RECESSION MOVEMENTS

In this section I apply clause-based semantic text analysis to study manifestos from movements of the Great Recession which swept across Europe and the United States during the year 2011. Inspired by the Arab Spring, movements such as the Spanish *indignados*, the Greek *aganaktismenoi* and the US *Occupy Wall Street* emerged as a purported reaction to the ongoing economic crisis and the harsh austerity measures imposed on crisis-ridden countries in the Eurozone (see Graph 6). As explained earlier, the distinctive ring of their discourse which regularly pitted a "noble" People against an assortment of powerful yet corrupt elites, has led to the first hypothesis of this thesis:

> **H1:** The manifestos of Great Recession movements exhibit a considerable degree of populist discourse compared to other types of movements.

If this hypothesis is confirmed, the result can be seen be a first step towards classifying this wave of mobilization as a wave of *populist social movements*.

Graph 6: Timeline of Events



Following a purposive (relevance) sampling approach (Krippendorf 2004), a dataset of manifestos was assembled, composed of those considered as most important instances of Great Recession mobilization. These are moderately short texts written in narrative format, encompassing the diagnostic, prognostic, and

motivational frames usually employed by social movement entrepreneurs (Snow and Benford 1988). The manifestos were seen as summarizing the essence of the mobilizations, as some type of official "constitutional" document approved unanimously in the General Assemblies of the squares, the sole collective decision making institution. The most significant movements such as those in Portugal, Spain, Greece, and the United States, all produced such texts, disseminated through social media and unequivocally acknowledged by all participants. Additionally, on October 15, 2011, a worldwide *United for Global Change* protest was jointly organized by the movements in 951 cities of 82 countries, and the respective manifesto was hence included in the dataset. While the J14 movement in Israel did largely partake in the same wave of contention (Alimi 2012), no manifesto was produced, and therefore J14 is not part of the case selection.

Table 4: Case Selection

Movement	Manifesto title	Date issued	Words
Geração à Rasca (Portugal)	Manifesto – Precarious Generation Protest	Feb 18, 2011	305
15M Indignados (Spain)	Manifesto "Real Democracy Now"	May 2, 2011	570
Kinima Aganaktismenon Politon (Greece)	Resolution of the Popular Assembly of Syntagma Square	May 27, 2011	156
Occupy Wall Street (USA)	Declaration of the Occupation of New York City	Sep 29, 2011	642
United for Global Change	Manifesto for Global Democracy	Oct 14, 2011	313
Populists (USA)	The Populist Manifesto	Feb 22, 1895	460
Greenpeace (USA)	Greenpeace Declaration of Interdependence	Nov 1976	628
Immigrant Movement International	International Migrant Manifesto	Nov 5, 2011	464

Furthermore, in order to provide a reliable benchmark for populist discourse as a means of validation, the dataset includes the *Populist Manifesto* of 1895, addressed to members of the American People's Party, widely considered as the paradigmatic case of populist mobilization in the literature (Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Canovan 1981). A second type of benchmark was provided by including two manifestos from movements classified within other genres of mobilization: the *Greenpeace Declaration of Independence*, and the *International Migrant Manifesto*. Therefore, I hypothesize that the manifestos of Great Recession movements will illustrate a degree of populist discourse much closer to the

former benchmark rather than the latter. A summary of cases can be seen in Table 4. The original full texts of all manifestos can be found in the Appendix.

Regarding the working conceptualization of populism I employ the definition provided by Mudde (2004). However, *contra* Mudde, and attending to a range of researchers who question the analytic purchase of ideology when applied to collective behavior (Tarrow 1992; Snow and Byrd 2007), I assign populism's genus to discourse rather than ideology, considering the latter a strong and unfounded claim, as explained in Chapter 1. Following Rooduijn and his associates, I posit that the minimal operationalization of populism can rest on the identification of two dimensions: *people-centrism*, defined as the invocation of the overwhelming majority of the people as rightful political sovereigns within a given polity, and *anti-elitism*, defined as the reference to slim minorities of power holders who are seen as being in the process of or having unjustly appropriated popular sovereignty. I further consider the concurrent presence of both dimensions in a coding unit as signifying a *full populist frame*. In other words, a *full populist frame* has a form which captures the complete essence of populist discourse, a message "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" as argued by Mudde (2004: 543).

In order to test my hypothesis and since I am only interested in illustrating overall scores of populist discourse in this case, I have not proceeded to building comprehensive qualitative databases for secondary analysis. The first step of the process, after assembling the dataset, is to apply syntax grammar rules to unitize texts into SVO triplets, as explained in the previous section. Each sentence, or each part of a sentence that hosts an inflected verb and (optionally) a subject and a predicate, undergoes a rewrite process and is transformed into an SVO triplet-clause. Hence, the original text is eventually turned into a sequence of SVO clauses, each with a unique serial number to preserve the original flow and coherence of meaning.

This transformation is assisted by a set of standard rewrite rules, such as turning passive clauses into active ones and segmenting clauses that contain coordinating conjunctions. As Franzosi (2004) notes, rewrite rules are necessary because the semantic content does not fully overlap with the "natural" segmentation unit employed in narrative, the sentence. To use his example, the sentence "The workers were young and skilled" provides not one, but two pieces

of substantive information that modify the subject, collapsed within the same sentence through the use of a coordinating conjunction. Therefore, to correctly code this sentence and preserve fidelity while capturing its full contents within our coding unit, we need to rewrite it into two separate semantic clauses: (a) "The workers were young", and (b) "The workers were skilled". Hence, the use of a semantic grammar entails that the number of semantic triplets extracted from a given text inevitably exceeds the number of natural sentences therein. Since rhetorical and syntactical elements such as repetition, conditional phrases, and adjectival expressions are vital to populist discourse, their impact must be reflected on a coding scheme that purports to measure intensity. As discussed in the previous section, this enhances overall resolution and provides for more nuanced scoring outcomes.

After unitization, three coders were trained to recognize populist invocations and identify empirical examples of *people-centrism* and *anti-elitism* by analyzing the nature of social actors mentioned in political texts and comparing with the populist categories of "people" and "elites" according to the theoretical framework provided by the author. Upon reaching acceptable intercoder reliability scores between the three coders (the researcher was not included) on a sub-sample of the data consisting of 111 observations (clauses) which approximate 20% of the full sample, they were introduced to a computer application (Picture 1) developed by the author to facilitate the assignment of SVO clauses into one of eight codes (Table 5). These codes are independent, exclusive, and exhaustive (Popping 2010). The decision to develop specialized software for the task was taken in order to streamline the coding process and avoid typing or other mistakes on the part of the coders; otherwise, the method is still a manual process.[30] Preparation of each manifesto took an average of two hours; coding required approximately one hour per case and was executed as follows.

Prior to assigning codes to clauses, coders were asked to read their assigned material at least twice to become acquainted with the context. In this first, holistic step, they were instructed to contemplate on subjects mainly addressed by the manifesto and pinpoint emergent collective identities, adversarial or otherwise. Then, taking up each clause in succession, they mentally constructed the set of **{actors}** in the clause and consulted a detailed decision scheme (Figure 2) in order to follow the correct steps towards reaching their final verdict on the

[30] The software package developed for this thesis is titled *tagger*, it is scalable for other projects, and is freely available upon contacting the author.

code to assign. Three codes (U01 for *people-centrism*, T01 for *anti-elitism*, and V01 for a *full populist frame*) contribute to identifying the dimensions of populist discourse, while the rest are residual codes, employed in research questions that require a second, qualitative stage, which will not be presented here.

Picture 1: A screenshot of *taggger* software package in the process of coding a manifesto.

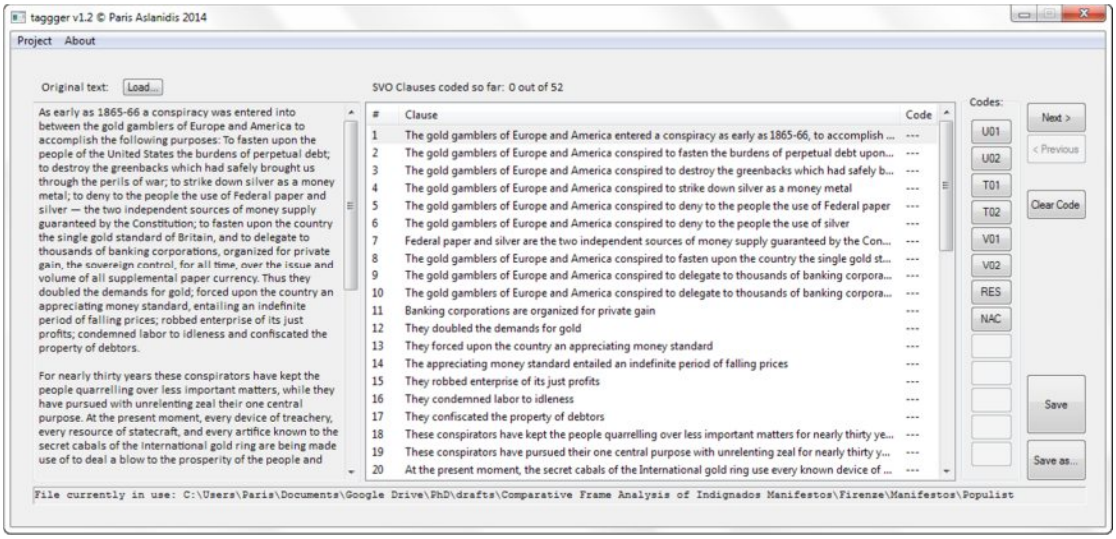
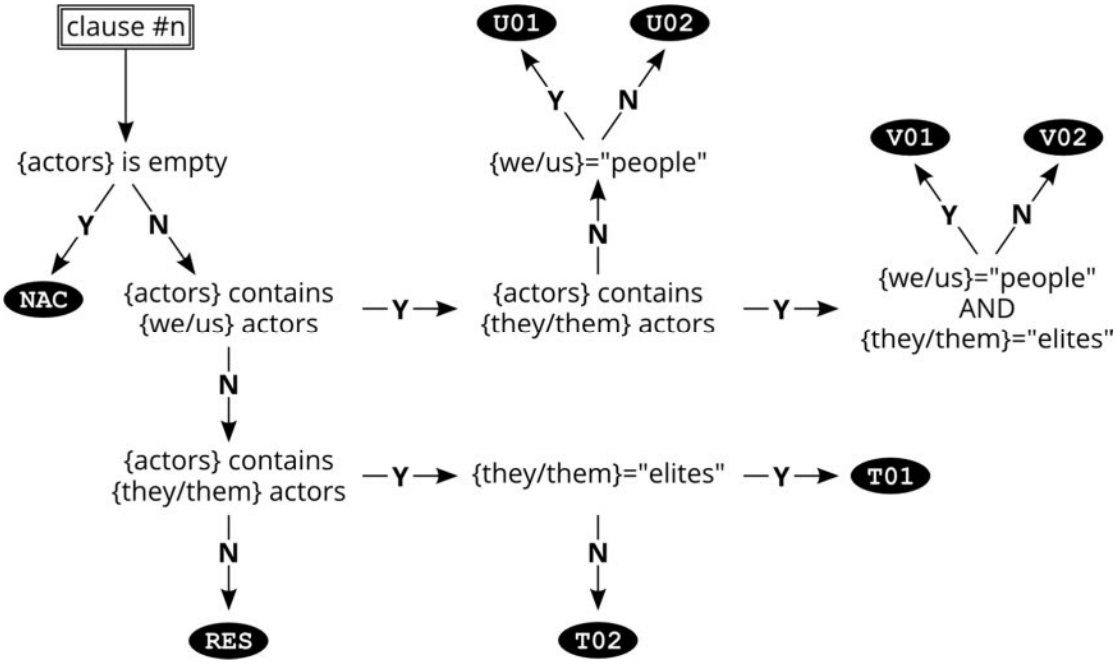


Table 5: Codes and descriptions

Code	Description	Rule
U01	people-centrism	{actors} contains a populist "we"
U02	us-residual	{actors} contains a "we" that is non-populist
T01	anti-elitism	{actors} contains a populist "they"
T02	them-residual	{actors} contains a non-populist "they"
V01	full populist frame	{actors} contains a populist "we" and a populist "they"
V02	us-vs-them residual	{actors} contains a "we" and a "they" but not both are populist
NAC	non-actor	{actors} is empty
RES	actor-residual	{actors} contains no "we" or "they" elements

One of the most important contributions of this method is the use of decision schemes (Graph 7). These tools greatly enhance reliability by organizing the coding process along a series of dichotomous decisions, they increase coding speed, and they minimize errors of coder fatigue (Krippendorf 2004). They also decrease the frustration felt by coders when dealing with lengthy and purely descriptive coding schemes which require a great deal of unwarranted interpretation on their part.

Graph 7: Decision scheme for coding SVO clauses into one of eight categories



The overall intercoder reliability score was recorded at a Krippendorf's *alpha* of 0.724 on a random sample of the dataset of Great Recession movements (Hayes and Krippendorf 2007). The respective scores for the various stages of coding can be seen in Table 6. Since qualitative inferences are not part of this example, we can code all categories that do not contribute to the ratio scale as residual, and hence the score reaches an *alpha* of 0.745.

Table 6: Intercoder reliability scores for the various stages of coding

Coding stage	***alpha***
Agreement on whether clause contains actor (NAC)	0.629
Agreement on whether clause contains we/us actors (U01/U02/V01/V02)	0.948
Agreement on whether clause contains they/them actors (T01/T02/V01/V02)	0.887
Agreement on *people-centrism* for we/us actors (U01/V01)	0.799
Agreement on *anti-elitism* for they/them actors (T01/V01)	0.780
Agreement on *full populist frames* (V01)	0.816

The moderate intercoder agreement on identifying the presence of an actor in the clause is largely attributed to disagreement whether vague notions such as "society" or "humanity" should be classified as actors or not. Further training that would disambiguate such observations could lead to highly increased

intercoder scores altogether, since the remaining decisions already illustrate a remarkable degree of agreement. In the next section I present my scoring scheme and discuss final results.

SCORING SCHEME AND RESULTS

The objective of this method is to provide an overall ratio metric of populism by dividing occurrences of "populist semantic triplets" with the total number of clauses in the sample unit. To capture the Manichean quality of populist discourse, a coding scheme needs to differentiate between *full populist frames*, where the adversarial juxtaposition between a positive valorization of the people (*people-centrism*) and a condemnation of elites (*anti-elitism*) as perpetrators of injustice are both manifest simultaneously within the coding unit, and partial populist frames which only contain elements of either *people-centrism* or *anti-elitism* (Barr 2009; Rooduijn et al. 2014). This is crucial since much research tends to confound partial frames with populism proper, miscoding simple anti-incumbent discourse or any appeal to popular sovereignty as populism, thus contributing to an unhealthy inflation of the concept to cover the near totality of political rhetoric.

Admittedly however, a "populist" text will inevitably contain *partial populist frames* along instances of *full populist frames*. These extra *people-centric* and *anti-elitist* appeals undoubtedly contribute to the populist character of the text, despite the fact that they are perhaps situated in neighboring clauses rather than coexist within one. Therefore, we need to devise a scoring scheme which acknowledges the semantic supremacy of *full populist frames* but also takes into account the existence of populist fragments across the text, albeit assigning them a somewhat lower value through the designation of a weighting coefficient.

Actual weighting decisions are rather a matter of perspective; the scoring scheme I employ here assigns a full score to *full populist frames* (V01) and a weighting coefficient c = 1/3 to clauses coded into the partial categories of *people-centrism* (U01) and *anti-elitism* (T01); residual categories received no score. The sum of populist-related clauses is divided with the total number of n clauses in the sample unit. The formula for the general *populist discourse index* (*PDI*) is then simply:

$$PDI = \frac{\sum_1^n V01 + c \times (\sum_1^n U01 + \sum_1^n \mathrm{T01})}{n}$$

Table 7 shows the final results. Although there is some variation in populist discourse among movements of the Great Recession, there is an obvious overrepresentation of *full* and *partial populist frames*. Devising a strict threshold to distinguish between populist and non-populist discourse is certainly a debatable decision, and the intricacies of political competition require that a degree of populist appeals is almost always to be expected. However, the lower weight attached to partial frames prevents the inordinate scoring of mild cases, while it has to be acknowledged that *full populist frames* are safe indicators of a populist inclination and have to be considered at face value. Therefore, in this setup, it is somewhat reasonable to assess a performance of *PDI*>0.20 as signifying considerable usage of populist discourse, and a score of *PDI*>0.35 as a safe indicator of populism.[31]

Table 7: Content analysis results

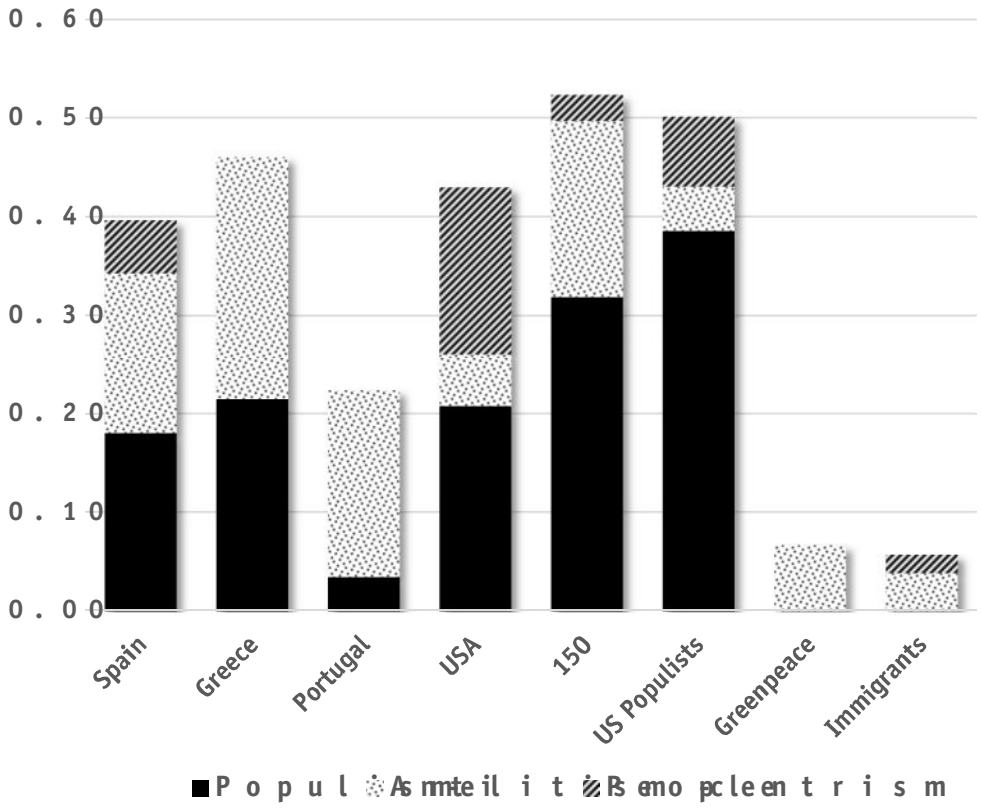
Sample unit	full populist frames	people-centrism	anti-elitism	residual	PDI
Geração à rasca (Portugal)	3.4%	56.9%	0.0%	39.7%	**0.22**
15M Indignados (Spain)	18.0%	48.6%	16.2%	17.1%	**0.40**
Aganaktismenoi (Greece)	21.4%	73.8%	0.0%	4.8%	**0.46**
Occupy Wall Street (USA)	20.7%	16.1%	50.6%	12.6%	**0.43**
United for Global Change	31.8%	53.4%	8.0%	6.8%	**0.52**
Populists (USA)	38.5%	13.5%	21.2%	26.9%	**0.50**
Greenpeace (USA)	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	80.0%	**0.07**
Immigrant Movement Int'l	0.0%	11.4%	5.7%	82.9%	**0.06**

Combined with the illustration in Graph 8 we can make some comparative observations. The manifesto of the American Populist Party sets a benchmark of 0.50 for the exemplary case of populist mobilization. Given the dissensus in the classification of populist cases, this score allows us to employ an acknowledged threshold with which to gauge the populist content of political texts. As expected, the manifestos of *Greenpeace* and the *Immigrant Movement International* exhibit a very small trace of populist elements and no *full populist frames* at all. On the contrary, in all manifestos issued by Great Recession movements we find an average of about 20% of full populist frames. In addition, we observe some

[31] For instance, a text with 10% *full populist frames*, 15% *people-centrism*, and 15% *anti-elitism* yields *PDI*=0.20. A text with no *full populist frames* would take a combined 60% of *partial populist frames* to pass this threshold, a rather unlikely scenario for non-populist discourse.

variation: the populist mix in Greece invests heavily in *people-centrism* while *Occupy Wall Street*, on the contrary, engages considerably in *anti-elitist* discourse. Portugal's *Geração à rasca*, while over the 0.20 threshold, constitutes a borderline case that would warrant a second stage of qualitative assessment in order to reach a more solid decision on its populist character.

Graph 8: Comparative illustration of content analysis results



The results of the semantic text analysis illustrate the generally high level of populist discourse employed by the movements of the Great Recession, which comes very close to paradigmatic cases of populist mobilization. Hence, the hypothesis driving this study is confirmed, and the inclusion of the Great Recession movements into a set of *populist social movements*, along with other similar manifestations of the past, seems justified at this first stage. This calls for a more comprehensive analysis of this genre of mobilization which includes qualitative elements to explain variation across the units of analysis and the specific combination of *people-centric* and *anti-elitist* themes. This is undertaken in the next two chapters.

Chapter 5

Qualitative analysis of Great Recession movements' discourse

In the previous, quantitative chapter, I employed a systematic and reliable content analysis method to establish the fact that the manifestos of the Great Recession movements contained a significant level of populist discourse which comes close to paradigmatic cases of populist mobilization. Hence, I have tested and confirmed the first hypothesis of this thesis. However, it may be posited that to merely study the manifestos of these movements, even though they were widely acknowledged by their members as constituting their political essence, may not yet be adequate in order to call them populist social movement.

Therefore, in line with the explanatory, sequential mixed-methods approach that I have adopted for this thesis, this chapter will provide a qualitative triangulation of these original, quantitative findings. Here I will delve more into the discourse of the Great Recession movements, employing two different stages of analysis. In the first, comparative part, I perform a qualitative comparative analysis of the discourse of the Great Recession movements in order to test the second hypothesis of this thesis:

> **H2:** The movements of the Great Recession mainly employed populist discourse in order to construct a common identity and mobilize their constituencies.

In the second qualitative stage, I shift the focus towards a selected instance of the movements of 2011 in order to perform an in-depth analysis by means of a case study of the Greek Thessaloniki indignados which will reach down to the level of the individual in order to test the third and final hypothesis of my thesis:

> **H3:** Great Recession movement entrepreneurs deliberately and strategically employed populist discourse in order to maximize and sustain mobilization.

A QUALITATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE "BIG THREE"

To further establish whether *Occupy Wall Street* and the Greek and Spanish *indignados*, the most prominent members of the wave of contention under study, do indeed constitute populist movements, we need to thoroughly dissect the discourse that was born within *Zuccotti Park*, *Puerta del Sol*, and *Syntagma Square* before it was disseminated at a national and international level by the

traditional and new media. To perform this analysis in as systematic a way as possible within a qualitative framework, we need to look back into the various schools of thought found in social movement studies, as depicted in chapter 2 of this thesis. Since we are interested in studying the discourse of social mobilization rather than any other of their features, we cannot recruit the standard tools furnished by the traditional schools of resource mobilization, political opportunity, the political process model, and the rational choice approach. This is not to say that these schools are redundant for studying the movements of the Great Recession. On the contrary, they can uncover important dimensions and contribute towards the study of a multitude of different facets. However, they are unable to provide insights for the research question of this particular thesis; for that, we need to turn to theories and methods which can handle the study of discourse.

In the previous chapters, it was made clear that the study of populist mobilization can be performed using extant tools of social movement studies. For this reason, the approach of the Essex school of discourse analysis was rejected as an option, due to the fact that it can readily be reduced to a combination of existing tools. However, it is a fact that social movement studies has particularly neglected the study of the discourse of their subject matter. A recent contribution by Sidney Tarrow (2013) has pointed to this gap and greatly elevated the significance of looking into what social movement *say*, along what social movements *do*. After all, *saying* and *doing* are two realms which are not as indistinguishable as it was previously thought, as the school of discursive psychology has struggled to prove in the previous decades (see e.g. Billig 1987, 1991). As Tarrow gradually came to grasp in his long career of studying contention, language "plays an important role in the construction, the endurance, and the diffusion of contentious politics" (Tarrow 2013: 21) and that "verbal behavior matters; … words can tell you more than speakers intend about their meaning; … the mobilization of words can actually change how people act collectively" (ibid.: 3).

In his book, Tarrow employs two main concepts to study repertoires of language: symbolic resonance, and strategic modularity. By "symbolic resonance", Tarrow revisits Snow and Benford (1988) to point to "the degree to which a particular term resonates with culturally familiar concepts" (Tarrow 2013: 17); by "strategic modularity" he denotes "the degree to which terms that emerge in one strategic context can be repeated without losing the strategic advantages they originally possessed" (ibid.). While these two pillars can combine an

ethnographic and a rhetorical approach to discursive production, they are mostly compatible with studying the long-term evolution of contentious words and language in general. In this spirit, Tarrow goes on to analyze the significance of the construction of words like "revolution", "patriot", or "citizen", and their impact on critical historical junctures such as the French Revolution and the emancipation of African slaves in the United States. Therefore, despite its undisputed value, this approach is not adequately systematic in pointing at specific guidelines on *where* to look in order to test our hypotheses on the effects of contentious language for specific case studies. For this reason, we need to go back and equip ourselves with the methodological tools of that perspective which brings us closer to discourse than any of its competitors in the social movements field: frame analysis.

Without repeating what has already been said in chapters 2 and 3, David Snow and his associates have systematized the discursive production of social movement entrepreneurs into three stages, a *diagnostic* stage where the social problem that provides the meaning of mobilization is articulated, a *prognostic* stage where perpetrators are identified and solutions suggested, and a third, *motivational* stage, where a call to arms is issued towards sympathizers. In order to capture the broadcast of populist messages, we need to look how *diagnosis* is performed, and whether the problem is illustrated as one stemming from the appropriation of popular sovereignty, of what the people should rightfully hold as their own when it comes to how they should be governed. In the *prognostic* phase, we need to make sure that the enemies of the movement's cause are depicted as small contingents of powerful elites who belong in the political, financial, or other sector that can influence the allocation of political power in a certain polity. In terms of identifying the People as the agent of mobilization, we need to look at how collective identity is effected, a topic we have already discussed thoroughly in the theoretical framework (chapter 3), where we have drawn heavily on identity theory to show that populist movement entrepreneurs strive to radicalize, or "jacobinize", citizen identity.

Hence, we need to scrutinize three facets of movement discourse: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and collective identity formation (boundary framing). Elites must be diagnosed as having corroded the main pillars of democracy, popular sovereignty and majority rule, in order to disenfranchise the People and serve their own narrow interests. The prognostic part can vary in terms of exact steps towards overturning the balance of power, yet in every instance, it has to contain a broad commitment to discard ruling elites and

restoring sovereignty into the hands of the people, through the mobilization of the latter. In the rest of this chapter, I apply these analytical guidelines on the discourse of the "big three" of the Great Recession movements.

EVIDENCE FROM ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

The Spanish *15M* movement came as a reaction to the economic crisis and was largely inspired by the Arab Spring and the popular uprising in Iceland. It was coordinated by a loose network of numerous like-minded small leftist activist organizations across Spain, under the banner of the "Democracia Real Ya!" (Real Democracy Now!) group, mainly using Facebook and Twitter as a means to reach their audience (Castells 2012). The manifesto of the movement, issued on May 2, 2011, called for a demonstration on Sunday, May 15, one week ahead of the municipal elections. On that day, more than 100,000 Spanish citizens gathered in 60 or so Spanish cities, heeding the call to rise up against "the system".[32] As illustrated by their slogan "people united function without parties" (Castells 2012), the *indignados* constructed an all-inclusive, non-partisan collective identity, painting a picture of a leaderless movement of ordinary, everyday citizens who are disenchanted by the way democracy functions in their country under the corrupt collusion of politicians and bankers. The tone was given in the foremost paragraph of the manifesto:

> "We are normal and ordinary people. We are like you: people, who get up every morning to study, work, or find a job, people who have family and friends. People, who work hard every day to provide a better future for those around us" (Democracia Real Ya 2011, all translations by the author).

The text stressed the uncompromisingly non-partisan, non-religious, and non-ideological character of the mobilization. What united potential participants was their common diagnosis of the dire situation of Spanish society and their prognosis on who was to blame for it:

> "we are all concerned and outraged about the political, economic, and social outlook which we see around us. About the corruption of politicians, businessmen, bankers… About the helplessness of the ordinary citizen" (ibid.).

[32] The complete list of Spanish cities where protests took place on May 15 can be found at http://acampadas15m.blogspot.hu/p/acampadas-del-15-m.html, accessed March 18, 2015.

Citizenship was invoked and politicized adversarially, since it was declared that "as citizens we form part of the gears of a machine intended to enrich a minority which knows nothing of our needs" (ibid.). The legitimacy of the mobilization lied in the supremacy of popular sovereignty: "Sin el pueblo no sois nada" ("Without the people, you are nothing") the protesters were shouting; "We are anonymous, but without us none of this would exist, because we move the world", wrote their manifesto (ibid.). This supremacy rests not only in legal, but also in moral foundations, this is why "an Ethical Revolution is necessary" (ibid.).

Only a couple of days after the *15M* took off and made headlines across the world, tent camps (*acampadas*) had sprang across Spanish cities, the movement had already acquired the title of "los indignados", inspired by the 2010 "Indignez-vous!" pamphlet of the 93-year-old French (born German) activist, and figure of the French Resistance, Stéphane Hessel.[33] Soon, a rumor reached Greece that Spaniards were deriding Greeks that while they suffered an even worse economic crisis, they were still surprisingly quiescent: "Don't make noise, you will wake up the Greeks!" was famously painted across banners and sung by the Spanish *indignados*, reverberating widely in the Greek blogosphere and social media platforms (Pantazopoulos 2013). For a large number of Greeks, already traumatized emotionally by the impact of austerity measures in their daily lives (Davou & Demertzis 2013), this struck a sensitive chord. Even though the banner incident turned out later to be totally unrelated to the crisis or even outright fake, it functioned as a wake-up call of motivation, and very soon a Facebook event called for every Greek "indignant citizen" to rise up and protest; again, extra care was taken to sound the clarion in an inclusive, non-ideological, non-partisan manner (see next section). Only ten days after the *15M*, the Greek *indignados* emerged in full force.

This time, since the movement was a spontaneous reaction of a single individual rather than a concerted effort of preexisting organizations, there was originally no common manifesto. Greeks gathered in the squares shouting "We have awoken!", expressing their accumulated indignation against what they perceived as a betrayal of democracy by their rulers, deriding, in turn, Italian and Irish citizens for staying home. "Democracy originated here, it can't be sold out, it belongs to the People", was one of the main slogans, along with "the People do not want you, take the bailout and go". Hence, popular sovereignty was elevated as the authority that justified the supremacy of the people over elected officials

[33] Hessel was included in *Foreign Policy's* Top 100 Global Thinkers of 2011 for "bringing the spirit of the French Resistance in a global society that has lost its heart." He was the last person on the list.

and justified mobilization. Protesters frequently referred to the last paragraph of the Greek constitution in order to legitimize their subversive aims, since Article 120, Paragraph 4 made clear that "observance of the Constitution rests on the patriotism of Greek people, who are justified and are obliged to resist, with any means, against those who attempt to abolish it by force". In this way, the radicalization of citizen identity in face of a government which was perceived as corrupt and treacherous was deemed not only a just act, but also an obligation.

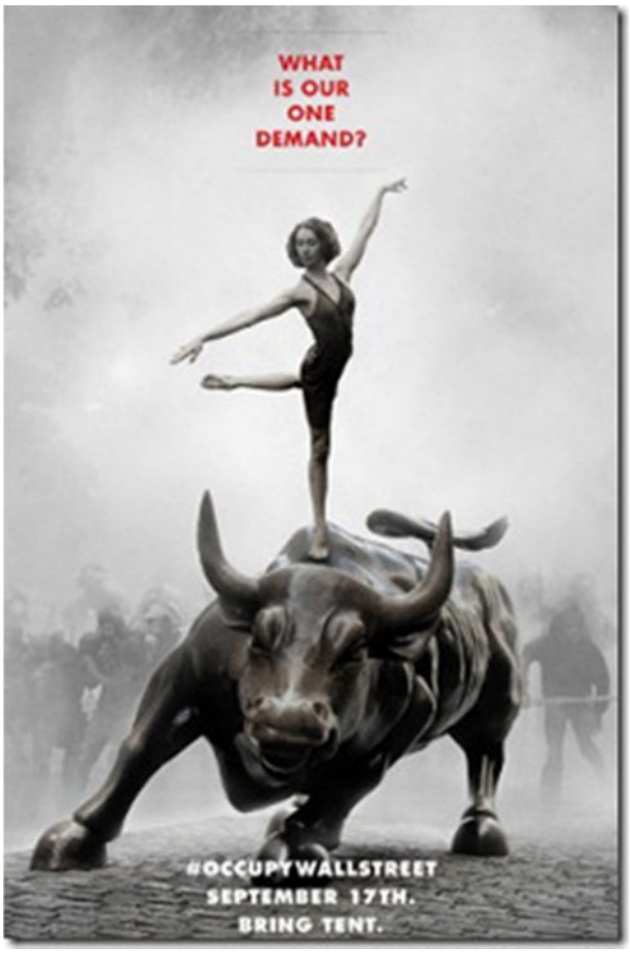
Even though a nationalistic undercurrent was obvious in the rhetoric of the participants in the Greek squares, especially the upper part of Syntagma square in Athens, the "enemies of the People" were more or less the same financial and political elites that had also been identified by the *15M*: the International Monetary Fund, banks, credit rating agencies, and of course, domestic politicians, who were seen as the lackeys of powerful foreign financial interests. The movement had no legitimate adversaries; those who did not sympathize with the Greek *indignados* were simply pro-bailout enemies and traitors of their own country; this boundary framing activity dichotomized the social body into an overwhelming majority of "noble" People, and a slim minority of corrupt enemies and their followers.

The Greek *indignados* very quickly acquired the standard devices of a General Assembly and a permanent tent camp. Within a few days, a founding declaration was voted unanimously by the Athens Syntagma square Assembly, diagnosing in the very first sentence a loss of democratic sovereignty while speaking as the common voice of Greek citizenry: "For a long time now, decisions have been taken for us, without us" (Aganaktismenoi 2011). Similarly to the Spaniards, they illustrated the inclusiveness of the movement by portraying themselves as originating from every section of society: "We are working people, unemployed, pensioners, youth, who have come to Syntagma square to struggle and fight for our lives and our future", they proclaimed (ibid.). On the prognostic part, the finger was pointed squarely on the perpetrators of the crisis and it was stressed that popular sovereignty could only be reinstated through popular struggle: "We are here because we know that the solutions to our problems can only come from us . . . We will not leave the squares, until all those who led us here are gone: Governments, the Troika, Banks, Memoranda, and all those who take advantage of us" (ibid.).

Occupy Wall Street, on the other hand, erupted after the summer of 2011, when the European movements already started to wane. However, *Adbusters*, the

Vancouver-based magazine which branded the mobilization, had already sounded the call in June, circulating the now famous poster of the ballerina dancing atop the Charging Bull statue outside Wall Street (Picture 2). "Bring tent" was the byline, hinting at the repertoires of the *Arab Spring* and the European *indignados*. The date was fixed for the 17th of September, the anniversary of the signing of the US constitution. *Occupy* was no spontaneous movement. David Graeber, an anarchist and academic with a rich experience in grassroots mobilization, helped organize an initially small group of American and

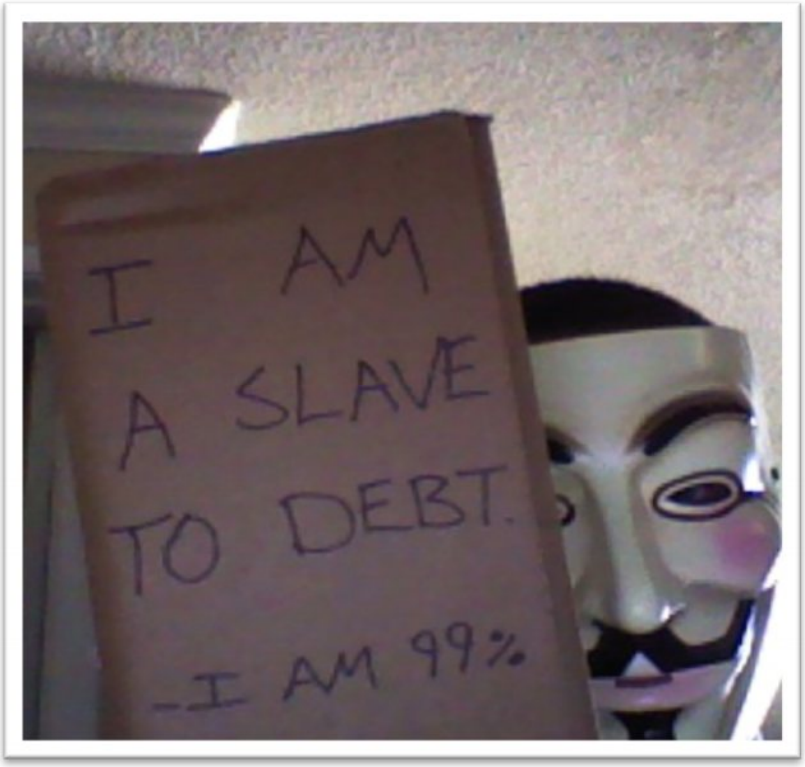
Picture 2: The ballerina atop the charging bull (AdBusters #97, p. 50-51)



international activists who started planning the details of the movement about six weeks before the designated day of occupation, holding regular General Assemblies and communicating through online email groups (Graeber 2013). Graeber and his circle also coined the motto that would become the most characteristic discursive element of Occupy: "We Are the 99 Percent." As he testifies in his book, the motto was extracted in a deductive logic: "If Wall Street represented the 1 percent, then we're everybody else" (ibid.: 40).

This paradigmatic populist slogan (Calhoun 2013) speaks volumes of the effort to frame a moral boundary between an overwhelming and homogeneous majority of citizens against a corrupt elite minority of the 1 percent. The majoritarian view of democracy was implicitly providing legitimacy for the movement and its claims; at the same time, divisions among the 99 percent were underplayed, since the vagueness of the collective identity allowed everybody to feel part of the *in-group*. The *Statement of Autonomy* proclaimed *Occupy* "a people's movement. It is party-less, leaderless, by the people and for the people" (Occupy Wall Street 2011a); it welcomed every peaceful individual that generally wanted to redress grievances.

Picture 3: First post on the *wearethe99percent* tumblr page, September 8, 2011



In the same vein, *Occupy's* "wearethe99percent" *tumblr* page on the internet proved to be a highly successful strategy. The page featured several hundred individuals who posted a photo of themselves holding a short note with their personal life story, always concluding with the declaration "I am the 99%", thus contributing to a voluntary subjugation of personal identities in favor of providing salience to the collective identity of the People (Picture 3). Very soon, the New York City General Assembly also voted a declaration as a founding document for the movement. The *Declaration of the Occupation of NYC* had an explicitly populist identity, providing a rationale for the legitimate

transfiguration of citizens into a "people-in-itself". Speaking "as one people, united" it maintained that:

"… our system must protect our rights, and upon corruption of that system, it is up to the individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their neighbors; that a democratic government derives its just power from the people, but corporations do not seek consent to extract wealth from the people and the Earth; and that no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power" (Occupy Wall Street 2011b).

The largest part of the document was comprised by an indicative bulleted list of twenty three "grievances" perpetrated by the 1 percent against the People. Each clause started with a vague invocation of a "they", such as "They have taken bailouts from taxpayers with impunity, and continue to give Executives exorbitant bonuses" or "They have sold our privacy as a commodity", in an effort to accommodate the different strands (anti-capitalist, pro-environmental, anti-consumerist etc.) within a common anti-elite framework.

These same themes of an awakened citizenry which rebels against its subjugation to unaccountable interests reverberate across most documents produced by *Occupy Wall Street*, as with the *People Before Parties* bulletin, which stated that "Government of the people, by the people and for the people has been transformed into government of the people, by the parties, for entrenched interests" (Occupy Wall Street 2011c). Again, a combination of diagnostic and prognostic framing portrays the People as having been deprived of their rightful sovereignty, to the benefit of a colluding minority of power holders in the political and financial domains. In the frontpage of the first issue of *The Occupied Wall Street Journal*, the "official" gazzette of the movement, this framing is repeated:

> "Our system is broken. More than 25 million Americans are unemployed. More than 50 million live without health insurance. Perhaps 100 million live in poverty. Yet the fat cats are showered with billions in tax breaks while politicians compete to turn the screws on the rest of us" (*The Occupied Wall Street Journal 2011a: 1).*

The boundary framing is evident also in the main article of the second issue of the same journal, published on October 8, 2011:

> "If there is one thing I know, it's that the 1% loves a crisis. When people are panicked and desperate and no one seems to know what to do, that is the ideal time to push through their wish-list of pro-corporate policies … There is only one thing that can block this tactic, and fortunately, it's a very big thing: the 99%. And that 99% is taking to the streets from Madison to Madrid to say 'No. We will not pay for your crisis'" (*The Occupied Wall Street Journal 2011b: 1).*

In general, the previous paragraphs prove the strong presence of the features expected by the theoretical framework in the development of the Great Recession movements. What emerges from the data is a strong drive towards explicit boundary framing between the People as an overwhelming majority and their adversaries. This "hard work", as explained in chapter 3, celebrates similarity among the former and exclaims difference against the latter. The crucial populist element is inserted through the grounding of this antagonism on the question of the moral supremacy of popular sovereignty over oligarchic castes within a polity, and the diagnosis of current affairs as a corruption and distortion of democracy. The People were invoked as the dominant actor in all instances, mobilizing against an immoral power bloc; the prognosis demanded a wholesale transformation of the political process, producing "real democracy".

Even though contextual differentiations can be explained by the intricacies of the established political cultures in each country, in reality most themes remained constant. In Spain, the main rallying call of the *indignados* was "We are not products in the hands of politicians and bankers", and one of their most famous slogans read "we have the solution: bankers in prison", phrases almost equivalent to *Occupy*'s "Banks got bailed out, we got sold out". The People were considered as rising above all other institutions: "When the people decide to abolish any procedure, they can do so, and the government, the police, and all other mechanisms can do nothing about it", it was proclaimed in the Athens Popular Assembly (June 15, 2011, author's archive). Various themes against the establishment and its policies were subscribed within this narrative, such as anti-capitalism and the problem of inequality in the United States, or anti-austerity and privatizations in Europe; in every case, the movements took care to broadcast universalist appeals which, as Calvo (2013: 240) notes on the Spanish *indignados*, demonstrated their attempt to "make connections across social groups in order to activate basic feelings of discontent, injustice and rage".

And while the enemies of the People varied somewhat across cases, what mattered was the claim of a deliberate attempt on the part of elites to subjugate their will and disenfranchise them. For the indignados, governments had not simply taken the wrong decisions, they were loyally following a carefully devised plot; hence the *15M* slogan "This is not a crisis, it's a scam!" and their warning: "If you steal our dreams, we will not let you sleep." Greeks, similarly, were prtesting under banners which wrote "Out with traitors!" and "We are millions – They are only 300 [MPs]" (Pantazopoulos 2013). There was deep enmity between people and power holders: "I am not anti-system, the system is anti-me" (Castells 2012), the Spaniards chanted. In August 2011, a common declaration by the Madrid and Athens General Assemblies explained the developments in Spain as a top-down "process of collective defrauding" while claiming that Greece was being deliberately led to default so that powerful interests can "sell off the land and public goods in discounted prices" (Joint Statement 2011). Governments of both countries were considered to be in bed with financial interests, shedding their democratic legitimacy; "No Nos Representan", "They do not represent us" was the upshot. The People were painted as a homogeneous totality, as a natural embodiment of all "ordinary" citizens, a unified *volonté générale* with no internal divisions in terms of class or partisan affiliations. Their legitimation was drawn from their status as citizens, as the founding stone of the polity. Spaniards forcefully declared that "democracy belongs to the people … which means that government should be of the people" (Democracia Real Ya 2011).

This qualitative analysis of the discourse of the movements has followed the quantitative analysis of the manifestos of the Great Recession movements (chapter 4) in order to triangulate those initial findings and provide insight in order to test the second hypothesis of this thesis. Indeed, the discourse of these movements rests crucially on employing populist themes in terms of diagnostic and prognostic framing, as well as constructing a collective identity in order to mobilize participation. The cognitive elements employed by movement entrepreneurs were targeted in politicizing citizen identity by elevating its salience within the hierarchy of the self, in order to forge a collective identity of the "sovereign People" which was pitted against a perceived minority of powerful enemies. Taking into account these findings, hypothesis 2 is confirmed.

As a last empirical stage, the argument of this thesis will be further triangulated by providing insights from the internal dynamics of the movements, furnishing evidence with regards to actions and motives on the individual level, which are not discernible in what we have seen so far. In this way, we will be able to

establish whether populist discourse was employed as a conscious strategy of maximizing participation and test the third and final hypothesis.

THE THESSALONIKI *INDIGNADOS*

In order to assess whether there was a conscious attempt to forge a collective identity by constructing a populist dichotomy between the indignant People and corrupt elites, I conducted twenty one semi-structured interviews with key informants of the Greek indignados in the city of Thessaloniki. The interviews took place in the summer of 2014, lasting an average of 100 minutes; they were recorded and fully transcribed, yielding approximately 400 pages of text. The audio files and transcripts were imported into a CAQDAS software package (Nvivo 10 by QSR International) to facilitate analysis and comparison. The site of the research was Thessaloniki, the birthplace of the Greek *indignados* and the second largest city in Greece, with a population of approximately one million inhabitants. The selection of the Thessaloniki *indignados* was made for several reasons. First, its moderate size facilitates the thorough examination of the various networks that engaged with each other during its duration and lowers the risk of missing significant aspects of mobilization and strategic activity on the part of movement entrepreneurs, a risk inherent in much larger settings such as Syntagma square in Athens. Moreover, the movement remained as a unified entity throughout its life-cycle and did not illustrate any type of spatial split as it happened in Athens; therefore, it is expected to uncover the full range of potential ideological exchange between its members. Other, secondary reasons, such as availability and funding restrictions also contribute towards this selection.

Even though the Greek movement was nominally leaderless, during my research, a snowball sampling approach led to the uncovering of a network of activists who functioned as an informal *avant-garde* of the Thessaloniki chapter, almost all of them members of small left-wing parties of Maoist, Trotskyist, and Stalinist origin, a phenomenon which has also been observed in both *15M* and *Occupy* (Castells 2012; Smucker 2013). These activists were identified as "the Reds" by a minority of "White" leading figures of the movement, who were in turn a mixture of apolitical individuals and a few anarchists. Both Reds and Whites were not homogeneous at all, accommodating smaller factions within their ranks which were constantly jostling with each other behind the scenes. While disputes would occasionally arise between the larger blocs, they overall managed to work well together in the General Assembly and the other activities of the Thessaloniki

indignados, from the outbreak of the movement until its major dissolution, on August 7, 2011 (Table 8).

Table 8: Timeline of main events: Thessaloniki *indignados* (2011)

May 22	Facebook event calls for rally at White Tower square
May 25	First gathering of the Thessaloniki indignados; first General Assembly
May 29	European day of action; the indignados protest by marching through Thessaloniki
May 30	Declaration of the General Assembly (adopts Athens manifesto)
June 3	Mayor of Thessaloniki is not allowed participation in the General Assembly
June 5	Second European day of action; march through the city
June 15	March alongside striking workers' unions
June 22	March across the city
June 25	Clashes with police over Golden Dawn rally taking place near White Tower square
June 28-29	Protests against Medium Term Fiscal Strategy bill; representatives visit Athens
July 8	Protesters temporarily block entrance to Bank of Greece Thessaloniki headquarters
July 20	Protest outside German consulate
August 4	General Assembly decides to voluntarily remove tents from White Tower square
August 7	Municipal and state police forces clear White Tower square
August 25	First General Assembly after the summer; low participation
September 10	Participation in antigovernment protests at Thessaloniki International Trade Fair

Boundary framing efforts as a way to construct a collective identity took place since the very start, when a single individual, with no links to political organizations or any significant prior experience as an activist, decided to post an event on Facebook, influenced by the onset of the Spanish *indignados* and irritated by the lack of a similar type of mobilization in Greece. As he indicated while interviewed, he took great pains to present the movement's character as non-partisan and non-ideological, in order to stress its all-inclusive and peaceful nature and mobilize "those people who wanted to express a reaction, who could not fit within any political party or hierarchy". His original post branded the *aganaktismenoi polites* ("indignant citizens" in Greek) as the identity of the protesters and asked people to join "in a spontaneous manner, without political parties, without groups and ideologies" and "without any banners or signboards"; Greeks were effectively requested to forgo any other personal or social identity and join the crowds as individual citizens. Moreover, the founder refrained from putting forward any specific claims at the outset, fearful that they

would inevitably produce fatal divisions. Indeed, a few days later, having already triggered similar developments in numerous Greek cities, the movement became a resounding success in Thessaloniki, managing to attract thousands of citizens of every ideological origin, level of education, age, and social standing, at White Tower square, the most important landmark of the city. These crowds, having suffered dearly from the measures imposed on them during the first year of austerity, had finally found a reliable non-institutional channel to collectively express their deep grievances and flocked to populate its ranks in great numbers. The People had finally started to take shape in the squares.

During the previous months, the left, which more or less monopolizes popular mobilization in Greece since the restoration of democracy (Andronikidou and Kovras 2012), had tried several times to initiate a movement against the harsh economic commitments that accompanied the country's bailout agreement, albeit with no success, to the great disappointment of its cadres. After the onset of the Greek indignados, as testified by all members of leftist parties interviewed by the author, there was an intense expectation on the left that something similar would erupt, sooner or later, in Greece. However, when the *indignados* broke out suddenly on May 25, many leftists proclaimed the movement as an apolitical, if not reactionary, hodgepodge. The Greek Communist Party, the oldest party in the country, openly expressed its hostility and refrained from mobilizing its large human resources. Nevertheless, a range of activists, mostly young members of smaller left-wing parties, decided to jump into the fray. Reluctant observers at first, they were eventually taken aback by the unprecedented level of participation on the first day of the mobilization, and made up their minds to invest heavily in influencing its future course.

One of these activists, now in his mid-thirties, still recalls his amazement even after several years: "The first two or three days I just stood there watching . . . I couldn't believe what was happening . . . I had struggled so hard in the past with every single protest and demonstration, and there I was, with all these people coming out of the blue, standing there and debating for long hours." Another experienced activist admitted that "we were very reserved and cautious at first, because there is this fear of the spontaneous and the unknown in a large part of the left, but gradually we started feeling that something very important was going on . . . I felt that something good can come out of this … that maybe this thing can really rejuvenate politics as such." A third interviewee exclaimed the speed with which things took off: "We were surprised by the dynamism and the

volume of participation, with the fact that this was happening so fast; we had initially expected that it would require a lot of effort to succeed this."

Realizing the huge potential to build a "Leninist Front" type of movement, left-wingers soon however came to understand that their usual Marxist jargon would not fit the discursive landscape of the squares. The citizens that took part in the Assembly had been disenchanted by the political system to the point of being hostile to any type of partisan affiliation and generally suspicious of any other type of politically charged institution such as trade unions or workers' initiatives. Moreover, the vast majority of them had no prior experience in political activism, and their values reached across the ideological spectrum, from the conservative and even far right, to the extreme left, with most of them being former loyal voters of the established parties that were now considered to have betrayed them. The generally low level of ideological alignment was evident since the first days of the General Assembly, with protesters expressing widely diverging, even contradictory, positions on what the movement signified and how it should go forward.

Under these circumstances, the politically savvy activists of the left were obliged to perform a precarious balancing act. On the one hand they had to stifle the somewhat nationalistic tendencies of a large part of the audience, without coming forward as unduly anti-nationalist, thus alienating the conservatives of the square; on the other hand, they had to gradually insert elements of their radical political agenda, without scaring the crowds with any maximalistic claims. At the same time, they had to appease the reactions of the key "White" activists who quickly felt that the movement was being taken over by the radical left through a tactic of "packing" the General Assembly. As one of the leading figures of the "Whites" remembers, "left-wingers used to incite commotion [in the General Assembly] on purpose, so that the people become bored and withdraw, and by the end of the day it would only be their own 'soldiers' who were left [in the square] to vote". Another activist complained that while "we were asking that each and every one of us will come here on her own and leave her identity outside", those who were unaffiliated with the left "got duped, believing that they [left-wing cadres] would indeed leave their identity outside, something that of course wasn't really the case".

Hence, most of the left-wing organizations decided to conceal the presence of their cadres and tone down their rhetoric, in a manner highly reminiscent of what Einwohner (2008) has, in a completely different context, termed "passing",

a type of consciously strategic identity work which requires masking the true origin of the activist in order to avoid sanctions by the movement. Similar to what Calhoun (2013) testifies on *Occupy Wall Street*, leftist entrepreneurs realized that employing strictly Marxist and socialist diagnostic tropes would not make any inroads. As one interviewee consented, "most organizations tried to keep pace with the movement; we didn't speak of a socialist revolution or anything like that". Inclusive labels in populist style, using the subjectivity of the People rather than nation, religion, or class, would prove more productive in inciting sympathy from potential adherents while keeping the unity of the movement intact, especially if coupled with a strategy of talking mostly about the enemy rather than the specifics of the movement itself. This strategy was a clear vindication of Polletta who argues that ambiguity enables "groups with very different agendas to come together in a common stance of indignation" (2006: 19). In a similar context, Gamson notes that it is always "a lot easier to unite groups with different grievances against a particular regime in oppositional action than it is to maintain solidarity in exercising power" (2011: 467).

One key informant with high visibility in the movement, member of a small Trotskyist party, contributed that he and his comrades had to systematically engage in *agitatsia*, which he described as substituting the usual leftist jargon with everyday language in order not to activate anti-leftist instincts in people who lacked a "revolutionary consciousness". So, for instance, "workers" and "proletarians" were replaced with "the People" or simply "the Indignants", and the "general strike" with "a sabotage against the economy". "You had to do this if you wanted to speak and be heard", another activist seconded, "otherwise, the people just wouldn't care". A third activist recalled that he used to advise his comrades not to "push matters if we see they are not going where we want them to; this can take a few weeks, or a month", proceeding to reflect on the situation as a period when "a large part of the left, if not all of it, finally found an audience which was not its *traditional* audience"; smart political entrepreneurs, according to the same informant, understood that they should not appear paternalistic towards these crowds, but simply strive to be heard. "We drove it towards the left, without calling it 'left' *per se*", he concluded.

Partisan activists who failed to conceal their identity were in danger of losing their legitimacy as influential actors, suffering a *cordon sanitaire* by White activists, or even risking outright expulsion, accused as traitors of the cause. A couple of heavy handed incidents actually did take place in the first few weeks. At the same time, there were certain organizations of the Stalinist extra-

parliamentary left, with an attitude very close to what Graeber (2013) describes with regard to the US Workers World Party, which fought for a place in the square while sticking to their old parlance. These activists accused the other left-wing organizations of disgracefully watering down their rhetoric in order to mingle with "the masses"; they were in turn accused by the latter of trying to "violently politicize the Assembly" or "blackmailing political outcomes", as two activists testified.

Therefore, the combination of structural rigidities in terms of the social content of the Thessaloniki indignados and the strategic objectives of the political entrepreneurs active within the movement, led to the adoption of a distinctly populist discourse as the optimal strategy to maximize participation while avoiding intramural rifts. Cultivating the antagonism between the People and the elites was the best way to sustain a healthy level of mobilization. The *indignado* identity became a jealously guarded treasure; whenever individuals or groups attempted to assert a different collective identity, invoking class, ethnicity, or other attributes, their actions were considered divisive or centrifugal vis-à-vis "the indignant People" and were met with great hostility by a majority of vigilant participants, in the same way that Calvo (2013) reports regarding the rift between feminists in the *acampada Sol* and the rest of the Madrid *indignados*.

The collective identity that was constructed in the Thessaloniki *indignados* was eloquently described by one of the key informants interviewed:

> "It was more or less what *Occupy* in the United States later termed 'the 99 Percent'; or what most of us, the politically savvy, imagine when we speak of the People. I mean, it was obvious that against us were the elites, political and economic; this was very clear. It was what allowed [the average shopkeeper] to be involved in this story, or made sure that the owner of a small business or a small property owner was not excluded. It wasn't the traditional class notion, say, the Proletarian. That, like, 'we are the Proletarians' and that's it. It was all of us, save for those who rip us apart, whether they are political or financial powers."

The founder of the movement chose a less politically sophisticated way to express his own view on the same matter, resorting to themes from Greek mythology and a Homeric analogy:

> "We were 'No One' [kanenas, in Greek]. When, for instance, you go to a hospital, you are No One. But you are sick, and this is a sacred thing … We

> were citizens . . . Just like Ulysses, we managed to emerge to the light under the belly of a sheep, under this Spanish sheep; we fooled them, they [the system] went crazy. It was all of Us, as a No One, as nothing, no surnames, no labels, no political parties."

These testimonies of the Thessaloniki *indignados* provide the necessary insight to reach a verdict on the third hypothesis of this thesis. Indeed, populist mobilization was not simply a spontaneous reaction to the impact of the Great Recession. On the contrary, the careful construction of the collective identity of the People based on the politicization of citizen identity, and the moral juxtaposition against a conspiring elite, reveals the role of agency and points to the existence of strategy. Movement entrepreneurs were actively conscious that this type of boundary framing would accommodate the various types of grievances out there and provide a wide springboard for concerted action against authority. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is also confirmed.

Conclusively, having reached the end of the qualitative empirical part of this thesis, we are now in a position to supply an informed opinion on the populist character of the Great Recession movements. The empirical test of the theoretical framework was organized along three distinct but interrelated hypotheses:

> **H1:** The manifestos of Great Recession movements exhibit a considerable degree of populist discourse compared to other types of movements.
>
> **H2:** The movements of the Great Recession mainly employed populist discourse in order to construct a common identity and mobilize their constituencies.
>
> **H3:** Great Recession movement entrepreneurs deliberately and strategically employed populist discourse in order to maximize and sustain mobilization.

The mixed-methods approach which was applied to test these hypothesis has led to their confirmation. The most important political statements of the Great Recession movements, their *manifestos,* as acknowledged by the totality of their members, have been found to contain a level of populist discourse that is on a par with relevant texts from paradigmatic instances of populist mobilization (H1). A qualitative analysis of their discourse drawing from a diverse set of archival material (e.g. manifestos, slogans, press releases, declarations, gazettes, minutes of meetings etc.) reveals that populist framing was the main strategic

plank on which diagnostic, prognostic, and boundary framing was conducted in order to construct a resonant collective identity for the movements (H2). Evidence from a specific instance of mobilization, the Thessaloniki indignados, has uncovered that populist strategy was a conscious choice on the part of movement entrepreneurs in order to construct a cohesive identity which could maximize participation and stifle internal disputes (H3).

This comprehensive analysis can therefore lead to the safe classification of the Great Recession movements within a larger family of *Populist Social Movements,* thus pointing to the need of further analyzing this type of recurrent social mobilization. This thesis has provided a solid theoretical and empirical framework to conduct such an analysis. However, apart from the need to classify, we must also reflect on the significance of Populist Social Movements. While this is not an objective that can be comprehensively undertaken in this thesis, the experience gathered from the Greek case can provide interesting inferences, by means of a case study of the impact of the Greek indignados on the Greek political system. This analysis is presented in the next and final chapter.

Conclusions

This thesis has drawn from populism theory, social movement studies, and sociological social psychology to investigate whether the movements of the Great Recession are best classified as a wave of populist mobilization. The study of the Great Recession movements that swept across the Western world in 2011 has been used as a backdrop against which to make several theoretical, methodological, and empirical claims which can enhance the study of populist phenomena and the nature of social mobilization. A number of different methods and techniques have been used towards this aim, both of a qualitative, as well as of a quantitative nature.

In the first chapter, specific guidelines were introduced as a solid analytical framework on which to perform a comprehensive overview of the conceptual evolution of populism in the academic literature. The various schools of thought were identified and their advantages and disadvantages thoroughly discussed. The constant drive towards discarding unnecessary dimensions and employing minimal conceptualizations has been illustrated, and three main misconceptions have been presented. Scholars of populism have been criticized for tending to neglect the operationalization of their dimensions, remaining mostly descriptive in their accounts of populist phenomena; moreover, they tend to succumb to contextual determination, inserting theoretical elements which apply only on a subject of the wider manifestations of populism, thus rendering the concept unable to travel; as a last point, it has been stressed that frequently causes of populism are conflated with its effects, producing a conceptual muddle that does not facilitate systematic and valid theorizing.

Furthermore, even though I have acknowledged the merits of the dominant definition of populism (Mudde 2004) in terms of its minimal nature and operationalizability, I have disagreed strongly with the assignment of populism to the genus of ideology. The mere fact that an *-ism* can be appended to a word does not amount to having identified an ideology. For instance, Rodgers (1987), in his elaborate treatise on the main political keywords of American politics since independence, lists *Utility*, *Natural Rights*, *People*, *Government*, and other keywords that have been used in various stages of American political history to incite mobilization. Even though Utilitarianism and Populism can be found in dictionaries, and "Naturalrightsism" or "Governmentism" cannot, this does not say much about the ideological coherence of the former over the latter. In this

respect, I have uncovered the weak theoretical grounding of Mudde's (2004) definition on Freeden's morphological analysis of ideology, and have proceeded to side with discourse as the fitting genus for populism, exclaiming the significance of the work of Ernesto Laclau, without however subscribing to the full length of his conceptualization and methodology in studying populist phenomena.

The analysis of populism-*qua*-discourse forms the first plank of my general theoretical framework. The second plank involves the workings of social mobilization. In the second chapter I supply a critical appraisal of the literature on social movements, discussing the merits of the main strands and arguing in favor of a synthetic approach which rests largely on rational choice theory as the cohesive substance to incorporate the different perspectives within a unified framework. This overview allows us to understand that simplistic evaluations of Great Recession movements as an almost deterministic outcome of the economic crisis and the ensuing austerity measures or the rising levels of economic inequality do not carry any scientific merit. Economic hardships and deprivation alone cannot explain mobilization, as it has time and again been stressed by social movement scholars; As Zald and McCarthy (1977: 1215) have exclaimed, "grievances and discontent may be defined, created, and manipulated by issue entrepreneurs and organizations". To counter these naïve claims, I have dedicated the third chapter to a comprehensive framework for the study of Populist Social Movements, a class of social mobilization that can better account for the onset of the Great Recession movements.

In chapter 3, the emergence of Populist Social Movements has been theorized as a process of group identification that unfolds at three different levels of analysis, with citizen identity as the active ingredient. Initially, at the micro level, individuals carry citizenship as a potentially fervent element of their identity hierarchy. At the meso level, and when the macro-political opportunity is perceived as favorable, populist entrepreneurs attempt to take advantage of this potentiality by constructing a collective identity of the People as rightful sovereigns, circulating a call to arms against an unjust appropriation of this authority on the part of self-serving elites. They also engage in framing tactics to achieve identity amplification by promoting a certain perspective of citizenship which accentuates the moral commitment to the virtue of upholding popular sovereignty. Back at the micro level, when identity amplification delivers, citizen identity becomes politicized and climbs the identity hierarchy of the self, prompting the person to heed the call and identify with the mobilizing in-group.

Hence, the personal and the social are bridged and populist mobilization is produced.

The theoretical framework employed to describe populist mobilization is an exemplary synthetic approach towards social mobilization which can stitch together the various levels of analysis into which most theories are confined (Opp 2009b). Here, all major strands of social movement theorizing have been combined into a sequential explanatory arrangement. Political opportunity provides the trigger for populist movement entrepreneurs who perceive it as conducive towards their plans. Framing supplies the discursive mechanism of mobilization of resources, of overcoming the free-rider problem; in the case of populist social movements, these resources are part symbolic part legalistic – they consist of an innate commitment to the significance and authority of citizenship. Movement entrepreneurs incite protest by mobilizing this preexisting network of allegiance among the citizenry, by accentuating the ownership of political sovereignty on the part of the People and promising redemption as a reward for the costs incurred by participation. By fomenting the emotions of resentment and moral indignation (Demertzis 2006) which rest on stressing grievances as an outcome of the loss of popular sovereignty to unaccountable elites, they manage to construct a hyper-inclusive collective identity for their movement and maximize participation.

The first three chapters comprise the theoretical part of this thesis. The second part furnishes empirical evidence to support a series of hypotheses on the populist nature of the movements of the Great Recession and discuss their impact on politics. Movements such as *Occupy Wall Street* and the Spanish and Greek *indignados* have unequivocally claimed to speak in the name of a homogeneous and overwhelming majority of noble People against a minority of corrupt elites, demanding the restoration of power into the hands of the former. In order to compare their discursive content with the theoretical framework that was laid down in chapter 3, I supply three hypotheses which, when combined, suffice to answer the research question of whether the Great Recession movements are best seen as a wave of populist mobilization, as instances of a wider family of Populist Social Movements. In order to empirically answer this question I have employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach which consists of a first, quantitative stage, and a second, two-tiered, qualitative stage.

In chapter 4 I set forth to measure populist discourse in the manifestos of the Great Recession movements and put its calculated level against other manifestos in order to derive valid inferences. Before I present my own measurement approach, I survey the field in order to illustrate the merits and shortcomings of extant approaches. These approaches, either automated or manual ones, have already convincingly proven that populism is a latent concept that can however be measured reliably and validly, opening up avenues for the quantification of the concept and the building of large datasets of populist discourse. My own approach, based on clause-based semantic text analysis furnishes a number of improvements: while retaining high levels of reliability and validity, it is able to address both quantitative and qualitative research questions, it provides increased scoring resolution compared to holistic grading approaches and coding schemes which rest on paragraphs as coding units, and it employs a clear decision scheme to facilitate the work of coders.

The results of the quantitative assessment of eight movement manifestos uncover the strong populist content of the discourse of the movements of the Great Recession. These movements present a Populist Discourse Index (PDI) as high as the manifesto of the US Populist party, the paradigmatic case of populist mobilization, and remain far from movements such as Greenpeace of Immigrant Movement International. Hence, the quantitative part of this thesis has confirmed that the movements of the Great Recession employed a strongly populist language in their public appeal towards citizens. However, a more in-depth, qualitative look was added in order to triangulate these findings and ascertain the central use of populist themes by these movements.

The first part of the qualitative stage was presented in chapter 5. Here, a comparative qualitative analysis of movement material from the Spanish *indignados*, the Greek *aganaktismenoi* and *Occupy Wall Street*, such as manifestos, slogans, gazettes, minutes of meetings, and other archival elements reinforced previous inferences and illustrated how populism was employed as the main discursive plank of these movements. The significance of boundary framing techniques dividing society between the People and a minority of elite enemies was stressed, and the value of such Manichean tropes, as with the "99 Percent" motto of *Occupy Wall Street* was put in perspective. Populist themes were found reverberating across these Great Recession movements, in the full spectrum of their activities.

In the same chapter, I switched the analytical lens to a case study in order to investigate the behavior of movement entrepreneurs and uncover motives and decisions at the individual level. A series of twenty-one interviews with key informants of the Thessaloniki *indignados* chapter, conducted in 2014, were analyzed in order to ascertain whether populist discourse was employed consciously, as a strategic decision in order to maximize participation. The interviews exposed a significant network of political entrepreneurs active in the Thessaloniki indignados, the vast majority of which were members of the extraparliamentary left. The movement was effectively divided between the latter, aptly named "Reds", and a contingent of non-affiliated participants as well as a few anarchists, named "Whites". Even though a series of disputes arose between the various factions, the leftists acknowledged that they had to alter their usual rhetoric in order to appeal to potential adherents, discarding their all subjectivities and stressing the People as the collective identity of the movement.

This collective identity which rested on the radicalization of citizenship was able to safeguard the movement against divisive identities, whether class-based when originating in the left, or ethnonationalist, when originating from the right. The notion of the sovereign People became a close guarded collective identity and those who attempted to undermine it were faced with heated opposition. Therefore, both as a means to maximize participation, as well as a means to keep the unity of the movement intact, the populist boundary framing approach which split society into the People and the elites, was a main strategic plank of the Greek indignados. Through this discourse, movement entrepreneurs managed to effect a "Jacobinization" of citizen identity, a peculiar instance of McAdam's (1982) "cognitive liberation", which politicized a quiescent, non-contentious feature of the self into an obligation to collectively react against a perceived appropriation of popular sovereignty after the onset of the Great Recession.

Apart from its significance as a distinct type of social mobilization, populist social movements are ideal candidates to study the nexus between movements and mainstream electoral politics (McAdam and Tarrow 2010; 2013). To take Greece as an example, the earthquake election of May 2012 can only be explained if we take into account the impact of the Greek *indignados* in reorienting political identities of Greek voters. After a rather weak opposition to austerity measures imposed by the Papandreou government until the spring of 2011, the emergence of the *indignados* in May 2011 precipitated the dealignment of the Greek voters, and provided the basis for the emergence of new populist political contenders, such as SYRIZA and the Independent Greeks. Both parties claimed the heritage of

the *indignados* and campaigned as part of the same camp in the bailout-antibailout divide, a fact which also partly explains the relative ease with which two ideologically opposed parties, one from the radical left and one from the radical right, have managed to coalesce in government after the January 2015 election.

While the details of this impact cannot be elaborated at length here, it seems that the collective identity of the "indignant citizens" functioned as a bridge identity from many Greek voters, facilitating their defection from the decades-old two-party system, and rendering them available for the new contenders. Those parties that decided to take up the discourse of the Greek *indignados* and fashion themselves as their natural continuation in the political arena, were those that would stand to benefit the most from the overhaul of the Greek political party system.

Furthermore, while the focus of this thesis has been limited to the movements of the Great Recession, the universe of mobilization that is encompassed by the analytical framework of PSMs that I suggest is far larger, as indicated in Table 1 (chapter 3). Apart from movements within established democracies, the non-doctrinal approach to PSMs which has been presented here can also provide a new perspective on addressing movements of democratization; the quote by Oberschall (1996) provided in chapter 3 is such a case in point. The acknowledgment of PSMs as a distinct analytic category will reconfigure the social movement landscape as it is now known.

For instance, in a recent book, della Porta (2014) has provided a rich account of the cognitive processes of "eventful" democratization in the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, and Tunisia, largely conditioned by mass mobilization from below. The author identified the "corruption of the political class (or the elite)" (2014: 114) as the diagnostic frame of these movements, while the prognostic frame rested on the construction of a collective actor in the form of "a broad and inclusive definition of the 'us'" (ibid.). As she explains, these two frames instigate "broad support in the population at large by suggesting a dichotomy between 'them' and 'us'". This description of the cognitive and framing processes of "eventful" democratization corresponds perfectly to the familiar anti-elitist and people-centric themes of populist mobilization, as analyzed in this thesis. "Eventful" or simply populist, movements of democratization can straightforwardly be subsumed within the analytical framework which has been applied here to movements of the Great Recession,

highlighting the rich value of this empirically grounded approach. In fact, it can be claimed that, in the context of populist mobilization, to distinguish between movements of democratization and movements within "established" democracies is a false dichotomy; in every instance, the powerful language of populism diagnoses current political affairs as a corruption of popular sovereignty, mobilizing citizens who refuse to recognize any democratic legitimacy to their rulers and decide to withdraw their allegiance to "the system" until their grievances are redressed.

However, it is not only scholars of social movement studies that this thesis addresses in its effort to establish the yet undertheorized category of Populist Social Movements. The author also desires to strongly engage students of populism theory. First, to highlight to them the need to embrace populism in the streets next to populism in the parliaments, since they have so far shown a tendency to favor the institutional realm and neglect non-institutional populist phenomena which are equally important. This balanced focus is destined to lead to more comprehensive theorizing on the nature of populism.

Apart from theoretical insights, I have also aspired to stress the need for the quantification of our subject matter. Indeed, qualitative analysts of populism have already picked all the low hanging fruits. Scholars need to move on and sharpen their focus upon measurable dimensions, taking stock of methodological developments and aligning themselves with wider advancements in the field of social science. This study can be seen as another building block towards that objective. As it has been argued here, substantive conceptualizations of populism fail to account for much diversity found in empirical reality; a graded reasoning can address more interesting research questions and test a multitude of hypotheses that have so far remained in the dark.

A review of extant quantitative literature has proven the feasibility of measuring populism in valid and reliable ways. Analysts have applied various content analysis techniques to study a wide range of textual data sources, from electoral manifestos and political speeches, to newspaper editorials and TV commercials. In every instance, variation was observed among units of analysis, stimulating fertile conclusions and opening avenues for further research. The method I have introduced caters for limitations of existing methods and allows for a reliable scale of populist discourse while maintaining the ability to foster qualitative inferences. The use of a semantic grammar provides balance between methods measuring purely manifest content (e.g. dictionary-based software applications),

and those which perform holistic assessments of latent meanings within text (e.g. thematic analysis and holistic grading).

Scholars now possess an arsenal of techniques to measure populism. Depending on the research question, the required resolution of the scoring index, or the availability of academic resources, we can employ dictionaries, perform holistic grading, or code text with various segmentation approaches in order to derive quantitative inferences from our data. Taking advantage of the formal features of populist discourse to produce quantitative indexes can greatly foster the growth of populism studies. With hard work and proper funding, research teams can further increase the validity and reliability of measurement and produce large datasets of populist discourse that cover wide geographical regions and time periods. The availability of such data will undoubtedly encourage comparative work and build bridges towards collaborating with political scientists and other social scientists working on fields that interact with the multifaceted activity of populist actors.

Appendix I

Great Recession movements' manifestos

This Appendix presents the full texts of the manifestos that have been used for the content analysis section of this thesis (chapter 4).

US POPULISTS MOVEMENT

Title: The Populist Manifesto

Source: McVey (1896: 201-202)

As early as 1865-66 a conspiracy was entered into between the gold gamblers of Europe and America to accomplish the following purposes: To fasten upon the people of the United States the burdens of perpetual debt; to destroy the greenbacks which had safely brought us through the perils of war; to strike down silver as a money metal; to deny to the people the use of Federal paper and silver — the two independent sources of money supply guaranteed by the Constitution; to fasten upon the country the single gold standard of Britain, and to delegate to thousands of banking corporations, organized for private gain, the sovereign control, for all time, over the issue and volume of all supplemental paper currency. Thus they doubled the demands for gold; forced upon the country an appreciating money standard, entailing an indefinite period of falling prices; robbed enterprise of its just profits; condemned labor to idleness and confiscated the property of debtors.

For nearly thirty years these conspirators have kept the people quarrelling over less important matters, while they have pursued with unrelenting zeal their one central purpose. At the present moment, every device of treachery, every resource of statecraft, and every artifice known to the secret cabals of the International gold ring are being made use of to deal a blow to the prosperity of the people and the financial and commercial Independence of the country. They seek to accomplish their purposes before the blow can be averted by an awakened public through the ballot. Their plans have been long matured and their line of action is fully chosen. They address themselves to one subject – the

money question – in all its breadth and magnitude. This brings the country face to face with a perilous issue, which calls for immediate and definite action on the part of the people. Every behest of patriotism requires that we shall at once meet the issue and accept the challenge so defiantly offered. We must meet the issue as it is presented to-day. To falter now is to invite disastrous failure. We earnestly urge the Populists throughout the country to concentrate their entire force and energy upon the tremendous contention presented, and thus meet the enemy upon his chosen line of battle. Invite the aid and cooperation of all persons who favor the immediate free coinage of silver at a ratio of 16:1, the issue of all paper money by the government without the intervention of banks of issue, and who are opposed to the issue of interest bearing government bonds in time of peace. In a word, to extend the hand of fellowship to all who agree with you upon the money question, which is certainly the mightiest and most fundamental controversy evolved during the present century.

GREENPEACE

Title: Greenpeace Declaration of Independence

Source: Greenpeace (2009)

We have arrived at a place in history where decisive action must be taken to avoid a general environmental disaster. With nuclear reactors proliferating and over 900 species on the endangered list, there can be no further delay or our children will be denied their future.

The Greenpeace Foundation hopes to stimulate practical, intelligent actions to stem the tide of planetary destruction. We are 'rainbow people' representing every race, every nation, every living creature. We are patriots, not of any one nation, state or military alliance, but of the entire Earth.

It must be understood that the innocent word 'ecology' contains a concept that is as revolutionary as anything since the Copernican breakthrough, when it was discovered that the Earth was not the centre of the universe. Through ecology, science has embarked on a quest for the great systems of order that underlie the complex flow of life on our planet. This quest has taken us beyond the realm of traditional scientific thought. Like religion, ecology seeks to answer the infinite mysteries of life itself. Harnessing the tools of logic, deduction, analysis, and empiricism, ecology may prove to be the first true science-religion.

As suddenly as Copernicus taught us that the earth was not the centre of the universe, ecology teaches us that mankind is not the centre of life on this planet. Each species has its function in the scheme of life.

Ecology has taught us that the entire Earth is part of our 'body' and that we must learn to respect it as much as we respect ourselves. As we love ourselves, we must also love all forms of life in the planetary system- the whales, the seals, the forests, and the seas. Ecological thought shows us a pathway back to an understanding of the natural world - an understanding that is imperative if we are to avoid a total collapse of the global ecosystem.

Ecology has provided us with many insights. These may be grouped into three 'Laws of Ecology,' which hold true for all forms of life - fish, plants, insects, plankton, whales, and humans. These laws may be stated as follows:

First Law of Ecology: All forms of life are interdependent. The prey is as dependent on the predator for the control of its population as the predator is on the prey for a supply of food.

Second Law of Ecology: the stability (unity, security, harmony, togetherness) of ecosystems is dependant on diversity (complexity). An ecosystem that contains 100 different species is more stable than an ecosystem that has only three species. Thus the complex tropical rain forest is more stable than the fragile arctic tundra.

Third Law of Ecology: all resources (food, water, air, minerals, energy) are finite and there are limits to the growth of all living systems. These limits are finally dictated by the finite size of the Earth and the finite input of energy from the sun.

If we ignore the logical implications of these Laws of Ecology, we will continue to be guilty of crimes against the earth. We will not be judged by men for these crimes, but with a justice meted out by the Earth itself. The destruction of the Earth will lead, inevitably, to the destruction of ourselves.

So let us work together to put an end to the destruction of the Earth by the forces of human greed and ignorance. Through an understanding of the principles of ecology, we must find new directions for the evolution of human values and human institutions. Short-term economics must be replaced with actions based on the need for conservation and preservation of the entire global ecosystem. We must learn to live in harmony, not only with our fellow humans, but with all the beautiful creatures on this planet.

GERAÇÃO À RASCA

Title: Manifesto do 12 de Março de 2012

Source: Protesto da Geração À Rasca (2011)

Original text (in Portuguese):

Nós, desempregados, "quinhentoseuristas" e outros mal remunerados, escravos disfarçados, subcontratados, contratados a prazo, falsos trabalhadores independentes, trabalhadores intermitentes, estagiários, bolseiros, trabalhadores-estudantes, estudantes, mães, pais e filhos de Portugal.

Nós, que até agora compactuámos com esta condição, estamos aqui, hoje, para dar o nosso contributo no sentido de desencadear uma mudança qualitativa do país. Estamos aqui, hoje, porque não podemos continuar a aceitar a situação precária para a qual fomos arrastados. Estamos aqui, hoje, porque nos esforçamos diariamente para merecer um futuro digno, com estabilidade e segurança em todas as áreas da nossa vida.

Protestamos para que todos os responsáveis pela nossa actual situação de incerteza – políticos, empregadores e nós mesmos – actuem em conjunto para uma alteração rápida desta realidade, que se tornou insustentável.

Caso contrário:

a) Defrauda-se o presente, por não termos a oportunidade de concretizar o nosso potencial, bloqueando a melhoria das condições económicas e sociais do país. Desperdiçam-se as aspirações de toda uma geração, que não pode prosperar.

b) Insulta-se o passado, porque as gerações anteriores trabalharam pelo nosso acesso à educação, pela nossa segurança, pelos nossos direitos laborais e pela nossa liberdade. Desperdiçam-se décadas de esforço, investimento e dedicação.

c) Hipoteca-se o futuro, que se vislumbra sem educação de qualidade para todos e sem reformas justas para aqueles que trabalham toda a vida. Desperdiçam-se os recursos e competências que poderiam levar o país ao sucesso económico.

Somos a geração com o maior nível de formação na história do país. Por isso, não nos deixamos abater pelo cansaço, nem pela frustração, nem pela falta de

perspectivas. Acreditamos que temos os recursos e as ferramentas para dar um futuro melhor a nós mesmos e a Portugal.

Não protestamos contra as outras gerações. Apenas não estamos, nem queremos estar à espera que os problemas se resolvam. Protestamos por uma solução e queremos ser parte dela.

English translation:

We, unemployed, "five hundred-eurists" and other underpaid people, disguised slaves, subcontracted, term-hired, fake self-employed employees, intermittent workers, interns, scholarship holders, working students, students, mothers, fathers and sons of Portugal.

We, who have so far been complacent with these conditions, are here, today, to contribute towards triggering a qualitative change in the country. We are here, today, because we cannot continue accepting the precarious situation that we have been dragged into. We stand here, today, because every day we strive hard to earn a decent future, with stability and safety in all areas of our lives.

We protest so that those responsible for our uncertain situation – politicians, employers, and ourselves – act together towards a rapid change of this reality that has become unsustainable

Otherwise:

a) The present is defrauded, for we do not have the chance to show our potential, blocking the improvement of economic and social conditions of the country. The aspirations of a whole generation, which cannot prosper, are wasted.

b) The past is insulted, because previous generations have worked for our access to education, for our security, for our labour rights and for our freedom. Decades of effort, investment, and dedication, are wasted.

c) The future is compromised, looming without quality education for all and without fair reforms for those who work their whole lives. The resources and skills that could lead the country to economic success, are wasted.

We are the generation with the highest level of training in the history of the country. Therefore, we will not let ourselves to be overcome by fatigue, by

frustration, or by lack of prospects. We believe we have the resources and tools to provide a better future to ourselves and to Portugal.

We do not protest against other generations. Simply, we are not, and we do not want to, wait for problems to sort themselves out. We protest towards a solution, and we want to be part of it.

15M

Title: Manifesto "Democracia Real Ya"

Source: Democracia Real Ya (2011)

Original text (in Spanish):

Somos personas normales y corrientes. Somos como tú: gente que se levanta por las mañanas para estudiar, para trabajar o para buscar trabajo, gente que tiene familia y amigos. Gente que trabaja duro todos los días para vivir y dar un futuro mejor a los que nos rodean.

Unos nos consideramos más progresistas, otros más conservadores. Unos creyentes, otros no. Unos tenemos ideologías bien definidas, otros nos consideramos apolíticos… Pero todos estamos preocupados e indignados por el panorama político, económico y social que vemos a nuestro alrededor. Por la corrupción de los políticos, empresarios, banqueros… Por la indefensión del ciudadano de a pie.

Esta situación nos hace daño a todos diariamente. Pero si todos nos unimos, podemos cambiarla. Es hora de ponerse en movimiento, hora de construir entre todos una sociedad mejor. Por ello sostenemos firmemente lo siguiente:

• Las prioridades de toda sociedad avanzada han de ser la igualdad, el progreso, la solidaridad, el libre acceso a la cultura, la sostenibilidad ecológica y el desarrollo, el bienestar y la felicidad de las personas.

• Existen unos derechos básicos que deberían estar cubiertos en estas sociedades: derecho a la vivienda, al trabajo, a la cultura, a la salud, a la educación, a la participación política, al libre desarrollo personal, y derecho al consumo de los bienes necesarios para una vida sana y feliz.

• El actual funcionamiento de nuestro sistema económico y gubernamental no atiende a estas prioridades y es un obstáculo para el progreso de la humanidad.

• La democracia parte del pueblo (demos=pueblo; cracia=gobierno) así que el gobierno debe ser del pueblo. Sin embargo, en este país la mayor parte de la clase política ni siquiera nos escucha. Sus funciones deberían ser la de llevar nuestra voz a las instituciones, facilitando la participación política ciudadana

mediante cauces directos y procurando el mayor beneficio para el grueso de la sociedad, no la de enriquecerse y medrar a nuestra costa, atendiendo tan sólo a los dictados de los grandes poderes económicos y aferrándose al poder a través de una dictadura partitocrática encabezada por las inamovibles siglas del PPSOE.

• El ansia y acumulación de poder en unos pocos genera desigualdad, crispación e injusticia, lo cual conduce a la violencia, que rechazamos. El obsoleto y antinatural modelo económico vigente bloquea la maquinaria social en una espiral que se consume a sí misma enriqueciendo a unos pocos y sumiendo en la pobreza y la escasez al resto. Hasta el colapso.

• La voluntad y fin del sistema es la acumulación de dinero, primándola por encima de la eficacia y el bienestar de la sociedad. Despilfarrando recursos, destruyendo el planeta, generando desempleo y consumidores infelices.

• Los ciudadanos formamos parte del engranaje de una máquina destinada a enriquecer a una minoría que no sabe ni de nuestras necesidades. Somos anónimos, pero sin nosotros nada de esto existiría, pues nosotros movemos el mundo.

• Si como sociedad aprendemos a no fiar nuestro futuro a una abstracta rentabilidad económica que nunca redunda en beneficio de la mayoría, podremos eliminar los abusos y carencias que todos sufrimos.

• Es necesaria una Revolución Ética. Hemos puesto el dinero por encima del Ser Humano y tenemos que ponerlo a nuestro servicio. Somos personas, no productos del mercado. No soy sólo lo que compro, por qué lo compro y a quién se lo compro.

Por todo lo anterior, estoy indignado.

Creo que puedo cambiarlo.

Creo que puedo ayudar.

Sé que unidos podemos.

Sal con nosotros. Es tu derecho.

English translation:

We are normal and ordinary people. We are like you: people, who get up every morning to study, work, or find a job, people who have family and friends. People, who work hard every day to provide a better future for those around us.

Some of us consider ourselves more progressive, others more conservative. Some of us consider ourselves believers, others not. Some of us have well defined ideologies, others consider ourselves apolitical… But we are all concerned and outraged about the political, economic, and social outlook which we see around us. About the corruption of politicians, businessmen, bankers… About the helplessness of the ordinary citizen.

This situation has hurts as all daily. But if we all unite, we can change it. It's time to get moving, time to build a better society among us. Therefore, we firmly hold the following:

• The priorities of any advanced society must be equality, progress, solidarity, free access to culture, ecologic sustainability and development, the welfare and happiness of the people.

• There are some basic rights that must be covered in these societies: the right to housing, employment, culture, health, education, political participation, free personal development, and consumer rights of the goods necessary for a healthy and happy life.

• The current functioning of our economic and government system does not meet these priorities and is an obstacle to the progress of humanity.

• Democracy belongs to the people (demos=people, krátos=government) which means that government should be of the people. However, in this country the major part of the political class does not even listen to us. The functions of the political class should be to bring our voice to the institutions, to facilitate the political participation of citizens through direct channels and to provide the greatest benefit to the wider society, not to get rich and prosper at our expense, attending only to the dictates of major economic powers and clinging to power through a partidocratic dictatorship headed by the immovable acronym PPSOE.

• The craving and accumulation of power to a few creates inequality, tension and injustice, which leads to violence, which we reject. The obsolete and unnatural economic model currently in force blocks the social machinery in a spiral that

consumes itself by enriching a few and sends into poverty and scarcity the rest. Until the collapse.

• The will and purpose of the system is the accumulation of money, disregarding efficiency and the welfare of society. Wasting resources, destroying the planet, creating unemployment and unhappy consumers.

• As citizens we form part of the gears of a machine intended to enrich a minority which knows nothing of our needs. We are anonymous, but without us none of this would exist, because we move the world.

• If as a society we learn not to trust our future to abstract economic profit, which never returns benefits to the majority, we can eliminate the abuses and shortcomings that we all suffer from.

• An Ethical Revolution is necessary. We have put money above human beings. and we have to put it to our service. We are people, not market products. I am not just what I buy, why I buy it, and who I buy it from.

For all of the above, I am outraged.

I believe I can change it.

I believe I can help.

I know that united, we can.

Come with us.

It is your right.

ΚΙΝΗΜΑ ΑΓΑΝΑΚΤΙΣΜΕΝΩΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ [KINIMA AGANAKTISMENON POLITON]

Title: Ψήφισμα της Λαϊκής Συνέλευσης Πλατείας Συντάγματος

Source: Author's archive

Original text (in Greek):

Εδώ και πολύ καιρό παίρνονται αποφάσεις για εμάς χωρίς εμάς.

Είμαστε εργαζόμενοι, άνεργοι, συνταξιούχοι, νεολαίοι, που έχουμε έρθει στο σύνταγμα για να παλέψουμε και να αγωνιστούμε για τις ζωές μας και το μέλλον μας.

Είμαστε εδώ γιατί γνωρίζουμε ότι οι λύσεις στα προβλήματά μας μπορούν να προέλθουν μόνο από εμάς.

Καλούμε όλους τους Αθηναίους, εργαζόμενους, ανέργους και νεολαία στο Σύνταγμα, και όλη την κοινωνία να γεμίσει τις πλατείες και να πάρει τη ζωή στα χέρια της.

Εκεί στις πλατείες θα συνδιαμορφώσουμε όλα μας τα αιτήματα και τις διεκδικήσεις μας.

Καλούμε όλους τους εργαζόμενους που θα απεργήσουν την επόμενη περίοδο να καταλήγουν και να παραμένουν στο Σύνταγμα.

Δεν θα φύγουμε από τις πλατείες, μέχρι να φύγουνε αυτοί που μας οδήγησαν εδώ: Κυβερνήσεις, Τρόικα, Τράπεζες, Μνημόνια και όλοι όσοι μας εκμεταλλεύονται.

Τους διαμηνύουμε ότι το χρέος δεν είναι δικό μας.

ΑΜΕΣΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ ΤΩΡΑ!

ΙΣΟΤΗΤΑ - ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ – ΑΞΙΟΠΡΕΠΕΙΑ!

Ο μόνος αγώνας που χάνεται είναι αυτός που δεν δόθηκε ποτέ!

English translation:

For a long time now, decisions have been taken for us, without us.

We are working people, unemployed, pensioners, youth, who have come to Syntagma square to struggle and fight for our lives and our future.

We are here because we know that the solutions to our problems can only come from us.

We call all Athenians, working people, unemployed, and youth to Syntagma square, and the whole of society to fill the squares and take life into their hands.

There in the squares we will shape together all our demands and our claims.

We call all working people who will go on strike during the next period to end up and remain at Syntagma square.

We will not leave the squares, until all those who led us here are gone: Governments, the Troika, Banks, Memoranda, and all those who take advantage of us.

We declare to them that this debt is not ours.

Direct democracy now!

Equality – justice – dignity!

The only struggle that is lost is the one that is never fought!

UNITED FOR GLOBAL CHANGE

Title: United for #GlobalDemocracy

Source: The Guardian (2011)

On 15 October 2011, united in our diversity, united for global change, we demand global democracy: global governance by the people, for the people. Inspired by our sisters and brothers in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, New York, Palestine-Israel, Spain and Greece, we too call for a regime change: a global regime change.

In the words of Vandana Shiva, the Indian activist, today we demand replacing the G8 with the whole of humanity – the G7,000,000,000.

Undemocratic international institutions are our global Mubarak, our global Assad, our global Gaddafi. These include: the IMF, the WTO, global markets, multinational banks, the G8/G20, the European Central Bank and the UN security council. Like Mubarak and Assad, these institutions must not be allowed to run people's lives without their consent. We are all born equal, rich or poor, woman or man. Every African and Asian is equal to every European and American. Our global institutions must reflect this, or be overturned.

Today, more than ever before, global forces shape people's lives. Our jobs, health, housing, education and pensions are controlled by global banks, markets, tax-havens, corporations and financial crises. Our environment is being destroyed by pollution in other continents. Our safety is determined by international wars and international trade in arms, drugs and natural resources. We are losing control over our lives. This must stop. This will stop. The citizens of the world must get control over the decisions that influence them in all levels – from global to local. That is global democracy. That is what we demand today.

Today, like the Mexican Zapatistas, we say "Ya basta! Aqui el pueblo manda y el gobierno obedece": Enough! Here the people command and global institutions obey! Like the Spanish Tomalaplaza we say "Democracia Real Ya": True global democracy now!" Today we call the citizens of the world: let us globalise Tahrir Square! Let us globalise Puerta del Sol!

IMMIGRANT MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL

Title: Migrant Manifesto

Source: Immigrant Movement International (2011)

We have been called many names. Illegals. Aliens. Guest Workers. Border crossers. Undesirables. Exiles. Criminals. Non-citizens. Terrorists. Thieves. Foreigners. Invaders. Undocumented.

Our voices converge on these principles:

1. We know that international connectivity is the reality that migrants have helped create, it is the place where we all reside. We understand that the quality of life of a person in a country is contingent on migrants' work. We identify as part of the engine of change.

2. We are all tied to more than one country. The multilaterally shaped phenomenon of migration cannot be solved unilaterally, or else it generates a vulnerable reality for migrants. Implementing universal rights is essential. The right to be included belongs to everyone.

3. We have the right to move and the right to not be forced to move. We demand the same privileges as corporations and the international elite, as they have the freedom to travel and to establish themselves wherever they choose. We are all worthy of opportunity and the chance to progress. We all have the right to a better life.

4. We believe that the only law deserving of our respect is an unprejudiced law, one that protects everyone, everywhere. No exclusions. No exceptions. We condemn the criminalization of migrant lives.

5. We affirm that being a migrant does not mean belonging to a specific social class nor carrying a particular legal status. To be a migrant means to be an explorer; it means movement, this is our shared condition. Solidarity is our wealth.

6. We acknowledge that individual people with inalienable rights are the true barometer of civilization. We identify with the victories of the abolition of slavery, the civil rights movement, the advancement of women's rights, and the

rising achievements of the LGBTQ community. It is our urgent responsibility and our historical duty to make the rights of migrants the next triumph in the quest for human dignity. It is inevitable that the poor treatment of migrants today will be our dishonor tomorrow.

7. We assert the value of the human experience and the intellectual capacity that migrants bring with them as greatly as any labor they provide. We call for the respect of the cultural, social, technical, and political knowledge that migrants command.

8. We are convinced that the functionality of international borders should be re-imagined in the service of humanity.

9. We understand the need to revive the concept of the commons, of the earth as a space that everyone has the right to access and enjoy.

10. We witness how fear creates boundaries, how boundaries create hate and how hate only serves the oppressors. We understand that migrants and non-migrants are interconnected. When the rights of migrants are denied the rights of citizens are at risk.

Dignity has no nationality.

Appendix II

Interview questions

This doctoral thesis made use of twenty-one semi-structured interviews that were conducted mainly in the summer of 2014. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. While the interviewees were allowed to expand on issues they felt important, the general structure of the discussion took place along the lines drawn from the list of twelve questions below:

1. What was your level of involvement with the Greek indignados?

2. Do you have prior experience in social mobilization? Are you a member of any political or civil society organization?

3. What happened on the first day? Where were you situated on the square? What were your thoughts by the end of the day?

4. Which were the dominant themes in the first General Assemblies? What di most of the people express?

5. Are you satisfied with the collective processes that took place in the squares? What would you have done to make them better?

6. Which were the dominant emotions in the square?

7. Which were the discernible groups in the square?

8. Were there any leading figures? Would an outsider recognize them as such?

9. What was the role of the Left in the square? [To members of political organizations:] What was the agenda of your political organization? What did it expect to achieve in the squares and how did you differ from other organizations?

10. How was the original manifesto drafted?

11. How was "we" expressed in the movement? Who *were* the indignados?

12. Who were the enemies of the Greek indignados?

13. Did internal disputes occur? If yes, on which issues? Who were the contenders? What was your own position?

14. Was it a successful movement? What was its impact on the political setting in your opinion?

15. How did the movement change you personally?

16. Do you believe the *indignados* can remerge? What would you do differently in such a case?

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