Left versus Right Populism: Antagonism and the Social Other

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Article very much in progress.

Most theoretical works on populism are still pitched at the level of the category, or "root concept" (Collier and Levitsky 2009; Goertz 2006), although the "Tower of Babel" on the concept may be less than a few decades ago, at least in political science and sociology. A newer and much needed literature has begun to tackle the sub-categories of left- and right- populism (Filc 2010; Mudde and Rovira 2013, Roberts 2016; Zaslove 2008; Otjes and Louwerse, 2013; Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014).[1] This more recent development has been triggered both by the emergence of clearly leftwing populism in the South of a continent, Europe, convinced that that populism was for all practical extent on the right, as well as by the increasing cross-regional comparison between Europe and Latin America, where populism in its third wave (the "Bolivarian" type) has been very clearly on the left, but which has also seen its share of right-wing populist leaders, like Carlos Menem and arguably Alvaro Uribe). In that much needed "descent" in the ladder of generalization, there is however a substantial danger that the rich theoretical unity of the concept may be lost or reduced to some trite banality, such as "anti-establishment politics", a dichotomy between a "good" or "pure" people and a "bad" or "corrupt" elite, or even "irrational", "angry" or "demagogical" politics.

The goal of this article is to fully explain and account for what makes given populisms right or left, without sacrificing an inch of the theoretical richness that has been displayed so far at the level of the category as a whole. To illustrate and empirically sustain our theoretical points, we revisit two of the cases analyzed in Mudde and Rovira (2013), the Front National under Marine LePen, a much more thorough populist than her father (more of the old Petainist anti-Semitic right of the late 1930)

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[1] Michael Kazin´s well-known book of 1995, on American populism, is a precursor in that regard.

and Chavez and Chavismo in Venezuela, to which we add Kirchnerism in Argentina and the more recent case of Trump and his supporters in the United States, thus at the same time covering cross-regionally three continents. As Roberts wrote: "The populist label…badly need its own descriptor to identify its substantive content and differentiate among its multiple expressions or sub-types" (2016:71), "not all populisms are identifiably left or right…but those that are should be characterized as such" (ibid).

"And Then They Were Three": Against Whom are the Populists?

There is a broad consensus in political science and sociology that populism implies, as a--non-sufficient--minimum, a dichotomizing of the political sphere discursively in two antagonistic camps, the "people" (on the deserving side, but currently "suffering" or "forgotten") and, again as a minimum, the political establishment (the villain). See for instance and in their own various different ways, Laclau 2005, Mudde 2004, Panizza 2005, Aibar 2007, or Ostiguy 2014 and 2017. The way these two camps are constructed, depicted, and understood, however, undoubtedly vary very much amongst key authors. For Laclau, in the post-Marxist camp, one side is the "ruling block", associated with the institutions in charge of administering demands and claims. The task of the populist (and of politics) is to construct a people, from an equivalential chain of demands--more specifically, to thread, connect together, associate the demands that are not registered or solved by the ruling bloc. For Laclau, populism is a "political logic" displayed in the active process of counter hegemony. For Mudde, however, more than an ongoing political logic at play in history "in the making", populism is an –admittedly quite "thin"—ideology (like any other ideologies), in which, on the one side, the people are depicted as "pure" (although what is meant by "pure" is never defined or explained)[2] and the political elite, as "corrupt". In yet another

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[2] It is not clear if the people are "pure" in an ethno-cultural sense, or if they are "pure of heart" with good intentions. The two are obviously not the same. The first intension obviously does

approach, for Weyland any talks of political logics or thin ideologies is all "smoke", as populist leadership are mainly interested in a "power grab", by directly appealing (demagogically, it is assumed) to a vast number of people responsive to them as individual leaders. The people, here, are large numbers, and it is not clear if there is another, adversarial camp or a dichotomy. The dean of the current wave of studies of populism, Margaret Canovan, is one of the few scholars who--ambiguously) ride the divide between sociology (or given groups of people) on the one hand, and ideas and constructions, on the other. For her as for us, populism is about appeals. For Canovan (1999: 3-5), in a dichotomy that she shows has a fair amount of variation, what is opposed on the negative side of those appeals is, sociologically, "the established structure of power" and, ideationally, the "dominant ideas and values of the society". Positively, and very tightly linked to the former, the object of "the people" can be the nation, "our people" (as opposed to those who do not belong), or "the common, ordinary people" (as opposed to the social elite). Our article follows up from Canovan. Part of that same line is also Robert Jansen, for whom populism involves the mobilization of "ordinarily marginalized social sectors" and "valorization of ordinary people" "into contentious political action" (2011: 82), with the other camp undefined but depicted simply as "elite". In the last few years, the definition of Mudde has gained a lot of traction, particularly in Europe, hence we will focus our constructive criticisms on the latter.[3]

Oddly enough, while extremely different in language, theoretical sophistication, and even disciplinary subfields, Laclau´s post-structuralist theory and Mudde´s "ideational" approach, in particular, share a marked indifference to sociology and "pre-

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not apply to South American populism, while the second can give rise to interesting debate, considering how the *chusma*, the "*negros*", etc are often depicted, as well as populist politicians such as Adhemar de Barros ("he steals, but he gets things done!").

[3] The purpose of this article is *not* to provide an overall definition of populism. We have done so elsewhere, in ___, ___, ___).

populist interventions" (Panizza 2017) social dynamics. In the case of Laclau, this can be understood as a reaction to the heavy sociological determinism of the vast Latin American scholarly literature on the topic in the 1960s and 1970s (Germani 1965, Di Tella 1965, Cardoso and Faletto 1969, O'Donnell 1973, Weffort 1978, Ruth and David Collier 1979) and to his previous orthodox Marxist commitments in the 1970s[4]. Ontologically, our approach partakes neither of determinism (as before) or of the idealism of both the discursive and the "ideational" approaches. On the contrary, our approach is "inter-active" and, quite simply, relational. The specific dynamic of populism can never be fully understood, moreover, without a reference to the particular place and time of its occurrence. That is, populists offer a diagnosis, as well as a set of solutions, for given social problems and ills, which of course vary from continent to continent (e.g. Bolivia vs France). It is self-evident, for instance, that immigration *to* Bolivia is not an issue in Bolivia, nor could it be; while on the other hand, the societal distance between a cultured and "Northernized"[5] elite and the popular sectors is certainly much larger in Latin America than it is in Europe. Populism, in general, as a particular type of appeals, and specifically, as right- or left- populism, is an interactive outcome with the particular, sociological realities and social dynamic at play independently of the populist phenomenon.

In terms of building blocks, we adopt from the post-Marxist tradition the key notion of antagonism, central in (but not exclusive to) populist socio-political logic. Old Marxists used to refer to main and secondary social contradictions, although these are also undoubtedly discursive products, but *not only* so. Certainly, discursive antagonisms cannot be produced *ex nihilo*: they must be articulated or constructed using as 'raw materials' tensions that are already latent and active in society, otherwise it is hard to

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[4] As in *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, Populism* Verso, 1977.
[5] The notion of "Westernized" makes no sense, including but not only geographically, in South America.

comprehend that they might gain much traction at all. Moreover, and this is our first central point, *not all antagonisms are the same*, although they may formally look alike. This is the first point of entry to theoretically distinguish between right- and left-populism. Both antagonism and Manicheism, it must be underlined, pertain to a much wider range of ideologies than some scholars of populism focusing on Manicheism would have it. Antagonism, first, is a key feature shared by the old Marxist-socialist left, populism, and fascisms on the rise, while it is disliked and feared by liberals of all stripes. (The one exception, here, is Chantal Mouffe with her agonistic democracy.) [Mouffe 2005] And *all* antagonisms, or antagonistic struggles, second, possess a normative, or if you like, a "Manichean" component, whether it is the heroic struggle of the worthy proletarians against the exploitative bourgeoisie or parasitic aristocracy, or in the worthy heroic nativist fighters for the beloved nation against its repugnant or sleazy internal enemies. (The most powerful theorist and advocate of this encompassing view, of course, was Georges Sorel, who despised liberals.) So Manicheism cannot be, in and of itself, a defining variable for populism, since it is not exclusive to, or even particularly distinctive of, populists, including and *especially* ideologically, except in their contrast to hegemonic liberal democrats.

Sociologically and politically, thus, not all antagonism (or Manichean antagonisms) are the same. This article's main contribution, both theoretically and comparatively, to the studies of populism is to open up what is always presented as a dyad into what is really, and always is, a *triangle*. This is, indeed, the "elephant, in the room" of the literature. There is a consensus in the literature that populists rail against 'the establishment', 'the elite'. However, as should be obvious, the political establishment, the (so-called) representatives in government, the political class, is in no way, first, the same as, empirically, analytically, and discursively, (all) the social elite, whether socioeconomically as the owners of the means of production, or culturally as

scholars, scientists, journalists, etc. And indeed, representing the people has never been a function of the social elite. It may be viewed as beneficial to the nation´s development, or harmful to the welfare of ordinary people, or arrogant and self-assured, but it has never been mandated to represent the people (or to politically govern them). So, the political establishment--the antagonist object of the populists--is *not the only* object of the populist discourse, practice, ideology, framework, (hostile) appeals. Populist antagonism, second, is far from only targeting, socially, rich-and-powerful people. To take a conspicuous example, in developed countries many populisms continuously rail against (lower-class) immigrants; one is hard-pressed to consider those either as part of the "corrupt elite" or of the "pure people", even though they are obsessively at the core of the populist discourse and ideational perspective. Thus, equally important and *in no way identical* to the political establishment is what we call the *social other*, the true object of the –very explicit and in no way hidden—ire of the populists. Now, to be sure, there is in the populist framework an alliance between these two negatively presented objects: the political establishment and the social other(s). And if hostility to the political establishment/elite is a common traits of all populists, as is also deep hostility to a social other (which is far from always being only a socially elite group!), what varies enormously is the nature of this social Other, particularly and especially between left- and right- populisms.

Left- and Right- Populisms

Populisms, left and right, share by definition a hostility to the political elite, the political establishment --"Washington", the insiders, the political class, the "political caste," etc. But--and this is the central point of the article--what manifestly distinguishes left from right populism is *who* the sociological (nefarious) Other is. While we will examine in greater empirical details this feature in the case studies, as a broad-strokes

general empirical description (later theorized), in left-wing populism, the *social* Other is the rich, the oligarchy, the 1%, financial capital, the *cuicos* or *pitucos*, the rich white folks, all of whom, moreover and importantly, are always foreignizing and globalizing --in league with imperialism, colonialism, the U.S., the U.K., global capital, "Europe", etc.[6] The left-populist motto is not "proletarians of the world unite", against your own national bourgeoisie, but: downtrodden people of this place, of this nation, unite and struggle against the sold-out oligarchs of this place. In right-wing populisms, in contrast, the *social* Others have (in the last decades) been immigrants, illegal aliens, Muslims, Mexicans, Maghrebins and *sans-papiers*, etc. –all, not particularly well-to-do, but culturally distinct--who, moreover and importantly, clearly deteriorate our nation and neighborhood environments, and are associated with delinquency and/or repulsive cultural practices. In each instances, what is a source of indignation is that the government, the political establishment protects[7] these "obviously nefarious" social Others (and their interests), instead of "the people of this place".

The terminology now in vogue to explain (or perhaps rather, describe) the difference between left- and right- populism, introduced forcefully and with a broad impact by Mudde and Rovira (2013), that is, that of inclusionary versus exclusionary populism, seems to us misplaced and, more significantly, theoretically erroneous with regard to populism --as well as of course normatively complacent (who on the center-left would in their right-mind normatively disagree with it?). *All* populisms are, *by very definition*, exclusionary; and if they are going to be populism (in contrast, say, to fascism or bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes), they must *also* be inclusionary. The odd

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[6] That is, to use the terminology of the Argentines (including the Pope now, diffusing it, as in *El Pais*, "Entrevista exclusiva al Papa Francisco", 22 January 2017), they are *cipayos*. The term comes from Persian, *Sepahi* (Sepoy, in English), and referred during the British empire to Indian native commanders who served in the British army against the natives. In Spanish, the term has been widen to describe well-to-do natives of a colony who sympathize with metropolitan interests against the interests and culture of their own place.
[7] In the often conspiratorial world view of populism, where agency and intentions rule, "in league" is probably a better expression.

feature of the much-cited Mudde and Rovira article is that they actually do recognize that. However, because of what is possibly an overly limited root-conceptual definition (to be "simple" and amicably easy-to-grasp is not synonymous with "minimally sufficient"), and also of a strong normative "liberal" bent, they retreat from the logical conclusions that follow from their very accurate descriptions. Following, instead, the full logic of what was well described there would have been more cogent. Indeed, is it simply a question of the proportion of inclusion to exclusion? A question of the number of people included versus of those excluded? That would be trivial. No, indeed, *all* populisms are both exclusionary, since without exclusion no effective antagonism is possible, and inclusionary, otherwise one is hard pressed to see how "populist" or people-ist the movement would be.

The main difference between right- and left- populism is thus not whether the first kind is exclusive and whether the second type is inclusive (of *all*, but the political elite).[8] And *both* are also anti elite, if being anti-elite means denouncing the evils of the *partidocracia,* the *casta política*, "Brussel bureaucrats," "Washington," etc. The defining feature of what makes a populism left or right is, in fact, who the *sociological Other of the people* is**.** As such, sociologically, left-wing populisms are "upward punching" --toward the socio-economic (not just governing, political) elites. Right-wing populisms, sociologically, are "downward punching", toward a social Other that is depicted, certainly, as culturally (or ethnically) outsider, but that is also at the same time (or "should be", in their view), lower sociologically and in entitlements than their "native" social equivalents. It is not the level of inclusivity, in the antagonism, that matters, but its *direction*, sociologically speaking. Populism, in other words, is discursively and politically a combat between social groups, and not just against

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[8] The criteria can also not be the degree of lack of pluralism, since this is one of the several features of populism or populist-ness (and anti-liberalism), and not of right or left.

political representatives who have stopped being representative of the people.[9]

Antagonism is thus the foundation, socially, of a given template that offers an indication or a diagnosis of who is to blame structurally for the troubles of "most people" and, therefore, should be fought against in the political arena. Left populism can be said to be "left" precisely because it antagonizes the social sectors that the left has historically attacked: the landed elites, global capital, the bankers, the 'oligarchs', etc. They direct their follower's ire towards some of the wealthiest social groups, in order to (to put it very succinctly) accumulate power of their own. Right populisms antagonize social groups that are not only different but also in fact poorer (and with less solid recognized entitlements) than their "native" equivalent and more easily excluded: immigrants, Muslims, day laborers, ethnic minorities, etc. Their presence, however, is seen as corrosive and detrimental to the body of the nation and its people: not because they accumulate all for themselves leaving little else to others, but because they are undeserving (i.e., "taking advantage"), "disrespectful" (of laws, ways, etc.), unintegrated, taking what has been ours, and potentially triggering violence.

There is one additional set of features, associated with the above, closely tied to the social dynamic politically triggered. Social antagonism is crucial because it operates as a *script*, as a template for practical action (i.e., policy). The direction of antagonism is thus inseparable from the *time orientation* of the script. Left populisms see the people's struggle as something that will bring about a better, more just *future* (in most post-colonial countries, mainly because there is no venturous to return to pass Filc 2013)--while right wing populism view the struggle that will *bring a most authentic and pure past back*.[10]

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[9] The *degree* of exclusion in the antagonism, in fact, probably serves as a better indicator of the militant radicalness, or intransigence, of the movement, as most literature on social closures and cleavages suggest [e.g. Bartolini and Mair,1990].

[10] Margaret Canovan distinguishes between two definitions of the people itself. One is rooted in a more Republican tradition, the other goes back to the Hegelian, Romantic tradition. Romantic nationalists like to think that their peoples were part of the order of nature, growing to maturity in an organic process of historical development, whereas classical republicans had always taken

Left-wing populisms, especially in Latin America but also historically in the US, try to incorporate in the political arena people who were not up to then part of it. The literature on classical Latin American populism has been more than explicit and reiterative on that [e.g., Collier and Collier 1991, O'Donnell 1973]. Populism even became the primary mode in Latin America for the incorporation of the popular sectors, shaping in the process the political arena --what Gino Germani [1963] called the Latin American "model of incorporation" for the working and popular classes. And the third wave of 21st century populism in Latin America has been called by some scholars the "second incorporation of the popular sectors" [Silva and Rossi, 2017]. In that sense, these left-wing populisms can be said to venture "on the offensive" into politically virgin (or semi-virgin) sociological terrain, in terms of party systems: it goes to meet the informal sectors, the Indians, the *chusma*, the *descamisados*, the despised outcast, etc., providing a new political identity and pride to these social sectors and bringing them in, antagonistically; they need to *build a people,* not just to protect one. Left wing populisms is *transformative* in that it attempts to bring about a societal version of the country that did not exist before, socio-politically.

Right-wing populism, in contrast, seems to be "defensive", in that it aims to protect and preserve the social and cultural universe of the natives against a flood of "odd", "loafing", illegal, "maladapted" immigrants, by keeping them out. Many scholars have called it welfare chauvinism [e.g., van der Waal and al. 2010; Reeskens and van Oorschot 2012; Mewes and Mau 2012]. In their discourse, many populists also claim to aim, for example, to keep "France French", to keep our nation and ways as recognizable. Right-wing populism, thus, can be said to be "fortress (or reactive)

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the view that a people of citizens was no more a natural growth than the city they inhabited. Cities needed to be built, and so (according to republican traditions) did people's, usually by some heroic founder or law giver (...) in the republican imagination the people is a product of political will. (Canovan 2005: 48)

populism".[11] Put simply, *defensive populism* tries to return the country to a societal state in which it is (at least) imagined it was, "before".

While we advocate for *transformative* versus *defensive* as the best descriptors of contemporary left versus right populisms, with left-wing populism between only upward punching, while right-wing populism always have an (outwardly) downward punching component, one could nonetheless argue that there is a certain merit to the inclusionary—better conceptualized as "incorporating", socio-politically--versus exclusionary (or "fortress") distinction. In practice, however, this is to seriously misunderstand the fundamental hostility of left-wing populisms towards the educated middle and the well-to-do sectors. In its downward casting, left-wing populism generally antagonizes *bien-pensants*, "*decente*", "respectable" middle sectors, which in the process in turn gets "punched" and certainly feel politically excluded and attacked. One could even argue that the proportion of the population that feels politically antagonized[12] (and rhetorically aggressed) is in fact *higher* in the incorporating populisms, precisely because of the antagonisms, tensions, sociocultural dislikes, and also abuses to the rule of law by such incorporating populisms in power. It is, in a sense, because it so cruelly exclude a smaller fraction of the society through a not overly credible ultra-majoritarian rhetoric that radical right-wing populism is so ominous to most. In a sense, in brief, the difference between left and right populisms is more a product of where the social frontier is located--vertically and also laterally, so to speak-- and of the direction of the "punching".

At its core, left-wing populism can never be inclusionary of "the 1%", the oligarchy, Wall Street, large banks or big-media owners, nor does it want to be; and right-wing populism cannot be inclusionary of the "culturally alien" and, in their view,

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[11] Certainly, for instance, Donald Trump in the U.S. is causing major waves by renouncing the American discourse about the US being a society of diverse immigrants and open to the world.
[12] Of course, to "feel" politically antagonized and excluded is not the same thing as to have one's legal rights diminished, be restricted entry, prevented to vote, or prohibited to wear certain kinds of clothing in public.

of "socially" disruptive "non-nationals", nor does it want to be. Conversely, both left- and right- populists claim to wish to reduce the distance, stand for, and fight for, "the people" "of this place", who have been either "ignored", "left behind" or ridiculed and despised in their social tastes (whether it is Nascar in the U.S. or boorishness in South America). For this reason, populist leaders present themselves as outsiders fighting for people who have been "left outside", against a political establishment that has been *in league with* undeserving (in what they get) but highly visible and hearable minorities.

Cas Mudde, in his celebrated definition of populism,[13] relies centrally in its second part on the Rousseauian concept of *volonté générale*, or general will. The contrast works perfectly with the standard bearers of liberalism and of institutional checks and balances –say, Mills and Montesquieu, respectively. However, Rousseau`s *volonté générale* is based on the *citizen* when, *all* of them, assembled, can decide in a unified will (the body politics), in abstraction of their personal interests (or where these cancel out).[14] As stated above, precisely because it is always exclusionary (and wishes to be so), populism cannot *be* the volonté générale. Instead, as scholars in the Argentine tradition have abundantly noted [Aboy Carles, Laclau, Barros], populism is the plebe trying to be the *populus*; it is the part trying to become the "true whole", in eternal tension.[15] So while the will is certainly collective, it is *never* general, at least not in the Rousseau sense!

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[13] Cas Mudde defines populism "as an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous groups, ´the pure people´ versus ´the corrupt elite´, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* of the people" (2004:543). The first part of the definition was constructively criticized above.

[14] The Argentine political scientist, Guillermo O'Donnell, emphasized the fundamentally different types of mediation between the state and society that is citizenship and the *pueblo* or *lo popular* [1979: 288-89]. While the first is based on abstract equality, the second does not "derive from the idea of shared citizenship, which involves abstractly equal rights…*Pueblo* and *lo popular* involve a ´we´ that is a carrier of demands for substantive justice, which forms the basis for the obligations of the state."

[15] This is why, at a very high level of abstraction, Laclau correctly states that populism is the quintessential act of struggle for hegemony. That is, ever since Gramsci, hegemony is the part, the particular, trying to substitute itself for the whole.

What is missing in the current theory debate on populism is thus not the overly travelled (liberal pluralist) Mills versus Rousseau, but, especially since there is a central reference to "two homogeneous" antagonistic groups in society in a vertical, societal relation, Rousseau versus Marx (or post-Marx). In that sense, as odd as it may be to Europeans where populism is understood as a radical *right* movement, populism is in more than one way much closer to Marxism than it is to Rousseau´s volonté *générale*. The fundamental difference, to us, is not the obvious one of "the people" versus "workers" –that is, a difference more political in one, more economic in the other (based in relations of production), something elaborated at length in all of Laclau´s Gramscian writings since 1977--but rather, instead, the fact that in Marxism the nefarious other can be *eliminated as a class* and be brought back (now as proletarian) into a producing society, into humanity, the people. This *destruction* (of a class and as a class) is necessary, theoretically and socio-politically, and allows a volonté générale to then become possible. In sharp contrast, populism does *not* want the elimination of the nefarious social Other, nor does it think it is possible. It needs it "eternally", as the Other against which to create and reaffirm ("forever") its own identity. For example, populists do not nationalize the press; they criticize it virulently and ad hominem. Populists do not expropriate the landed oligarchs; in left-wing populism, they tax them to the helm and insult them. Similarly, it is to be assumed that in Europe, if right-wing populists were they to take power they would not enact a "final solution" with immigrants, but would continue to ostracize them, restrict them, and (also) insult them. In other words, the third step in Hegelian thinking *never* happens in populism, in contrast to Marxism. The terms remain in eternal tension, and *must* remain so. For this reason, the volonté cannot, and should not be, générale: some citizen truly count, while others should be more marginalized politically.[16]

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[16] The fact that some citizen count less than other (in order, according to populists, to re-

"Collective" and "unitary", contrasting to individual and pluralist, should thus in no way be construed as general or *générale*. It is, after all, the will of the "true people from here", *le peuple*, *ce peuple*, which should prevail. And not only should it be "sovereign" in relation to a king (as in Rousseau's republican thinking) or to an illegitimate "political class or elite" (the modern version the leaders of pre-Revolution societies), but also and equally, it should *prevail* against the social Other--an Other that may be unavoidable, but that is for that no less nefarious to the nation's happiness (to use Peronist language). *All* democratic politics since Rousseau believe that the government should be some kind of "expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2004); there is nothing particularly populist there. What distinguishes populism is precisely the opposite: the argument that politics should be an expression of the (majority) *portion* of the people, crowned as the only portion *justly* entitled to be the whole, whether it is the pleb, the populus, or the natives (or those willing to become so). In contrast to Rousseau´s aim, the "1%" will never be able to merge (qua citizen) in a volonté générale[17]; and in contrast to Marx, the "1%" will never be able, through forceful "assimilatory" measures (here, expropriation), to become part of a volonté générale. Closer to the eternal debate between left and right (Laponce 1981), the people and its enemies are bound to live side by side, in hostility, as struggling unequal Siamese twins, in "eternal struggle" that cannot be resolved once and for all.

In that light, it is not always clear what is the feature creating greater reject towards populism, in the literature: the explicit anti-pluralism and anti-liberalism of the antagonistic (and loud) script; the bringing into the limelight of "the deplorable people",

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establish a certain balance in the society) is, however, not reason enough for them to kill them, as happens in totalitarian regimes, where only *one* category can exist.

[17] Of course, Rousseau in the *Social Contract* was fully aware of this. Which is why he believed that a general will was only possible in societies with *no* extremes in wealth distribution and where all citizen were owners.

in what Ostiguy has called "the flaunting of the low"; or the "fraudulent claim" that these outsiders are "the voice of the people," in a display of media presence and performance. Whatever the case may be, xenophobia surely has ranked very high as a cause of alarm. However, while all (or almost all) populisms clearly emphasize the "from here," the emphasis on the "from here" is not synonymous with, in all populism, xenophobia. For example, quite on the contrary, persistently populist—now for over seven decades--Peronism has always been open-armed in relation to (poor) Paraguayan and Bolivian illegal immigrants, including for political reasons. This inclusionary incorporation has been equally matched with a long-lasting, sharp hostility toward Britain, Frenchified elites and cultured middle sectors. Distasteful "punching" may indeed well be populist, but punching (laterally) down is a feature of the populist right in developed countries.

"Punching upward" vs "punching downward": Chávez and the Kirchners; Trump and Le Pen

If analysis of the antagonistic Other in populism is changed, as it should, to a trichotomic model, two different queries become salient: (1) Who is designated as the political other? (2) Who are designated as the sociological others? We do not expect the first question to significantly vary from case to case, because the political other in populism is almost always defined as the established political "class" or elite, which may also include the technocratic elite in governing institutions. Who the sociological others are, on the other hand, is of greater interest, as it is what makes populism left or right. And as stated above, left populism tends sociologically to only punch "upwards" (in contrast to downwards), while right populism has a very visible element of punching "outwardly," including certainly in a *downward* way.

Our cases clearly make up two pairs. What is notable is that each pair is not only a product of the scholars´ analytic categories—here, left and right populism—but, strikingly so, are also explicit pairs in the "real political world", that is, each leader make politically highly supportive and frequent references to the other member of the pair, considered allied and friend. Indeed, the strong personal friendship between the Kirchners and Hugo Chavez was well known; and Marine Le Pen makes constant, frequent, and highly positive references to Donald Trump, who in turn, recent into politics, has also made very supportive statements about Britain's exit from the EU and met with Nigel Farage, UKIP leader, just after his victory. However—and this is a challenge for scholars of populisms—there are basically *no* references *between* pairs, as if they belonged to entirely different worlds, despite the fact of being contemporary. Is there thus a political category--"populism"-- that exists only in the cognitive mind of the community of researchers? Two highly divergent reasons to explain the strong cross-references within the pair and absence thereof across pairs are: the left-right differences remains what truly counts in the real political world; therefore, similarity in style or in formal processes of (Manichean) dichotomizations, across the left-right divide, is simply not sufficient for political actors.[18] The other possibility is that of still very strong regional communities and identities, widely apart from each other. That is, there is a Latin American universe, with its problems and own political trends (a regional "us"), and there is a European universe (now recently joined by the U.S.) of developed countries, with its own set of problems and references. A "straw in the wind" perhaps favoring the former is that the leftwing populism of Spain was largely inspired, *cross-regionally* and de facto, by the left, Bolivarian Latin American experience (and by the

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[18] This does not mean that style or, for example, what Ostiguy has called the flaunting of the low is not relevant politically, quite on the contrary. ´CITA. There would have been nothing more spectacular (and also perhaps dangerous) than to have seen Hugo Chavez alive and well in the times of Donald Trump. The escalation of presidential insults and threats would have been undoubtedly riveting --perhaps two quite opposite mirror images of each other.

Argentine theorist Laclau [citas aquí a la tesis de Iñigo Errejón]). But then, Spain also certainly shares more linkages (language, contacts, etc.) with all of Latin America than the rest of Europe, thus also providing an ideal "point of entry" for "contagion" or demonstration.

Punching "upwards". The South American populist governments of the last 'Pink Wave', as well as those of the classical, first wave of populism, were all "upward punching": they focused their antagonism against the oligarchy, the large soybean producers, the pro-American, the owners of the media conglomerates,[19] etc. The fact they explicitly attacked wealthier elements of society, while explicitly claiming to side with the poorer popular sectors, does not mean that they always defined these strata in identical terms; they also shifted their definitions according to different moments and strategic needs.

Hugo Chávez's election in 1998 was made possible by several circumstances: the persistence of the economic crisis which had brought about the Caracazo of 1990; the loss of legitimacy of the two main parties brought about by their unwavering and bipartisan support for neoliberal reforms (Roberts 2003); and the fact that a major party leader like Rafael Caldera defected from his own party to compete against it. Once elected, Chávez came to power in a situation in which the almost absolute obliteration of the political parties, social movements and unions gave him almost unfettered political power (Garay and Etchemendy 2011). Hugo Chávez's directed the populist antagonism both outwardly and upwards. The United States was designated as external 'Other' of Chavismo and Hugo Chávez was the most vocally anti-American and anti-imperialist of all the South American populist leaders, frequently riling against the US

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[19] While populists tend to attack the press in general, the way they negatively characterize it varies significantly between left and right populism. Left populisms focus on their corporate, big business conglomerate ownership, while a right-wing populist like Trump characterizes it as "dishonest".

worldwide "hegemonic system for domination". Chávez also frequently called out American presidents by name, including his now famous public reference to George W. Bush as "The Devil" ("El Diablo") in front of the the UN General Assembly-something that Evo Morales or the Kirchner's did not do.

Chávez´ anti-imperialism was not only more vocal than most of his counterparts[20] but also felt in a way 'older'. While Néstor and Cristina Kirchner (and Evo Morales and Rafael Correa as well) always underscored in their own way more 'modern' democratic and liberal tropes such as a commitment to democratic norms, environmental issues (Morales), minority rights (the Kirchners) and multilateralism, Hugo Chávez´ discourses at times sounded as if coming straight from the late sixties, early seventies anti-colonial book.[21] For instance, Chávez explicit negative reference to Israel as one of the allies to the hegemonic system of domination was a unique feature of his discourse, as was his support for Arab leaders such as the late Muammar Gaddafi in Libya and his very vocal alliance with Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.[22] In regard to the external element, then, Hugo Chávez presented himself through discourse as the closest to an old school South American anti-imperialist leftist, with frequent taunts to the US, CIA and Israel. His rhetoric was the most extreme of the populist presidents; it is no surprise that his policies were also the most extreme.

The designation of the internal adversary was in line: the Other of the Bolivarian Revolution were the internal accomplices of "The Empire". Among them was the "Venezuelan oligarchy", the owners of the mass media,[23] and, in terms of the political

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[20] Evo Morales´discourse, for instance, is very critical of the US when talking to Bolivians while in Bolivia; however, he is more moderate that Chavez in international institutional settings.

[21] He was fond of mentioning Noam Chomsky, the Cuban Revolution, Marx, the Che and Fidel, the Gospels and, of course, Simón Bolívar.

[22] Venezuela's international status as a major oil producer and its long history of participating in the OPEC alongside most Middle-Eastern countries probably allowed for an identitarian dimension with oil producing Arabs and Persians, an identitarian dimension that is completely absent South American countries.

[23] Hugo Chavez antagonized the media, not only in discourse, but through policies such as the nationalization of television channels (See Kitzberger 2010).

elite, the leaders of the opposition parties, reiteratively called during the first years the 'escuálidos' or 'emaciated.' They were *emaciated,* he argued, because they were "sickly" and perpetually hoping for bad things for Venezuela, such as a drought, since it would expedite the downfall of Chavismo. The *escualidos* were 'sick', he said, while the members of the Revolution, he reiterated, were strong, happy, and growing.

In sum, Hugo Chávez antagonization of an 'external' adversary (the American Empire) was 'upwards and outward', while his antagonization of the internal one was 'upward." These antagonisms were, in fact, quite *exclusionary*: his discourses and policies had concrete consequences such as the nationalization of private enterprises and media, the massive lay-off of PDVSA cadres in the lockout of 2002-2003, and the empowerment of disenfranchised groups with the resulting exclusion of previously 'elite' sectors from positions of power. Even though his definition of the Boliviarian people was expansive enough to accommodate the urban poor, the working classes, people from indigenous descent and South American immigrants, the inclusivity was aimed *below,* never upwards.

The changing 'Other' of Kirchnerismo

The Kirchner's arrival to power was similar but not identical to Chávez. To begin with, Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Férnandez were part of the political establishment: he was the governor of the Southern Province of Santa Cruz and she was a long time Senator. Néstor Kirchner was elected in the aftermath of the worst social, economic and political crisis in decades but the Argentine party system did not collapse entirely; moreover, the Kirchners had to negotiate and maneuver within the rich ecosystem of Argentine social movements, unions, and civil society organizations, that had grown empowered by the crisis. We find that the *Kirchnerista* discourse underwent two distinct phases: from 2003 to 2008, and from 2008 to 2015.

From 2003 to 2008 the then-president Néstor Kirchner directed the antagonism *upwards* but also *outside:* because his electoral legitimacy was precarious and because he came to power amidst the rage created by the crisis (encapsulated in the popular slogan 'Que se vayan todos', or 'Throw everybody out') brutal crisis, in the first years Néstor Kirchner sought to unify most of the social and political national actors under the banner of the fight against transnational economic actors: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the foreign banks, the financial "vultures" who had bought Argentina debt bonds, and their domestic partners and economic gurus. Kirchner inaugural speech spoke of a the need for a 'normal' country as opposed to the chaos and destruction caused by "los núcleos de poder económico con amplio eco mediático" (the 'cores of economic power backed by the media") and the "el discurso único del neoliberalismo" ('the hegemonic neoliberal discourse').[24] By 'punching upwards' but also 'outside', in the direction of the financial foreign connected sectors, the Kirchners were able to gather popular support for a series of measures aimed at extracting resources from foreign creditors (by negotiating a debt swap) and agricultural exporters (by taxing agricultural exports).

All of this changed, however, after his wife Cristina Fernández de Kirchner won the presidency in 2007. In 2008, her government tried to increase the tax rates for soybeans exports and a sudden opposition movement erupted. Soybean exporters, agricultural producers, urban middle classes and the owners of the biggest two media conglomerates of the country became united against the tax measure. In response, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner switched the direction of antagonism from the outside to the domestic scene: from foreign financial sectors to the old 'oligarquía ganadera'[25],

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[24] (Extracted from Néstor Kirchner Inaugural Address, May 2003.)

[25] The phrase 'oligarquía ganadera', or 'cattle-breeding oligarchy' comes straight from the old Peronist lore. The agricultural sectors, fronted by the powerful and aristocratic association of the cattle ranchers Sociedad Rural Argentina (Rural Argentine Society) became the leaders of the opposition to the government of Juan Doming Perón. (Sidicaro 2002) Similarly, the president of the Sociedad Rural was one of the top four leaders of the opposition movement to the 124 in

urban upper middle classes which were nicknamed 'caceroleros' ('pot-bangers')[26] and very especially the media. It was in 2008 that the antagonism between the Kirchners and Héctor Magnetto, the owner of the largest media conglomerate in the country and of Clarín, the most important newspaper, achieved historic proportions. (Néstor Kirchner encapsulated it in a phrase that would become famous: "¿Qué te pasa Clarín [the newspaper], estás nervioso?", or "What is the matter, Clarín, are you nervous?")[27]

This new (but old) antagonism would remain firmly in place for the rest of her two governments. Paradoxically, the heightened 'internal' antagonism (which popular journalist Jorge Lanata called "la grieta", or "the cleavage") that moved the populist frontier from outside the Argentine society to very much its inside resulted in an attempt to expand of the 'Us' of kirchnerismo by bringing in more subaltern actors. For instance, the government of Cristina de Kirchner sought to include the LGBT movement by throwing Peronism weight behind a gay marriage law; it expanded social expenditures for unemployed or informally employed families (that is, the urban or even working poor) it also cemented the inclusion of migrants sectors with a new and very 'pro immigrant' law.[28] The expansion of the 'US' of course was mirrored with the sudden heightening of new (but old) antagonisms: the passing of the gay marriage law

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2008. Farmers and rural producers appropriated the 'piquete', or road block method of protest from the unemployed workers of the nineties: they blocked roads throughout the country for four days.

[26] The urban middle classes mobilized in support of the soybean exporters in 2008 by marching on the streets in big numbers while banging pots and pans. This mobilization of the middle classes in support of 'la oligarquía' was crucial for the defeat of the government. Like in the case of 'piquetes' or roadblock, with the 'cacerolazo' the urban upper middle classes engaged in direct protests methods that had been previously unique to the popular sectors.

[27] *"What is the matter Clarín, are you nervous?"*

[28] Of special relevance to our analysis is the immigration law that Kirchnerismo passed in 2010 called 'Patria Grande' (The Big Homeland). This law was hailed by human rights organizations as the most progressive in the world [cita CELS]: the populist government actually lowered the requirements for permanent citizenship to citizens of South American countries, wrote into law the right of immigrants to use public hospitals, schools and universities, and offered a path to citizenship for the millions of immigrants from poorer Bolivia, Perú and Paraguay, among others. [For the impact of the program on furthering formal employment of migrants, see Perera and Velázquez 2013.]

led to a public scuffle between the government and the Catholic Church;[29] representatives from the agricultural groups and the 'Sociedad Rural' figured prominently in the opposition ballots in 2009, and the mass media became universally and uniformly anti-Kirchnerista from 2009 to 2015. Until the very end, Kirchnerismo maintained the antagonism with those very sectors.[30]

The contrast between the South American left populisms and the right populisms of Donal Trump and Marine Le Pen in relation to the sociological other could not be greater.

Donald Trump´s populism

The recently elected president of the United States, Donald Trump is a prime example of "downward" and "outwardly" punching populism. Even though the tradition of right populism is not new in US history [Lee 2006, Lowndes 2008], Trump is the most successful right populist in American history as he reached the Presidency. Trump, a real estate developer, beauty pageant organizer and reality television star who had not held any government position previously, won the presidency after an insurgent primary campaign against more accomplished republican candidates such as Jeb Bush, the former governor of Florida and John Kasich, the governor of Ohio. Then, he went on to defeat Hillary Clinton (thanks largely to the US electoral college and despite having received almost three million less votes) by waging a campaign in which openly misogynistic, xenophobic and racist discourses were front and center.

In the months before and after his inauguration, Donald Trump's antagonistic discourse zeroed-in onto three main groups. On the one hand, he promised to "drain the

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[29] The Catholic Church organized marches to protest the law.
[30] In a clear departure with its Peronist roots, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner clashed with Hugo Moyano and the General Confederation of Labor Unions (CGT). In 2012 Moyano broke publicly with the government and in 2013 and 2015 he and a number of unions publicly backed opposition candidates.

swamp" in Washington DC, that is, to purge the political establishment to eliminate corruption (including of course, the totality of the Democratic party but also the established or "Republican in Name Only" Republicans which were also deemed "weak"). Yet his antagonization of two social Others was front and center from the beginning: immigrants in general and Mexicans in particular ("very bad men", "rapists"), and Muslims both foreign and American (all potential "terrorists") [sources].[31] Both were described as a major source of violence and death for the "American people". The problem with the political elite is that "they were not doing anything about it" [some sources here]. The "it" in question was *the* major nefarious sociological Others, not the political elite. Outside of the US, there are also of course threatening Others as well: China with its trade practices, Mexico again for similar reasons, Europeans who "do not do their part" in defense and "take advantage" of the US, and ISIS.[32] A wall, literally in the case of Mexico, and through immigration veto in the case of entire categories of Muslims, are to prevent further entry from outside of these sociologically nefarious Others. And undocumented migrants will be massively deported, purging the country. Oddly enough, however, populist scholars only focus on antagonism towards a "corrupt" *elite*. It seems to us that the relation must be inverted: the political elite is "guilty" to the extent that it is passive regarding these sociological others.

In sharp contrast to left-wing populism (and also of the discourse of Marine Le Pen regarding the financial elite), "Wall Street"--another sociological Other--is left alone with Trump. Not only is it not Otherized in a nefarious way, but it will even benefit from deregulations. CEOs of large industries are also not constructed as part of

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[31] Many of the figures central to Donald Trump administration are also well-known Anti-Semites, though Anti Semitism has not been explicitly articulated so far.
[32] Oddly enough, the historical main international Other of the US (and especially for the Republicans), by far, Russia, has become a close ally of Donald Trump. ISIS, very much present during the campaign, seems to have taken a back seat in the first months of the Presidency.

the "1%", but as decision-makers who must decide if they will "patriotically" produce in the US or be the object of negative presidential tweets for leaving to produce from Mexico. Similarly, large polluting enterprises are not demonized, but encouraged.

The source of trouble for the national people with Trump, thus, is mostly "infiltration" of *foreignized* social elements living in the country (a stigmatizing "foreignization" not unlike the discourse of the 1930s in Germany), hurting the people of the nation and which we should aim to purge, even at the expense of personal, family drama.[33] The left-populism of South America, in contrast, is more about socio-cultural "class struggle", than about wall building directed at human crossing or diffusion. So while Trump wants to build a "fortress" America, Chávez explicitly wanted to export Bolivarianism thoroughly across the continent as part of a transformative goal.

A Narrative with Empty Boxes

Paraphrasing and minimalizing even more Canovan (1999: 4) in light of what has been said so far: "Populism understood in [a] structural sense can have different contents depending on [who] it is mobilizing against". In populism, as we concretely saw above, the denotation of who the us and who the other are is as a rule always done narratively. Populists do not engage in 'scientific' analytics of the world around them, but instead use a most basic, simple genre: the narrative "myth". Populist myths have four key features: they are formal narratives; they are personalized; they are redemptive; and they offer practical clues for action. [Casullo 2014] The first feature--the fact that myths are narrative templates--implies that they are structures with "empty boxes" that

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[33] In that sense, the "abandoning" to their own "miserable" fate of the "national people" by socioliberal, free-trade and "free immigration" elites is certainly not equivalent to the explicitly antagonistic exclusion, not to say removal, of people, in terms of rights and entitlements. Left-wing populisms, in the explicitly antagonistic component of their discourse towards a nefarious other also do not call for physical removal, though they do aim for major entitlement reductions.

can be filled with quite varied contents.[34] Every populist myth tells the same history: there was a hero (the people) who was betrayed/preyed upon by an evil Other, who needs to be vanquished with the help of the redeemer.

The narrative naming is the basis for the 'process of Otherization.' Overall, the populist script or general narrative, across continents, is as follows. There is a majority of people (people as individuals) of "the people" (le peuple, the collective), the quite ordinary (by local historical standards) "typically from here", whose authentic voice is not heard, and whose true interests are not safeguarded. They face a broad *two-way* coalition, comprised of a nefarious, or a various nefarious, Social Other(s)--the object(s) of greatest hatred--at odds with "the people", and a government, a political establishment, a political elite that protects them undeservingly at the expense of "the ´true´ people". This situation is a source of moral indignation. Moreover, this sociological other is also a product of, and in line with, hostile and powerful global/ international forces.

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[34] This feature explains their utility for political discourse, as they can be "filled" with a variety of contents depending of the context and the need of the speaker.

Figure 1
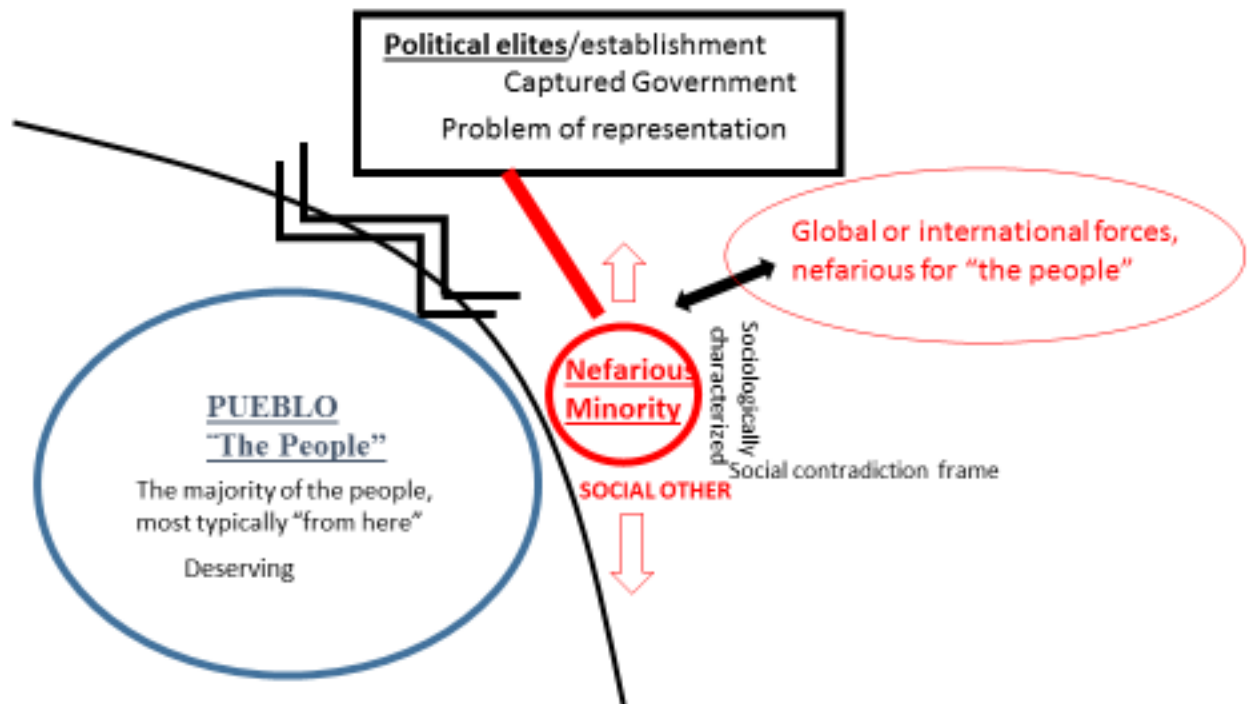
POPULIST SCHEME (cross-regionally)

Figure 2

Left-wing populism:

Latin America, U.S. from Bryan to Huey Long

Governmental Elite

Global capitalism, American imperialism, large corporations, IMF, etc.

Oligarchy

The "true" people from here

Right-wing populism in U.S. and Northern Europe

Governmental Elite

Islam, Mexico, Arabs, etc.

The "true" people

Immigrants

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