

31st Bremen University Talks: Liberal Democracies under Stress: Economic Inequality, Cultural Diversity, and Populism

Ladies and Gentlemen,

welcome here in the Sparkasse Bremen. We in Bremen know something about good dinners and good red wine. So, enjoy this evening with good talks!

Let me start with a personal introductory remark: I have been living here in Bremen for seventeen years, serving in the management board of the Sparkasse Bremen with responsibility for Corporate Clients and Treasury. Also, since seventeen years I am working in the board of the Wolfgang-Ritter-Foundation with responsibility for the Bremen University Talks. Part of this responsibility is this yearly dinner speech, perhaps my biggest challenge every year.

Working with my corporate clients we always analyze the environment of the business. That has been for decades the analysis of market environment, business cycles and so on. Since I am also responsible for our Treasury I know the old say that politics has only a short time influence on the stock markets. Consequently, in my working environment I didn't need to be informed about politics so much. So you understand that this year with our topic about populism and my intention to hold an acceptable dinner speech I would be in trouble. Luckily, I have always been interested in politics. That is why the preparation of this speech has been fun for me. Let us see what it will turn out to be for you.

Approaching our this years topic I undertook a little groundwork on populism, including some background information, attempts of a definition of populism, and the three core concepts of populism: the People, the Elite, and the General Will. Finally I will outline some further research that I have not been able to finish as of today.

Some background

In debates that are currently fought under the topic of populism one could be under the impression that members of the upper class tell us how disgusted they are of the lower class, of the deplorables. Because those people really vote differently from what they have been told before, differently from what they have been told to be in their best interest, based on the best rational grounds. But what should we do, if people don't vote like they are supposed to? Should we get rid of elections to save democracy? Or should we

simply exclude uneducated voters from the elections? Recently, there have been people who have indeed tended to treat populist movements as pathological symptoms of some social disease. So populism has a bad name among intellectuals. Here comes to mind that a nice definition for a populist is a politician who has a different opinion.

In finding the answer to the question of why so many people currently support populist ideas and populist politicians, a first avenue to take is so obvious that it is often ignored: one should not a priori dismiss the charges anti-political establishment actors formulate. Maybe, some of the arguments of the populists are true and that could explain why they are so successful.¹ In other words, populism might be a dismissive term for everything metropolitan elites can't find the energy to understand.² Sometimes, their understanding could be labeled 'elitist democracy'. Reduced to caricature, it might be stated as follows:

- (1) 'Democracy' means the system of a representative government that exists in various advanced industrial countries. It does not mean direct popular self-government, which all political scientists know to be impossible.
- (2) The main difference between democratic states and nondemocratic mass-participatory systems lies in the free competition between political parties and other organizations characteristic of democracy.
- (3) Most citizens in democratic countries are apathetic and do not participate much in politics. However, this is just fine, as the masses are of ignorant, irrational, and authoritarian temperament. Democracy is a system in which liberally minded elites rule, and the masses participate just enough to make it impossible for their rulers to ignore their interests.³ In consequence, it is not supposed to be a good idea to take decisions away from the experts and give them to the ignorant.

Actually and unnoticed by most political scientists, a form of undemocratic liberalism has taken root in the West. In this form of government, procedural niceties are carefully followed (most of the time) and individual rights are respected (much of the time). But voters have concluded that they have very little influence on public policy, and they aren't altogether wrong. Consequently, there are two alternatives: In the first case, the will of the people pushes aside the independent institutions that were meant to protect the rule of law and the rights of minorities. In the second case, the force of the markets and the beliefs of the technocrats push aside the will of the people.⁴

In many modern Western democratic countries elite political culture is strongly imbued with liberal values such as individualism, internationalism, multiculturalism, permissiveness and a belief in progress. That is the background for a populism that is bound to

involve more or less resistance to these values, and can at times amount to a relatively coherent alternative world-view.⁵

It is safe to say that liberal elites have been unable and unwilling to make migration and globalization a topic of discussion and political dispute. Together with the proposition that the current policy is good for everyone (a win-win policy) and without alternative (TINA: there is no alternative), this has made liberalism a synonym for hypocrisy. In many combinations there is a liberalism of the elite that combines social tolerance with political intolerance: understanding for everything that is socially different, no understanding for anything that is politically different. We see elites taking hold of the political system and making it increasingly unresponsive: the powerful are less and less willing to cede to the views of the people. As a result, liberalism and democracy, the two core elements of the political system of the West, are starting to come into conflict.⁶

Another driver for populism might be the development of opinion polling that has given a considerable boost to populism and its anti-elitism. Polls enable the unorganized ordinary people to know what they as a group think, and sometimes draw the attention to embarrassing differences between majority views in the country and those favored within the establishment.⁷

If we are looking to explain the rise of populism, its underlying causes must operate on a longer time scale. And indeed, there do seem to be two fundamental developments that match the timeline of the populist rise and help explain the particular shape populist politics have taken in recent years: a decline in living standards from one generation to the next and the perceived threat to national identity posed by immigration and the growth of supranational organizations.⁸ Thus, populism appears to be a consequence of declinism. Too many people feel that their society is in decline, unable to live up to the new challenges posed by growing internal diversity and globalization.⁹

To understand the populism of the recent years it is as well crucial to have a look at the financial crisis of 2008 and thereafter. The financial crisis was a moment that devastated the western world. It broke a social contract between the plutocrats and everyone else. But it also broke a sense of trust, not just in financial institutions and the government that oversaw them, but in the very idea of experts and expertise. The past ten years have seen an open revolt against the intelligentsia.

Mistrust led to new political movements: the Tea Party for those who didn't trust the government and Occupy Wall Street for those who didn't trust big business. These moved Democrats and Republicans in the United States away from each other in fundamental ways, and populist attitudes on both ends of the spectrum found champions in

Senator Bernie Sanders and Donald J. Trump during the 2016 presidential race.¹⁰ There is an underlying assumption of the populists, explicit or implicit, that the ordinary voter is much more trustworthy than the average politician or lobbyist, so that the more popular participation in government the better.

It can be added that one of the standard objections to populist democracy is that it is an invitation to a tyranny of the majority. Where issues are settled by direct popular vote, it is argued, the will of the majority must prevail, and the sharp ‚yes or no‘ nature of direct voting on issues rules out compromise and conciliation, overriding the interests and rights of the minority.¹¹

Subsequently, we are seeing the rise of *illiberal democracy*, or democracy without rights, and *undemocratic liberalism*, or rights without democracy,¹² where *democracy* is a set of binding electoral institutions that effectively translates popular views into public policy; *liberal* institutions effectively protect the rule of law and guarantee individual rights such as freedom of speech, worship, press, and association to all citizens (including ethnic and religious minorities); and a *liberal democracy* is simply a political system that is both liberal and democratic—one that both protects individual rights and translates popular views into public policy.¹³

Now, comprehension should not only be independent from political condemnation in social science, analysis should not be replaced by ethical condemnation. So, let’s have a look at the subject in more detail! Let’s see the term populism and a definition of populism with its core concepts People, Elite, and General Will.

The term *populism* goes back to the latin word „populus“ which means people. Nevertheless, it is both contemporary and important as it is revealed as 2017 Word of the Year by Cambridge University Press¹⁴. Wendalyn Nichols, Publishing Manager at Cambridge University Press, is quoted: „What sets populism apart from all these other words is that it represents a phenomenon that’s both truly local and truly global, as populations and their leaders across the world wrestle with issues of immigration and trade, resurgent nationalism, and economic discontent.“ *Populism* is described by the Cambridge Dictionary as „political ideas and activities that are intended to get the support of ordinary people by giving them what they want“¹⁵. It includes the usage label ‚mainly disapproving‘.¹⁶

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica¹⁷ populism is a political program or movement that champions the common person, usually in favorable contrast with an elite. Populism has been a tool of progressives, of reactionaries, of democrats, of autocrats, of the left and the right, opposing large business and financial interests but also frequently

being hostile to established socialist and labour parties.¹⁸ Most likely, populism is not a relic of an earlier developmental stage, but rather an enduring feature of the modern civic and political landscape.¹⁹

Attempts of a definition of populism

To be more precise, what is the definition of populism? We cannot hope to reduce all cases of populism to a single definition or find a single essence behind all established uses of the term. There is a trap in a sense, that looking at the enormous range of movements and ideas generally called populist. Anxious to capture all within our definition, we tend to propose a theory which is indeed wide enough to include them all, but which is so wide that it includes virtually everything else.

According to Isaiah Berlin we must not suffer from the Cinderella complex, „by which I mean the following: that there exists a shoe—the word ‚populism‘—for which somewhere there must exist a foot. There are all kinds of feet which it *nearly* fits, but we must not be trapped by these nearly-fitting feet. The prince is always wandering about with the shoe; and somewhere, we feel sure, there awaits it a limb called pure populism. This is the nucleus of populism, its essence. All other populisms are derivations of it, deviations from it and variants of it, but somewhere there lurks true, perfect populism, which may have lasted only six months, or [occurred] in only one place. ... We must not, I suggest, be tempted in that direction.“²⁰ In essence, there are quite a few definitions.

First of all, populism can be seen as a ‚*thin*‘ ideology that in practice is to be found in combination with established, ‚*full*‘ ideologies.²¹

Starting with ‚*ideas*‘, we find that ideas exist in a dialectical relationship with social and historical circumstances. There is the claim that what actors are doing in ‚having ideas‘ is *interpreting* the world in which they find themselves. If ideas are individual interpretations, *ideologies* are interpretative frameworks that emerge as a result of the practice of putting ideas to work in language as concepts. The essence of ideology is simplification, but ideologies do not simply reflect possible pathways through the political; they also play a role in shaping them. A comprehensive, ‚*full*‘ ideology will contain particular interpretations and configurations of all the major political concepts attached to a general plan of public policy that a specific society requires.²²

‚*Thin*‘ ideologies are those whose structure is restricted to a set of core concepts which alone are unable to provide a reasonably broad, if not comprehensive, range of answers to the political questions that societies generate. In contrast to ‚*thin*‘ ideologies ‚*full*‘ ideologies could be nationalism, liberalism, or socialism. Populism is a ‚*thin*‘ ideology; it is diffuse in its lack of a programmatic centre of gravity, and open in its ability to co-

habit with other, more comprehensive, ideologies.²³ Thus, populists can be found at different locations along the left-right political spectrum and there is both left-wing populism and right-wing populism. The reason for its adaptability lies in the ‘empty heart’ of populism: populism lacks a commitment to key values. While other ideologies contain, either implicitly or explicitly, a focus on one or more values such as liberty and social justice, populism has no such core to it. This explains why populism is appropriated by such a wide range of political positions. It also explains why populism is very often appended to other ideologies. Populism’s natural position is an adjective attached to other ideas that fill the space at the empty heart of populism. In essence, populism is more likely to attach itself than be attached to.²⁴

In the political literature there are a number of different definitions of populism which cannot be presented here in their entirety, so the presentation will include only five plausible definitions:²⁵

- (1) According to the *popular agency approach* populism means a democratic way of life built through popular engagement in politics. So the popular agency approach considers populism essentially as a positive force for the mobilization of the (common) people and for the development of a communitarian model of democracy. In its most democratic form, populism seeks to defend the interest and maximize the power of ordinary citizens, through reform rather than revolution. In the United States the term was applied to the program of the Populist Movement, which gave rise to the Populist, or People’s, Party in 1892. Many of the party’s demands were later adopted as laws or constitutional amendments (e.g., a progressive tax system). The populist demand for direct democracy through popular initiatives and referenda also became a reality in a number of U.S. states.
- (2) The *socioeconomic approach* has understood populism primarily as a type of irresponsible economic policy, characterized by a first period of massive spending financed by foreign debt and followed by a second period marked by hyperinflation and the implementation of harsh economic adjustments. The background for this approach was the Latin American populism of the 1980s and 1990s. In the second half of the 20th century, populism came to be identified with the political style and program of Latin American leaders such as Juan Perón, and Hugo Chávez.²⁶
- (3) In its contemporary understanding, however, populism is most often associated with an authoritarian form of politics that can be named as *charismatic leader approach*. Populist politics, following this definition, revolves around a charismatic leader who appeals to and claims to embody the will of the people in order to consolidate his

own power. In this personalized form of politics, political parties lose their importance, and elections serve to confirm the leader's authority rather than to reflect the different allegiances of the people.

Max Weber has famously distinguished three types of authority: legal, traditional and charismatic.²⁷ Our modern society saw the rise of legal-rational authority as the form where we can trace the legitimacy of leaders through law and institutions and, in contemporary democracy, through the consent of (the majority of) the governed. Consequently, legal authority is meant to be based on competence, and often on bureaucracy. Traditional authority traced legitimacy through immemorial traditions. Unlike these authorities the charismatic authority is rooted neither in structures nor in history but in the particular personal characteristics of the leaders and the qualities ascribed to them by their followers.

Insofar, charismatic leadership has strong similarities to religious leadership. The term 'charisma' comes from the word 'grace', and charismatic leaders will tend to inspire a loyalty from their followers that is like devotion and based on faith. Consequently, the leaders themselves will be attributed powers that are almost superhuman and which are contrasted with the ordinariness of their followers. So, the dilemma of leadership for populism is that a movement of ordinary people relies on the most extraordinary of individuals for leadership.²⁸

- (4) The Russian-British social and political theorist, philosopher and historian of ideas *Sir Isaiah Berlin* proposed that there was general agreement over six features of populism that applied across the different variants:²⁹

The first feature is commitment to *Gemeinschaft* (approximately community). According to Berlin *Gemeinschaft* is that famous integral society which everybody talks about—some sort of coherent, integrated society, which has roots in the past, either imaginary or real, and is opposed to a competitive, atomized society.

The second feature is that populism is apolitical: that is to say, it is not principally interested in political institutions, although it is prepared to use the State as an instrument for the purpose of producing its ends. But a State organization is not its aim and the State is not its ideal human association. Populism believes in society rather than in the State.

The third feature is that populism is concerned with returning people to their natural and spontaneous condition to which they belonged before having been subject to some sort of spiritual collapse. Either the collapse has been in the past or it is threatening—one of the two. Either innocence has been lost, or enemies are breeding wit-

hin or attacking from the outside. The enemy may be capitalism, it may be foreign States which have forms of political, social or economic organization which threaten the spontaneous integral group and the sense of brotherhood which unites them.

The fourth element is that some degree of past-directness is essential to all populisms. In this sense populism seeks to bring back ancient values into the contemporary world. According to Berlin there is no populism which assumes that man was born in a low or undesirable state and that the golden age is somewhere in the future.

The fifth feature is that populism seeks to speak in the name of the (silent) majority. The silence of the majority comes from the fact that they are the ones who are working, paying taxes and quietly getting on with life. They are the have-nots, in some sense, the obvious majority of the deprived. They might be any group of individuals with whom you identify the true people, and you identify the true people with them because the ideology of populism itself springs from the discontented people who feel that they somehow represent the majority of the nation, which has been done down by some minority or other. Populism cannot be a consciously minority movement. Whether falsely or truly, it stands for the majority of men who have somehow been damaged by an elite, either economic, political or racial, some kind of secret or open enemy. The implication of mobilizing the silent majority is that the majority is politically reluctant and only shaken from that reluctance by a sense of necessity brought on by perceived extreme conditions³⁰—by a sense of crisis or collapse, potentially caused by a societal and economic modernization.

That's why finally, Berlin suggests that populism emerges in societies undergoing or about to undergo modernization. Populists resist economic and social development that they fear is able to threaten them if they do not in some way catch up (which they might not be able to) or create some kind of walls with which to resist modernization. With respect to the recent populist movements, the alleged crisis is the result of the transformation to a post-industrial society, as well as the (perceived) inadequate way in which the welfare state has tried to deal with it. The populist heartland³¹ becomes active only when there are special circumstances: most notably, the combination of persisting political resentment, a (perceived) serious challenge to 'our way of life', and the presence of an attractive populist leader.³²

- (5) Another common framework for interpreting populism is known as the *ideational approach*³³: this defines populism as an ideology which posits 'the people' as a morally good force against 'the elite', who are perceived as bad and corrupt. In this understanding 'populism always involves a critique of the establishment and an adula-

tion of the common people³⁴, and populism itself is a product of an antagonistic relationship between the people and the elite, and is „latent wherever the possibility occurs for the emergence of such a dichotomy“³⁵. This understanding conceives populism as a discourse, ideology, or worldview.³⁶

Usually, the term populism is used against others, often in a pejorative sense to discredit opponents. Beyond the lack of agreement on the defining attributes of populism, most of the definitions have focused on the idea that it should reference some form of relationship between ‚the people‘ and ‚the elite‘. Now it could be, however, that elites are incapable of addressing a number of different demands. Although these (unsatisfied) demands are not set in stone, they are also a function of some kind of failed ‚expectation management‘, i.e. people expect more than the elites were willing to deliver or more than what objectively could have been delivered. Here, populism insists that the people ought to get what they want, when they want, and however they want. Consequently, a ‚logic of equivalence‘ dominates and an antagonism arises between the people and the elite.

So, ultimately the ideational approach defines „populism as a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic camps, ‚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.“³⁷

Populists differ in how ‚the people‘ are defined, but it can be based along class, ethnic, or national lines. Populists typically present ‚the elite‘ as comprising the political, economic, cultural, and media establishment, all of which are depicted as a homogenous entity and accused of placing the interests of other groups—such as foreign countries or immigrants—above the interests of ‚the people‘.

Populism, like nationalism, focuses on the ‚who‘ of politics; it is an ideology to identifying the people as the privileged subject of politics. Its core consists of four distinct but interrelated concepts:

- The existence of two homogeneous units of analysis: ‚the people‘ and ‚the elite‘.
- The antagonistic relationship between the people and the elite.
- The idea of popular sovereignty.
- The positive valorization of ‚the people‘ and denigration of ‚the elite‘.³⁸

Looking for direct opposites of populism, there are two: ‚elitism‘ and ‚pluralism‘.³⁹

Elitism shares populism's basic distinction of society, between a homogenous 'good' and a homogenous 'evil', but it holds an opposite view on the virtues of these groups. To put it simple, elitists believe that 'the people' are dangerous, dishonest, and vulgar, and that 'the elite' are superior not only in moral, but also in cultural and intellectual terms. Hence, elitists want politics to be exclusively or predominantly an elite affair, in which the people don't have a say. They either reject democracy altogether or support a limited model of democracy.

Pluralism is the direct opposite of the dualist perspective of both populism and elitism, instead pluralism holds that society is divided into a broad variety of partly overlapping social groups with different ideas and interests. Pluralism sees diversity as a strength rather than a weakness. Pluralists believe that a good society should have many centers of power and that politics, in working on compromises and consensus, should reflect the interests and values of as many different groups as possible. Thus, the main idea is that power should be distributed throughout society in order to avoid specific groups acquiring the capacity to impose their will upon the others. Populists are always anti-pluralist because they claim that they, and they alone, represent the people.

The three core concepts of populism: the People, the Elite, and the General Will:

Who are **the People**? It is more than 230 years ago that the constitution of the United States of America started with its first sentence: „We The People (of the United States) ...“. It might be interesting that in England of that time landowning gentlemen were the natural representatives of the people as a whole, whereas in American politics the sovereign 'people' to whom government was to be given back included those previously regarded as the (male, white) common people.⁴⁰ Since the writing of the constitution of the United States of America the principle that the people's consent is the only basis for a legitimate government has become a commonplace.

In simplifying the complexities of reality, the concept of 'the people' is vague and flexible,⁴¹ with this plasticity benefitting populists who are thus able to expand or contract the concept to suit the chosen criteria of inclusion or exclusion at any given time.⁴² In employing the concept of 'the people', populists can encourage a sense of shared identity among different groups within a society and facilitate their mobilization toward a common cause.⁴³

There are, broadly speaking, three senses in which 'people' is commonly used in modern english language:

(1) The People as Sovereign,

(2) The People as Nation,

(3) The People as opposed to the ruling elite (,the common people').⁴⁴

The first way that populists employ the understanding of ,the people' is in the idea that the *people are sovereign*, that in a democratic state governmental decisions should rest with the population and that if they are ignored then they might mobilize or revolt.⁴⁵ It was in city-states, not nations, that the conception of popular sovereignty was first articulated. More recently, this notion is closely linked to the American and French Revolutions. However, the formation of a democratic regime does not imply that the gap between governed and governors disappears completely. Under certain circumstances, the sovereign people can feel that they are not being well represented by the elites in power, and, accordingly, they will not even criticize but rebel against the political establishment. This could set the stage for a populist struggle to give government back to the people.

In other words, the notion of ,the people as sovereign' is a reminder of the fact that the ultimate source of political power in a democracy derives from a collective body, which, if not taken into account, may lead to mobilization and revolt. This is the sense of ,the people' employed in the late 19th century United States by the People's Party and which has also been used by later populist movements in that country.⁴⁶

In this context resistance theory might be of some help. Resistance theory is an aspect of political thought, discussing the basis on which constituted authority may be resisted, by individuals or groups. In the European context it came to prominence as a consequence of the religious divisions in the early modern period that followed the Protestant Reformation. Protestant resistance theory was most fully articulated by the French Huguenots after the St Bartholomew's Day massacre of protestants on August 24, 1572. It argued that kings rule by the authority of the people and for the sake of the people's welfare. Consequently, the authority of the kings is conditional. If the king breaks his contract with the people, the latter have the right to resist.⁴⁷ Resistant theories can also underpin and justify the concept of revolution as now understood. Resistance theory of the early modern period can be considered to predate the formulations of natural and legal rights of citizens, and to co-exist with considerations of natural law.

Any ,right to resist' or ,right of self-defense' is a theory about the limitations on civil obedience. The Declaration of Independence can in a sense be read as the culmination of the traditional resistance theory.

Before moving to the next narrative of the people a legal view on the concept of sovereignty might shed some extra light on this subject. In connection with the law of the states and the law of the peoples there is a distinction of three models of sovereignty⁴⁸:

- (A) Classic sovereignty,
- (B) Liberal international sovereignty, and
- (C) Cosmopolitan sovereignty.

Classic sovereignty is the undivided power to make and enforce the law and, as such, is the defining characteristic of the state.⁴⁹

The beginning of the regime of the *liberal international sovereignty* is marked by attempts to extend the processes of delimiting public power to the international sphere and by attempts thereafter to transform the meaning of legitimate political authority from effective control to the maintenance of basic standards or values that no political agent should, in principle, be able to abrogate. Effective power is challenged by, among others, the principles of the human rights regime with its interrelated features (a) the constitutive human rights agreements; (b) the role of self-determination and the democratic principle that were central to the framework of decolonization; and (c) the recent recognition of the rights of minority groups as the proper basis of sovereignty.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, states remain of the utmost importance to the protection and maintenance of both the security and the welfare of their citizens. For in the regime of liberal international sovereignty it is not a question of international versus national law, but rather of a multiplicity of overlapping legal competencies, institutions, and agencies seeking to provide the administration necessary to protect and nurture human rights.⁵¹

Finally, the *cosmopolitan sovereignty* has some paramount principles: (a) equal worth and dignity; (b) active agency; (c) personal responsibility and accountability; (d) consent; (e) reflexive deliberation and collective decision-making through voting procedures; (f) inclusiveness and subsidiarity; and (g) avoidance of serious harm and the amelioration of urgent need.⁵² It remains a project.

The usual implication of the *People as Nation* is that all those native to a particular country are included, and together they form a community with a common life. The word nation came to English from the Old French word ‚nacion‘ which means ‚birth‘ (naissance), ‚place of origin‘ and in turn originates from the Latin word ‚natio‘ literally meaning ‚birth‘. In English, the term nation tends to have more of a cultural connotation, the people more of a political connotation. In German, it is the other way around.⁵³

There are two images of community, the nation and the people, that have become entangled in our minds. Disentangling them, however, is extremely difficult, since we tend to use the words ‚nation‘ and ‚people‘ interchangeably. Both the people and the nation are imagined communities.

The national community can be defined either in civic or in ethnic terms. In this sense ‚people‘ fits comfortably into the classic conservative mould. When we talk about ‚the German people‘ or ‚the people of the USA‘ we usually mean the nation, the country, implying a corporate whole that includes all living members, but also reaches back into the past and stretches out to the future. The people in this sense are not only a collection of individuals, but an articulated and structured community.

What binds us into national communities is our image of a shared heritage that is passed, in modified form, from one generation to another. National communities, as a result, are imagined as starting from some specific point of origin in the past and extend forward into an indefinite future. The people, in contrast, presents an image of community over space. It portrays all individuals within the given boundaries of a state as members of a community from which the state derives its legitimate authority. The concept of the nation allows us to imagine the evolving community that precedes our existence and survives our death. The concept of the people allows us to imagine the community that we share at any particular moment in dealing with the state’s coercive authority.⁵⁴

As we see in Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1966:

„1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.“

Implicitly, this means that even if we were able to extend popular solidarity, however, it would not alter the fact that any specific people have boundaries and that members of a democratic people enjoy rights and powers denied to people in general.⁵⁵

To see the problem in another perspective, we can take a look at the statement of the Statue of Liberty in New York:

„Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!“

The irony of these universal words of welcome is that the mission to all people does not erase the boundary between the chosen people and the rest. The American people might be readier than other peoples to welcome new immigrants, but the boundary between insiders and outsiders remains, denying to people in general the rights enjoyed by ,our‘ people. Neither liberal universalism nor globalization can erase the significance of these boundaries.⁵⁶ It is hard to imagine a cosmopolitan citizenship with enough popular solidarity at a global level to allow a United Nations ,People’s Assembly‘ to hold a global government to account.

That means that the people is clearly imagined as a bounded community. But where do its boundaries come from?

On one hand, it seems like there is a simple and clear answer to the question. A people derives its boundaries from its state. It is sovereignty within the boundaries of its state’s territories, and nothing more, that the people claim. If peoples are the communities to which states are accountable, then the boundaries between one people and another will be the boundaries that distinguish the reach of one state’s coercive authority from another’s.

On the other hand, if the people is imagined as prior to the state, as the community that authorizes the establishment of the state’s authority and survives its dissolution, then its boundaries cannot be defined by the boundaries of particular states. An appeal to the people is an appeal beyond the constituted authority of state actors and institutions to the community that lends them their authority. And if the appeal to the people is an appeal beyond the state, why should we imagine peoples as limited by the contingent borders that a history of accident, force, and fraud have established for states? The people, it seems, is imagined both as existing prior to the state and as defined by the borders of an already constituted state, or as both a pre political and post political community. In practice, the application of popular sovereignty doctrine usually takes for granted existing state boundaries. But by raising the prospect of a pre political community on which the legitimacy of state authority depends, the new popular sovereignty doctrine raises questions about the pre political sources of community, questions that visions of national community are much better equipped to answer than are visions of the sovereign people.⁵⁷

In essence, a nation can be best understood as an intergenerational community bound by an imagined heritage of cultural symbols and memories associated with a particular territory or territories.

Although ‚the people‘ may at times mean the whole nation, it can equally well refer to a particular section of the nation, to what used to be called the *common people*, the lower classes.⁵⁸ In this more restricted sense, the term can be contrasted with some kind of elite or upper class. Consequently, the People as Underdogs can be seen as the less privileged majority of the whole community.

For a long time there has been an ambiguity of the word ‚demos‘: on the one hand, it meant the citizen body as a whole; on the other hand it meant the common people, the many, the poor. The ancient citizen population was itself a select group, raised above slaves, women, and foreign residents. In Republican Rome, ‚populus‘ in this sense meant the ‚plebs‘, who were often feared by their patrician betters. There have been three connected reasons for fearing the common people:

Since the people were the poor, they could easily be incited by demagogues to plunder the rich. Being also ignorant and resentful, they were irrational and could be turned into a mob, the ‚many-headed monster‘. Finally, they posed a danger to any mixed constitution and limits on power because they could be induced by a populist military leader to support the establishment of a tyranny like the ‚Caesarism‘.

Besides using the word with an article—‚the people‘ or ‚a people‘—we talk about ‚people‘ in general. That is, *People as Everyman* can mean individual human beings at large. Speaking of the common people often refers to a critique of the dominant culture, which views the judgements, tastes, and values of ordinary citizens with suspicion. In contrast to this elitist view, the notion of the common people vindicates the dignity and the knowledge of groups who objectively or subjectively are being excluded from power due to their sociocultural and socioeconomic status: ‚From common people comes common sense, and that is better than bookish knowledge.‘

Populists typically seek to reveal to ‚the people‘ how they are oppressed. In doing so, they do not seek to change ‚the people‘, but rather seek to preserve the latter’s way of life as it presently exists, regarding it as a source of good. Although populist leaders often present themselves as representatives of ‚the people‘, they often come from elite strata in society; examples like Silvio Berlusconi, Boris Johnson, and Donald Trump were all well-connected to their country’s political and economic elites.

From the point of view of a socialist, ‚the people‘ are the workers, the laboring class contrasted with the parasitic capitalists. Although this left-wing people includes less of the population of any given nation than its right-wing counterpart, this is compensated for by its links of solidarity with the lower-class people of other nations.

Now, who is this **Elite**?⁵⁹ The existence of elites is something that is not only to be endured, but it is something quite natural. In every society, in every era, and in every part of human endeavor there have been elites. For a couple of thousand years there were basically two sources of power: God and Land Property. Now, we have the idea of a meritocracy, like it is presented in the Protestant Ethic (and the Spirit of Capitalism) of Max Weber.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, anti-elitism is a characteristic feature of populism. In populist discourse, the fundamental distinguishing feature of the elite is that it is in an adversarial relationship with the people. In defining the elite, populists often condemn not only the political establishment, but also the economic elite, the cultural elite, and the media elite. All of these are portrayed as one homogenous, corrupt group that works against the ‚general will‘ of the people. In American politics in particular, this anti-elitist style of popular rhetoric is very common. Nineteenth-century populists contrasted the people with ‚the plutocrats, the aristocrats, and all the other rats‘.⁶¹ To understand the background of this statement the famous book ‚The Theory of the Leisure Class‘⁶² of the Norwegian-American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen is a must-read.

First and foremost, the elite are defined on the basis of power, i.e., they include the people who hold leading positions within politics, the economy, the media, and the arts. Although condemning almost all those in positions of power within a given society, populists often exclude both themselves and those sympathetic to their cause even when they too are in positions of power.

When populists take governmental power, they are faced with a challenge in that they now represent a new elite. In such cases—like Chávez in Venezuela—populists retain their anti-establishment rhetoric by making changes to their concept of the elite to suit their new circumstances, alleging that real power is not held by the government but other powerful forces who continue to undermine the populist government and the general will of the people itself. Linking the elite to economic power is particularly useful for populists in power, as it allows them to explain their lack of political success, because they are sabotaged by the elite, who might have lost political power but who continue to hold economic power.

As a matter of fact one can with good reasons claim that the development of communication techniques and the globalization of the recent years have established an interconnected global elite.⁶³ Although there is a growing political gap between the national oriented and the international oriented part of society. Business is more or less international oriented and is interested in the international markets for capital and labour, whereas

employees are more national oriented and perceive immigration and free trade as threatening their jobs and wages. Nobel price winner Joseph Stiglitz of Columbia University was not the only one who emphasized that elites all over the world have pushed changes that have been in their interest, and at the same time prevented changes that might have been most profitable for the society.⁶⁴

When the preferences of economic elites and of organized interest groups are controlled for, the preferences of the average American appear to have only a statistically non-significant impact upon public policy. When a majority of citizens disagrees with economic elites or with organized interests, they generally lose. Moreover, because of the strong status quo bias built into the political system, even when fairly large majorities of people favor policy change, they generally don't get it. That is in line with analyses of U.S. politics which argue that a chief aim of the framers of the U.S. Constitution was to protect private property, favoring the economic interests of wealthy merchants and plantation owners rather than the interests of the then-majority small farmers, laborers, and craft workers.⁶⁵

Americans enjoy many features central to democratic governance, such as regular elections, freedom of speech and association. But, if policymaking is dominated by powerful business organizations and a small number of super affluent Americans, then America's claims to being a democratic society are seriously threatened.⁶⁶ Finally, it has been Dwight D. Eisenhower who told us already in 1961 in his farewell address: „In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.“⁶⁷

When operating in liberal democracies, populists often condemn dominant political parties as part of the elite but at the same time do not reject the party political system altogether, instead either calling for or claiming to be a new kind of party different from the others. As part of their anti-elitist attitude, many populists adhere to conspiracy theories about how the elites control the country.

What is the **General Will or *volonté générale***? It is the third and last core concept of the populist ideology. For populists, the ‚general will‘ of ‚the people‘ is something that should take precedence over the preferences of ‚the elite‘. This concept is closely linked to the work of the Swiss-French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1778)⁶⁸.

Rousseau's work is dominated by his concern to find a way of preserving human freedom in a world where people are increasingly dependent on one another for the satisfaction of their needs. In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau sets out to answer what he takes to be the fundamental question of politics, the reconciliation of the freedom of the indivi-

dual with the authority of the state. This reconciliation is necessary because human society has evolved to a point where individuals can no longer supply their needs through their own unaided efforts, but rather must depend on the co-operation of others. The process whereby human needs expand and interdependence deepens is set out in the ‚Discourse on the Origins of Inequality‘.

All needs, whether real or only perceived needs, have the potential to give rise to dependence, as long as they are perceived as needs by the subject.⁶⁹ According to Rousseau there are two kinds of needs, namely the commodities of life for oneself, and consideration among others. These needs result in two main types of dependence: economic and psychological dependence. The former consists in dependence on others in the production or acquisition of necessary commodities, whereas psychological dependence is dependence on others for the recognition one needs in order for one’s sense of one’s value or standing among others to be reflected and thus confirmed in the external world.⁷⁰

Rousseau principally explores two routes to achieving and protecting human freedom: the first is a political one aimed at constructing political institutions that make sure that free and equal citizens can co-exist in a community where they themselves are sovereign; the second is a project for child development and education that enables autonomy and avoids the development of the most destructive forms of self-interest. Rousseau thought that humankind is good by nature but is corrupted by society.

„As long as men were content with their rustic huts, as long as they were limited to sewing their clothing of skins with thorns of fish bones, adorning themselves with feathers and shells, painting their bodies with various colors, perfecting or embellishing their bows and arrows, carving with sharp stones a few fishing Canoes or a few Musical instruments; in a word, as long as they applied themselves only to tasks that a single person could do and to arts that did not require the cooperation of several hands, they lived free, healthy, good, and happy insofar as they could be according to their Nature, and they continued to enjoy among themselves the sweetness of independent intercourse. But from the moment one man needed the help of another, as soon as they observed that it was useful for a single person to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, labor became necessary; and vast forests were changed into smiling Fields which had to be watered with the sweat of men, and in which slavery and misery were soon seen to germinate and grow with the crops.“⁷¹

Rousseau’s central doctrine in politics is that a state can be legitimate only if it is guided by the ‚general will‘ of its members. The general will could be seen as the intention to promote the common good. The community expresses the general will insofar as it in-

tends to promote the common good, and likewise with its individual members. Thus, the general will is intimately related to the common good of the community.⁷² The idea of the general will finds its most detailed treatment in „On the Social Contract or Principles of Political Right“⁷³. It starts with the famous phrase: „Man was/is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.“⁷⁴

The key to the reconciliation of the freedom of the individual with the authority of the state is the idea of the general will: that is, the collective will of the citizen body taken as a whole. The general will is the source of law and is willed by each and every citizen. In obeying the law each citizen is thus subject to his or her own will, and consequently, according to Rousseau, remains free.

Thus, the question is „Find a form of association that defends and protects the person and goods of each associate with all the common force, and by means of which each one, united with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before.“ This is the fundamental problem which is solved by the social contract.⁷⁵

And the answer is: „If, then, everything that is not of the essence of the social compact is set aside, one will find that it can be reduced to the following terms. *Each of us puts his person and all his power under the supreme direction of the general will; and in a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.*“⁷⁶ „As long as several men together consider themselves to be a single body, they have only a single will, which relates to their common preservation and the general welfare. Then all the mechanisms of the State are vigorous and simple, its maxims are clear and luminous, it has no tangled, contradictory interests; the common good is clearly apparent everywhere, and it requires only good sense to be perceived.“⁷⁷ Consequently, Rousseau takes it for granted that the interests individuals have in common are at least as important as their personal interests, if not more so.

As a starting point for clarifying the general will democratic procedures are conceived of as a method for discovering the truth about the public interest; they then interpret the general will as a deliberative means of seeking outcomes that satisfy the preferences of individuals and render the authority of the state legitimate. „It can be seen ... that the way in which general matters are handled can provide a rather precise indication of the current state of morals and health of the body politic. The more harmony is in the assemblies, that is, the closer opinions come to obtaining unanimous support, the more dominant as well is the general will. But long debates, dissensions, and tumult indicate the ascendance of private interests and the decline of the State.“⁷⁸

„The Citizen consents to all the laws, even to those passed in spite of him, and even to those that punish him when he dares to violate one of them. The constant will of all the members of the State is the general will, which makes them citizens and free. When a law is proposed in the assembly of the People, what they are being asked is not precisely whether they approve or reject the proposal, but whether it does or does not conform to the general will that is theirs. Each one expresses his opinion on this by voting, and the declaration of the general will is drawn from the counting of the votes.“⁷⁹

According to Rousseau there are two (convincing) maxims that can serve to regulate the voting: „One, that the more important and serious the deliberations, the closer the winning opinion should be to unanimity. The other, that the more speed the business at hand requires, the smaller the prescribed difference in the division of opinions should be. In deliberations that must be finished on the spot, a majority of a single vote should suffice. The first of these maxims appears more suited to laws; the second, to business matters. However that may be, it is a combination of the two that establishes the proper ratio of the deciding majority.“⁸⁰

In a well-ordered society, there is no tension between private and general will, as individuals accept that both justice and their individual self-interest require their submission to a law which safeguards their freedom by protecting them from the private violence and personal domination that would otherwise hold sway.

It is obvious that the best way for the general will to emerge is where there is no difference between the governors and the governed; in other words: a political order is one where the sovereign people are governed by their own general will: where the people are both rulers and subjects at the same time.⁸¹ As this is only imaginable in rather small communities, the problems arise with the representation of the general will or the people in larger societies. Subsequently and based on Hobbes⁸², Rousseau presents three forms of government:

„The Sovereign can, in the first place, entrust the Government to the entire people or the majority of the people, so that there are more citizens who are magistrates than citizens who are simply private individuals. This form of Government is given the name *Democracy*.

Or else it can restrict the Government to the hands of a small number, so that there are more simple Citizens than magistrates; and this form bears the name *Aristocracy*.

Finally, it can concentrate the whole Government in the hands of a single magistrate from whom all the others derive their power. This third form ... is called *Monarchy* or royal Government.“⁸³

„In the strict sense of the term, a genuine Democracy has never existed and never will exist. It is contrary to the natural order that the majority govern and the minority be governed. It is unimaginable that the people remain constantly assembled to attend to public affairs, and it is obvious that it could not establish commissions to do so without changing the form of administration.“⁸⁴

So it doesn't come as a surprise that Rousseau concludes: „If there were a people of Gods, it would govern itself Democratically. Such a perfect Government is not suited to men.“⁸⁵

As far as the Aristocracy is concerned, according to Rousseau there are three kinds of it: natural, elective, and heredity. The first is suited only to simple peoples. The third is the worst of all Governments. The second is the best; it is Aristocracy properly so-called.⁸⁶ By the way, the word ‚aristocracy‘ derives from the Greek term *aristokratia*, from *aristos* ‚best‘ + *-kratia* ‚power‘. The term originally denoted the government of a state by its best citizens.

So Rousseau has a very favorite view on the elective aristocracy which could also be seen as a form of an indirect sovereignty⁸⁷:

„Beside the advantage of distinguishing between the two powers, aristocracy has that of the choice of its members. For in popular Government all the Citizens are born magistrates, whereas this type limits them to a small number, and they become magistrates only through election, a means by which probity, enlightenment, experience, and all the other reasons for public preference and esteem become so many new guarantees of being wisely governed.

Moreover, assemblies are more conveniently held, business is better discussed and acted upon in a more orderly and diligent manner, the prestige of the State is better sustained in foreign countries by venerable senators than by an unknown or scorned multitude.

In short, it is the best and most natural order for the wisest to govern the multitude, as long as it is certain that they govern for its benefit and not for their own. Devices must not be multiplied uselessly, nor must twenty thousand men do what one hundred well-chosen men can do still better. But it must be noted that here the corporate interest begins to direct the public force in accordance with the rule of the general will to a lesser degree, and that another unavoidable tendency exempts from the laws a part of the executive power.

With regard to particular matters of expediency, a State must not be so small, nor the people so simple and upright, that the execution of laws follows immediately from the

public will, as is the case in a good Democracy. Nor must a nation be so large that the leaders, dispersed to govern it, can each make decisions for the Sovereign in its own department, and begin by making themselves independent in order to become masters in the long run.

But if Aristocracy requires somewhat fewer virtues than popular Government, it also requires others which are specific to it, such as moderation among the rich and contentment among the poor. For it seems that rigorous equality would be misplaced in an aristocracy. It was not even adhered to in Sparta.

Besides, if the form includes some inequality of wealth, it is simply in order for the administration of public affairs to be generally confided to those who can best devote all their time to it; but not, as Aristotle claims, for the rich to be always given preference. On the contrary, it is important that an opposite choice should occasionally teach the people that personal merit offers more important reasons for preference than does riches.⁸⁸

Rousseau holds that good laws make for good citizens. However, he also believes both that good laws can only be willed by good citizens and that, in order to be legitimate, they must be agreed upon by the assembly. This could be seen as political theology in the sense that Rousseau's general will has godlike dignity, uniting power, and justice. It is an unlimited and unlimitable legislator, the source of the laws of the state as God is of the laws of nature.⁸⁹

However, there are two dangers to the ideal rule of the general will:

First, the general will can err: „One always wants what is good for oneself, but one does not always see it. The people is never corrupted, but it is often fooled, and only then does it appear to want what is bad.“⁹⁰ It is not always the case, „that all the characteristics of the general will are still in the majority.“⁹¹

Second, the representatives don't follow the general will but their own selfish interests at the cost of the people. This becomes possible, when public service ceases to be the main business of the citizens, and they prefer to serve with their pocketbooks rather than with their persons. Then the state is already close to its ruin. „Is it necessary to march to battle? They pay troops and stay home. Is it necessary to attend the Council? They name deputies and stay home. By dint of laziness and money, they finally have soldiers to enslave the country and representatives to sell it.“⁹² That is the reason why Rousseau apparently rejects ‚representative government‘.

With regard to Rousseau's account of relations between sovereign and government there is an important issue that arises, and that is his political pessimism, even in the case of the best-designed and most perfect republic. Just as any group has a collective will as opposed to the individual private will of its members, so does the government. As the state becomes larger and more diffuse, and as citizens become more distant from one another both spatially and emotionally, so the effective government of the republic will need a proportionally smaller and more cohesive group of magistrates. Rousseau thinks it almost inevitable that this group will end up usurping the legitimate sovereign power of the people and substituting its corporate will for the people's general will.

In emphasizing the general will, many populists share the critique of representative democratic government. This approach regards representative governance as an aristocratic and elitist system in which a country's citizens are regarded as passive entities. Rather than choosing laws for themselves, these citizens are only mobilized for elections in which their only option is to select their representatives rather than taking a more direct role in legislation and governance. Populists often favor the use of direct democratic measures such as referenda and plebiscites.

Further research:

Based on some ideas of what populism could mean further research could go on as follows:

- (1) First, we look at major statements the elites are consenting on—freedom of trade and free movement of people, which might not be outright stupid.

On the one hand freedom of trade is based on the success-story of free markets and capitalism as well as the success-story of globalization.

On the other hand freedom of migration is based on the right of asylum and christian charity. The right of asylum (sometimes called right of political asylum) is an ancient juridical concept, under which a person persecuted by his own country may be protected by another sovereign authority, such as another country or church official, who in medieval times could offer sanctuary. In Christian theology charity, Latin *caritas*, is understood by Thomas Aquinas as ,the friendship of man for God', which ,unites us to God'. He holds it as ,the most excellent of the virtues'. Furthermore, Aquinas holds that ,the habit of charity extends not only to the love of God, but also to the love of our neighbor', who could also be our neighbor in other countries.

- (2) Second, we look at the challenges of populism for the current main stream politics in the Western World.

First, there is the left wing-populism that challenges capitalism and globalization. Here we look at the inequality of wealth and wages, the problem of technological unemployment, and the uneasiness with the outcome of globalization for rather lower skilled workers in the West.

Second, there is the right wing-populism that challenges immigration and (also) globalization. The challenge of open borders for people from everywhere is linked with the fear of loss of the own culture, and the concern that people have to compete for jobs and government resources. When right wing-populists are attacking globalization, they are fighting against the relocation of jobs in other countries far away. Finally, there is the (implicit) fight against a real or perceived loss of status (of not only but mainly white men).

Beside the challenges from left wing-populists as well as right wing-populists remains the open question whether populism is democracy in action or a threat to democracy.

- (3) Third, this essay is not supposed to be another essay explaining the problems of the world, but should also look at possible solutions.

First, if society follows the main stream politics with open borders for (almost) everyone, there is the danger of a decline of civilization, and the establishment of parallel societies.

Second, if politics follows the right wing-populism with closed borders, there are all the dangers that are associated with a closed society, including a decay in competitiveness on the international markets.

Third and finally, there could be an attractive alternative in a society with limited open borders for trade and people. With limited migration fresh blood and ideas are secured as well as solidarity in a community that is perceived as the community of everyone living in this country.

Beyond this I cannot go. I do not know whether all this constitutes a workable model or not. I am afraid all I have done is to have spoken too long.

Notes

- ¹ See Mudde, C. (2004). "The Populist Zeitgeist." *Government and Opposition*: 541-563., p. 552.
- ² See Cohen, R. (2018). It's Time to Depopularize 'Populist'. *The New York Times*. New York, The New York Times Company: A20..
- ³ See Canovan, M. (1981). *Populism*. New York/ London, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich., pp. 179-180.
- ⁴ See Mounk, Y. (2018). *The People vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom Is in Danger and How to Save It*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press., p. 13.
- ⁵ See Canovan, M. (1999). "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy." *Political Studies* 47: 2-16., p. 4.
- ⁶ See Mounk, Y. (2018). *The People vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom Is in Danger and How to Save It*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press., p. 13.
- ⁷ See Canovan, M. (1984). ",People', Politicians and Populism." *Government and Opposition* 19: 312-327., p. 325.
- ⁸ See Mounk, Y. (2014). "Pitchfork Politics: The Populist Threat to Liberal Democracy." *Foreign Affairs*.
- ⁹ See Elchardus, M. and B. Spruyt (2014). "Populism, Persistent Republicanism and Declinism: An Empirical Analysis of Populism as a Thin Ideology." *Government and Opposition* 51(1): 111-133., p. 125.
- ¹⁰ See Sorkin, A. R. (2018). *The Echoes Of Lehman In Our Time Of Distrust*. *The New York Times*. New York, The New York Times Company: B1..
- ¹¹ See Canovan, M. (1981). *Populism*. New York/ London, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich., p.203.
- ¹² See Mounk, Y. (2018). *The People vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom Is in Danger and How to Save It*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press., p. 14.
- ¹³ See *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- ¹⁴ See <https://www.cam.ac.uk/news/populism-revealed-as-2017-word-of-the-year-by-cambridge-university-press>
- ¹⁵ See <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/populism>
- ¹⁶ See <https://www.cam.ac.uk/news/populism-revealed-as-2017-word-of-the-year-by-cambridge-university-press>
- ¹⁷ See <https://www.britannica.com/topic/populism>
- ¹⁸ See Taggart, P. A. (2000). *Populism*. Buckingham, Open University Press., p. 3.
- ¹⁹ See Jansen, R. S. (2011). "Populist Mobilization: A New Theoretical Approach to Populism." *Sociological Theory* 29(2): 75-96., p. 91.
- ²⁰ Berlin, I. (1967) "To Define Populism." *The Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library*, 1-19., p. 6.
- ²¹ See Stanley, B. (2008). "The thin ideology of populism." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13(1): 95-110., p. 95.
- ²² See *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.
- ²³ See *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.
- ²⁴ See Taggart, P. A. (2000). *Populism*. Buckingham, Open University Press., pp. 3-4.

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- ²⁵ For the definitions see *Ibid.*, page 10-22, Mudde, C. and R. C. Kaltwasser (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press., pp. 1-20. See also Di Tella, T. S. (1997). "Populism into the Twenty-first Century." *Government and Opposition* 32: 187-200., p.196, Canovan, M. (1982). "Two Strategies For The Study Of Populism." *Political Studies* 30(4): 544-552., pp. 550-551. Another interesting definition might be the *Laclauan approach* to populism which is based on the ideas of the Argentinian political theorist Ernesto Laclau. In this approach populism is considered not only as the essence of politics, but also as an emancipatory force. The main difficulty with theories of political representation is that most of them conceived the will of the people as something that existed before representation. This is what happened with the aggregative model of democracy which reduced the people to a pluralism of interests and values; and with the deliberative model which found for example in 'justice as fairness' (see Rawls, J. (2001). *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.) the basis for a rational process. Once that point has been reached, the only relevant question is how to respect the will of those represented, taking for granted that such a will exists in the first place. But, there is nothing automatic about the emergence of a people that could express such a will. On the contrary, it is the result of a complex construction process which can fail to achieve its aim. So the answer of Laclau is that liberal democracy is the problem and radical democracy is the solution. See Laclau, E. (2005). *On Populist Reason*. London, Verso.; Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (2014). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London, New York, Verso..
- ²⁶ Dornbusch and Edwards analyze the policy experiences of left wing populism that ultimately fail, and when they fail it is always at a frightening cost to the very groups who were supposed to be favored: Dornbusch, R. and S. Edwards (1990). "Macroeconomic Populism." *Journal of Development Economics* 32: 247-277..
- ²⁷ Weber, M. (1980). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*. Tübingen, Mohr., pp. 122-142.
- ²⁸ See Taggart, P. A. (2000). *Populism*. Buckingham, Open University Press., pp. 101-103.
- ²⁹ See Berlin, I. (1968). "To Define Populism." *Government and Opposition*: 137-179., pp. 173-178.
- ³⁰ Perception could be different from facts. Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway make this very clear in their brilliant 'thriller': Oreskes, N. and E. M. Conway (2012). *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. London, Bloomsbury..
- ³¹ The 'Heartland' is described in more detail in Taggart, P. A. (2000). *Populism*. Buckingham, Open University Press., pp. 95-97.
- ³² See Mudde, C. (2004). "The Populist Zeitgeist." *Government and Opposition*: 541-563., p. 547.
- ³³ See Mudde, C. and R. C. Kaltwasser (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press., pp. 5-9.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ³⁵ Stanley, B. (2008). "The thin ideology of populism." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13(1): 95-110., p. 96.
- ³⁶ See Mudde, C. and R. C. Kaltwasser (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press., p. 5.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- ³⁸ See Stanley, B. (2008). "The thin ideology of populism." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13(1): 95-110., p. 102.
- ³⁹ See for 'elitism' and 'pluralism': Mudde, C. and R. C. Kaltwasser (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press., pp. 7-8.

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- ⁴⁰ See Canovan, M. (2005). *The People*. Cambridge, Polity., p. 29.
- ⁴¹ See Mudde, C. and R. C. Kaltwasser (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press., p. 9.
- ⁴² See Stanley, B. (2008). "The thin ideology of populism." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13(1): 95-110., p. 107.
- ⁴³ See Mudde, C. and R. C. Kaltwasser (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press., p. 9.
- ⁴⁴ See Canovan, M. (2005). *The People*. Cambridge, Polity., p. 2. See also Canovan, M. (1984). ",People', Politicians and Populism." *Government and Opposition* 19: 312-327., pp. 314-316.
- ⁴⁵ See also the Second Amendment of the Constitution of the United States: „A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.“
- ⁴⁶ See Mudde, C. and R. C. Kaltwasser (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press., p. 10. For further information about populism in the United States see Canovan, M. (1981). *Populism*. New York/ London, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich., pp. 17-58, Laclau, E. (2005). *On Populist Reason*. London, Verso., pp. 201-208.
- ⁴⁷ See Canovan, M. (2005). *The People*. Cambridge, Polity., p. 17.
- ⁴⁸ See Held, D. (2002). "Law of the States, Law of the Peoples: Three Models of Sovereignty." *Legal Theory* 8: 1-44..
- ⁴⁹ See *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- ⁵⁰ See *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 9.
- ⁵¹ See *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- ⁵² See *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- ⁵³ See Yack, B. (2001). "Popular Sovereignty and Nationalism." *Political Theory* 29(4): 517-536., p.533.
- ⁵⁴ See *Ibid.*, pp. 520-521.
- ⁵⁵ See Canovan, M. (2005). *The People*. Cambridge, Polity., p. 41.
- ⁵⁶ See *Ibid.*, p. 59.
- ⁵⁷ See Yack, B. (2001). "Popular Sovereignty and Nationalism." *Political Theory* 29(4): 517-536., pp. 522-523.
- ⁵⁸ For the common people see Canovan, M. (2005). *The People*. Cambridge, Polity., pp. 68-74.
- ⁵⁹ See Mudde, C. and R. C. Kaltwasser (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, Oxford University Press., pp. 11-113.
- ⁶⁰ Weber, M. (2011). *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (Reprint of the Original of 1934). Paderborn, HWA Historisches Wirtschaftsarchiv.
- ⁶¹ Canovan, M. (1984). ",People', Politicians and Populism." *Government and Opposition* 19: 312-327., p. 319.
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- ⁶³ As a useful example of portraying and analyzing this global elite see Rothkopf, D. (2008). *Superclass. The Global Power Elite and the World They Are Making*. New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux..

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- ⁶⁴ See Stiglitz, J. E. (2002). *Globalization and its Discontents*. New York, W.W. Norton..
- ⁶⁵ See Gilens, M. and B. I. Page (2014). "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 564-581., p. 566.
- ⁶⁶ See *Ibid.*, pp. 575-577. See also Winters, J. A. and B. I. Page (2009). "Oligarchy in the United States?" *Ibid.* 7(4): 731-751..
- ⁶⁷ Eisenhower, D. D. (1961) "Farewell Address." 1-6., p. 4.
- ⁶⁸ See also Baczko, B. (1988). "The Social Contract of the French: Sieyès and Rousseau." *Journal of Modern History* 60: S98-S125.; Bertram, C. (2012). "Rousseau's Legacy in Two Conceptions of the General Will: Democratic and Transcendent." *The Review of Politics* 74: 403-419.; Forsyth, M. (1981). "Thomas Hobbes and the Constituent Power of the People." *Political Studies* 29(2): 191-203.; Grofman, B. and S. L. Feld (1988). "Rousseau's General Will: A Condorcetian Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 82(2): 567-576.; Neuhouser, F. (1993). "Freedom, Dependence, and the General Will." *The Philosophical Review* 102(3): 363-395.; Sreenivasan, G. (2000). "What is the General Will?" *Ibid.* 109(4): 545-581..
- Sreenivasan suggests the following definition:
 „The general will is any deliberative decision made by the community when
 (i) the subject matter of the deliberation is perfectly general, and
 (ii) the conclusions of the deliberation apply equally to all the members of the community, and
 (iii) all the members of the community participate in the deliberation, and
 (iv) all parties to the deliberation think for themselves.“ (*Ibid.*, p. 574.)
- W. G. Runciman and Amartya K. Sen suggest an interpretation to be given to the general will on the model of the prisoner's dilemma: Runciman, W. G. and A. K. Sen (1965). "Games, Justice and the General Will." *Mind* 74(No. 296): 554-562.; see also Arrow, K. J. (1963). *Social Choice and Individual Values*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press., pp. 81-86.
- ⁶⁹ See Neuhouser, F. (1993). "Freedom, Dependence, and the General Will." *The Philosophical Review* 102(3): 363-395., pp.375-376.
- ⁷⁰ See *Ibid.*, p. 377.
- ⁷¹ Rousseau, J.-J. (1992). *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality (second discourse); Polemics; and, Political Economy*. Translated by Judith R. Bush, Roger D. Masters, Christopher Kelly, and Terence Marshall. Hanover, NH, University Press of New England for Dartmouth College., pp. 1-95, p. 49.
- ⁷² See Sreenivasan, G. (2000). "What is the General Will?" *The Philosophical Review* 109(4): 545-581., p. 547.
- ⁷³ Rousseau, J.-J. (1994). *Social Contract; Discourse on the Virtue Most Necessary for a Hero; Political Fragments; and Geneva Manuscript*. Translated by Judith R. Bush, Roger D. Masters, and Christopher Kelly. Hanover, NH, Published by University Press of New England for Dartmouth College.,pp. 127-224.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 131.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, p. 138.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, p. 139.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, p. 198.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, p.199.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, pp. 200-201.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, p. 201.

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- ⁸¹ See Bertram, C. (2012). "Rousseau's Legacy in Two Conceptions of the General Will: Democratic and Transcendent." *The Review of Politics* 74: 403-419., p. 403.
- ⁸² Hobbes, T. (2008). *Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall and Civil*. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Simon & Schuster., p. 143.
- ⁸³ Rousseau, J.-J. (1994). *Social Contract; Discourse on the Virtue Most Necessary for a Hero; Political Fragments; and Geneva Manuscript*. Translated by Judith R. Bush, Roger D. Masters, and Christopher Kelly. Hanover, NH, Published by University Press of New England for Dartmouth College., pp. 127-224, p. 172.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, p. 173.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, p. 174.
- ⁸⁶ See *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, p.175.
- ⁸⁷ See Hont, I. (1994). "The Permanent Crisis of a Divided Mankind: 'Contemporary Crisis of the Nation State' in Historical Perspective." *Political Studies* 42: 166-231., pp. 171-172: „I try to show that the language of the ‚nation‘ and representation which emerged in the political thought of Emmanuel Sieyès was a continuation of the Hobbesian theory of indirect popular sovereignty.“
- ⁸⁸ Rousseau, J.-J. (1994). *Social Contract; Discourse on the Virtue Most Necessary for a Hero; Political Fragments; and Geneva Manuscript*. Translated by Judith R. Bush, Roger D. Masters, and Christopher Kelly. Hanover, NH, Published by University Press of New England for Dartmouth College., pp. 127-224, pp. 175-176.
- ⁸⁹ See Arato, A. (2013). "Political Theology and Populism." *social research* 80(1): 143-172., p. 145.
- ⁹⁰ Rousseau, J.-J. (1994). *Social Contract; Discourse on the Virtue Most Necessary for a Hero; Political Fragments; and Geneva Manuscript*. Translated by Judith R. Bush, Roger D. Masters, and Christopher Kelly. Hanover, NH, Published by University Press of New England for Dartmouth College., pp. 127-224, p. 147.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, p.201.
- ⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 127-224, pp. 191-192.

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