

# Lexicography

/leksɪ'kɒɡrəfi/

- 1 the editing or making of a dictionary
- 2 the principles and practices of dictionary making

Lexicography focuses on the design, compilation, use and evaluation of general dictionaries, i.e. dictionaries that provide a description of the language in general use. Such a dictionary is usually called a general dictionary or LGP dictionary (Language for General Purpose).

Specialized lexicography focuses on the design, compilation, use and evaluation of specialized dictionaries, i.e. dictionaries that are devoted to a (relatively restricted) set of linguistic and factual elements of one or more specialist subject fields, e.g. legal lexicography. Such a dictionary is usually called a specialized dictionary or Language for specific purposes dictionary

Using all the documents listed below, prepare a lexicon on the topic making sure you will include the following words:

- populism
- liberalism / illiberal
- democracy
- majority rule
- illiberal democracies
- monism / holism
- nationalism
- radical right / far right / extreme right
- fascism
- thin-centered ideology / host-ideology

- **Dictionary of Populism by the European Center for Populism Studies**

<https://www.populismstudies.org/resources/vocabulary/>

- **Glossary of terms by the Observatory of Populism by Institut de Montaigne**

<https://www.institutmontaigne.org/ressources/documents/observatory-of-populism.pdf>

- **A Lexicon of Europe's far right, *The Guardian*, June 18 2024**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jun/18/populist-nativist-neofascist-a-lexicon-of-europes-far-right>

- **The word 'populism' is a gift to the far right – four reasons why we should stop using it**

*The Conversation*, 28 février 2024

<https://theconversation.com/the-word-populism-is-a-gift-to-the-far-right-four-reasons-why-we-should-stop-using-it-224488>

- **VIDEO – Professor Cas Mudde explains populism– Video uploaded on Cahier de Prépa**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHbnKcJhjHA&ab\\_channel=InternationalAssociationforPoliticalScienceStudents](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHbnKcJhjHA&ab_channel=InternationalAssociationforPoliticalScienceStudents)

● **BBC Radio 4, Analysis – Populism – July 2015 Podcast Uploaded on Cahier de Prépa**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b061qhtf>

Who are "the people" - and who's keeping power from them? Eliane Glaser explores how across Europe and beyond, populist movements are claiming they can to put back politicians in touch with voters and reinvigorate democracy from the grassroots. From UKIP's millions of voters to the passionately engaged Scottish referendum, from the rise of nationalist parties in northern Europe to burgeoning left-wing movements like Syriza and Podemos further south, traditional politicians are feeling the public's wrath. But how much of the crowd-pleasing rhetoric can be taken at face value - and do politicians really now think of themselves as ordinary people?

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## What the experts said in 2016

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| Document 1 - <b>The global wave of populism that turned 2016 upside down</b> |
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*Today's Worldview*, Washington Post, December 19, 2016 Analysis by [Adam Taylor](#)



(Matt Cardy/Getty; Vladimir Simicek; Don Emmert/AFP/Getty; Albin Lohr-Jones; Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

If you had to sum up 2016 in one word, you might choose “populism.”

Once rarely used outside the academic halls of political science departments, that word has been fully cemented in the mainstream this year as shock-voting results emerged around the world. Soon, we found ourselves debating not only populism, but also economic populism, authoritarian populism, radical populism and so on.

5 For such a ubiquitous word, it can be surprisingly hard to say what populism actually is. Academics have offered differing definitions for decades. The evidence suggests that a populist in one country may not necessarily look like a populist in another country. “Populism has always been a misused and misconstrued concept, and this has become worse in past years, simply because of the explosion in the use of the term,” said Cas Mudde, an academic at the University of Georgia who wrote the book on the populist radical right.

10 Mudde says that many use the word to simply denounce a politician who is not serious or who offers simplistic solutions to problems. In fact, while definitions do vary, the core of populism is a concerted anti-establishment posture: It's us (“the people”) vs. them (“the establishment”).

A distrust of the elite and pandering to the masses has been around before 2016, of course. So how did it come to dominate our understanding of the world over the past year?

#### 15 **April 24: A far-right candidate's close win in Austria**

An early warning sign may have come from Austria in April, when a far-right candidate, Nobert Hofer, came remarkably close during the first round of Austria's presidential election to being elected as head of a Western European state for the first time since World War II.

20 Hofer's Freedom Party has been around for decades. It had been founded by Nazis. But his presidential campaign played down its links to the traditional far right, suggesting that the party was “to the left of the U.S. Democrats.” Instead, although Hofer has argued otherwise, many credited the success of his campaign to his appeal as a populist. He marketed himself as an anti-establishment figure.

“Unspoilt, honest, good” was his campaign slogan. He rallied against not only the Muslim immigrants arriving in Austria but also the political elites who he said aided them.

25 Hofer received the most votes in the first round of voting. In a runoff round in May, he was narrowly beaten by independent candidate Alexander Van der Bellen. A subsequent rerun of the vote gave Van der Bellen a more convincing majority. Yet many were still shocked that Hofer could receive 46 percent of the vote. After Hofer's defeat, Freedom Party leader Heinz-Christian Strache suggested that he viewed the results as a victory.

#### **May 9: 'Death squad mayor' wins Philippine presidency**

30 Rodrigo Duterte had been mayor of Davao for two decades before he became Philippine president in June. While he came from a local political dynasty, he was the first leader of the Philippines from the southern island of Mindanao and campaigned on recognizably populist pledges to upend Manila's traditional political elite and protect the poor. Duterte won the presidential election comfortably, garnering 6 million votes more than his closest rival. His crude, sometimes bellicose rhetoric and his denunciations of U.S. power probably helped. But it was his remarkable promise to take the bloody extrajudicial war on drug dealers he had started in Davao national that gained the most attention. Since he has assumed the presidency, thousands of suspected criminals and gang members have been killed in murky circumstances. There has been widespread international condemnation of these slayings, but the Philippine president has laughed it off with jokes that he should leave the United Nations. In fact, he has gone further — seemingly admitting to killing people himself — but it has made no dent in his remarkable popularity.

#### 40 **June 25: Britain votes to leave the E.U.**

Britain's infamous “Brexit” vote — the remarkably close referendum that resulted in a decision to leave the European Union — demonstrated that populist sentiments held sway even outside traditional parliamentary and presidential elections. Anti-E.U. firebrand Nigel Farage had long been unsuccessful in gaining enough votes to become a member of Parliament, but his U.K. Independence Party helped define the Brexit campaign.

45 With UKIP's influence, what could have been a debate over mundane and bureaucratic E.U. details was suddenly portrayed as an ideological battle between a pro-Europe elite and a Brexit-backing underclass. Even relatively mainstream right-wing politicians, such as Conservative lawmaker Michael Gove, used anti-establishment language to dismiss studies that showed the benefits of the E.U., telling journalists that “people in this country have had enough of experts.”

50 Combined with legitimate concerns about the E.U. — not to mention plain-old nationalism and xenophobia — it became a powerful argument. And the political elite were indeed crushed by Brexit's victory: Prime Minister David Cameron, who had pushed for Britain to remain in the bloc, announced his resignation after the vote, temporarily plunging the country into political and economic uncertainty.

55 “UKIP used to protest against the establishment,” Farage observed after the vote, “and now the establishment protests against UKIP.”

#### **Nov. 8: Trump is elected U.S. president**

Can a billionaire who surrounds himself with other billionaires really be a populist? That's a question to consider when reviewing the rise of Donald Trump, a businessman-cum-reality-TV-star who forged an unlikely path to the White House.

60 Trump is clearly a member of the elite, but his campaign resonated with American voters who felt that political elites had forgotten them. His promises to “drain the swamp” in Washington suggested a new start that would wipe the slate clean for America. When it came time to vote in November, his support was stronger than expected in the economically troubled Rust Belt, helping clinch an electoral college win, if not a popular-vote victory.

65 Trump is an awkward fit for populism (an “anti-establishment elitist” is one description Mudde has used), but he's happy to be associated with the global wave of populism. After dubbing himself “Mr. Brexit” on the campaign trail, he invited Farage to Trump Tower in Manhattan after the election. He has even called up the Philippines's “death squad” president and spoken warmly to him, Duterte said.

#### **Dec. 4: A referendum's defeat in Italy**

70 Italy's populist moment was a strange one. In it, Beppe Grillo, a self-proclaimed populist, and his Five Star Movement party didn't actually advocate change — they opposed it. And to block it, they joined forces with establishment figures such as former prime minister Mario Monti.

The setting for this battle was a big referendum on constitutional changes sought by Prime Minister Matteo Renzi as a way of simplifying his country's political system and ending political gridlock. Renzi's critics — some of whom, but not all, were populists — said it was a power grab by the ambitious prime minister. Many Italians agreed; Renzi  
75 resigned after he lost the vote.

To many, the referendum result was a sign of Grillo's growing clout. The former comedian's anti-corruption message was clearly appealing in Italy, but his ideas about leaving the euro zone (not to mention links to Russia-promoting fake news websites) cause broader concern in Europe. With new elections widely predicted, some polls have shown that the Five Star Movement may be the most popular in the country.

80 “Times have changed,” Grillo wrote after the election. “The sovereignty belongs to the people again — and now we will really start to apply our constitution.”

#### **Dec. 13: Impeachment in South Korea**

It's certainly tempting to view the protests that eventually led to the South Korean president's impeachment as populist: Protesters were genuinely angry about a perceived unfairness in Korean society, where elites such as Park  
85 Geun-hye and the shadowy figures who advised her seemed to act with impunity.

“There is a growing clamor for real political reform, real generational change and cleaner politics,” Lee Chung-min, a professor of international relations at Yonsei University, told The Washington Post this month.

But no populist politician or movement has been able to take advantage of this distrust of elites. That may change. Lee Jae-myung, the outspoken mayor of Seongnam city, is slowly becoming a possible contender in the next national  
90 election. His meteoric rise has been linked to anger over Park's scandal, and some have labeled him “Korea's Trump.” “We have been ruled by a small class of the privileged,” Lee said at one rally in which he called for Park's removal. “Let's make with our own hands a democratic republic where everybody is treated equally.”

#### **What's next?**

Even after this bumper year, there is plenty of room for populism to spread. Next year, there are major elections  
95 in France, Germany and Holland, where it is probable that populist-leaning parties or candidates will do well, although they are unlikely to form governments. The political crises in Britain, Italy and South Korea will no doubt continue.

Is the tide of populism reversible? Some academic research has shown populist parties notching successes in rich democracies over the past few decades. But Mudde cautions that the gains are not quite as dramatic as some would  
100 fear.

“In the 12 European parliamentary elections of 2016, far-right parties (most are populist) gained on average just 4.2 percent of the national vote!” he says. “Moreover, in Latin America, populism is on the decrease, after a successful run in the late 1990s and early 2000s.”

Document 2 –

#### **Trump, Erdoğan, Farage: The attractions of populism for politicians, the dangers for democracy**

Populists are just different elites who try to grab power with the help of a collective fantasy of political purity

**Jan-Werner Müller**, *The Guardian*, Fri 2 Sep 2016

*Jan-Werner Müller is a professor of politics at Princeton and a fellow at the Institute of Human Sciences in Vienna. His book What Is Populism? is published this month by the University of Pennsylvania.*

5 After Brexit, and with a Trump victory in November still a possibility, liberals are in a panic about populism. They have struggled to comprehend what a figure like Trump is about ideologically – hence the enormous amount of ink spilt over the question of whether he is or

10 isn't a fascist – and the rather hapless attempt to coin the term “Trumpism” (Trump, you see, is really a representative of Trumpism). Alternatively, liberals have focused on actual Brexit and Trump supporters and jumped to conclusions about what they think and, especially, feel. As a result, the content of what, after all, is an “-ism” – that is to say, a political belief system – has become conflated with the supposed psychological states of its supporters, namely feelings of resentment and relative deprivation.

20 It is correct that in Europe and the United States (at least in the case of Trump) less educated males are the main constituency of what is commonly referred to as populism; it is true that in surveys many voters register their sense that the country as a whole is declining (an assessment that does not necessarily depend on their personal economic situation; it is simply not true that every supporter of what can plausibly be classified as a populist party is an objective “loser in globalisation”). But all this is like saying that we best understand the intellectual content of social democracy if we keep redesccribing its voters as workers envious of rich people. The profile of supporters of populism obviously matters, but it is patronising to reduce all they think and say to resentment, and explain the entire phenomenon as an inarticulate political expression of the Trumpenproletariat and its European equivalents.

Instead of speculating about the motives of voters, we need to pin down what populism really is. And that can only be done by paying attention to what populist leaders themselves are saying. The crucial point is this: it's not enough to be critical of elites in order to be classified as a populist. Otherwise, anyone finding fault with the status quo in, for instance, the US, UK, Greece and Italy would by definition be a populist – and, whatever else one thinks about, for instance, Bernie Sanders, Jeremy Corbyn, Syriza or Beppe Grillo's insurgent Five Star Movement in Italy, it's hard to deny that their attacks on the status quo can often be justified. Also, virtually every presidential candidate in the US would be a populist, if criticism of existing elites is all there is to the phenomenon: everyone, after all, claims to run “against Washington”.

When in opposition, populists for sure criticise elites. But there is also always something else they do that is the tell-tale sign of populism: they claim that they, and only they, represent the people. Think, for instance, of Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan addressing his critics in the country: “We are the people. Who are you?” Of course, he knew that they were Turks, too.

60 The claim to exclusive representation is not an empirical one; it is always distinctly moral. Populists' political

competitors and critics are inevitably condemned as part of the immoral, corrupt elite, or so populists say when running for office; once in government, they will not recognise anything such as a legitimate opposition. The populist logic also implies that whoever does not really support populist parties might not be part of the proper people at all: there are American citizens, and then there are what George C Wallace, an arch-populist of the 1960s often viewed as a precursor of Trump, always called “real Americans” (white, God-fearing, hard-working, gun-owning and so on). Thus, populists do not just claim: we are the 99%. According to their own logic, they actually have to say: we are the 100%.



75 Nigel Farage, centre, claimed the Brexit vote was a victory for ‘real people’. Photograph: Facundo Arrizabalaga/EPA

Think of Nigel Farage celebrating the Brexit vote by claiming that it had been a “victory for real people” (making the 48% of the British electorate who had opposed taking the UK out of the European Union somehow less than real – or, rather, questioning their status as members of the political community). Or consider a deeply revealing remark by Trump that went virtually unnoticed, thanks to the frequency with which the New York billionaire has made scandalous statements. At a campaign rally in May, he announced that “the only important thing is the unification of the people – because the other people don't mean anything”.

The conventional wisdom that populists want to bring politics closer to the people or even clamour for direct democracy could not be more mistaken. They do say that they are the only ones who care for the “people's will”, but they are hardly interested in an open-ended, bottom-up process where citizens debate policy issues. What populists take to be the people's real will is derived from what they stipulate to be the real people. What's worse, “the people's will” that populists claim they will just faithfully execute – in that sense denying their own role as leaders and also any real political responsibility – is a fiction. There is no single political

will, let alone a single political opinion, in a modern,  
105 complex, pluralist – in short, enormously messy –  
democracy. Populists put words into the mouth of what  
is after all their own creation: the fiction of the  
homogeneous, always righteous people. And then they  
say, like Trump, “I am your voice.” Or think again of  
110 Erdoğan claiming this July: “What does my people  
want? The death penalty!” Never mind that he had  
asked for its reintroduction first.

This split between the actual citizenry and “the real  
people” explains why populists so frequently question  
115 election outcomes when they aren’t the winners (which,  
after all, seems to falsify their claim to be the only  
legitimate representative of the people): populists only  
lose if “the silent majority” – shorthand for “the real  
people” – has not had a chance to speak, or worse, has  
120 been prevented from expressing itself. Hence the  
frequent invocation of conspiracy theories by populists:  
something going on behind the scenes has to account for  
the fact that corrupt elites are still keeping the people  
down. Before Trump was assured of the Republican  
125 nomination, he kept alluding to fraud, and with a defeat  
in the November election looming, he is already trying  
to discredit Hillary Clinton’s victory.

Recently, the rightwing populist Freedom Party in  
Austria successfully contested the outcome of the  
130 presidential election in May. Its candidate, Norbert  
Hofer, had kept confronting his rival, the economics  
professor Alexander van der Bellen, with the claim:  
“You have the *haute volée* [high society] behind you; I  
have the people with me.” What clearly follows: if the  
135 people’s politician doesn’t win, there must be  
something wrong with the system.

Populist politicians are not like other politicians in a  
democracy. But the difference is not that they are  
somehow closer to the “masses” who, according to the  
140 self-declared non-establishment thinker John Gray, are  
everywhere in “revolt”. It is also not that they want  
direct, as opposed to representative, democracy.  
Populists are fine with the idea of representation, as long  
as they get to represent who they consider to be the real  
145 people. This is why one cannot score points against  
figures such as Geert Wilders (who has spent his entire  
adult life in the Dutch parliament) or Trump by pointing  
out that they themselves are not exactly ordinary people.  
The crucial difference is that populists deny, or wish  
150 away, the pluralism of contemporary societies. When  
they say equality, they mean sameness, which is to say:  
conforming to some ideal of Middle America, Little  
England, or whatever a symbolic representation of real  
peoplehood comes down to for them.

155 Does all this matter in practice? It’s certainly worrying  
that populists cast doubt on election outcomes and try to  
question the legitimacy of all other politicians (to the  
point of wanting to lock them up, or even suggesting  
they could be shot, if we believe Trump’s recent  
160 musings). But this might also lead one to conclude that  
populists live in a kind of political fantasy world and  
hence are bound to fail in practice. Many liberal  
observers think populists only offer simplistic  
prescriptions that will quickly be exposed as  
165 unworkable, or even that populists, deep down, are  
afraid of actually winning, because they are clueless  
about what to do next (an impression confirmed by  
Farage’s flight after the referendum). Conventional  
wisdom has it that populist parties are primarily protest  
170 parties and that protest cannot govern, since, logically,  
one cannot protest against oneself: anti-politics cannot  
generate real policies.

The notion that populists in power are bound to fail one  
way or another is comforting. It’s also an illusion. For  
175 one thing, while populist parties necessarily protest  
against elites, this does not mean that populism in  
government will become self-contradictory. All failures  
of populists in government can still be blamed on elites  
acting behind the scenes, whether at home or abroad.

180 Many populist victors continue to behave like victims;  
majorities act like mistreated minorities. Hugo Chávez  
in Venezuela, for instance, would always point to the  
dark machinations of the opposition – that is to say, the  
officially deposed “oligarchy” – and the US trying to  
185 sabotage his “21st-century socialism”. Erdoğan would  
present himself as a plucky underdog; he’d forever be  
the street fighter from Istanbul’s tough neighbourhood  
Kasımpaşa, bravely confronting the old, Kemalist  
establishment of the Turkish republic, long after he had  
190 begun to concentrate all political, economic and, not  
least, cultural power in his own hands. One little noted  
side-effect of the recent failed putsch has been to  
reinforce this self-presentation as struggling with the  
people against the visible and invisible forces of evil –  
195 the military and the shadowy Gülen network – as  
opposed to the face of a sultan-in-the-making, holed up  
in his pompous presidential palace, which Erdoğan had  
been showing in the past few years.

More worryingly still: when populists have sufficiently  
200 large majorities in parliament, they try to build regimes  
that might still look like democracies, but are actually  
designed to perpetuate the power of the populists (as  
supposedly the only authentic representatives of the  
people). To start with, populists colonise or “occupy”  
205 the state. Think of Hungary and Poland as recent  
examples. One of the first changes Viktor Orbán and his



party Fidesz sought after coming to power in Hungary in 2010 was a transformation of the civil service law, so as to enable them to place loyalists in what should have been non-partisan bureaucratic positions. Both Fidesz and Jarosław Kaczyński's Law and Justice party (PiS) in Poland also immediately moved against the independence of courts. Media authorities were captured; the signal went out that journalists should not report in ways that violate the interests of the nation (which were equated with the interests of the governing party). Whoever criticised any of these measures was vilified as doing the bidding of the old elites, or as being outright traitors (Kaczyński spoke of "Poles of the worst sort" who supposedly have "treason in their genes").

Such a strategy to consolidate or even perpetuate power is not exclusive to populists, of course. What is special about populists is that they can undertake such state colonisation openly: why, populists can ask indignantly, should the people not take possession of their state through their only rightful representatives? Why should those who obstruct the genuine popular will in the name of civil service neutrality not be purged?

Populists also engage in the exchange of material and immaterial favours for mass support. Again, such conduct is not exclusive to populists: many parties reward their clientele for turning up at the voting booths, though few would go so far as Austrian arch-populist Jörg Haider, who would literally hand out €100 bills to "his people" on the streets in Carinthia. What – once more – makes populists distinctive is that they can engage in such practices openly and with moral justifications: after all, for them, only some people are really "the people" and hence deserving of the support by what is rightfully their state. Without this thought it's hard to understand how Erdoğan could have politically survived all the revelations about his regime's corruption, which began to emerge in 2013.

Some populists have been lucky to have the resources to build up entire classes to support their regimes. Chávez benefited from the oil boom. For regimes in central and eastern Europe, funds from the European Union have been the equivalent of oil to some Arab authoritarian states: governments can strategically employ the subsidies to buy support or at least keep citizens quiet. What's more, they can form social strata that conform to their image of the ideal people – and that are deeply loyal to the regime. Erdoğan continues to enjoy the unshakable support of an Anatolian middle class that emerged with the economic boom under his AK party (and that also embodies the image of the ideal, devout Turk, as opposed to westernised, secular elites and minorities such as the Kurds). Hungary's Fidesz has

supported a new group that combines economic success, family values (having children brings many benefits) and religious devotion into a whole that conforms to Orbán's vision of a "Christian-national" culture.

There is one further element of populist statecraft that is important to understand. Populists in power tend to be harsh (to say the least) with non-governmental organisations that criticise them. Again, harassing civil society is not a practice exclusive to populists. But for them opposition from within civil society creates a particular symbolic problem: it potentially undermines their claim to exclusive moral representation. Hence it becomes crucial to argue (and supposedly "prove") that civil society isn't civil society at all, and that what can seem like popular opposition has nothing to do with the real people.

This explains why Putin, Orbán and PiS in Poland have gone out of their way to try to discredit NGOs as being controlled by outside powers (and also legally declare them to be "foreign agents"). In a sense, they try to make the unified people in whose name they had been speaking all along a reality on the ground: by silencing or discrediting those who refuse their representative claim (and, sometimes, by giving them every incentive to exit the country and thereby to separate themselves from the pure people; 500,000 Hungarians have left in recent years). Thus, a PiS government or Fidesz government will not only create a PiS state or a Fidesz state – it will also seek to bring into existence a PiS people and a Fidesz people. In other words, populists create the homogeneous people in whose name they had been speaking all along: populism becomes something like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

There is a tragic irony in all this: populism in power commits the very political sins of which it accuses elites: excluding citizens and usurping the state. What the establishment supposedly has always done, populists will also end up doing. Only with a clear justification and, perhaps, even a clear conscience. Hence it is a profound illusion to think that populists, as potential leaders of Gray's "revolt of the masses", can improve our democracies. Populists are just different elites who try to grab power with the help of a collective fantasy of political purity.

So how should we react to the current wave of populism in the west? To begin with, we should stop the inflationary use of the term "populism". There is no reason to put Sanders, Corbyn, Syriza and Podemos into the same category as Trump, Farage and Erdoğan – only the latter group claims exclusively to represent the one authentic people, whereas the former are just more or less plausible attempts to

reinvent social democracy. Second, one should call populists out for what they are: a danger to democracy and not a useful corrective for too much elite power, as some commentators naively assume. This doesn't mean  
315 that one should avoid engaging them politically: talking with populists is not the same as talking like populists. Otherwise, one ends up in a paradoxical situation: because populists exclude, we exclude them; because they demonise their opponents, we demonise them.  
320 Instead, one should concede that some of their complaints may have been justified (Erdoğan and Chávez did not invent the notion that many citizens in their respective countries had been excluded from the political process; rising inequality across the west is not  
325 a figment of the populist imagination).  
Finally, one has to face up to a genuine conflict that characterises our time (but which is hardly about "elites versus the people"): on one side there are the advocates for more openness; on the other, the proponents of some  
330 kind of closure. Openness can mean more porous borders and the recognition of minorities inside a country (a commitment to openness can also translate into more trade agreements – but, contrary to what neoliberals insinuate, it doesn't have to). Demands for  
335 closure can come in the form of legitimate concerns

about democracy. "Take back control" is not necessarily a populist imperative, whereas "We have been robbed of our country" is likely to mean: "The government is un-British or un-American by my definition of  
340 Britishness or Americanness", or "Too many other citizens don't look like us". It can also hide outright racism or a desire to preserve traditional hierarchies (on closer inspection Trump's "Making America Great Again" turns out to mean: "Make sure white males  
345 continue to rule").

It's tempting to think that all liberals have to do is make these conflicts ones about interests, not identity, and win back voters willing to back populists by offering trade agreements more favourable to workers (and, right now,  
350 hammer away at the point that Trump's actual economic policy proposals, especially the enormous tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy, are a slap in the face of the working class). All this undoubtedly has to be part of an anti-populist strategy. But liberals also have to  
355 tread on the dangerous territory of identity politics. They have to argue against the populist fantasies of a "pure people", and instead fashion attractive and, above all, pluralist conceptions of Britishness and Americanness.

### Document 3 - Us v Them: the birth of populism

*It's not about left or right: populism is a style of politics that pits 'the people' against 'the establishment'. Its rise is a warning sign that the status quo is failing*

By [John B Judis](#), The Long Read, *The Guardian* Thu 13 Oct 2016

This essay is adapted from *The Populist Explosion* by John B Judis, published by Columbia Global Reports.

When political scientists write about populism, they often begin by trying to define it, as if it were a scientific term, like entropy or photosynthesis. To do so is a mistake. There is no set of features that exclusively  
5 defines movements, parties, and people that are called "populist": the different people and parties that are placed in this category enjoy family resemblances of one to the other, but there is not a universal set of traits that is common to all of them.  
10 **There is, however, a particular kind of populist politics that originated in the United States in the 19th century, which has recurred there in the 20th and 21st centuries – and which began to appear in western Europe in the 1970s. In the past few decades,**  
15 **these campaigns and parties have converged in their concerns, and in the wake of the Great Recession, they have surged.**

The kind of populism that runs through American history, and has been transplanted to Europe, cannot be  
20 defined exclusively in terms of right, left or centre: it includes both [Donald Trump](#) and Bernie Sanders, the Front National in France and Podemos in Spain. There are rightwing, leftwing and centrist populist parties. It is not an ideology, but a political logic – a way of thinking  
25 about politics. In his book on American populism, *The Populist Persuasion*, the historian Michael Kazin describes populism as "a language whose speakers conceive of ordinary people as a noble assemblage not bounded narrowly by class; view their elite opponents  
30 as self-serving and undemocratic; and seek to mobilise the former against the latter."

That's a good start. It doesn't describe people like Ronald Reagan or Vladimir Putin, both of whom have sometimes been called "populist", but it does describe



35 the logic of the parties, movements, and candidates,  
from the US's People's Party of 1892 to [Marine Le](#)  
[Pen's](#) Front National of 2016. I would, however, take  
Kazin's characterisation one step further and distinguish  
40 Podemos's [Pablo Iglesias](#), and rightwing populists such  
as Trump and Le Pen.

Leftwing populists champion the people against an  
elite or an establishment. Theirs is a vertical politics of  
the bottom and middle, arrayed against the top.  
45 Rightwing populists champion the people against an  
elite that they accuse of favouring a third group, which  
can consist, for instance, of immigrants, Islamists, or  
African American militants. Rightwing populism is  
triadic: it looks upward, but also down upon an out  
50 group.

Leftwing populism is historically different to socialist  
or social democratic movements. It is not a politics of  
class conflict, and it does not necessarily seek the  
abolition of capitalism. It is also different to a  
55 progressive or liberal politics that seeks to reconcile the  
interests of opposing classes and groups. It assumes a  
basic antagonism between the people and an elite at the  
heart of its politics.

Rightwing populism, meanwhile, is different to a  
60 conservatism that primarily identifies with the business  
classes against their critics and antagonists below. In its  
American and western European versions, it is also  
different to an authoritarian conservatism that aims to  
subvert democracy. It operates within a democratic  
65 context.

Just as there is no common ideology that defines  
populism, there is no one constituency that comprises  
"the people". They can be blue-collar workers,  
shopkeepers, or students burdened by debt; they can be  
70 the poor or the middle class. Equally, there is no  
common identification of "the establishment". The  
exact referents of "the people" and "the elite" do not  
define populism, what defines it is the conflict between  
the two (or, in the case of rightwing populism, the  
75 three).

***Populist movements have flourished in  
opposition, and have suffered identity  
crises when they have entered  
government***

80 The conflict itself turns on a set of demands that the  
populists make of the elite – demands that the populists  
believe the establishment will be unwilling to grant  
them. Sanders wanted "Medicare for all" and a \$15  
minimum wage. If he had wanted the Affordable Care  
85 Act to cover hearing aids, or to raise the minimum wage  
from \$7.25 to \$7.75, that would not have defined a clash

between the people and the establishment. If Trump  
were to demand an increase in guards along the  
Mexican border, or if Denmark's rightwing People's  
90 Party campaigned on a mere reduction in asylum-  
seekers, these demands would not open up a gulf  
between the people and the elite. But promising a wall  
that the Mexican government will pay for or the total  
cessation of immigration – that does establish a frontier.  
95 These kinds of demands define the clash between the  
people and the establishment. If they are granted in  
whole or even in part, or if populists abandon them as  
too ambitious – as Syriza did with its demands for  
renegotiation of Greece's debt – then the populist  
100 movement is likely to dissipate or to morph into a  
normal political party or candidacy. In this sense,  
American and western European populist movements  
have flourished when they are in opposition, and have  
suffered identity crises when they have entered  
105 government.

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Populist campaigns and parties often function as  
warning signs of a political crisis. In both Europe and  
the US, populist movements have been most successful  
110 at times when people see the prevailing political norms  
– which are preserved and defended by the existing  
establishment – as being at odds with their own hopes,  
fears, and concerns. The populists express these  
neglected concerns and frame them in a politics that pits  
115 the people against an intransigent elite. By doing so,  
they become catalysts for political change.

Populist campaigns and parties, by nature, point to  
problems through demands that are unlikely to be  
realised in the present political circumstances. In the  
120 case of some rightwing populists, these demands are  
laced with bigotry or challenge democratic norms. In  
other cases, they are clouded with misinformation. But  
they still point to tears in the fabric of accepted political  
wisdom.

125 In recent decades, as the great postwar boom has  
stalled, the major parties on both sides of the Atlantic,  
have embraced a neoliberal agenda of free movement of  
capital and labour to achieve prosperity. Leaders have  
favoured increased immigration, only to find that  
130 American voters were up in arms about illegal  
immigration, and European voters were up in arms  
about immigrant communities they regarded as  
seedbeds of crime and, later, terrorism. In continental  
Europe, the major parties embraced the idea of the  
135 single currency only to find that it fell into disfavour  
during the Great Recession. In the United States, both  
parties embraced "free trade" deals only to discover that  
much of the public did not support these treaties.



Marine Le Pen, the leader of the Front National, addresses a rally in Frejus, France, in September. Photograph: Jean-Paul Pelissier/Reuters

In the last decades of the 19th century, as the People's Party was erupting on the American scene, Europe was seeing the emergence of social democratic parties inspired by Karl Marx's theory of socialism. Over the next 70 years, Europe would become home to an array of parties on the left, centre and right, but it would not witness anything resembling American populism until the 1970s.

Like the original People's Party in the US, the European parties operated within the electoral arena and championed the "people" against an "establishment" or "elite". The French Front National says that it represents the "little people" and the "forgotten members" against the "caste". In Finland, the Finns Party says that it wants "a democracy that rests on the consent of the people and does not emanate from elites or bureaucrats". In Spain, [Podemos](#) champions the "*gente*" against the "*casta*". In Italy, Beppe Grillo of the Five Star Movement rails against what he calls the "three destroyers" – journalists, industrialists, and politicians. In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom represents "Henk and Ingrid" against "the political elite".

The first European populist parties were rightwing. They accused the elites of coddling communists, welfare recipients, or immigrants. As a result, the term "populist" in Europe became used pejoratively by leftwing and centrist politicians and academics. In the last decade, however, leftwing populist parties have arisen in Spain and Greece that direct their ire against the establishment in their country or against the EU headquarters in Brussels.

The main difference between US and European populists is that while American parties and campaigns come and go quickly, some European populist parties have been around for decades. That is primarily because many European nations have multi-party systems, and many of the countries have proportional representation that allows smaller parties to maintain a foothold even when they are polling in single digits.

Populist movements themselves do not often achieve their own objectives. Their demands may be co-opted by the major parties, or they may be thoroughly rejected. But they do roil the waters. They signal that the prevailing political ideology is not working and the standard worldview is breaking down.

190

No one, not even the man himself, expected Donald Trump to get the Republican presidential nomination in 2016. Similarly, no one, including Bernie Sanders, expected that through the California primary in June, the Vermont senator would still be challenging Hillary Clinton for the Democratic nomination.

Trump's success was initially attributed to his showmanship and celebrity. But as he won primary after primary, political experts observed him playing on racist opposition to Barack Obama's presidency or exploiting a latent sympathy for fascism among working-class white Americans. Sanders's success invited less speculation, but commentators tended to dismiss him as a utopian and point to the airy idealism of millennial voters. If that were not sufficient explanation for his success, they also emphasised Hillary Clinton's weakness as a frontrunner.

It makes more sense, however, to understand Trump and Sanders's success as the latest chapter in the history of American populism. While strands of populism go back to the American revolution, it really begins with the People's Party of the 1890s, which set the precedent for movements that have popped up periodically ever since. In the US, in contrast to Europe, these campaigns have burst forth suddenly and unexpectedly. Despite usually being short-lived, they have, nevertheless, had an outsized impact. And while they may seem unusual at the time, they are very much part of the political fabric of the nation.

While the history of American politics is riven with conflicts – over slavery, prohibition, abortion, intervention abroad – it is also dominated for long stretches by an underlying consensus about government's role in the economy and abroad.

American politics is structured to sustain such prevailing worldviews. Its characteristics of winner-takes-all, first-past-the-post, single-member districts have encouraged a two-party system. Third-party candidates are often dismissed as "spoilers". Moreover, in deciding on whom to nominate in party primaries, voters and party bigwigs have generally taken electability into account, and in the general election, candidates have generally tried to capture the centre and to stay away from being branded "extremist". As a result of this two-party tilt towards the centre, sharp

political differences over underlying socioeconomic issues have tended to become blunted or even to be ignored, particularly in presidential elections.

But there are times, when, in the face of dramatic changes in society and the economy, or in America's place in the world, voters have suddenly become responsive to politicians or movements that raise issues that major parties have either downplayed or overlooked completely.

245 The rise of the People's Party was the first major salvo against the worldview of laissez-faire capitalism; the Louisiana governor Huey Long's "Share Our Wealth" movement, which emerged in the wake of Franklin Roosevelt's election in 1932, helped pressure  
250 Roosevelt to address economic inequality. Together, these movements established the framework that Bernie Sanders, who described himself both as a democratic socialist and as a progressive, would adopt during his 2016 campaign. Equally, the populist campaigns of  
255 George Wallace in the 1960s and Pat Buchanan in the 1990s foreshadowed the candidacy of Donald Trump.

During their heyday in the late 19th century, the populists of the People's Party had a profound effect on  
260 American and – as it turned out – Latin American and European politics. It developed the logic of populism: the concept of a "people" arrayed against an elite that refused to grant necessary reforms. In American politics, the organisation was an early sign of the  
265 inadequacy of the two major parties' views of government and the economy.

The populists were the first to call for government to regulate and even nationalise industries that were integral to the economy, like the railroads; they wanted  
270 government to reduce the economic inequality that capitalism, when left to its own devices, was creating, and they wanted to reduce the power of business in determining the outcome of elections. Populism had an immediate impact on the politics of some progressive  
275 Democrats, and even on Republicans such as Theodore Roosevelt. Eventually, much of the populist agenda was incorporated into Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal and into the outlook of New Deal liberalism.

In May 1891, the legend goes, some members of the  
280 Kansas Farmers Alliance, riding back home from a national convention in Cincinnati, came up with the term "populist" to describe the political views that they and other alliance groups in the west and south were developing. The next year, the alliance groups joined  
285 hands with the Knights of Labor, then the main workers' organisation in the United States, to form the People's Party, which, over the next two years, challenged the

most basic assumptions that guided Republicans and Democrats in Washington. The party would be short-  
290 lived, but its example would establish the basis for populism in the United States and Europe.



A political cartoon from 1900. Photograph: Rights Managed/Mary Evans / Library of Congress

295 At the time, the leading Republicans and Democrats in the United States were revelling in the progress of American industry and finance. They believed in the self-regulating market as an instrument of prosperity and individual opportunity, and thought that the role of  
300 government should be minimal. Grover Cleveland, who was president from 1884 to 1888 and then from 1892 to 1896, railed against government "paternalism". Public sector intervention, he declared in his second inaugural address, "stifles the spirit of true Americanism"; its  
305 "functions," he stated, "do not include the support of the people". Government's principal role was to maintain a "sound and stable currency" through upholding the gold standard.

But during these years, farmers in the south and the  
310 plains suffered from a sharp drop in agricultural prices. Farm prices fell two-thirds in the midwest and south from 1870 to 1890. The plains, which prospered in the early 1880s, were hit by a ruinous drought in the late 1880s. But unsympathetic railroads, which enjoyed  
315 monopoly status, raised the cost of transporting farm produce. Many farmers in the south and the plains states could barely break even. The small family farm gave way to the large "bonanza" farm, often owned by companies based in the east. Salaries were threatened by  
320 low-wage immigrants from China, Japan, Portugal and Italy. Farmers who retained their land were burdened by debt. In Kansas, 45% of the land had become owned by banks.

The first populists saw themselves representing the  
325 "people", including farmers and blue-collar workers, against the "money power" or "plutocracy". That was reflected in their early programmes, which included a demand for the incorporation and recognition of labour unions alongside demands for railroad regulation, an  
330 end to land speculation, and easy money (through the replacement or supplementing of the gold standard) to

ease the burden of debt that the farmers suffered from. Except for a few scattered leaders, the populists were not socialists. They wanted to reform rather than abolish capitalism, and their agent of reform was not the socialist working class, but the loosely conceived idea of “the people”.

When their demands – which also included a graduated income tax and political reforms to establish the secret ballot and the direct election of senators – proved too radical and far-reaching for the major parties, the People’s Party was created in 1892, and nominated a candidate for president. “We seek to restore the government of the Republic to the hands of ‘the plain people’, with whose class it originated,” the party’s first platform declared. “We believe that the powers of government – in other words, of the people – should be expanded ... as rapidly and as far as the good sense of an intelligent people and the teachings of experience shall justify, to the end that oppression, injustice, and poverty shall eventually cease in the land.”

There was always a more conservative strain within the populist movement. In the south, some groups cooperated with the parallel national alliance of black farmers, but others did not. Populists also favoured the expulsion of Chinese immigrants, whom businesses had imported to provide cheap labour on western farms and railroads, and their support for that policy was often accompanied by racist rhetoric. But in the 1880s and early 1890s, populist politics was primarily directed upward at the plutocrats.

In the 1892 election, the People’s Party did remarkably well. Its woefully underfunded presidential candidate received 8% of the vote and carried five states. In the 1894 election, the People’s Party’s candidates for the House of Representatives won 10% of the vote. The party elected four congressmen, four senators, 21 state executives and 465 state legislators. With its base in the south and the west, and with Grover Cleveland wildly unpopular, the People’s Party looked to be on its way to challenging the Democrats as the second party. However, the election of 1894 turned out to be the party’s swansong.

In the end, the populists were done in by the dynamics of the two-party system. In the plains states, anger against Cleveland turned voters back to the more electable Republicans. In the south, Democrats subdued the People’s Party by a combination of co-option and, in response to the willingness of some populists to court the black vote, vicious race-baiting.

As liberal critics would later point out, the People’s Party had within it strains of antisemitism, racism, and nativism, particularly towards Chinese people, but these were at best secondary elements. Until the movement began to disintegrate, the original People’s Party was primarily a movement of the left. The first major instances of rightwing populism would come in the 1930s – from the Catholic priest and radio host Father Charles Coughlin – and then, in the 1960s, with George Wallace’s presidential campaigns.

Wallace, the Democratic governor of Alabama, helped to doom the New Deal majority and lay the foundations for the Reagan realignment of 1980. He created a new rightwing variety of populism – what the sociologist Donald Warren called “middle American radicalism” – which would migrate into the Republican party and become the basis of Donald Trump’s challenge to Republican orthodoxy in 2016.



To populist politician George Wallace, campaigning in Boston in 1968. Photograph: AP

The New Deal had rested on a tacit alliance between liberals and conservative southern Democrats, the latter of which resisted any legislation that might challenge white supremacy. As the party of Abraham Lincoln, the Republicans had traditionally been receptive to black civil rights, and the Republican leadership in Congress supported the Democratic president Lyndon Johnson’s Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965. The Arizona Republican senator Barry Goldwater was an early dissenter, but in the 1964 presidential election, Johnson easily defeated him. Johnson’s victory did not, however, signal widespread support for his civil rights initiatives, and after he passed the Voting Rights Act and introduced legislation known as the “War on Poverty”, a popular backlash grew. Wallace turned the backlash into a populist crusade.

Wallace would eventually make his name as an arch-segregationist, but he was initially a populist Democrat for whom race was strictly a secondary consideration. He initially ran for governor in 1958 as a New Deal



425 Democrat and lost against a candidate backed by the Ku Klux Klan. After that, he pledged: “I will never be outniggered again.”

In 1962, Wallace ran again and this time he won as a proponent of “segregation now, segregation tomorrow, 430 segregation forever”. In 1963, he gained notoriety when he attempted to block two black students from registering at the University of Alabama. In 1964, he ran in the Democratic primaries in Wisconsin, Indiana and Maryland, winning about a third of the vote – as high as 435 43% in Maryland, where he carried 15 of 23 counties. In 1968, he ran as an independent against the Republican Richard Nixon and the Democrat Hubert Humphrey. In early October, Wallace was ahead of Humphrey in the polls – in the end, he got 13.5% of the 440 vote and carried five states in the south. In 1972, he ran as a Democrat, and stood a chance of taking the nomination when, in May, an assassin shot and crippled him while he was campaigning for the Maryland primary.

445 Wallace emphasised his opposition to racial integration, but he framed it as a defence of the average (white) American against the tyranny of Washington bureaucrats. Big government was imposing its will on the average person. Appearing on Meet the Press in 450 1967, Wallace summed up his candidacy:

There’s a backlash against big government in this country. This is a movement of the people ... And I think that if the politicians get in the way, a lot of them are going to get run over by this average man in the 455 street – this man in the textile mill, this man in the steel mill, this barber, this beautician, the policeman on the beat ... the little businessman.

Wallace opposed busing – the practice of assigning children to particular state schools in order to redress 460 racial segregation – because it was breaking up working-class neighbourhoods, and he attacked the white liberals who promoted it as hypocrites who refused to subject their children to what they insisted that the children of less affluent families must endure. 465 “They are building a bridge over the Potomac for all the white liberals fleeing to Virginia,” he declared.

Wallace was not, however, a political conservative. On domestic issues that did not directly touch on race, he ran as a New Deal Democrat. In his 1968 campaign 470 brochure, he boasted that in Alabama, he had increased spending on education, welfare, roads and agriculture.

In 1976, the Donald Warren published a study of “middle American radicals” (MARs). On the basis of extensive surveys conducted between 1971 and 72 and

475 in 1975, Warren defined a distinct political group that was neither left nor right, liberal nor conservative. MARs “feel the middle class has been seriously neglected,” Warren wrote. They see “government as favouring both the rich and poor simultaneously”.

480 Warren’s MARs held conservative positions on poverty and racial issues. They rejected busing and welfare agencies as examples of “the rich [giving] in to the demands of the poor, and the middle-income people have to pay the bill”. They disliked the national 485 government, but they also thought corporations “have too much power” and were “too big”. They favoured many liberal programmes. They wanted government to guarantee jobs to everyone. They supported price (but not wage) control, Medicare, some kind of national 490 health insurance, federal aid to education and social security.

Warren found that MARs represented about a quarter of the electorate. They were on average more male than female; they had a high-school but not a college 495 education; their income fell in the middle, or slightly below it; they had skilled or semi-skilled blue-collar occupations, or clerical or sales jobs – and they were the most likely demographic group to vote for George Wallace.

500 In other words, Wallace’s base was among voters who saw themselves as middle class – the American equivalent of “the people” – and who believed themselves to be locked in conflict with those below and above.

505 Forty years later, Trump portrays himself as an enemy of free trade treaties, runaway shops, and illegal immigration and as the champion of the “silent majority” – a term borrowed from Nixon – against the “special interests” and the “establishment” of both 510 parties. “The silent majority is back, and it’s not silent. It’s aggressive,” Trump declared last year. At rallies, his campaign has given out signs that read: “The silent majority stands with Trump.”

In January, just before the Iowa caucuses, Trump’s 515 campaign ran a television advertisement titled The Establishment. Seated behind a desk, Trump looked into the camera and said: “The establishment, the media, the special interest, the lobbyists, the donors, they’re all against me. I’m self-funding my campaign. I don’t owe 520 anybody anything. I only owe it to the American people to do a great job. They are really trying to stop me.”

Fareed Zakaria, *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2016 Issue

Donald Trump's admirers and critics would probably agree on one thing: he is different. One of his chief  
 5 Republican supporters, Newt Gingrich, describes him as a "unique, extraordinary experience." And of course, in some ways—his celebrity, his flexibility with the facts—Trump is unusual. But in an important sense, he is not:  
 Trump is part of a broad populist upsurge running through  
 10 the Western world. It can be seen in countries of widely varying circumstances, from prosperous Sweden to crisis-ridden Greece. In most, populism remains an opposition movement, although one that is growing in strength; in others, such as Hungary, it is now the reigning ideology.  
 15 But almost everywhere, populism has captured the public's attention.

What is populism? It means different things to different groups, but all versions share a suspicion of and hostility toward elites, mainstream politics, and established  
 20 institutions. Populism sees itself as speaking for the forgotten "ordinary" person and often imagines itself as the voice of genuine patriotism. "The only antidote to decades of ruinous rule by a small handful of elites is a bold infusion of popular will. On every major issue  
 25 affecting this country, the people are right and the governing elite are wrong," Trump wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* in April 2016. Norbert Hofer, who ran an "Austria first" presidential campaign in 2016, explained to his opponent—conveniently, a former professor—"You  
 30 have the *haute volée* [high society] behind you; I have the people with me."

Historically, populism has come in left- and right-wing variants, and both are flourishing today, from Bernie Sanders to Trump, and from Syriza, the leftist party  
 35 currently in power in Greece, to the National Front, in France. But today's left-wing populism is neither distinctive nor particularly puzzling. Western countries have long had a far left that critiques mainstream left-wing parties as too market-oriented and accommodating of big  
 40 business. In the wake of the Cold War, center-left parties moved much closer toward the center—think of Bill Clinton in the United States and Tony Blair in the United Kingdom—thus opening up a gap that could be filled by populists. That gap remained empty, however, until the  
 45 financial crisis of 2007–8. The subsequent downturn caused households in the United States to lose trillions in wealth and led unemployment in countries such as Greece and Spain to rise to 20 percent and above, where it has remained ever since. It is hardly surprising that following

50 the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the populist left experienced a surge of energy.

The new left's agenda is not so different from the old left's. If anything, in many European countries, left-wing populist parties are now closer to the center than they were  
 55 30 years ago. Syriza, for example, is not nearly as socialist as was the main Greek socialist party, PASOK, in the 1970s and 1980s. In power, it has implemented market reforms and austerity, an agenda with only slight variations from that of the governing party that preceded  
 60 it. Were Podemos, Spain's version of Syriza, to come to power—and it gained only about 20 percent of the vote in the country's most recent election—it would probably find itself in a similar position.

Right-wing populist parties, on the other hand, are  
 65 experiencing a new and striking rise in country after country across Europe. France's National Front is positioned to make the runoff in next year's presidential election. Austria's Freedom Party almost won the presidency this year and still might, since the final round  
 70 of the election was annulled and rescheduled for December. Not every nation has succumbed to the temptation. Spain, with its recent history of right-wing dictatorship, has shown little appetite for these kinds of parties. But Germany, a country that has grappled with its  
 75 history of extremism more than any other, now has a right-wing populist party, Alternative for Germany, growing in strength. And of course, there is Trump. While many Americans believe that Trump is a singular phenomenon, representative of no larger, lasting agenda, accumulating  
 80 evidence suggests otherwise. The political scientist Justin Gest adapted the basic platform of the far-right British National Party and asked white Americans whether they would support a party dedicated to "stopping mass immigration, providing American jobs to American  
 85 workers, preserving America's Christian heritage and stopping the threat of Islam." Sixty-five percent of those polled said they would. Trumpism, Gest concluded, would outlast Trump.

#### WHY THE WEST, AND WHY NOW?

90 In searching for the sources of the new populism, one should follow Sherlock Holmes' advice and pay attention to the dog that didn't bark. Populism is largely absent in Asia, even in the advanced economies of Japan and South Korea. It is actually in retreat in Latin America, where left-  
 95 wing populists in Argentina, Bolivia, and Venezuela ran their countries into the ground over the last decade. In Europe, however, not only has there been a steady and



strong rise in populism almost everywhere, but it has deeper roots than one might imagine. In an important research paper for Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris calculate that since the 1960s, populist parties of the right have doubled their share of the vote in European countries and populists of the left have seen more than a fivefold increase. By the second decade of this century, the average share of seats for right-wing populist parties had risen to 13.7 percent, and it had risen to 11.5 percent for left-wing ones.

The most striking findings of the paper are about the decline of economics as the pivot of politics. The way politics are thought about today is still shaped by the basic twentieth-century left-right divide. Left-wing parties are associated with increased government spending, a larger welfare state, and regulations on business. Right-wing parties have wanted limited government, fewer safety nets, and more laissez-faire policies. Voting patterns traditionally reinforced this ideological divide, with the working class opting for the left and middle and upper classes for the right. Income was usually the best predictor of a person's political choices.

Inglehart and Norris point out that this old voting pattern has been waning for decades. "By the 1980s," they write, "class voting had fallen to the lowest levels ever recorded in Britain, France, Sweden and West Germany. . . . In the U.S., it had fallen so low [by the 1990s] that there was virtually no room for further decline." Today, an American's economic status is a bad predictor of his or her voting preferences. His or her views on social issues—say, same-sex marriage—are a much more accurate guide to whether he or she will support Republicans or Democrats. Inglehart and Norris also analyzed party platforms in recent decades and found that since the 1980s, economic issues have become less important. Noneconomic issues—such as those related to gender, race, the environment—have greatly increased in importance.

What can explain this shift, and why is it happening almost entirely in the Western world? Europe and North America include countries with widely varying economic, social, and political conditions. But they face a common challenge—economic stasis. Despite the variety of economic policies they have adopted, all Western countries have seen a drop-off in growth since the 1970s. There have been brief booms, but the secular shift is real, even including the United States. What could account for this decline? In his recent book, *The Rise and Fall of Nations*, Ruchir Sharma notes that a broad trend like this stagnation must have an equally broad cause. He identifies one factor above all others: demographics. Western

countries, from the United States to Poland, Sweden to Greece, have all seen a decline in their fertility rates. The extent varies, but everywhere, families are smaller, fewer workers are entering the labor force, and the ranks of retirees swell by the year. This has a fundamental and negative impact on economic growth.

That slower growth is coupled with challenges that relate to the new global economy. Globalization is now pervasive and entrenched, and the markets of the West are (broadly speaking) the most open in the world. Goods can easily be manufactured in lower-wage economies and shipped to advanced industrial ones. While the effect of increased global trade is positive for economies as a whole, specific sectors get battered, and large swaths of unskilled and semiskilled workers find themselves unemployed or underemployed.

Another trend working its way through the Western world is the information revolution. This is not the place to debate whether new technologies are raising productivity. Suffice it to say, they reinforce the effects of globalization and, in many cases, do more than trade to render certain kinds of jobs obsolete. Take, for example, the new and wondrous technologies pursued by companies such as Google and Uber that are making driverless cars possible. Whatever the other effects of this trend, it cannot be positive for the more than three million Americans who are professional truck drivers. (The most widely held job for an American male today is driving a car, bus, or truck, as *The Atlantic's* Derek Thompson has noted.)

The final challenge is fiscal. Almost every Western country faces a large fiscal burden. The net debt-to-GDP ratio in the European Union in 2015 was 67 percent. In the United States, it was 81 percent. These numbers are not crippling, but they do place constraints on the ability of governments to act. Debts have to be financed, and as expenditures on the elderly rise through pensions and health care, the debt burden will soar. If one secure path to stronger growth is investment—spending on infrastructure, education, science, and technology—this path is made more difficult by the ever-growing fiscal burdens of an aging population.

These constraints—demographics, globalization, technology, and budgets—mean that policymakers have a limited set of options from which to choose. The sensible solutions to the problems of advanced economies these days are inevitably a series of targeted efforts that will collectively improve things: more investments, better worker retraining, reforms of health care. But this incrementalism produces a deep sense of frustration among many voters who want more dramatic solutions and

a bold, decisive leader willing to decree them. In the United States and elsewhere, there is rising support for just such a leader, who would dispense with the checks and balances of liberal democracy.

## FROM ECONOMICS TO CULTURE

In part because of the broader forces at work in the global economy, there has been a convergence in economic policy around the world in recent decades. In the 1960s, the difference between the left and the right was vast, with the left seeking to nationalize entire industries and the right seeking to get the government out of the economy. When François Mitterrand came to power in France in the early 1980s, for example, he enacted policies that were identifiably socialist, whereas Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan sought to cut taxes, privatize industries and government services, and radically deregulate the private sector.

The end of the Cold War discredited socialism in all forms, and left-wing parties everywhere moved to the center, most successfully under Clinton in the United States and Blair in the United Kingdom. And although politicians on the right continue to make the laissez-faire case today, it is largely theoretical. In power, especially after the global financial crisis, conservatives have accommodated themselves to the mixed economy, as liberals have to the market. The difference between Blair's policies and David Cameron's was real, but in historical perspective, it was rather marginal. Trump's plans for the economy, meanwhile, include massive infrastructure spending, high tariffs, and a new entitlement for working mothers. He has employed the usual rhetoric about slashing regulations and taxes, but what he has actually promised—let alone what he could actually deliver—has been less different from Hillary Clinton's agenda than one might assume. In fact, he has boasted that his infrastructure program would be twice as large as hers.

This convergence in economic policy has contributed to a situation in which the crucial difference between the left and the right today is cultural. Despite what one sometimes hears, most analyses of voters for Brexit, Trump, or populist candidates across Europe find that economic factors (such as rising inequality or the effects of trade) are not the most powerful drivers of their support. Cultural values are. The shift began, as Inglehart and Norris note, in the 1970s, when young people embraced a postmaterialist politics centered on self-expression and issues related to gender, race, and the environment. They challenged authority and established institutions and norms, and they were largely successful in introducing new ideas and recasting politics and society. But they also

produced a counterreaction. The older generation, particularly men, was traumatized by what it saw as an assault on the civilization and values it cherished and had grown up with. These people began to vote for parties and candidates that they believed would, above all, hold at bay these forces of cultural and social change.

In Europe, that led to the rise of new parties. In the United States, it meant that Republicans began to vote more on the basis of these cultural issues than on economic ones. The Republican Party had lived uneasily as a coalition of disparate groups for decades, finding a fusion between cultural and economic conservatives and foreign policy hawks. But then, the Democrats under Clinton moved to the center, bringing many professionals and white-collar workers into the party's fold. Working-class whites, on the other hand, found themselves increasingly alienated by the cosmopolitan Democrats and more comfortable with a Republican Party that promised to reflect their values on "the threeGs"—guns, God, and gays. In President Barack Obama's first term, a new movement, the Tea Party, bubbled up on the right, seemingly as a reaction to the government's rescue efforts in response to the financial crisis. A comprehensive study by Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, however, based on hundreds of interviews with Tea Party followers, concluded that their core motivations were not economic but cultural. As the virulent hostility to Obama has shown, race also plays a role in this cultural reaction.

For a few more years, the conservative establishment in Washington remained focused on economics, not least because its most important financial supporters tended toward libertarianism. But behind the scenes, the gap between it and the party's base was growing, and Trump's success has brought that division into the open. Trump's political genius was to realize that many Republican voters were unmoved by the standard party gospel of free trade, low taxes, deregulation, and entitlement reform but would respond well to a different appeal based on cultural fears and nationalist sentiment.

## NATION VS. MIGRATION

Unsurprisingly, the initial and most important issue Trump exploited was immigration. On many other social issues, such as gay rights, even right-wing populists are divided and recognize that the tide is against them. Few conservative politicians today argue for the recriminalization of homosexuality, for instance. But immigration is an explosive issue on which populists are united among themselves and opposed to their elite antagonists.

There is a reality behind the rhetoric, for we are indeed living in an age of mass migration. The world has been transformed by the globalization of goods, services, and information, all of which have produced their share of pain and rejection. But we are now witnessing the globalization of people, and public reaction to that is stronger, more visceral, and more emotional. Western populations have come to understand and accept the influx of foreign goods, ideas, art, and cuisine, but they are far less willing to understand and accept the influx of foreigners themselves—and today there are many of those to notice.

For the vast majority of human history, people lived, traveled, worked, and died within a few miles of their birthplace. In recent decades, however, Western societies have seen large influxes of people from different lands and alien cultures. In 2015, there were around 250 million international migrants and 65 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. Europe has received the largest share, 76 million immigrants, and it is the continent with the greatest anxiety. That anxiety is proving a better guide to voters' choices than issues such as inequality or slow growth. As a counterexample, consider Japan. The country has had 25 years of sluggish growth and is aging even faster than others, but it doesn't have many immigrants—and in part as a result, it has not caught the populist fever.

Levels of public anxiety are not directly related to the total number of immigrants in a country or even to the concentration of immigrants in different areas, and polls show some surprising findings. The French, for example, are relatively less concerned about the link between refugees and terrorism than other Europeans are, and negative attitudes toward Muslims have fallen substantially in Germany over the past decade. Still, there does seem to be a correlation between public fears and the pace of immigration. This suggests that the crucial element in the mix is politics: countries where mainstream politicians have failed to heed or address citizens' concerns have seen rising populism driven by political entrepreneurs fanning fear and latent prejudice. Those countries that have managed immigration and integration better, in contrast, with leadership that is engaged, confident, and practical, have not seen a rise in populist anger. Canada is the role model in this regard, with large numbers of immigrants and a fair number of refugees and yet little backlash.

To be sure, populists have often distorted or even invented facts in order to make their case. In the United States, for example, net immigration from Mexico has been negative for several years. Instead of the illegal immigrant problem growing, in other words, it is actually shrinking. Brexit advocates, similarly, used many misleading or outright

false statistics to scare the public. Yet it would be wrong to dismiss the problem as one simply concocted by demagogues (as opposed to merely exploited by them). The number of immigrants entering many European countries is historically high. In the United States, the proportion of Americans who were foreign-born increased from less than five percent in 1970 to almost 14 percent today. And the problem of illegal immigration to the United States remains real, even though it has slowed recently. In many countries, the systems designed to manage immigration and provide services for integrating immigrants have broken down. And yet all too often, governments have refused to fix them, whether because powerful economic interests benefit from cheap labor or because officials fear appearing uncaring or xenophobic.

Immigration is the final frontier of globalization. It is the most intrusive and disruptive because as a result of it, people are dealing not with objects or abstractions; instead, they come face-to-face with other human beings, ones who look, sound, and feel different. And this can give rise to fear, racism, and xenophobia. But not all the reaction is noxious. It must be recognized that the pace of change can move too fast for society to digest. The ideas of disruption and creative destruction have been celebrated so much that it is easy to forget that they look very different to the people being disrupted.

Western societies will have to focus directly on the dangers of too rapid cultural change. That might involve some limits on the rate of immigration and on the kinds of immigrants who are permitted to enter. It should involve much greater efforts and resources devoted to integration and assimilation, as well as better safety nets. Most Western countries need much stronger retraining programs for displaced workers, ones more on the scale of the GI Bill: easily available to all, with government, the private sector, and educational institutions all participating. More effort also needs to be devoted to highlighting the realities of immigration, so that the public is dealing with facts and not phobias. But in the end, there is no substitute for enlightened leadership, the kind that, instead of pandering to people's worst instincts, appeals to their better angels.

Eventually, we will cross this frontier as well. The most significant divide on the issue of immigration is generational. Young people are the least anxious or fearful of foreigners of any group in society. They understand that they are enriched—economically, socially, culturally—by living in diverse, dynamic countries. They take for granted that they should live in an open and connected world, and that is the future they seek. The challenge for the West is to make sure the road to that future is not so rocky that it causes catastrophe along the way.

Here is a portrait of Fareed Zakaria by Le Monde and a presentation of the concept of “Illiberal democracies” that he coined. <https://www.lemonde.fr/article-offert/1aa388b8ba63-6023072/fareed-zakaria-pourfendeur-de-la-democratie-illiberale>

## Document 5 - Q&A with Müller: Populism in today’s world

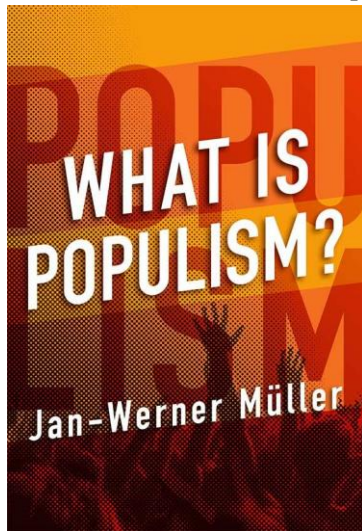
By Michael Hotchkiss, Princeton University, Office of Communications on Oct. 25, 2016, noon

The term “populist” has been used to describe a wide range of politicians around the world in recent years, from Hugo Chávez to Nigel Farage to Donald Trump. But what does the term actually mean, and who is a populist?

Jan-Werner Müller, a professor of politics at Princeton, explores those questions and their significance in his new book, *“What Is Populism”(Link is external)?”* (University of Pennsylvania Press).

Müller, a Princeton faculty member since 2005, specializes in democratic theory and the history of modern political thought. His other books include “A Dangerous Mind: Carl Schmitt in Postwar European Thought”; “Another Country: German Intellectuals, Unification and National Identity”; “Constitutional Patriotism”; and “Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe.”

Müller answered questions about populism, his book and its relevance to the 2016 presidential campaign.



“What Is Populism?” is politics professor Jan-Werner Müller’s latest book. *(Book cover image courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Press)*

**Question.** Why did you tackle this question, “What is populism?”

**Answer.** I wanted to confront two issues in particular. First, populists — especially, but not only, in Europe — often present themselves as the real champions of democracy. I wanted to know whether that self-presentation was at all valid. Second, I was disturbed by

commentators’ lazy — I’d even say unthinking — way of suggesting some kind of symmetry between, for instance, Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump (or, in the European context, left-wing parties such as Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece on the one hand, and right-wing populists such as Marine Le Pen [France] and Viktor Orbán [Hungary] on the other). I sought to understand if all these actors really have something in common.

**Q. What is the biggest misconception about populism?**

**A.** Today, we read in virtually every second op-ed piece that the world is witnessing a growing alienation between elites and the people, or that across the West there is a “revolt of the masses” against the establishment. However, not everyone who criticizes elites is a populist (in fact, any standard civic-education book will positively encourage us to be critical citizens). Rather, populists always claim that there is a homogeneous, morally pure people of which they are the only authentic representatives. For them, it follows that all other contenders for power are corrupt or in some other way immoral. Less obviously, they hold that whoever does not support them among citizens does not properly belong to the “real people.” Think of Nigel Farage celebrating the Brexit vote by claiming that it had been a “victory for real people” (thus making the 48 percent of the British electorate who had opposed taking the U.K. out of the European Union somehow less than real — or, rather, questioning their status as members of the political community). Figures like Sanders or Britain’s Jeremy Corbyn criticize elites, of course, but they are not anti-pluralist in the way Le Pen, Farage and Trump are. And only the latter are a danger for liberal democracy.

**Q. What can we learn from recent populists, such as Silvio Berlusconi in Italy and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela?**

**A.** Many observers think that populists offer very simplistic policy prescriptions which will quickly be exposed as unworkable. Conventional wisdom also has it that populist parties are primarily protest parties and that protest cannot govern, since, logically, one cannot protest against oneself. In fact, though, populists can

govern specifically as populists, in line with their claim to a moral monopoly of representing the real people. This explains why populists with sufficient majorities and weak countervailing institutions — such as Orbán in Hungary, Erdoğan in Turkey, or, indeed Chávez in Venezuela — have taken their countries in an authoritarian direction. Berlusconi was dangerous, but he was much more constrained by the existing political and legal system than these other figures; he also had no large ideological project to reshape society in line with a conception of the “real people”; and, not least, he always had to worry about his own troubles with the law.

**Q. How can claims that populists speak exclusively for “the silent majority” be countered?**

A. In a diverse democracy containing many interests and identities, populists’ anti-pluralism opens the path to excluding entire groups — and to authoritarianism. Those fighting populists have to be absolutely explicit about this danger and should not shy away from calling a racist a racist, in a case like Trump’s. But they also have to avoid a trap: they end up contradicting themselves if they, in turn, demonize the supporters of the demonizers, or effectively end up saying: “because you exclude, we exclude you.” It’s the trap that Hillary Clinton fell in when she criticized Trump voters as “deplorables.” Above all, liberal democrats have to offer both substantive policy ideas that can work for voters of populist parties *and* conceptions of a pluralist collective identity that are more attractive than the populists’ fantasies of pure peoplehood.

**Q. How does Donald Trump fit in this picture of populism?**

A. Trump has said so many horrendous things over the course of the past year and a half that one remark at a rally in May passed virtually unnoticed — even though that statement clearly showed the populism at the heart of Trump’s worldview: “The only important thing,” he said, “is the unification of the people — because the other people don’t mean anything.” Like all populists, Trump engages in a certain form of exclusionary identity politics (which is not to say that all identity politics has to be populist): he decrees who belongs to the real American people and who doesn’t. What is unusual is the openness with which he has incited hatred against minorities in this process.

It is also worth saying that Trump, contrary to what some academic observers have claimed, is not an “elitist,” just because he himself is so obviously part of a certain elite. It’s naive to assume that one has scored a decisive point against populists by pointing out that they themselves are not exactly commoners. Populists promise not that they themselves are authentically “ordinary,” but that, contrary to the corrupt elites, they will faithfully implement the real will of the real people.

**Q. How does this book fit in the broader scope of your work?**

A. As political theorists, we should engage with actual political challenges; that engagement can at the same time help in rethinking long-standing theoretical puzzles. Confronting populism has pushed me further in addressing hard questions about the relationship between ideals of self-government and the institutional machinery of political representation, as well as the difficult issue of where the boundaries of “the people” should be drawn.

# Europe's Populist Surge

## A Long Time in the Making

Cas Mudde

The year 2015 was a dreadful one for Europe in general and for the EU in particular. It started with the terrorist attack against the magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris and ended with an even more deadly jihadist assault in the same city. In between, the EU battled an economic crisis in Greece, which threatened the entire eurozone, and endured a staggering inflow of refugees from the Middle East and other war-torn regions.

The year 2016 has not been much better. More terrorist attacks have shaken the continent. The refugee crisis has abated slightly, but only because the EU has outsourced the problem to Turkey—a country that is itself experiencing a bout of instability. And for the first time, the EU is set to lose a member, the United Kingdom, as a result of the so-called Brexit referendum.

All these developments have helped push populist movements to the center of European politics. The threat of terrorism and anxiety about a massive wave of immigrants from the Muslim world, coupled with the widespread belief that the EU

hinders rather than helps when it comes to such problems, have created a perfect storm for populists, especially enhancing the standing of right-wing populists in many countries. Chief among them is Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has taken advantage of public fears to rally opposition to German Chancellor Angela Merkel and her belief that Europe should embrace a *Willkommenskultur*, a “culture of welcoming.” Meanwhile, the eurozone crisis has aided the rise of left-wing, anti-austerity populists in Greece and Spain.

But although the threats to security and economic stability that have rattled Europe in the past few years may have spurred the current populist surge, they did not create it. Its origins lie further back, in the structural shifts in European society and politics that began in the 1960s. Because so much commentary on contemporary populism overlooks its deep historical sources, many observers fail to appreciate the durability of today's populist appeals and the likely staying power of the parties built around them. It's true that populists have often struggled to hold on to power once they've obtained it. But today's social, political, and media landscapes in Europe favor populists more than at any time since the end of World War II. To reverse the populist tide, today's floundering, hollowed-out mainstream European parties and the entrenched elites who guide them will have to respond with far more dexterity and creativity than they have shown in recent decades.

### THE PURE PEOPLE

As with any “ism,” definitions are crucial. A useful one goes like this: populism is an ideology that separates society into

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two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite," and that holds that politics should be an expression of "the general will" of the people. With a few exceptions, that kind of thinking remained on the margins of European politics throughout the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century. Aspects of populism could be found in the communist and fascist movements, particularly during their oppositional phases. But both of those ideologies (and the regimes that embraced them) were essentially elitist, placing a small group of powerful insiders above the masses.

In the first decades of the postwar era, Western European politics was defined by a broad consensus on three key issues: alignment with the United States in the Cold War, the need for more political integration on the continent, and the benefits of maintaining a strong welfare state. Deep and wide support for those positions left little space for ideological alternatives, and populism was no exception. It wasn't until the 1980s that populist thinking truly began to make its mark, with the arrival of radical right-wing parties such as France's National Front, which rose to prominence in the wake of mass immigration and growing unemployment by promising to return France to the monocultural glory of its past.

Today, populist parties are represented in the parliaments of most European countries. The majority are right wing, although not all are radical. Others are left wing or espouse idiosyncratic platforms that are difficult to place on a left-right spectrum: for example, the Italian Five Star Movement, which has found success with a combination of

environmentalism, anticorruption rectitude, and antiestablishment rage. In national elections held in the past five years, at least one populist party earned ten percent or more of the vote in 16 European countries. Collectively, populist parties scored an average of 16.5 percent of the vote in those elections, ranging from a staggering 65 percent in Hungary to less than one percent in Luxembourg. Populists now control the largest share of parliamentary seats in six countries: Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, and Switzerland. In three of those (Hungary, Italy, and Slovakia), populist parties collectively gained a majority of the votes in the most recent national elections, although in Hungary and Italy the main populist parties are rivals. The situation in Hungary is most striking, where the governing party (Fidesz) and the largest opposition party (Jobbik) are both populist. Finally, in three other countries—Finland, Lithuania, and Norway—populist parties are now part of the governing coalitions.

#### **TINA POLITICS**

Most conventional explanations of this trend emphasize the importance of two factors: globalization and the economic crises in Europe that resulted from the financial meltdown of 2008 and the subsequent Great Recession. But the current populist moment is part of a longer story and is rooted in the post-industrial revolution that led to fundamental changes in European societies in the 1960s. During those years, deindustrialization and a steep decline in religious observance weakened the support enjoyed by established center-left and center-right parties, which had been largely dependent on working-

class and religious voters. In the quarter century that followed, a gradual realignment in European politics saw voters throw their support to old parties that had become virtually nonideological or to new parties defined by relatively narrow ideological stances.

Later, during the last two decades of the twentieth century, mainstream European parties increasingly converged on a new elite consensus—a common agenda that called for integration through the EU, multiethnic societies, and neoliberal economic reforms. The embrace of a vision of Europe as a cosmopolitan, business-friendly technocracy was particularly pronounced among parties that had traditionally been social democratic, many of which were inspired by British Prime Minister Tony Blair's concept of a "New Labour" party and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's move toward a "new center" (*neue Mitte*). The traditional center-right parties also shifted

away from their historical identities, as leaders such as Merkel and David Cameron of the British Conservative Party adopted more centrist and pragmatic approaches to economic and cultural issues.

This convergence created a fertile breeding ground for populism, as many voters began to see political elites as indistinguishable from one another, regardless of their party affiliations. To many Europeans, mainstream elites of all parties also seemed to share an essential powerlessness, owing to two massive transfers of authority that took place in the second half of the twentieth century: from national governments to supranational entities such as the EU and the International Monetary Fund and from democratically elected officials to unelected ones such as central bankers and judges. In many EU member states, vital issues such as border control and monetary policy were no longer the

exclusive responsibility of the national government. This led to the emergence of so-called TINA politics—"TINA" being short for "There is no alternative," the line political elites often used as a shorthand for the argument that their responsibility to the EU or the IMF outweighed their duty to be responsive to the demands of voters.

At the same time, the advent of the Internet produced electorates that were more plugged in to political debates and more independent-minded (although not necessarily better informed), which made them more critical of and less deferential toward traditional elites. In particular, voters became more aware of the fact that elected officials often blamed agents or factors outside their control—the EU, globalization, U.S. policy—for unpopular policies but claimed to be fully in control and took credit whenever policies proved popular.

The Internet also severely limited the gatekeeping function of mainstream media. With far more stories and voices finding an audience, populist narratives—which often contained a whiff of sensationalism or provocation—became particularly attractive to media organizations that were chasing eyeballs as revenue from subscriptions and traditional advertising plummeted. These subtle but profound shifts set the stage for short-term triggers, such as the global financial crisis and the spillover from Middle Eastern conflicts, to turbocharge populism's growth.

#### **POWER HUNGARY**

The rise of populism has had important consequences for the state of liberal democracy in Europe. Although populism is not necessarily antidemocratic, it is essentially illiberal, especially in its

disregard for minority rights, pluralism, and the rule of law. What is more, as the case of Hungary demonstrates, populism is not merely a campaign strategy or a style of political mobilization that leaders shed as soon as they achieve political power. Since 2010, Orban has openly set about transforming his country into what he described in a 2014 speech as "an illiberal new state based on national foundations," in which the government purposely marginalizes opposition forces by weakening existing state institutions (including the courts) and creating new, largely autonomous governing bodies and packing them with Fidesz loyalists.

Although the situation in Hungary is exceptional, Orban's success has inspired and emboldened many other right-wing populists in the EU, from Marine Le Pen in France to Jaroslaw Kaczynski in Poland. Most distressing, the rise of populist illiberalism is facing less and less opposition from embattled mainstream parties, which have fallen silent or have even applauded the trend.

Left-wing populists have been nowhere near as successful as their right-wing counterparts. In Greece in 2015, Syriza's amateurish attempt to challenge EU-imposed austerity policies backfired, and Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras was ultimately forced to accept precisely the kinds of spending cuts and structural reforms that he had pledged to prevent. Since then, no other left-wing populist parties have managed to succeed at the national level, with the exception of Podemos (We Can) in Spain. And although left-wing populists are generally less exclusionary than their right-wing counterparts, political polarization in Greece has increased significantly since Syriza came to power in January 2015.

Many opponents of the government feel vilified by official rhetoric portraying them as members of a fifth column doing the bidding of Berlin or Brussels. And Tsipras has proposed several laws that could limit the space for political opposition by increasing state control of education and the media.

Even in countries without populist governments, a populist *Zeitgeist* has taken hold. In many cases, populists now set the agenda and dominate public debate, while mainstream politicians merely react, sometimes even adopting elements of populist rhetoric, peppering their speeches with references to “the people” and condemnations of “elites.” Consequently, even traditionally pro-European Christian democrats and social democrats now use “Brussels” as a derogatory term, evoking a distant elite, removed from the concerns of the common people and posing a threat to national sovereignty.

#### **A NEW POPULIST ERA?**

Many scholars contend that European populism is an episodic phenomenon—that it creates moments rather than eras—and that although populists can succeed in opposition, they inevitably fail once in power. That is wishful thinking, and those who engage in it generally put too much stock in a few high-profile populist implosions. This sanguine view overlooks the fact that Orbán has been in power for six years and still leads the most popular party in Hungary and populism has dominated politics in Slovakia ever since the fall of communism. Meanwhile, Austria is poised to become the first European country in the postwar era to directly elect a populist radical-right president: Norbert Hofer of the

Freedom Party, who leads in the most recent opinion polls.

Deep structural changes in European societies produced the current populist wave. Those changes are not likely to be reversed anytime soon, so there is no reason to anticipate that populism will fade in the near future. Moreover, populist parties are growing just as major establishment parties are becoming increasingly obsolete: in many European countries, it has become rare for any party to win more than one-third of the national vote.

Mainstream parties have to develop short-term and long-term strategies to deal with the new reality of fragmented party systems that include influential populist parties. So-called *cordons sanitaires*—coalition governments, such as that in Belgium, that explicitly seek to exclude populist parties—will become increasingly difficult to sustain. In the many countries where populists now represent the third- or second-biggest party, a *cordon sanitaire* would force all the other parties to govern together, which would have the unintentional effect of re-creating many of the very conditions that led to the rise of European populism in the first place. At the same time, it will become harder for establishment parties to govern alongside populist parties. In recent years, populist parties have been willing to serve as junior partners in coalitions. Now, however, many populist parties are much bigger than their potential mainstream partners and will be far less likely to take a back seat.

Still, populist parties are ultimately subject to the same basic political laws that constrain their establishment rivals. Once they achieve power, they, too, must choose between responsiveness and responsibility—between doing what

their voters want and what economic reality and EU institutions dictate. Orban has so far been successful at doing both things at the same time, in part by saying different things to different audiences. But Tsipras has learned about the pressures of responsibility the hard way, and has suffered a significant drop in popularity.

This dilemma for populists presents opportunities for liberal democratic parties, be they new or old, but only if they do not simply attack the populist vision but also provide clear and coherent alternatives. Some establishment figures seem to grasp this. For example, in positioning himself for next year's national elections in France, the center-right politician Alain Juppé has cast himself as "a prophet of happiness" with a positive vision of a more harmonious country—a stark contrast to the negativity and fear-mongering of his rival within the Republicans, Nicolas Sarkozy, and a rebuke to the divisive rhetoric of Le Pen, the right-wing populist leader of the National Front. And in Germany, Merkel has mostly avoided a strong populist backlash—despite immense frustration and pushback inside and outside her own party—by acknowledging public anger while sticking to a clear policy agenda and a positive message: "*Wir schaffen das*" (We can do this).

In essence, the populist surge is an illiberal democratic response to decades of undemocratic liberal policies. To stem the populist tide, establishment politicians will have to heed the call to repoliticize the crucial issues of the twenty-first century, such as immigration, neoliberal economics, and European integration, bringing them back into the electoral realm and offering coherent and consistent alternatives to the often shortsighted and simplistic offerings of the populists. ❷