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Leadership, Populism and Power

Editor
Cristine de Clercy

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Editorial

On the Intersection of Leadership and Populism in North America and Europe

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Abstract
This editorial introduces the thematic issue and considers what the articles tell us about new approaches to studying political leadership and populism. The editorial surveys the set of eleven articles by referring to their geographic concentration (North America and Europe), along with methodological and thematic similarities. In conclusion, the set of articles displays the diverse theoretical and methodological approaches currently employed in cutting-edge research on populism and political leadership.

Keywords
leadership; party leaders; populism; presidents; prime ministers; social media; Trump

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "Leadership, Populism and Power" edited by Cristine de Clercy (Western University, Canada).

1. Introduction

The study of populism in all subfields of political science has expanded significantly over the last several years. Brexit, Donald Trump's presidency, the "yellow jacket" protests in France, and Venezuela's Bolivarian government are some of the many examples where political events spread across countries and continents have made headlines and attracted scholarly attention. Alongside this trend, the study of political leadership is enjoying a renaissance. Mark Bennister notes that the "recent rich flowering of research presents opportunities for scholars to move the field forward" (Bennister, 2016, p. 1).

At first blush, the concept of populism seems antithetical to leadership; in reality populism is deeply tied to political leaders and the exercise of leadership. Populist movements almost always generate or select a champion, a leader who represents the people. However, as Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2014) warn, while most manifestations of populism produce flamboyant and strong political leaders, the link between political leadership and populism is not straightforward. Populism can exist comfortably with various types of leadership, and sometimes appears in leaderless form (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2014, p. 1).

This thematic issue of *Politics and Governance* gathers new, cutting-edge research focused on the intersection of populism and political leadership. Here we approach populism as a broad ideology centering on appeals to "the people" and critiques of "the corrupt elites." In the call for papers we invited studies particularly focusing on populism as an instrument employed by leaders, as a challenge for leaders, and examining whether populism influences what sorts of leaders and policies citizens support and eschew. As discussed in more detail below, the final set of eleven articles divides rather cleanly among those concerning populism in North America, those focusing on Europe, along with a few studies comparing both areas.

2. Leadership and Populism in North America, or as Compared with the United States

Seven articles concern leadership and populism in North America. Of these, four studies rather directly engage the

populist leadership of the American president Donald Trump, who remains in office at the time of writing. In his study of "The Populist Radical Right in the US: New Media and the 2018 Arizona Senate Primary," Jeremy Roberts notes that in the wake of Trump's presidential victory, "pitched battles for the Republican Party's soul broke out in primaries across the country" (Roberts, 2020, p. 111). Roberts asks a simple but important question: Given that populist radical right candidates, à la Trump, do not belong to the Republican party establishment, how do they win Republican primary contests and so access real power? Drawing upon some European analyses concerning the bases of populism, Roberts concludes that the case of the 2018 Arizona Senate primary demonstrates that voters' expectations about party convergence, along with social media consumption, helps to explain how populist citizens mobilize to support particular leaders in primary contests (Roberts, 2020).

In a somewhat similar vein, Allesandro Nai focuses on "The Trump Paradox: How Cues from a Disliked Source Foster Resistance to Persuasion" (Nai, 2020). Noting that populist leaders often deliberately exhibit a bad-mannered style, that "dislike voting" is increasingly relevant, and that Trump is a widely disliked figure outside of the United States (US), he probes the persuasive power of communications from controversial figures. On the basis of an experimental study with 272 students, he concludes that a simple endorsement from the President, positive or negative, substantially alters how issue-based messages are perceived. Nai (2020) suggests the source of the message may matter more than the message's content when populist leaders disseminate communications to citizens.

Nai's interest in discerning what motivates voters to accept or reject populist leaders is mirrored in my article with Gerard Seijts. In "How Do Populist Voters Rate Their Political Leaders? Comparing Citizen Assessments in Three Jurisdictions," we set out to explore how a sample of voters in the US, Canada, and the United Kingdom use a leader character framework to assess the character of some contemporary national leaders (Seijts & de Clercy, 2020). In probing whether citizens who lean toward populism view character the same as ordinary voters, we find these groups are quite different. Populists in all three jurisdictions believe that leader character matters much less than in the case of ordinary citizens, who clearly place more value on the importance of leader character. This finding is important for understanding how populist voters generally evaluate politicians, and why they may be drawn to some leaders over others (Seijts & de Clercy, 2020).

A cross-national comparative approach also grounds Michael Hameleers' study of "Populist Disinformation: Exploring Intersections between Online Populism and Disinformation in the US and the Netherlands" (2020). Through undertaking a qualitative content analysis of Donald Trump and Geert Wilders' social media discourse, Hameleers finds both leaders use such outlets to express their distrust in established institutions, sentiments which appear to resonate among those citizens who support populism (Hameleers, 2020).

Interestingly, Hameleers finds such criticisms are not articulated by mainstream or left-wing populist leaders. In this vein—how national leaders use social media—Kenny Ie's (2020) article on "Tweeting Power: The Communication of Leadership Roles on Prime Ministers' Twitter" may be usefully read. He analyzes how Canada's Justin Trudeau and Britain's Theresa May use Twitter to create personalized leader–follower relationships in terms of their role performance and function.

Following on Trump's 2016 election, Brian Budd examines whether the nativist and xenophobic rhetoric of populist leaders in the US and Western Europe has permeated Canada's most populous province. Budd concludes in "The People's Champ: Doug Ford and Neoliberal Right-Wing Populism in the 2018 Ontario Provincial Election" (2020) that while Ford's election is one of the few domestic cases of successful populist leadership, Trumpian politics has not in fact spilled across the 49th parallel. Instead, he finds Ford successfully created a conception of "the people" using an economic and anti-cosmopolitan discourse centered on middle-class taxpayers and opposition to urban elites. Budd's (2020) study, along with the Roberts (2020) analysis, helpfully delineate some of the ideological variation within populism, and both underscore the creative capacity of populist leaders to select and incorporate particular aspects of this ideology.

Similar to Budd's concern to probe the implications of American populism for neighbouring Canada, Mario Levesque takes the entrenchment of the neoliberal state and the rise of populist political leaders in Canada as key elements in examining local disability leadership. Levesque's (2020) study of "Leadership as *Inter*preneurship: A Disability Nonprofit Atlantic Canadian Profile" points out that disability leaders may face significant challenges where populist politicians on the right justify service reductions and budget cuts as necessary to reduce the resources devoted to such "special interests." Levesque concludes survival in the current context means disability leaders have become interpreneurs, working to sustain operations increasingly within dense networks and relying on interpersonal connections, shared resources, and superior communication skills (Levesque, 2020). He expresses some doubt as to whether this adaptation is viable over the longer term.

3. Leadership and Populism in European Case Studies, or in Cross-National Perspective

The second group of papers comprises four studies that are situated within Europe, or that reference the European context. Tina Burrett's study of Vladimir Putin in power, titled "Charting Putin's Shifting Populism in the Russian Media from 2000 to 2020," assesses to what degree he can truly be considered a populist politician

across the two decades of his rule. Burrett argues that a key element to his leadership success lies in Putin's capacity to shift his populist discourse from its original focus on domestic "enemies" toward international ones, along with a growing emphasis on the West's "otherness." She concludes Putin's leadership fits most closely with discursive descriptions of populism, although there is evidence he has become less populist and more nationalist over time (Burrett, 2020).

In his study, "Revisiting the Inclusion-Moderation Thesis on Radical Right Populism: Does Party Leadership Matter?" Laurent Bernhard (2020) similarly focuses on tracing the chronological evolution of populist leadership through examining the Geneva Citizens' Movement (MCG), a Swiss party on the radical right. Bernhard's interest is in how the nature of a populist party's leadership (traditional or managerial) is related to adopting more mainstream positions. On the basis of analysing partisan communications, he concludes the MCG's mainstreaming owes to governmental participation as well as an internal transfer of power from the traditional leadership to the managerial wing (Bernhard, 2020).

In "Veridiction and Leadership in Transnational Populism: The Case of DiEM25," Evangelos Fanoulis and Simona Guerra probe how the Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DiEM25) has developed since 2016 as a pan-European political movement aimed at democratizing the European Union. They ask whether the movement's leadership has succeeded in constructing a transnational "people" by promoting its Euroalternative discourse. Focusing on leader Yanis Varoufakis's veridiction (or truth-telling) speech and agency, the authors conclude that while Euroalternativism has been successful in capitalizing on transnationalism, the spread of populism can be limited by national borders (Fanoulis & Guerra, 2020).

The final study is Henry Milner's "Populism and Political Knowledge: The United States in Comparative Perspective" (2020). Milner illustrates the trenchant differences in adult education among developed democracies, comparing high functional literacy levels in Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway against the relatively low literacy levels in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and the US. Moreover, he notes older respondents are more informed than the younger "Internet generation" in most countries. Arguing that low political knowledge is related to populism and support for Trump in particular, he calls for better and more comprehensive data on political knowledge and populist attitudes (Milner, 2020).

4. Conclusion

Milner's (2020) focus on the US in comparison with Europe's advanced democracies returns this discussion to its origin. This collection of articles underscores the rise of populism across national boundaries, and several authors here rely directly or indirectly on Europe's long experience with populism for insight and context vis-à-vis populism in North America. As well, the articles share a couple of several thematic similarities. First, the articles by Roberts, Nai, Hameleers, Budd, Burrett, and Fanoulis and Guerra focus on how leaders' communications inform, attract (or repel), or mobilize populist citizens. A second common theme in the Roberts, Seijts and de Clercy, Hameleers, and Milner studies concerns discerning how populist voters differ from ordinary, non-populist citizens. Reading these articles together, populism's widespread affect across the diverse cases under study here is striking, as is the need to continue to explore and explain its intersection with political leadership.

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Article

The Populist Radical Right in the US: New Media and the 2018 Arizona Senate Primary

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Abstract
This article analyzes the appeal of populist radical right (PRR) politics in the US after the election of Donald Trump. Specifically, I seek to explain how new media helps politicians representing the PRR secure support in Republican primaries. Using an online survey of 1052 Arizona Republicans in the lead-up to the August 2018 Senate primary, I evaluate support for three candidates: Rep. Martha McSally, former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, and Kelli Ward, a physician. The findings highlight a bifurcation in the drivers for support of PRR candidacies: Skepticism of immigration drives the Arpaio vote, while use of social media news and belief in party convergence mobilize Ward's support. The results demonstrate that support for PRR politicians in the Arizona primary is concentrated in two groups, anti-immigrant and anti-establishment, and that the anti-establishment voters are more likely to access news on social media. These findings indicate that social media news consumption does shape voter perceptions about mainstream parties favorably for the PRR.

Keywords
convergence; Donald Trump; new media; populism; populist radical right

Issue
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1. Introduction

In 2016, Donald Trump shocked observers by winning the Republican nomination and the presidency. Trump, a politically inexperienced real estate developer, reality television star, and conservative commentator, was hardly a favored candidate. He spewed anti-elite invectives, rejected the Republican establishment, and challenged Republican doctrine on issues like immigration and trade. Trump's unorthodox policies, charisma, and media profile set him apart as a different breed of Republican. Party loyalty, combined with an uninspiring Democratic alternative in Hillary Clinton, may help explain Trump's general election victory, but neither of these factors can explain how he bested his Republican competitors to win the party's nomination. Nor can they explain the success of Trump-like candidates in primaries around the country.

Some answers may lie in Europe. Trump is not a traditional Republican, but he does share ideological predilections with European right-wing populists. While some scholarship has explored the transatlantic right, comparisons between the US and Europe often underemphasize the particularities of the US party system, and the importance of radical right actors mobilizing through a mainstream conservative party (Mudde, 2017, p. 51). Scholars seeking to explain the American radical right's recent surge have not taken advantage of the insights from across the Atlantic (Mudde, 2019, p. 97). This article bridges these gaps while building on recent literature on the social media's role in American elections.

In the wake of Trump's victory, pitched battles for the Republican Party's soul broke out in primaries across the country. I argue that Trump and post-Trump candidates represent an American incarnation of what Mudde (2007) calls the "populist radical right" (PRR), which emphasizes populism, nativism, and authoritarianism in its appeals. I explore party convergence as a necessary precondition for PRR success, per Kitschelt and McGann (1995, p. 17), and consider the role of new media in rela-

tion to two hypotheses: (1) the PRR should be attractive to voters who believe the major parties have converged; and (2) PRR voters should be more likely to get their news from social media sources. I test these hypotheses using a survey of Arizona Republicans conducted before the 2018 Senate primary—the first electoral cycle of the Trump era. I find that PRR voters are more likely to perceive convergence between the mainstream party establishments and to use social media for news, but that this only holds for the candidate that emphasized anti-establishment rhetoric. In Arizona, the most credible anti-immigrant voice was more likely to attract voters concerned about the economic impact of immigration, lending support to demand side theories of PRR success.

1.1. Defining the PRR

What do we mean by "populist radical right"? The "radical" label denotes hostility to elements of liberal democracy, such as institutional pluralism and safeguards for minority rights (Plattner, 2010, p. 84). Populists invoke the "general will" and view politics as a conflict between the "pure people" and the "corrupt elite" (Mudde, 2007, p. 23). Mudde's (2007) term, PRR, which comprises actors that are populist, nativist, and authoritarian, accurately describes the Trump and post-Trump political phenomena in the US, and meets definitional requirements of analytical utility and cross-contextual portability.

PRR appeals border on anti-liberal democratic: Both American and European populists exhibit contempt for the independent judiciary. Donald Trump has been criticized for his attacks on a judge overseeing a lawsuit against him, for pardoning former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio in a contempt of court case, and for the 2016 Republican platform, which called for the impeachment of activist judges (Peabody, 2018, pp. 243–245). In appealing to their own definition of "the people" as opposed to liberal democratic institutions, these figures are populist.

The PRR is nativist, advocating exclusionary nationalism. Trump's racially-charged comments about immigrants, along with his "Muslim ban," push him firmly into nativist territory. European PRR parties have also stoked anti-immigrant sentiment. According to Ellinas (2010, p. 12), "[t]he glue that ties these parties together is their shared understanding that the political should be congruent with the national." Finally, authoritarian appeals—those that emphasize conformity, deference, skepticism, and aggression in defense of those values—further distinguish the PRR. Authoritarian candidacies tend to focus on immigration, law and order, and the military (Knuckey & Hassan, 2019, pp. 2–3).

1.2. Explanations for the Success of the PRR

Explanations for PRR success fall into two main categories: supply side and demand side (Golder, 2016, p. 482). Demand siders suggest that so-called "losers of modernization," voters who feel left behind by globalization and the postindustrial economy, may find the PRR appealing (Betz, 1993; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995, pp. 56, 275). The PRR's electorate is less-educated, more likely to be unemployed, and more likely to work in blue collar occupations (Imerzeel & Pickup, 2015, p. 358). Macroeconomic factors are also important. Voters who are economically anxious and fear immigrant labor competition have reason to vote for the PRR. Jackman and Volpert (1996, pp. 516–517) highlight unemployment as a key explanatory variable, providing "the pretext for mounting the xenophobic political appeals that characterize these political movements." Overall, however, support for unemployment as an explanatory variable is mixed (Coffé, Heyndels, & Vermier, 2007, p. 144; Golder, 2016, p. 484; Knigge, 1998, p. 266; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2001, p. 443).

Cultural explanations, Golder's third demand side category, matter as well. These arguments hold that PRR support can be explained by cultural change brought about by mass immigration. To test this proposition, scholars have compared PRR success to immigration levels. Results are mixed (Coffé et al., 2007, p. 149; Golder, 2016, p. 485). Lubbers and Scheepers (2001, p. 443) find that extreme right support increased in Germany in regions where more asylum seekers settled, while Knigge (1998, p. 70) finds that "heightened levels of immigration…are conducive to the electoral success of extreme right-wing parties." Mudde (2007, pp. 212–216) provides a good overview of the literature. Other scholars offer versions of the cultural backlash thesis, arguing that the radical right succeeds where voters push back against concessions for minorities (Bustikova, 2014, pp. 1757–1758), or where intergenerational transitions in values create a cultural backlash among older voters (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

Supply side explanations for PRR success have become more common in recent years, as demand side explanations have consistently failed to explain results across different countries (Golder, 2016, p. 486). Supply siders hold that the key to a PRR party's success lies within the party itself. Explanatory factors include administrative competence and party organization (DeClair, 1999, p. 189; Ellinas, 2013, p. 561), leadership charisma (Art, 2011, p. 8), and favorable opportunity structures, including effective number of parties (Jackman & Volpert, 1996) and convergence of left and right parties (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995, pp. 58, 72).

Ideology is another factor: Scholars have evaluated the extent to which policy programs appeal to PRR voters. The most famous of these explanations is the "winning formula" (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995), which holds essentially that PRR parties succeed when they combine authoritarian appeals with neoliberal economics (see also de Lange, 2007, pp. 429–430). Muis and Scholte (2013, p. 42) invoke ideological flexibility—that is, a shift to the economic left—in explaining the Dutch Party for Freedom's spike in electoral success. Harteveld (2016,

p. 226) analyzed ten radical right parties, and found that a shift to the economic left attracts more working-class votes at the expense of the highly-educated and highly-skilled—demonstrating that economic policy programs do explain at least some party appeal.

Other supply side explanations focus on the media's role in facilitating PRR success (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007, p. 413; Ellinas, 2010). The PRR and the media have a symbiotic relationship: controversial policy positions help media outlets generate compelling content, while media attention helps the PRR build credibility with voters (Golder, 2016, p. 488). As the media landscape changes, new media, including Internet-based social media, has factored into analyses of PRR success. Stockemer and Barisione (2017, p. 111) find that social media activism contributed in part to gains the French National Front saw in the early 2010s, while Karl (2017, p. 353), draws a similar conclusion about Hungary's Jobbik.

This review provides a list of variables to be considered as part of an explanation for PRR success in the US. It remains necessary, however, to consider how insights drawn from the European literature apply in the American context. Arguably, the most important differences rest in the respective party systems. In the US, the Republicans and Democrats dominate political competition. Representatives of the PRR must compete against fellow right-leaning candidates in Republican primaries. Consequently, in the US, intra-party competition is the crucial battleground for the PRR, unlike in much of Europe, where proportional electoral systems facilitate diverse party systems.

Literature on the radical right in the US has neglected Republican intra-party competition and mobilization (Mudde, 2017, p. 51). In intra-party competitions, the key actors are individual candidates who only have the relatively short primary campaign to declare, articulate, and defend their ideological programs against criticism from fellow conservatives. Ideological positions are still important—libertarians, religious conservatives, and neoconservatives all compete in primaries—but differentiation can come down to effective messaging. In a fast-paced primary campaign where voters cannot rely on party cues (all candidates compete for the same party's nomination) and candidates may not have much name recognition (particularly in primaries for lower offices), the role of the media and information about candidates becomes especially important, as scholars have articulated in reference to the European example.

Of special importance is the relationship between social media and support for the PRR. While this literature is relatively underdeveloped in the European context, the details of the 2016 election have inspired some American literature. For example, Gunn (2017, p. 59) claims that "without Twitter or an equivalent social media platform, it would have been difficult for a candidate like Trump…to come across as viable." Groshek and Koc-Michalska (2017, p. 1402) find that social media were a critical part of Trump's 2016 victory, along with several other factors (including "television reliance" and "passive and uncivil social media users"). New media—particularly social media—offers an appealing avenue for populist candidates to circumvent the media establishment (a frequent target of populist ire) and reach voters directly (Conway, Kenski, & Wang, 2013, p. 1597). It therefore stands to reason that those who turn to these new media sources should be more likely to support PRR candidates in primaries.

Golder's (2016, p. 490) invocation that future research should be at the intersection of supply and demand is apt, as both schools of thought are critical to explaining PRR success. The key point of intersection is with the source of information available to voters: the media—particularly in the form of new media that offer populists a direct route to their voters.

1.3. New Media, Party Convergence, and the PRR Vote

The explanatory factors highlighted above have one thing in common: none is complete without understanding how voters see the world. Voters are not always well-equipped to evaluate the nature or extent of phenomena cited by the PRR. As Norris and Inglehart (2019, p. 181) point out, "[t]he public may misperceive the extent of ethnic diversity, and of the crime rates and unemployment." If voters are rational actors whose political choices are based on how they perceive events, media diets matter.

In both Europe and the US, certain media outlets have had a special relationship with PRR figures. Ellinas (2010, pp. 8, 34) finds that the European far right's success is largely a function of media exposure. Such exposure is the product of a symbiotic relationship:

> The political repertoire of the Far Right satisfies the thirst of the media for sensational, simplified, personalized, and controversial stories. Exaggerated references to violent crime and urban tension, which are typical ingredients of Far Right appeals, match the growing tendency of the media to dramatize news. The "simplism" that also characterizes Far Right appeals (Lipset and Raab, 1978) is in line with a media appetite for monocausal explanations and for the delivery of easy solutions to complex phenomena. (Ellinas, 2010, p. 34)

In the US, changes in technology and the regulatory environment have facilitated the rise of reactionary outlets that thrive on this "simplism" and controversy. Among other qualities, these "outrage" outlets are reactive, engaging, ideologically selective, and centered on personality (Berry & Sobieraj, 2014, p. 14). Talk radio hosts stoke controversy to generate audience engagement, Fox News dominates cable, and right-wing websites flood the Internet with dubiously factual attack pieces.

Of course, not all media are equal. The growth of the competitive 24-hour news market in the 1990s, along

with satellite radio and the Internet, changed the game for outrage media. New media outlets are appropriate venues for outrage content. These outlets make no—or weak—claims to objectivity, and the Internet makes news more accessible than ever. A blog run out of a basement can draw millions of monthly visitors. The mode of dissemination also matters. New media, characterized by its embrace of new technology, along with "plurality, accessibility, and participation," (Fenton, 2010, p. 6), best exemplified by social media, should be more likely to mobilize support for PRR candidates, for several reasons.

The first key reason is the combination of purity testing and convergence rhetoric. According to Kitschelt and McGann (1995, pp. 17–25), convergence between the mainstream right and the mainstream left is a necessary condition for the radical right's success in Europe. In promoting themselves as an alternative to the mainstream left and right, the PRR often conflates them. As anti-establishment brands, PRR candidates are well-positioned to take advantage of disaffection with establishment parties. In Europe, distinct parties emerge. In the US, where the majoritarian political system freezes out third parties, I suggest that this competition should instead be found within Republican primaries. Instead of fringe parties accusing mainstream parties of collusion, American PRR candidates accuse mainstream Republicans of being insufficiently Republican, and attack the party establishment itself, as Donald Trump did in 2016. The conservative media indulges such controversy, and moderate members of the party caucus—those "insufficiently conservative" Republicans—can expect to be attacked as "Republicans in Name Only" (RINOs; Goldberg, 2013, p. 10). This leads to a first hypothesis:

> H1: If a conservative voter believes that the mainstream liberal and conservative parties have "converged," that is, adopted similar positions on important issues, he or she is more likely to support a PRR candidate.

Leading up to 2016, making a case for party convergence would have been difficult. Polls have indicated that over time Americans have become more inclined to differentiate the parties (Lee, 2016, p. 140). The question, then, is how do voters come to believe that supporting an establishment Republican is essentially the same as supporting a Democrat?

I suggest that the answer aligns with the second reason that new media and the PRR are synergistic: The PRR's claims and proposed solutions are eye-catching, and are likely to be treated skeptically by the mainstream press. Exaggerations about crime, along with unconstitutional or poorly articulated policy proposals, may draw ridicule from trained journalists. But the same is not necessarily true of new media. Whereas legacy media have standards intended to prevent journalists from reporting misleading stories, social media feeds and partisan blogs are not beholden to traditional editorial standards. Once a story is released, editors have no control over the commentary readers attach as they share it with their personal networks, and those networks' insularity magnifies the message and shields audiences from rebuttal (Jamieson & Capella, 2008, p. 76).

The melding of outrage media with social media provides a powerful platform for the PRR. Social media can support upstart candidacies because it allows ideas to permeate networks uncritically. Social media is also conducive to purity testing, in which we would expect PRR politicians to have a distinct advantage, given that most PRR candidates have never held elected office and so have never had to compromise. It therefore stands to reason that exposure to the sort of information that is likely to propagate in a social media environment reinforces support for PRR politicians among ideologically susceptible conservatives. In their discussion of the 2016 presidential election, Groshek and Koc-Michalska (2017, p. 1402) find that "loosening of gatekeeping certainly opened the doors to a mediated information environment that while diverse and expansive was also hostile and prone to misinformation that may well have reinforced citizens' pre-existing viewpoints." I therefore hypothesize that social media use should be related to support for the PRR:

> H2: If a conservative voter is exposed to social media news, he or she is more likely to support a PRR candidate.

Because the theory outlined here should apply to the PRR beyond the presidency, I employ a state-level case study to evaluate these hypotheses.

2. Case Study: The Arizona US Senate Primary, 2018

After Donald Trump's 2016 victory, Republicanism became a contested concept. Trump's irreverent use of social media, his attacks on the establishment, and his embrace by American conservatism's Internet fringe created a new playbook for the fresh crop of PRR candidates who began competing in Republican primaries around the country.

The next round of primaries for federal office took place in summer 2018. While the general election decides who goes to Washington, the battle between conservative factions takes place at the primary stage. In the American majoritarian system, once the parties have selected candidates, voters essentially have a choice between the Republican and the Democrat, and many will default to their party's candidate out of loyalty, or as a strategic vote against the opposition (Mudde, 2017, p. 76). The primary is therefore a better venue for analysis of the PRR.

A suitable primary meets several conditions. First, it is for federal office, since many of the issues the PRR emphasizes are federal responsibilities. Second, there

should be clear competition between the PRR and the Republican establishment. Third, it should have no incumbent, in order to better isolate the impact of explanatory variables on a PRR candidacy. Finally, a Senate election is preferable, because states cannot be gerrymandered, and because states are often larger and more diverse than districts.

2.1. Background and Candidates

On August 28, 2018, Arizona Republicans selected their nominee for the Senate seat vacated by Jeff Flake. Flake was a moderate Republican who decided to leave on account of what he saw as the erosion of traditional Republican values in the Trump era. Flake's withdrawal signaled that the party's radical wing had made his moderation politically untenable. In stepping down, Flake created a vacuum. Three major candidates contested the primary.

2.1.1. Martha McSally: The Establishment Candidate

Martha McSally is a military veteran elected to Congress in 2015. In her early career, McSally's views were moderate: She supported pro-life positions on abortion, traditional marriage, and immigration reform with a path to legalization (Parker, 2014). Dubbed by *Politico* "the House GOP's top recruit," McSally also supported a bipartisan equal pay bill and refused to endorse Tea Party principles (Isenstadt, 2014). McSally's candidacy represented progress for the establishment GOP, and their female recruitment project cited her primary victory as a success (Henderson & Kucinich, 2014).

In the Trump era, McSally has been forced to balance criticism of the party's leader with maintaining the base's support. When Trump attacked McCain for being captured in Vietnam, McSally was the only member of the Arizona delegation to speak out (Nowicki, 2015). Even after Trump secured the nomination, McSally declined to endorse him (Hansen, 2016). Of course, Trump won Arizona, and has remained popular with Republicans. McSally made overtures to Trump's base throughout the 2018 campaign, highlighting her interactions with the President and hinting at the existence of a working relationship (Wingett Sanchez, 2018). Despite these efforts, McSally did not credibly represent the PRR in 2018, and was instead a target of convergence rhetoric from her opponents in the primary (Sullivan, 2018). McSally also ran a much more traditional campaign: Even after her appointment to the Senate, she still has fewer "likes" on Facebook and followers on Twitter than Ward or Arpaio, and she attracted far more establishment support.

2.1.2. Joe Arpaio: The Anti-Immigrant Crusader

Before his Senate campaign, Joe Arpaio served as Republican elected Sheriff of Maricopa County from 1993 until 2017, where he became notorious for housing prisoners in tents, reinstituting chain gangs, and cutting meal costs (Arpaio & Sherman, 2008, pp. 96–97, 213). He also aggressively pursued an anti-illegal immigration agenda.

As Sheriff, Arpaio denounced the dangers of illegal immigration from Mexico. He called for a "war" on illegal immigration, citing threats to culture and sovereignty. He asks his readers, "[a]re we prepared to give up our sovereignty? Are we willing to give up our national identity?" (Arpaio & Sherman, 2008, p. 244). Though he often frames it as law enforcement, Arpaio is making a nativist cultural argument familiar to observers of the European right.

Arpaio's office consistently violated Latino citizens' civil rights by illegally detaining them as part of its war on illegal immigration. When a judge issued an injunction to halt this practice, Arpaio ignored it, and was convicted of criminal contempt (Pérez-Peña, 2017). Trump later pardoned the Sheriff, leading *Breitbart* to run the headline, "Trump Defends Arpaio Pardon as GOP Establishment Joins the Left" (Mason, 2017). These events highlight fault lines in the post-Trump conservative movement, and place Arpaio in the anti-establishment camp.

For Arpaio, the 2018 campaign proceeded familiarly. On his signature issue he supported hardline policies, suggesting that foreigners brought to the country illegally as children should be deported, and that the military should be deployed to Mexico to combat drug smuggling (Romero, 2018). In line with the convergence theme, Arpaio said of McSally, "she sounds like a Democrat" (Sullivan, 2018). When it came to the party's right fringe, however, Arpaio had competition.

2.1.3. Kelli Ward: The Outsider

Kelli Ward burst onto the national stage in 2016 with an unsuccessful primary challenge against John McCain. Shortly after her defeat, she announced that she would challenge Flake. Ward, a former state legislator, became a PRR darling for her anti-establishment politics. By 2018, Ward had established herself as "the perfect spokesperson for the Trump wing of the GOP" (Posner, 2017). Ward also received endorsements from radical right figures. Representative Paul Gosar, known for his radical positions and relationship with the European right, called McSally an "establishment patsy," and endorsed Ward (Garcia, 2018), as did Sebastien Gorka, a former Trump deputy with European far right ties (Farzan, 2018).

This contest attracted the Republican establishment. The Senate Majority Leader's allies poured money into the race, bolstering McSally as an immigration hardliner, and drawing fire from the Ward campaign, which attacked McSally's record on Trump, the border wall, and "dozens of votes for amnesty" (Arkin, 2018). Combat between the Republican establishment and the PRR flared throughout the summer. Ward attacked McSally's conservatism and attempted to tie her to the left, by alleging that McSally had voted for amnesty "11 times" in a misleading radio ad (Athey, 2018). Ward immersed herself

in anti-establishment convergence rhetoric, and in a further step away from the establishment, she attempted to leverage the conservative Internet media ecosystem.

Ward campaigned with far right Internet personality Mike Cernovich, whom *The Washington Post* called, "[her] newly minted campaign surrogate" (Selk, 2018). *Breitbart* editor and Trump strategist Steve Bannon participated in Ward's campaign launch (Nowicki, 2017), and until September 2017, several senior campaign aides were former *Breitbart* reporters (Moore, 2017). These *Breitbart* connections are especially important in evaluating the theory presented here, as Faris et al. (2017, pp. 11–13) find that *Breitbart* formed "the nexus of conservative media" in 2015–2016, and was the most popular source for social media sharing on the right during the 2016 election. Ward was also among a group of insurgent Republicans who benefited from websites masquerading as legitimate news sites that produced anti-establishment content and endorsed candidates under the guise of independent journalism (Schwartz, 2018).

3. Methodology

The research question posed here is "Does use of social media for news drive support for the PRR in Republican primaries?" To test the hypotheses that perceptions of convergence and use of social media drive support for PRR candidates, I employed Qualtrics to distribute an online survey to 1052 self-identified Arizona Republicans in the week leading up to the primary in August 2018. Qualtrics (2014, p. 4) offers the following disclaimer: "Qualtrics panel partners randomly select respondents for surveys where respondents are highly likely to qualify….Each sample from the panel base is proportioned to the general population and then randomized before the survey is deployed."

3.1. Variables

To capture attitudes about immigration, I used several American National Election Survey (ANES) measures, including one that asks how worried respondents are about illegal immigration, and one that asks if immigrants are "generally good for America's economy." To capture economic anxiety, I asked voters how worried they were about employment status using another ANES measure. To measure authoritarian values, I included four standard ANES child-rearing questions and created an index (see also MacWilliams, 2016). To test convergence, I asked voters if there were any important differences between the Republican establishment and the Democratic Party. I also asked about perceptions of corruption and concern about RINOs to gauge disaffection with the party. To measure exposure to social media, I asked voters where they get their news.

The dependent variable (DV) is the answer to the question "if the 2018 Arizona Republican Senate Primary election were held today, which of the candidates would you vote for?" Support for each candidate is the DV for each model reported in Table 1.

3.2. Method

I use logistic regression because the DV is dichotomous. Logistic regression coefficients are difficult to interpret because they represent log odds, so I have reported the results as odds ratios (ORs). The OR "describes how much more likely an outcome is to occur in one group as compared to another group" (Braver, Tboemmes, & Moser, 2010, p. 957), representing the relative odds of two related outcomes occurring. For example, in Table 1, the OR for the variable "Race (white)" in the McSally model is the odds that a McSally supporter is white divided by the odds that he/she is not. This OR is less than one, indicating that a McSally supporter is 0.75 times as likely as a non-McSally voter to be white (though this is not significant). For ordinal independent variables, the OR increases or decreases exponentially, so for each additional year of age, a voter is 1.02 times as likely to vote for McSally (Braver et al., 2010, p. 958).

4. Results

The results, displayed below in Table 1, largely support the hypotheses proposed above. H1 holds that PRR voters should be more likely to perceive convergence between the parties, and this is the case. As expected, McSally voters are less likely to perceive corruption to be widespread, and while the other two variables of interest (party similarity and RINOs are a detriment) are not significant, they are directionally correct. Ward's voters are nearly twice as likely to agree that there are no differences between the Republican establishment and the Democratic Party, and they are substantially more likely to agree that RINOs are a detriment to the Republican Party. H1 does little to explain Arpaio support, however.

H2 holds that PRR voters should be more likely to get their news from social media sources. The data support H2 in the McSally and Ward cases. McSally's supporters are roughly half as likely to use social media for news, and nearly twice as likely to turn to Fox News. Ward's supporters are more likely to turn to social media for news, as expected, while Arpaio's supporters are less likely to watch Fox or listen to talk radio. Neither fear of job loss nor authoritarian attitudes are significant, though Arpaio's supporters are substantially more likely to perceive immigrants as bad for the economy, as would be expected according to economic demand side theories. Finally, McSally's supporters are slightly older and Ward's slightly younger, while Arpaio's supporters have lower levels of education and are less conservative.

5. Analysis

H1 predicts that PRR voters should be likely to perceive convergence between the parties. This is borne out in

Table 1. Factors that influence support for 2018 Arizona Senate candidates among self-identified Republican likely voters.

Independent variable	McSally support	Ward support	Arpaio support
No differences between Rep./Dem. establishment	0.76	1.79 *	0.96
Perception of corruption (1–4)	0.77 *	1.26	1.10
RINOs are a detriment (1–5 [strongly agree])	0.89	1.41 ***	0.91
Social media news consumer	0.60 **	1.79 *	1.24
Talk radio news consumer	1.12	1.16	0.59 *
Fox News viewer	1.71 **	0.79	0.63 *
Fear of job loss (1–5 [extremely worried])	1.03	1.02	0.94
Authoritarianism (0–4)	1.00	0.95	1.19
Immigrants good for economy (1–5 [strongly disagree])	0.84 *	0.93	1.46 ***
Education (1–5 [highest])	1.10	1.13	0.74 **
Income (1–5 [highest])	1.11	1.04	0.81
Age (years)	1.02 **	0.98 *	0.98
Ideology (1 [extremely liberal]–7 [extremely conservative])	1.05	1.21	0.83 *
Race (white)	0.75	2.29	0.75
Constant	1.24	0.01 ***	3.67
n count	739	739	739
Pseudo r-squared	0.07	0.07	0.11

Note: * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$.

Ward's case, but not in Arpaio's case. Voters who believe that establishment Republicans and the Democratic Party are indistinguishable are nearly twice as likely to support Ward. It appears that efforts to paint McSally as an establishment patsy were successful, but that anti-establishment voters do not view Arpaio, an experienced politician, as a suitable outlet for their disaffection. The fact that Ward's voters are also more likely to identify "fake" Republicans ("RINOs") as a detriment indicates that, for many Republicans, mainstream offerings are impure. McSally's voters, perhaps tired of their candidate drawing criticism as insufficiently Republican, do not perceive RINOs to be a threat. Corruption perceptions among likely voters tell an interesting story as well. Populists, including Trump, paint the world as full of corruption. They pledge to "drain the swamp" and make government work for the people again, claiming that both parties have contributed to the status quo. I therefore expect that PRR supporters should believe corruption to be more problematic. Although this variable is not significant in either the Ward or Arpaio models, McSally's voters are less likely to perceive corruption—providing some corroboration for the hypothesis.

The supply side literature suggests that the PRR succeeds where convergence between mainstream parties creates a favorable opportunity structure (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995, p. 17). The analysis here indicates that voters who believe in party convergence do, in fact, disproportionately support Ward, a PRR candidate. This finding provides evidence that a supply side explanation derived theoretically from European party systems and patterns of communication (convergence rhetoric) can travel to American party primaries, where a first-past-the-post electoral system makes multi-party competition untenable.

There are, however, some caveats that limit the scope of this finding. While convergence explanations are typically applied at the party system level (e.g., Katz & Mair, 2009), here I operationalize convergence at the level of individual perception. I have done so for two reasons. First, the DV examined is support for individual candidates, not organized parties. Even the most ephemeral parties typically outlast individual candidacies. Second, voters' perceptions may not align with reality. I do not claim here that actual party convergence explains PRR success, but rather that when a voter believes that the parties have converged, the PRR becomes a rational selection. The best way to operationalize perception is at the individual level.

Endogeneity limits my ability to make causal inferences about convergence. It is not possible to determine if anti-establishment attitudes caused Ward support or vice versa based on this cross-sectional analysis. That said, the fact that those Republican primary voters that support a PRR candidate also believe that the Republican establishment is indistinguishable from the Democrats sheds light on how the PRR can successfully mobilize within an existing conservative party.

The second part of the story concerns the reason for these beliefs. H2 holds that PRR voters should be more likely to get their news from social media, at least in part because social media offer an environment for vot-

ers to consume and share belief-affirming information. H2 is also borne out in the Ward case, but, again, not for Arpaio. While McSally supporters are more likely to watch Fox News, Ward supporters are nearly twice as likely to use social media for news. This suggests that the characteristics of social media news are appealing to PRR voters, and may therefore benefit PRR candidacies. In line with previous research (Groshek & Koc-Michalska, 2017), consumption of social media news does appear to correlate with support for populists in primaries. Ward's willingness to embrace new media, conspiracy theories, convergence rhetoric/purity testing, and outlandish claims drew criticism from the mainstream press, but endeared her to the Internet fringe, who disproportionately turned out for her in the primary at Arpaio's expense.

Surprisingly, neither Fox nor talk radio boost support for either PRR candidate, perhaps because Trump did not endorse any candidate after Flake dropped out, or because national conservative hosts were less likely to cover a state's primary competition. It is also possible that, although conservative outlets like Fox and major talk radio hosts (e.g., Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity) often position themselves as counterweights to the liberal establishment, committed anti-establishment primary voters may consider those outlets part of the establishment themselves. If anti-establishment voters consider traditional conservative media to be part of the establishment, social media would be even more attractive for these voters—especially in light of characteristics such as the ability for candidates to speak directly to voters on platforms like Twitter and Facebook, the "loosening of gatekeeping" (Groshek & Koc-Michalska, 2017, p. 1402), and the potential for stories to spread quickly without any official endorsement. Social media's grassroots, viral nature is especially appealing to the PRR. While this cross-sectional analysis cannot establish causality, the evidence presented strongly suggests that when voters are exposed to the (relatively) gatekeeper-free world of social media news, PRR talking points become more prominent and more compelling.

5.1. Sheriff Joe and the PRR

Arpaio's voters have less in common with Ward's voters than expected. While both groups trend younger, Arpaio's voters appear to be driven by concerns about immigration. In Europe, PRR parties often appeal to both anti-establishment and anti-immigration voters. The Arizona Senate primary included two candidates vying for largely the same base, each appearing to attract only part of it. Arpaio, because of his tenure as a Republican official with a national profile built on crime and immigration, is the natural choice for committed Republicans who prioritize those issues. This would explain why Arpaio's supporters are less likely to agree that immigrants are good for the economy. The fact that Arpaio's supporters are also less educated offers a partial explanation for the economic threat of immigration they perceive, as expected by some of the demand side literature (e.g., Jackman & Volpert, 1996).

Arpaio's voters are less likely to identify as "very conservative." Moderate Republicans who feel economic pressure from immigration might find the scorched earth, conspiratorial politics of the PRR appealing, but prioritize effective immigration policy over "draining the swamp." It appears that Arpaio appealed to anti-immigrant Republicans, while Ward attracted the anti-establishment camp. The PRR coalition was split: Arpaio successfully drew the nativists, while Ward appealed to the populists.

It is unclear, however, how much of Arpaio's success is due to his outsized public profile. As a longtime local politician with national name recognition, Arpaio may have gained some of the advantages of incumbency without holding the desired office. For example, his name recognition may have led the electorate to perceive him as more viable (Kam & Zechmeister, 2013, p. 983). However, I do not believe that Arpaio's name recognition is sufficient to explain the results for two reasons. First, leading up to the primary, much of the news coverage about Arpaio concerned either the pardon he received from Trump or commentary on his "irrelevance" (Romero, 2018). Second, while name recognition is powerful in local elections contested by relative unknowns, the 2018 Arizona Senate primary was a high-profile race. All three candidates had claims to relevance. Ward and Arpaio both drew Donald Trump's attention in 2016, and McSally served in Congress. The primary received national media coverage, and the results had potential to carry national implications (i.e., the Senate may have flipped from Republican to Democratic control). Voter turnout was also record-breaking: More than 670,000 voters participated in the Republican primary (Daniels, 2018).

6. Conclusion

This analysis offers evidence that theoretical expectations about party convergence and social media use can explain some PRR success in the US. In Arizona, among Republicans, Kelli Ward's supporters are more likely to see the Republican establishment as functionally Democratic and to report accessing social media news. Joe Arpaio's supporters, on the other hand, do not share these characteristics: They are more likely to perceive immigration as economically disadvantageous, and to have lower levels of education. These findings indicate that the PRR coalition comprises both anti-immigrant and anti-establishment supporters, and that the two groups are not coterminous. The PRR encompassing two distinct camps is consistent with the theory that populism is a thin-centered ideology (or "toolkit," or style) that is not inherently tied to other left or right ideologies like nativism (Mudde, 2007, p. 23; Ylä-Anttila, 2017, p. 8). The results also support the supply side idea that there is a symbiotic relationship between social media and the

PRR. Though this evidence is not definitively causal, it offers a compelling circumstantial case for social media's power.

Furthermore, these results suggest that transitioning from experienced party politician to insurgent is difficult, and that while long experience in office may establish credibility on issues, it is detrimental in attracting anti-establishment support.

The theory presented here is drawn from European literature on both the supply side and the demand side, with a specific focus on the part convergence and new media play in facilitating PRR success. The American party system produces different constraints than many of its European counterparts, forcing PRR competition into the intra-party arena. Nevertheless, the evidence demonstrates that, when properly contextualized, similar phenomena facilitate support for the PRR on both sides of the Atlantic.

Future research should expand the scope of the analysis to include independents. Participants in the examined survey self-identified as Republicans, but non-Republicans can and do vote in primaries. PRR candidates like to position themselves as alternatives to left-right politics. Self-identified independents could therefore have an important role to play in explaining PRR success in the US. This is a promising area for future inquiry.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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Article

The Trump Paradox: How Cues from a Disliked Source Foster Resistance to Persuasion

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Abstract
We usually reject information from sources we dislike. But what if those same sources explicitly disagree with that information? Are we more likely to be persuaded by information that is opposed by someone we dislike? We present results from an experimental study with a convenience sample of 199 Dutch students. Respondents were exposed to counter-attitudinal information on climate change in an attempt to generate persuasion, and in a second time exposed to a tweet from the current US president, Donald J. Trump, as a positive or negative endorsement of the counter-attitudinal. Results show that positive endorsements reduce the persuasive power of counter-attitudinal information, whereas negative endorsements (marginally) increase its persuasive power. These results have important implications in today's politics, where "disliked" figures—most of the time referred to as "populists"—play an increasingly central role in framing the terms of the debate on the most salient issues.

Keywords
Donald Trump; political persuasion; populism; Twitter

Issue
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1. Introduction

Beyond politics and policy, one of the most defining elements of the Trump presidency is the blurring of the boundaries between official White House communications and personal outbursts from the President on social media. Trump's profuse use of Twitter—characterized by the trifecta of simplicity, impulsivity, and incivility (Ott, 2017)—is a central part of the narrative that portrays him as thin-skinned and quick to anger, deceitful, brazen, and boasting a grandiose sense of self and an exaggerated vision of his accomplishments. Several observers (Nai & Maier, 2018, 2019; Visser, Book, & Volk, 2017) have pointed to Trump's apparent narcissistic tendencies and his "sky-high extroversion combined with off-the-chart low agreeableness" (McAdams, 2016), and to the fact that his actions display "a messiah complex, no conscience, and lack complete empathy" (Hoise, 2017).

Trump is however not, by far, the only world leader often accused of displaying an abrasive public persona (on social media, or otherwise). Recent years have seen a renewed focus to the emergence of populist figures worldwide (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Mudde, 2004; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). Beyond their electoral success and communication strategies (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Mudde, 2007; Nai, 2018), several studies increasingly point to the fact that populists promote a "bad mannered" and "transgressive" political style (Moffitt, 2016; Oliver & Rahn, 2016) that "emphasises agitation, spectacular acts, exaggeration, calculated provocations, and the intended breech of political and socio-cultural taboos" (Heinisch, 2003, p. 94). A recent study by Nai and Martínez i Coma (2019) found that, when compared to "mainstream political figures," populists score lower on agreeableness, emotional stability, and conscientiousness, but score significantly higher on the Dark Triad of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism.

Social media bolsters these trends and allow populists to efficiently diffuse their messages (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2017). In this article, however,

we are not interested in describing how populists communicate on social media, and neither how their image is shaped by it (for this, see, e.g., Ahmadian, Azarshahi, & Paulhus, 2017; Enli, 2017; Ott, 2017). Rather, we focus on its consequences for the persuasiveness of their messages. Overall—partially contrasting with the contemporary narrative of elections easily swung by (mis)information campaigns on social media—relatively little is known about the persuasive power of political communication on social media (but see Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Even more importantly, little is known about the persuasive power of communication from controversial figures.

1.1. Persuasion and Affective Polarization

The dynamics of political persuasion have received strong attention in recent decades (e.g., Cobb & Kuklinski, 1997; Mutz, Sniderman, & Brody, 1996). Central in this literature is the idea that persuasion is achieved when individuals are exposed to counter-attitudinal messages, that is, messages that clash with their previously held beliefs, and adjust those beliefs accordingly. Inversely, resistance to persuasion exists when "an attitude change is capable of surviving an attack from contrary information" (Petty & Brinol, 2010, p. 240). Persuasion is endemic in contemporary politics, where voters are exposed to an endless stream of partisan information.

Much attention has been provided to individual differences in resistance to persuasive attempts, for instance in terms of personal relevance of the issue (Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981) or issue-related emotional states (Nai, Schemeil, & Marie, 2017). Persuasion is also affected by characteristics of the message itself; evidence exists that specific characteristics of the source of the persuasive message also matter, for instance in terms of credibility (Tormala & Petty, 2004) or likeability (Reinhard & Messner, 2009) of the source. Especially this last factor—how much the respondent "likes" the source of persuasion—has received a strong attention, confirming a general rationale that liked sources are more likely to persuade, a claim that is central in many dual models of opinion formation (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Little is known however about the effects on persuasion effectiveness when information comes from disliked figures (but see Weber, Dunaway, & Johnson, 2012). Mounting evidence suggests that ideological polarization is being replaced with affective polarization (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes, 2012), as disagreements in the public are increasingly driven by a profound dislike for the opponents regardless of their policy alignments. What is increasingly likely to drive the alignment and dealignment of opinions are social identity dynamics of in-group and out-group, where what matters the most is pushing back against the disliked out-group. With this in mind, it is then not surprising to witness that disliked figures have an important role to play in contemporary politics. A substantial part of today's electoral politics can be explained as voting not "for" a specific party or candidate, but rather "against" them; this is one of the main drivers of support for populist and so-called "anti-elitist" parties (Schumacher & Rooduijn, 2013), and a key element in referenda across the world (Lupia & Matsusaka, 2004). In this sense, assessing the role of source dislike within persuasive communication is not only epochal due to the growing importance of "antagonistic" figures worldwide—and to get a better sense, ultimately, about how "populist" and other controversial figures manage (or fail to manage) to persuade voters in the first place—but also central for a more complete understanding of the consequences of affective polarization.

1.2. The Study and the Setting

In this article, we discuss a theoretical model that explains under which conditions people resist persuasive attempts, and we apply this to an experimental protocol where respondents were exposed to mock tweets from Donald Trump. We test two overarching claims: (1) being confronted to counter-attitudinal information leads to a readjustment of initial opinions (what we call "persuasion"); and (2) cues from a disliked source affect the persuasive power of counter-attitudinal information—more specifically, persuasion is reduced when the disliked source endorses the counter-attitudinal information, and it is increased when the disliked source opposes the counter-attitudinal information.

We test this model via an experimental protocol where all participants are first asked their opinion about an initial statement (would they support slowing down economic activity to reduce climate warming); depending on their answer, all participants are then exposed to a tailored counter-attitudinal information, that is, information promoting the other side (for instance, reasons why economic activity should be slowed down if they signalled that they would rather not support a slowdown in the first place). After exposure to the counter-attitudinal information, all participants are asked again their opinion about economy slowdown. Divergence between the two statements (pre- and post-counter-attitudinal) indicates readjustment of initial opinions, or persuasion (Nai et al., 2017).

The experimental component intervenes before this second question, just after exposure to the counter-attitudinal information. Participants in two experimental groups are exposed to one additional piece of information, framed as a cue form a disliked source (Trump), taking the form of either an endorsement or an opposition to the counter-attitudinal information; a first group is told that the disliked source approves the counter-attitudinal information (consonant source cue), whereas the second group is told that the disliked source opposes the counter-attitudinal information (dissonant source cue). Respondents in the control group are only ex-

posed to the counterargument (no consonant/dissonant source cue). More details about the design are described in Section 3.2.

The experimental components of the protocol—the "disliked source cues"—are based on (mock) tweets from Donald Trump, signalling either support or opposition to the counter-attitudinal piece of information respondents are exposed to. Donald Trump is a perfect subject for real-world experimental research (Resnick, 2018), especially for research on persuasion and likeability. First, he benefits from constant exposure in US and international media, and thus it is fair to assume that he is fairly well known by all respondents, even outside the US as in our case (participants are undergraduate students at the University of Amsterdam). Second, Trump suffers from almost universal dislike outside the US (Wike, Stokes, Poushter, & Fetterlof, 2017) and its coverage in international media is strongly skewed towards the negative (Patterson, 2017); in this case, he is the perfect real-world candidate for the study on source (un)likeability, as there is a strong chance that recruited participants have already an overall negative opinion about him; as we will see, this is indeed the case. Third, his unique public persona (Nai & Maier, 2018, 2019; Visser et al., 2017) manifests into frequent opinion shifts on salient issues—for instance, a 2016 *Washington Post* article (also cited by Resnick, 2018) discusses how Trump publicly took five different positions on abortion in a handful of days (Bump, 2016). This chronic inconsistency is a perk for experimental research, as it allows to create mock statements that are diametrically opposite to fit our treatments—in our case, mock tweet messages that support opposite stances on climate change. This helps circumvent a well-known limitation in experimental research with real-world figures, that is, the fact that mock treatments have to be consistent with the profile of those figures to be realistic. Given Trump's lack of consistency over important issues, virtually every message and its opposite should be considered at the very least conceivable.

2. Source Cues and Persuasion

The starting point of our model is the persuasive power of counter-attitudinal messages. Even in an environment where filter bubbles and selective exposure drive consumption of information that is perceived as congruent with one's own opinions and predispositions (Bakshy, Messing, & Adamic, 2015; Metzger, Hartsell, & Flanagin, 2015), people are nonetheless constantly exposed to counter-attitudinal information (Messing & Westwood, 2014).

People are however hardwired to reject such counter-attitudinal information. Following established models of motivated reasoning (Lodge & Taber, 2000; Taber & Lodge, 2006), people are driven by directional (or partisan) goals "to apply their reasoning powers in defense of a prior, specific conclusion" (Taber & Lodge, 2006, p. 756). Initial beliefs "bias" the way citizens respond to partisan information and people tend to evaluate more favorably messages that are in line with their pre-existing beliefs ("prior attitude effect"; Taber & Lodge, 2006); at the same time, people tend to reject counter-attitudinal messages.

Nonetheless, if not a full reversal, exposure to counter-attitudinal messages should operate at the very least a readjustment. Following "on-line" information processing models, people keep a "mental tally" of all information encountered about a specific issue; they form judgments as a function of the sequence of information on that issue they are exposed to, and adjust their judgment with any new piece of information received (McGraw, Lodge, & Stroh, 1990; Redlawsk, 2001, 2002). This adjustment is expected to be stronger for people low in cognitive skills (McGraw et al., 1990), but it is supposed to exist across the board:

> H1: Exposure to counter-attitudinal arguments produces a readjustment of initial opinions.

Many elements intervene to shape the magnitude of this readjustment. In this article, we focus on a previously overlooked element: the presence of supporting information (source cues) advocating for or against the counter-attitudinal messages. More specifically, we argue that resistance to counter-attitudinal information is, first, a direct function of the presence of cues from a disliked source (in our case, an endorsement from Trump), and, second, mediated by the level of cognitive skills of the respondent. We discuss below a theoretical model with two components: (1) the role of consonant disliked source cues on the treatment of counter-attitudinal information; and (2) the role of dissonant disliked source cues on that treatment.

We define a disliked "consonant" source cue as a piece of information provided by an external source (Trump) that is aligned with the content of the persuasive information. Let's take an example, in which a person that usually dislikes burgers is told: (1) that "Big Kahuna burgers are the best burgers in town"; and that (2) Trump very much likes them. The two pieces of information are consistent with each other in the eyes of the respondent (remember that they dislike both those burgers and Trump). The information they receive is "consonant," and because it contrasts with their initially held beliefs the person will probably not have a hard time to reject both. Inversely, a "dissonant" source cue exists when the persuasive message contrasts with the endorsement from the source. In our example, the person is told that Big Kahuna burgers are great, but that Trump dislikes them. In such a case, the two persuasive components of the new information conflict with each other. Both "consonant" and "dissonant" source cues thus only refer to their relationship with the initial persuasive message, and not with the respondent initial beliefs. This is illustrated in Figure 1. The situation would of course be reversed in case of a positively evaluated source cue

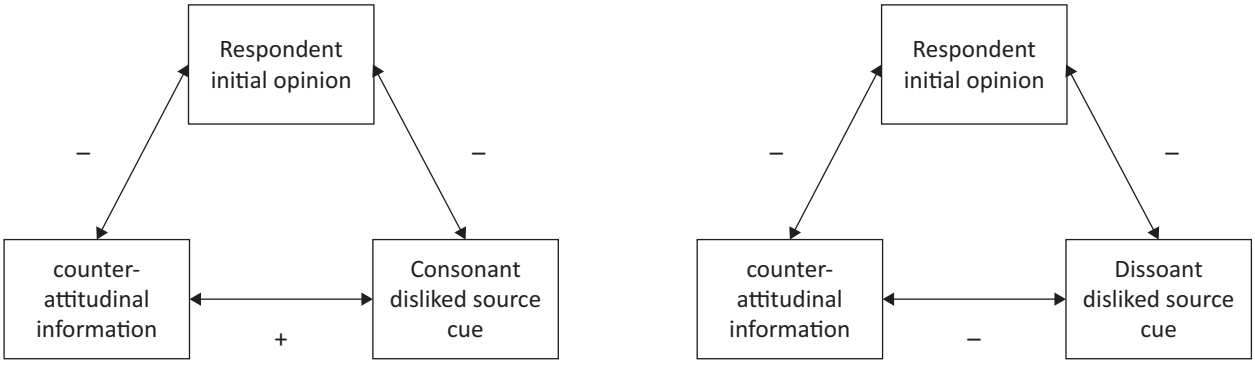

Figure 1. Consistent and inconsistent systems of beliefs and counter-attitudinal information.

(e.g., endorsement of the counter-attitudinal information from a political figure that the respondent likes), but this is not something we test here.

We start with the setting of a consistent system of beliefs and counter-attitudinal information. In this first case, this refers to being exposed to counter-attitudinal information which is endorsed by a disliked figure. We expect that endorsements by disliked sources steal the thunder from persuasive messages. Persuasion is all about convincing the subject that his or her previously held beliefs (if any) are not as anchored as he or she might have believed—opposite rationales exist, the subject might feel, and those rationales actually seem to make sense.

Research shows that persuasion is more likely induced when the source or the sponsor of persuasive messages is liked by the subject (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The cognitive mechanism supporting this effect, going back to motivated reasoning, is simply a decrease in the automatic defences against counter-attitudinal information due to positive feelings towards the source of the message. Within this context, an endorsement by a disliked figure should operate in the other direction. If the default position is to reject information that clashes with our predispositions (Lodge & Taber, 2000; Taber & Lodge, 2006) then not only does an endorsement from a disliked figure not mitigate this motivated bias, but it should logically enforce it. In this case, the counter-attitudinal information should be more easily rejected:

> H2. Persuasion is less effective when it is endorsed by a disliked figure

The opposite situation is one of an inconsistent system of beliefs and counter-attitudinal information, where individuals are exposed to counter-attitudinal information that is opposed by a disliked figure. In this situation, we expect respondents to experience cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962; Harmon-Jones, Harmon-Jones, & Levy, 2015): They signal a preference for argument A, but are exposed to the new information that a disliked figure also endorses the argument A. The clash, in this case, is not external, between predispositions and exogenous persuasion, but rather internal between two sets of beliefs (support for the argument and dislike for the person that also supports that argument). It is not our goal to study the extent of cognitive dissonance in our respondents; rather we expect this mental state to shatter previously held beliefs, paving the way for successful persuasive attempts. Cognitive dissonance robs individuals of their certainties, and thus creates conditions where tailored counterarguments are more likely to be accepted and processed (Harmon-Jones, 2002; Whittaker, 1964). On top of this, there are also reasons to expect that the persuasive message itself is made more palatable in this case. Knowing that Trump rejects a message could suggest that the message itself is not that bad, for those who despise the candidate. The enemy of my enemy is my friend, or in this case the opinion opposed by my enemy might actually be relevant after all:

> H3. Persuasion is more effective when it is opposed by a disliked figure.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

The experimental survey was administered to a convenience sample of 272 undergraduate students in Communication Science at the University of Amsterdam in October 2017. Students have to collect a given amount of "research credits" during their undergraduate studies (14), and this research provided participants with a modest incentive in this sense (0.18 research credits). Convenience samples, especially when composed by such a narrow segment of the population (students) cannot be expected to be representative of the whole population. In this sense, results should not be generalised beyond the boundaries of the sample. This being said, this type of sample has been shown to pose less problems than expected in terms of external valid-

ity (Druckman & Kam, 2011). Furthermore, working with student samples offers some specific advantages. For instance, due to their younger age, students tend to have more ductile opinions and predispositions (Lau & Erber, 1985; Pinkleton, Um, & Austin, 2002), and thus are good subjects for studies about persuasion. Furthermore, for students age and education effects should cancel each other out (Garramone, 1984).

Unsurprisingly, the sample is far from representative of trends in the general population. In the initial sample before filtering (see below), 84% of respondents are female (reflecting the composition of students at the University of Amsterdam) and 42% are Dutch nationals. Although 82% declared that English is not their main language, the overwhelming majority of participants have an excellent command of English (also reflecting a known characteristics of the Dutch population). On average, respondents are somewhat interested in politics and only averagely knowledgeable about climate change facts; they however declare an average high anxiety about the issue (M = 3.17/4, SD = 0.94). Overall, the sample is slightly skewed towards the left (M = 3.97/10, SD = 2.03).

3.2. Design and Treatments

Respondents were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: control group; treatment 1; or treatment 2. All respondents were, first, provided with an introduction presenting some facts about global warming (e.g., that 16 of the 17 warmest years on record occurred since 2001), and then were asked to answer a few factual questions and to report their self-reported emotions when thinking about global warming. The experimental setting followed, introduced for everyone with a short incipit that suggests a potential solution (see Supplementary Material). Figure 2 presents the design of our study at a glance.

After this incipit, all respondents were asked to what extent they support economy slowdown in their country to reduce climate warming (from 0 "Absolutely no" to 10 "Absolutely yes"). This question was used as initial benchmark of the respondents' position and was compared with an identical question after the treatments to gauge opinion change (our main dependent variable, compared across groups). Answers to this initial question were also used to tailor the information that respondents received next; we replicate the design of a previous study (Nai et al., 2017) and provided each respondent with a specific counterargument depending on his or her answer to the initial question. For instance, a respondent that believes that economic activity should be reduced received a counterargument suggesting reasons why this should not be the case. A similar (but reversed) counterargument was proposed to respondents that disagree with economy slowdown. These counterarguments represent the persuasive component of the design.

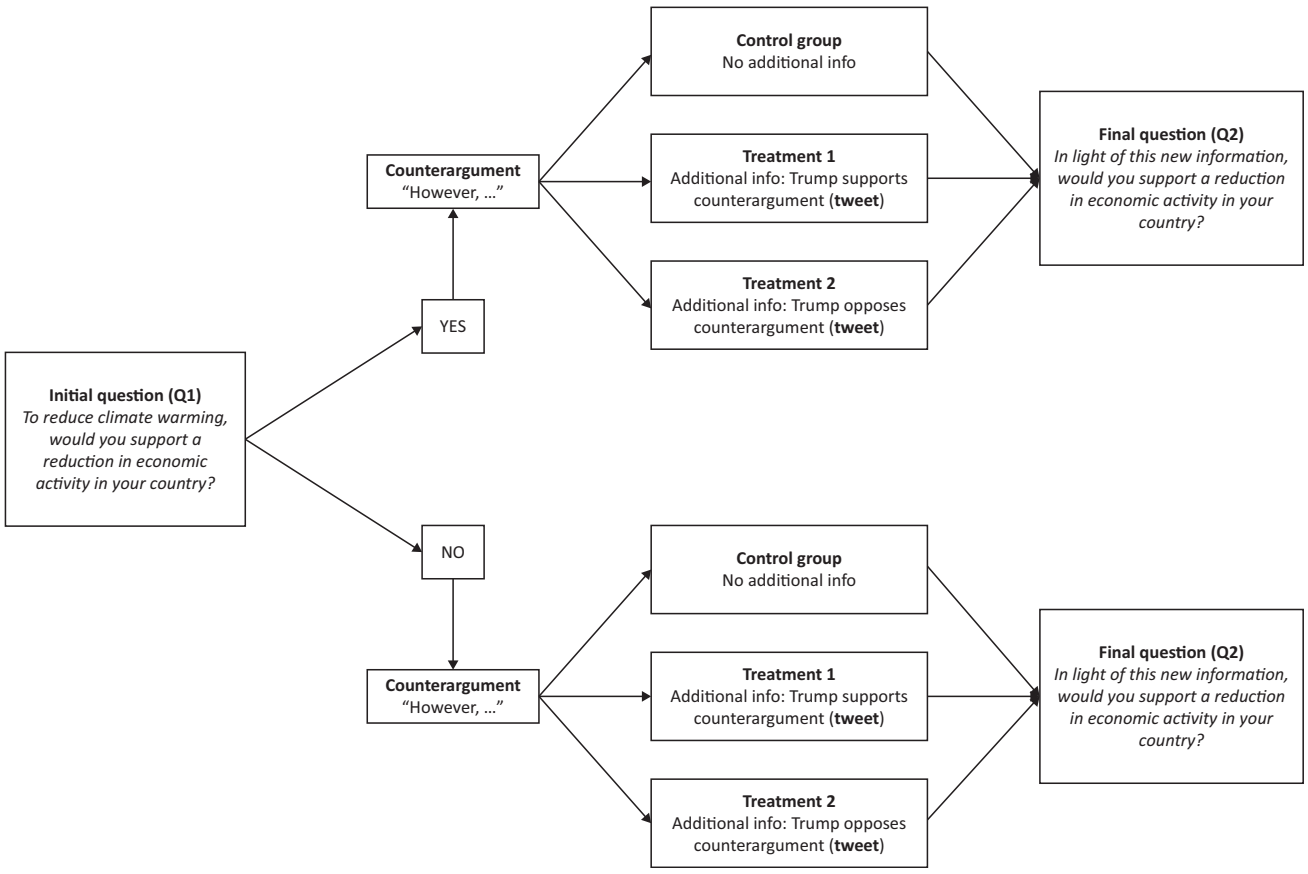

Figure 2. Experimental design.

After this initial set of information and counterarguments, the experimental component of the study started. Respondents in treatment groups were shown a tweet from Trump either in favour (group 1) or against (group 2) the counterargument, plus a final statement that sums up Trump's position. For instance, respondents that were in favour of economy slowdown were told the following just after the counterargument: "This alternative position is strongly supported by USA President Donald Trump, who recently said in a tweet that climate change is an invention of liberal news media, aiming at reducing the international US competitiveness. Trump thus believes that economic activity should not be reduced" (see Figure 3a). Similarly, respondents that believe that economic activity should not be reduced were exposed to a mock tweet that supports the opposite position. After this treatment, respondents were asked again to evaluate, in the light of this new information, whether they support economy slowdown.

The second treatment was similar but reversed. In this case respondents in the treatment groups, after being exposed to the counterargument, were shown a tweet where Trump signals his opposition to that counterargument. The questionnaire, including the mock tweets used as treatment, is in the Supplementary Material. Respondents in the control group were not provided with any further information.

Figure 3 presents the two mock Trump tweets that were used in the experiment. Figure 3a shows the mock tweet where Trump opposes economic slowdown, whereas Figure 3b shows the mock tweet where Trump supports the slowdown. The tweets are similar in length. They differ of course in the topics presented; the first refers to US manufacturing sector whereas the second refers to China and the issue of pollution. However, the two tweets are extremely similar in framing and tone; both tweets refer to "fake news media"—one of Trump's most known catchphrases—make a similar use of capitalization of selected works (HOAX, STOP) and exclamation marks, which are also a distinctive trait of Trump's social media use, and use a very similar direct and "low" language (Ostiguy, 2009). In this sense, the tweets have many more elements in common than elements that differentiate them and can in our opinion be seen as rather comparable—beyond of course their main difference in the position advocated, which is the experimental component we use in our group comparisons.

3.3. Opinion Change

The dependent variable in all our analyses—opinion change after persuasion—is measured by comparing answers to the question "Do you support economy slowdown?" before and after the treatment. We subtracted the score at the first question from the score at the second question. The higher the score, the higher the change in opinions after exposure to counterarguments; positive scores signal a stronger agreement to economy slowdown after treatment, whereas negative scores signal a stronger disagreement. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table A1 in the Supplementary Material; the table excludes respondents that are filtered out—see Section 3.4.

3.4. Filters

We employ two filters. The first one ensures that our analyses are run only on respondents that dislike Trump. Before the experiment, a battery of questions asked all respondents to evaluate a series of public figures (Julian Assange, Donald Trump, Geert Wilders, Hillary Clinton, Pope Francis, Rihanna, and Vladimir Putin), presented in a random order, using the feeling thermometer developed by the ANES research group (Wilcox, Sigelman, & Cook, 1989) on a 0–100 scale. Unsurprisingly, the average "warmth" for Trump over the whole sample is extremely low (M = 9.86, SD = 13.94)—almost half of the average score for the next most disliked figure in our battery, Putin (M = 18.62, SD = 20.98). The higher average "warmth" is for Rihanna (M = 65.54, SD = 21.05), followed by the Pope (M = 52.94, SD = 21.42). To ensure that only respondents that dislike Trump are included in the final sample, we dropped all respondents whose warmth for the candidate was higher than 30 out of 100.

Figure 3. Mock tweets (treatments). **(a)** Trump mock tweet (against slowdown), **(b)** Trump mock tweet (in favour of slowdown).

The second filter is a screener (or "attention check"; Berinsky, Margolis, & Sances, 2014) set up as long question with specific instructions "hidden" in the middle (in our case, to simply chose the option "other" and write "dinosaur" in the allowed space). Respondents that failed to comply with those instructions are assumed to only having skimmed the questions and are filtered out. After excluding respondents that either do not have a strong dislike for Trump (19) or that fail the attention check (71), our final sample is composed of 199 respondents.

4. Results

The first clear result is that persuasion works. At different degrees, and depending on the experimental conditions, all results converge towards the fact that, when exposed to a counter-attitudinal argument, respondents on average readjust their prior opinions. Figures 4 and 5 show this trend: Respondents that had an initial opinion in favour of economy slowdown are less likely to support it when exposed to counter-attitudinal information (e.g., Figure 4a); in the same way, respondents that were initially against economy slowdown are more likely to think that it is a good idea when exposed to counter-attitudinal information (e.g., Figure 4b). We now test under which conditions this is more likely to happen, looking at the congruence of source cues.

4.1. Trump Agrees with the Persuasive Message

We first test the assumption that the persuasive power of counterarguments is stripped away when they are supported by a disliked figure (in our case, Trump). Figure 4 contrasts the mean opinion change score for respondents in the control group with the mean score for respondents that have been told that Trump supports the counterargument. Figure 4a is for respondents that declared an initial support for economy slowdown (and thus received a counterargument that tried to convince them that the slowdown would be ineffective and potentially harmful), whereas Figure 4b is for respondents that initially rejected the idea of economy slowdown. Remember that due to variables coding higher positive scores on the dependent variable (y-axis) signal a move towards increased agreement towards the slowdown, whereas high negative scores signal a move towards increased disagreement.

Let's first observe respondents that initially agreed with economy slowdown as a solution of global warming (Figure 4a). For those respondents, we find strong confirmation of our expectation. Compared to the control group, the group that was told that Trump agrees with the counterargument was significantly less likely to change their opinion. The difference between the two groups is important and statistically significant, $t(77) = -4.16$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 0.95$. A similar trend can

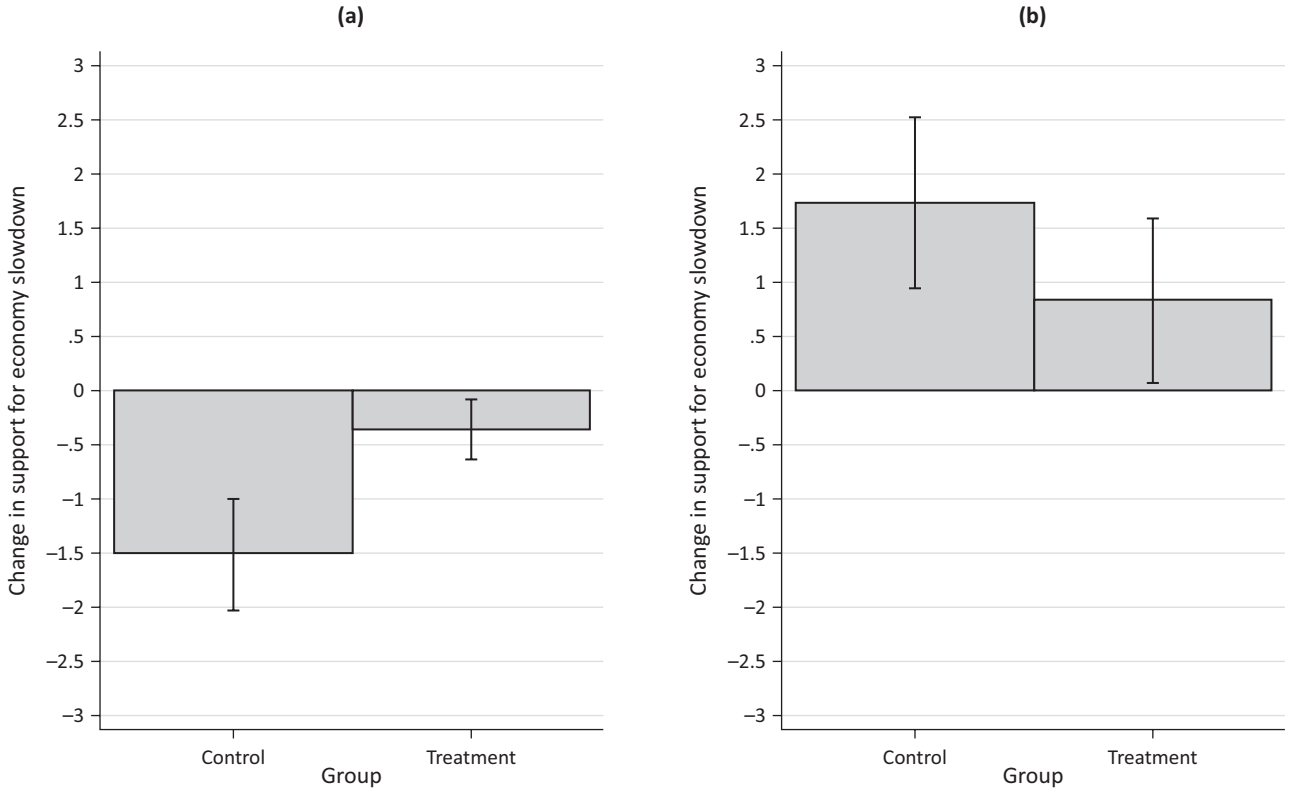

Figure 4. Treatment 1 effects: Trump "agrees" with the persuasive message. **(a)** Initially in favour of economy slowdown, **(b)** Initially against economy slowdown. Notes: N(control) = 37, N(treatment) = 42 (Figure 4a); N(control) = 26, N(treatment) = 23 (Figure 4b).

be observed as well for respondents that initially opposed economy slowdown (Figure 4b): Being told that Trump supports the persuasive argument makes respondents less likely to change their opinion when compared with the control group. The difference between the two groups is only significant at 10% and less dramatic than in Figure 4a, $t(47) = 1.70$, $p < 0.096$, $d = 0.50$. Overall, this suggests that people are more likely to resist persuasion when the persuasive message is endorsed by despised figures. This provides *a contrario* confirmation that source likeability also works in reverse: Dislike drives resistance to persuasion.

4.2. Trump Disagrees with the Persuasive Message

The second treatment reverses the logic of the first, and deals with the effects of dissonant disliked source cues. In lay language, instead of supporting the counter-attitudinal information as in the first treatment here Trump opposes it (and, thus, he supports the respondent's initial position). The intuition here is that respondents will be more likely to accept the persuasive information if they are informed that Trump opposes it. Our results show only partial support of this expectation (Figure 5).

Contrarily to what expected, respondents that initially agree with economy slowdown (Figure 5a) in the control group do not have stronger levels of opinion change (which would mean that they disagree more with economy slowdown after being exposed to the counterargument) than respondents in the control group, $t(74) = -0.10$, $p = 0.846$. The absence of difference between the two groups mean that being told that a disliked figure (Trump) opposes a persuasive message does not makes more likely for this persuasive message to be effective and result in opinion change. The figure offers however a striking contrast with respondents that have been exposed with the first treatment (Figure 4a), as discussed before. Figure 5b shows trends that are in the direction of our expectations—for respondents that initially disagree with the slowdown, being told that Trump opposes the persuasive argument makes respondents slightly more likely to be persuaded and change their opinion. The difference between the two groups is, however, again not statistically significant, $t(42) = -0.65$, $p = 0.519$.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Societal conflict lines are increasingly drawn based on how much we dislike our opponents, and less so on how much we disagree with their policy proposals. Assessing the extent of this "affective polarization," Iyengar et al. (2012) show, for instance, that in the USA over the past 50 years the use of negative stereotypes to describe the opponents (e.g., mean, hypocritical, selfish, closed-minded) has increased exponentially. Within this set-

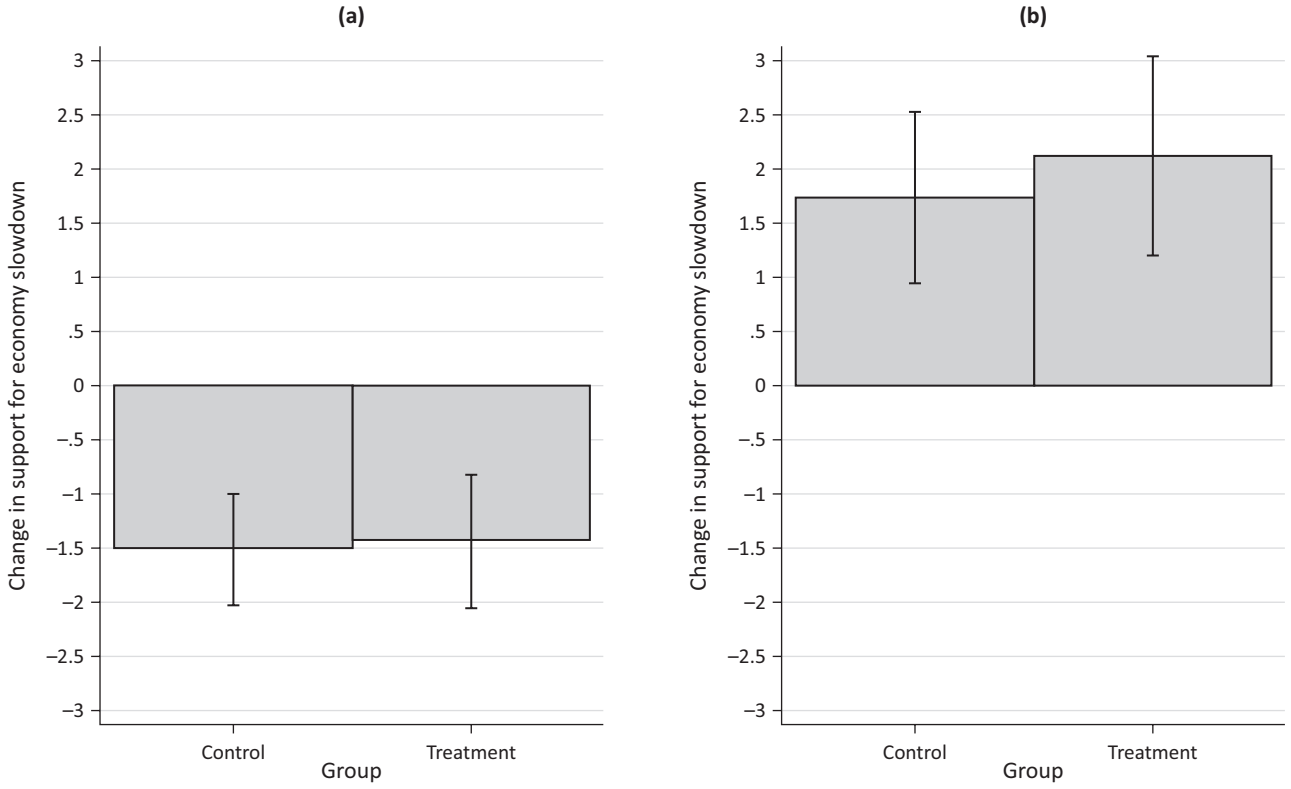

Figure 5. Treatment 2 effects: Trump "disagrees" with the persuasive message. **(a)** Initially in favour of economy slowdown, **(b)** Initially against economy slowdown. Notes: N(control) = 37, N(treatment) = 39 (Figure 5a); N(control) = 26, N(treatment) = 18 (Figure 5b).

ting, it is thus perhaps unsurprising that controversial figures thrive. Agitators, provocateurs, and bad-mannered, populists have their moment in the spotlight and, in some cases, in governments worldwide (Nai & Martínez i Coma, 2019). The increasing affective polarization and consolidation of controversial figures raises a fundamental question: To what extent is the success of (populist) persuasive messages a function of their affective assessment by the public at large? In this article, we explored this overarching question via an experimental setting where respondents in a Dutch student sample were exposed to persuasive tailored counterarguments to their expressed opinion (on climate change), and subsequently exposed to cues—either in favour or against the counterarguments—from a disliked figure, and one of the most illustrious examples of the current populist zeitgeist: Donald Trump.

In a nutshell, our results suggest that: (1) persuasion works—at different degrees, and depending on the experimental conditions, respondents on average readjust their prior opinions when they are exposed to a counter-attitudinal argument; (2) positive endorsements from a disliked source reduce the persuasive power of counter-attitudinal information (being told that Trump supports the persuasive argument makes respondents less likely to change their opinion); and (3) negative endorsements from a disliked source increase the persuasive power of counter-attitudinal information (being told that Trump opposes the persuasive argument makes respondents slightly more likely to be persuaded and change their opinion—although not is a significant way).

All in all, our results show that the persuasive power or counter-attitudinal information exists as a function of (positive or negative) endorsement from disliked sources. This suggests that endorsements matter in political propaganda, and that the persuasive power of arguments can be manipulated by external sources.

Much has been said already about the 2016 Presidential election in the media and academic debates. A leitmotif, at least in liberal circles, was that many Trump supporters uncritically accepted, shared and processed low-quality anti-Clinton propaganda and "fake news" (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017), which might have increased his electoral appeal. Our results suggest that a similar phenomenon could be at play also among detractors of the current President: A simple endorsement from Trump (positive or negative) substantially alters how issue-based messages are perceived, regardless of their direction, valence, and content. This being said, the question remains open about the political implications of this effect, and about why many (on both sides of the partisan divide) seem to forego most critical skills when it comes to the current US president (Nai & Maier, 2019).

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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Article

How Do Populist Voters Rate Their Political Leaders? Comparing Citizen Assessments in Three Jurisdictions

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Abstract
Drawing from the field of management studies, we explore how a sample of voters in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom use a leader character framework to judge political leadership. We ask, how do voters actually assess the character of their current leaders? And, in light of the populist zeitgeist, do people who hold a populist attitude differ markedly in how they judge the character of political leaders? Our results show that voters generally consider character important. However, voters who lean toward populism believe character matters less in political leadership than individuals who scored low on the populism indicator. This durable difference merits more exploration in a political context marked by populism. Our findings about the factors that influence vote choice contribute to this conversation and to extant research that reports that some voters pay greater attention to leader characteristics than do others.

Keywords
Canada; leaders; leadership; politics; populism; United Kingdom; United States

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Leadership, Populism, and Power" edited by Cristine de Clercy (Western University, Canada).

1. Introduction

Writing about political parties in Western Europe, Cas Mudde notes that parties on the right of the political spectrum enjoy a favourable discursive environment (2013, p. 15). Transformation of the mass media, electoral trends, economic insecurity, and inter-party competition are among key factors encouraging a context of soft populism where even mainstream parties now feature populist language and themes in their communications. Mudde suggests many of the policies pursued by popular radical right parties reflect existing attitudes and policy preferences among democratic voters. So, rather than being responsible for initiating these preferences, these sorts of parties simply benefit from them (Mudde, 2013, p. 1).

While the debate continues over whether populist parties are growing more powerful or are merely a reflection of the modern zeitgeist, Mudde's comments underscore that populism is found in every democratic polity. With growing populism, the role of character in leadership selection has become increasingly relevant in politics, as was underscored, for example, in the events surrounding the 2016 presidential campaign, which brought Donald Trump to the White House, and the subsequent controversies that have marred Trump's presidency. As students of leadership, we probe in this study how citizens of voting age in Canada, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US) judge the character of their political leaders. Given the current populist context, we comparatively examine whether populist voters are distinct in their assessment of character.

In exploring the facets of character, we draw from the field of management studies to apply a widely-used framework to the study of political behaviour. We explored our research questions by means of an online

opinion survey administered in Canada, the US, and the UK in the fall of 2018. The survey instrument was designed to address four research questions: Does character matter to voters? Are all eleven dimensions that comprise the leader character framework considered essential for political leadership? How do voters actually assess the character of their current leaders? And do voters who hold a populist attitude differ markedly in how they judge the character of political leaders?

We begin by reviewing the literature concerning the study of political leaders and the perceived importance of character. Then, we introduce a new framework for character evaluation that has been developed and validated by scholars working in management studies and employed in research on organizational leadership. Finally, we summarize the study's methodology, describe the main findings gleaned from the survey and offer a brief conclusion.

2. Literature Review

Because prime ministers and presidents sit at the apex of national politics, there are several ways to probe the leader–follower connection. An enduring approach separates a leader's qualities into two broad domains: competence and character (Crossan, Seijts, & Gandz, 2016, pp. 3–4; see also Johnston, 2002, p. 166). There is, however, little agreement on what exactly constitutes character and how it is best measured or indicated. Some definitions are narrow, focusing on a single aspect of character, such as a leader's trustworthiness. Other scholars understand character to be a part of a large bundle of qualities that may include a variety of perceived attributes, including decisiveness, youthfulness, and toughness (King, 2002, pp. 7–9). To survey the literature's parameters and its comparative depth, we begin by briefly discussing pertinent works in each of the three countries under study.

In the US, there is a longstanding tradition of emphasizing the role of leader character in politics. A key figure is James D. Barber, who helpfully defined character as "the way the president orients himself toward life—not for the moment, but enduringly" (1972, p. 282). Barber's work was the first to press the study of presidential character beyond historical case studies of individuals (for later examples, see Greenstein, 1975; Hinck, 1993). Kinder, Peters, Abelson, and Fiske (1980, p. 330) conclude that citizens formulate prototypes about what defines an exemplary president, including personality traits and behavioural expectations. Pfiffner (2003, p. 7) concludes, "Americans agree that presidential character is important—just as or more important than intellect, organizational ability, television presence, and effectiveness in public speaking." At the same time, other analysts find that the actual effects of candidates' personal qualities upon vote choice in American presidential elections are negligible (e.g., Miller & Shanks, 1996).

In contrast to the American literature, there is much less attention paid in Canada to leader character. Only a handful of studies concern character and how voters assess it (Ballard & Suedfeld, 1988; Courtney, 1976). The most continuous set of information across time about how voters perceive aspects of political leadership appears in the Canadian election studies series. Scholars here investigate how key parameters such as region, religion, and socio-economic status influence vote choice (e.g., Clarke, Kornberg, MacLeod, & Scotto, 2005). Key studies find information about political leaders, such as their province of origin or debate performance, contributes to explaining how voters make their choice (see Nadeau & Blais, 1995, p. 216). Johnston (2002, p. 179) concludes that while the net effects are small, Canadian voters do take leaders' personalities into account. However, the analysis of character tends to focus narrowly on single measures across several cases, and these measures are limited to a handful of items. The battery of items changes across federal election surveys, and often character is indicated simply by asking how much voters like particular leaders (Bittner, 2011; Canadian Election Study, 2015; Johnston, 2002, pp. 166–167).

The study of leader character among British academics more closely resembles the Canadian literature than the American. British study is dominated by attention to the institutions surrounding leaders (Bennister, 2008, pp. 336–337). Some scholars have drawn from American studies of leader personality to inform their understanding. Theakston, for example, employs the work of Greenstein to analyse the leadership of prime minister Gordon Brown (Theakston, 2011; see also Mansfield, 2004). Some insight into how scholars consider character and its perception by followers can be discerned in national election studies, such as the British Election Study (BES), which has been conducted since 1964. Comparing the 2015 and 2017 general elections, for example, the BES team probed how changing the party leader impacted how voters felt about the party (Johnston, Hartman, & Pattie, 2019). The BES study's core questionnaire focuses mainly on probing the likeability of leaders and does not engage the broader concept of character. As in the American case, British analysts disagree about the net effect of party leader characteristics on election outcomes, with many studies reporting mild to moderate influence (Bartle & Crewe, 2002, pp. 74–78; Garzia, 2011).

The comparative study of leader character and vote preference is a rather underdeveloped area of inquiry. King (2002, p. 3) notes that while the issue of leaders' personalities is an important one, "political scientists and other social scientists, especially outside of the United States, have had relatively little to say on the subject." King published the first comparative volume ever devoted to the subject in 2002. In 2011, Aarts, Blais, and Schmitt edited a book that used election surveys across fifty years to probe the effect of political leaders on vote choice in nine democracies. Examining what he called the personalization of politics in eight democratic countries, Garzia (2011) suggested scholars need to pay much more attention to the interaction between a leader's per-

sonality and contextual factors such as the ideological orientation of the voters. He notes that a number of studies concur that right-wing voters are much more likely to vote on the basis of leader personality (Garzia, 2011, p. 706). In 2015, Costa Lobo and Curtice edited a comprehensive collection on *The Role of Leader Evaluations in Democratic Elections*. Covering three decades of elections and leaders in thirty-four new and established democracies, the most pertinent case for our purposes is Beck and Nadeau's (2015) examination, which concludes that leader image matters a great deal in the case of French presidential elections (Costa Lobo & Curtice, 2015, pp. 169–170). Like its counterparts, this study is somewhat constrained by its reliance on election survey data and the narrow operationalization of character that such surveys typically employ.

Because the concept of populism necessarily involves elite-mass relationships, leaders are a frequent subject of attention. De la Torre, for example, references the role of leaders and the effects of leadership throughout his analysis of populism in Latin America, a region with a significant populist tradition (de la Torre, 2017). Other analysts aim to understand how voter attitudes predict the likelihood of supporting a populist, radical right party. For example, Bos, Sheets, and Boomgaarden report that implicit attitudes matter much more for ideologically moderate Dutch voters than for more extreme voters (2018, p. 80). Several recent studies broadly engage how populists respond to their leaders. Many of these studies, however, focus on the role of discursive environments or social media technology as key in linking populists to leaders (see Muis, 2015; Stockemer & Barisione, 2017).

There are only a handful of empirical studies directly examining how citizens perceive the character of populist politicians. This is puzzling to us owing to the view that "a defining feature of populism is its reliance on strong leaders who are able to mobilize the masses" (Mudde, 2017, p. 62). There are two main approaches that could be used to address this gap in the literature. One draws from Max Weber's work and examines the role of charismatic bonds between leaders and their followers (e.g., Meret, 2015). The second approach focuses on how modern media shapes, and is shaped by, populist leaders (e.g., van den Pas, de Vries, & van den Brug, 2011). In line with our approach, a few authors examine the connection between perceptions of a politician's character and citizen support (see Bakker, Rooduijn, & Schumacher, 2016). However, these analyses are rather narrow in scope, and no studies to date employ a robust, theory-driven framework that guides leadership research in focusing on the character of political leaders and voter perceptions.

In sum, as Blais wrote a decade ago, there remains surprisingly little systematic comparative analysis of the impact of leaders on vote choice across countries (2011, p. 4). Our study aims to inform some of the gaps in the extant literatures by using a comprehensive leader character framework drawn from the field of management studies to examine how populist and non-populist voters in three countries adjudicate the character of their political leaders. Our character framework, as described in the next section, is richer and more integrated than the single indicators for character used in almost all of the studies described above. Moreover, and as discussed below, we are not reliant on data from election survey studies and so our analysis is significantly more comprehensive and comparable than many existing analyses of leader effects on citizen behaviour.

3. The Leader Character Framework and Research Questions

Character has attracted significant attention in the field of management studies. Many leadership scholars who examine the effect of character on decision-making and subsequent action align their work with virtuous character. For example, Crossan et al. (2016) explained that character is an amalgam of virtues, personality traits, and values that enable human excellence and sustained performance. Virtues are situationally-appropriate behaviours, such as temperance and humanity, that are widely considered by individuals as emblematic of good leadership in that they contribute to the well-being of individuals and societies. Some of these virtues are personality traits, such as conscientiousness and resiliency, which are relatively stable dispositional variables. Lastly, some of the virtues operate as values, such as being equitable. Values act as deep-seated beliefs people hold about what is morally right or wrong.

Some virtues may be personality traits, but character and personality traits are not equivalent. There are important differences between these constructs (Seijts, Byrne, Crossan, & Gandz, 2019). First, character is anchored in virtuous behaviours and can be learned, as opposed to personality traits, which are relatively stable and, importantly, mostly agnostic to virtue (Wright & Huang, 2008). A person's character-driven behaviours may change due to deliberate practice, the effects of context or neglect and, sometimes, because of some intense, crucible experience (Byrne, Crossan, & Seijts, 2018). Second, character addresses strengths and deficiencies whereas personality traits just are as they are. For example, we do not talk about a good or bad extrovert; however, we do emphasize strengths and deficiencies in humanity or temperance.

Crossan, Seijts, and their colleagues conducted a series of qualitative and quantitative studies involving over 2,500 leaders from the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors, which led to the development and validation of the leader character framework shown in Figure 1 (Crossan et al., 2016, 2017). Their research was specifically aimed at enhancing the legitimacy and, hence, acceptance of character into mainstream organizational practices, as well as to develop a clear, unambiguous vocabulary with which leaders can address character-related issues in the workplace. Crossan et al. (2016) de-

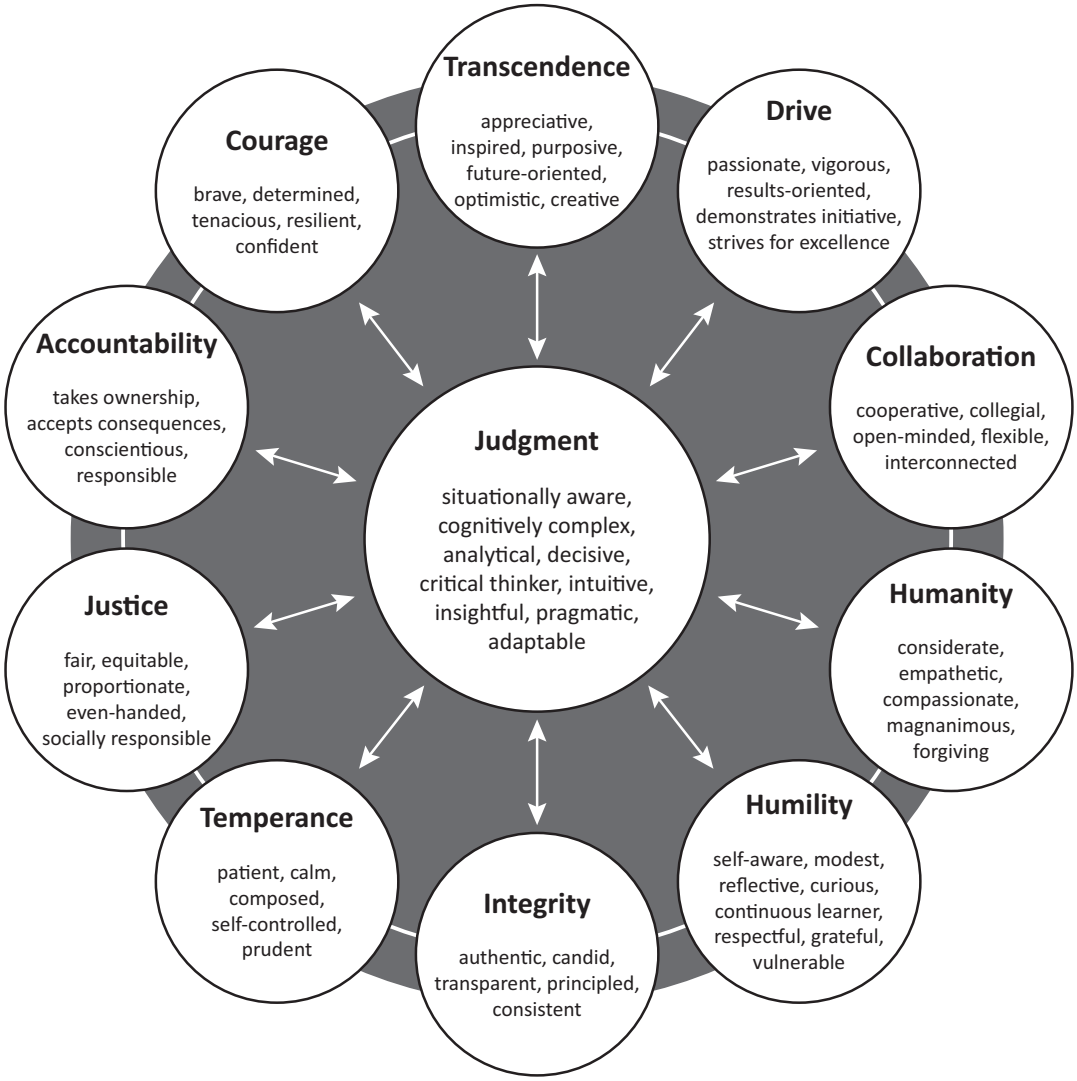

Figure 1. Leader character dimensions and associated character elements.

veloped a character diagnostic structured in both self-administered and 360-degree formats for use in organizations in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. Because the diagnostic can be used in the public sector, we adopted the framework for our study.

The framework indicates that there are eleven unique dimensions of character that—independently and interactively—influence individual, team, and organizational outcomes (see Table 1 for a description of the leader character dimensions). Crossan et al. (2017) also identified 60-plus character elements that are illustrative of the character dimensions. They posit that each of the elements has an impact on the strength of the character dimension, although their impact may not be equal.

The framework in Figure 1 communicates several important features. First, the positioning of judgment in the centre is consistent with Aristotelian thinking. Aristotle argued that practical wisdom—which Crossan et al. (2017) labelled judgment—is the outcome of the application of the virtues in situationally appropriate ways. Leadership is always context-dependent such that the wise leader understands when it is appropriate to demonstrate humility and when to be assertive; when to encourage collaboration and foster engagement and when to be more directive; and so on. For example, President John F. Kennedy showed good judgment in the handling of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, in part because he was able to activate the character dimensions of temperance, courage, humility, accountability, and drive when he truly needed them.

Second, it is essential to consider the interconnections between the character dimensions. This is because some behaviours that one might consider to be virtuous may actually operate as vices when not supported by other dimensions of character. For example, Rubenzer explained that President Jimmy Carter scored very high on achievement-striving (or drive). He was in the top one percent of all former presidents (see the interview in Dingfelder, 2004). However, his lack of assertiveness—particularly his lack of tenaciousness or resiliency (see Figure 1)—did not support the full activation of his drive, which would be considered a flaw in his leadership.

Table 1. Dimensions for leader character.

Judgment	Makes sound decisions in a timely manner based on relevant information and critical analysis of facts. Appreciates the broader context when reaching decisions. Shows flexibility when confronted with new information or situations. Has an implicit sense of the best way to proceed. Sees into the heart of challenging issues. Reasons effectively in uncertain or ambiguous situations.
Courage	Does the right thing even though it may be unpopular, actively discouraged or result in a negative personal outcome. Shows an unrelenting determination, confidence, and perseverance in confronting difficult situations. Rebounds quickly from setbacks.
Drive	Strives for excellence. Has a strong desire to succeed. Tackles problems with a sense of urgency. Approaches challenges with energy and passion.
Collaboration	Values and actively supports development and maintenance of positive relationships among people. Encourages open dialogue and does not react defensively when challenged. Is able to connect with others at a fundamental level, in a way that fosters the productive sharing of ideas. Recognizes that what happens to someone, somewhere, can affect all.
Integrity	Holds oneself to a high moral standard and behaves consistently with ethical standards, even in difficult situations. Is seen by others as behaving in a way that is consistent with personal values. Behaves consistently with organizational policies and practices.
Temperance	Conducts oneself in a calm, composed manner. Maintains the ability to think clearly and responds reasonably in tense situations. Completes work and solves problems in a thoughtful, careful manner. Resists excesses and stays grounded.
Accountability	Willingly accepts responsibility for decisions and actions. Is willing to step up and take ownership of challenging issues. Reliably delivers on expectations. Can be counted on in tough situations.
Justice	Strives to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and that consequences are commensurate with contributions. Remains objective and keeps personal biases to a minimum when making decisions. Provides others with the opportunity to voice their opinions on processes and procedures. Provides timely, specific, and candid explanations for decisions. Seeks to redress wrongdoings inside and outside the organization.
Humility	Lets accomplishments speak for themselves. Acknowledges limitations. Understands the importance of thoughtful examination of one's own opinions and ideas. Embraces opportunities for personal growth and development. Does not consider oneself to be more important or special than others. Is respectful of others. Understands and appreciates others' strengths and contributions.
Humanity	Demonstrates genuine concern and care for others. Appreciates and identifies with others' values, feelings and beliefs. Has a capacity to forgive and not hold grudges. Understands that people are fallible and offers opportunities for individuals to learn from their mistakes.
Transcendence	Draws inspiration from excellence or appreciation of beauty in such areas as sports, music, arts, and design. Sees possibility where others do not. Has an expansive view of things both in terms of taking into account the long term and broad factors. Demonstrates a sense of purpose in life.

The framework developed by Crossan and her colleagues (2017) proposes that, at its most basic, leader character is a highly complex network of correlated constructs (dimensions and elements) that affect decision-making and subsequent action and, hence, none of the leader character dimensions should be considered in isolation because a virtue can easily turn into a vice.

The contours of the literatures discussed above helped to shape and inform our study of how citizens adjudicate leader character. We focus on four research questions: Does character matter to voters? Are all eleven dimensions that comprise the leader character framework considered essential for political leadership? How do voters actually assess the character of their current leaders? And do populist voters on the right differ markedly in how they judge the character of political leaders? The next section explains our methodology and then presents the results in light of each specific research question.

4. Methods

We commissioned an opinion survey of voting-age individuals in the US, Canada, and the UK. We constructed a survey instrument (available from the authors upon request) that probed how voters engaged the leader character framework developed and validated by Crossan et al. (2016), and then employed the framework to assess specific aspects of character for political leaders in each of the three countries. We chose these countries

because they are similar in terms of democratic development, main language, media freedom, and the key role played by political leaders in national politics.

We relied on the AskingCanadians organization and their affiliates to administer the opinion survey and collect the results. Respondents were sourced from a well-established online market research panel community. The total sample of 2,194 respondents contained nationally representative sub-samples of 629 Americans, 1,039 Canadians, and 526 Britons, all of voting age, who completed an online survey. The American and Canadian data were collected during the week of October 19–23, 2018, or about three weeks prior to the mid-term elections in the US. Data collection in the UK took place during the week of November 19–23, 2018. The samples were measured against interlocking age, gender, and regional quota structures that resemble the demographic distribution of the three countries.

The nature of our research questions required identifying existing national political leaders. We focused on President Donald Trump, a Republican, and former president Barack Obama, a Democrat, in the US. We selected Liberal Party leader and prime minister, Justin Trudeau, as the key subject in Canada (the other two main Canadian party leaders were new in their positions; thus, most citizens had not yet had much opportunity to form impressions about the leaders' character). And, lastly, in the UK, we considered the then prime minister and leader of the Conservative Party, Theresa May; the then member of parliament and Conservative Boris Johnson; Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn; leader of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), Gerard Batten; and leader of the Brexit Party, Nigel Farage. We believe that in each case of the leaders under study, respondents had ample opportunity to consider their respective leaders, become informed about them, and evaluate their character as a result of extensive proofing and exposure in the media.

5. Results

We first explore how citizens of voting-age adjudicate character in political leadership and then probe the role of a populist attitude in evaluating character.

5.1. Does Character Matter? Are All Eleven Character Dimensions Considered Essential for Political Leadership?

Good leadership is a function of competencies (skills, knowledge), character (virtues, values, personality traits), and the commitment to do the hard work of leadership (aspiration, engagement, sacrifice; Crossan et al., 2016; Gandz, Crossan, Seijts, & Stephenson, 2010). Thus, we first asked respondents to force-choice or rank order the importance of competencies, character, and commitment as they relate to the role of prime minister or president (1 = most important; 3 = least important). The results revealed that character was ranked as the most important consideration by 30 (UK) to 40 percent (US) of respondents. Competencies was the most important consideration for 44 percent of respondents from the US and UK and for 47 percent of respondents from Canada. These results led us to conclude that character is an important consideration in the vote for political leaders across the populations under study.

We also explored whether all eleven character dimensions are considered important for adjudicating character, or whether citizens of voting-age value only a subset of these dimensions in the evaluation of leadership. If the latter, which dimensions are considered the most salient to adjudicating character? Thus, we asked respondents to rate each of the eleven character dimensions according to how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the dimension is an essential aspect for performing the role of prime minister or president. We provided a description of each character dimension as well as specific examples of behaviours in parentheses to enhance the clarity of the dimension. The scores ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent); the midpoint of the scale was 3 (somewhat).

The results are shown in Table 2 and indicate that respondents across the three countries deemed all character dimensions to be essential in political leadership. Most of the character dimensions had a rating of 4 or higher; the lowest score (3.79) was for transcendence in the UK sample. The results in Table 2 also reveal a striking similarity in responses across the populations. The averages are high and similar, which may indicate that the character dimensions are equally valued across Canada, the UK, and the US. Accountability, integrity, judgement, and justice were rated highest, and humility and transcendence lowest.

5.2. Evaluating the Character of Political Leaders

We next asked respondents to employ the character framework to assess their political leaders. Respondents rated the extent to which they perceive their leaders to actually demonstrate the behaviours associated with each of the eleven character dimensions. The scores ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent); the midpoint of the scale was 3 (somewhat). The results are shown in Table 3 and allow us to generate five important observations.

First, there is an appreciable gap between the perceived importance of the character dimensions as reported by the respondents (see Table 2) and whether the respondents believe their political leaders live up to these expectations (see Table 3). Second, in the US, respondents scored Obama higher than Trump on all character dimensions. The same pattern exists for Canada and the UK where respondents rated their national leaders higher than Trump on almost all character dimensions. Third, respondents evaluated Trudeau and Obama highest; the other leaders are evaluated lower on the

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for the perceived importance of the dimensions of character for political leadership as rated by citizens of voting age.

	Canada	US	UK
Accountability	4.39 (1.02)	4.46 (0.85)	4.22 (0.93)
Collaboration	4.12 (0.93)	4.21 (0.88)	3.96 (0.92)
Courage	3.99 (0.93)	4.23 (0.88)	4.11 (0.90)
Drive	4.15 (0.90)	4.30 (0.85)	4.11 (0.93)
Humanity	4.09 (0.95)	4.23 (0.91)	4.04 (0.97)
Humility	4.01 (0.96)	3.99 (0.98)	3.88 (1.00)
Integrity	4.42 (0.96)	4.48 (0.84)	4.24 (0.97)
Judgment	4.33 (0.95)	4.42 (0.85)	4.16 (0.93)
Justice	4.35 (0.96)	4.41 (0.87)	4.21 (0.91)
Temperance	4.07 (0.93)	4.17 (0.93)	4.05 (0.93)
Transcendence	3.92 (0.95)	4.02 (0.89)	3.79 (0.94)

character dimensions. Fourth, the results indicate that Canadians and Britons consistently rated Trump as much less adept across all eleven character dimensions than did their American counterparts. Fifth, in the UK, the ratings that Trump received are much closer to those of populist leaders Johnson, Batten, and Farage than to those of May and Corbyn. May and Corbyn received ratings around the midpoint; the other leaders scored substantially lower on the character assessments.

5.3. Populism and Its Connection to Character

The third question we explored was whether respondents with a strong populist attitude appreciate the im-

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for the extent to which political leaders demonstrate the dimensions of character as rated by citizens of voting age.

	US		Canada		UK					
	Obama	Trump	Trudeau	Trump	May	Johnson	Corbyn	Batten	Farage	Trump
Accountability	3.36 (1.43)	2.46 (1.49)	3.00 (1.31)	1.54 (1.05)	3.08 (1.35)	2.50 (1.32)	3.00 (1.31)	2.48 (1.30)	2.50 (1.33)	2.21 (1.32)
Collaboration	3.57 (1.35)	2.45 (1.36)	3.41 (1.25)	1.47 (0.90)	2.96 (1.32)	2.53 (1.28)	2.98 (1.33)	2.43 (1.27)	2.40 (1.25)	2.00 (1.27)
Courage	3.49 (1.32)	3.39 (1.52)	3.24 (1.21)	2.82 (1.61)	3.34 (1.35)	2.93 (1.30)	3.09 (1.32)	2.57 (1.23)	2.97 (1.34)	3.06 (1.50)
Drive	3.64 (1.26)	3.58 (1.42)	3.40 (1.20)	2.76 (1.50)	3.29 (1.32)	3.12 (1.31)	3.17 (1.28)	2.73 (1.26)	3.08 (1.32)	3.22 (1.44)
Humanity	3.81 (1.29)	2.37 (1.38)	3.70 (1.22)	1.39 (0.83)	2.93 (1.29)	2.50 (1.25)	3.22 (1.33)	2.47 (1.28)	2.36 (1.22)	1.92 (1.23)
Humility	3.65 (1.40)	2.09 (1.29)	3.20 (1.31)	1.38 (0.88)	2.88 (1.28)	2.31 (1.28)	2.96 (1.38)	2.40 (1.29)	2.29 (1.27)	1.81 (1.24)
Integrity	3.52 (1.47)	2.54 (1.52)	3.07 (1.32)	1.61 (1.11)	3.05 (1.35)	2.56 (1.34)	3.08 (1.34)	2.56 (1.34)	2.64 (1.35)	2.21 (1.38)
Judgment	3.64 (1.30)	2.84 (1.52)	3.12 (1.27)	1.76 (1.21)	3.12 (1.28)	2.75 (1.29)	2.97 (1.31)	2.54 (1.32)	2.69 (1.31)	2.42 (1.40)
Justice	3.58 (1.35)	2.60 (1.47)	3.25 (1.29)	1.53 (0.97)	3.01 (1.32)	2.63 (1.31)	3.24 (1.33)	2.52 (1.30)	2.50 (1.30)	2.08 (1.33)
Temperance	4.06 (1.19)	2.16 (1.24)	3.69 (1.19)	1.40 (0.83)	3.45 (1.26)	2.55 (1.24)	3.22 (1.31)	2.55 (1.29)	2.58 (1.27)	2.01 (1.30)
Transcendence	3.60 (1.32)	2.88 (1.47)	3.42 (1.24)	1.85 (1.20)	2.98 (1.35)	2.72 (1.29)	3.03 (1.32)	2.51 (1.29)	2.60 (1.31)	2.46 (1.37)
Overall	3.62 (1.21)	2.65 (1.26)	3.31 (1.10)	1.74 (0.86)	3.10 (1.14)	2.64 (1.09)	3.08 (1.15)	2.52 (1.14)	2.58 (1.09)	2.29 (1.10)

portance of character in leadership and, if so, which specific dimensions of character are considered especially important by those with a strong populist attitude. A populist attitude has been described as one that includes a key feature: authoritarianism. Inglehart and Norris (2016) explained that individuals with authoritarian leanings favour the personal power exerted by a strong leader, which is thought to reflect the will of the people. We used two items taken from round six of the World Values Survey to assess authoritarianism. A sample item is:

> There are various types of political systems. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad way of governing the United Kingdom? Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections. (Inglehart et al., 2014, p. 9)

The response options included very good (1); fairly good (2); fairly bad (3); and very bad (4). The average scores of the two items were 2.95 (SD = 0.93) for the UK; 3.17 (SD = 0.84) for the US; and 3.43 (SD = 0.69) for Canada. These results appear to be consistent with the marked absence of populist politics at the national level in Canada as compared to the UK and the US.

The results showed that the correlation between a populist attitude as self-identified by the respondents and the belief that character is the most important aspect of political leadership was negative and significant for respondents from the UK ($r = -.15$, $p < .001$) and the US ($r = -.14$, $p < .001$) and not significant for respondents from Canada ($r = -.05$, $p > .05$). In other words, respondents from the UK and the US with a strong populist attitude (or authoritarian leanings) were less inclined to rank–order character (in relation to competencies and commitment) as their most important consideration for performing the role of prime minister or president. Although the magnitude of the correlations is small (see Cohen, 1992), the results for the data from the US and UK are significant and suggest, as we describe in subsequent sections, that populists care less about character than non-populists.

We then explored whether there are differences in the way a populist attitude is related to the evaluation of the perceived importance of each of the eleven character dimensions for performing the role of prime minister or president. The results are shown in Table 4. The data suggest that Americans and Canadians who score high on the populist attitude believe all the character dimensions are less essential to the role of prime minister or president as compared to individuals who score low on the populist attitude. The results are less clear for the respondents from the UK. Table 4 also indicates that, remarkably, the most consistent results across the three countries are for the dimensions of accountability, integrity, judgment, and justice—the dimensions of character that individuals generally see as most important for political leadership (see Table 2). Again, these results seem to indicate that populists care less than non-populists about character in political leadership.

5.4. What Drives Evaluations of Character?

Our assumption is that a host of variables may drive evaluations of character in political leaders. For example, it is likely that political affiliation influences the perceived character of leaders. Supporters of the Conservative Party may prefer May's character more so than non-Conservative voters. Further, annual income was included as a potential predictor because economic distress may motivate individuals to vote for Trump or other populist leaders. Thus, the final question we explored in our study was which demographic, social-economic, and political preference variables contribute to the prediction of character. We were particularly interested in whether a populist attitude explains variance in character over and above a myriad of demographic, social-economic, and political preference variables.

Table 4. Correlations between a populist attitude and dimensions of character.

	Canada	US	UK
Accountability	.17***	.17***	.12**
Collaboration	.21***	.14***	.06
Courage	.11*	.10*	.02
Drive	.19***	.08*	.07
Humanity	.17***	.11**	.02
Humility	.12**	.10*	−.05
Integrity	.24***	.21***	.21***
Judgment	.21***	.21***	.19***
Justice	.22***	.14***	.13**
Temperance	.16***	.10*	.03
Transcendence	.09*	.02	−.08

Notes: Scale scores for populist attitude are reverse coded such that respondents who score high on the populist attitude believe the character dimensions matter less in political leadership as compared to individuals who score low on the populist attitude. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

We used stepwise multiple regression to determine which variables drive preferences in character, and we combined the eleven dimensions of character into a single scale score. We entered demographic, social-economic, and political preference variables in step 1 and then explored whether a populist attitude added any incremental variance in step 2. Any incremental variance explained would provide more robust support for the relationship between a populist attitude and the evaluation of character in political leadership. The results are shown in Tables 5, 6, and 7; these findings allow us to generate three important observations.

First, demographic, social-economic, and political preference variables contribute unique and significant variance to the evaluation of character in political leaders. However, the results, as can be expected, depend on the political leader. For example, age and gender were significant predictors for Obama and assessments of his character (see Table 6, step 2). In contrast, voters from small cities, towns, and rural areas were significant predictors for Trump and his character (see Table 6, step 2). Second, political affiliation or preference was a robust predictor for all political leaders in all three countries, and in the expected direction. For example, Liberals evaluate Trudeau's character higher than non-Liberals (see Table 5, step 2). Third, and most important, the results reinforce our earlier findings regarding the influence of a populist attitude on the evaluation of character. This is because a populist attitude predicted significant variance in character over and above the baseline model that included the demographic, social-economic, and political preference variables, as shown by the significant ΔR^2 in step 2.

The results of the regression analyses suggest holding a strong populist attitude has a positive effect on the assessment of the character of populist leaders (Trump, Johnson, Batten; and, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, May) and a negative effect on non-populist leaders (Trudeau, Obama). That is, respondents who hold a less populist attitude rate the character of Trudeau and Obama higher than do respondents who hold a strong populist attitude (see Tables 5 and 6). In contrast, respondents who hold a strong populist attitude rate the character of Trump, Johnson, Batten, and May higher than do respondents who hold a less populist attitude (see Tables 6 and 7).

We converted the ΔR2 to an effect size or f^2 (see Cohen, 1992). The magnitude of the effect for a populist attitude ranges from small to medium (see Tables 5, 6, and 7). Effect sizes between .01 and .15 are considered small; between .15 and .35 are considered medium; and effect sizes above .35 are considered large.

6. Conclusion

The foundation of good leadership is character in addition to competencies and commitment. The results of our study reveal that, generally speaking, character in po-

Table 5. Results of stepwise hierarchical regression predicting character by citizens of voting age in Canada.

			Trudeau		
	ΔR^2	f^2	B	SE	β
Step 1					
Gender			.22	.09	.11*
Age			.09	.06	.07
Political orientation			1.02	.09	.51***
Income			−.17	.10	−.08†
Education			.01	.10	.01
Rural			.11	.10	.05
Born in Canada			.09	.12	.04
	.30 * **	.43			
Step 2					
Gender			.20	.09	.10*
Age			.05	.06	.04
Political orientation			1.01	.09	.51***
Income			−.19	.10	−.09†
Education			−.01	.10	−.01
Rural			.09	.10	.04
Born in Canada			.16	.12	.07
Populist attitude			.17	.07	.12*
	.01*	.01			

Notes: Gender: 1 = Female; 0 = Male; Political orientation: 1 = Liberal; 0 = other; Income: 1 = > CA $75,000; 0 = ≤ CA $74,999; Education: 1 = bachelors, and post-graduate; 0 = less than high school, high school, and some college or university; Rural: 1 = downtown area of major city or surrounding neighbourhood, and suburbs of major city; 0 = rural municipality, small town or village, and small city or large town; and Born in Canada: 1 = No; 0 = Yes. Scale scores for populist attitude are reverse coded. † < .10; * p < .05; *** p < .001.

Table 6. Results of stepwise hierarchical regression predicting character by citizens of voting age in the US.

	Trump					Obama				
	ΔR^2	f^2	B	SE	β	ΔR^2	f^2	B	SE	β
Step 1										
Gender			−.09	.09	−.04			.25	.09	.11**
Age			−.03	.06	−.02			−.20	.05	−.13***
Political orientation			1.61	.09	.61***			1.43	.09	.58***
Income			−.07	.10	−.03			−.05	.09	−.02
Education			−.17	.09	−.07†			.13	.09	.06
Rural			−.17	.09	−.07†			.15	.09	.06†
Born in US			.22	.19	.04			.26	.18	.05
	.39***	.64				.40***	.67			
Step 2										
Gender			−.08	.09	−.03			.26	.08	.11**
Age			.06	.06	.04			−.24	.05	−.16***
Political orientation			1.46	.09	.56***			1.38	.09	.56***
Income			−.08	.09	−.03			−.04	.09	−.02
Education			−.04	.09	−.02			.06	.09	.03
Rural			−.21	.09	−.08*			.17	.09	.07*
Born in US			.13	.18	.02			.31	.18	.06†
Populist attitude			−.40	.06	−.26***			.21	.05	.14***
	.06***	.06				.02***	.02			

Notes: Gender: 1 = Female; 0 = Male; Trump—Political orientation: 1 = Republican; 0 = other; Obama—Political orientation: 1 = Democrat; 0 = other; Income: 1 = > US $50,000; 0 = ≤ US $49,999; Education: 1 = bachelors, and post-graduate; 0 = less than high school, high school, and some college or university; Rural: 1 = downtown area of major city or surrounding neighbourhood, and suburbs of major city; 0 = rural municipality, small town or village, and small city or large town; and Born in US: 1 = No; 0 = Yes. Scale scores for populist attitude are reverse coded. † < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.

litical leaders matters to citizens of voting age in Canada, the US, and the UK. Further, there was a striking similarity among respondents from the three countries concerning the perceived importance of the eleven character dimensions in political leadership. The results also reveal that there is a noticeable, indeed disturbing, gap between the perceived importance of the character dimensions and how the political leaders under investigation measure up: they don't, hence the character deficit in leadership.

However, among the most interesting results of our study is the finding that individuals who have a strong populist attitude appear to care less about character in political leadership; they are less likely to identify character as their most important consideration in their vote for prime minister or president. And again, generally speaking, those who have a strong populist attitude tend to agree less that the eleven character dimensions are essential to the role of prime minister or president. The effects for populism were robust: a populist attitude contributed to the prediction of character even after including a myriad of demographic, social-economic, and political preference variables in regression analyses. These findings bolster our assertion that citizens of voting age who subscribe to populism carry different views of character than the general voting public. These findings are important because they add to our general understanding of the factors that influence vote choice and to the extant research that reports that some voters pay greater attention to leader characteristics than others (Bakker et al., 2016; Blais, 2011, p. 7).

In summary, the results of our study suggest the leader character framework we employed is useful for studying how people think about leader character. We conclude this rich and integrated framework has utility across national populations, at least with respect to the three Anglo-American countries studied. Second, we note that the populist and non-populist voters in each country possess markedly different attitudes about character. These differences seem durable despite the presence of other factors such as socio-economic status. Populist voters generally think character matters less than non-populist voters and yet are more positive about the character of populist leaders like Trump and Johnson.

The effects we obtained were small to moderate yet consistent across analyses. While certainly more in-depth follow-up of our findings ought to be pursued, our work informs efforts to understand how voters think about leaders. As well, our findings reflect work by scholars such as Bakker et al. (2016) who report that a populist voter's psychological orientation explains their attraction to particular leaders. Our data clearly show that populist voters are different than non-populists in how they judge the character of political leaders. While many authors such as Mudde (2017) have observed that leaders are important with respect to understanding the emergence of populism, our work contributes by probing exactly how

Table 7. Results of stepwise hierarchical regression predicting character by citizens of voting age in the UK.

	May					Johnson				
	ΔR^2	f^2	B	SE	β	ΔR^2	f^2	B	SE	β
Step 1										
Gender			−.07	.10	−.03			.10	.10	.05
Age			.14	.07	.10*			−.26	.07	−.20**
Political orientation			1.04	.11	.44***			.45	.12	.20***
Income			.08	.10	.04			−.02	.11	−.01
Education			−.01	.10	−.01			−.05	.11	−.02
Rural			.19	.10	.08†			−.05	.11	−.03
Born in UK			.02	.19	.01			−.05	.20	−.01
	.23***	.30				.06***	.06			
Step 2										
Gender			−.07	.09	−.03			.09	.09	.04
Age			.21	.07	.15***			−.16	.07	−.12**
Political orientation			.99	.11	.42***			.38	.11	.17***
Income			.07	.10	.03			−.03	.10	−.02
Education			−.01	.10	−.01			−.04	.10	−.02
Rural			.16	.10	.07			−.09	.10	−.04
Born in UK			−.01	.18	−.01			−.08	.19	−.02
Populist attitude			−.27	.05	−.23***			−.40	.06	−.34***
	.05***	.05				.11***	.12			

	Corbyn					Batten				
	ΔR^2	f^2	B	SE	β	ΔR^2	f^2	B	SE	β
Step 1										
Gender			.01	.09	.01			.24	.14	.10†
Age			−.27	.06	.19***			−.34	.09	−.23***
Political orientation			1.21	.09	.53***			.86	.22	.23***
Income			−.08	.09	−.04			.09	.14	.04
Education			.20	.09	.09*			−.04	.14	−.02
Rural			.03	.09	.01			.01	.14	.01
Born in UK			−.29	.17	−.07†			.28	.23	.07
	.39***	.64				.14***	.16			
Step 2										
Gender			.01	.09	.01			.25	.13	.11*
Age			−.26	.06	−.18***			−.20	.08	−.14*
Political orientation			1.21	.09	.53***			.70	.20	.19***
Income			−.08	.09	−.04			.07	.13	.03
Education			.20	.09	.09*			−.03	.13	−.01
Rural			.02	.09	.01			−.05	.13	−.02
Born in UK			−.29	.17	−.07†			.23	.21	.06
Populist attitude			−.06	.05	−.05			−.47	.07	−.39***
	.00	.00				.14***	.16			

Notes: Gender: 1 = Female; 0 = Male; May—Political orientation: 1 = Conservative; 0 = other; Johnson—Political orientation: 1 = Conservative; 0 = other; Corbyn—Political orientation: 1 = Labour; 0 = other; Batten—Political orientation: 1 = UKIP; 0 = other; Income: 1 = > GB £26,000; 0 = ≤ GB £25,999; Education: 1 = Higher National Certificate or higher; 0 = GCSE, and A/AS level; Rural: 1 = downtown area of major city or surrounding neighbourhood, and suburbs of major city; 0 = rural municipality, small town or village, and small city or large town; and Born in UK: 1 = No; 0 = Yes. Scale scores for populist attitude are reverse coded. † < .10; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

populists think about character, and its eleven interrelated dimensions, when adjudicating political leaders.

Our results must be interpreted with caution given the limitations associated with our research method. Online opinion poll sampling is a common approach to probe public opinion. However, the approach is necessarily limited for at least three reasons. First, we did not sample the entire population; instead, we used relatively

small sample sizes. Second, it is possible that there are biases embedded in our data; for example, we cannot rule out that the more educated or high-status individuals responded more frequently to the survey. Third, public opinion is likely to change across time. As a result, we cannot say with certainty that the results we obtained would necessarily be replicated with a different sample at another time. Further, our measures were limited in scope. For example, populist attitude was measured by two items. Also, we did not examine the actual electoral impact of perceptions of character of political leaders. As well, we focused on three Anglo-American countries; it is important to study leadership and populism across other nations on different continents to assess the generalizability of our findings.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Populist Disinformation: Exploring Intersections between Online Populism and Disinformation in the US and the Netherlands

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Abstract
The discursive construction of a populist divide between the 'good' people and 'corrupt' elites can conceptually be linked to disinformation. More specifically, (right-wing) populists are not only attributing blame to the political elites, but increasingly vent anti-media sentiments in which the mainstream press is scapegoated for not representing the people. In an era of post-truth relativism, 'fake news' is increasingly politicized and used as a label to delegitimize political opponents or the press. To better understand the affinity between disinformation and populism, this article conceptualizes two relationships between these concepts: (1) blame attributions to the dishonest media as part of the corrupt elites that mislead the people; and (2) the expression of populist boundaries in a people-centric, anti-expert, and evidence-free way. The results of a comparative qualitative content analysis in the US and Netherlands indicate that the political leaders Donald Trump and Geert Wilders blame legacy media in populist ways by regarding them as part of the corrupt and lying establishment. Compared to left-wing populist and mainstream politicians, these politicians are the most central players in the discursive construction of populist disinformation. Both politicians bypassed empirical evidence and expert knowledge whilst prioritizing the people's truth and common sense at the center stage of honesty and reality. These expressions resonated with public opinion on Facebook, although citizens were more likely to frame mis- and disinformation in terms of ideological cleavages. These findings have important implications for our understanding of the role of populist discourse in a post-factual era.

Keywords
disinformation; fake news; misinformation; populism; social networks

Issue
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1. Introduction

Populism and the uncontrolled spread of mis- and disinformation have been regarded as key threats to the functioning of representative democracy. Although populism and mis- and disinformation have been studied within separate research fields, we can identify an important conceptual affinity between these concepts (e.g., Waisbord, 2018). First of all, populism's antagonistic framing of the ordinary people versus the corrupt elites can be extrapolated to the attribution of blame to alleged inaccurate and dishonest media elites. Second, populism typically focuses on conflict and the people's feelings and experiences whilst circumventing or attacking empirical evidence and expert analyses. Although this does not mean that populism should be equated with the politics of disinformation, it does indicate that the central stylistic and framing elements of populism can give rise to a type of argumentation in which people-centric experiences are preferred over expert knowledge and empirical evidence.

Populist communication and mis- and disinformation may have similar political consequences. By shifting blame to the alleged 'corrupt' elites whilst emphasizing the centrality of the ordinary people, populist communication may polarize the electorate—cultivating an in-

group of deprived people against other groups in society (Hameleers, Bos, & de Vreese, 2017; Müller et al., 2017). Literature on the political consequences of mis- and disinformation posits that people may be inclined to accept information that aligns with their partisan lenses, whereas they avoid or counterargue dissonant information (Thorson, 2016). As a consequence of such defensive motivations, polarization between opposing camps may be bolstered, placing people in fact-free populist echo chambers. In this article, we extend the conceptualization of the interconnectedness of populism and mis- and disinformation beyond their shared political consequences by focusing on two types of discursive relationships: (1) scapegoating the media as part of a populist communication strategy; and (2) populist disinformation as a discursive construction of fact-free, anti-elitist, and people-centric discourse. We rely on a qualitative content analysis of social media data collected in the US and the Netherlands to empirically explore the presence of these relationships. The central two-fold research question guiding this study is: (1) How are the media blamed for being dishonest and inaccurate; and (2) how are populist expressions related to a fact-free discourse?

Different actors in media, politics and society can directly spread (dis)information without the interference of media elites or journalistic routines, such as verification, accuracy and balance. Citizens can, for example, use social media to share their distrust in the media and politics, irrespective of the factual basis of their claims. Politicians may also use the oxygen of publicity provided by ungated social media to spread falsehoods across society. Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and Donald Trump in the US are two influential cases to consider in this regard: They are found to frequently blame the media for spreading lies that harm the ordinary people. Together, this article analyzes the discursive construction of populist disinformation by citizens and leading politicians in the US and the Netherlands. These countries are selected to compare how the discursive relationship between populism and disinformation is constructed in 'most different' media and political systems (e.g., Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Hence, the US has a bi-partisan political setting—which is mirrored in the ideological leaning of the press. The Netherlands, in contrast, is governed by a multiparty minority government, and the opposition consists of (smaller) left- and right-wing parties. Although some media outlets may have an ideological color, the Dutch press is less divided by ideological/partisan perspectives. In this setting, we aim to assess how robust and context-independent the discursive construction between populism and mis- and disinformation is.

The key findings of the qualitative content analysis indicate that both Trump in the US and Wilders in the Netherlands use social media to express their distrust in established institutions. These sentiments resonate with hostile media perceptions on the demand-side of the electorate. Ordinary citizens use Facebook communities to express their closeness to the ordinary, honest people who share similar constructions of reality. Moreover, they mark their distance to lying elites and dishonest media outlets. These constructions are not voiced by mainstream or left-wing populist politicians, who express milder media criticisms that are more closely linked to misinformation attributions. These findings implicate that the discursive construction of populism and mis- and disinformation can be integrated on social network sites, where both politicians and ordinary people shape alternative versions of 'their' reality whilst discrediting the 'truths' disseminated by their opponents. An important theoretical implication is that constructions of 'truth' and 'fake' are driven by identity attachments and motivated reasoning rather than a deliberation of all available facts—augmenting polarized divides across society.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Populist Discourse and the Attribution of Blame to the Media

Populism revolves around the expression of a central divide in politics and society—the ordinary people are pitted against the 'corrupt' elites (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Canovan, 1999; Mudde, 2004; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). As populism emphasizes that the ordinary people are not represented by the 'corrupt' and self-interested elites, populism relates to attributions of blame (Hameleers et al., 2017). More specifically, problems experienced by the ordinary people are allegedly caused by elites that are unwilling and unable to represent their 'own' people. Here, it is relevant to distinguish the ideational core of populism from host ideologies that may be associated with populism (also see Mudde, 2004; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). Essentially, populism refers to a style, communication tactic, discourse, or (thin) ideology in which the ordinary people are framed in opposition to the corrupt elites. This core idea can be enriched with host ideologies—such as nativism and anti-immigration sentiments on the right-wing and economic inclusion or anti-capitalism on the left-wing.

In this article, a communication approach to populism is taken (also see Aalberg, Esser, Reinemann, Strömbäck, & de Vreese, 2017; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). More specifically, populist ideas come into being—and have real-life political consequences—when communicators (i.e., politicians, the media, citizens) emphasize populist ideas in their communication. Although a growing number of empirical studies are based on content analytic research on the expression of populist ideas in (online) media (e.g., Ernst, Esser, Blassnig, & Engesser, 2019; Schmuck & Hameleers, 2019; Waisbord & Amado, 2017), there is relatively little inductive research on the nature of populist discourse (but see e.g., Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2017; Hameleers, 2019). Qualitative research indicates that populist ideas are frequently present in a

fragmented way in the media—indicating that the different components of populist communication do not always co-occur as single frames or interpretations in texts (Engesser et al., 2017). Extending this research, this article aims to explore how the central building blocks of populist discourse are represented in texts communicated by politicians and citizens, and how the expression of (fragments of) populist discourse resonate with the attribution of communicative untruthfulness or 'fake news.'

Misinformation can simply be defined as inaccurate or false information that is spread without the intention to mislead (e.g., Nyhan & Reifler, 2010; Wardle, 2017). Disinformation can be defined as the intentional (multimodal) doctoring, manipulation, or de-contextualization to reach a certain goal (e.g., Marwick & Lewis, 2017; Wardle, 2017). Although mis- and disinformation are different from populist communication, we can identify a discursive connection between the attribution of mis- and disinformation and the ideational core of populist blame attributions (i.e., using 'fake news' as a delegitimizing label or accusing politicians of spreading falsehoods). More specifically, populism's Manichean discourse bypasses elitist knowledge and expert opinion and stresses conflict, emotionalization and people centrism.

Populism's antagonistic view on society and politics has been associated with anti-media sentiments (e.g., Krämer, 2017). Hence, established media outlets can be regarded as part of the 'corrupt' establishment far-removed from the people's experiences. Populism's blame attribution strategy may thus apply to the attribution of causal responsibility to the media elite as well. Against this backdrop, we first of all identify a relationship between populist rhetoric and attributions of mis- and disinformation: Next to shifting blame to political elites, populist communication can shift blame to the established press or media elites for not representing the ordinary people's worldview (misinformation) or for deliberately lying to them (disinformation).

Although populism emphasizes a pervasive causal and moral divide between the ordinary people and the corrupt elites, most research has applied a rather limited conceptualization of the elites. Hence, the political elites on the national or supra-national are not the only elitist actors deemed responsible for causing the people's problems. By allegedly silencing the people's voice, and by promoting versions of reality that support the established political order, the mainstream media can be regarded as an important enemy of the people in populist discourse (e.g., Fawzi, 2019). We therefore need to extend our understanding of populist communication and shift our focus to the media elites and journalists as part of the people's enemy. As a first step, we thus conceptualize attributions of mis- and disinformation within a populist framework: Populism's antagonistic framing of a central opposition between ordinary and honest people and lying and corrupt elites may be extrapolated to media critique and hostility. Just like the political elites are held responsible for depriving the ordinary people, the media can be blamed for lying to the people, and deliberately misleading them by communicating misleading interpretations that suit their own political agenda.

Different actors can express populist and anti-media sentiments through different media channels. In line with the recent body of research on the content and effects of online populist communication (e.g., Engesser et al., 2017; Ernst et al., 2019), this article focuses on the communication of populist ideas via social media platforms. Although most empirical research has focused on the direct communication of populist ideas by (populist) actors (Engesser et al., 2017), online media may also create a discursive platform for ordinary citizens to communicate populist ideas (Hameleers, 2019). Combining these approaches, this article aims to understand how politicians and members of the 'ordinary' people use social network sites to express populist boundaries that blame the media for the people's problems. On the actor level, we are mostly interested in how radical-right wing populist actors that have theoretically been associated with the spread of disinformation (Bennett & Livingston, 2018; Marwick & Lewis, 2017) attribute blame to the media by accusing them of disinformation. However, although conceptual literature has regarded the disinformation order as a radical-right wing phenomenon, it remains an open question if, and if so how, the affinity between the ideational core of populism and discourses of (un)truthfulness or the radical right-wing component is the driving force of attributions of blame to the media. For this reason, we will contrast conceptually most likely cases of media scapegoating (Trump and Wilders as radical right-wing populists) to other cases (left-wing populists and mainstream politicians).

In this article, a 'most different' systems design was chosen to explore the extent to which populist disinformation is constructed in similar ways in national settings that differ on a number of relevant factors. Specifically, we compare a bipartisan country (the US) to a multiparty system with a minority coalition (the Netherlands) to investigate whether the perseverance of partisan divides shapes attributions of populist disinformation in different ways. In addition, affective polarization along partisan lines has mostly been associated with the US (e.g., Iyengar & Hahn, 2009), whereas it is much less central in public opinion, media, and politics in the Netherlands. Finally, the presence of right-wing populism in US and Dutch politics differs. Although most literature has reached consensus that the Dutch politician Geert Wilders can be regarded as a (radical) right-wing populist actor (e.g., Aalberg et al., 2017), there has been less consensus on whether Trump is a populist or radical right-wing leader (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). Irrespective of the different ways in which Trump has been classified, empirical research confirmed that he communicates populist and nativist worldviews (Hameleers, 2019). Again, this article aims to explore how similar populist disinformation is constructed in different national settings. Across these

national settings, we aim to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of how the media are cultivated as a scapegoat in populist discourse. Therefore, the following research question is introduced:

> RQ1: How are references to the media as a scapegoat for the people's expressed in social media content in the US and the Netherlands?

2.2. Populist Disinformation: The Resonance of Populism with Fact-Free Communication

The second type of relationship between populism and communicative untruthfulness proposed in this article—populist misinformation—describes the resonance between populist styles of communication and the expression of fact-free sentiments that bypass expert knowledge and empirical evidence. Among other things, the style of populism has typically been regarded as people-centric, conflict-focused, emotionalized, and based on common sense and gut feelings (Ernst et al., 2019; Hameleers et al., 2017; Schmuck & Hameleers, 2019). Here, it should be emphasized that mis- and disinformation should not be conflated with the absence of factual information and/or verified empirical evidence. Hence, we argue that the circumvention of empirical evidence and expert knowledge may give rise to the reliance of a type of argumentation that relies on experiences and opinions instead of verified information. As populism shares a similar communication strategy (e.g., Aalberg et al., 2017; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Krämer, 2014), the second type of affinity between post-truth communication and populism should be regarded on the content level: a preference for people-centric experiences over hard facts and base rate information. Although this does not mean that such type of information is necessarily false, it does connect to a type of communication that deviates from journalistic principles that strive for the truth (Waisbord, 2018): The people's opinions and experiences are less susceptible to verification and scrutiny than information presented as empirical evidence.

Populist communication bypasses the elites and experts as a source of knowledge and claims to give voice to the ordinary people and their concerns (e.g., Krämer, 2014). These stylistic elements may give rise to a specific type of communication that resonates with misinformation: Populist communication may present information that is not based on empirical evidence and/or expert opinion, but rather on the feelings and experiences of the people. Here, it should be emphasized that such forms of evidence-free communication are not necessarily wrong or inaccurate. In fact, one of the role conceptions of journalism is to mobilize the public, and interpret issues by establishing a link between events that happened and the people on the streets. This means that giving a voice to the people, and emphasizing their interpretations of and connections to issues, is actually a focal part of quality journalism.

Situated in an era of post-factual relativism where even the most basic facts that can be judged as false or true are debated, (political) communication should at least be founded on a true factual basis (e.g., van Aelst et al., 2017). As an assessment of the normative implications an underpinnings of communication that avoids facts whilst prioritizing the ordinary people's lifeworld reaches beyond the scope of this empirical endeavor, this article aims to explore if, and if so, how, populist communication actually gives rise to a communication tactic that avoids verified empirical evidence and experts whilst prioritizing conflict, emotions, and people's experiences. The research question that guides this focus reads as follows:

> RQ2: To what extent is populist communication used to circumvent elitist knowledge and empirical evidence whilst prioritizing experiences, conflict, and people-centrism as the focal point of reality?

3. Method

To answer these research questions, this article reports the result of two qualitative content analyses conducted in the US and the Netherlands. The article analyzes direct communication via Twitter (politicians) and Facebook (citizens). These two social media channels are chosen for different reasons. Different social media channels may correspond to different affordances (e.g., Valenzuela, Correa, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2018). Twitter may be used to acquire novel information, and can be used as a one-directional communication channel where followers receive updates from connections that are not necessarily reciprocal connections or 'friends.' Politicians frequently use Twitter accounts as they can reach a large number of followers, with whom they do not have to be connected, which makes it a suitable platform for elitist communication via weak-tie networks. Communication among ordinary citizens on Facebook is more likely to be based on strong-tie networks (e.g., Valenzuela et al., 2018). However, politicians use Facebook in a different way: they communicate their (personal and political) viewpoints without necessarily interacting with their followers. They do not personally know their followers, and there is no reciprocity in the online exchanges. Yet, Facebook may create a stronger perception of interactivity and community because citizens can respond to posts by politicians and interact more directly with fellow citizens that respond to the same original posts. Interaction between users is afforded by both Twitter and Facebook, but Facebook interactions typically allow for richer and more detailed discussions and less elitist interactions than the response sections offered by Twitter.

Based on these theoretical premises, data from politicians' Twitter accounts in the Netherlands and the US were scraped. Here, two 'most likely' cases to express populist attributions of blame were first of all selected: Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and Donald Trump

in the US. To further explore if, and if so, to what extent, populist media critique, attributions of blame to the media, and the expression of populist disinformation is a radical-ring wing populist phenomenon, these cases were contrasted to the direct communication of left-wing populist actors (Bernie Sanders in the US and the left-socialist politician Emile Roemer of the Socialist Party in the Netherlands) and mainstream politicians (Hillary Clinton in the US and Mark Rutte in the Netherlands). Even though not all scholars may agree on the classification of Bernie Sanders and Emile Roemer as left-wing populist, empirical evidence at least indicates that the communication tactics of these actors at times align with populist rhetoric. The key aim of case selection was to test the theoretical premise that populist disinformation mainly pertains to the radical right-wing, or whether it can also be associated with the political communication of left-wing populist and mainstream actors.

For the sample of Facebook communities used by ordinary citizens, the most-likely cases strategy was also employed: Publicly accessible communities that revolves around the native people and their distrust in the elites, or nationalist pages more generally, were used to get inductive insights into the construction of populist mis- and disinformation.

3.1. Sample

The sample frame reflected key electoral events in both countries: the national elections in the Netherlands and the presidential elections in the US. In the Netherlands, the most recent general elections were held on March 15, 2017. All original tweets by Geert Wilders in a two months pre-election and a two months post-election period were scraped (N = 1,065) and supplemented with a routine period in 2016 and 2018. In the same period, all 124 tweets of the left-wing politician Emile Roemer and a sample of 558 tweets of the prime-minister were selected. The key electoral event in the US took place on November 8, 2016. In this country, the four-months Twitter activity yielded 1,153 tweets by Donald Trump (excluding non-relevant entries and retweets). This sample was extended with 603 tweets of Bernie Sanders and 405 tweets of Hillary Clinton. In the US, the same routine period as in the Dutch case was used for reasons of comparability.

In each country, two publicly accessible Facebook community pages that reflected radical-right wing issue positions were sampled. In the Netherlands, these platforms for example revolved around the theme of 'getting back the native people's country' and anti-immigration sentiments. Similar authoritarian pages were sampled in the US (one patriotist community page and one nativist page was selected). Within these two communities, contributions published in exactly the same timeframe as the Twitter posts were sampled.

The sampling strategy on Facebook was two-staged. More specifically, original posts had multiple replies that contained relevant information connected to the research question. Based on principles of maximum variation and saturation (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), ten original posts in each community was found to be sufficient for saturation (meaning that an additional sample of new posts did not yield additional findings). For every post, the first ten replies were selected (ordered on date). Again, saturation was assessed by coding additional replies after the first ten. In some cases, the analysis of additional replies yielded additional insights, which were included in the analysis. Together, 20 posts and 215 replies were analyzed in the Netherlands. 20 posts and 234 replies were analyzed in the US. To contrast these pages to negative cases, we added one left-wing community page in each country. These pages mainly reflected an anti-corporation perspective, whilst articulating a more inclusive perspective on the people (which is in contrast to the authoritarian emphasis of the radical right-wing pages).

3.2. Analysis

All data were analyzed at the level of tweets, Facebook posts, or replies. The Grounded Theory approach was used to analyze the data in a step-by-step approach (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The coding process was selective in the sense that only excerpts that were relevant in light of the research questions were coded. First of all, open coding was applied to label segments of tweets, Facebook posts, and responses in light of the sensitizing concepts (i.e., discursive constructions of truth, fake, misinformation, disinformation, populism). Here, it should be noted that the coding process did not aim to classify information as mis- and/or disinformation on the content level (which would require fact-checking). Rather, we looked at how politicians and citizens referred to information spread without the intention to mislead (misinformation) or claims that are deliberately untrue (disinformation). Further, we looked at the type of argumentation used to make claims about reality: was empirical research quoted? Were expert analyses referred to? Did the politician or citizen refer to experiences and common sense as argumentation/evidence for issue positions?

During the second step of focused coding, this extensive list of codes (500+) was reduced by merging unique open codes, reformulating codes to higher levels of abstraction, and raising codes to categories. Codes were grouped and ordered based on their variety. In this process, piles of codes related to the construction of truth, the attribution of blame to (mainstream) media, falsehoods, and populism were made. These groups were used when conceptualizing dimensions that captured variety in the concepts of interest. Finally, during the step of axial coding, connections between these groups were made. The research questions were guiding during this final step of data reduction. More specifically, constructions of populism were connected to discourses of

truth, reality, and disinformation. The outcomes of the three-stage analysis strategy are depicted in a concept-indicator-model (see Figure 1).

3.3. Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Text Analysis

It has been argued that the measures to ensure validity and reliability used in quantitative (content) analyses are not suited to the completely different nature, aims, and scope of qualitative (text) analysis (see e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2013). Responding to these different demands, all steps of coding have been discussed with a peer that was less involved in the study, but familiar with qualitative text analysis. The raw data files of 25 tweets and 25 Facebook posts were also coded independently by this second researcher. After this sample was coded twice, differences in the labeling of segments (open coding), the merging and grouping of codes (focused coding), and the conceptual connection between emerging dimensions (axial coding) was discussed extensively. Although minor differences in the allocation of open codes and the subsequent process of data reduction were identified, the final core themes that emerged from the raw data were similar, and resulted in the same answers to the two research questions.

4. Results

4.1. How Right-Wing Populists Cultivate a Divide between the Honest People and Lying Press

Both Trump and Wilders scapegoated the traditional press for withholding the truth to the ordinary people. The media, and mainstream media in particular, were blamed for spreading lies that deprive the people of the truth. This can be exemplified by one of Wilders' tweets: "Most of the media channels have just one aim: to hurt me and the Freedom Party with their lies. Fortunately, we are stronger than the lies they are spreading" (Wilders, 2017b). Similar anti-media sentiments were expressed by Trump: "Not only does the media give a platform to hate groups, but the media turns a blind eye to the gang violence on our streets!" (Trump, 2017c).

Even more explicitly, Trump (2017b) actively refers to the cluster of media channels he distrust as the so-called 'fake news' media—which he regards as the greatest enemy of the American people: "The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!" References to the 'danger to our country' or 'the American people' explicate the discursive connec-

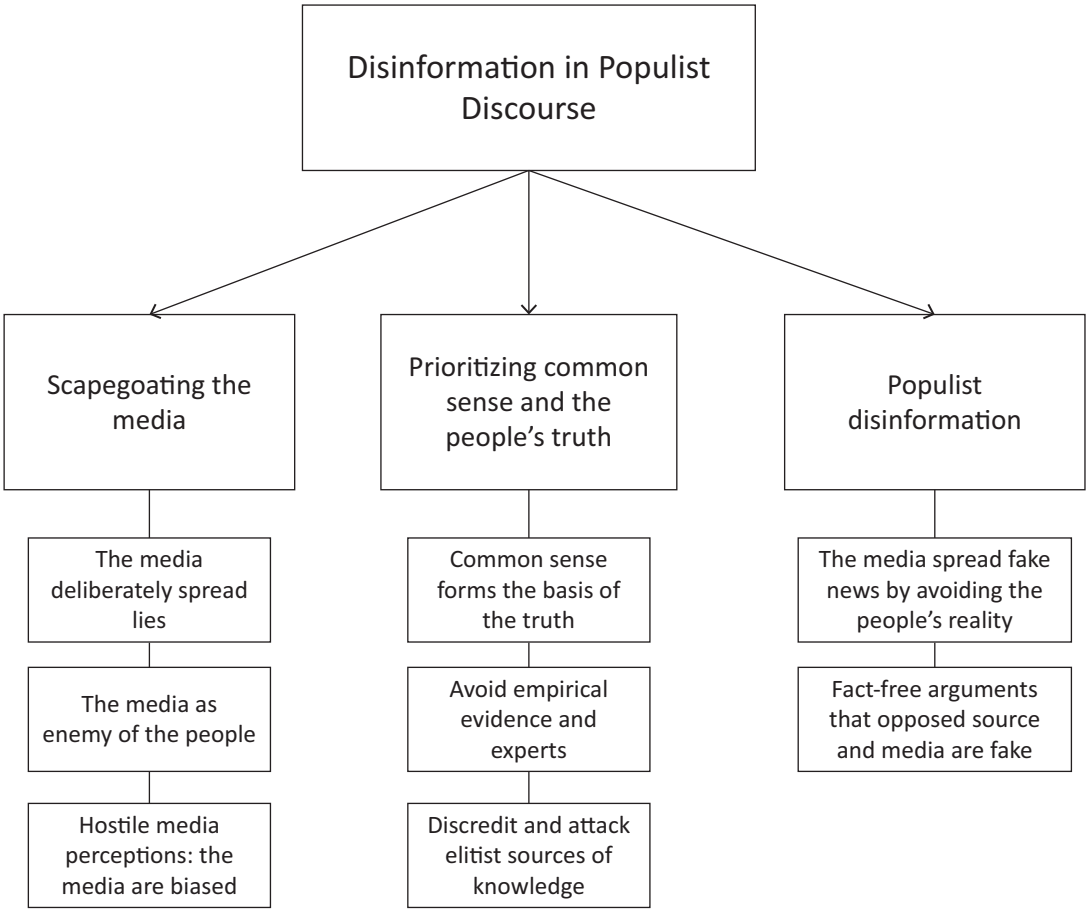

Figure 1. Concept-indicator-model depicting the structuring of populist disinformation on social networking sites.

tion between populism and accusations of disinformation: Because the media are not reporting accurately on the facts that happened, and as they deliberately distort the truth, the native people are threatened severely. Wilders further emphasized the need to start a revolution to remove the elites in politics and media.

A further analysis of the discourse used to frame the media as a culpable, elitist outsider reveals a clear distinction between mis—and disinformation. More specifically, Trump's and Wilders' references to the media emphasize that the media's dishonesty and inaccurate reporting is goal-directed and deliberate. As Trump (2017b) puts it: "FAKE NEWS media knowingly doesn't tell the truth. A great danger to our country. The failing @nytimes has become a joke. Likewise @CNN. Sad!" These accusations of disinformation further point to an alleged political goal or hidden agenda of the news media: "Crooked Hillary colluded w/FBI and DOJ and media is covering up to protect her. It's a #RiggedSystem! Our country deserves better!" (Trump, 2016). According to Trump, many news media outlets reside with opposed partisans. In this reading, these media outlets are propaganda machines that promote and uncritically disseminate the political agenda of the Democrats whilst disregarding, attacking or strategically neglecting the Republicans. Wilders further blames the media for self-censorship, and for denying the 'real' problems facing the nation: the Islam. As he puts it: "Fear and self-censorship of the coward media that ignores Islam as the greatest danger to our nation" (Wilders, 2017a).

The references used by Trump and Wilders to describe the media climate further confirm the discursive framing of an alleged climate of disinformation as a key threat to the native people. Trump, for example, uses adjectives as dishonest, rigged, dirty, crooked, and fake to denote that the media are an enemy of the people. Wilders refers to the media as unworldly, disgusting, cowards, or left-wing elitist. Here, it is important to note that Trump is much more selective in attributing blame to the media than Wilders. Whereas Wilders seems to scapegoat the 'news media' as a whole, Trump (2017a) clearly distinguishes between platforms that show a bias against his political viewpoints and media platforms that do report on the facts accurately: "The fake news media is going crazy with their conspiracy theories and blind hatred. @MSNBC & @CNN are unwatchable. @foxandfriends is great!" Hence, channels that are in line with Trump's political agenda are credited, and incongruent media are regarded as biased and blamed for their deliberate spread of dishonesty. For Wilders (2016), the divide is mostly based on a cleavage between the people's reality and the distorted worldviews of the left-wing elitist media: "A new all-time low for the left-wing media scums. Disgusting!"

Contrasting the discursive constructions expressed by the right-wing populist leaders to other political actors, it can be confirmed that hostile media sentiments and accusations of disinformation do not spill over to left-wing populists or the mainstream. In the US, Bernie Sanders did not voice hostile media sentiments. Specifically, disinformation, 'fake news,' or related accusations were not addressed to the established press or other sources of information. The discourses of (un)truthfulness voiced by him did emphasize an antagonism between the people's reality and the lies spread by his political opponent Trump (at least in the pre-election period). In the pre- and post-election period, Clinton did not explicitly engage in discourses of (un)truthfulness. In the Dutch case, results are similar: The left-wing populist politician Emile Roemer did not voice anti-media sentiments, although he did emphasize a divide between hard-working ordinary people and corporate elites. Finally, the Dutch prime-minister Mark Rutte did not engage in any populist or anti-media discourse. Taken together, our findings illustrate that attributions of blame to the media, and using 'fake news' or disinformation as a delegitimizing label, was restricted to the direct communication of the two radical right-wing populist leaders in our sample. Although left-wing populists do stress a divide between the truth of the people and lying political opponents, these reality constructions reflect partisan and divides instead of blame attributions to the (established) press.

4.2. A Populist Conception of Truth and Reality: The People Know Best

The second type of relationship between populism and discourses of mis- and disinformation conceptualized in this article—populist disinformation—can be identified clearly in the direct communication of Trump and Wilders. In the direct Twitter communication of both Trump and Wilders, expert opinion is oftentimes neglected and discredited, whereas the ordinary people are regarded as the most reliable source of honest and accurate information. In the Netherlands, Wilders (2018b) frequently refers to common sense and the knowledge of the ordinary people to disregard expert knowledge on climate change, also referred to as "climate nonsense" (Wilders, 2018b) by Wilders and his followers: "Ordinary people confront the king with climate nonsense of our cabinet. Where do people get 15,000 euros from?" Wilders (2018a) also cultivates a divide between the representation of left-wing elitist parties and ordinary people represented by his Freedom Party: "The Freedom Party represents all ordinary people despite their color. The Greens only represent the white, left-wing elites."

Common sense is used to depict the truth, without referring to any empirical evidence, numbers, or sources: "What is sure is that the ordinary Dutch person can pay for all this nonsense. The rest of it is based on lies and deception" (Wilders, 2018d). This type of evidence that prioritizes common sense and the ordinary people is used to interpret any kind of issue, for example the (failing) expenditures of the government:

> Electricity more expensive. VAT goes up. Rents higher. But billions of euros go to Africa. The ordinary Dutch people can bleed as a cause of the mistakes of the gang of our governmental leader. Give these billions to the hardworking Dutch citizens! (Wilders, 2018c)

Hence, hard claims, as well as causal connections that resonate with a populist anti-elitist divide and threats to the ordinary people, are made without any references to evidence, statistics, numbers, or expert opinion.

A similar discourse construction of reality can be identified in Donald Trump's populist expressions. Trump (2018a) actively defends the political agenda he pursues as the agenda governed by the common sense of the American people: "Our agenda is NOT a partisan agenda—it is the mainstream, common sense agenda of the American People." Moreover, Trump explicitly refers to 'facts' and 'the truth' without giving any type of empirical evidence to support these truths. In these references to the truth and the centrality of the ordinary people, the two types of relationships between accusations of disinformation and a populist framing of truth and reality oftentimes co-occur in single interpretations:

> The Fake News hates me saying that they are the Enemy of the People only because they know it's TRUE. I am providing a great service by explaining this to the American People. They purposely cause great division & distrust. They can also cause War! They are very dangerous & sick! (Trump, 2018b)

Cultivating the people's truth is not restricted to the discourse of radical right-wing populists. The left-wing populist actors in our sample emphasized that ordinary or native people are right, whereas elitist outsiders (i.e., corporations) are breaking their promises by lying to the people. This can be illustrated by the following tweet of Sanders (2016): "Time and again Native Americans have seen the government break solemn promises and corporations put profits ahead of their sovereign rights." Although people-centrism was less central in Emile Roemer's (2016) discourse, references to the majority of the people and their will were implicitly articulated by the Dutch left-wing populist politician: "The people know it—2/3 of all Dutch people agree with the Socialist Party: we need to let the profiting billionaires pay!" Turning to the mainstream politicians, Clinton in the US and Mark Rutte in the Netherlands do identify many references to the "American people" or "Dutch voters." Yet, these references do not cultivate a cleavage between common-sense and people-centric realities contrasted to the elite's lies.

4.3. The Audience's Perception of a Cleavage Between the Truthful 'Us' and Dishonest 'Them'

Both types of relationships between populism and mis- and disinformation identified in the Twitter communication of Trump and Wilders are confirmed with the analyses of the public's discourse on Facebook. In this section, only the differences between politicians' reality constructions and citizens' interpretations on the demand-side will be discussed in more detail. In US public discourse, citizens made a less fine-grained distinction between trustworthy and rigged media outlets compared to Trump. Hence, the media, opposed partisans, and governmental institutions were frequently lumped together as an elitist outsider that did not comprehend the people's lifeworld: "Those that are white getting in trouble for hate (racist) crimes and yet the far left communist Democrat controlled media never seem to report these hate crimes against the whites" (Facebook user, February 15, 2017). In the Netherlands, people mainly attributed blame to the media elites for looking away, or for being 'blind' to see the real problems and experiences of the ordinary people: "They make sure that this is not seen on TV. But the police is willing to join [protests initiated by the people]" (Facebook user, March 12, 2017). In addition, Dutch citizens focalize an overall sense of distrust in both the media and expert knowledge: "They are all shouting to tell exactly the same story. All the best to them: there is no one who trusts media, students or other so-called experts" (Facebook user, July 17, 2017).

The epistemic and moral boundary between the innocent and honest ordinary people and the lying elites was more salient on Facebook than reflected in the direct communication of both politicians. Similar to politicians' discourse, however, people refer to 'the truth' and 'reality' without using empirical evidence or facts: "That's the truth. People with jobs don't vote Democrat unless they just don't understand what goes on in this world" (Facebook user, April 6, 2017). In the Netherlands, this divide was further stressed by cultivating the divide along ideological lines. The left-wing was regarded as dishonest and far-removed from reality, whereas the 'real' ordinary people did know what was going on in society: "Like our Facebook page to show these left-wing idiots that reported our previous page that we are right. They do not want to see what is really going wrong here" (Facebook user, August 8, 2017).

The analysis from the negative cases—the left-oriented pages—reveal that people-centrism and a focus on the common sense of the ordinary people is a common theme on these community pages as well. On these pages, the reality constructions and lies of corporate and political elites are contrasted to the ordinary people's experiences. Here, we see a left-wing populist construction in which the hardworking ordinary citizen is juxtaposed to the self-interested elites. Media critique is salient on these pages as well, but it takes on less hostile forms. See, for example, the following statement voiced on a Dutch Facebook community: "The media do not report accurately. They present a worldview that does not take these factors into account" (Facebook user, September 8, 2017). Although the hostile media critique on the right-wing populist pages may be considered as accusations

of disinformation, the left-wing pages more closely reflected attributions of misinformation.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The alleged uncontrolled spread of dishonest or inaccurate information in today's fragmented media environment may have severe political consequences (van Aelst et al., 2017). More specifically, the epistemic status of factual information increasingly becomes the focal point of heated debates, and the acceptance of information may be driven by defensive and consistency motivations rather than veracity (e.g., Nyhan & Reifler, 2010). Extending this line of argumentation, this article has proposed a two-fold relationship between populism and mis- and disinformation: (1) the attribution of mis- and disinformation to the (media) elites; and (2) populist disinformation as a communication style that avoids empirical evidence and expert analysis, whilst placing common sense and the ordinary people at the center stage of reality. Two qualitative content analyses in the US and the Netherlands were conducted to provide in-depth insights into the affinity between populism and mis- and disinformation: How are social media platforms providing a discursive opportunity for politicians and ordinary citizens to express populist boundaries between the truthful us and the dishonest them?

First of all, we found that both Trump in the US and Wilders in the Netherlands expressed a populist boundary between the dishonest, inaccurate, and fake media and ordinary native people that were victimized by the media's dishonesty. These attributions tie in with disinformation: The media were accused of deliberately distorting reality to promote their own biased political agendas. The language used by both politicians further indicate that the media are blamed for looking away, and denying the problems experienced by the ordinary people. There was one noteworthy difference between Trump's and Wilders' anti-media discourse: Wilders mostly attributed blame to the media in general, whereas Trump more specifically blamed the media outlets that did not support his partisan views. This finding can be interpreted as a stronger hostile media bias in the US. Here, media outlets that expressed incongruent viewpoints were regarded as biased against the views of the people (e.g., Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985) and the truth in general. Donald Trump thus selectively blamed and credited sources to defend the partisan views he communicated to his followers. This finding can be explained in light of the different media discourses at the time of data collection. Although most legacy media were critical toward Wilders and his policies (i.e., there are at least no clear indications that certain media were systematically more favorable toward Wilders as compared to other outlets), Trump could more clearly rely on the US partisan media system: Certain media may be explicitly negative in their coverage, whereas others may be systematically more favorable because of a political parallelism.

In support of the theoretical notion of the expression of fact-free and people centric-communication in populist discourse (e.g., Waisbord, 2018), both politicians clearly avoided expert knowledge, statistics, verifiable facts or evidence, and relied on common sense and the people's truth as evidence for the populist claims they made. There was little room for balance or opposing viewpoints, and the populist discourse was generally one-sided and presented as the only reality opposed to the 'fake news' presented by opposing politicians and media sources. An important implication of these findings is that social network sites, such as Twitter, provide (populist) politicians with a platform to express disinformation to strategically attack the politicians they oppose. This may eventually increase polarized divides in society, and raise levels of political distrust and cynicism among the electorate (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). Explicit attacks targeted at the news media were only found on the radical-right, and did not spill over to the communication tactics of left-wing populists or mainstream politicians in the two countries. Left-wing populists did, however, emphasize people centrality and attributed dishonesty to their political rivals and the (corporate) establishment. Hence, discourses of untruthfulness can be connected to populism in general, whereas the explicit reliance on common sense and emotions as the focal point of reality and blame attribution to the 'lying' established press is a communication tactic of radical right-wing populists in particular. In that sense, it seems that the authoritarian element that sets right-wing populism apart from the thin-cored ideology of populism (Mudde, 2007) can be associated with hostile critique on the established press and a circumvention of expert knowledge and empirical evidence. But how is populist disinformation shaped by the public on social media?

The content analysis of citizens' discourse on Facebook largely confirms the findings of the politicians' discourse, pointing to an alignment of populist interpretations between the supply and demand-side. The difference mainly revolves around the type of moral and epistemic cleavage emphasized by the public. More specifically, Dutch citizens were more likely to cultivate a divide between their in-group and the ignorant left-wing people. In the US, the political and media elites were frequently lumped together, whereas Trump articulated a more fine-grained distinction between the 'fake news' media and politicians of the opposed party. The analysis of the negative cases—left-wing oriented Facebook community pages—revealed that emphasizing the people's truth is not restricted to radical right-wing populist interpretations. However, media critique was less hostile and focused more on unintended false information (misinformation) than intentional deception (disinformation). These findings indicate that citizens communicating their political perspectives on different platforms do distinguish between attributions of mis- and disinformation.

Despite providing important new insights into how mis- and disinformation can be situated in populist dis-

course, this study has some limitations. First of all, the empirical study only focused on two social media platforms. Future research may extend the analysis to different platforms (i.e., including commentary sections of mainstream outlets) and political actors (i.e., distinction between populist and mainstream actors may be relevant). Second, the qualitative and inductive findings presented in this article provided important first insights into how populist disinformation manifests itself online, but may be extended with (automated) content analytic research that also provides insights into the relative salience of, and relationships between, different forms of populist sentiments targeted at the media.

Despite these limitations, this article contributes to our understanding of the current post-factual media era and populist zeitgeist—and the interconnectedness of these communicative phenomena—indicating in what ways different actors can use social network sites to express a pervasive divide between the 'honest' people and 'the others.'

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Tweeting Power: The Communication of Leadership Roles on Prime Ministers' Twitter

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Abstract
This article examines the communication of leadership roles by prime ministers Justin Trudeau and Theresa May on Twitter. I argue that tweets from prime ministers implicitly communicate information about how prime ministers lead and what their job entails: what I call role performance and function. I develop an inductive typology of these leadership dimensions and apply this framework to Trudeau and May's tweets in 2018 and 2019. I find first that Trudeau is a much more active Twitter user than Theresa May was as prime minister, attesting to different leadership styles. Second, both use Twitter primarily for publicity and to support and associate with individuals and groups. Trudeau is much more likely to use Twitter to portray himself as a non-political figure, while May is more likely to emphasize the role of policy 'decider.' Both prime ministers are framed much more often as national legislative leaders rather than party leaders or executives. Finally, May's tweets reflect her position as an international leader much more than Trudeau's. Assessing how prime ministers' tweets reflect these dimensions contributes to our understanding of evolving leader–follower dynamics in the age of social media. While Twitter has been cited as conducive to populist leaders and rhetoric, this study shows how two non-populist leaders have adopted this medium, particularly in Trudeau's case, to construct a personalized leader–follower relationship.

Keywords
leadership roles; political communication; political leadership; prime ministers; Twitter

Issue
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1. Introduction

This article examines the communication of leadership roles by Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau and former British prime minister Theresa May on Twitter. Online social media such as Twitter has become a major arena for political engagement. In 2017, almost 70 percent of adults in the US and Canada used social media (Poushter, Bishop, & Chwe, 2018); 40 percent used it as a daily news source (Mitchell, Simmons, Matsa, & Silver, 2018). 40 percent of online Canadian adults had a Twitter account (Gruzd, Jacobson, Mai, & Dubois, 2018). These numbers are even more striking for younger individuals; 60 percent of Canadians aged 18–29 use social media as a daily source of news, while only one-quarter over the age of fifty report doing so. The prevalence of social media use for political purposes suggests that it plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of politics and political leaders. Online social media has also played a central role in the rise of populism and populist leaders globally (Ernst, Engesser, Büchel, Blassnig, & Esser, 2017).

While Twitter is often associated with populist leaders and rhetoric, non-populist leaders have also adopted the medium. The advantages of Twitter for populist messaging are clear: the opportunity to communicate short, simple messages directly to followers, unfiltered by 'hostile' institutions such as the mainstream, traditional media. However, it is less clear how non-populist leaders use such messaging to present themselves online. The question guiding the present analysis is: What do prime ministers' tweets communicate about the leadership roles of the prime ministerial office? I argue that these tweets carry not only content but implicit information about how prime ministers lead and what their

job entails. This is important because followers' expectations of leadership, and their evaluations of whether those expectations are met, are shaped by framing on social media. Employing content analysis, I examine how Trudeau and May frame their leadership on Twitter in terms of an original inductive typology of role performance (performative tasks like education, advocacy, and publicity) and function (the 'job description': party leader, global statesperson, chief executive, etc.). Assessing how prime ministers' tweets reflect these two dimensions contributes to our understanding of evolving leader–follower dynamics in the age of social media.

This exploratory analysis uncovers several significant findings. The perception that Justin Trudeau is a highly active Twitter user is confirmed: He tweets almost three times as often as Theresa May. Second, both leaders use Twitter primarily for publicity and to offer support and association with individuals or groups. Trudeau is much more likely to use Twitter in a personalistic way, while Theresa May is slightly more likely to emphasize the prime minister as a 'decider' of government policy. Prime ministers are framed much more often as legislative and national leaders than as party leaders or executives. Theresa May's tweets reflect her position as an international leader much more than Justin Trudeau's, though this is largely due to the salience of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. These contrasts suggest that even non-populist leaders use Twitter to forge direct, personalized attachments with followers, with Trudeau much more active than May in doing so.

I proceed by reviewing research on leadership, social media, and political communication. In the third section, I describe the political context, leadership styles, and selection of the two prime ministerial cases. I then introduce the typology of leadership role performance and function that structures empirical analysis. Subsequently, I describe the data and methodology used to collect and analyze twitter data. I explicate the empirical results and what they reveal about how prime ministerial use of Twitter reflects understandings of leadership. Finally, I discuss these findings, contributions, and suggestions for further research.

2. Leadership, Twitter, and Political Communication

This study builds on research on the rise of unmediated political communication and Twitter as increasingly central to the success of leader messaging. Traditionally, political communication was mediated: filtered through channels linking leaders to the public, such as the media and parties (Pfetsch & Esser, 2012, p. 26). These institutions, particularly media, perform a gatekeeping function: selecting and framing the transmission of messages (Soroka, 2012, p. 515). Research thus focused on the power of media in politics and interaction between leaders and the media (e.g., Bennett & Entman, 2000; Kaid, Gerstle, & Sanders, 1991; Nimmo & Combs, 1989). This interaction was central to the success and failure of leaders. For example, Zaller and Hunt's (1994, p. 386) analysis of Ross Perot's failed presidential candidacy in 1992 argues that both his rise as a viable candidate and his decline in support are attributable to the mass media's shifting framing. Heffernan (2006) and Helms (2008) examine how media acts as both a resource for leaders and a significant constraint.

Despite mass media's importance, the growth of online social media has undoubtedly shifted the landscape. Indeed, mass media increasingly 'outsource' their content and information to social media. Sites such as Twitter that focus on instantaneous public messaging greatly increase opportunities for leaders to communicate to followers without the intervention and potential manipulation of the press (Parmelee & Bichard, 2012, p. 12). Crucially, populist leaders and groups are often particularly effective users of social media precisely because they lack access to traditional mass media (Mudde, 2004, p. 545); their appeals tend to focus on charismatic leaders, antagonism to the 'mainstream' media, framing of powerlessness against 'elites,' and simple messaging (Groshek & Koc-Michalska, 2017; Waisbord & Amado, 2017). Social media also personalizes politics for followers, creating a more 'individuated' politics in which people experience politics as an expression of individual autonomy, direct interaction with leaders, and choice among sources of information and support (Fenton & Barassi, 2011; McAllister, 2007). Individuals construct their own political worlds through choices, for example, of who to follow on social media, and leaders gain direct access to those worlds.

Twitter is an online social network that allows messages of up to 140 or 280 characters (Parmelee & Bichard, 2012, pp. 3–4). Political leaders use Twitter to communicate with the public, but especially to their own followers. Twitter is an especially appealing method of communication because of its ease of use, low cost, and high accessibility. As above, these characteristics have been particularly conducive to the populist communication style and rhetorical content. Researchers are increasingly interested in Twitter use by political leaders and parties, particularly after its contribution to Barack Obama's presidential campaign success (Evans, Cordova, & Sipole, 2014, p. 454; Parmelee & Bichard, 2012, p. 8). Initially, much research focused on Twitter's contribution to democratic participation and leader–follower engagement. The emergence of online social networks in the 2000s, 'Web 2.0,' raised the possibility of meaningful, deliberative interaction between citizens, leaders, and governments (Jackson & Lilleker, 2009). However, most studies have found only unfulfilled potential (Cammaerts, 2008, p. 372). Instead of robust deliberation, there are 'echo chambers'; instead of genuine dialogue, leaders use Twitter mostly for "one-way transmitting of policy information and personal musings" (Parmelee & Bichard, 2012, p. 26).

While social media has not meaningfully democratized leader–follower dynamics, it has become essential

in modern campaigns; research has followed this trend (Davis, Bacha, & Just, 2016; Jungherr, 2016; Parmelee & Bichard, 2012). Parmelee and Bichard (2012), for example, categorize congressional candidates' tweets in the 2010 US elections. Evans et al. (2014) followed by measuring candidates' Twitter in 2012, finding significant differences in style by gender and party, among others. Research has also assessed how political leaders use Twitter for political communication outside of campaigns, examining the communications of personality and leadership styles. Aharony (2012) found that the three leaders examined—Benjamin Netanyahu, David Cameron, and Barack Obama—used it primarily for informational and self-promotion purposes. Madestam and Falkman (2017) examined the tweets of two Scandinavian ministers, finding divergent styles: personal and informal, on the one hand, and professional, on the other. Australian politicians' use of Twitter has been examined by both Fuller, Jolly, and Fisher (2018) and Grant, Moon, and Grant (2010). Fuller et al.'s (2018) study is particularly interesting as a single case study of Malcolm Turnbull (prime minister, 2015–2018). They examine changes over time in how Turnbull used Twitter, showing that his changing political circumstances from opposition to government are associated with a decline in genuine engagement with his followers (Fuller et al., 2018, pp. 99–100). This study follows these efforts to understand how political leaders, populists or not, have adopted online social media to communicate leadership. It does so by examining the cases of two prime ministers, Justin Trudeau in Canada and Theresa May in the UK, which present quite contrasting political contexts, styles, and social media strategies.

3. Justin Trudeau and Theresa May: Political Context and Leadership Styles

Justin Trudeau became prime minister of Canada in 2015, winning a majority after nine years of Conservative government. Widespread fatigue with the incumbent government, the personal 'celebrity' status of Trudeau, rebuilding opposition parties, and the rise of a third-place party to government afforded the new prime minister considerable political space to imprint his brand of leadership on Canadians. While Trudeau certainly faced challenges, notably with the election of Donald Trump in 2016, his first term saw few serious threats to his leadership. Theresa May's period in office, from 2016 to 2019, was dominated by the process of negotiating and implementing the UK's exit from the EU, 'Brexit' (Goodlad, 2018, p. 13); in fact, she entered office as a result of her predecessor's referendum failure. In contrast to the stability of Trudeau's majority government, high personal popularity, and relatively serene political waters, May faced serious intraparty divisions, party system fragmentation, a "limited personal mandate," and a legislative minority after the June 2017 election (Williams, 2017, p. 13). As Allen (2018, p. 106) notes, these factors continually "threatened to overwhelm" May's prime ministership, and eventually did. The sharp contrasts in the political contexts of these two leaders should be reflected in the leadership styles they projected and on how their leadership was communicated on social media.

As recent prime ministers, Trudeau and May's leadership styles have not been the subjects of extensive scholarly analysis. However, we know that Trudeau's high personal popularity was often attributed to his 'celebrity' status as the son of a former prime minister and his "youth, approachability, and positive approach to politics" (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019, p. 889). Canadians held very positive views of Trudeau's leadership qualities, particularly of his temperance and humanity (Seijts, de Clercy, & Nguyen, 2018, p. 439). These positive characteristics of his leadership style, however, were accompanied by questions about the prime minister's seriousness and competence as a decision-maker. Seijts et al. (2018, p. 439) also found that Trudeau's lowest-rated character traits were accountability and judgement. The Conservative strategy in 2015 of portraying Trudeau as 'not ready' to govern, while unsuccessful in that campaign, has persisted for many Canadians (Lalancette & Cormack, 2018). In contrast, Goodlad (2018, p. 12) describes perceptions of May as "fundamentally serious" and "business-like," while Allen (2018, p. 155) describes her leadership style as "stubborn," cautious, and disinterested in building coalitions of support for her agenda. This lack of personal appeal in a personalized media and political environment has been cited as contributing to the minority result in the 2017 election (Bale & Webb, 2017, p. 21).

These contrasting leadership styles are reflected in differences between Trudeau and May's social media use. Justin Trudeau is described as especially effective in using social media, to the extent of being dubbed the 'selfie' prime minister. This suggests a strong focus on public engagement and, perhaps, inattentiveness to governance (Marche, 2019; Watt, 2019). Trudeau's use of social media for direct, unmediated communication with followers, based largely on carefully crafted image-making, echoes populist communication strategies, if not in rhetoric or ideology (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2019, pp. 916–917). Conversely, Theresa May was described as adverse to social media. Labour "handily" beat the Conservatives in the social media campaign during the 2017 election (Cecil, 2017); Simon (2018) argues that May campaigned "by pretending social media didn't really exist" and that she considered David Cameron's social media use to be frivolous and vain.

These two prime ministers were selected as cases for both pragmatic and methodological reasons. First, pragmatically, selection was limited by the need to access English-language tweets by prime ministers who hold similar positions in similar institutional contexts. This means the universe of cases is limited to the four Anglo parliamentary systems (the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). Second, as an exploratory descrip-

tive analysis, my focus is on applying a novel typology of leadership roles to elucidate case-specific outcomes, not necessarily on inference from these cases to the broader population of prime ministers or political leaders. In other words, the primary goal is to describe Justin Trudeau and Theresa May's communicative patterns on Twitter using an inductive typology, not to test a theory or the adequacy of a typology by examining representative cases. As Seawright and Gerring (2008, p. 296) note, in this type of descriptive case study "the problem of case selection does not exist."

This does not mean that methodology is unimportant; Gerring (2006, pp. 717–726) identifies analytical strategies when the primary goal is case-specific description. The comparison of prime ministers Trudeau and May can be seen as a "most similar" design, in which one case is "preselected" (in this case, Trudeau) and a comparator case most similar in important respects except outcomes is chosen (Gerring, 2006, p. 723). Since the role of the Canadian prime minister is based on the British system, the cases inherently share similar institutional contexts. Of the four, New Zealand is substantially smaller and has an electoral system that has altered significant aspects of executive governance, while Australia would introduce complications as the study period includes a change in prime minister. We also have reason to expect, from above discussion, that Trudeau and May display contrasting leadership styles and political contexts and will produce quite different patterns of leadership communication on Twitter, despite their similar offices. Thus, they provide interesting variation with which to develop our typology of leadership roles, to which we now turn.

4. Analytical Framework

To reiterate, the question guiding this research is: What do tweets communicate about the leadership roles of the prime ministerial office? This specific focus on prime ministers is particularly interesting because of the flexibility of the prime ministerial role and the relative lack of formalized rules governing its use (Heffernan, 2006); the office "is what its holder chooses and is able to make of it" (Seymour-Ure, 2008, p. 9). Thus, what prime ministers say and do is a crucial way through which publics learn about prime ministerial leadership. Through Twitter and other media, leaders reveal perspectives on the roles and functions of political office. This is important because public expectations and evaluations of leaders are shaped by their understanding of what leaders are doing in relation to what they are supposed to be doing (Waterman, Jenkins-Smith, & Silva, 1999). For example, if tweets suggest that self-promotion or publicity are dominant roles, evaluations may be more focused on the personal appeal of leaders or their celebrity. If tweets frame leaders as chief executives, evaluations are more likely to be based on competence and results.

I examine frames of prime ministerial leadership in two ways: role performance and function, reflecting how prime ministers do their job and what their job is, respectively. For each of these dimensions, I construct a typology of tweet categories. These categories were established inductively, using Blondel (1987, p. 97) and Parmelee and Bichard (2012) to suggest initial categories and modifying through examination of sample tweets. The first set of categories, role performance, characterizes performative tasks of leaders and how they implicate the relationship between leaders and followers. Do leaders act as mobilizers of political action? Are leaders performing an educative, informational role for followers? Table 1 summarizes this classification of role performance.

First, the advocate role argues for a desired political or policy direction, without an explicit request for action and without specific government action. Leaders sometimes signal such a direction to followers to test reactions, as a form of agenda-setting, or to add their political capital to a general sentiment. The decider role emphasizes decision-making authority and responsibility for government policy. These tweets involve statements of government spending or specific government decisions. As the example tweet shows, these need not be framed in first-person terms; it suffices that the tweet demonstrates responsibility for decision-making, assuming the prime minister ultimately bears that burden.

Third, leaders may act as educators, communicating information about government activity and services that affect the public. The example tweet performs such a role: it specifies that the reader can obtain a sum of money by making a claim on their income tax returns. Others may be more serious: informing the public where they can get help during a crisis, for example. While ostensibly non-partisan, most educative tweets have some political purpose. The mobilizer role involves prime ministers asking followers to engage in specific political activities: voting and contacting their representatives, for instance. Empirically this role was not observed in the sample, but it should be included in the general typology.

The personalization role classifies tweets depicting the prime minister as a human being outside of politics or governing, involving aspects like family or hobbies. These tweets reflect the appeal of personalization as a method of relating to the public. Similarly, the publicizer leadership role portrays leaders as actively engaged with the public, government officials, social organizations, etc. This category of social media use by leaders has been well-documented (e.g., Aharony, 2012). While self-promoting, publicizing such activities also serves a transparency function and communicates that public engagement is an important leadership role. Lastly, the supporter role refers to communications of non-political sympathy, agreement, condolences, or congratulations. These reflect an important prime ministerial role of associating the prestige of the office with individuals and groups. Prime ministers can act both as 'cheerleaders' and as 'consoler-in-chief,' a phrase associated with the American presidency but also applicable here.

Table 1. Role performance frames and examples.

Leadership Role	Description	Example
Advocate	Approval or disapproval of political or policy statements	The world's commitment to ending the recruitment & use of child soldiers through the agreement known as the Vancouver Principles speaks to the immense leadership of LGen Romeo Dallaire. Thanks for the discussion yesterday on that and on Canada's role in peacekeeping issues. (Trudeau, 2018d)
Decider	Statement of decision-making power	I am determined to end rough sleeping by 2027. We've now set out £34 million to help more people living on the streets, so the most vulnerable in society get the support they need to turn their lives around. (Downing Street, 2018b)
Educator	Official government messaging	Do you live in Ontario? You could get $307 back. Claim your Climate Action Incentive when you file your taxes this year! (Trudeau, 2019a)
Mobilizer	Active request to engage in political activity	n/a
Personalizer	Portrayal of prime minister as non-political person	Happy 70th birthday, Mum! Sophie, Xav, Ella-Grace, Hadrien and I are so grateful to have you in our lives. (Trudeau, 2018b)
Publicizer	Engagement with public and official activities	PM @theresa_may marked the centenary of the World War 1 Armistice by laying a wreath at the Cenotaph today. (Downing Street, 2018d)
Supporter	Sympathy with government or private actor	My thoughts are with the people of Melbourne and all of Australia following today's appalling attack. (Downing Street, 2018c)

The second dimension of leadership roles is that of role function: how tweets reflect the scope and responsibilities of political office. While role performance answers the question of how prime ministers relate to publics, function considers the bases of their authority. Prime ministers, for example, act within multiple, overlapping arenas of leadership and from multiple sources of power. These are listed in Table 2, below. At the personal level, the goal is to present the leader as a personally appealing figure; authority derives from how followers evaluate this appeal. In the context of this typology, this category is essentially a 'catch-all' for tweets which do not clearly fall into the other, more specific frames.

The remaining five frames identify clearly contrasting arenas of leadership and authority. Prime ministers are party leaders; some tweets should reflect this authority. These tweets invoke clearly partisan messaging, including naming opposition parties, their own party, or elections. The prime minister, however, is not merely a party leader but also the de facto chief legislator: an essential function of the office is to produce legislation. Tweets reflecting this role frame the prime minister through the lens of legislation, including announcements of bills being introduced or passed, spending items, or more generally statements of government intentions. This function is separate from the fourth function: prime minister as chief executive. This role reflects the prime minister as head of government with executive power, from cabinet selection to machinery of government and appointment powers.

The national and international leader reflect prime ministers as representative of the nation in domestic and global contexts, respectively. The first frames prime ministers as leaders with unique authority and responsibility. They are not merely party leaders and legislators, but sometimes claim to speak and act for the nation. As the example tweet shows, this category includes tweets in the supporter role described earlier, insofar as they fall within the domestic scope. The international leader function broadens the scope of the prime minister's representative role to include engagement with international actors and organizations. The responsibility implied in this leadership function is that of representing national interests within the uncertainty of international politics and connected global economies.

This exploratory analysis does not posit specific hypotheses about the relative prevalence of these leadership frames. However, as reported above, accounts of these leaders' Twitter behaviour condition our expectations. Justin Trudeau is described as especially effective at using social media, to the extent of being dubbed the 'selfie' prime minister, suggesting inattentiveness to governance (Marche, 2019; Watt, 2019). His Twitter, then, should be highly active and likely oriented more

Table 2. Role function frames and examples.

Leadership Function	Description	Example
Personal	Prime minister as a personally appealing figure	PM @theresa_may will be sending Christmas cards designed by three schoolchildren from her Maidenhead constituency this year. (Downing Street, 2018e)
Party Leader	Prime minister as the leader of a political party	Last night, Conservatives forced marathon votes for the 2nd night in a row… We're focused on working for you, while the opposition plays politics. (Trudeau, 2019b)
Legislative Leader	Prime minister as the 'chief legislator'	The Bill to provide for an energy price cap has now received Royal Assent and has become law. (Downing Street, 2018a)
Chief Executive	Prime minister as the 'chief executive,' chair of cabinet	Each minister in our Cabinet gets a mandate letter that outlines our vision for delivering real change & improving the lives of Canadians across the country. (Trudeau, 2018a)
National Leader	Prime minister as the representative of the nation domestically	Today we remember those who died in the Lockerbie bombing 30 years ago. (Downing Street, 2018f)
International Leader	Prime minister as a global figure	This Sunday, I'll meet with Spanish PM @sanchezcastejon in Montreal to talk about how we can keep working together to increase trade and create more jobs & opportunities for people in both our countries. (Trudeau, 2018c)

towards publicity and personal role performance and personal, national, and international role functions than other frames. Conversely, Theresa May was described as adverse to social media. Labour "handily" beat the Conservatives in the social media campaign during the 2017 election (Cecil, 2017); Simon (2018) argues that May campaigned "by pretending social media didn't really exist" and that she considered David Cameron's social media use to be frivolous and vain. Thus, I expect that May will have comparably lower Twitter activity than Justin Trudeau and that it will be more focused on decision-making, policy advocacy, and governance.

5. Data and Methods

For this analysis, all tweets by Justin Trudeau and Theresa May from July 1, 2018 to May 1, 2019 were collected. While typically not tweeting personally, it is reasonable to assume that leaders' accounts reflect their leadership style, since Twitter is now an essential tool of political communication. I use Justin Trudeau's personal account, @JustinTrudeau, and the Downing Street account, @10DowningStreet, because they had more followers than alternative accounts. Trudeau's personal account had 4.48 million followers as of the end of data collection (222,700 for the official account); the Downing Street account had 5.44 million followers (833,400 for May's personal account). This does not introduce significant selection bias because most tweets made by one account are duplicated on the other, and the more followed accounts are the better measure of public communication.

Tweets were collected using rtweets in R and cleaned using the *tm* package. Classification into the role performance and function categories was conducted using IBM Watson Studio's Natural Language Classifier. A representative sample of 100 tweets was manually coded and used to train the classifier models. The full set of tweets was then used to test these models. Comparison of the automated classification with further manual coding suggests that the classifier performs sufficiently well for exploratory purposes, particularly for the performance typology.

6. Results

This section relates the key empirical results, beginning with a picture of each prime minister's Twitter activity. Figure 1 shows the number of tweets from both accounts, aggregated every three days for visual clarity. Our expectation that Trudeau is more active than Theresa May is strongly supported, with Trudeau tweeting almost three times as much as May. Trudeau tweeted 6.3 times per day (N = 1935), on average, while only 2.3 tweets were made from the Downing Street account (N = 715). In only one period does Theresa May tweet more than Trudeau, after initial EU agreement on a Brexit withdrawal deal in late November 2018. Frequency spikes representing particularly heavy Twitter activity tend to occur around significant cabinet shuffles and international summits (e.g., the G8 and G20, UN General Assembly).

Turning to our main results, how are leadership roles framed in these tweets? First, I examine the results from classification of role performance frames. To recall, I inductively defined seven categories characterizing performative roles of prime ministers as advocates,

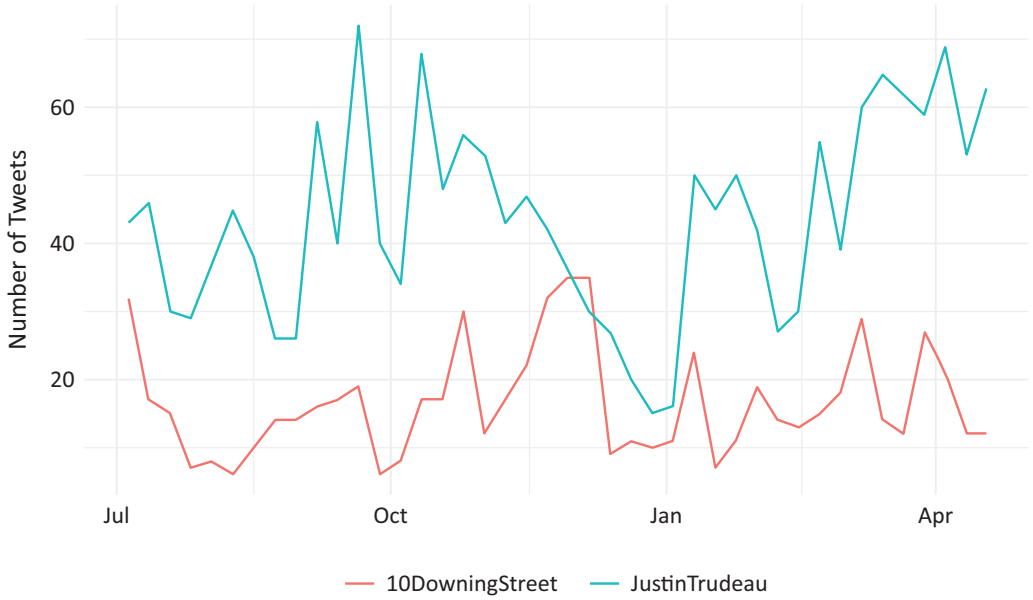

Figure 1. Number of tweets and retweets from @10DowningStreet and @JustinTrudeau (July 1, 2018–May 1, 2019), aggregated every three days. Source: Twitter API via rtweets.

deciders, educators, mobilizers, personalizers, publicizers, and supporters. The mobilizer category was dropped for lack of observations. Figure 2 presents the results: panel (a) shows combined results, while panel (b) show separate results for Trudeau and May.

The pooled results indicate that tweets reflect a publicizing role significantly more often than other categories. Almost 24 percent of tweets publicized prime ministerial activities—meetings, press availabilities, local visits, etc. The second most frequent role was the supporter role (21 percent). The relative strength of these roles suggests a predominant framing of prime ministerial leadership as active and affective: prime ministers portrayed as constantly engaged with the public and eager to lend the weight of their office to console and uplift. Notably, neither of these roles are particularly substantive in terms of policy, supporting the common notion that Twitter does not generate serious political discourse.

Tweets invoking decision-making power of prime ministers constitute 19 percent of all tweets analyzed. While not as prevalent as the publicity and support roles, it is still notable that prime ministers emphasize government decisions to a significant degree. The unmediated communication aspect of Twitter is possibly most relevant here in that prime ministers can transmit a frame of authority without contention from opposing parties or media. On Twitter, prime ministers do not have to worry about garnering 'favourable' coverage for their decisions. A similar logic applies to the advocate role, which constitutes 17 percent of tweets. Prime ministers can express support for policy directions directly and instantly to their followers, without that support being qualified or contextualized by a third-party. Curiously, the educator role is less apparent in these tweets than might be expected. This is possibly because such messaging is more the domain of departments and agencies than prime ministers; only politically salient information will be communicated by the latter.

Finally, communication of the non-political, personalized frame is not especially evident. Unlike the case examined by Madestam and Falkman (2017), neither Justin Trudeau nor Theresa May use Twitter significantly for expressing themselves as people; they do not extensively discuss hobbies, personal musings, or use humour. Instead, they are primarily professional in their Twitter use. However, as Figure 2b demonstrates, Justin Trudeau is much more likely to communicate in personal terms. Eight percent of Trudeau's tweets are classified as personal, while only two percent of May's are personal. This conforms to expectations that Trudeau is comfortable using Twitter to express personal thoughts, while May's aversion to social media makes personalization less likely. This is the main difference in comparing the prime ministers on role performance. In fact, in the two most frequent categories of publicity and support, they use Twitter very similarly. May is slightly more likely to emphasize the prime minister's decision-making role, as well as to advocate for policy, but the differences are slight.

The second dimension explored is leadership function: what tweets imply about the scope and responsibilities of a leadership position. Whereas our discussion of role performance demonstrates patterns in how prime ministers act, analysis of role functions reflects understandings of what the prime ministerial job is. While all modern prime ministers must fulfill certain expectations, they have significant discretion about what functions of the job they emphasize. My framework demarcates six categories of such functions: chief executive, leadership in the international arena, leadership in the legislative

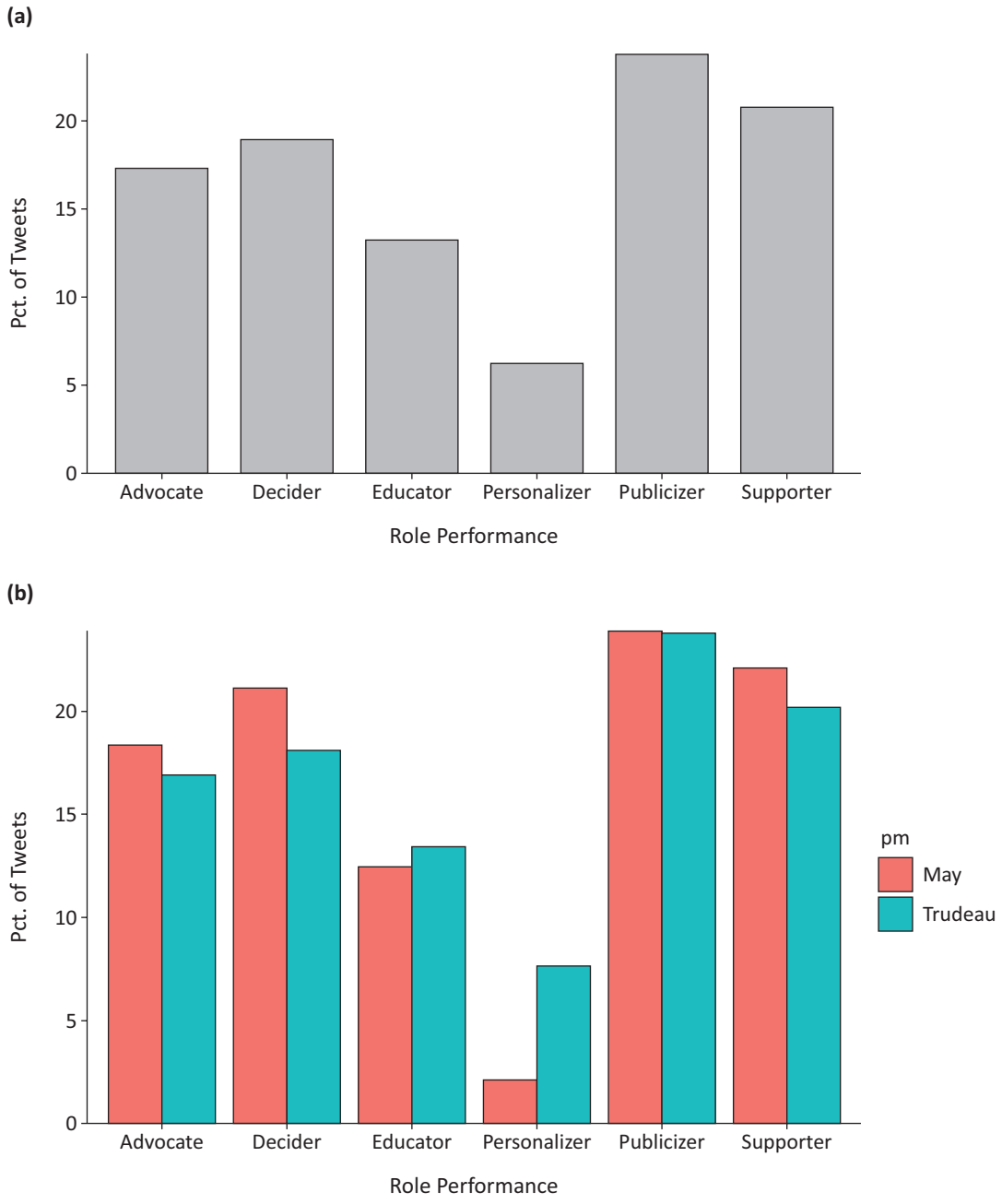

Figure 2. Relative frequency of role performance frames. **(a)** Pooled, **(b)** By prime minister.

arena as 'chief legislator,' national leadership, leader of a political party, and personalized leadership. Figure 3 displays the results of this classification model, pooled in (a) and separated in (b).

These results indicate that two predominant functions are communicated through tweets: legislative and national leadership. Overall, the legislative function constitutes more than 30 percent of tweets, followed by a quarter of tweets that reflect national leadership. This trend is consistent when disaggregated by prime minister. That the legislative frame is significant is not especially surprising, since legislative activity and the role of the prime minister in the House of Commons is probably the most visible and transparent aspect of the job. The strength of the prime minister as national leader frame also comports well with the strength of the publicizing and supporting role found earlier. While prime ministers are not heads of state, they are clearly the most well-known and publicly accessible national political figures. Prime ministerial tweets reflect this position.

The prime minister as a global leader is also apparent, with 15 percent of tweets reflecting this role. However, there is a noticeable difference in the relative strength of this frame when comparing May to Trudeau. For May, 25 percent of tweets reflect an international leadership role, eclipsing, in fact, her role as national leader. Justin

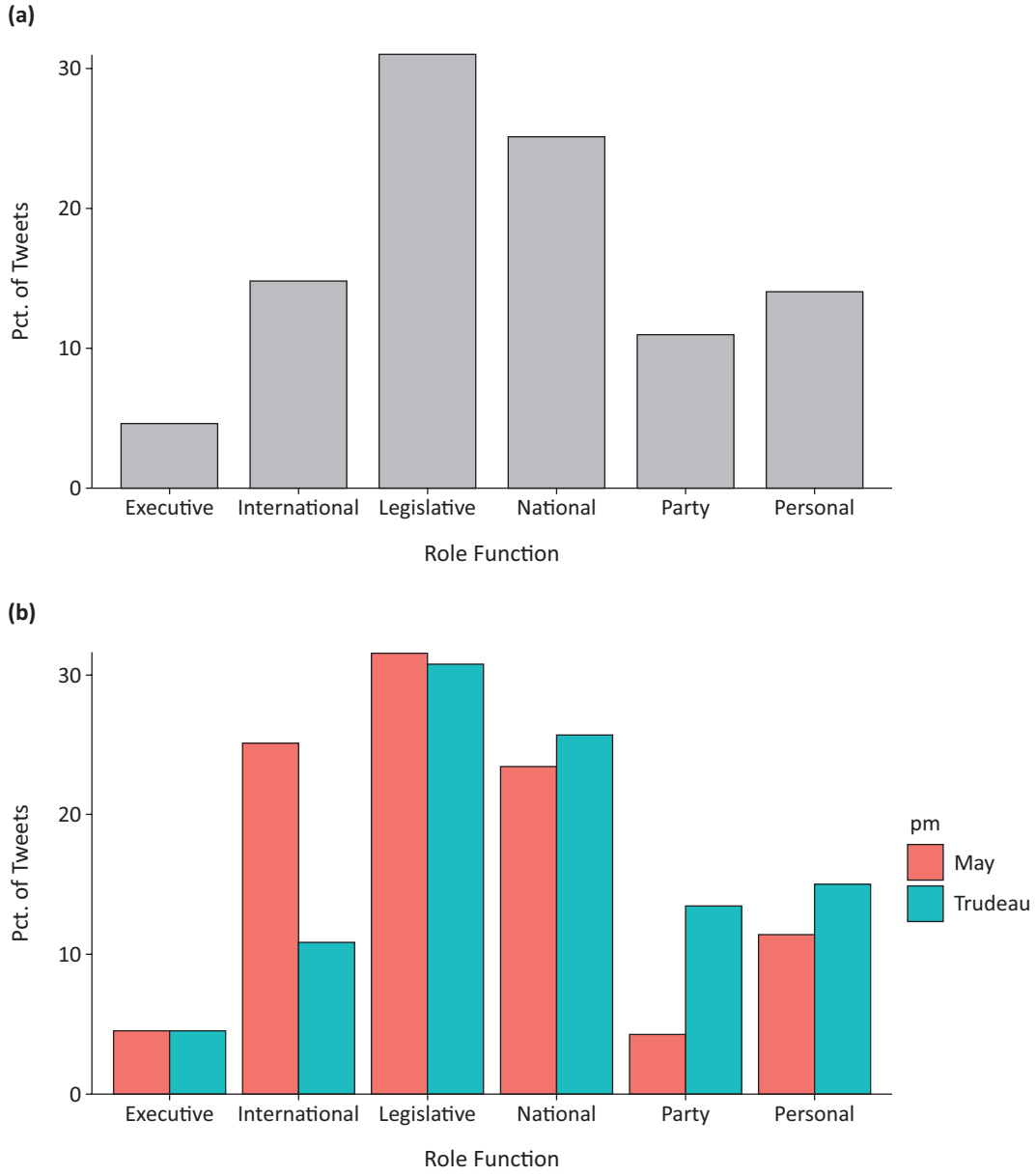

Figure 3. Relative frequency of leadership function frames. **(a)** Pooled, **(b)** By prime minister.

Trudeau's tweets are classified as international in only 11 percent of cases. I expect that this is largely due to the inordinate entanglement of Prime Minister May in negotiations with the EU over UK withdrawal. A considerable number of May's tweets are about Brexit and her meetings with EU heads and heads of national governments in Europe. Conversely, it appears that Trudeau's tweets are significantly more likely to carry partisan content than May's. 13 percent of Trudeau's tweets reflect his position as Liberal party leader, typically in announcing candidates or drawing contrasts between his party and the Conservatives. Only four percent of May's tweets are classified as carrying such partisan content. This may be in small part due to the personal/official Twitter account difference, but also suggests the role of political context. Mid-2018 to May 2019 is a period in which parties in Canada are gearing up for an October 2019 election, while the UK is embroiled in Brexit, an issue where conflict crosses party lines.

Finally, the executive function frame is conspicuously weak in these results. Overall, it is found in only four percent of tweets, and is essentially identical for both Trudeau and May. This relative lack of executive leadership reflected in analysis of prime ministerial tweets can be explained in two ways. First, executive leadership was narrowly defined in the training model to include references to cabinet, the prime minister's appointments powers, and management of the civil service. While vitally important to the job, it is reasonable to conclude that these topics are not especially meant for Twitter consumption. In fact, there are almost no tweets that reflect the prime minister's place as chief executive of

the machinery of government at all. Most of the tweets that were classified as executive were simply announcements of cabinet appointments. Second, the role of head of government is encapsulated by their role as legislative leader, since prime ministers lead the executive in virtue of leading, i.e., enjoying the support of the legislature. Still, it is striking to find that the executive function is only minimally reflected in one of the major ways used by prime ministers to communicate politically. It strengthens the notion that the picture the public has of prime ministers and the prime ministerial job is distorted.

7. Conclusion

This article asks the question: What do prime ministers communicate about their leadership roles through their use of Twitter? In exploring this question, it makes two important contributions to leadership theory and empirical understanding. First, it introduces an inductive typology for understanding this communication. This typology sees tweets as carrying information about the leadership roles that prime ministers play, in addition to their explicit content. It distinguishes between types of role performance—how leaders engage with followers in the 'doing' of leadership—and role function—how leaders engage in different leadership arenas. This typology can be used and modified contextually to characterize leadership communication in and outside of politics. More broadly, understanding how leaders use Twitter to 'perform' their leadership tasks and functions should inform characterizations of leadership styles. It is also substantively important because public expectations and evaluations of leaders hinge upon perceptions of the roles that leaders should play.

Second, I apply this typology by collecting and analyzing data on two cases of prime ministers who prima facie present contrasting leadership styles and circumstances. This yielded several key results that are mostly congruent with our prior understanding of these styles and circumstances. The expectation that Justin Trudeau is a comparably active Twitter user, informed by his 'celebrity' appeal and highly attuned social media strategy, is confirmed. In the study period, he tweets almost three times more often than Theresa May. Second, for both prime ministers, the most evident aspects of leadership performance in prime ministerial tweets are the publicity and support roles: prime ministers promoting their public engagements and offering sympathy and association with particular individuals or groups. Prime minister Trudeau is much more likely to use Twitter in a personalistic way, while Theresa May is slightly more likely to emphasize government decision-making. This conforms with our understanding of Trudeau as concerned with personalizing his relationship to followers, while May constructs her leadership as serious and concerned with the business of government.

Third, the legislative and national leader functions of prime ministers are predominant as frames of the 'job description.' A majority of tweets, overall, communicate the role of prime ministers in implementing a legislative agenda and representing the nation as a whole. Perhaps surprisingly in May's case, neither leader's tweets emphasize executive functions as central to the prime ministerial role. The role of the prime minister on the international stage is much more apparent for Theresa May, suggesting the importance of considering the political context of tweets, and of leadership style generally. Theresa May's communication during this time, for example, is dominated by the issue of the UK's withdrawal from the EU and her continual struggles to argue and find support for the various deals struck by her government. Thus, it is difficult to assess how typical May's use of Twitter is of previous and future prime ministers.

These results are especially interesting in light of the rise of populist leaders, for which Twitter has been an especially powerful tool. This study shows the varying ways in which even mainstream, non-populist leaders such as Justin Trudeau and Theresa May have adopted Twitter in the construction of their leadership styles. The prominence of Twitter as a way for populist leaders to build personalized, unfiltered, leader-centered appeals to followers is echoed in Trudeau's Twitter communication, while this is much more muted in May's case. Future research could use the typology of leadership roles introduced in this study to directly compare how populist and non-populist leaders use social media to shape perceptions of leadership tasks and functions.

A second direction for future research is to more closely examine how the topics and political context of tweets relate to the leadership content of tweets. Do prime ministers tend to emphasize differential leadership roles and functions based on the political context or substantive policy content of that communication? Finally, refining and exploring the implications of this typology would prove fruitful. For example, this study has considered the two leadership dimensions independently, but there may be interesting correlations between them. While this analysis was exploratory and descriptive, its framework for understanding how social media reflects prime ministerial leadership, and its enrichment of our understanding of Justin Trudeau and Theresa May's leadership, are important contributions. The almost universal use of Twitter and other forms of unmediated political communication makes it essential to understand how this messaging shapes views of leaders and political leadership.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

The People's Champ: Doug Ford and Neoliberal Right-Wing Populism in the 2018 Ontario Provincial Election

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Abstract
The 2018 Ontario provincial election marked a decisive shift in the political direction of Canada's most populous province. The election brought an end to the long reign of the Ontario Liberal Party (2003–2018), whose government devolved into a series of scandals that resulted in a third-place finish. The Liberal's defeat came at the hands of the Progressive Conservative Party led by former Toronto city councillor, Doug Ford. The Progressive Conservative's victory was propelled on the back of Ford's deeply populist campaign where he promised to reassert the interests of 'the people,' expel the influence of elites and special interests, and clean up government corruption. This campaign discourse led many political opponents and media pundits to accuse Ford of importing the nativist, xenophobic, and divisive rhetoric of other radical right-wing populist leaders. This article advances the argument that rather than representing the importation of 'Trumpism' or other types of radical right-wing populism, Ford's campaign is better understood within the tradition of Canadian populism defined by an overarching ideological commitment to neoliberalism. In appealing to voters, Ford avoided the nativist and xenophobic rhetoric of populist leaders in the United States and Western Europe, offering a conception of 'the people' using an economic and anti-cosmopolitan discourse centred upon middle class taxpayers. This article makes a contribution to both the literatures on Canadian elections and populism, demonstrating the lineage of Ford's ideological commitment to populism within recent Canadian electoral history, as well as Ford's place within the international genealogy of right-wing populism.

Keywords
Canada; neoliberalism; political leadership; populism; right-wing politics

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Leadership, Populism and Power" edited by Cristine de Clercy (Western University, Canada).

1. Introduction

In the wake of the 2016 United States Presidential Election, Canadian exceptionalism has enjoyed a healthy resurgence. As its neighbor to south became swept up in the rising global tide of right-wing populism, Canada returned to a more pluralistic and progressive style of politics under Liberal Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. The country's renewed commitment to liberal pluralism led many political commentators to confidently conclude that far right ideologies and populist movements had little social or political currency in Canada (Adams, 2017; "Liberty moves north: Canada's example to the world", 2016). However, recent developments have heightened concern that, like other liberal democracies in the Western world, Canada too might be susceptible to the growth of far-right movements. These concerns came to a head in the 2018 Ontario provincial election, where right-wing populist leader, Doug Ford, won a majority government in Canada's most populous province. Ford's election is one of the few recent cases of successful populism in Canada, where a growing number of fringe leaders, parties and movements have adopted the discourses of populist leaders from other parts of the globe (Budd, 2019). Ford's brash and common-sense approach to politics drew comparison to Donald Trump and other radical right-wing populists, where Ford was accused of championing the same xenophobic, nativist, and authoritarian ideology (Kassam, 2018; Marche, 2018; Porter, 2018).

This article advances the arguments that rather than representing the importation of populist radical right-wing ideologies that have taken hold in other parts of

the world, Ford's campaign is better understood within the tradition of Canadian right-wing populism defined by an overarching ideological commitment to neoliberalism. In campaigning to voters, Ford largely avoided the type of nativist and xenophobic rhetoric of populist leaders in the United States and Western Europe, and instead offered a conception of 'the people' using an economic and anti-cosmopolitan discourse centred upon middle class taxpayers and opposition to urban elites. This argument is advanced using a discursive definition of populism to analyze a range of campaign material produce by Ford and the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario (PC) during the election. This article makes a contribution to both the literatures on Canadian elections and populist leadership, demonstrating the lineage of Ford's ideological commitment to populism within recent Canadian electoral history, as well as Ford's place within a broader international context of right-wing populism.

2. Theoretical Framework: A Discursive-Genealogical Approach

In order to place Doug Ford in comparative perspective with other right-wing leaders, I adopt a discursive-genealogical approach that combines elements of Mudde's (2007) thin-centred ideology approach with a discursive definition of populism. Mudde (2004, p. 543) approaches populism as an "ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people." This minimal definition accounts for the various expressions of populism from around the globe that see populism become combined with other 'thicker' ideologies such as conservatism, liberalism, socialism, or nativism (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2011). Approaching populism as a thin-centred ideology acknowledges that there is no singular or pure form of populism, but rather sub-types distinguished based on the ideologies of different parties and leaders.

Broadly speaking, populism can be bifurcated between left and right-wing variants. However, there is a great deal of variation within these two general categories of populism as well. On the right, we can distinguish between what Mudde (2007) refers to as the "populist radical right" and the "nonradical populist right." The former category includes parties and leaders that share a common core ideology of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism. The nativism dimension refers to the combination of nationalism and xenophobia that tends to manifest itself in proposals to facilitate the realization of a homogenous nation-state, whereas the pillar of authoritarianism refers to the ideological belief in an ordered society secured through an emphasis on law and order and punitive moralism. The nonradical populist right is a more diverse group of actors comprising those who combine a core right-wing ideology with populism while eschewing the extreme ideological tenets of the radical populist right.

One sub-type within this grouping is neoliberal populism. The concept of neoliberal populism was first developed by Betz (1994), who used the term to categorize populist leaders and parties emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Neoliberal populism can be understood as the combination of a primary ideology of economic liberalism with populism, typically expressed in a promotion of free market economics, individual liberty, and a commitment to traditional family structures and private property. Neoliberal populism differs significantly from the populist radical right. Brubaker (2017) argues that we can understand ideological differences between sub-types of populism based on the intersection between vertical and horizontal dimensions of opposition. According to Brubaker (2017), populism rests on the social construction of a vertical dimension of opposition where 'the people' are pitted against some class of political, economic, and cultural elites. There is also a horizontal dimension comprised of an insider-outsider distinction between 'the people' and groups of 'others' constructed along racial, ethnic, economic, and cultural lines. Neoliberal populism can be understood within this framework as defining vertical and horizontal opposition in primarily economic terms. In this way, neoliberal populists stand out from the recent wave of radical right-wing populists. As Inglehart and Norris (2016) argue, the recent global wave of populism is reflective of a value shift where the traditional left-right economic cleavage that has defined party competition in post-war Western democracies has been displaced by a cultural continuum arranged between exclusionary populist values on one pole and liberal cosmopolitan values on the other. This new cultural continuum of values is what accounts for the recent surge of populism, where leaders and parties have abandoned or blended traditional economic ideologies in favour of a politics focused on cultural backlash. Neoliberal populists thus stand out from this broader realignment of values in that their ideology and policy agenda is defined by the traditional left–right divide while omitting the core features of other forms of populism defined by a commitment to nativism, xenophobia, and authoritarianism (de Lange & Mügge, 2015; Inglehart & Norris, 2016).

While useful in parsing apart ideological variants of leaders and parties, the prevalence of the thin-centred ideology conception of populism has also led critics to identify a number of inherent challenges and shortcomings. As both Aslanidis (2015) and Moffitt (2016) have highlighted, the ideological approach infers that we understand populism as a fixed attitude of a leader or party. In other words, a particular political party or leader is either populist or not. This inherent binary between populists and non-populists belies research findings noting periodic forays into populism among leaders and parties not typically thought to be populist. This is particularly prescient in the Canadian literature on populism,

where a number of scholars have persuasively demonstrated the Harper government's periodic affinity for populist appeals (Kelly & Puddister, 2017; Sawer & Laycock, 2009; Snow & Moffitt, 2012). The ideological approach has trouble accounting for these populist displays by non-populists, representing a significant incongruence between theory and empirical reality. Thus, the ideological approach provides an imprecise empirical explanation of populism by failing to account for its strategic use in discourse among a wide array of leaders beyond those with a coherent populist worldview.

In noting this issue with the thin-centred ideology approach, I adopt an alternative discursive approach that understands populism as a discursive frame by which political ideologies, grievances, and interests become packaged and expressed (Aslanidis, 2015; Bonikowski & Gidron, 2016; de Vreese, Esser, Aalberg, Reinemann, & Stanyer, 2018). In assuming this approach, I define populism as an anti-elite discourse that invokes "the supremacy of popular sovereignty to claim that corrupt elites are defrauding 'the People' of their rightful political authority" (Aslanidis, 2015, p. 96). Similar to the thin-centred ideology approach, this definition retains the antagonistic divide between 'the people' and the elites/political establishment. However, in approaching populism as a discourse, the site of inquiry shifts to a focus on the various types of speech acts offered by political leaders and parties. Like the ideological approach, this discursive definition of populism retains a degree of conceptual 'thinness' allowing for an accounting of the differences between various enactments of populism. More importantly for this article, this discursive approach is consistent with the identification of genealogical variants of populism based on ideology discussed above. As a flexible and modular discourse, populism can be deployed by a range of different actors with various ideological dispositions and policy agendas. It is with this strength in mind that I apply the discursive-genealogical approach to analyze and compare Doug Ford's 2018 electoral campaign against the global roster of right-wing populists.

3. Canadian Electoral Politics and Right-Wing Populism

A complete review of the history of right-wing populism in Canada dating back to Confederation is well beyond the scope of this article. However, it is possible to briefly summarize some of the general characteristics of Canadian populist movements, leaders, and parties. One of the most defining characteristics of Canadian populism is the influence of regional political cultures, identity issues, and grievances. Many of the most well-known and successful populist movements in Canada have been organized around regional/provincial interests where right-wing politicians and parties have positioned themselves as opponents of an unaccountable and out-of-touch federal government. This is especially true of movements that have developed in Western Canada, where an engrained sense of regional alienation has helped to fuel several highly successful populist movements and parties. There are numerous examples of these throughout history including the Social Credit Party that governed Alberta from 1935 to 1968, Saskatchewan's Progressive Conservative Party during the 1970s and, perhaps most notably, the creation of the federal Reform Party in the late 1980s (Wiseman, 2006). These parties and their leaders have expressed to varying degrees an ideological commitment to asserting the interests of Western Canadians against the intrusive and undemocratic policies of the federal government. The exact nature of these articulations has evolved over time. During the mid-20th century, right-wing Western Canadian populists focused their appeals on articulating the interests of small businesses and individual consumers whose purchasing power and economic wellbeing, they argued, had been curtailed by a cadre of Eastern-based financial interests, government planners, bureaucrats, and political parties (Laycock, 1990, p. 206). Leaders and parties during this period advocated for reforms to democratic institutions that would scale back the influence and power of Eastern financial interests and replace them with plebiscitarian forms of democracy that would allow 'the people' direct input into fiscal policy-making (Laycock, 1990, p. 234). These populist discourses evolved considerably beginning in the late 1970s, where a new wave of Western populist leaders and parties emerged sparked by the introduction of Pierre Trudeau's National Energy Program and mega-constitutional debates surrounding the accommodation of Quebec. This subsequent wave of Western populism—typified by Preston Manning and the Reform Party—helped to displace the Progressive Conservatives as the de facto federal party of the right in Canada while opposing proposals for asymmetrical federalism that would grant Quebec increased power and jurisdiction relative to other provinces. Populists during this period also targeted federal social programs and policies that they saw as unfairly benefitting special interests at the expensive of middle-class taxpayers and wealth producing provinces. A through line to earlier Western populist movements was continued support for direct democracy reforms such as the increased use of referenda, the creation of a triple-E senate, and the popular ratification of constitutional amendments.

While populism in Canada is most widely associated with Western Canada, an overlooked tradition of right-wing populism also exists in Eastern Canada. Here, populism has also taken on a regional flavor, with populist grievances taking root in the form of anti-Francophone sentiments. The two most notable examples of this are the New Brunswick Confederation of Regions Party (1989–2002) and the People's Alliance of New Brunswick (2010–present). The Eastern tradition of Canadian populism has been largely concentrated around efforts aimed at repealing official bilingualism mandating the dual use of English and French in federal and provincial public services. Populists in the East have sought to position themselves as the voice of English-speaking pop-

ulations whose interests, they argued, have been sacrificed by establishment parties and politicians who have catered to francophone voters (Martin, 1995). Like their Western Canadian counterparts, the Eastern tradition of populism has also focused its efforts on promoting individual freedom and responsibility, rolling back the entitlements of special interests, and introducing market-based alternatives to government services (Gordon & Chouinard, 2019).

In being shaped primarily by regional and linguistic divides, populism in Canada has also been defined by the relative absence of radical positions on issues of culture and immigration. Instead, Canadian iterations of populism, especially at the federal level, have tended to gravitate toward neoliberal ideologies and discourses while largely eschewing the nativism and xenophobia that has characterized populist leaders and parties in other parts of the world. Canadian populist discourse has generally reflected the underlying tenets of neoliberal ideology where 'the people' have been defined using economic signifiers and elites criticized for mishandling and wasting public resources and tax dollars. The primary political agenda of Canadian populists has focused on scaling back the entitlements of the welfare state while advocating for reduced taxation and an enhanced private sector in Canadian society. Canadian populist discourse has repeatedly invoked the undue influence of special interests defined largely as "feminist lobby groups, native organizations, organized labour, multicultural, linguistic and ethnic groups, the management of most crown corporations and state agencies, and public sector unions" (Laycock, 1994, p. 217). As Laycock (1994) notes, the influence of these out-groups has largely been criticized through the ideological prism of neoliberalism, where their accommodation has been lambasted as producing political outcomes that unfairly skew the natural market-based distribution of social and economic resources while violating the inalienable principles of formal individual equality. While generally opposed to a generous immigration policy and official multiculturalism, populists in Canada have evolved to frame their opposition using the language of economics and fiscal restraint as oppose to appeals to ethnic identity or social concerns (Koning, 2019).

In Ontario, populism has been especially rare compared to other parts of Canada. However, when it has taken root, it has generally come in the form of neoliberal populism where the focus has been on reducing government expenditures through the elimination of social programming. Mike Harris' Progressive Conservative government of the mid-1990s is the most prominent example of right-wing populism at the provincial level in Ontario. Inspired by the success of Manning and the Reform Party at the federal level of politics, Harris helped to usher in what he and the party called 'the commonsense revolution.' Harris' government sought to capitalize on a growing sense of economic uncertainty connected to the influence of globalization and a corresponding decline in institutional confidence to push forward a neoliberal agenda focused on reducing the size and spending of the Ontario government and replacing it with free market reforms and greater personal responsibility (Woolstencroft, 1997). Apart from this brief flourish at the provincial level of politics, populism has also made its way into municipal politics in Ontario. The late Rob Ford—Doug Ford's brother—brought a similar neoliberal populist message to Toronto City Hall during his tenure as Mayor. Ford's appeals to Torontonians rested on a blending of austerity, anti-elitism, and anti-cosmopolitanism where he successfully rallied the support of voters in suburban wards of the city against supposedly left-leaning downtown elites (Thomas & Tufts, 2016). In many ways Rob Ford's mayoral run mirrors broader national trends in right-wing populism in that he largely avoided overt appeals to nativist or anti-immigrant sentiments in the course of constructing an ethnically diverse coalition of support (Kiss, Perrella, & Spicer, 2019; Silver, Taylor, & Calderón-Figueroa, 2019).

While regionalism and neoliberalism have helped to shape Canadian populism away from radical ideologies, there has been a recent uptick in Canadian leaders and parties engaging with more xenophobic, nativist, and nationalist forms of populism. Recently, Canadian right-wing politicians such as Kellie Leitch and Maxime Bernier have launched political campaigns focused on gathering support around concerns over immigration, national heritage, and illiberal forms of cultural expression (Budd, 2019). The mainstreaming of these exclusionary populist appeals is connected to broader shifts in right-wing discourse both in Canada as well as internationally, where a growing number of populist leaders in Western democratic countries have successfully challenged the consensus around immigration and multiculturalism. In light of this, it is worth considering not only how Ford fits into the global context of right-wing populism, but also whether or not Ford represents a progression toward a more radical, nationalistic version of populism in Canada.

4. Context: The 2018 Ontario Provincial Election

The 42nd Ontario general election was notable on a number of fronts. Firstly, the election marked a significant moment of departure in the political direction of the province. Up until the PCs victory in June of 2018, the Ontario Liberal Party had enjoyed 15 years of consecutive rule in Ontario. This long period of governance led to the accumulation of high-profile public scandals and policy controversies that over time began to sow seeds of mistrust among the public toward the ethical integrity and managerial competency of the Liberals and their leaders. As a result, the resounding narrative of the 2018 election became one of change and which opposition party, the PCs or New Democratic Party (NDP), were best prepared to offer sound leadership and restore trust in government (Delacourt, 2018). Second, the election was notable in regard to the turmoil that occurred in its lead-up.

In the months prior to the election, the PCs enjoyed a healthy lead in the polls as it appeared to be a foregone conclusion that their then leader, Patrick Brown, would become Ontario's next premier. However, Brown's bid for premier was derailed in January of 2018, when allegations of sexual misconduct levied by two women surfaced in the news media. While denying any wrongdoing, under widespread public scrutiny and internal pressure from party leadership, Brown resigned as PC leader on January 25th, 2018. Brown's resignation ignited an unexpected and highly competitive leadership election. Despite not having any previous experience in provincial or federal politics, former Toronto city councillor, Doug Ford, narrowly edged out runner-up and veteran Member of Provincial Parliament, Christine Elliott, on the third ballot to become the new leader of the PCs. Elliott lost the leadership contest to Ford despite receiving a larger share of the overall popular vote amongst PC members (51.7%). Ford's victory came as a result of the complex election system used by the PCs which combines preferential ballots with equally weighted ridings. Under the system, each of Ontario's 124 electoral districts is worth up to 100 electoral points which are awarded to candidates based on the weighted percentage of votes they receive in a riding (Grenier, 2018). This formula helped Ford to victory as he was able to take a larger share of electoral points in ridings that he won versus the share taken in ridings won by Elliott.

With less than three months before the election, Ford's entry as leader drastically altered the PC's strategy and the overall discourse of their campaign. Ford successfully reshaped the PCs in his own image, restructuring the party's platform and appeals to voters using the language of populism. This shift was a far cry from the traditional political brand of the PCs in Ontario and the preferred messaging of Ford's most recent predecessor. While occupying ideological space to the right of the Liberals and NDP, the PCs have historically been a centre-right party that has avoided overt ideological commitments in favour of a pragmatic brand of economic managerialism and sound political leadership (Malloy, 2017). This traditional posturing was the one adopted by Patrick Brown, who had reoriented the party toward a centrist, immigrant-friendly image following the party's more hardline shift to the right under former leader, Tim Hudak (2009–2014). Inheriting the PC's lead in the polls following Brown's resignation, Ford pivoted the party away from this centrist orientation and initiated a full-scale adoption of populism. In his election platform, aptly titled *A Plan for the People*, Ford offered a suite of campaign promises intended to draw upon popular discontent with the political status quo. Included in Ford's platform were promises to repeal Ontario's cap and trade plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, fire the CEO of Ontario's utility provider Hydro One, scrap Ontario's revised sex-ed curriculum, and launch a full audit of government spending under the previous Liberal government (PC, 2018). These promises were framed as part of a broader effort by Ford to put 'the people' ahead of political elites who he accused of unfairly benefitting from government waste and mismanagement to the detriment of taxpayers. The PC's political opponents were attacked using the same type of populist discourse framed as corrupt political elites beholden to special interests.

Ford's populist agenda and discourse proved a successful pathway to electoral victory for the PCs. The party came away with a majority government winning 76 seats to the NDP's 40, the Liberal Party's seven and the Green Party's one. It is important to note that the PC's majority was supported by only 40.5% of the popular vote. This gap between the popular vote and the allocation of seats is a common outcome of Ontario's single-member plurality electoral system, where 7 of the last 8 elections held since 1990 have produced majority governments supported by less than 50% of the popular vote. Nevertheless, the election demonstrated the appeal of Ford's populist brand of politics among Ontarians, particularly those residing in non-urban regions of the province. Geographically, Ford found the strongest support in suburban and rural areas, taking most of the seats within the Greater Toronto Area and the rural regions located in the southern half of Ontario. Demographically, pre-election polling found that Ford's support tended to be strongest among younger voters with less education and lower incomes for whom economic pessimism is high and issues of immigration and globalization are considered important (EKOS Politics, 2018). This demographic concentration of support is consistent with support for other right-wing populists, which tends to be rooted in a growing sense of political disaffection, backlash against globalization, and an opposition to population migration (Norris, 2005).

Thus, it would appear that Ford's adherence to populism during the campaign and the profile of his support mirrors the rise of populists from other parts of the world. The similarities between Ford and other right-wing populist leaders, particularly Donald Trump, provoked a great deal of media commentary during the campaign while also serving as the basis of attack for his political opponents. Ford's brash, common-sense approach to politics and right-wing policy agenda left many media pundits to wonder if the 2018 Ontario provincial election marked Canada's very own "Trump moment" (Kassam, 2018). For political opponents, mostly Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal Party, branding Ford as a cheap imitation of Trump served as a key line of attack during the election in an effort to court voters supportive of the PCs but concerned with the importation of divisive right-wing populism (Powers, 2018). Ultimately, these unflattering comparisons fell short in preventing Ford from becoming premier. However, the similarities between Ford and other right-wing populists warrants further attention. How closely does Ford's ideology resemble other right-wing populists? The remainder of this article makes an effort to place Ford within the global context of right-wing populism.

5. Data and Methodology

In analyzing the ideological elements of Ford's populist discourse, I follow the approach laid out by prominent discourse theorist, Teun van Dijk (1995). Van Dijk (1995, p. 17) argues that we understand ideology as:

> The basic frameworks for organizing the social cognitions shared by members of social groups, organizations or institutions. In this respect, ideologies are both cognitive and social. They essentially function as the interface between the cognitive representations and processes underlying discourse and action, on the one hand, and the societal position and interests of social groups, on the other hand.

In other words, ideologies form both the interpretive schemata for individuals as well as the values, principles, and interests that bind social groups/collectives together. The task for analysis then is to understand how discourse, in the form of discrete speech acts, functions to persuasively convey ideological meaning to inform subjective and intersubjective worldviews. In the context of this article, I am interested in understanding the ideological composition of Ford's populist discourse and the degree it resembles the ideological worldviews of other populists.

The analysis I offer below is based on a discourse analysis of campaign material and public appearances offered by Ford during the official campaign period (May 9–June 7, 2018). Included in the analysis is the PCs official party platform, Ford's performance during 3 official leadership debates, as well as campaign videos produced by the PCs featuring Ford. In total, I have analyzed 40 videos posted on the *Ford Nation Live* website. The videos are shot in the style of news segments featuring a journalist reporting on a recent public appearance by Ford on the campaign trail, a gaffe or scandal involving another party, or a major policy announcement introduced by the PCs. The analysis of the videos focuses on both the discursive contours of speech as well as included imagery and visuals. As Moffitt's (2016) work argues, it is increasingly important that we focus on the visual self-presentation of populist leaders in light of the contemporary age of hyper-mediated and stylized politics. The videos produced by the PCs provide a window into the role of populist discourse during the campaign and pertinent material for assessing Ford's ideological orientation as expressed in appeals to Ontario voters.

6. Research Findings

6.1. Defining the People: Taxpayers, Government Insiders, and Radical Special Interests

Across the campaign material produced by Ford and the PCs, a very clear discursive construction of 'the people' emerges. While Ford's campaign slogan is literally "For the People," examining his discourse over the course of the campaign reveals that Ford's definition of 'the people' is confined to and structured around the signifiers of 'taxpayers' and the 'middle class.' For Ford, 'the people's' interests are those that belong to taxpaying citizens who under the Liberal government have been exploited by scandals involving government insiders and political elites. The oppositional framing between taxpayers and well-connected insiders is consistently used to frame Ford's policy agenda, especially his opposition to Ontario's cap and trade system and his proposals to terminate highly paid public servants (Ford Nation, 2018b, 2018h). Ford's championing of the taxpayers' interests represents the centre piece of his campaign that positions his prospective PC government as signalling an "end to the party with taxpayers' money" and the ushering in of a government that embraces fiscal restraint and curtails wasteful government spending (Ford Nation, 2018j). However, while Ford's discursive definition of 'the people' is rooted in class-based appeals, his populist discourse largely avoids direct references to working class Ontarians. Instead, Ford's definition of the middle class is confined to entrepreneurs and small business owners. This is exemplified in the videos released by Ford and the PC's announcing tax cuts for the middle class that are accompanied by interviews with CEOs, entrepreneurs and small business owners praising Ford's proposals and linking them to supporting average hardworking Ontarians (Ford Nation, 2018f, 2018g). In Ford's populist discourse, entrepreneurs become the embodiment of the middle class and ultimately the vanguard to middle class success, serving as job creators and wealth generators for 'the people.'

Equally important as who 'the people' are, is who 'the people' are not. Populist discourse hinges on the construction of an elite class whose power operates against the interests of 'the people.' Additionally, populists also focus their efforts on constructing an identifiable 'other' typically in the form of a competing social group that threatens 'the people' in some way. Ford's populist discourse includes consistent and clear elements of anti-elitism in the form of criticisms of the political establishment who he claims have been coopted by political elites and insiders that have used their special political connections to defraud taxpayers. The construction of elites in Ford's discourse emerges primarily out of attacks against the outgoing Liberal government, who he accuses of systemic corruption and using their authority to enrich their close friends and colleagues. Ford's crusade against political insiders is typified in his criticism of Hydro One's CEO who he labels "Kathleen Wynne's six million dollar man" (Ford Nation, 2018a). Issues involving Ontario's main utility provider have been long gestating, beginning with rapid increases in hydro rates under the Liberal government in the early 2000s. These issues were magnified following the Liberal government's decision in November of 2015 to privatize a portion of Hydro One in order to pay down provincial debt and fund transit projects. Ford juxtaposed these longstanding issues with the renumer-

ation of its CEO and Board of Directors to reinforce the image of a political establishment designed to enrich the wealthy at the expense of the middle class. Ford successfully positioned himself as the only politician capable of expelling these unaccountable bureaucratic elites from power while promising to end the "Liberal practice of making millionaires from your hydro bills" (PC, 2018).

Ford's populism also prominently featured declarations against "radical special interests" who serve in the role of the 'other' in his discourse. The groups falling under the banner of special interests never receive a full articulation, however they are frequently linked to the NDP and their supporters. Ford largely frames these radical interests as being opposed to 'the people' based on their resistance to the creation of economic opportunities and individual prosperity for the middle class. The construction of special interests in Ford's discourse retains a distinct geographic dimension, as Ford positions special interests as being from "downtown Toronto" and motivated by a desire to eliminate economic opportunities for those residing in suburban and rural regions of the province (Ford Nation, 2018i). Radical special interests received particular attention during the Northern Leaders' Debate where Ford accused the NDP of harbouring candidates who would close mines and stifle the development of the forestry industry in Ontario's North. The evocation of urban-based radical interests by Ford echoes the anti-cosmopolitanism that characterized his brother's populism during his time as Mayor of Toronto (Silver et al., 2019; Thomas & Tufts, 2016). Anti-cosmopolitanism played a similar role in Doug Ford's provincial campaign, where it became a discursive strategy to advance neoliberal reforms aiming to increase private sector productivity and eliminate government oversight, while strengthening Ford's appeal amongst suburban and rural voters.

6.2. Performing Crisis: Government Corruption and the Promise of a Neoliberal Dawn

The populism literature suggests that successful populists tend to capitalize on moments of political, social, or cultural crisis in order to appeal to 'the people' and justify the drastic measures outlined in their policy agendas (Taggart, 2000). As Moffitt (2016) rightly notes, while traditionally treated as an external trigger, crisis is best understood as an internal feature of populism that is rendered present through populist discourse and performance. In other words, crisis is something that is imagined and created by populist leaders and parties. In the case of Ford, the crisis that is brought to bear is primarily economic in nature. Ford's discourse is heavily structured around the identification of various institutional failures including scandals involving Hydro One, the size of the provincial debt, the impending economic damage of Ontario's cap and trade plan and lengthy hospital wait times. Importantly, Ford links these crises together as a symptom of a broader democratic deficit between politicians and 'the people.' As Ford outlines in his campaign platform: "The problems facing Ontario share one thing in common: Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government just doesn't care about you anymore" (PC, 2018). Ford and the PCs draw explicit ties between Liberal scandals, institutional failings and the unwillingness of establishment politicians to listen to or protect the interests of Ontarians. This linking of political crisis to democratic representation is a common strategy of populists writ large (Canovan, 1999). In Ford's version of populism, democratic representation becomes tied to the abuse and manipulation of taxpayers, whose freedom and prosperity are portrayed as being curtailed by unaccountable and out-of-touch elites.

Importantly, Ford adds a temporal dimension to his critique of the political establishment by framing the potential of electing an NDP government as exacerbating this crisis for taxpayers. During the campaign, Ford repeatedly argued that the NDP are like the Liberals except "10 times worse" while referencing the NDP government of the 1990s as evidence of what would happen if they were elected. The economic threat of the NDP is crystalized in the following statement given by Ford in a post-debate scrum:

> I've talked to hundreds of small businesses. They are terrified, absolutely terrified about the NDP coming in. And you know what, you look back, back when they were back in power, they lost 125 000 jobs in less than 4 years, unemployment skyrocketed 28% higher, welfare rates went up. (CBC News, 2018)

This use of the past points to a unique feature of Ford's populism. Taggart (2000) argues that populist rhetoric tends to rely on referential appeals to the past in the form of an imagined 'heartland' that serves as an idealized society structured around the inherent interests and shared values of 'the people.' For Ford, the past is not praised or positioned as a place to return to, but rather is an example of what has gone wrong in Ontario. Instead, Ford casts his populist gaze forward, projecting an idealized representation of Ontario as a land of unrestrained individual opportunity: "A new day will dawn: a day of prosperity, a day of growth, a day of opportunity this province has never seen before" (Ford Nation, 2018i). This imagined Ontario is consistent with Ford's broader neoliberal worldview, where the issues and challenges affecting Ontarians can be boiled down to a lack of individual economic freedom stemming from an inefficient, burdensome and bloated provincial government.

6.3. For the Little Guy: Epistemological Appeals to Common-Sense and the Sovereignty of 'the People'

A critical task for populist leaders is not just defining who 'the people' are, but also positioning themselves as speaking on their behalf (de Vreese et al., 2018). In other words, it is essential for populist leaders to assert

themselves as the voice of 'the people' and the legitimate expression of the popular will. In Ford's discourse, we see this accomplished by epistemological appeals to common-sense and the linking of policy proposals to dialogue with citizens. The early portion of Ford's campaign was presented in the narrative of a bus tour with the goal of connecting with 'the people' and listening to their concerns. In a video updating Ford's campaign, the reporter featured in the video offers the following update: "Doug Ford is listening and gathering real information" while "connecting with people who are disconnected from Queens Park" (Ford Nation, 2018d). In another video highlighting Ford's attendance at cultural events, one of his supporters describes Ford as "not your typical ivory tower type, he cares about connecting with the people" (Ford Nation, 2018e). These discursive appeals to real, common-sense knowledge play an integral role in framing Ford's policy agenda while helping to sediment his connection with average middle-class Ontarians. His proposal to cut taxes and reduce waste are repeatedly framed as part of a broader effort to "put money back in the pocket of taxpayers" (Ford Nation, 2018d) under the logic that 'the people' know how to spend their money far better than any bureaucrat or politician. In sum, Ford's anti-government discourse and everyman self-presentation function to construct him as being intimately connected to and bringing expression to the voice of 'the people.'

Ford's positioning of himself as the expression of the popular will also relies on discursive opposition to other forms of knowledge. Ford's critique of the political establishment and government services evokes a repudiation of technocratic forms of knowledge and bureaucratic managerialism. This comes out most clearly in Ford's promise to end 'hallway healthcare' which served as a central plank of the PC's policy platform throughout the campaign. Ford repeatedly blames the issues facing Ontario's healthcare system on bureaucratic oversight arguing that "for common-sense Ontarians, we need less money lining the pockets of bureaucrats and more for hospital beds" (Ford Nation, 2018c). More importantly for Ford, politicians are called on to start listening to frontline healthcare workers and service providers to gain insight into how healthcare can be made more efficient and cost-effective. The PC's campaign communications outlining their plan for healthcare prominently feature interviews with nurses, doctors, and other service providers who provide firsthand accounts of issues in the healthcare system. These representations help to reinforce the anti-government and free market orientation of Ford's populism by challenging the wisdom of government planners and lionizing common-sense, experiential forms of knowledge.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

Doug Ford's 2018 election campaign provides a useful case study toward understanding both the historical legacy and future potential of right-wing populism in Canada. In examining Ford's discourse, it is quite clear that his particular brand of populism eschews the ideological tenets that scholars have used to characterize the populist radical right. In campaigning to Ontarians, Ford largely avoided deploying xenophobic or nativist appeals to ethnic identity or nationalism. Rather, his discourse relied on a neoliberal conceptualization of 'the people' structured around economic signifiers focused on appealing to a shared sense of middle-class identity. In Ford's populist worldview, the issues and interests that matter are those that belong to middle-class taxpayers whose collective prosperity has been limited by inefficient bureaucrats and corrupt politicians. This populist vision of society not only provided the jumping off point for Ford to offer his own preferred set of neoliberal free market reforms but allowed him to construct an inclusive conception of 'the people' that cut across racial and ethnic lines. Thus, Ford's populism stands apart from other recent populist leaders who have ascended to power on the back of anxieties about social or cultural change. Rather, Ford can be understood as part of a broader historical lineage of Canadian right-wing populism, where ethnic, cultural, and social concerns have been marginalized in favour of a unified focus on formal political equality and market-based reforms to government programs (Farney, 2019; Farney & Koop, 2017; Sawer & Laycock, 2009). Ford's promotion of middle-class identity as a unifying signifier is firmly in line with this ideological lineage.

On a broader level, Ford's campaign demonstrates the contextually contingent nature of successful iterations of populism. The leveraging of neoliberal and anti-cosmopolitan appeals represents ideological tenets that have significant currency in the unique political context of Ontario where a large and ethnically diverse proportion of citizens reside in seat-rich suburban ridings. As mentioned, Ford's brother, Rob, rode similar populist themes to serve a tumultuous term as Mayor of Toronto, successfully mobilizing disenchantment toward downtown elites to create an ethnically diverse coalition of support among suburban voters (Kiss et al., 2019; Silver et al., 2019). This geographic divide between out-of-touch urban elites and ordinary people residing in suburbs played a key role in the PC's victory in 2018 as well. The coupling of neoliberal and anti-cosmopolitan discourses capable of transcending racial and ethnic divides sheds insight into the ways in which populism—at least electorally successful examples—conform to the specific social, cultural, and political contexts in which they unfurl (Budd, 2019; Moffitt, 2016). Ford's success in the 2018 election should also be understood as an outcome of the resonance of his neoliberal populist discourse within the unique political cultural of Ontario. While initially populated by Anglo-Celtic residents, successive waves of immigration since the 1950s have transformed Ontario into a highly diverse multicultural province with a political culture that privileges inclusiveness, fair treatment, and equality (Woolstencroft, 2016). However, Ontario's polit-

ical culture has also maintained many of its 'red Tory' roots centred on a view of government as being responsible for fostering economic success and demonstrating managerial efficiency. Ford's non-exclusionary brand of neoliberal populism focused on free market managerialism has a natural symbiosis within this cultural and political context.

On the surface then, Ford's blending of neoliberal ideology and populist discourse distinguishes him from other right-wing populists. Moreover, the absence of xenophobia and nativism in Ford's appeals to Ontarians renders comparisons between Ford and other populists made during and after the election largely unsupported. The analysis offered in this article may serve as evidence to support the conclusion that Canada is immune to the wave of radical right-wing populism that has infiltrated other countries (Adams, 2017). However, while there is an absence of overt appeals to cultural and ethnic divisions, we should not assume that Ford's neoliberal populist discourse during the election is free of racialized elements. Rather, we might reasonably interpret the absence of explicit discursive appeals to cultural or ethnic signifiers as an outcome of the neoliberalization of multicultural discourse that has been crafted by right-wing politicians and parties in Canada over the last three decades. As Kwak (2019, p. 1709) notes, conservative politicians have engaged in a gradual process of "racial realignment" whereby right-wing policies and electoral platforms have been re-encoded with neoliberal signifiers as part of efforts to appeal to immigrant communities. This neoliberal reimaging of racial and ethnic difference has allowed right-wing leaders and parties to strengthen their appeal to non-white communities by demarcating these communities between ideal and non-ideal neoliberal subjects. The former are defined as those imbued with an entrepreneurial spirit and independence for whom ethnic and religious differences become muted through economic integration. The latter category has been branded with the label 'special interests' and deemed undesirable based on their lack of economic value and the unreasonable demands they direct toward the state for group-based accommodation (Kwak, 2018). Thus, the importance of 'special interests' within Ford's discourse is well in line with the broader evolution of right-wing political discourse in Canada whereby racial social hierarchies have become reinforced by seemingly neutral, inclusionary neoliberal subjectivities. It is important that future studies of populism in Canada and elsewhere consider these subtle and often covert neoliberal racial politics when analyzing and studying populist leaders.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

Leadership as *Inter*preneurship: A Disability Nonprofit Atlantic Canadian Profile

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Abstract
The entrenchment of the neoliberal state and rise of populist leaders has marginalized the role of voluntary organizations in society. This presents significant challenges for nonprofit leaders in economically challenged areas as it erodes their ability to protect and serve vulnerable populations. Attention turns to maintaining hard fought gains at the expense of making progress. Yet doing so requires new skills and leadership styles to manage organizational change where innovation and transformation are key. Based on 42 qualitative interviews with disability nonprofit leaders in Atlantic Canada, our study aims to characterize this transformation. Using Szerb's (2003) key attributes of entrepreneurship that distinguish between entre-, intra-, and *inter*preneurs, we find disability leaders have become *inter*preneurs. We find a strong emphasis on networked service delivery underscoring shared goals, risks and responsibilities, and resources. For disability leaders, cultivating relationships and strong communication skills are essential. In the face of populist desires for state retrenchment, we question how long this collective response can hold given ongoing economic challenges.

Keywords
Atlantic Canada; disability nonprofits; interpreneur; leadership

Issue
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1. Introduction

Leadership in the nonprofit sector including the disability sector has gained importance in the past 30 years as governments have increasingly off-loaded their social policy implementation role to civil society actors (Bennett & Savani, 2011; Rathgeb Smith, 2012). This has coincided with the rise of populism and, combined, have marginalized the nonprofit sector (LaForest, 2012). This presents significant challenges for nonprofits in economically disadvantaged provinces such as those found in Atlantic Canada (Levesque, 2012). The competitive climate and increased role for disability nonprofits calls into question the role and skills required of their leaders. Specifically, how does the skill set that disability leaders possess align with the competitive funding environment that now exists? While the "nothing about us without us" philosophy guides persons with disabilities, there is also the need to examine disability leaders and how they are being transformed, if at all, by the changing context within which they operate.

The aim of this article is to examine disability nonprofit executive directors to take stock of their skill sets and leadership styles and argues that existing leadership models insufficiently capture their operating logic. Given the neoliberal turn and the rise of populism, it is argued that disability leaders have become *inter*preneurs in this turbulent period of shrinking government support, and it is questioned whether this aids or frustrates social citizenship for people with disabilities. The article begins by situating leadership in relation to the Canadian disability nonprofit sector within the populist discourse. In the second part, the focus is narrowed to executive directors of disability nonprofits in Atlantic Canada and the environment within which they operate. The methods that guide this exploratory study are elaborated in the third part with our results presented in the fourth part. The conclusion underscores our findings that disability non-

profit leaders are wrestling to define and redefine their roles as they become *inter*preneurs to ensure their organizations' survival.

2. Populism, Leadership, and the Canadian Disability Nonprofit Sector

Populism is a nebulous and contested concept. At its heart are three core concepts best captured in the ideational approach which posits the existence and tension between ordinary people and the elites with politics being the expression of the general will. Populist leaders are typically strong and charismatic and position themselves as the voice of the people in their fight against the elites even though they themselves are often part of the political elite. For liberal democracies such as Canada, populism has both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, voice is given to those individuals that feel marginalized in society. Yet, this voice comes at a cost in that it erodes the ability of traditional sectors of society that struggle to protect and recognize fundamental rights (see, for example, LaForest, 2012; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). For example, for voluntary sector leaders such as disability nonprofits, significant challenges arise in the maintenance of hard-fought gains at the expense of making progress. These challenges require new skills.

The rise of the right-wing Doug Ford Progressive Conservative Party in Ontario in 2018 is illustrative. As the "voice of the people," Ford has, among other things, changed labour laws, reformed the education system, cut government regulations, while continually criticizing the "corrupt" press (Kheiriddin, 2019; Wherry, 2018). Yet, it was his attacks on "special interests," services for autistic children in particular, that led to a massive backlash and forced his government to retreat, demonstrating the power of the electorate and the limitations of a populist agenda (Alphonso, 2019).

A similar populist strand is seen post-2000 in Atlantic Canadian provinces, an economically challenged region where opposition is often muted (Pied, 2011; Rodner, 2016; Saillant, 2014). Populist governments have emerged in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) with the Williams administration, in Nova Scotia (NS) with the Dexter administration, and in New Brunswick (NB) with the Graham and Higgs administrations respectively. Populist sentiments are also evident among opposition parties such as with the People's Alliance Party of NB, which calls for the downsizing of government services in the fight for ordinary people including the elimination of services and rights for "special interests"—Francophones, which make up 30% of the provincial population (Fahmy, 2018).

For disability nonprofits, the rise of populist leaders along with the neoliberal state pose significant challenges. Their position has been transformed from one of policy making to service provision by contracting with the state. Yet, even this is being challenged with the move to increased partnerships with businesses which can compromise their core values (LaForest, 2013; Senior, 2011). The legitimacy of represented groups is also undermined with looming uncertainty among individual citizens regarding who is left to fight for specific rights (e.g., disability) forcing us to rethink forms of representation (Levine, 2016). It also tests the capacity of nonprofit leaders as they increasingly adopt business practices and reinvent themselves in attempts to remain relevant (Dekker, 2019; Edwards, Cooke, & Reid, 1996). Managing in such an environment is challenging for disability leaders—disability nonprofit executive directors. But where to turn?

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Leadership and Organizational Change

Our current understanding of nonprofit leadership is overly determined by the deep leadership literature on the for-profit sector. Here one can trace the evolution of leadership theory to its early pre-1950s beginnings which focused on identifying the personal attributes of leaders in the belief that leadership was an inherent trait (e.g., Stogdill, 1948). Found wanting (Hemphill, 1949), attention turned to identifying leadership styles and patterns with much attention on task oriented versus more participatory leadership styles (Likert, 1961; Stogdill & Coons, 1957). By the 1970s, it was recognized that situational settings mediated leadership styles thus giving rise to a series of contingency theories (Fielder, 1967; House, 1971). Recent work integrates these theories into a process of sustaining change recognizing that leadership is a function of roles occupied, influence, and context (Bass, 1985; Kotter, 2012; Yukl, 2006). Research has focused on identifying factors that underpin transformational leadership (Popa, 2012), its use (Wright & Pandey, 2010), and differences when compared to transactional and collaborative styles (Atwood, Mora, & Kaplan, 2010; Fisher, 2013; also see MacGregor Burns' [1978] pioneering work).

From an organizational change perspective, like the situation disability nonprofits in Atlantic Canada currently find themselves, emphasis is placed on transformational leadership (Jaskyte, 2004; Lutz Allen, Smith, & da Silva, 2013). Here, we find charismatic and inspirational traits in leaders who are relations oriented. That is, their focus is on human relations both within and outside of their organizations, in hiring the right people, motivating others, and monitoring their performance. Transformational leaders have superior decision making and interpersonal skills while having a high degree of self-confidence. They are in it for the "long game" (perseverance) and possess strong communication skills (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). They also argue for what they think is right rather than what is acceptable or popular (Bass, 1985). This contrasts with transactional and participatory leadership styles which

are both largely process oriented. Transactional leadership is largely incremental in its focus on marginal improvements, maintaining performance, reducing resistance, and implementing decisions (Scholten, 2010). Participatory leadership emphasizes the input of people in reaching decisions and can be seen as more democratic (Pearce et al., 2003). Autocratic or top-down, directive-oriented leadership is perhaps the least suited for organizational change often leading to conflicts. This controlling style is usually related to less educated and insecure individuals (Derue et al., 2011).

3.2. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is often related to entrepreneurs (for a comprehensive overview see Avolio & Bass, 2001; Riggio & Bass, 2005). At the heart of entrepreneurial leadership is venture taking (see Table 1). This involves bringing together the necessary resources (e.g., funding, equipment, people) in order to create a new venture or to take over an existing venture only to significantly transform it seeking enhanced performance. In such processes, the risk is assumed by venture takers with the rewards flowing back to them (Brockhaus, 1980; Gartner, 1985; Szerb, 2003). Risk taking has been found to be equal between entrepreneurs and managers (Brockhaus, 1980) although their motivation differs with entrepreneurs focused on money and fame (Gartner, 1985). Entrepreneurial skills are vast and include the ability to generate new ideas and envision possibilities, the ability to recognize and seize opportunities, the recognition of social and market needs, the ability to manage risks, self-confidence, perseverance, and networking (Jain, 2011; Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). To be clear, entrepreneurs are highly creative individuals that operate independently outside of organizations regarding what and how things get done.

Yet highly creative individuals and agents of change also reside within organizations and are termed intra- and *inter*preneurs as shown in Table 1. Intrapreneurs are entrepreneurs who work within organizations (internal entrepreneurs). Intrapreneurs are able to marshal significant internal company resources in support of their venture that should lead to increased profits for the company. Unlike entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs are team-oriented but still possess a fair amount of independence within the company. The more success they have, the greater their independence (Pinchot, 1985; Szerb, 2003).

*Inter*preneurs, on the other hand, were initially conceived as individuals who facilitate a period of revitalization of a company or organization. *Inter*preneurs are intergenerational and often discussed as family descendants who are able to bridge practices of the past with the future in transforming the organization. Their moti-

Table 1. Attributes of entre-, intra-, and *inter*preneurs.

	Classical Entrepreneur	Intrapreneur	*Inter*preneur
Role	Create new venture; make business grow	Create new venture within existing organization	Continuous development; exploit new opportunities
Goal	Own profit maximization; glory	Profit maximization within framework of broader company goals	Profit maximization along with other network member goals
Risk/Responsibility	Owns all risk and consequences	Risk lies with company owner; limited individual responsibility	Shared risk and responsibility among network members
Control of Resources	Owns or controls necessary resources	Company owns resources; individual has partial control of them	Partial ownership and control of necessary resources
Connections	Informal, vague, authority-based	Formal, authority-based; significant independence from other units	Mixed; hierarchical within business; associative within network
Personal Attribute	Individual person; works alone	Team person; works in small group within company	Network person; works in collaboration with other network members
Skills	Possesses all entrepreneurial and business skills	Most entrepreneurial skills; fights for resources	Specialized skills; some entrepreneurial and business skills; strong emphasis on social and communication skills, ability to cooperate with network members

Note: Adapted from Szerb (2003).

vation is growth, leadership, profit, survival, and family values (Poza, 1988). *Inter*preneurs are networked individuals and, like intrapreneurs who consider the goals of the company within which they work, also consider the goals of their network members. Successes and risks are shared with network members while *inter*preneurs own or control the resources they bring to the table. What distinguishes *inter*preneurs is the emphasis on developing and maintaining their network to ensure success thus underscoring the need for superior social and communication skills and the ability to co-operate with other network members (Hoy, 2007; Szerb, 2003).

3.3. Executive Directors, Management Challenges, and Leadership

The executive directors of nonprofits are uniquely positioned at the centre of their organization. This poses management challenges as management is multidirectional. For example, executive directors must manage up to their board of directors. This involves the preparation of financial, human resources, and programmatic information for meetings. It also involves long-term strategic planning related to fundraising, growth, and organizational structure, as well as board renewal. Executive directors also need to manage down to their staff and clients largely surrounding the implementation and evaluation of programs and the assignment of related resources. Executive directors also manage out to their external stakeholders. Managing contracts with government agencies, reporting on financial and program outcomes, and continually cultivating relationships with existing and potential donors is time consuming yet crucial for the organization. Executive directors also need to respond to community group or media inquiries as they arise. Lastly, executive directors manage out to other nonprofits in terms of working collaboratively on programs or advocacy strategies in order to make progress on disability issues. Time is a precious resource and an executive director's attention can be focused on one or more directions depending on priorities or time of year (for a broader overview, see Levesque, in press-a; Mintzberg, 2002).

Two implications arise from this management situation. First, the multidirectional management required is very different from that found in the corporate world. For example, for-profit managers, that is, chief executive officers, typically operate at the halfway point between their board of directors and their staff similar to the pinch point in an hourglass. Management is up or down with very little management out in other directions (a similar situation is found with local government chief administrative officers; see Siegel, 2010).

Second, multidirectional management places a premium on key competencies. The skills required to manage up to boards are not necessarily the same as those required to engage with the media or external stakeholders or to work with clients and staff (Wang & Ashcraft, 2012). No one executive director possesses all of the necessary skill sets which underscores the need for support from other key individuals with complementary skill sets. This is important given the unpredictability of populist leaders' agendas.

To survive in this environment, change is required. Disability leaders have to be creative and innovative in order to ensure programs meet their clients' needs. The creativity comes from having to reinvent themselves and their organization to remain relevant and to compete for government contracts for service delivery. Innovation means doing things differently including working with other like-minded groups. It is this creativity and innovation that are at the core of transformative and entrepreneurial leadership and enable forward movement. The question is: Do we see evidence of this leadership emerging in Atlantic Canadian disability nonprofits?

4. Methodology

This article is derived from the Fostering the Next Wave of Disability Leaders project. This 2.5 year project was aimed at understanding leadership in the disability nonprofit sector in an era of increasing populist leaders to improve disability policy development and program implementation in the post-2000 neoliberal era.

4.1. Research Context

Consisting of three parts, part 1 developed a management profile of disability leaders—executive directors of nonprofit disability organizations and government disability program managers. This included distilling the skill sets and tasks performed in order to reveal gaps and to assess how those gaps could be addressed and distinguished. Executive directors were found struggling to keep their organizations afloat due to the loss of core operational funding in the move to competitive contracting. In comparison, government disability officials deviated little from the hierarchical model of management and stressed the need to "manage" superiors and engage project partners. The result is the current patchwork of disability services with individuals increasingly turning to rights-based approaches for policy changes to force governments into cross-departmental person-centred approaches to meet needs, something for which they are poorly structured to do (Levesque, in press-a).

Part 2 of the project is the current work. Given the changes forced upon disability leaders in the post-2000 neo-liberal era, how can we characterize what they do? While many are struggling, disability leaders are, nonetheless, surviving. Yet, we are witnessing a transformation from their former managerial role into a "jack of all trades" role with significant innovative and creative entrepreneurial spirit. The characterization of this spirit is the focus here.

Part 3 examined the relationship between disability nonprofit executive directors and their boards of direc-

tors. It found that the benefits board of directors offer (advice, guidance) were negated by the efforts executive directors spent recruiting and continually educating them on issues to ensure they remained on task. In other words, boards were less than transformative and acted as a brake on executive directors' ability to realize service mandates and lead the organization in challenging times (Levesque, in press-b).

4.2. Geographical Context

A qualitative study was conducted containing semi-structured interviews with executive directors of disability nonprofits in Atlantic Canada. An Atlantic Canadian disability focus is warranted for several reasons. First, it is an understudied area in the literature yet provides an excellent research laboratory. It is comprised of four small Canadian provinces—NB, NS, Prince Edward Island (PEI), and NL—each of which have unique yet intertwined histories and similar governance structures. Second, the four provinces are traditionally "have not" provinces and have been economically marginalized from the rest of Canada receiving federal equalization payments (Graefe & Levesque, 2006). Third, the region is highly rural (48–56%) with a small population (approximately 2.4 million people combined; Statistics Canada, 2016). Fourth, Atlantic Canada has the highest rate of disability in Canada at 16.3% (Statistics Canada, 2014) and is served by over 250 disability nonprofit groups (Levesque, in press-a). Lastly, and more broadly, leadership research centred on nonprofit disability organizations is scarce (but see Schalock & Verdugo, 2012). Combined, these factors offer an excellent opportunity to study leadership transformation, especially with the rise of populist leaders post-2000, the entrenchment of new public management and recent funding cuts to disability organizations. In such situations, disability leaders face greater pressure in fulfilling mandates and we should see evidence of a move to transformative and entrepreneurial leadership.

4.3. Methods for Data Collection and Analysis

A total of 42 semi-structured interviews were conducted either in person or via telephone during 2016 and 2017 (see Table 2) with executive directors of disability organizations. Lists of provincial disability organizations were developed via Google web searches and disability group websites. Interviewees selected included a balance of groups from each province representing various disabilities including physical (12 interviews), visual (3 interviews), hearing (5 interviews), mental health (4 interviews), intellectual (5 interviews), and learning (0 interviews) disabilities, or a combination thereof (13 interviews). Lastly, disability organizations interviewed differed by whether they were primarily service (32), advocacy oriented (5), or both (5), and varied in scope from local to provincial and national. Participants are referenced as Respondent 1 (R1) and Respondent 2 (R2) to ensure confidentially and anonymity.

Questions probed their leadership approach, tasks performed, skills required, and board of directors relations. Interviews lasted on average 50 minutes and were recorded and transcribed. Each interview transcription was then reviewed three times by the research team to identify key attributes associated with entre-, intra-, and *inter*preneurs as outlined in Table 1 (role, goals, risk/responsibility, control of resources, connections, personal attributes, and skills). Key passages illustrative of each feature were highlighted with each reading. Analysis and interpretation of these passages was then undertaken to ensure consistency with the entre-, intra-, or *inter*preneurship categories.

4.4. Limitations

One potential limitation is related to the identification and interpretation of key "preneurial" features from the interview transcriptions. While errors may arise when one individual conducts the review, the team approach minimized such errors. Three members of the team reviewed the transcriptions independently then compared analyses to arrive at final results.

A second limitation is the mix of disability organizations with individuals from physical disability and cross-disability nonprofit organizations forming the majority of the interviews. The fact that no interviews were conducted with officials from learning disability organizations even with efforts to reach out to those identified (e.g., contacting all of them twice) was problematic. We were limited to those individuals who voluntarily agreed to participate. The results are dependent on the mix of disability nonprofits responding. However, we are confident in the results given the quality of feedback received from research dissemination events in the four provinces and a cross-provincial webinar with over 60 disability organizations.

Third, caution is required in generalizing the results given only one sector, disability nonprofits, and one economically challenged region, Atlantic Canada, formed the basis of this study. Differences may exist with other types of nonprofits such as those addressing poverty, homelessness, or economic development given sectoral dynamics. Results may also vary in regions with stronger economies in Canada (Ontario or Alberta) or in other

Table 2. Number of interviews conducted (requested), by province and type.

		NL	PEI	NS	NB	Total
Disability Organizations	# conducted	8	14	9	11	42
	(# requested)	(25)	(25)	(25)	(25)	(100)

countries given differences in institutional, social, and political structures.

Lastly, while Atlantic Canadian politics post-2000 is tinged with populist leaders such as Darrell Dexter (New Democratic Party) in NS, Danny Williams (Progressive Conservative Party) in NL, Shawn Graham (Liberal Party), Blaine Higgs (Progressive Conservative Party), and Kris Austin (People's Alliance of NB) in NB, we admit that results may differ in regions with a deeper history of populist leaders and politics.

5. Results

A move to *inter*preneurial leadership is evident. We discuss this result in relation to how Szerb's (2003) key features of "preneurs" overlap, then relate it to populist leaders.

5.1. Disability Nonprofit Executive Directors—Interpreneurs

5.1.1. Roles

Our interviews revealed a move to *inter*preneurial and transformational leadership with one key distinction: there is no familial dynamic involved. With *inter*preneurial leadership, the leader is typically a family member who has worked within the organization and moved to lead it into the future by bridging its past while seizing new opportunities in order to remain relevant in the marketplace. Such individuals are a rare entity in the disability nonprofit sector given their small size with most having less than ten employees (many have less than five). The typical situation was for a new executive director to assume the position after working in a similar position elsewhere, then taking stock of the organization to transform it in light of community and market realities.

Executive directors recognize the need for change stating that:

> To move the organization forward, like I believe that change has to happen on a daily basis. I really feel strongly that because we are dealing with people's lives and everything changes on a daily basis so as an executive director of an organization, it has to be a visionary. It has to know what the future can look like and what it should be and that type of thing. It doesn't mean that you are totally on the ball but you have to have a vision to then discuss with your board. (R33)

This quote underscores the need to have a vision and a plan but for others, it is more about holistic and continuous change as this quote from an executive director outlines:

> So the whole idea is about constantly improving, continuous learning, making yourself better, and applying that knowledge to your job and that makes us better as an organization. So, it is an interconnectedness thing and a flow, but the whole thing is about learning, constant desire to learn and improve because….I believe that if you stop growing and learning and applying and trying to, you know, organize change or drive change, change is going to drive you and that usually means someone will drive you out the door too, because change is constant. People have to understand that, people don't like change, but change is constant and change is good. (R8)

In the above quote, the executive director is espousing some of the tenets of new public management (Reiter & Klenk, 2019) in continuous improvement and learning which is consistent with *inter*preneurialism. R8 also emphasizes adaptability and to making change the norm. In R8's words, "change is constant." This, however, questions how change is to be approached and managed. Again, to quote the same executive director:

> I think you manage change by, I think realizing, look for trends in the sector, you realize that change is constant, so it is best for you to make change happen, as opposed to letting change make things happen to you, you know what I mean? So, you try to look at your organization and take note of where you are, what is going on around you, how does that affect us and if it does how do you deal with it effectively. (R8)

5.1.2. Goals, Risks/Responsibilities, and Control of Resources

Interviewees emphasized being aware of the "market" and the organization's fit within it, underscoring the need to stop to think, reflect, and plan (R17). This involves conducting asset mapping and environmental scans and creating opportunities to create relationships that may or may not have previously existed with organizations (R13). It is also about being evidenced-based and data driven (R16) which takes time and demands research to make a business case as one executive director pointed out:

> We have been trying to develop our own social enterprise or what kind of model that could be, we have identified a market and we are still kind of in that assessment mode of how we can figure out what the size of the market is and what really the demands are. (R4)

Being opportunistic is beneficial as examples from two executive directors point out:

> So we had been scrambling to try to find an alternate source of funding because we see just how important that program was and how there is nothing else like it in this province, there is a gap….We worked with government, they were looking to do something to work with…to kind of put a toe in the water for the flex fund-

> ing stuff and it broadened into doing some significant person-centered planning. (R6)

> We did a proposal for four schools and United Way gave us enough for two so I met with the school board and said if you want another two it will cost you $5,000, which is significantly less than the first two, so we will see if they are open to the idea. (R9)

The above examples highlight two key behaviours. First, there is a search to fit programs in line with government needs. Second, executive directors are searching out new opportunities consistent with *inter*preneurial leadership yet interpreting the organization's capabilities in government terms with a keen eye to budgets. Note the emphasis on the cost differential in the second quote. At other times, opportunities may be unexpected due to societal change as this next quote reveals:

> I think with mental health, everyone can relate to it so therefore it is becoming more important to everybody and we are just finding, like, the third-party fundraisers are increasing like you wouldn't believe, whereas years ago there was no such thing as a third-party fundraiser. If you want to raise money you had to do it yourself. (R9)

The evidence suggests that executive directors are largely *inter*preneurially oriented. Their focus is on continuous development, launching new ventures while exploiting new opportunities. They are also interpreting situations in government terms more so, which demonstrates consideration of their partners' goals while acknowledging their limitations (funding) which is consistent with *inter*preneurial leadership (see Table 1).

5.1.3. Control of Resources and Personal Attributes

Our interviews revealed a strong networking and collaboration component among executive directors. They cultivate their networks and approach services delivery often as networked-based, sharing expertise and resources (R5, R22), which is consistent with *inter*preneurial leadership. Networking and collaboration consumed the vast majority of executive directors' time, upwards of 70% for some (R29, R31). As one executive director explained:

> One of the best [pieces of] advice I got from a mentor that worked in the community was [to] get out there in the community; get on committees that are not related to what you do but let people know who you are and what you do; so, extend your reach and let them know you are there, you have got something to offer and you learn things and you make connections. (R8)

This need to continuously cultivate relationships was highlighted, with one executive director stating:

> The majority of my job is relationship building 60%+…because, you know, even in terms of relationships with government funders, you know asking for money is just one small part of it. The rest of it is making sure you are at the public consultations that they expect you to be at and being a part of partnerships. So, you are constantly kind of talking to people within that department to show that you a good partner in terms of somebody that they would want to work with in order to move forward the priorities of the government….So, I think that that part is really important and the ability to juggle a lot of different relationships is really critical because there [are] so many individuals who we touch in our work right, different stakeholders and the people we partner with and the people who give us money. That is the hardest part of this job and you have to be able to manage those partnerships and relationships well. (R34)

The Atlantic provinces have formal networks of disability associations (NL Network of Disability Leaders, NB Disability Executive's Network) or provincial accessibility committees (PEI, NS). The executive directors of those networks found the cross-sector disability approach beneficial to raise awareness, to combine efforts on common issues (e.g., transportation, stigma, discrimination, social supports; R4, R5), and for meeting key decision makers (R39). This does not mean that there is consistent agreement on how to move forward; rather, agreement exists for ongoing discussions and seizing opportunities for change (R33).

While beneficial, formal networks experience problems. Lacklustre attendance hampers information sharing and decision making (R4). Moreover, issues surrounded network membership given membership is by invitation only. As one individual stated:

> When you have one group speaking for all disabilities then some disabilities get left to the back because no, I am not a strong believer in cross-disability. You can't be an expert in all disabilities. You can be an expert in some things but not all and I stick to what I know and let the others speak for themselves and often times when you have cross-disability I am often at the table going, oh actually, that is not actually right for my group. (R36)

5.1.4. Skills, Personal Attributes, and Control of Resources

Another issue was that funding was disproportionately directed to disability nonprofits that were part of the network, which was lamented by one executive director whose organization was unable to join the network (R5). Still, others noted that it was the wave of the future because "governments are more interested in speaking with multi-disability groups then single-issue disability groups, especially at the federal level" (R38).

Questions also surrounded what collaboration actually means, especially for smaller disability nonprofits. In the words of one executive director:

> One of the things that I find that I am running up against is what does collaborative work actually mean when a large institution is working with a community-based organization and my experience in…was very different than here and whether it is a lack of knowledge or fear or lack of political will, I am not sure, but the ability to begin to look at what collaborative working from my perspective, from an NGO perspective, seems to be lacking from our government and our large institutions. (R13)

Other executive directors expressed frustration with other organizations arguing that collaboration may be expressed yet actions are often less than collaborative (R21). Frustrations also surrounded dysfunctional networked efforts with some executive directors occasionally asking to be removed from provincial committees (R19).

What we find is a situation where executive directors have all expressed the need for collaboration and networking in order to achieve goals. Yet, this collaboration at times involved only select disability nonprofits to the chagrin of others. The evidence also suggests that collaboration, while plentiful, is imperfect, and much trial and error is involved. One executive director may have said it best by stating:

> What is the value of that collaboration? So, being able to communicate, those communication skills and being able to build those relationships and articulate those values without wanting to poke someone's eyes…but the art of patience and understanding that building relationships takes time, whether it is with larger organizations or with clientele. It is not a fast process, it takes a lot of time, it doesn't happen. We don't "friend" somebody you know and that creates a relationship. It is a long process and building trust with whatever organization of group of people you are working with is a slow process. (R13)

5.1.5. Skills

At the heart of this shift to "preneurship" is the need for superior communication skills. This includes:

> Strong writing and oral skills; you are constantly writing. You are writing press releases, you are writing letters to sponsors, you are writing letters to participants, you are writing letters to parents, you are writing letters to schools, so that is definitely something. (R26)

The above quote illustrates the need to "know your audience" given a different writing style is required for each audience. Knowing your audience means being "people-centric" as one executive director explained:

> Number one, I think you need to be a people person because you need to be able to connect with people, otherwise they are not going to see you as being available to them for whatever it is they need you for or want you for. (R37)

This again underscores the ability to build and sustain relationships and partnerships (R9) with some executive directors stating that fostering relationships with project funders is over half of their work (R4). The key in this process is:

> The ability to be able to write and just craft a story because even if you don't know the contract piece if you can craft a story than you can write the proposal, you know? A level of, I don't even know how to phrase this, but just a level of awareness of the political circumstances of this province and knowing who the players are. The ability to speak well on whatever it is that are speaking and to be aware of how it is that you are presenting things. (R6)

> That is big, that storytelling piece, whether it is face-to-face or whether it is in a group, is a big piece of what I do as well and I think it is about trying to make it and communicate it in a way that is succinct, it grabs people's attention, but yet I know it stays focused enough that I know they can walk away with a seed that has been planted, that is big piece of what we do for sure. (R3)

The point is that superior communication skills and relationship building are inter-related and underpin collaboration and partnerships which is consistent with the move to *inter*preneurship focused on managing networks in order to achieve your goals.

5.1.6. Control of Resources

Much of the change has been forced on disability nonprofits due to changes in their funding structure and, in particular, funding cuts. These cuts have occurred due to changes in federal funding formulas and provincial economic realities. Federally, the Harper Conservatives cut core operational funding to disability groups in 2012 which had a knock-down effect. As one official stated:

> About three to four years ago, the national office and a couple of the other ones found out they weren't going to receive their traditional funding and they were given a period of, I think it was three years, where the first year they received their normal funding, the next year it was cut by 50%, and the year after that it was cut down to 25% so basically they were cutting them out. (R5)

At the same time, federal program funding changes redirected funding to provinces which, in turn, redirected the funds based on their own priorities thus recalibrating funding among disability organizations. Winners and losers were created and, for some, significant funding was lost, upwards of a million dollars (R46). While governments may be sympathetic to disability issues, executive directors realize that there is little money for them (R6). Changes in funding have forced disability nonprofits to innovate. For example, a formerly top-down funding structure with the national organization distributing funds to provincial chapters was reversed so that the provincial chapters now fund the federal office (R15). Disability organizations have also been forced to be more creative in their fundraising efforts given formerly funded national groups are more aggressive at the local and provincial levels which has crowded out funding for many smaller nonprofits. This has forced them to be more creative with fundraising, especially given increased competition from new electronic sites such as Go Fund Me that has multiplied the number of causes competing for the public dollar (R3, R7, R13, R21, R33). A changing funding climate has forced disability nonprofits to innovate to survive. This is consistent with *inter*preneurship given their desire to transform organizations in order to keep pace with market shifts.

6. Conclusions

This article focuses on how the entrenchment of the neoliberal state and the rise of populist leaders in Atlantic Canada has impacted disability nonprofit leaders. Our results indicate that disability nonprofit leaders have become *inter*preneurs. Their role is to take stock of organizational strengths in order to capitalize on new opportunities while working to redefine how they operate given the new climate. While their focus remains largely on sustaining operations, they are increasingly doing so as part of networks illustrating the fact that risks and responsibilities and the control of resources are now shared. The success of network members is, therefore, of great importance and underscores the value of networking, relationship building, and communication skills. Our results also show how the key *inter*preneurial leadership features, particularly goals, risks, and responsibilities and control of resources, as well as personal attributes, skills, and control of resources are intertwined.

The implications are significant. In the face of populist desires for state retrenchment, we see the disability nonprofit sector in Atlantic Canada recoiling with increasing dependence on sector networks to survive. Short-term, this may be an effective survival mechanism. Long-term, attrition of the sector is suggested and increased societal inequality due to elevated services demands and chronic underfunding. As "policy takers," disability nonprofits are vulnerable to populism and question remains as to the severity of the attrition and whether Atlantic Canada is on the same "do-democracy" path as the Netherlands (Dekker, 2019). On the ground, the degree of attrition may be a function of the willingness of disability nonprofits to collaborate. The fact that executive directors have become *inter*preneurial bodes well for the future.

Looking forward, research is needed on different types of nonprofit organizations and in different economic and political conditions, including the context of populist leaders. There is also a need to examine the types of service delivery collaborations among disability nonprofits and their impacts on people with disabilities. This can then be linked back to state restructuring initiatives under populist leaders to improve the resiliency of disability nonprofits. The framework used here offers a model for gauging this transformation.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Charting Putin's Shifting Populism in the Russian Media from 2000 to 2020

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Abstract
This article analyses the changing themes of Vladimir Putin's populist messaging during his almost 20 years at the apex of Russian politics. To reveal shifts in Putin's populist rhetoric, the article examines Russian media framing of his four presidential-election campaigns and of Russia's relations with China and the United States (U.S.). Public opinion data is used to assess the impact of Putin's populist propaganda. The article begins by assessing to what degree Putin can be considered a populist politician, concluding that while his rhetoric is populist his rule is largely not. The article further finds that Putin has maintained his populist appeal by turning his ire from domestic economic elites to international political enemies, specifically by positioning himself as the main challenger to U.S. hegemony in the global system. Putin's control of the Russian media, co-opting of opposition populist causes and geopolitical victories in Syria and Crimea have helped him maintain his populist connection with Russian voters. But, the article concludes, growing access to anti-Kremlin online media, the pain of economic sanctions, botched social welfare reforms, and the presence of effective opposition movements are causing Putin's populism to lose its lustre.

Keywords
international relations; populism; Russia; Russian media; Russian politics; Vladimir Putin

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1. Introduction

Almost two-decades before Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin won power in Russia by promising to 'make Russia great again.' A faceless functionary until his surprise appointment as President Yeltsin's prime minister in August 1999, Putin used his obscurity to fashion a populist image as a man of the people. Earthy-toned pledges to 'wipe out' Chechen terrorists, crackdown on unruly oligarchs and to restore Russia's international prestige won Putin the presidency in March 2000. During his first presidential term, Putin's jailing and exile of media moguls and other tycoons helped remove his wealthy political opponents, while cementing his anti-establishment credentials with ordinary Russians (Burrett, 2011).

By the time Putin sought re-election for a third presidential term in 2012, however, he had become a victim of his own success. After serving at the apex of Russian politics for 12 years, Putin was undeniably the establishment candidate. To renew his populist appeal, Putin turned his anger from domestic economic elites to international political enemies and their alleged fifth-column provocateurs, positioning himself as the main challenger to the Western-dominated global order (Burrett, 2019). To help Putin reconnect with voters ahead of presidential elections, the Kremlin also began promoting a new narrative about Russia as Europe's last bastion of traditional values, defined as moral conservatism and Orthodox Christianity (Tolz & Harding, 2015, p. 476). Furthermore, to counter the emergence of genuine public opposition protests in 2011–2012, Putin's government introduced legislation aimed at reinvigorating Russian citizens' sense of patriotism, as well as sanctioning an array of patriotic organisations targeting Russia's perceived domestic enemies (Baunov, 2017).

Although Putin has clearly borrowed from the populist playbook to win and retain power over the past 20 years, this article argues that he has also eschewed many of the tactics deployed by populist leaders in other parts of the world. Putin, for example,

has largely rejected the anti-immigration, Islamophobic, ethno-nationalism of many European right-wing populists, instead championing Russia's multi-ethnic character as a national strength. Putin's rhetoric, meanwhile, frames close relations with Central Asia, China, and other rising powers as essential to the country's great-power status (Hutchings & Tolz, 2015, p. 27). Unlike populist presidents Donald Trump or Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Putin has sought to strengthen the state's institutional foundations and is at pains to appear to be following established legal procedures, even if in reality he frequently breaks the rules (Baunov, 2017). Putin's government maintains its legitimacy through institutions as well as through popular public support, aiming to make other state institutions subservient to the presidency rather than to destroy them (Sakwa, 2012).

This article has three parts. The first part analyses to what extent Vladimir Putin can be described as a populist. It compares Putin's leadership to academic definitions of populism, arguing that while elements of Putin's political approach conform to these definitions, in other ways it contradicts them. The second part of the article charts how the themes of Putin's populist messaging have changed over his four terms as president. To investigate Putin's changing rhetoric, the article analyses the Kremlin-sanctioned narratives promoted by Russian-state controlled media. Television has played a central role in disseminating official discourses in Russia since Putin first became president in 2000 (Burrett, 2011). At its core, populism is an ideology pitting a virtuous people against a corrupt elite (Mudde, 2007). Analysis in this article therefore focuses on Russian-media framing of domestic and international elites. Furthermore, since populist movements generally seek to impose the will of the people on 'others,' the framing of 'otherness' by the Russian media is also explored (Morelock, 2018, p. XIV). The article demonstrates that in light of public protests that followed the announcement that Putin would seek a third presidential term in 2012, official discourses changed substantially. Major shifts included a change in focus from domestic to international 'enemies' and a growing concentration on the West as Russia's main other. At the same time, the article finds that media reporting on China became more positive. These arguments will be elaborated by comparing Russian television framing of Putin's earlier (2000 and 2004) and later (2012 and 2018) presidential election campaigns. To assess the Russian media's representation of 'otherness,' the article also examines changing coverage of Russia's relations with the United States (U.S.) and China over the course of Putin's four presidencies. Drawing on media discourse theory, news reports are analysed qualitatively for changes in framing (emphasizing or excluding specific facts to promote particular definitions and interpretations), narrative, rhetorical strategy, and visual imagery, all of which can influence the way audiences interpret events (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine, & Newbold, 1998). The final section of the article analyses the durability of Putin's populism. It argues that Putin's control of the Russian media, co-opting of opposition populist causes and geopolitical victories in Syria and Crimea have helped him maintain his populist connection with Russian voters, despite presiding over an enduringly kleptocratic state. It is further argued, however, that growing access to anti-Kremlin online media, the pain of economic sanctions, botched social welfare reforms, and the presence of effective opposition movements are causing Putin's populism to lose its appeal. The article's conclusion returns to the question of whether Putin can be classified as a populist, arguing that his leadership fits most closely with discursive descriptions of populism and that the Russian president has become less populist and more nationalist over the course of his long tenure (de la Torre, 2007).

2. Is Putin a Populist?

The definition of populism is hotly contested among social scientists. Some scholars use the term exclusively to describe radical-right ethno-nationalist parties, such as Fidesz in Hungary, while others also apply the term to anti-austerity leftist parties, such as Spain's Podemos or Syriza in Greece (Ostiguy & Roberts, 2016). Some scholars include social movements as well as political parties in definitions of populism, for example the Occupy Wall Street or Tea Party movements in the U.S. (Williamson, Skocpol, & Coggin, 2011). Nevertheless, most scholars concur that across its diverse manifestations, populism expresses a division between 'the people,' however defined, and some type of elite (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012, p. 8). There is a general consensus that populists present themselves as the voice of the silent majority, whose interests are being ignored by the establishment. Many definitions recognise that populism does not map onto a conventional left–right axis of political competition (Ostiguy & Roberts, 2016, p. 26). Indeed, populist leaders may draw support simultaneously from both sides of the left–right spectrum.

From Rodrigo Duterte to Narendra Modi, populism is often characterised as guided by a strong, charismatic personality (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 7). Yet not all manifestations of populism are led by charismatic figures, as demonstrated by leaderless populist movements like the Arab Spring (O'Brien, 2015, p. 337). Furthermore, when scholars identify a populist leader as 'charismatic' this impression is usually based on how leaders present themselves (as saviours of the people) or how they perform (rousing political speeches) rather than on how their followers perceive them (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 27). Max Weber, who coined the concept of charisma, however, specified that what is important is how followers regard their leaders (Weber, 1978, p. 242). It is not what the leader is, but what the people see the leader as being that counts in generating the charismatic relationship. Weber further theorised that particularly at times of crisis, 'the people' would come to see some-

body as a 'saviour,' ascribing to them a charismatic quality, whether actual or presumed (Weber, 1978, p. 295).

Vladimir Putin first came to national prominence in Russia in turbulent times. Renewed conflict in Chechnya in August 1999 prompted President Yeltsin to promote the little-known Putin—then head of the Security Council—to prime minister. In this role, Putin capitalised on the patriotic emotions engendered by the Chechen conflict. Jingoistic coverage of the war on state-owned television helped Putin build his public image as a decisive leader (Burrett, 2011). Prior to his appointment as premier, Putin was a relatively unknown figure outside the political elite. When he took office as prime minister, only two percent of voters identified him as their choice to replace Yeltsin (Russian Public Opinion Research Center, 1999). But Putin's obscurity was an advantage, allowing him to create his public persona from scratch. Television coverage showing Putin planning tough action against Chechen terrorists, inspecting troops and taking part in martial arts competitions transformed him from a bland security officer into the strong leader Russians desired. Basing his 2000 presidential campaign on the ambiguous slogan 'Great Russia,' Putin was able to satisfy the competing interests of diverse domestic constituencies. In the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, Putin won by a wide margin, like many populists, cutting across left–right cleavages to gain support from neoliberals, post-Soviet communists and nationalists alike (Burrett, 2019).

Despite strong xenophobia in Russian public sentiments, as far as it is consistent, Putin's nationalist rhetoric is relatively moderate. Unlike populist leaders in many parts of Europe, Putin's nationalism has mainly emphasised citizenship rather than ethnic heritage as the basis for inclusion in a multi-ethnic Russian nation. Putin's nationalist rhetoric is largely aimed at controlling rather than mobilising xenophobic nationalism (Krastev, 2007). This does not preclude, however, the selective deployment of ethnic nationalism for electoral and legitimation purposes (Tolz, 2017). In response to the public protests that followed his re-election in 2012, Putin turned to ethno-nationalism to stabilise support for his administration. Since opinion polls show widespread xenophobia in Russia, including ethno-racial definitions of national identity in the official discourses disseminated by the Russian media allowed Putin to show his concern for public grievances (Levada Center, 2012). But following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, narratives stigmatising Russia's ethnic or religious minorities were again dropped. Putin could hardly accuse Ukraine's new government of 'fascist' discrimination against its Russian diaspora while encouraging ethno-racial representations of the Russian nation at home (Tolz, 2017, p. 753).

In appealing to nationalist sentiments, Putin has sought to mobilise society behind the reestablishment of order after the economic and political turbulence of the 1990s (Laruelle, 2009). The state that Putin inherited from Yeltsin in 2000 was weak and fragmented (Ruble, Koehn, & Popson, 2001). Regional governors established personal fiefdoms that overtly rebuffed central authority while several national republics talked of secession. Russia's oligarchs plundered the nation's wealth with little respect for the rule of law (Sakwa, 2012, p. 10). By successfully mobilizing themes that were previously the reserve of ultra-nationalists and using them to promote a state-building nationalism that has stabilized Russian society, Putin is at odds with the majority of populists. More often, populist leaders show scant regard for institution building, beyond creating or co-opting political parties that act as a personal vehicle for winning elections (Mudde, 2007). In using nationalism to strengthen the state, Putin has more in common with nineteenth century state-building nationalists in Britain and Japan than with many contemporary populists (Hechter, 2001).

Scholars argue that populist leaders establish a particular type of polity, what Peter Mair has termed 'populist democracy.' Under this system, charismatic leaders claiming to embody the 'will of the people' reject institutional constraints on their power (Mair, 2002, p. 90). In the populist playbook, defying convention and even breaking the law are celebrated as acts of subversion and as evidence that the leader will stop at nothing to serve the people (Fieschi, 2019). Populists thus tend to distain liberal and deliberative forms of democracy. Moreover, many populist leaders also undermine electoral forms of democracy by casting their opponents as illegitimate actors (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasster, 2014, p. 384). Donald Trump is a good example of a populist leader prone to labelling his critics as criminals or fakes. But although Putin has undoubtedly trampled on democratic norms and emasculated liberal institution in Russia, he has gone to great lengths to appear to be following legal procedures (Burrett, 2011). Putin, for example, behaves differently from many populists by refusing to comment on court cases involving his political adversaries. Yet at the same time, in using his influence over Russia's courts to harass his opponents, Putin's actions are more typical of a populist.

Populists in power invariably seek constitutional revisions to strengthen the executive, while weakening checks and balances (Pappas, 2019, p. 73). Putin has not radically altered Russia's constitution, perhaps because it already granted a dominant role to the president, who has the right to issue decrees, dissolve parliament and veto legislation (Huskey, 1999). Russia's existing constitution gave Putin all the tools he needed to build a vertical power structure. In 2004, without constitutional amendments, Putin eliminated direct gubernational elections, giving himself the power to appoint Russia's 89 regional leaders. Henceforth, regional governors were chosen based on their loyalty to the Kremlin (Ferris, 2019). Following demonstrations over alleged parliamentary-election fraud in 2011, directly-elected regional governors were reinstated in 2012 (Teague, 2014). When selecting candidates to run for regional governorships,

Putin has drawn on a new generation of technocrats, giving them responsibility for delivering his 12 'national projects,' that include increasing employment, raising living standards and improving infrastructure. Whereas Putin formerly drew on his personal network of fellow former security officers, his recent political appointees have been chosen for their professional experience. By promoting a new generation and granting them a degree of autonomy, Putin is attempting to transform Russia's system of governance that is too dependent on him personally (Hille & Foy, 2018). In building an overly centralised system predicated on his personal leadership, Putin's actions are in line with populists such as Hugo Chávez or Viktor Orbán (Pappas, 2019, p. 72). But in now seeking to depersonalise and decentral power—albeit to a limited degree—Putin's actions run counter to the populist norm (Müller, 2017).

More in keeping with the populist standard, Putin was behind constitutional amendments that extended presidential terms from four to six years from 2012. But in contradiction to this, when his constitutionally limited two-consecutive terms as president were over in 2008, Putin did not seek to extend his tenure by referenda or ad hoc laws like many populists (Pappas, 2019). Rather, Putin took a four-year interlude from the presidency, serving as prime minister to his protégé Dmitry Medvedev from 2008–2012. Putin's moves vis-à-vis Russia's constitution both confirm and confound expectations of populist rule. His decision to take a hiatus from the presidency may have been cosmetic, but appearances are important. Along with public support, the appearance of institutionalised procedures is the foundation of his legitimacy (Baunov, 2017).

Although Putin largely seeks to govern through institutions, his authority over those institutions rests on his direct, unmediated support from ordinary Russians. In seeking to connect directly with voters on a personalistic level, Putin follows an approach common among populist leaders (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012, p. 378). Although the United Russia Party was created as a vehicle to support Putin's legislative agenda in the Russian parliament, in three out of four presidential elections he has stood as an independent rather than on the party ticket.

Again, in common with many populists, Putin frequently employs crude language and displays of machismo to show he is a man of the people who will protect the nation (Sperling, 2016). The abundance of manly Putin-images presented by the Russian media are internationally notorious: bare-chested outdoor man, fighter pilot and, most theatrically, the tamer of Siberian tigers (Schuler, 2015, p. 137). The public first heard Putin's coarse language in September 1999 when he vowed revenge after Russia was hit with several deadly terrorist bombings. Putin didn't hold back: 'We'll catch them in the toilet, we will wipe them out in the sh*thouse,' he said (Dougherty, 2015). Since then, Putin has regularly sprinkled his statements with vulgarisms. In response to a hostile question from a journalist at a Brussels summit in 2002, Putin bizarrely offered his questioner a circumcision. The following year, Putin raised eyebrows again when he criticised Russia's oligarchs saying, 'you must always obey the law, not just when they've got you by the balls' (Strauss, 2003).

Putin's populist gestures have helped him solidify support among Russian citizens. During his first two presidential terms, his approval ratings averaged approximately 70 percent (Levada Center, 2019a). But Putin's public support is predicated more on the provision of socially popular measures than on a genuine emotional connection with voters. Attempts to reform social benefits in 2004 and to raise Russia's retirement age in 2018 resulted in public protests and a plunge in Putin's approval ratings (Myers, 2005; Volkov, 2018). In both cases, Putin watered down his proposals in response to public pressure. Unlike populist leaders in other countries who aim to mobilise and politicise their supporters with what Conaghan and de la Torre (2008) call a 'permanent campaign,' Putin's governing strategy is based on demobilising and depoliticising Russian citizens (Laruelle, 2013, p. 4). But demobilisation is not necessarily counter to populism. Many populist leaders substitute 'rule *by* the people' with 'rule *for* the people,' with the leader supposedly embodying the people's will. In this sense, populism without participation is not an incoherent proposition. Populists, such as Silvio Berlusconi or Viktor Orbán, often adopt a caretaker attitude towards a passive public (Müller, 2016, p. 30).

Putin's transactional rather than emotional connection with his followers suggests only weak evidence of populism. But populism can be viewed as an ordinal rather than nominal category. If conceived as nominal, leaders are either populist or they are not. But if viewed as ordinal, leaders can be located spatially on a scale, with some conforming to more elements of populism than others (Ostiguy, 2017, p. 89). Very few leaders fit all the attributes of populism as outlined by scholars in their varied definitions. Putin may not be a populist in all aspects of his leadership, but this does not mean that certain populist elements are not part of his repertoire.

As well as viewing populism as ordinal, scholars have described different varieties of populism. Three main conceptual approached have emerged defining populism respectively as an ideology, a discursive style and as a form of political motivation. Cas Mudde's (2007) influential ideational approach described populism as a 'a thin centred-ideology' that extols the pure, authentic people in their confrontation with a corrupt elite. Due to its generic worldview, Mudde argues, populism can combine with other more specific ideologies. An alternative approach describes populism as a discursive style. Analysing populism in Latin America, Carlos de la Torre (2007, p. 389) defines populism as a discourse framing politics as a struggle between the people and the oligarchy. Here, populism is not an ideology, but a mode of political expression built around a dichotomy between 'them' and 'us.' In contrast to ideational and discursive

approaches, some scholars understand populism as a political strategy. This approach focuses on different aspects of political strategy: policy choices, political organizations, and forms of public mobilisation (Madrid, 2008). This article argues that Vladimir Putin conforms most closely to discursive descriptions of populism. As outlined above, Putin's rhetoric is often populist, but his style of governance is largely not. It is further argued that over time, Putin has shifted from populist to more nationalist discourses. The section that follows analyses how the focus of Putin's rhetorical appeals has changed over the course of his four presidential terms.

3. How Has Putin's Populist Messaging Changed?

3.1. From the Oligarchs to Overseas Enemies

In his campaigns for the Russian presidency in 2000 and 2004, Putin emphasised his firmness in standing up to forces undermining Russia's stability, dignity, and honour (Lambroschini, 2000). In 2000, foremost in Putin's sights were separatists in Chechnya. Yet despite being chosen by Yeltsin and his band of oligarchs as a loyal successor who would preserve crony capitalism and keep them out of jail, Putin also turned his ire on those who had accumulated billions by appropriating state assets. In the aftermath of the 1998 Russian financial crisis that saw living standards plummet, the oligarchs, who had accumulated vast wealth by seizing Russia's rich natural resources, were an easy populist target. At a meeting with the oligarchs a month before the March 2000 presidential election, Putin made it clear that under his leadership the rules of the game would change (Goldman, 2004, p. 36). In his statement—widely reported in the Russian media—Putin told Russia's tycoons that they would no longer be able to flout government regulations or to count on special access to the Kremlin. Putin reiterated the same message in an open letter to voters published in three national newspapers on 25 February 2000, writing:

> Our priority is to protect the market against illegal invasion, both by government bureaucrats and by criminals….All economic entities should be in an equal playing field. (Putin, 2000a)

The acting president argued that individuals taking excessive and illegal rents out of the economy 'threaten our very existence' (Putin, 2000a). Putin's attacks on the oligarchs won him supporters among ordinary Russians' struggling to make ends meet, as well as among the country's young entrepreneurs, angry that the growth of their companies was being undermined by the lawlessness of Russia's business climate and its dominance by financial tycoons close to Yeltsin (Thornhill, 2000). As the election drew closer, Putin's attacks against the oligarchs became more explicit. In an interview on *Radio Mayak* a week before voting, Putin attacked the oligarchs for 'merging power with capital' and spoke of his aspiration to 'liquidate the oligarchs as a class' (Reddaway, 2001, p. 27). As well as condemning the oligarchs collectively, Putin took aim at individual tycoons. In February 2000, he criticised Unified Energy Systems chief executive Anatoly Chubais for presiding over 'an unstable and disorderly mechanism' that would not need to hike electricity prices if the company was better run (Humphreys & Bivens, 2000).

During the 2000 election campaign, Putin had to tread carefully against the oligarchs, especially those such as Boris Berezovsky and Vladimir Gusinsky whose media holdings were essential in helping him win (Burrett, 2011). But his own meteoric rise taught Putin the power of the media over public opinion. And after his election, the new president concluded that such a powerful tool could not be left in the hands of unruly tycoons. Legal loopholes and their murky financial dealings provided Putin with levers to wrestle their media assets away from the oligarchs. Less than six months after his election victory, prosecutions were launched against Berezovsky and Gusinsky, forcing both into exile (Burrett, 2011). These moves allowed Putin to extend state control over the media, but also to burnish his anti-elite credentials with ordinary Russians.

At the same time as pursuing their oligarchic bosses, Putin also launched an attack against Russia's liberal media elites. Although journalists working for Berezovsky and Gusinsky helped to get Putin elected, they soon turned on the new president over his inept response to the sinking of the *Kursk* nuclear submarine in August 2000. In an interview on state-owned broadcaster *Rossiya*, Putin blamed the media for enflaming public passions over the *Kursk* disaster, stating that:

> The people on television, who for ten years were destroying the army and the navy, where people are now dying, are the first among the army's defenders….They want to show the military and political leadership that we need them, that we are on their hook. (Putin, 2000b)

Media coverage criticising Putin over the *Kursk* disaster and Chechen war was branded as unpatriotic by his administration (Burrett, 2011). But in his propaganda war with Russia's media elites, Putin was the victor. Only four percent of Russians saw his moves to bring Gusinsky and Berezovsky's media holdings under state influence as a clampdown on free speech. Rivalries between oligarchic clans or economic concerns were more widely accepted explanations (Petrova, 2001).

Putin's war with the oligarchs was a central theme of his re-election campaign in 2004. A public opinion survey less than a year before the election found that 84 percent of Russians believed the oligarchs acquired their wealth illegitimately (Naryshkina, 2004). The majority of Russian voters viewed the social and economic influence of major capitalists as negative (Petrova, 2003). To marshal votes for Putin, a high-profile target was needed to demon-

strate the sincerity of the president's commitment to ending the parasitic relationship between the oligarchs and the state. Mikhail Khodorkovsky, owner of the oil giant Yukos and one of Russia's most successful businessmen, became the obvious choice when he appeared on television accusing Putin of improprieties over the sale of another energy firm *Severnaya Neft* to state-owned *Rosneft*. Around the same time, Khodorkovsky signalled his intentions to enter the political arena by donating to Putin's rivals and buying newspaper *Moskovskie Novosti* (Latynina, 2003). His deep pockets made Khodokovsky a dangerous adversary. In July 2003, Khodorkovsky's deputy Planton Lebedev—along with several other high-ranking Yukos employees—was arrested for embezzlement. On 25 October, Khodorkovsky himself was arrested at Novosibirsk airport and charged with fraud and tax evasion amounting to billions of dollars. The nature of Khodorkovsky's arrest was deliberately executed to create a television sensation that would elicit maximum support for the move among ordinary Russians. Khodorkovsky could easily have been arrested in Moscow, but the storming of his private plane gave events a filmic quality and provided footage that would remind audiences of his connection to the privatisation bonanza of the 1990s.

An aggressive campaign on state television was used to frame public thinking about Khodorkovsky. Exploiting voters' long-held distrust of the rich, state television portrayed Khodorkovsky as an oligarch who had reached the pinnacle of his wealth through suspicious means (Tavernise, 2003). Putin appeared on television to defend the arrest as purely an attack on corruption. No other interpretation of events was heard on state-owned channels, with journalists covering the story without analysis and likening the affair to the arrest of Enron executives in the U.S. (Burrett, 2011). A public opinion poll conducted at the end of October 2003 found that 52 percent of Russians accepted Putin's explanation that Khodorkovsky had been arrested solely for violating the law—only 11 percent thought the arrest was politically motivated (Smirnov, 2003). Khodorkovsky's arrest allowed Putin to satisfy public demands for action against the oligarchs while also removing a potentially dangerous political opponent.

Khodorkovsky's fate served to deter other oligarchs tempted to meddle in politics. After neutering the old cadre and consolidating his power during his first two terms in office, the biggest obstacle to Putin's return to the presidency for a third term in 2012 was voter apathy. A high turnout was crucial to legitimating his renewed mandate. But after more than a decade at the top and a record of throwing his political opponents in jail, Putin could hardly campaign as a plucky outsider battling an entrenched elite. To suggest the oligarchs were still plundering Russia's wealth would be to admit failure. To rally populist support for Putin in 2012, therefore, the Kremlin shifted its main focus to a different 'enemy': domestic and international forces bent on overturning Putin's legacy. State-controlled television was used to vilify those who staged public demonstrations against Putin's return. Putin labelled his domestic detractors as a privileged elite. Russia's best-educated citizens were portrayed as traitors, perhaps in the pay of the U.S. (Krastev & Holmes, 2012, p. 44). This was not the first time that Putin had invoked anti-Americanism or the idea of a 'fifth column.' During the 2005 Orange Revolution, Putin accused the U.S. of funding anti-government NGOs in Ukraine. He did not, however, accuse Western governments of the same provocateur activities in Russia until 2012, when his government introduced legislation requiring all NGOs receiving overseas funding to register as foreign agents (Elder, 2013). In February 2007, Putin made a powerful speech at the Munich Security Conference accusing Washington of 'forcing its will on the world' and of undermining global security (Yasmann, 2007). But although there are examples of Putin citing external enemies earlier in his presidency, it is not until 2012 that this became a consistent feature of his rhetoric. The subsequent Ukraine crisis from February 2014 gave Putin the perfect opportunity to further solidify nationalist and anti-Western sentiments as the main base of support for his leadership. In a speech in January 2015, for example, Putin asserted that pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine were not just fighting the Ukrainian army but also a NATO-sponsored 'foreign legion' (Sperling, 2016, p. 17). Putin's Ukraine strategy worked as intended. Thanks to his role as the embodiment of an internationally resurgent Russia, Putin managed to improve his popularity during one of the worst economic crises in recent Russian history. Despite Western-led sanctions that sent Russia's economy into recession in 2014, Putin's approval rating hovered around 80 percent (Levada Center, 2019a).

The spectre of a hostile West was again deployed to bolster support for Putin ahead of the 2018 presidential election. Russian television warned voters that high turnout was the only thing protecting the nation from annihilation by the West. Social media spread rumours of Western government plans to interfere in the election, while state news agencies alleged that more than a dozen countries had attempted cyber-attacks against Russia (Polyankova, 2018). Putin's 2018 presidential rivals were accused of being agents of foreign powers. State media accused communist candidate Pavel Grudinin of stashing $1 million in a Swiss bank account. The Russian parliament accused those campaigning for an election boycott of receiving funds from foreign governments ('V Sovfede Zayavili,' 2018).

The Russian media further framed the assassination attempt against exiled former *Glavnoe Razvedyvatel'noe Upravelnie* (GRU) intelligence officer Sergei Skripal on 4 March 2018 to support Putin's narrative of a hostile enemy at the gates. The British government was accused of using the Skripal' case to spread anti-Russian propaganda to shore up its security partnerships ahead of its departure from the EU. Speaking on Russian television

Pervyy Kanal, political scientist Caroline Galacteros accused the British government of using an attack on its soil to 'return the UK to the European family' ('Odnim iz punktov,' 2018). Speaking on his weekly *Vesti Nedeli* programme, Dmitry Kiselyov accused the U.S. of plotting the attack to undermine support for Russia's position in Syria (Kiselyov, 2018). In stoking voters' fear and resentment towards hostile Western powers, the Kremlin's propaganda machine achieved its desired results. Turnout in the 2018 election reached a respectable 67.5 percent, with Putin winning 76 percent of votes cast. After the results were announced, Kremlin sources thanked Western leaders for consolidating support behind Putin with their threats. Putin's campaign spokesman Andrei Kondrashov specifically thanked the UK for ensuring 'a level of turnout we weren't hoping to achieve by ourselves' (MacFarquhar, 2018).

Shifting the focus of his discourse from domestic to foreign enemies does not mean that Putin has abandoned populism. Benjamin de Cleen (2017) demonstrates that nationalism is often articulated within populist politics. Nationalism is a discourse constructed around the nation, which is imagined as a limited, sovereign community tied to a certain territory and constructed through opposition to its 'out' groups (Anderson, 1983). Nationalism and populism combine in numerous discursive ways. One combination pits the virtuous people, equated with the nation, against foreign powers and/or multinational institutions that would limit their sovereignty (de Cleen, 2017, p. 353). A good example is the Brexit Party, which claims to be fighting to repatriate popular-national sovereignty from the EU. Putin articulates a similar populist-nationalism that posits the Russian nation as an underdog fighting hegemonic Western powers accused of undermining Russia's national identity and pride.

3.2. From China to the U.S. as Russia's 'Other'

Populists' use of 'otherness' to generate support for their leadership is well documented (Mudde, 2007; Ostiguy & Roberts, 2016). In the case of Russia, the international 'others' against which the nation has been defined and set in opposition has shifted from East to West during Putin's tenure. Given its location between Europe and Asia, for centuries Russian political leaders and intellectuals have debated different visions of Russia's others. Whether or not Russia is part of European civilization is an argument featuring prominently in these debates since tsarist times (Neumann, 1998, p. 167). Starting with Peter the Great, some Russian elites have attempted to define national identity in line with European ideas of enlightenment, constitutionalism, and capitalism. Integration with Europe and imitation of its institutions has been seen by Russia's Westernisers as a path to development (Neumann, 1998, p. 164). In contrast to these would-be-Westernisers, Slavophiles have conceptualised Russia as a unique culture, seeing Europe as a significant other against which Russian civilisation is defined. Both early Slavophiles and Westernisers tended to see Eastern civilisations as barbaric and inferior. But following Russia's humiliation in the Crimean War, some Slavophiles turned towards Asia, praising China's strong state model and India's religiosity (Tsygankov, 2008, p. 767). Slavophile intellectuals began to argue that only by preserving Russia's distinct culture—based on the moral force of orthodoxy and a strong state—could the nation avoid the decadence weakening Europe. In the twentieth century, Bolshevik doctrine similarly perceived Soviet Russia as superior to the 'rotten' capitalist West. Civilisational debates reignited with the collapse of the Soviet Union. President Yeltsin's vision of integration with the West assumed Russia would develop Western-style liberal democratic institutions. Yeltsin was opposed by Eurasianists, with roots in the Slavophile tradition, who emphasised Russia's strong ties to Asia and the importance of cultural and geopolitical independence (Tsygankov, 2008, p. 768). On assuming office, Putin embraced a vision of Russia as part of Europe (Putin, 2005). But as Russia's path of development and geopolitical interests have diverged from the West, Putin has pivoted East. Putin has become increasingly critical of many of the West's characteristics, including equal rights for sexual minorities (Makarychev & Medvedev, 2015). Putin frequently challenges the idea that Western values are universal (Tsygankov, 2008, p. 771). Rather, he maintains that Russia's need for modernisation necessitates an emphasis on political stability and national sovereignty over other values, thus articulating similar civilizational arguments to leaders in China and other Asian states.

When Putin took office in 2000, Russia's media presented China as both an internal and external threat to Russian security. At that time, media reporting on China mainly focused on illegal Chinese immigration as a territorial, economic and cultural danger to Russia's declining population. The media fanned fears that illegal Chinese immigrants were the first wave of China's expansion into Russia's Far East (Hille, 2016). Similarly, Chinese traders in Moscow's markets were accused of undermining local businesses by trading in counterfeit goods (Hutchings & Tolz, 2015). But for the past decade, as Russia's economic interdependence with China has accelerated, the Russian media has emphasized cooperation between Beijing and Moscow, playing down areas of discord.

Russian television builds a narrative of friendship between China and Russia with frequent references to bilateral summits, joint economic projects, cultural exchanges, and to united action within international institutions such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)—often to counter what is presented as the destructive dominance of the U.S. In recent months, for example, Russian television has reported on joint efforts to tackle transnational terrorism ('Bor'ba s terrorizmom,' 2019); booming bilateral trade that in 2019 exceeded $100 billion ('Vladimir Putin held Kremlin talks

with Xi Jinping,' 2019); and Chinese military participation in Russian-led war games ('Vladimir Putin pribyl,' 2019). China's support for Russia at the UN during a debate on Syria also featured prominently on Russian television news ('Na zasedanii Sovbeza,' 2019). The media's reframing of Sino-Russian relations appears to have influenced Russian public opinion of China. A 2006 survey found that 41 percent of Russians thought China was a threat to Russia's interests, while 36 percent believed it was not a threat. But by 2014, only 19 percent saw China as a threat, while a majority 57 percent felt the opposite (Public Opinion Foundation [POF], 2014). In a June 2017 survey, 62 percent of Russians named China as Russia's closest ally (POF, 2017).

As framing of China has become more positive, Russian media reporting on the U.S. has followed the opposite trajectory. Media framing of the U.S. during Putin's presidency can be divided into several phases. Putin came to office believing Russia's international status would be best enhanced through integration with the West. To pursue his strategy, Putin successfully wooed U.S. President George W. Bush, who famously claimed to have looked into his Russian counterpart's soul and found him straightforward and trustworthy (Perlez, 2001). The Russian media used his relationship with Bush to herald Putin's growing global stature ('Tretiy den' itogi', 2001). The 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, however, soured Putin's budding bromance with Bush ('Gunitsky & Tsygankov,' 2018). Russia's media no longer presented the U.S. president as a potential partner, but as an aggressive militarist with scant regard for international law or national sovereignty ('Dzhordzh Bush i Toni Bler,' 2005).

Although from the beginning of the Iraq war onwards, Russia's media often took a hostile view of Washington's actions—for example, the deployment of American missiles in Poland in 2008—the majority of reporting on the U.S. was surprisingly matter-of-fact ('Pol'sha gotova,' 2008). Negative framing of the U.S. ebbed and flowed as the context of bilateral relations was shaped by events (Tsygankov, 2010). Anti-U.S. rhetoric only became a persistent feature of Russian news after Washington led efforts to sanction Russia over its annexation of Crimea in March 2014 (Tolz & Teper, 2018). Events in Ukraine were systematically framed as a Washington plot to prevent Russia from taking its rightful place on the world stage (Kiselyov, 2014). Since then, U.S.–Russia relations have been framed as an existential battle for survival (Gaufman, 2017, p. 3). Personal attacks against President Obama and other prominent U.S. policymakers also became more common in Russia's media from 2014. In some quarters, anti-Obama propaganda included racist slurs, conduct not usually seen outside wartime (Dobriansky, 2016). Anti-U.S. narratives in the Russian media appear to have influenced Russian public attitudes. In June 2012, 53 percent of Russians saw bilateral relations with the U.S. as good, while only 17 percent thought they were bad. In June 2014, 64 percent described the relationship as bad, while just 25 percent said it was good (POF, 2018). By mid-2014 the U.S. was seen as the least friendly country towards Russia, even more hostile than Ukraine (POF, 2017).

It was in the context of deteriorating U.S.–Russian relations that Donald Trump emerged as the Republican presidential candidate in 2016. Trump's campaign rhetoric echoed many of the Kremlin's criticisms of Obama's policies. This, along with his praise for President Putin, guaranteed Trump frequent favourable coverage on Russian television. Trump's surprise victory, however, presented a conundrum for Russia's media. Coverage of the president-elect immediately became more negative, as Kremlin spin-doctors tried to lower high expectations of the improved bilateral relations that they had encouraged during the campaign. Russian television began to cover anti-Trump protests that it had previously ignored. Attention also focused on Trump's business failures, political inexperience and sexism, all downplayed during the campaign (Burrett, 2018). Trump's intention to 'get along with Russia,' stated during the presidential debates, was always going to be tempered by his pledges to uphold U.S. military and economic supremacy (Sakwa, 2017). In April 2018, for example, U.S. airstrikes on Damascus, in response to chemical attacks by forces loyal to the Syrian government, were widely condemned on Russian television. In a two-hour special broadcast of *Rossiya's 60 Minutes*, the U.S. and its allies were accused of faking news of the chemical attack (Lowe, 2018).

The Russian media's intensifying onslaught against the U.S. is motivated by Putin's domestic political needs as well as by tensions with Washington over Ukraine, Syria, and other issues. Anti-U.S. populism is an important component of Putin's efforts to mobilize domestic support for his leadership against a backdrop of economic crisis caused by Western sanctions and rampant domestic corruption. In these precarious circumstances, Putin has based his appeal on promises to vanquish Russia's foreign foes, chief among them, the U.S.

4. Is Putin's Populism Durable?

Soon after winning a fourth presidential term in March 2018, Putin's popularity began to decline. For four years following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, Putin's approval rating averaged above 80 percent. But for the past two years, it has hovered closer to 65 percent (Levada Center, 2019a). More worryingly for Putin, a 2017 survey found that more than two-thirds of Russians held him entirely or significantly responsible for high levels of corruption among state officials (Levada Center, 2017). Putin's long tenure at the top is eroding his ability to brand himself a populist. Russians are growing tired of his nationalist populism and overseas adventurism. Initially, Putin's annexation of Crimea boosted approval of his leadership, as for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russians felt like they were a superpower again (Volkov, 2015). Although the Russian

media dutifully fed these feelings of national grandeur, over time, the 'Crimea effect' on Putin's support levels has waned. Domestic issues are the main concerns of the majority of Russians, who would like Putin to focus more of his attention on problems at home than on wars abroad (Levada Center, 2018a). The Russian government's 2018 plan to reform pensions was almost universally opposed, sparking protests in cities across Russia. In August 2019, Moscow witnessed its largest anti-government protests in more than six years, in response to a ban on many opposition candidates from running in city council elections (Roth, 2019). Almost half of Russians believed that the ban occurred because Putin's government was afraid to face an open competition. Only 25 percent accepted the president's nationalist line that Western interference was the main cause of the protests (Levada Center, 2019b). In the event, pro-government candidates suffered heavy election losses, seeing their share of seats on the 45-member council slashed from 40 to 25 (Bennetts, 2019).

Putin's preferred candidates were the victims of a well-orchestrated online campaign encouraging tactical voting by opposition leader and anti-corruption crusader Alexei Navalny, who was one of those barred from standing for election. In exposing corruption within the state bureaucracy, Navalny is playing Putin at his own game, basing his appeal on populist issues that matter to ordinary Russians (Pertsev, 2017). And Navalny is not the only populist figure seeking to claim Putin's mantle. In 2018, Russia's Communist Party elected a new charismatic leader, businessman Pavel Grudinin. Grudinin is a popular Internet personality, where his videos promising an end to corruption and a better life for ordinary Russians regularly draw 800,000 views (Pertsev, 2018). As Putin's populist messages become increasingly old and tarnished, the availability of new populist alternatives like Grudinin and Navalny may further syphon support from the president.

Putin's tight control of the Russian media has helped him retain his populist image, despite his many years in power. But growing Internet penetration in Russia provides citizens with access to alternative information to that presented by state-controlled television, still the preferred news source for the majority of Russians (Levada Center, 2018b). As of 2018, 80.6 percent of Russians had Internet access (Internet Live Stats, 2019). Those taking part or supporting the 2019 Moscow election protests were more likely to get their news online than from other sources (Levada Center, 2019b). As he loses control over the information environment, Putin is also losing his ability to control his image and the public agenda.

5. Conclusion

This article has argued that although there are populist elements to Vladimir Putin's approach to mobilising support for his leadership, to define him purely as a populist is not entirely accurate. Putin is more populist in his rhetoric than in his ideology or style of governance, conforming most closely to discursive definitions of populism. As his presidency has progressed, Putin's populist discourse has developed increasingly nationalist overtones. Today, 20 years after he first became president, Putin's nationalist-populist narratives aim to maintain a narrow, vertical power structure that discourages public participation in politics. Although Putin came to power by neutralising the influence of Yeltsin-era oligarchs, a new breed of politically-connected tycoons have taken their place (Foy, 2019). In 2020, Russia's kleptocracy is alive and well. A dwindling number of Russians now see Putin in populist terms as the people's champion against a corrupt elite. Putin's relationship with Russian voters is more transactional than emotional, as seen by the rapid evaporation of support for the president when his administration sought to introduce unpopular social welfare reforms. Voters were willing to overlook the inconsistencies between Putin's populist rhetoric and elite-based rule while the economy boomed, and his policies restored domestic stability and international prestige. But the arrival of tech savvy alternatives to Putin, with their own populist messages more suited to the times, is eroding support for the president. State-controlled television, which maintains Putin's heroic 'man of the people' image, is losing audiences to online news. Growing internet access aided the campaign for tactical voting against Putin's preferred candidates in Moscow council elections in September 2019. In the past, Putin succeeded in reinventing his populism by refocusing public anger from domestic economic to international political elites, especially towards the hegemonic influence of the U.S. But today, a growing number of Russians see Putin's foreign policy as an obstacle to Russia's development. Western sanctions over Crimea and the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine are adversely affecting the economy. After more than five years of sanctions, money is tight. The Kremlin can no longer keep voters on board with cheap mortgages, wage rises, and public sector spending. Under these conditions it is unlikely that disseminating the same anti-U.S. nationalist populism will help Putin recover support. Putin is now the establishment figure against which other Russian nationalist populists make their claims. Endemic corruption and economic inequality fuel Russians' appetite for populist leadership. If Putin isn't able to satisfy populist demands, Russian voters will increasingly turn to others claiming they can.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Revisiting the Inclusion-Moderation Thesis on Radical Right Populism: Does Party Leadership Matter?

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Abstract
This article reflects on the inclusion-moderation thesis, which asserts that parties from the radical right become like mainstream parties once they move from the opposition to government. This mainstreaming primarily occurs through the moderation of issue positions and the decline of populism. In this article, I focus on populism and consider the role of party leadership for government parties. I distinguish between traditional and managerial leadership. While traditional leadership employs an adversarial strategy toward mainstream parties, managerial leadership adopts an accommodative strategy. This article looks at three phases: 1) the opposition period; 2) in office under traditional party leadership; 3) in office under managerial party leadership. I expect that, compared to the second phase when the party is in office under traditional party leadership, levels of populism are higher during the opposition period and lower when it is in office under managerial party leadership. The empirical part of this article conducts a quantitative content analysis on the populist communication of the Geneva Citizens' Movement, a radical right party from Switzerland. The findings tend to support my theoretical argument.

Keywords
government participation; party leadership; populism; radical right; Switzerland

Issue
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1. Introduction

Over the last few decades, the radical right in Western Europe has managed to emerge, develop, and increase its electoral weight in numerous countries. Some of these parties have even entered coalition governments. The increased government radical right parties in governments has prompted scholars to explore the question of mainstreaming (Akkerman, de Lange, & Rooduijn, 2016). The inclusion-moderation thesis states that radical right parties become more like mainstream parties once they participate in government. Apart from a moderation of issue positions, this expectation refers to a reduction in terms of populism. Regarding the latter, the state of the art reveals inconclusive findings. In this article, I propose focusing on the role of party leadership in order to examine the inclusion-moderation thesis in a more nuanced way. The main theoretical contribution of this article is the distinction between traditional and managerial party leadership of radical right parties in office. While traditional leadership employs an adversarial strategy toward mainstream parties, the latter favors an accommodative strategy. This article looks at three phases: 1) the opposition period; 2) in office under traditional party leadership; and 3) in office under managerial party leadership. When compared to the second phase when it is in office under traditional party leadership, I expect that the radical right's level of populism will be higher during the opposition period and lower when it is in office under managerial party leadership.

I illustrate my theoretical argument by focusing on the Geneva Citizens' Movement (MCG) from Switzerland. Located in the Canton of Geneva, this regional radical right party has rather successfully relied on continuous mobilization against cross-border commuters from neighboring France. I selected this case because the MCG

has experienced the three phases of interest in chronological order in its short history so far. Indeed, it was first in the opposition (from 2005 to 2013, Phase 1), then in office under traditional party leadership (from 2013 to 2016, Phase 2), and finally in office under managerial party leadership (since 2016, Phase 3). Based on a quantitative analysis of the MCG's newspaper, I show that, compared to the second phase, where the party was in office under traditional leadership, the party relied more frequently on populism in the first phase when it was in the opposition and less so in the third phase where it was in office under managerial leadership. These results are in line with my theoretical argument.

The remainder of this article proceeds as follows. Section 2 develops the theoretical argument by proposing that the radical right relies on varying levels of populism depending on the phase it is in. Section 3 focuses on the MCG's trajectory by chronologically outlining the three main phases the party experienced since its foundation. Section 4 describes the documents selected for the empirical analysis as well as the construction of the indicators. Section 5 presents the findings of my investigation using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Finally, Section 6 briefly summarizes the key findings of this contribution and embeds them into a larger context.

2. The Role of Party Leadership

Over the last few decades, parties from the radical right have emerged, developed, and increased their electoral weight across Western Europe (Mudde, 2013). In addition to having firmly established themselves in the political landscape of a large number of countries, some of them even managed to enter national and subnational governments. Once considered political pariahs by mainstream parties, the radical right has increasingly emerged as a potential coalition partner in recent years (Biard, Bernhard, & Betz, 2019). Some prominent examples include the government participation of parties such as the Austrian Freedom Party, the Finns, the Norwegian Progress Party, and the League in Italy.

The widespread inclusion of the radical right in governments, among other issues, has prompted scholars to question the concept of mainstreaming (Akkerman et al., 2016). According to the inclusion-moderation thesis (see Tepe, in press, for an overview of its original meaning), parties from the radical right should become more like mainstream parties once they move from the opposition to government. Scholars have begun to test this theoretical expectation by examining two key dimensions of mainstreaming: the moderation of issue positions and the decline of populism. In the case of Western Europe, it appears that the government participation of the radical right did not generally lead to its ideological moderation. However, there is evidence that it became more mainstream with respect to European integration issues (Akkerman et al., 2016).

As to populism (and more generally anti-establishment attitudes and behavior), no conclusive evidence has emerged from the few comparative studies so far (Akkerman et al., 2016; Albertazzi, 2009). This suggests that government participation does not always reduce the radical right's reliance on populism. In this context, the study by Albertazzi (2009) shows that, when in office, the radical right can exhibit behavior that is similar to its behavior while in the opposition and that it can resort to a division of labor between responsible government members and de facto oppositional party leaders. Based on these considerations, I expect that the strategies adopted by government parties of the radical right play a crucial role in the extent to which they resort to populism.

The following analysis will focus on the dimension of populism by highlighting the role of party leadership. I will discuss the radical right's level of populism by distinguishing between three phases: Phase 1) the opposition period; Phase 2) in office under traditional party leadership; and Phase 3) in office under managerial party leadership. As compared to Phase 2, I argue that the radical right exhibits higher levels of populism during Phase 1 and lower levels during Phase 3.

The academic literature identifies populism, authoritarianism (i.e., belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority should be severely punished), and nativism (i.e., the view that the sensibilities and needs of the 'native-born' should be given absolute priority over those of newcomers) as major characteristics of the radical right (Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn, 2015; Rydgren, 2013). Populism considers society to be divided into two antagonistic groups: the vast majority of virtuous people and the elites that pursues its own interest (Mudde, 2004).

In the opposition period (Phase 1), it is reasonable to expect that radical right parties rely heavily on populism by mobilizing ordinary citizens around a common set of grievances and resentments that provide them with a sense of a shared identity as the genuine and authentic 'people' who are pitted against the elites in general and the government in particular (Betz & Bernhard, 2019). The radical right typically accuses the elites of putting internationalism ahead of the nation and ahead of the interests of the 'people,' who are defined in ethnic terms (Mény & Surel, 2000). The radical right claims that it represents the 'common sense' of ordinary people and that it will restore their voice, thereby promising that political decisions will become the true expression of the popular will.

Scholars have emphasized that radical right parties are frequently organized around a strong and internally uncontested leader (e.g., Taggart, 2000). Indeed, the radical right is currently the party family that is most often associated with personalistic parties (Schedler, 1996). Radical right parties are thus heavily dependent on their leader for conveying their populist messages. In order to draw the attention of the media and citizens, this leader must not fear intentionally relying on provocations that

challenge the formal and informal rules of the democratic game.

Due to their pronounced populist mobilization, electorally successful radical right parties face a major internal challenge when sharing power with mainstream parties in office. Given that the radical right mobilizes ordinary citizens against established elites that they hold responsible for all their grievances, close and visible cooperation with mainstream parties may be seen as a betrayal of its core beliefs by substantial parts of its party members (Heinisch, 2003; Heinisch & Mazzoleni, 2016). Unlike this traditional adversarial approach, more pragmatic party members may prefer to settle for policy compromise by pursuing a more accommodative strategy toward mainstream parties. This tension may become particularly visible when office holders take actions and make public statements that contradict the official positions of the party (Harmel & Svåsand, 1993).

While the electoral growth in the opposition period typically builds around a strong leader that dominates the party, this may not be the case in the second phase. Once the radical party is in office and participates in government, it likely forms a second center of power, a managerial wing, which is articulated by the members of government (Mazzoleni, 1999, 2010). Within a radical right party that is in office, there may thus be a separation between the party leader on the one hand and the office holders on the other. Due to diverging party strategies, this setting may rapidly incite internal conflicts. The managerial wing may want to abandon the unconventional style and unpredictable behavior of the party leader and his/her entourage, thus preferring a more credible and trustworthy person at the head of the party who will put more emphasis on cooperating with mainstream parties. Hence, the period of government participation is likely to be marked by factionalism, which can lead to sharp conflicts and may ultimately even lead to a split that separates pragmatic from the more oppositional forces (Heinisch, 2003; Luther, 2011). A great deal of party-internal coordination is thus required to cope with this challenge (Harmel & Svåsand, 1993).

I will now argue that the level of populism displayed by radical right parties in office depends on which faction gains control of the party (for the sake of simplicity, I do not account for an intermediate variant, which refers to a power-sharing solution between the two factions, which could be labelled as 'dual leadership'). If the traditional figure and his/her entourage manage to continue to assume party leadership (Phase 2), then the radical right will rely on a pronounced degree of populism. This is due to the fact that it will basically maintain its adversarial strategy toward mainstream parties. However, it is expected that it will pursue a lower level of populism than during the opposition period (Phase 1). This is because the party leadership has to account for the wishes of the managerial wing (i.e., pragmatic forces in general and the government members in particular), at least to some degree.

I expect that there will be a greater reduction of populism if the managerial wing takes control of radical right parties in office (Phase 3). This can be attributed to the fact that the new leadership may want to abandon its transformative aspirations in order to detoxify its image as an unreliable party, thus becoming a more acceptable partner to mainstream parties. Rather than an ideological moderation, such a leadership change would entail a break with the initial adversarial approach directed against the political establishment in the name of the 'people.'

To summarize, I posit that the levels of populism by the radical right differ according to the aforementioned three phases. I expect that the highest level of populism occurs during Phase 1, in opposition, followed by Phase 2, in office under traditional party leadership, and Phase 3, in office under managerial party leadership. In other words, I expect that in Phase 2, in office under traditional party leadership, there will be an intermediate level of populism. Hence, the hypothesis states:

> As compared to the phase when it is in office under traditional party leadership (Phase 2), the radical right's level of populism is higher during its time in opposition (Phase 1) and lower when it is in office under managerial party leadership (Phase 3).

3. The Trajectory of the MCG

This hypothesis will be tested using the case of a regional radical right party from Switzerland—the MCG. I decided to select this party because it has experienced the abovementioned three phases chronologically since its foundation in 2005. The first phase (until 2013) includes the MCG's opposition period during which it experienced a spectacular electoral ascent thanks to its traditional leader, Eric Stauffer. The second phase (from 2013 to 2016) started with the election of Mauro Poggia, a pragmatic member of the party, to the cantonal government. In this phase, the party remained under the traditional party leadership of Stauffer's entourage, while witnessing the rise of a managerial wing around Poggia. Despite diverging views over the party's strategy, the two factions managed to get along fine for three years. In 2016, however, a major dispute occurred during the party president elections leading Stauffer to quit the MCG. This event marked the beginning of the third phase, in which the managerial wing took control of the party.

Before addressing the MCG's trajectory, I would like to briefly provide some basic information about the party, given that it has received little scholarly attention so far. The MCG operates in the Canton of Geneva, whose territory is mostly surrounded by France. This peculiarity, coupled with the economic attractiveness of Geneva and the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons between the European Union and Switzerland, have led to a sharp increase in cross-border commuters from neighboring France in recent years. This situation

has provided the MCG with fertile ground for creating a successful populist mobilization. Using the slogan "Geneva and Genevans first," the party claims to be neither left nor right. Its cultural differentialism (Betz, 2004; Betz & Johnson, 2004) manifests itself in a regional form by discriminating between people from Geneva, on the one hand, and cross-border commutes from France, on the other. However, the party's economic position is much more ambivalent. The MCG tends to embrace liberalism on financial policies by pleading for tax cuts and budgetary discipline. At the same time, it regularly supports an expansion of the welfare state, which distinguishes it from the Swiss People's Party, the largest radical right party in Switzerland (Bernhard et al., 2015; Mazzoleni, 2008).

3.1. Opposition Period (Phase 1)

The MCG was founded in June 2005 in the run-up to the cantonal elections. Two local politicians, Georges Letellier and Eric Stauffer, were the driving forces behind the party's establishment. Letellier, a native Frenchman, served as the party's first president. The MCG immediately met with success. In the October 2005 elections for the cantonal parliament, the party managed to surpass the electoral threshold of 7%. The MCG made its entrance to the Grand Council by obtaining nine out of 100 seats. Considering that the party had only been founded four months earlier, and that it counted with no more than 30 members within its ranks, many observers described the MCG's 7.7% vote share as a sensation. During the campaign that preceded the vote, the party employed an aggressive tone. Indeed, it pledged to "wipe away cross-border commuters, the political establishment, and criminals" (Béguin, 2007, p. 125).

In 2006, a major quarrel erupted within the MCG. Letellier opposed the virulent anti-French xenophobia pursued by the party (Béguin, 2007, p. 129). This conflict led to his resignation and his decision to leave the party altogether. In the following years, Stauffer and some close associates took control of the MCG. George Jost (2006–2008), Stauffer (2008–2012), and Roger Golay (2012–2016) assumed party leadership in the following years. Stauffer not only established himself as the heart and soul of the party, but he also quickly became the *enfant terrible* of Genevan politics. Due to his extraordinary communication skills, he managed to become ubiquitous in the local media. To many inhabitants of Geneva, he hit the nail on the head by forcefully blaming cross-border commuters from France for their daily problems.

Stauffer attracted a great deal of attention by pointing out the malfunctioning of public companies. In part due to insider information, he targeted the Geneva Industrial Services (SIG), a state-controlled infrastructure company where he was a member of the Board of Directors. Stauffer denounced abuses in terms of executive pay and excessive electricity prices. As a result, the company was forced to scale back in both respects. In 2008, Stauffer also succeeded in forcing the SIG to renounce importing waste from Naples on the grounds that this transaction would have led to a questionable relationship between the Camorra and the industrial services of the Canton of Geneva. In the Grand Council, Stauffer obtained abundant media coverage by repeatedly paralyzing parliamentary business through filibustering tactics and the submission of an excessive number of amendments. Additionally, cantonal MPs felt compelled to passing a weapons ban in the assembly, given that Stauffer carried a handgun in his everyday life.

In 2009, the party continued its electoral ascent. Thanks to a vote share of 14.7%, it almost doubled its representation (17 MPs) in the Grand Council. The MCG succeeded in setting the agenda of the election campaign. In addition to using cross-border commuters from neighboring France as a scapegoat, the party focused on urban security issues. After a bloody fight between drug dealers occurred in the city of Geneva, members of the MCG were quick to capitalize on public discontent by taking to the streets. In the following years, Stauffer frequently continued to make headlines. In 2010, some of the MCG's billboards created diplomatic tensions between Switzerland and Libya in the context of a federal direct-democratic vote on the deportation of criminal foreigners. In 2012, Stauffer attracted a great deal of attention by throwing a glass of water onto a politician from the Liberals who had verbally provoked him in the Grand Council.

In 2013, the MCG emerged as the big winner of the cantonal elections. With 19.2% of the vote, the party obtained 20 seats in the Grand Council. The party probably benefitted from the fact that law and order issues ranked high in voters' minds, given that the murder of a young woman had occurred just one month before election day. In any case, the MCG stuck to its core issues during the campaign. Following the publication of an article in the party's newspaper, in which the president and the secretary described cross-border commuters as an "epidemic that is by far not eradicated" (Golay & Baertschi, 2013), the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism urged the cantonal government to intervene. A video Stauffer posted on YouTube also caused quite a stir. The party leader stated that drug trafficking had established itself in Geneva under the helpless gaze of the judicial authorities.

3.2. In Office under Traditional Party Leadership (Phase 2)

In November 2013, the MCG experienced another major success. Mauro Poggia, a pragmatic member of the party, was elected to the seven-member government of the Canton of Geneva by taking a seat from the Greens. Poggia, an advocate who specialized in the defense of insured people, and formerly a member of the Christian Democrats, had joined the MCG in 2009 in the run-up to the cantonal elections. When in government, Poggia

took over the newly created portfolio of Employment, Social Affairs, and Health. This allowed the MCG to exert some direct influence in terms of policy-making. The party's increased power was probably most visible in the labor market domain. Under the decisive pressure of the MCG, the Canton of Geneva had already introduced the so-called 'cantonal preference' legislation in 2012. This legislation prioritizes local unemployed people when there are job vacancies within the cantonal administration and state-controlled companies, such as public transport, the airport, the university hospital, and industrial services. In November 2014, Poggia announced that this scheme would be extended to the 250 organizations that receive subsidies from the Canton of Geneva (e.g., retirement homes, cultural institutions, and charities).

Detractors forecasted that the MCG would not succeed in reconciling Poggia's contained temper with Eric Stauffer's exuberance. At first glance, it hardly seemed imaginable that two such distinct characters would be able to work closely together. However, the so-called 'Poggia–Stauffer duo' harmonized well, at least in the beginning. Indeed, the fact that the MCG managed to remain united for three years was commonly attributed to successful internal coordination. The party relied on a division of roles between Stauffer's entourage and Poggia's growing number of followers. The latter were granted a discretionary degree of freedom from the official party line, which allowed the office holder to act responsibly and loyally to the other members of government from the mainstream parties. Stauffer and its entourage, for their part, basically remained responsive to their electorate by relying on their traditional, predominantly adversarial approach. The party continued to actively mobilize citizens against cross-border commuters by launching referendums and initiatives challenging the government's position, among others.

A local journalist observed that the MCG's two most prominent figures skillfully played on the same partition in public: "When Stauffer lights the fire, Poggia waters it down" (Le Temps, 2015). This division of roles also worked within the party, as illustrated at the 2015 annual party meeting when Poggia made the point that the economy would still need cross-border commuters even if all local unemployed people were hired. While party members greeted these words with sustained applause, not all of them were expressing approval for the same thing that evening. Some activists—undoubtedly adherents to the managerial wing—welcomed Poggia's pragmatic words, whereas supporters of Stauffer's more orthodox approach focused on the preferential treatment of local unemployed people, a key demand of the party since its existence (Le Temps, 2015).

3.3. In Office under Managerial Party Leadership (Phase 3)

The party's latent division turned into open conflict in Spring 2015, when the electoral fortune of the MCG took an unexpected turn toward the worst: The party failed to gain ground in local elections. As the party suffered its first set-back in its short history, internal rivalries quickly broke out. Several party figures publicly criticized Poggia for some of his statements and decisions, which they claimed had gone against the MCG's position. Others criticized Stauffer's authoritarian, egocentric, narcissistic, and even manipulative de facto leadership.

Most importantly, a major dispute with far-reaching consequences emerged as a result of the 2016 party president elections. In the framework of the annual party meeting, held in camera on 29 April, Ana Roch, a close associate of Poggia's, was elected by a margin of only one vote against Stauffer, the party's honorary president. Stauffers' defeat meant that his influence on the party's strategic decisions would decidedly diminish. Following that event, he decided to leave the party and to sit in the Grand Council as an independent. In September 2017, Stauffer announced the foundation of a new party, which several former members of the MCG joined. Its name, *Genève En Marche!* (GEM; Geneva on the Move!), was reminiscent of Emmanuel Macron's successful campaign to become French president.

It is worth noting that the MCG did not change its ideological profile after Stauffer's departure. Indeed, the party program has remained the same. Pundits simply observed that the MCG turned slightly to the left on economic issues. This was most visible in the domains of public finances and in the defence of the civil servants' interests. Without its *enfant terrible*, the party experienced a marked loss in media attention. This loss, together with the fact that three radical right parties competed for citizens' votes, did not bode well for the 2018 cantonal elections. As expected, the MCG experienced a resounding defeat. With a vote share of only 9.4%, the party lost nine of its 20 seats in the Grand Council. Party figures could at least take comfort in the fact that the MCG fared better than its direct competitors from the Swiss People's Party (7.3%) and GEM (4.1%). As the latter failed to pass the threshold into the cantonal parliament, Stauffer announced the dissolution of the newly created party on Election Day. In addition, Poggia was comfortably re-elected to the Council of States.

Despite the MCG's electoral backlash, Roch managed to keep the party presidency in 2018. After her re-election, she declared that after two difficult years, during which the credibility of the MCG nevertheless increased among the other parties, the party had to pursue a strategy of openness and stability (Bretton, 2018). The party maintained this accommodative strategy under Francisco Valentin, the current party leader who was elected in 2019.

4. Data and Operationalization

The empirical part of this article is based on a quantitative content analysis of the MCG's party newspaper *Le Citoyen* (The Citizen). I chose this source as it is the

only type of document that proved to be available for a period that encompasses the three phases being analyzed. The party distributes this publication among its members and to a broader audience at irregular intervals through canvassing activities and direct mailings, especially in the run-up to elections and direct-democratic votes. The number of issues per year ranges from one to four. This empirical investigation encompasses a period of almost ten years and includes 25 newspapers published by the MCG between September 2008 and February 2018. I gathered these documents from the Library of Geneva, the long-serving party secretary as well as from the MCG's website. However, I must note that I failed to collect at least three editions. Indeed, the first editions of *Le Citoyen* that were published before September 2008 do not appear in this investigation, nor do the newspapers from Spring 2010 and Spring 2012. Among the available documents, I selected articles that comprehensively address a given political issue at the cantonal or federal level. As a result, the number of articles included in this study is 167.

The dependent variable of this study, populism, was operationalized using indicators based on Mudde's (2004, p. 543) influential definition. This definition views populism as an ideology that considers that society is separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups—the pure people versus the corrupt elites—and that postulates that the will of the former must always prevail. While conceived as an ideology, it is now widely accepted among scholars that populism manifests itself in the discursive patterns of political actors (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). In this manifestation, political communication can be analyzed to empirically capture populism (Aalberg, Esser, Reinemann, Strömbäck, & de Vreese, 2017). In other words, this analysis proposes examining the extent to which political actors appeal to the people, denigrate the elites, emphasize the antagonism between these two groups, and call for popular sovereignty.

In order to measure populist communication, I account for the four core elements of Mudde's definition: i.e., 1) people-centrism; 2) anti-elitism; 3) calls for popular sovereignty; and 4) the antagonistic relationship between people and elites (see Bernhard, 2017). The content analysis consists of an assessment at the article level. For each of the four populist components of interest, a dichotomous indicator is utilized. More specifically, I employ the following coding criteria. People-centrism is coded as '1' if a given political actor portrays the people (or functional equivalents such as 'the population,' 'the citizens,' or 'Genevans') as a homogeneous unity. Regarding anti-elitism, the value of '1' is assigned if actors, such as the government in its entirety or the business community as a whole, are characterized in a fundamentally negative manner. As to popular sovereignty, demands for more power to the people, or the rejection of a loss of the people's power, take the values of '1.' Finally, the antagonistic relationship between people and elites are coded as '1' if there are statements that highlight a sharp conflict or an insurmountable clash of interests between people and elites. The coding work was carried out by a native French speaker. A separate reliability test was performed, which was based on 56 randomly selected articles (i.e., roughly a third of the total number), and its main result turned out to be satisfactory (the combined Cohen's Kappa amounts to 0.86).

When applying this coding scheme, it appears that the MCG most frequently made use of demands for people-centrism. This indicator proved to be present in slightly more than every third newspaper article (0.34). Indications of anti-elitism were apparent in one out of five documents (0.19), while antagonistic statements (0.11), and demands for popular sovereignty (0.08) turned out to be far less pervasive.

As a reviewer rightly pointed out, a multiplication of these four indicators is indicated from a theoretical point of view. In line with Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013, p. 151), it appears obvious to argue that all indicators need to be present in order to qualify as populism. However, such an encompassing co-occurrence was only the case in 19 out of the 167 articles included in this analysis. Due to this low level of variation, it was impossible to estimate the multivariate models presented in Section 5.2. Therefore, I decided to opt for an additive aggregation method, provided that the four populism indicators form a single dimension. To verify the dimensionality question, I rely on the Mokken scale analysis, a hierarchical scaling method that assumes the presence of an underlying latent attribute, which is represented by a set of observable items (van Schuur, 2003). Table 1 shows that the four populism indicators tend to occur together. Given that these indicators form a strong hierarchical scale (Loevinger's H coefficient amounts to 0.56), it is indicated to construct a composite measure by adding the four items. The populist communication index (PCI) thus ranges from 0 to 4, with a mean score of 0.72 and

Table 1. Mokken scale analysis of the populism indicators (N = 167).

	Share of documents in which indicator is present	H-coefficient (scalability, maximum = 1)
People-centrism	0.34	0.57
Anti-elitism	0.19	0.51
Antagonism	0.11	0.58
Popular sovereignty	0.08	0.58
Scale		0.56

a substantial variance across the articles under investigation (s.d. = 1.05).

Regarding the independent variable, I assigned the 167 selected articles to one of the three phases of interest. Based on the dates of publication, this resulted in the construction of three dummy variables. Eighty-five articles refer to the opposition period (Phase 1), as they were published before the election of Poggia to the Council of States of Geneva, 34 articles concern the phase of government participation under traditional party leadership, which lasted from December 2013 to April 2016 (Phase 2), and 48 articles cover the phase of the party in office under managerial party leadership (Phase 3).

With respect to the control variables, I propose accounting for the influence of issue domains, campaigns, and authorship. All indicators are dichotomous in nature. The classification of issue domains relies on the work of Kriesi et al. (2008). The economic dimension includes economic policies, welfare state issues, and finances. In contrast, topics related to cultural liberalism, European integration, education, immigration, the army, and security fall under the cultural dimension. In addition, there is a residual category of issues that cannot be clearly assigned to either of these two domains (i.e., ecology, institutional reforms, and infrastructure). With respect to the campaigns, I separately account for election contexts and direct-democratic votes. For the former, articles published within the last eight weeks before election day are considered to belong to the campaign period in the case of federal or cantonal elections. For the latter, newspaper articles take the value of '1' if they deal with a referendum or an initiative that was submitted to the ballot either at the federal or at the cantonal level. As far as authorship is concerned, I distinguish between the individual and the collective level. The articles signed by individuals are coded as '1' and editorial contributions are coded as '0.'

5. Empirical Analysis

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Among the three phases considered here, the highest mean PCI level (M = 1.00) occurs during Phase 1 (i.e., the opposition period). In contrast, the lowest level (M = 0.27) appears in Phase 3 (i.e., in office under managerial party leadership). The difference is considerable given that the party played the populist card almost four times less frequently than in the first phase. In Phase 2 (i.e., in office under traditional leadership), the level of the MCG's (M = 0.67) populist communication is between that of Phase 1 and Phase 3. These descriptive figures are thus in line with the hypothesis.

I now briefly present some descriptive statistics pertaining to the control variables. At first glance, it seems that levels of populist communication do not vary much according to issues. When looking at the level of issue domains, it turns out that from 2008 to 2018, the MCG did not rely on cultural populism more frequently than on economic populism (PCI of 0.70 vs. 0.68), thus confirming previous research (Bernhard, 2017). Apart from that, the average PCI level for the residual issue category is 0.85. When deconstructing the populist communication of the MCG for each main category, the party excels on a single issue. On the cultural dimension, this issue is immigration (M = 1.33), with a focus on cross-border commuters. In the economic domain, the highest score is attained for economic policies (M = 0.95). In this respect, the MCG frequently relies on populist statements when addressing the maladministration of state-controlled companies. As to the residual category, the party frequently employs populist appeals on institutional reforms (M = 1.18) above all else. This communication occurs on various isolated topics (e.g., extending direct-democratic rights, fighting lobbyism, and protecting the competences of the Canton of Geneva within the Swiss Confederation).

In terms of the campaign context, the distinction between election and non-election periods does not seem to influence the MCG's degree of populist communication (0.65 vs. 0.79). However, the articles that relate to direct-democratic votes achieve somewhat higher levels on the PCI than the remaining ones (0.92 vs. 0.65). Authorship, for its part, does not seem to matter. Newspaper articles signed by MCG party members are only slightly more populist than the editorial contributions (0.82 vs. 0.68). When I also examine the various authors of the articles under investigation, it becomes obvious that Stauffer outclasses the remaining party figures in terms of populist communication. His average PCI score is 2.00. The remaining individuals who wrote at least five articles attained the following PCI scores: Stauffer is followed by François Baertschi (1.29), Roger Golay (0.85), and Mauro Poggia (0.43). It is worth noting that the articles authored by the remaining individuals display very low levels of populist communication (0.18).

5.2. Inferential Statistics

In order to test whether the aforementioned descriptive patterns stand up to a multivariate analysis, I rely on ordered probit regressions. The results on the phases presented in Table 2 tend to support the hypothesis. As is visible from the first model, there is evidence that the MCG relied on populist communication more frequently during its initial opposition period (Phase 1) than when it assumed office under traditional party leadership (Phase 2). In addition, the significative negative coefficient for Phase 3 indicates that the party adopted lower levels of populist communication when it was in office under managerial party leadership compared to Phase 2, the reference category. These findings suggest that the second phase was characterized by an intermediate level of populism, which is in line with my theoretical argument. However, there is a caveat. Unlike the coefficient

Table 2. Ordered probit regression model explaining the MCG's levels of populist communication.

	Model I	Model II
Opposition period (Phase 1)	0.504 ** (2.04)	0.499 ** (2.02)
In office under managerial party leadership (Phase 3)	−0.620 * (−1.94)	−0.108 (−0.27)
Economic issues	−0.048 (−0.22)	0.129 (0.54)
Other issues	0.273 (1.08)	0.196 (0.77)
Election context	0.149 (0.74)	0.056 (0.27)
Direct-democratic vote	0.317 (1.53)	0.342 (1.63)
Individual author	−0.124 (−0.59)	−0.050 (−0.24)
Phase 3 × economic issues		−0.971 ** (−2.00)
Cut 1	0.422 (1.46)	0.478 (1.64)
Cut 2	1.310 *** (4.33)	1.377 *** (4.50)
Cut 3	1.812 *** (5.62)	1.884 *** (5.78)
Cut 4	2.147 *** (6.30)	2.221 *** (6.45)
N	167	167
Pseudo R^2	0.062	0.073

Notes: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$; z-values in brackets. Reference groups: in office under traditional party leadership (Phase 2) and cultural issues (for issue domains).

of Phase 1, the one of Phase 3 narrowly misses the 5% error level normally used in regression estimations. In other words, the difference in populism levels between Phase 2 and Phase 3 is rather weakly secured from a statistical point of view.

I now comment on the influence of the control variables. The model confirms that the party does not more frequently resort to populism on economic issues than on cultural ones. At the level of single issues, further analyses (not shown here) reveal that the populist rhetoric of the MCG tends to prevail when immigration, institutional reforms, and economic issues are at stake. With respect to campaigns, electoral periods are not found to increase the party's reliance on populist appeals. The same holds true for direct-democratic votes, thus contradicting the impression obtained from the descriptive analysis. Finally, the party's level of populist communication does not prove to be related to authorship. Hence, articles signed by individuals do not differentiate themselves from editorial contributions. Additional estimation models also accounted for individual party figures (i.e., Eric Stauffer, Roger Golay, François Baertschi, and Mauro Poggia). However, no single coefficient turned out to be significant. The absence of a positive finding at the individual level supports the conclusion that the MCG's level of populist communication primarily depended on the phase it was in during its short history.

Finally, a reviewer suggested testing the interaction between issue domains and the third phase. The rationale for this idea stems from the fact that the MCG is said to have moved slightly to the left on economic issues since the managerial wing took over party leadership (see Section 3.3). In the second model in Table 2, the significant negative coefficient of the interaction term between economic issues and Phase 3 shows that the party's decline in populist communication during Phase 3 was particularly discernible on economic issues.

6. Conclusion

Over the last few decades, several parties from the radical right have managed to enter national and subnational governments in Western Europe. Inspired by the inclusion-moderation thesis, this article has examined the mainstreaming of the radical right in office. Given that the state of the art has found that government participation does not generally lead the radical right to become less populist, I have proposed a theoretical refinement by adding the role of leadership in government parties. The main contribution of this article is its distinction between traditional and managerial party leadership. The former is characterized by an adversarial strategy toward mainstream parties, while the latter favors an accommodative strategy. I hypothesized that, compared to the second phase when the radical right is in office under traditional party leadership, levels of populism are higher during the opposition period and lower when it is in office under managerial party leadership.

To empirically illustrate this theoretical argument, this article examines the case of the MCG, a regional radical right party from Switzerland that has continuously pursued a populist mobilization against increasing numbers of cross-border commuters from neighboring France. Based on a quantitative content analysis of the party newspaper, I examined the three main phases of the MCG's trajectory, i.e., initial opposition period (Phase 1), in office under traditional leadership (Phase 2), and in office under managerial party leadership (Phase 3). As compared to Phase 2, the MCG tended to rely more frequently on populist appeals during Phase 1 and much less so during Phase 3 This pattern is in line with my hypothesis. This contribution suggests that the MCG's decline in populism is not only attributable to government participation, but also to the party-internal transfer of power from the traditional leader to the managerial wing, whose representatives subsequently adopt a more pragmatic strategy.

A limitation of this study stems from its sole use of the MCG's newspaper, which left aside other valuable sources such as press releases, the paid media, and social media. More reliable results would emerge from an analysis encompassing several communication channels. A reviewer highlighted another inferential challenge related to the MCG's newspaper. Given that the party mainly seems to use *Le Citoyen* as a mobilization tool in the run-up to elections and direct-democratic votes, it may be the case that levels of populism negatively depend on party size. This expectation hinges on the idea that larger parties may be incentivized to reduce their populist communication, since they have to appeal to a broad and therefore heterogeneous voter base. Due to the fact that the MCG has continuously increased its electoral strength in the period under investigation, it is difficult to account for this factor in this empirical analysis. However, the party's recent electoral set-back offers an opportunity to examine this alternative explanation in the future.

Given that the empirical part of this article limits itself to a single party, some caution about the generalizability of the main conclusions are in order. In addition to the peculiarities of the Swiss context (Mazzoleni, 2016), there is a need to more thoroughly consider the role of government participation and party leadership in the populism of radical right parties across Western Europe. Hence, it is fundamental that more research follow on radical right parties that have experienced the three phases of interest. It would be particularly stimulating to conduct comparative research, as such contributions could focus on contextual differences. For instance, it could be possible that the radical right reduces its level of populism before entering government in countries where this party family has traditionally faced a *cordon sanitaire* (i.e., a commitment by mainstream parties to exclude the radical right from coalition governments) in order to detoxify its bad image.

In addition, I would like to highlight that this theoretical framework can be applied to populist parties of any ideological stripe. Researchers may particularly seek to expand their focus to the radical left, a party family that nowadays also tends to rely heavily on populism (Bernhard & Kriesi, 2019). An empirical examination could focus on Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain, as these two parties have managed to participate in government. This would enable scholars to analyze whether the radical right and the radical left differ in their reliance on populism once in office. Finally, unconventional populists would represent another fascinating subject of investigation. This applies, above all, to the Five Star Movement from Italy. It is worth noting that this case is particularly relevant when considering the role played by party leadership. In addition to the traditional leadership under Beppe Grillo, a managerial wing has emerged around Luigi di Maio since the party's entrance into government at both the national and subnational level.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Veridiction and Leadership in Transnational Populism: The Case of DiEM25

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Abstract
While research tends to explore questions of power and leadership at the national level, populism in Europe has moved beyond national borders, with an increasing number of transnational movements and organizations. This article investigates the Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DiEM25) and its leadership's main speeches. Informed by both discourse theory and Michel Foucault's work on parrhesia (veridiction), the analysis draws on readings of transnational Euroalternativism and populism, pointing out the conflicting logic of bringing them together at the transnational level. Our findings thus stress the increasing politicization of European integration as an opportunity to mobilize transnational activities, which are based on the populist 'people vs. the elites' dichotomy and against Brussels' unaccountable elites (see FitzGibbon & Guerra, 2019), while indicating the limits of leadership in a populist transnational movement (de Cleen, Moffitt, Panayotu, & Stavrakakis, 2019; Marzolini & Souvlis, 2016).

Keywords
discourse analysis; Euroalternativism; leadership; parrhesia; power relations; transnational populism

Issue
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1. Introduction

The Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DiEM25) officially took off at the Volksbühne (the 'People's Theatre') in Rosa Luxembourg Platz, in Berlin, on Tuesday 9th February 2016. Since then, DiEM25 has developed as a pan-European political movement whose *raison d'être* is the democratization of the European Union (EU; Moffitt, 2017). The movement's founding fathers, former Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis and Croatian philosopher Srećko Horvat have presented European citizens with two simple choices regarding the EU's future. The institutions, policies and procedures of the EU will either become more democratic or the Union will disintegrate (DiEM25, n.d.-a). In the meantime, the EU's multiple crises have meant that DiEM25 now resonates with citizens across Europe who share disappointment and distrust in how the EU works (Panayotu, 2017). Its critical stances towards the EU—here defined as Euroalternative, as explained below—translated into electoral gains in the recent Greek national elections, where the movement's electoral wing, under the leadership of Varoufakis, gained 3.44% of the national vote and nine seats in the country's parliament ("Final results of Greek national elections," 2019).

The success of DiEM25 should be seen within the context of increasing populism in Southern Europe. Considering the EU technocrats and bureaucrats in Brussels to be suppressors of the citizens' voice in European governance (DiEM25, n.d.-b), the movement has embraced the populist dichotomist logic of people vs. the elites (Laclau, 2005a; Mudde, 2004; Stavrakakis, 2017). DiEM25's criticism of the EU is its primary political strategy, bringing together heterogeneous public de-

mands, all under the people's concept (see also de Cleen, Glynos, & Mondon, 2018). As argued elsewhere, the combination of a critical narrative towards the EU and a populist logic is not a new phenomenon in Southern Europe. It can be traced back to the national political successes of *Podemos* in Spain and *Syriza* in Greece (Fanoulis & Guerra, 2017; Kioupkiolis & Katsambekis, 2018). Yet, little research has been published regarding the combination of transnational opposition to European integration, termed Euroalternativism (FitzGibbon & Guerra, 2019), and populism.

In order to fill this gap, our analysis examines the use of Euroalternativist discourses by the political leadership in transnational populism, using DiEM25 as its case study. Expanding on recent studies (de Cleen, Moffitt, Panayotu, & Stavrakakis, 2019; Moffitt, 2017), our research question asks whether the movement's leadership has succeeded in constructing a transnational people by capitalizing on Euroalternative discourse. We also ask to what extent DiEM25's main political figure, Yanis Varoufakis, has managed to bring the peoples of Europe together by telling them the truth about the misdeeds and shortcomings of the EU. Using discourse theory and Michel Foucault's work on parrhesia (veridiction), our empirical investigation looks at the speeches of Varoufakis, trying to capture whether the political truth, as articulated by the movement's leader, has resonated with the peoples in the EU so much so as to construct one transnational people. Our main contention is that the pursuit of truth somehow gets stuck in the difficult passage from national to transnational populism. In terms of discourse theory, signifiers such as 'change the EU' or 'for a more democratic Europe' are used tendentially in Varoufakis' Euroalternativist discourse as unspoken truths. They can bring together the notion of the people, but also establish an internal frontier in Europe's social space between an 'us, the pan-European people' versus 'them, the Brussels' elites.' Thus, the focus of our study lies on how the movement's leader makes use of a Euroalternativist truth in order to establish a transnational European people.

The analysis will proceed as follows. Section 2 presents our theoretical framework, i.e., Laclau's basic concepts in his theory of populism and the Foucauldian notion of parrhesia. Section 3 revisits the emergence of DiEM25 by rereading its manifesto, with topical emphasis on its references to populism and Euroalternativism—having introduced the latter as a contemporary form of pro-systemic opposition towards the EU. Section 4 consists of a brief note justifying our methodological choices. In the section that follows, we present a discourse analysis of key speeches of Yanis Varoufakis, as the leader of DiEM25. Having elaborated on how the question of leadership affects the transnational expansion of DiEM25, the conclusion of this study addresses the weakness of shifting to a homogeneous people for a transnational populist movement and we underline the political potential of a progressive Euroalternativist movement speaking truth to power via its leader(ship).

2. Laclau's Populism and Foucault's Parrhesia

Laclau (2005a) developed an account of populism centred on key concepts of his discourse theory, namely logics of difference and equivalence, internal frontier and antagonism, and empty signifiers. First of all, Laclau presents populism as a distinct "political logic" (Laclau, 2005a, p. 117) and a "logic of articulation" (Laclau, 2005b, p. 33) that brings together heterogeneous public demands as they emerge in society. This process is both social and relational. As Laclau (2005a, p. 73) writes, "'the people' is not something of the nature of an ideological expression, but a real relation between social agents.''

But how is it possible that highly diverse sociopolitical demands, coming from a plethora of societal actors with highly differentiated political identities can be jointly articulated? Two processes appear to happen in parallel, one based on a logic of difference and one on a logic of equivalence. On the one hand, public demands have to maintain their uniqueness in the societal realm so as satisfy the distinct groups or actors articulating them. On the other hand, their plurality gets acknowledged in a democratic society according to a logic of equivalence, that means they are understood to be of equal democratic importance (Laclau, 2005b).

In lines with populist reasoning, there needs to be some sort of pairing of these heterogeneous demands, whilst maintaining their 'particularity' to use Laclau's own words. This can occur by tying them up in a chain of equivalence. The chain of equivalence downplays the element of heterogeneity and socially constructs an analogy between the public demands, which is then able to keep them together. There is an inherent tension in this procedure, also acknowledged by Laclau (2005a, p. 122) "so the equivalential chain necessarily plays a double role: it makes the emergence of the particularism of the demands possible but, at the same time, it subordinates them to itself as a necessary surface of inscription."

Yet, for the equivalential chain to be able to subordinate the public demands to itself, it needs to recalibrate them around features they share even in their distinctive uniqueness. Simply put, there needs to be a kind of 'glue' that can stick the public demands together. For Laclau, this is done by means of introducing an internal frontier in the society, splitting the social space into two camps. The 'glue' that brings together the heterogeneous public demands is their common political aversion towards an antagonistic other, a common political adversary that does not allow for these demands to be satisfied (Laclau, 2005a, p. 131).

This 'glue' is the notion of the people for Laclau. The people is a signifier which aligns the heterogeneous public demands and does so by recognizing their common enemy that exists in society, yet is outside of the people's equivalential chain. The notion of the people thus 'hegemonizes' the meaning of the heterogeneous public demands by introducing them all under its signifier (Laclau, 2005a, pp. 132–133). At the same time, the

people's own signifier is 'emptied' during this process (Laclau, 2005b).

The above abstract discussion has been summarized by post-Laclauian scholars in what is called the minimal definition of populism. As Stavrakakis and Katsambekis (2014, p. 123) note, a movement or party can be considered populist if it establishes the notion of the people, and does so based on an antagonistic logic of a "we, the people" versus an out-group that shares the same social space with the people yet is always outside of their group. What is striking in both Laclau and his followers' theorization of populism is the marginal attention to the role of political agency in populism and especially in relation to the role of the populist leader. Laclau (2005a, p. 99) has emphasized that his analytical schematization of populism is 'structural' and his elaboration of the populist leader follows the same pattern. However, an investigation of the populist leader necessitates looking more closely at questions of political agency. In this analysis, we consider that Foucault's notion of parrhesia, as it emerges in the French philosopher's governmentality approach, can help with such a task.

What we particularly focus on here is the linkages of parrhesia to populism on the one hand and leadership on the other. Translated into 'veridiction' or 'truth-telling'—'franc-parler' in the original French text—Foucault (2010, p. 52) argues that parrhesia is not simply the ontology of truth, but refers instead to the practice of telling the truth in a specific spatio-temporal context, where the parrhesiast—the agent standing up to tell the truth—is aware of the political risks and consequences that their outspokenness entails (Foucault, 2010, p. 56).

Parrhesia's basic features unravel in this definition. It is not just a performed act of truth or simply a speech act. As Luxon (2008, p. 379) highlights, "Foucault remains most interested in parrhesia as a concrete set of practices that condition the parameters of individual self-development." This set of practices is truthful not only because of being true but most importantly because the parrhesiastic subject freely and courageously chooses to speak the truth despite any unfavourable conditions or consequences for them due to the power nexus (Foucault, 2010, p. 66). As Foucault (2010, p. 66) attests, "parrēsia is the ethics of truth-telling as an action which is risky and free.''

Foucault distinguishes between good and bad parrhesia, a distinction that he draws both politically and normatively. It is sometimes difficult to identify a clear-cut definition of good parrhesia in his texts; the philosopher moulds our perception of it abductively, by giving examples of bad parrhesia such as flattery and demagoguery. Good parrhesiasts—philosophers like Socrates, or politicians like ancient Athens' Pericles—stand out in a *demos* of equals with an equal right to talk freely (*isegoria*), taking the floor and speaking the truth at their own risk. Hence, good parrhesia stands at a crossroads of ethics, knowledge, and power (Dyrberg, 2014).

This truthful set of practices results in various political relations which become meaningful in the context of a democratic polity. Firstly, there is the relationship of the parrhesiast to their own self, i.e., their commitment to be truthful and hence step beyond the existing power status quo in order to tell the truth. Secondly, there is the relationship that develops between the parrhesiast and the rest of the demos, what Foucault (2010) calls ascendancy and it clearly links to the question of political leadership in democracies. The parrhesiast emerges from the rest of the citizens with the ethical task of telling the truth to those who govern, hence acquiring a leadership position among their fellow citizens. And thirdly, there is the relationship between the parrhesiast and the political system itself, to which the parrhesiast addresses the truth. These three different relations constitute a form of pact, the "parrhesiastic pact," which for Foucault (2010, pp. 65–66, 163) is essential for the governing of oneself and of others in democratic politics.

Two aspects of the parrhesiastic pact are crucial for the ensuing investigation. The first is the linkage with the question of leadership. Parrhesia introduces a constitutive relationship between truth and the political agency of the leader. It bestows power and an ethical dimension upon this agency, which in turn become interconnected. By telling the truth in a free and unbinding manner, the parrhesiast's subject position in the power nexus changes, allowing them to govern others because of their being so truthful (to themselves) that they can first of all govern, and by doing so, form their own self (Foucault, 2011). What is more, the rising of the parrhesiastic leader is accompanied by an ontological bond to the truth with a profound ethical dimension. This means that their power to govern results from their normative pact to tell the truth both to the subjects as well as the rulers.

How does parrhesiastic leadership then connect with populism? Laclau's vision of the populist leader as "primus inter pares" (as cited in Mazzolini & Borriello, 2018, p. 242) coincides with Foucault's understanding of the parrhesiast. In populism's radical democratic politics, the parrhesiastic leader feels ethically compelled to tell the truth by becoming the people's voice. The populist leader addresses the truth in two consequential steps. First of all, the leader stands out from the rest of the citizens and raises awareness of the injustice, exploitation, and oppression experienced by unprivileged groups within a society. The leader then succeeds in bringing those heterogeneous public demands together in a chain of equivalence, under the common signifier of the people. At the same time, the parrhesiastic leader cements the notion of the people by accentuating the antagonistic relationship between this nascent people and its oppressors, i.e., the Establishment and economic and political elites (Stavrakakis & Katsambekis, 2014).

3. DiEM25 as a Euroalternative Transnational Movement

In 2017, the year after the first steps of DiEM25 into European politics, John FitzGibbon, Benjamin

Leruth, and Nick Startin (2017) published an edited volume on transnational Euroscepticism. The recent Eurozone crisis had impacted the increasing levels of dissatisfaction towards the EU, while the academic literature still seemed to focus on national, party-based Euroscepticism (Taggart, 1998; for hard and soft Euroscepticism, see Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2002). With time, opposition has become more widespread and critical voices have additionally emerged in civil society (FitzGibbon, 2013). In order to explain the current protests, the volume modelled this new manifestation of pan-European opposition to the EU (Usherwood, 2017), where exogenous crises and events such as treaty reforms or the economic crisis, are significant factors affecting Euroalternativist mobilization beyond national borders. These crises may well explain the emergence of DiEM25 as a Euroalternative transnational movement and can be traced in its Manifesto, which states:

> The Eurozone economies are being marched off the cliff of competitive austerity, resulting in permanent recession in the weaker countries and low investment in the core countries; EU member-states outside the Eurozone are alienated, seeking inspiration and partners in suspect quarters; unprecedented inequality, declining hope and misanthropy flourish throughout Europe. (DiEM25, n.d.-f)

Previous research has already argued that the tensions arising from European integration and the social costs of the EU's multiple crises have successfully mobilized discontent and contestation across different European countries (Fanoulis & Guerra, 2017). At the domestic level, the anti-EU narrative has given voice to the citizens' dissatisfaction with national and EU elites, following a populist antagonistic logic of 'us' versus 'them.' DiEM25's antagonistic logic moves beyond national borders. It mainly revolves around the EU elites, such as the appointed technocrats of the European Central Bank, to defend democracy in countries that demonize the left of centre or do not pay real attention to the people against "corporate power" across Europe (DiEM25, n.d.-f). Moreover, in DiEM25 leader Yanis Varoufakis' view, there is no democracy in the EU. The EU thus needs to be reformed, otherwise it will implode and "we, the peoples of Europe, have a duty to regain control over our Europe from unaccountable 'technocrats,' complicit politicians and shadowy institutions" (DiEM25, n.d.-f).

Most importantly, DiEM25, shows a pro-systemic opposition towards the EU (FitzGibbon & Guerra, 2019), and transnationally mobilizes citizens by asking for greater accountability and transparency. Such a critical view of European integration is defined as (progressive) Euroalternativism (FitzGibbon & Guerra, 2019). Policies, not the polity, are at stake here. Euroalternativism, as pro-systemic contestation, emerged after the EU's economic and financial crisis. Due to the central reference to economic and social costs, Euroalternativism can be traced in DiEM25's manifesto that seeks "to subject the EU's bureaucracy to the will of sovereign European peoples; to dismantle the habitual domination of corporate power over the will of citizens, and to re-politicize the rules that govern our single market and common currency" (DiEM25, n.d.-f). Such critical voices are similar to the first 'Euro-critical' social movements and protests examined during the anti-austerity protests of 2011 (della Porta, Kouki, & Fernández, 2017), signalling a loss of trust in both national and EU institutions. These movements did not call for a return to the nation-state, but a process of Europeanization from below. Similarly, DiEM25's call is to all EU citizens, the 'democrats' (in bold in the original below), and is not fully hostile to the EU. As mentioned on the movement's web-page, "committed democrats must resolve to act across Europe" (DiEM25, n.d.-f) as well as for Europe.

It is worth noting that DiEM25's progressive Euroalternativism is distinct from the radical right (and nationalist) approaches of sovereigntist alt-Euroalternativists, who "believe European cooperation can only work through the member states—even if the nature of the policy means that this must take place at the European level" (FitzGibbon & Guerra, 2019). DiEM25 seeks to embrace all democrats across and beyond Europe. References, meetings and direct participation thus move beyond European borders, with affiliations to Noam Chomsky, Naomi Klein, and Bernie Sanders, with local DiEM25 Spontaneous Collectives (DSCs) and groups of volunteers also based in Australia and the United States (DiEM25, n.d.-g). As poignantly highlighted by Moffitt (2017), it is in the ambiguity of the passage from 'the people' to 'the peoples' that the construction of a transnational populist movement seems unsurmountable, as demands at the transnational level mainly emerge through national demands, with national characteristics. Yet, the analysis that follows stresses an emerging transnational progressive Euroalternativism intrinsic in DiEM25's and Varoufakis' populist discourse.

4. A Note on Methodology

Case study research is an effective methodology to examine and understand complex real-world issues. Central to this approach is the underpinning ontological and epistemological contribution gained through inductive analysis, which is the approach adopted here. Discourse theory, and Michel Foucault's work on 'parrhesia' will help us bring together the different dimensions of the case study and investigate the narrative and leadership discourse in DiEM25. Our empirical investigation focuses on 2019, being the most recent, and the year in which both the European Parliament (EP) elections and Greek general elections were held, alongside the rising salience of the Euroalternativist voice vis-à-vis the EU. The speeches were retrieved from the movement's official web-page (diem25.org) and the personal web-page of Yanis Varoufakis (yanisvaroufakis.eu). Concerning the

latter, we initially collected all of Varoufakis' interviews from the year 2019 via his personal web-page. To reduce the amount of data, selection was limited to only those whose thematology was clearly centered on EU politics and European integration.

The analysis concentrates on the two most significant expressions of DiEM25's discourse, its progressive Euroalternativism and its populist dimension, as they together aim to mobilize, from the bottom-up, the true democrats of Europe. We first establish that Yanis Varoufakis emerged as the political leader of DiEM25 due to his being empowered by an ethical urge to reveal the truth about the EU to its peoples. In Foucauldian terms, we hence justify Varoufakis' ascendancy as the parrhesiastic subject within DiEM25, speaking the truth about the EU to fellow members of the movement, to the whole body of European citizens, as well as to the political actors governing the EU (Varoufakis, 2017). We then evaluate whether his Euroalternativist attempt to reveal the problems of European integration has succeeded in constructing a transnational people.

5. Rereading the Discourse of DiEM25's Political Leadership

Thanks to his office as the Greek minister of finance during periods of acute contestation regarding EU decisions by both the national government and the Greek people, Varoufakis had the chance to articulate what he considered to be the truth about the working of the EU institutions. In the midst of a highly mediatized financial crisis, Varoufakis' dissident conduct in the Council of the EU gave voice to concerns about the institutional power of appointed, unelected, technocratic actors in the EU institutions. Varoufakis criticized the EU Commission for its bureaucratic handling of EU policies and governance, arguing that "raw, brutish power [had] taken the place of the democratic process" (BruegelEvents, n.d.). He pointed to the bureaucratic narrowmindedness of the EU institutions concerning innovative solutions to the EU's contemporary challenges. For example, on his innovative idea of an EU antipoverty fund sponsored by European Central Bank (ECB) resources, Varoufakis claimed that this option "offended those in EU that austerity has given them enormous power," implying the Troika mechanism (StartupTV, 2019). Varoufakis' criticism against the *modus operandi* of EU institutions culminated with the publication of his autobiographical best-seller, *Adults in the Room: My Battle with Europe's Deep Establishment* (Varoufakis, 2017), focusing on his time as Greece's finance minister.

Either due to having been on the media's spotlight or due to his academic reputation as a professor of economics, Varoufakis undoubtedly ascended in the political realm as a defiant voice speaking the truth about the shortcomings of European integration both courageously and freely, whilst presenting an alternative view of the EU. His leadership style can be explained through political charisma (Pappas, 2016). In the restlessness of formal institutions, the transnational movement has allowed Varoufakis "to defy prevailing worldviews, forging instead new collective entities based on discourses of justification against the established" (Pappas, 2016, p. 379), and by providing a "radical founding of a novel structure of legitimacy" (Pappas, 2016, p. 379). At times of short-term political commitments, Varoufakis' fierce voice and independence can resonate beyond ordinary leadership (Gabriel, 2015). The public resonance of his ideas and his political persona have allowed him to become the central voice of DiEM25 both at national—as the leader of the Greek political party MeRA25—and transnational levels. Furthermore, his leading subject position within the transnational movement may well amount to a hegemonization of DiEM25's discourse. This is evident by Varoufakis' centrality in the Coordinating Collective (CC) of the movement. It also shows in his public appearances, whose number increased during the campaign prior to the 2019 EP elections, as well as in his candidacy for Member of the EP's office in Germany, while organizing the participation of the movement's Greek Electoral Wing (MeRA25) in the same elections. Further, it also shows in the discourse itself, whose boldness and outspokenness reinforces Varoufakis' position as the de facto leader of the movement. Absolute statements such as "the Juncker Plan was a fraud" (BruegelEvents, n.d.), "EU as a Napoleonic project for France" (StartupTV, 2019), "Troika caused the dissolution of the EU" (Varoufakis, 2019a) are not only critical of the EU, they performatively establish Varoufakis as the only political subject among equals who reveals the truth about the misdeeds of the EU. Having the courage to do so, he stands out as the leader of the movement.

The consolidation of Varoufakis' leadership role in DiEM25 is also because he highlighted aspects of truth about the EU and its institutions to mainstream political subjects. He has repeatedly talked about a "very large democratic deficit in the EU" (BBC Newsnight, 2019), condemning the secretive and non-transparent methods of EU institutions—"Eurogroup, astounded by the secrecy" (StartupTV, 2019)—and their inefficiency to deliver prosperity to European citizens—"Competition Committee not having done something about the oligopolistic practices of the big supermarkets" (Varoufakis, 2019b). Pushing a progressive Euroalternativist agenda, Varoufakis highlights the need for change in the EU institutions, changes that "will be healing for the whole Europe" or "will be democratizing the EU" (Varoufakis, 2019a). A lot of different political actors claim to speak the truth about the deficient European project, so what makes Varoufakis' discourse exceptional? His discourse comes from the vantage point of a political actor who became directly involved in the EU policy—and decision-making procedures; hence, his claim to the truth acquires a foundation of credibility that may be lacking in other critical voices, and which allows Varoufakis' ascendancy as the parrhesiastic sub-

ject with the courage to freely criticize the functions and operations of the EU, no matter the political cost. In this manner, Varoufakis's Euroalternativist discourse reinforces his leading role within DiEM25.

5.1. Euroalternativism and Populism in the Context of True Discourse

To whom does Varoufakis address the truth about the EU's problems? His speeches first of all target the political subjects governing and managing Greece as an EU member state. In his first speech in the Greek parliament as elected party leader, Varoufakis criticized the conservative government as follows: "At the same time, you will be awarding gifts…to our parasitic oligarchs" (Varoufakis, 2019b). Moreover, Varoufakis renounced the previous government of left-wing SYRIZA for having consented to Troika's demands during the Greek financial crisis, adding that SYRIZA was trying to hold him responsible for the country's austerity (Varoufakis, 2019a). Such comments underline the antagonism between an oppressed people and their ruling economic and political elite. Varoufakis' populist discourse is articulated against Greece's ruling elites by primarily referring to their handling of the positionality of Greece within the European integration project. Being both MeRA25's party leader and DiEM25's leader, Varoufakis manages to pull together in the same chain of equivalence critiques of political clientelism in Europe ("political parties and politicians are largely funded by the oligarchy in every country not just in Germany," StartupTV, 2019), general demands for social justice ("the interest of the few have a disproportionate influence in political narratives," StartupTV, 2019), and public dissatisfaction regarding the inefficiency of EU policies ("you know all too well that Mr. Draghi's arsenal is done," Varoufakis, 2019b).

A number of observations should be highlighted. Varoufakis' populist logic operates simultaneously at two interconnected levels: the Greek national, speaking as the party leader of MeRA25, and the transnational European level, speaking as the leading figure of DiEM25. The two levels become interconnected via the referent object of his discourse, which in both cases is the Euroalternativist need to change the EU's sedimented and unpopular practices of governance. Unlike other commentators on populism arguing that the distinction between the people and its other is moralistic (see Mudde, 2004, for example), meaning a distinction between the pure people and the corrupt other, Varoufakis' populist discourse is based on an ethical performativity of truth-claiming. This means that he establishes his populist claim on the basis that telling the truth about the EU is the right and ethical thing to do, no matter how hard and unpleasant this may be. In his own words, "we will be here to reveal the working-class dystopia, that is predestined to fail, due to memorandum Greece" (Varoufakis, 2019b). Of course, this presupposes firstly an unflinching conviction on behalf of Varoufakis that his version of facts and events is the truth and that this is accepted as such by his audience, the people (see also Moffitt, 2016). MeRA25's electoral success in the Greek elections seems to confirm the public resonance of Varoufakis' claim to the truth about the EU. His success also reinforces his subject position and power status within the domestic political party and by extension within the transnational movement.

Interestingly, Varoufakis negates populism as a strategy to gain political power:

> We are here to bury populism. A populism that…the Greek people remember, the PASOK under Simitis, a time when the biggest debt bubble in the Eurozone both public and private was building up, while the Greek people were being told they belonged to the hardcore of Eurozone. (Varoufakis, 2019b)

We witness again how Varoufakis' discourse refers to Greek domestic politics, but in reference to Greece's position within EU structures and mechanisms, unravelling the unspoken truth about Greece's real financial situation. For a better comprehension of the statement, the semantic and political usage of the term *'laikismos*' (populism) in Greek politics should be elaborated. The dominant understanding of the word in the Greek language has a negative connotation mainly due to the clientelistic relationships that traditionally develop between the Greek electorate and socioeconomic elites. It is in this manner that Varoufakis refuses the populist label, albeit without denying the importance of the people as the key political actor in radical democratic politics. Moreover, the fact that Varoufakis does not wish to adopt the populist label as part of a long tradition in the Greek context does not mean, nevertheless, that his political logic or logic of articulation is not populist.

5.2. From Domestic Populism to a Transnational People through the Gates of Euroalternativism?

The populist call of Varoufakis for real change in the EU's functions, a change that will serve the interests of Europe's peoples, goes beyond Greek borders. DiEM25's responsibility for the democratization of the whole EU is a core feature in his discourse. He pledges solidarity with the British people on Brexit (BruegelEvents, n.d.), sympathizes with families in rural France that cannot pay increased taxation (BruegelEvents, n.d.), and declares that "we will be on the victim's side, not just in Greece, but also in Germany, in France. Because the crisis that started here, in 2008–2010, was transmitted, through the memorandum, to the entirety of the EU." Yanis Varoufakis thus calls upon Europeans to unite against the few, the elites that have coalesced with the politicians and suppress the popular will across the EU.

The leader's populist discourse resonates with the movement's political activities at a pan-European level. Firstly, the movement has broadened its base in Europe

to over 117,000 members (DiEM25, n.d.-c). Secondly, it maintains a bottom-up approach and actively involves its members in agenda-setting, including initiation of or participation in DSCs or carrying out voluntary work (e.g., translation, communication, etc.) for the movement (DiEM25, n.d.-d). Thirdly, the institutional structure and decision-making procedures within the movement comply with a populist logic of merging the movement's leadership with its popular base. For example, the core political mechanism of the movement, the CC, becomes the representative voice of the movement's membership, as it articulates its stances "in response to events that require a rapid DiEM25 response" (DiEM25, n.d.-e). All the above indicate that DiEM25 and its leadership—whether this is practiced individually by Varoufakis or collectively by the CC and its members—have employed a Euroalternativist populist discourse that has resonated across Europe.

However, this does not mean that the movement has managed to socially construct a transnational people in the EU. This is primarily due to the populist leadership's limited capacity to use truth-claiming about European integration to socially construct a transnational people. The notion of the people needs indeed a clearly defined constitutive other (de Cleen et al., 2019). In the case of DiEM25 the 'them' are supposed to be a transnational elite as well as an EU in need of change. In both, there is the precocious assumption of a common agreement across Europe regarding who the enemy of the people is. This is erroneous for two reasons. The EU's nature as such is contested and fluid (what we call *sui generis*) and this extends to the role of the transnational elites. Who are these powerful, oppressing elites that stand against the European peoples' will and what is their exact relationship with the transnational demos? Such ambivalence blurs a clear understanding of the people's constitutive other. Of equal importance, EU citizens do not hold the same understanding of the EU's transnational elites or of their respective roles, as evidenced by the many different versions of Euroscepticism and Euroalternativism which exist (FitzGibbon & Guerra, 2019). All these point to the fact that we cannot have an accurate picture of the transnational people's political adversary.

Moreover, the parrhesiastic role of the populist leader needs to be highlighted at this point. Within the context of national populism, the populist leader convinces the people of the 'us vs. them' distinction and eventually convinces the body politique that they can speak on behalf of the people and hence represent the people in democratic politics (Laclau, 2005a). This occurs because the populist leader both articulates unheard or silenced public demands, and speaks the truth about the latter being under-represented. The populist leader's truth thus emerges as a revelation and resistance against and despite the power relations embedded in politics. In the context of the hegemonization of DiEM25's discourse by Yanis Varoufakis, in Greece, his success has proved that his political truth can resonate with the people there. However, there is little empirical evidence that the other peoples of the EU have similarly been united under a common signifier of a transnational people wishing for liberation from the EU Establishment, Brussels' bureaucracy, and elites. Thus, DiEM25's discourse may start transnationally, but its political truth can still fall back to national political outcomes and consequences. Such insights do not fully agree with other scholars' view that DiEM25 is a case of transnational populism; our analysis instead points towards a case of international cooperation between nationally defined populist claims across Europe (see Moffitt, 2017, p. 410). The eventual absence of transnational populism does not mean, however, that we should altogether discount the political strength of transnational progressive Euroalternativism.

6. Conclusion: Euroalternativist Leadership as a Defender of the People against the Power of the 'Few'

"We are inspired by a Europe of Reason, Liberty, Tolerance and Imagination made possible by comprehensive Transparency, real Solidarity and authentic Democracy" (DiEM25, n.d.-f). DiEM25 presents a distinctive character in the social and political European context, particularly in terms of its transnational nature and its leadership's discourse. Our analysis has reiterated these two dimensions by investigating the most recent key speeches of the movement's main founder and leader, Yanis Varoufakis. While most of the other studies have sought to examine the movement in terms of its transnational populism, our investigation has focused on Varoufakis' Euroalternativist discourse as the truth about the EU that is able to mobilize the peoples of Europe, from the bottom-up, according to a populist logic. Without being hostile to the EU, the movement's immediate priorities are full transparency in the decision-making at the Council level, "full disclosure of trade negotiation documents, publication of ECB minutes etc.) and…the urgent redeployment of existing EU institutions in the pursuit of innovative policies that genuinely address the crises of debt, banking, inadequate investment, rising poverty and migration" (DiEM25, n.d.-f). After a short time in office as Greek finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis became a credible voice for the progressive Euroalternativist agenda by asking for change in the EU institutions to 'heal' the whole of Europe.

Varoufakis' discourse is based on an ethical performativity of truth-claiming, termed as veridiction (parrhesia). His veridiction addresses a Euroalternativist agenda towards the people, the movement, and the EU institutions. While MeRA25's electoral success in the Greek elections confirms that Varoufakis' claim to the truth about the EU in Greece resonates with the public, this analysis also points to different conclusions at the transnational level. Our primary insight is that the pursuit of the truth about the problems of EU integration provides more opportunities for a transnational movement. The populist dimension is still attached to domestic national poli-

tics, whereas critical voices against the EU are becoming more widespread and transnational at the political, mass, and civil society levels. This is because Euroalternativism, or even Euroscepticism, can create alliances across borders, and can aggregate mobilization, particularly at times of crises (see Usherwood, 2017). Progressive Euroalternativist views converge together with similar demands centred on the EU budget and questions of accountability and transparency (FitzGibbon & Guerra, 2019), the same main issues that mobilize DiEM25's transnationalism. Hence, Euroalternativism is successful in capitalizing on transnationalism, while populism can be limited by national borders. The role of a parrhesiastic leader is to articulate the truth about politics. This truth, in the service of both Euroalternativism and populism in the case of DiEM25 and of Yanis Varoufakis, may be a necessary condition for the social construction of a transnational people across Europe, yet it does not seem to be a sufficient one.

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Article

Populism and Political Knowledge: The United States in Comparative Perspective

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Abstract
This article addresses the link between political knowledge and populist attitudes in the United States (US) in comparative perspective. At the beginning of the new decade, populism in the US is associated with support for the Republican party and Donald Trump in particular, and that is how I address it here. Using secondary data from a number of related studies, we find that, overall, support for Trump is not only negatively related to political knowledge, but also to other factors that make his supporters unaware of their being misinformed. This is because, more than for others, partisan cues serve them as a basis for their factual beliefs about political actors and events and assessments of the beliefs of others. While political knowledge has long been comparatively low in the US, as I show in the early part of the article, the relationship between misinformation and populism (i.e., support for Trump) is seen as a new and especially worrisome element. In the concluding section I address what, if anything, could be done to address this situation.

Keywords
Donald Trump; political knowledge; political misinformation; populism; tribalism; United States

Issue
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1. Introduction

In addressing the relationship between low political knowledge and the emergence of populist attitudes, I begin by comparing the political knowledge of Americans to that of people in comparable countries, bringing to bear data based on responses to political knowledge questions in cross-national surveys. By first breaking the results down by generation, I find a trend whereby political knowledge is becoming more dependent on education, and that this is especially true of the United States (US). The resulting challenge is that of civic literacy: An apparently increasing proportion of voters cannot be counted upon to have the political knowledge needed to act as competent citizens.

I go on to address the link between civic literacy and support for Trump and the Republicans in the US today, with its rigid two-party system. Using secondary data from a number of related studies, we find that, overall, support for Trump is not only negatively related to political knowledge, but also to other factors that make his supporters unaware of their being misinformed. This, I contend, is a new element, and linked especially to media use. The informational deficits, in turn, make Trump supporters especially susceptible to populist emotional appeals relying on "false news" that exploit their anxieties. What unites populists these days is that they identify with the interests of the native born, seeking to keep outsiders out of the country, mobilizing against "elites" who side with the outsiders against the "real" people of the country. While in most democratic countries populists have formed new parties, in the context of the rigid American two-party system, they have largely succeeded at taking over the Republican party, mobilizing a sufficient number of registered Republicans to deny renomination to insufficiently loyal legislators.

I have been working in the area of comparative political knowledge for at least two decades. Emerging from this literature is a consensus over the generally low level of political literacy or political competence in democratic

countries. Overall, since it was seen as a manifestation of low political interest and attentiveness, low political knowledge has not been regarded as a threat to democracy. The bulk of respondents found in the research to lack basic political knowledge were understood to be politically passive, even when it came to voting. It was implicitly assumed that when circumstances warranted their participation, they would become more attentive and thus sufficiently informed. A corollary of this assumption was that they would seek the needed information through communications media that could be counted on to adequately provide the needed facts. The media could be counted on to provide sufficiently objective facts as long as the right to a free press and free expression were not threatened.

While it was acknowledged that there would be a group that rejected the premises of liberal democracy based on systematic misinformation, this phenomenon was not given attention in the literature on political knowledge since it was taken for granted that, except in periods of great instability like the 1930s, the workings of liberal democracy would keep such a group to a politically ineffective minority.

These assumptions made their way into our methodology. Representative samples of the population were to be given political knowledge tests, allowing us to compare different groups (by age, gender, region, educational attainment, as well as nationality, taking into account cultural differences). Specifically, it meant that wrong or "don't know" answers treated as were equivalent, since the former were basically a matter of a guesswork. In other words, to be uniformed or misinformed, in the end, amounted to the same thing.

The recent emergence of populist parties in democratic countries forces us to question these assumptions, something we are just beginning to do. As I have followed developments in Trump's America in particular, I am coming to the realization that we can no longer count on a large number of politically misinformed Americans to be open to becoming informed. The literature has not yet caught up with these developments, however. I could find only one research article investigating the distinction between uninformed and misinformed, and it uses European data. In it, according to van Kessel Sajuria, and van Hauwaert (2020):

> Recent research suggests that populist party supporters are not necessarily unsophisticated protest voters. This leads us to question the still popular assumption that these individuals are politically uninformed. Simultaneously, given the current political and media climate and debates about 'fake news,' this article asks to what extent misinformation, i.e., the possession of erroneous political information, stimulates populist party support. Survey data from nine European democracies are used to assess to what extent populist party supporters differ from abstainers and non-populist party supporters in terms of their political information and misinformation. It is found…that political misinformation relates positively to support for right-wing populist parties. The findings provide a first empirical and comparative contribution to recent debates that seek to connect misinformation and political behaviour.

In the rest of this article I take an approach based on this distinction. A great deal has been written about modern liberal democracy, stressing majoritarian decision making, respect for the rights of minorities, and freedom of expression. Yet, in the context of what is happening today, one dimension is missing, namely the capacity to resolve disagreement through appeals to objective facts. Experts and commentators have taken for granted, as the well-known expression put it, "you can have your own opinion, but not your own facts." I return to this distinction and its relationship to populist attitudes after first outlining what we know of comparative political knowledge in democratic countries.

2. The Political Knowledge of Americans in Comparative Perspective

An early signal of acute differences1 among developed democracies emerged from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). This highly sophisticated cognitive-proficiency test, developed jointly by Statistics Canada and the OECD, sought to assess the extent to which people over 16 years of age in each country possess the kind of literacy needed to be effective citizens in today's world. The study tested the level of comprehension of three types of written materials: 1) prose literacy—the ability to understand and use information from texts such as editorials, news stories, poems, and fiction; 2) document literacy—the ability to locate and use information from documents such as job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and graphs; and 3) quantitative literacy—the ability to perform arithmetic functions such as balancing a checkbook, calculating a tip, or completing an order form.

The specific literacy tasks designed for the IALS were scaled by difficulty, divided into five broad literacy levels. Level 1 indicates very low literacy skills, where the individual may, for example, have difficulty identifying the correct amount of medicine to give to a child based on the information printed on the package. Figure 1 displays the average percentage scores for each country in the three tests of those that scored in the lowest category, which may be described as the "level of functional illiteracy." As we can see, those that have the fewest falling in the functional illiteracy category turn out to be the Nordics followed by the Netherlands and Germany. Australia fits into a wide middle category along with Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, and New Zealand, with those at the bottom, the US, Britain, and Ireland, which have the greatest number falling in the functional illiteracy level.

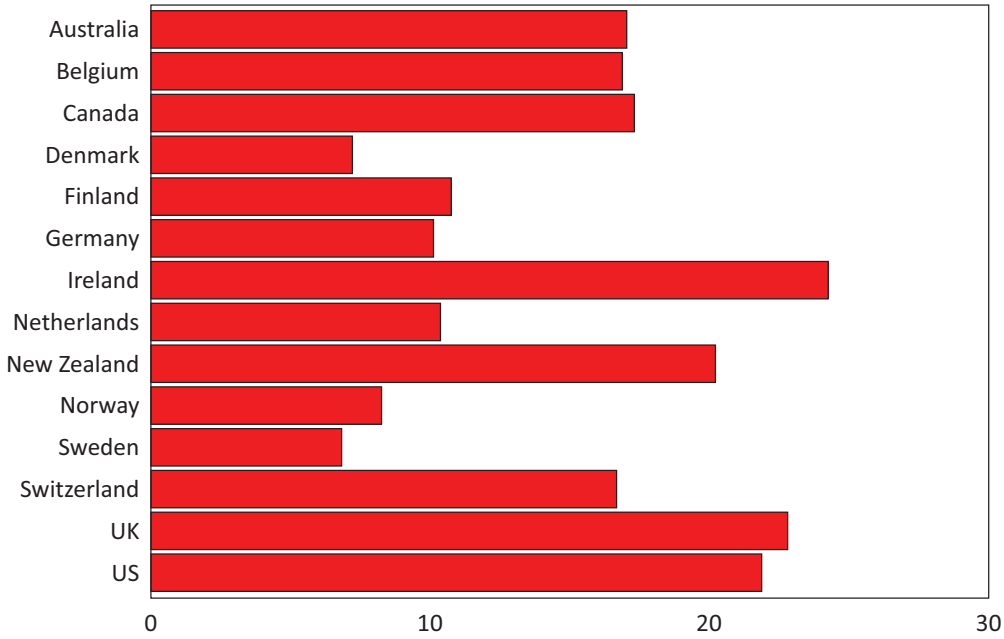

Figure 1. Functional illiteracy level (IALS category 1 average).

Given that in modern societies information about politics is in large part distributed in written form, we expect to find a relationship between functional illiteracy and political knowledge, and thus a low level of political knowledge in the US. There is no shortage of documentation attesting to this (see e.g., Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2014; Rauch & Wittes, 2017). The best comparative political knowledge data is found in surveys conducted for the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) based at the University of Michigan. In the first three rounds, participating countries included three political knowledge questions, designed to provide some overall comparability (the national research teams were instructed to formulate the three questions in such a manner as to have different levels of difficulty, with one question being answered correctly by 2/3, another by 1/2, and the last by 1/3 of the respondents). It was only the fourth wave, however, comprising surveys using the fourth module, that included questions that were the same for all participating national surveys.

The data in Figure 2 is drawn from the combined results to the questions posed in the first three waves. Taken together, the responses in the 22 longstanding democracies in the CSES give us a total of 102,783 respondents. Figure 2 sets out the levels of political knowledge in CSES countries that reported results for at least two election surveys at least five years apart between 1996 and 2012. One conclusion emerging from the charts is of generational decline: In all but one (Germany 2002) of the 76 election surveys, young people were less politically knowledgeable than their elders. Moreover, in most countries the generational gap between young citizens and everyone else was growing over time, though punctuated by fluctuations due to the changing content, and thus difficulty of the questions. Figure 3 combines the data in Figure 2, setting out the average difference between the two age groups for all the surveys carried out in each period. As we can see, the CSES data fits neatly into 5-year intervals for the four waves. Because each period contains the results from many different countries, the effect of the fluctuations based on question difficulty is effectively canceled out. Thus, we see a steady increase in the generation gap, rising from about a quarter of a question to almost half.

Overall, for the decades leading up to about 2012, a clear relationship between declining political knowledge and the arrival of what is termed the Internet Generation (Milner, 2010) has been established. In order to compare countries' level of political knowledge per se, and not just generational differences, we need to use the more recent wave 4 data (up to and including 2016), when the same political knowledge questions (see Supplementary File, Appendix 2) were posed in each country. The questions in module 4 were based on recent facts, while those in the earlier modules were a mix of facts about institutions as well as recent and historical facts, which would explain the less apparent generational difference. Unfortunately, while the results found their way into several research studies, the more comprehensive research projects based on planned longitudinal use of the data had to be abandoned when the questions were not included in the subsequent CSES waves. Thus, there is no data for elections after that date. In the Supplementary File Appendix 1, the results are broken down by question. Overall, with the exception of the question on unemployment levels, a matter of acute concern to younger respondents, older respondents are still more informed than younger ones in most countries, though the picture is cloudier than in earlier years.

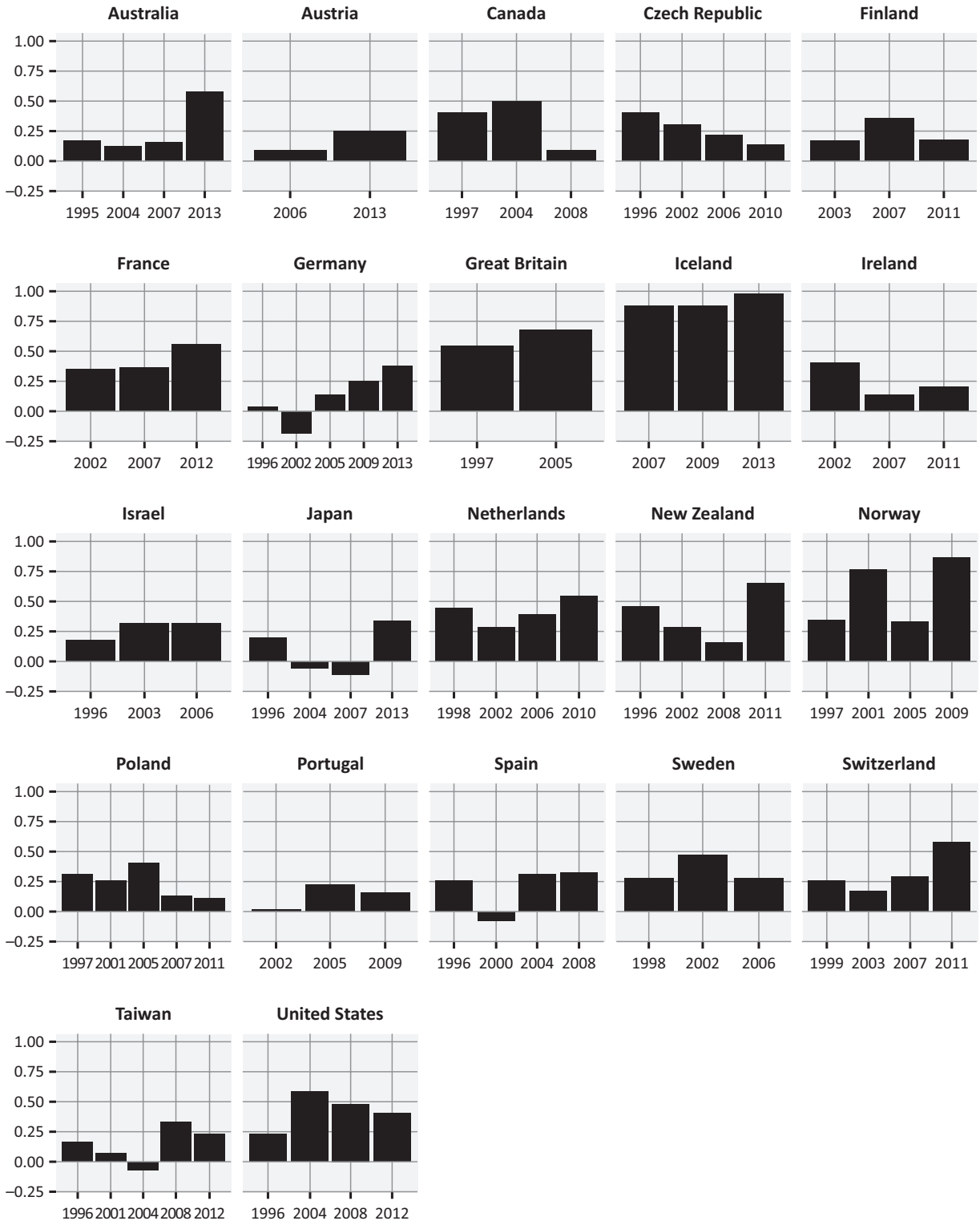

Figure 2. Difference in political knowledge: Between 18 to 25-year-olds and 26 to 65-year-olds.

The data represented in Figure 4 suggest that the key differences are now cross-national. This becomes clearer in Figure 5 where we combine the CSES data in Figure 4 into simple bar graphs setting out thus the average number of correct answers for all respondents at the times of elections in each country. We can see that, overall, the differences in literacy, which were identified in the IALS surveys and visualized in Figure 1, are reproduced to a certain degree here. Among developed countries, on average, the highest scores are those in Western Europe, next come the English-speaking countries (excluding the US), then those in Asia. They are followed by Eastern European countries and, finally, developing countries. The US is the clearest outlier with levels closer to the latter.

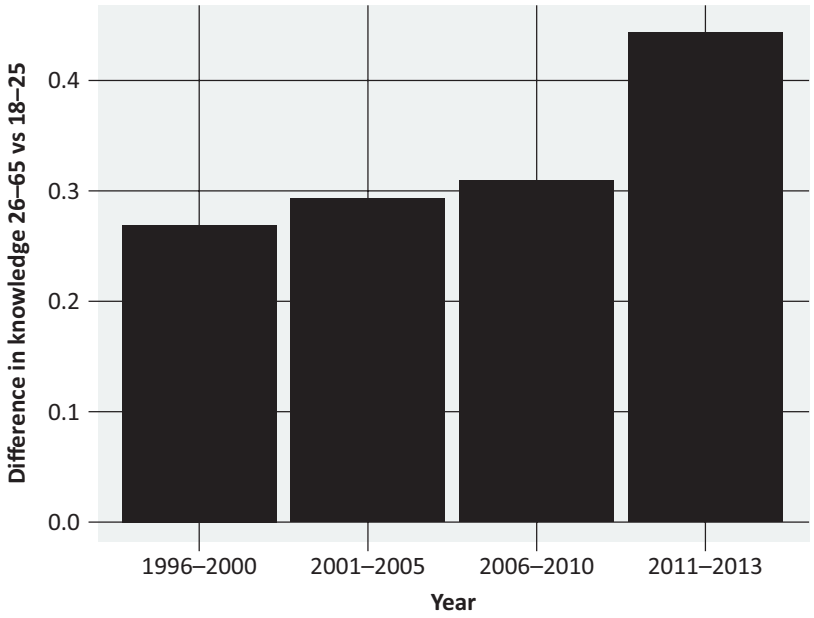

Figure 3. Average difference in political knowledge between 26–65 and 18–25-year-olds.

A glance at the charts suggests that it is the countries lower in civic literacy that, other things being equal, are more vulnerable to the emergence of populist parties. A clear exception is Greece, but other research suggests that civic literacy is high in Greece since citizens need to know something about politics in order to conduct ordinary business given the way the system operates. Of course, another factor linked to the emergence of populist parties and attitudes is geopolitical, in Greece and Austria in particular, in the form of an awareness of vulnerability to uncontrolled migration.

The data also reflects a relationship to which I have drawn attention in my comparative analysis, namely that between civic literacy and what I have termed the sustainable welfare state (see Milner, 2010). Recently, as Sitaraman (2019) argues, as inequality rises with the retreat from the welfare state in many countries, to still find meaning somewhere in their lives, people retreat to tribalism and identity groups, with civic associations replaced by religious, ethnic, or other cultural affiliations:

> When taken to an extreme, social fracturing into identity groups can be used to divide people and prevent the creation of a shared civic identity. Self-government requires uniting through our commonalities and aspiring to achieve a shared future. When individuals fall back onto clans, tribes, and us-versus-them identities, the political community gets fragmented. It becomes harder for people to see each other as part of that same shared future. Demagogues rely on this fracturing to inflame racial, nationalist, and religious antagonism, which only further fuels the divisions within society.

Here I look specifically at the micro-relationship between populism as currently finds expression in politics (i.e., support for Trump and the Republicans) in the low civic-literacy US. Would-be populist leaders undermine political institutions, questioning their legitimacy, for example in Donald Trump's false claims about widespread electoral fraud. Populist discourse rejects nuanced political arguments in favor of conspiracy-laden attacks that reject the political legitimacy of one's opponent. It tends to encourage politics based on fear and resentment rather than informed policy debate. Populist political actors often seek to mobilize exclusionary collective identities, appealing to ethno-nationalism. It is not a coherent worldview but a dynamic framing strategy, analytically separable from the political ideologies it expresses (see Bonikowski, 2017).

The Trump phenomenon fits this conception of populism, which is in fact not an "ism," like socialism or fascism, and fits nowhere on the standard left–right scale. That's because it has no underlying programmatic content, except, in the current context, keeping outsiders out of the country and replacing their elitist sponsors in politics and the media with true patriots. It is understandable why populism has increasingly come to resonate with voters who are experiencing frustrations associated with rapid social change.

3. Populism and Political Knowledge in the US

There is no shortage of interest in populist developments currently. Here is an excerpt from the call for papers to the September 2019 American Political Science Association meeting sent out early that year, a call which drew scores of papers, something inconceivable at similar meetings only a few years earlier:

> No recent political development has been more striking than the rise to power of self-identified pop-

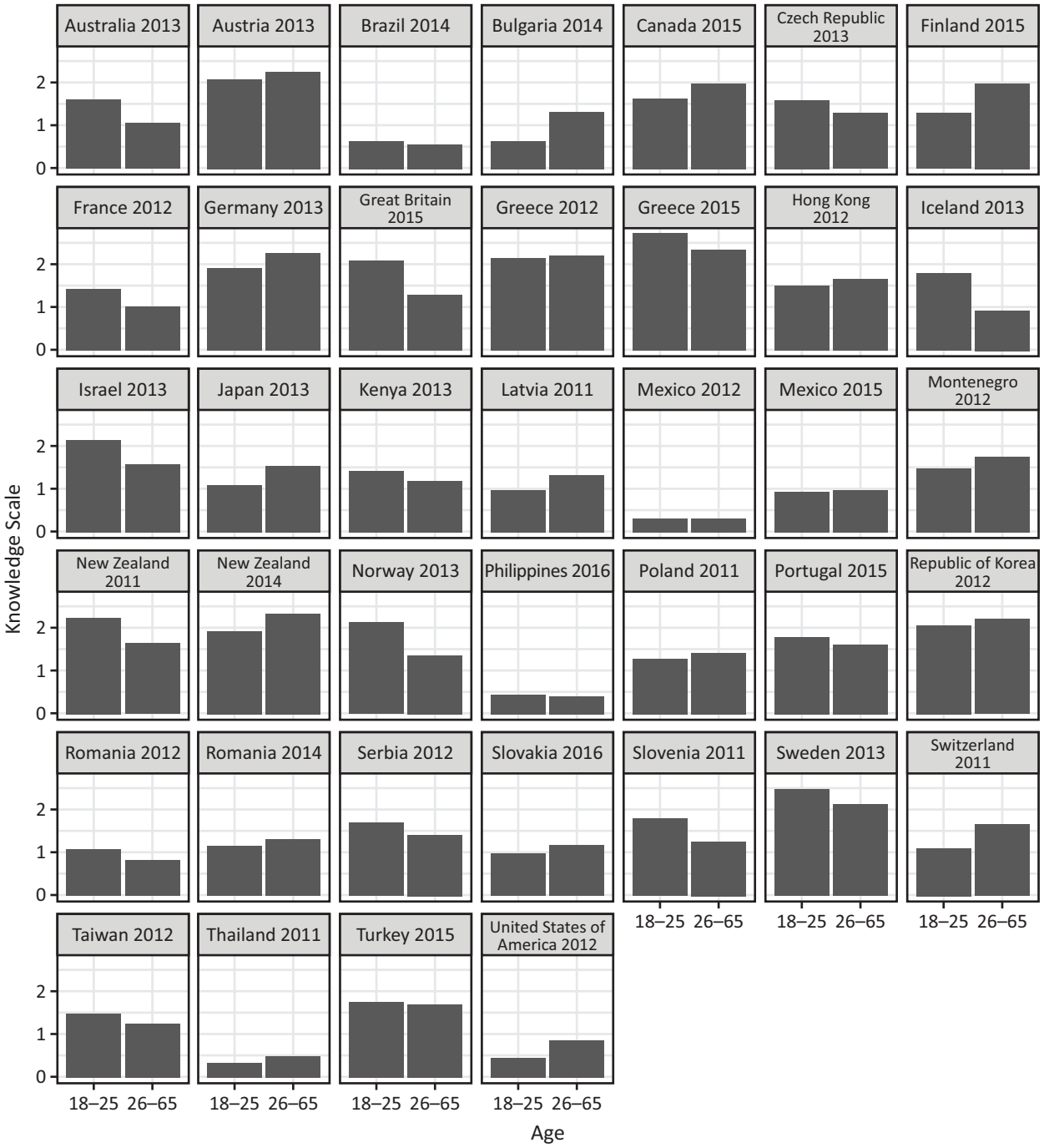

Figure 4. Difference in political knowledge by country from CSES Wave 4.

ulist movements around the globe, whose main unifying trait is their claim to champion "the people" against entrenched selfish "elites." These movements display differences that have sparked debates over which, if any, should be called "populist"; how they compare with past "populisms"; and what "populism" is. The current partisans, often labeled populist, have more often been on the right than the left, including anti-immigrant, anti-globalization, ardently nationalist parties such as *Fidesz* in Hungary; the Law and Justice Party in Poland; and the Trump Republicans in the United States. (American Political Science Association, 2018)

To better understand this phenomenon, we can start from a feeling of dissatisfaction with life generally, which has been found to translate into the above identified attitudes. In the case of Brexit, Alabrese, Becker, Fetzer, and Novy (2018) using a sample of around 13,000 respondents found a strongly significant association between life satisfaction and support for leave, those who were dissatisfied with life overall were around 2.5% more likely

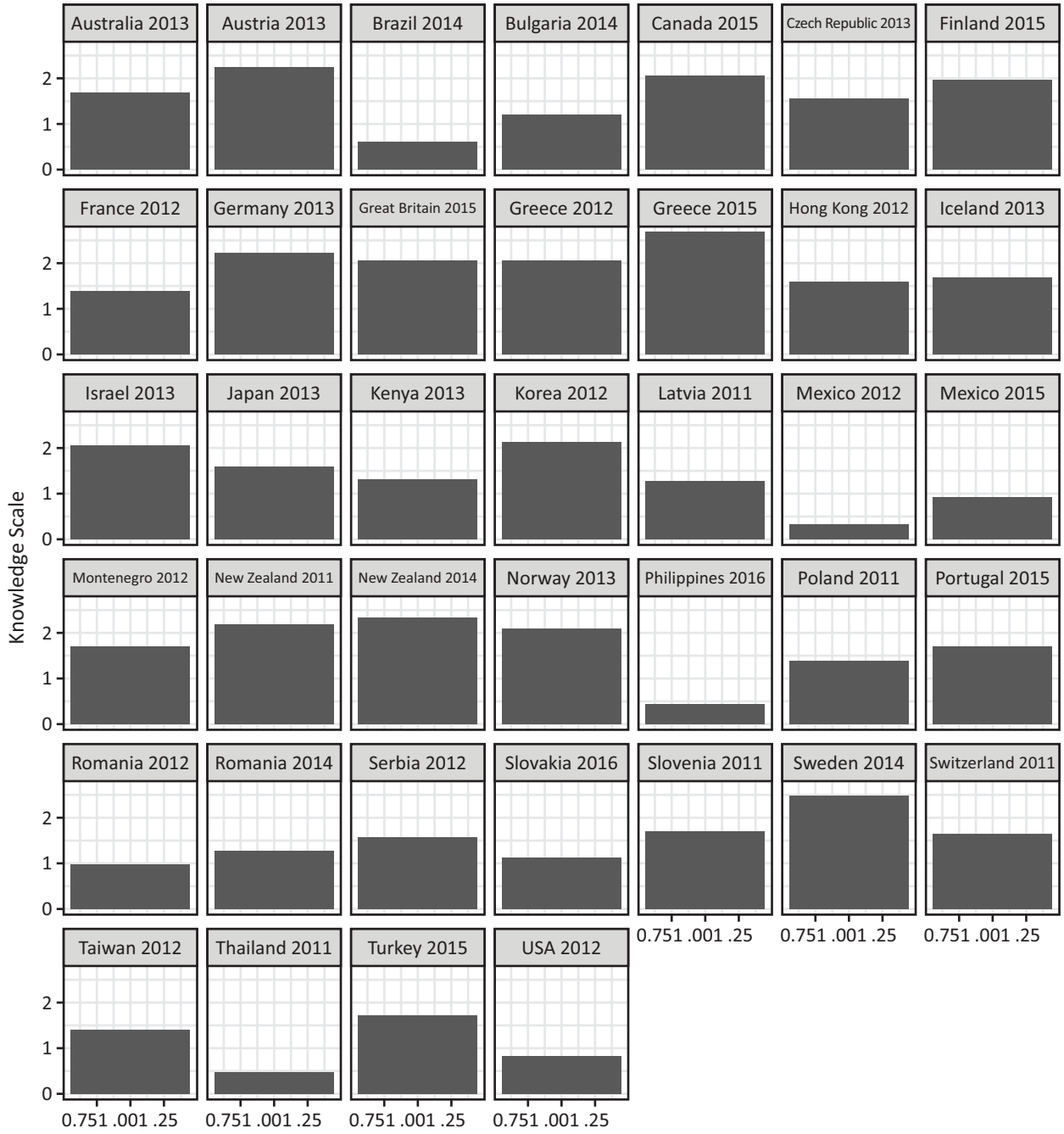

Figure 5. Average of correct answers in CSES Wave 4.

to answer yes to the question of whether the United Kingdom should leave the European Union. This is true both at the individual-level and at the aggregate local-authority level, where the percentage of people dissatisfied predicts the leave vote.

Turning the US, using data from Gallup surveys of US residents on various aspects of their subjective well-being, Herrin et al. (2018) find a correlation between subjective well-being and Trump voting. Placing counties into 6 categories based on the percentage point electoral shift from 2012 to 2016, they find that the percentage of people placing themselves near the bottom in subjective well-being, both currently and in five years' time, is significantly associated with larger swings towards the Republican Party. In counties where the Romney to Trump swing was smaller than—10%, only 3.4% of people were of low life satisfaction (0–4 on the 0–10 scale). But in strong Trump voting areas (where the swing was greater than 10%) this more than doubles to 7.1%.

Life satisfaction, we know, correlates with political participation, both of which are positively linked to education. According to Flavin and Keane (2011), those more satisfied with life are likely to vote and participate in the political process at a magnitude that rivals the effect of education. Nate Silver, in his "538" assessment on of the 2016 election result, pointed out that Hilary Clinton won

the 50 best educated US counties, and Trump the 50 least educated (Silver, 2017). In the context, thus, of a negative relationship between populism and both life satisfaction and education, it is reasonable to expect to find that populist attitudes correlate with low political knowledge (see also Stanley, 2008).

In part, the informational deficits that make these voters especially susceptible to emotional populist appeals simply reflect the quality of information they receive which exploit these anxieties. Trump supporters, we know, more frequently rely on information media that are most likely to provide false information that confirms their biases. In an analysis of millions of American news stories Benkler, Faris, and Roberts (2018) conclude that, unlike most news outlets that seek to adhere to facts and run corrections of false reports, conservative media are more concerned with confirming their audience's biases, fearing angry reactions to exposures of falsehoods from core viewers. As Jane Mayer (2019) noted, on Fox News when falsehoods are exposed, core viewers often react angrily, noting that after Shepard Smith, the Fox News anchor, contradicted Trump's scaremongering about immigrants viewers lashed out at him on social media.

While we have no systematic data linking Trump support with political ignorance, there is no shortage of suggestive partial data. For example, according to Kurt Andersen (2017), when asked: "Do you believe that a secretive power elite with a globalist agenda is conspiring to eventually rule the world through an authoritarian world government?" 34% of Republican voters said yes.

Poundstone (2016) reported on the results of several quizzes. He first asked a sample of 404 adults whether dinosaurs lived at the same time as humans. 25% of Trump supporters agreed, but only 8% of those who had voted for Clinton. Then he asked them three questions getting at basic political knowledge: to identify Vladimir Putin, the majority party in Congress, and the official who nominates Supreme Court justices. Those who disapproved of Trump averaged 2.45 correct answers (out of three), while his supporters averaged 2.21. The scores for Clinton, 2.28 and 2.55, were reversed. He cites a survey showing much greater support for a US–Mexico border wall by those with low scores on a set of 16 general knowledge questions, including locating North Carolina on a US map and knowing which came first, Judaism or Christianity (Poundstone, 2016).

Related to this is an important contribution to this discussion in a recent publication by Fording and Schram (2017, p. 670) based on data from the American National Election Studies 2016 pilot study which surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1200 adults. The authors conclude that the Trump campaign exploited a void of facts and reasoning among:

> Low information voters…that made them more vulnerable to relying on emotions about Mexican immigrants, Muslim refugees, and African American citizens, as well as their disdain for the first African American President, Barack Obama. As a result, these Trump supporters were less in a position to want or be able to question Trump's…campaign of misstatements, untruths, and lies. (Fording & Schram, 2017)

Two measures were combined to gage political knowledge, one indirectly through "need for Cognition" (NFC), the other directly of political knowledge. Those with low NFC rely more on cognitive short cuts such as the statements of celebrities on issues. Two questions, the scores on which were combined, got at this dimension: "Thinking is not my idea of fun"; and "I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that would challenge my thinking ability." Of the sample, 50% were found to be low in NFC, 15% high. The latter measure consisted of two questions: 1) How many years is a senator's term?; and 2) on which of these does the government spend least—Foreign aid, Medicare, National Defense, and Social Security? 46% got neither question right; 33% got one right, and 22% got both right. The two indicators correlated quite strongly: Only 7% of those getting both right were also ranked as low in NFC.

Controlling for level of education, party identification, (on a seven-point scale from strong Democrat to strong Republican), ideology (on a seven-point scale from extremely liberal to extremely conservative,) family income, gender and age, and limiting the sample to whites, the authors tested the relationship of both measures to feelings about Clinton and Trump. The result of subtracting the score for Clinton from that for Trump (the thermometer gap) correlated strongly with political knowledge and NFC. Preference for Trump among those low in political knowledge was 20% higher and for those low in NFC it was 12%. Nothing similar had been found regarding Mitt Romney and other recent Republican candidates.

Breaking down the results, the authors found that almost 80% of the effect of political knowledge flowed through six items, each significantly related to support for Trump over Clinton: 1) belief that Obama is a Muslim; 2) belief that whites are losing jobs to minorities; 3) belief that Muslims are violent; 4) support for immigration restrictions; 5) racial resentment against blacks; and 6) belief that the economy has worsened over the last year. Belief in the false assertion that Obama is a Muslim had the strongest relationship—three times that of the worsening economy, and twice the effect of the other four questions.

This is part of the explanation. But there appears to be, I argue, a more profound development that was less present before the age of Trump, something our standard analyses of the effects and causes of political knowledge have not incorporated. Before Trump, low civic literacy in the US had no partisan hue. Now things have changed. Anson (2018) surveyed 2,606 American adults online as to their political knowledge. He found that those who performed worse were more likely to overestimate their performance. Moreover:

> When I asked partisans to "grade" political knowledge quizzes filled out by fictional members of the other party, low-skilled respondents gave out scores that reflected party biases much more than actual knowledge….More often than not, this means that partisans will think of themselves as far more politically knowledgeable than an out-partisan, even when that person is extremely politically knowledgeable. (Anson, 2018, p. 1173)

This was more the case among Republicans than Democrats, the former using partisan cues to judge peers' political knowledge to a greater extent confirming, Anson noted, the findings of an emerging literature on "asymmetric polarization" (Anson, 2018). To put it simply, the bulk of those identifying themselves as partisan Republicans, which by 2020 are effectively almost all supporters of Trump, are not only unaware of their being politically misinformed, but dismiss efforts to bring out the actual facts as politically motivated. Understandably, thus, when the facts do come out, the effect, as the polls continue to show, is negligible.

Barber and Pope (2019) carried out online surveys of almost 1600 respondents who completed a political knowledge quiz, which asked five questions: the number of years served by a Senator, as well as the name of the current Secretary of Energy, from four possibilities; which party is more conservative on the issue of healthcare; which currently controls the House of Representatives; and on which of four different programs the Federal government spends the least? They found evidence that Republicans use partisan cues to judge peers' political knowledge to a greater extent than do Democrats, coinciding with the actual polarization in the American electorate:

> We find that low-knowledge respondents, strong Republicans, Trump-approving respondents, and self-described conservatives are the most likely to behave like party loyalists by accepting the Trump cue—in either a liberal or conservative direction. These results suggest that there are a large number of party loyalists in the United States [whose]…claims to being a self-defined conservative are suspect, and that group loyalty is the stronger motivator of opinion than are any ideological principles. (Barber & Pope, 2019)

Indeed, there is an emerging literature that begins to assess these phenomena, using concepts like cult (Heffernan, 2020), as well as tribalism (see Rauch & Wittes, 2017).

4. Institutional Arrangements and a Media Environment Favouring Trumpian Populism

The negative portrayal of Trump in the mainstream media though accurate, has, if anything, bolstered Trump supporters in their views: The more strongly his statements—however distant from the facts—stick it to the elitist liberals, i.e., the "Democrats," the more fervent, apparently, is their support. In this war, on the other side are the "lamestream" news organizations, the "enemies of the people" (an expression notably first used by Vladimir Lenin after coming to power in the decree of 28 November 1917 declaring the opposing Constitutional Democratic Party to be filled with enemies of the people who are to be arrested immediately). Politically, thus, the priority for Trump is to mobilize his hard-core base, which, at this writing, remains large enough to keep almost all Republican legislators from straying, fearing defeat in the primaries more that in the general election, and verbal if not physical violence.

In this context, as noted at the outset, Trump supporters are not uninformed but misinformed. While factual information can have an effect on the views of the former, this is not the case with the latter. Trump supporters who are ignorant by the standards of our political knowledge tests do not see themselves that way. Hence his approval rate is unaffected by the revelation that, as of this writing, he has uttered 16,500 false or misleading statements since taking office, according to the factcheckers. To take one example, the following was reported in *The Washington Post*:

> President Trump held his longest campaign rally to date on Dec. 18, just as the House was voting to impeach him. We measured how much of what Trump said was accurate and how much was false. That meant going through Trump's often-dizzying remarks line-by-line, nearly 12,000 words in total….Of the 179 statements we identified, 67 percent were false, mostly false or devoid of evidence. That's 120 fact-free claims.
>
> At the December rally in Michigan, Trump falsely claimed he won the state's "man of the year" award. He falsely claimed to have set military spending records. He claimed—again, falsely—that 401(k) retirement accounts have gained up to 90 percent in value during his presidency. He falsely claimed Michigan had more auto industry jobs. He inflated the attendance at his rally and made up stories about several Democratic rivals. He took credit for major legislation and economic growth trends and NATO spending that came well before he took office. ("Anatomy of a Trump rally," 2020)

It is in the context of intense as well as asymmetric polarization that this distinction has become significant. As Rauch (2019) argues, "emotional identification with a partisan team is driving ideology, more than the other way around," that, in the US today, "party equals tribe." He cites Pew Research Center (2018) data showing that more than three-quarters of respondents in both parties concur that Republican and Democratic voters can't even agree on basic facts, and that, compared to 1994, the

share of Republicans with very unfavorable opinions of the Democratic Party went from 17% to 43% in 2014, while the share of Democrats with very negative opinions of the Republican Party went from 16% to 38%. Among them, the vast majority say the opposing party's policies represent a threat to the nation's well-being:

> What we fear, we tend also to hate….Partisans are not so much rallying for a cause or party they believe in as banding together to fight a collective enemy—psychologically and politically a very different kind of proposition….Fans of opposing sports teams perceive different events in close calls. Fans of opposing political parties perceive different facts and take different policy views depending on which party lines up on which side. Presenting people with facts that challenge an identity—or group-defining opinion does not work; instead of changing their minds, they will often reject the facts and double down on their false beliefs.
>
> Although the result was to reverse Republican orthodoxy on everything from entitlement spending and trade protectionism to global alliances and the FBI, partisans felt no psychological inconsistency or lurch, because, as a result of their ideological somersaults, they continued to be aligned with the same in-group and opposed to the same out-group. (Rauch, 2019)

Older, white, less educated males in blue states overwhelmingly fit the above characterization. Not only does their social milieu reinforce these sentiments, but so do the social and electronic media from where they get information. They have Fox News and other pro-Trump electronic media sources like Breitbart, and national and local phone-in hosts in stations owned by Sinclair, Trinity broadcasting network, and Nexstar. According to Woolley and Joseff (2020):

> Emerging technologies, including synthetic media, virtual and augmented reality, and biometric-powered mass surveillance have the potential to worsen the disinformation crisis in a number of ways. However, it is not only the sophistication of these technologies that poses the greatest challenge, but the interaction with the demand-side drivers….News consumers who are heavily invested in false political narratives are often quite knowledgeable about (and skeptical toward) independent media.

With the latest communications technology, recognition of a voice or picture is no assurance of authenticity. With the development of synthetic media and "deepfakes," every digital communication channel, audio, video, or even text, can be imperceptibly subverted. To illustrate this, we can cite as just one example of what is apparently happening regularly the following from a report in *The New York Times* about a "video of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden that was selectively edited to falsely suggest he made racist remarks during a recent speech made the rounds Thursday on social media, raking in more than a million views on one tweet alone" (Corasaniti, 2020). Also:

> In the edited clip, which was less than 20 seconds long, Biden says, "Our culture is not imported from some African nation or some Asian nation." Social media users paired the video with comments like "It's almost like Joe Biden is a racist….The clip was taken from ABC News coverage of Biden speaking for more than an hour in Derry, New Hampshire, on Dec. 30, 2019. A review of the full video shows that Biden was commenting on changing the culture around violence against women. In discussing the difficulty victims face reporting sexual assault on college campuses, he said, "Folks, this is about changing the culture, our culture, our culture, it's not imported from some African nation or some Asian nation. It is our English jurisprudential culture, our European culture that says it is all right."…The video spread rapidly on social media, amplified by many right-wing verified users on Twitter, including reporters at conservative news outlets, the former speaker of the Missouri House and Republican strategists, according to data compiled by *Vinesight*, a company that detects disinformation on social media. (Corasaniti, 2020)

Finally, American institutional arrangements exacerbate this situation, enshrining the two-party system, giving extra political weight to the blue regions far from the metropolitan centers and most prone to the false news syndrome. We turn to this aspect next before addressing what, if anything could be done to meet the challenge.

5. Institutions, Policies, and Political Knowledge

5.1. Civic and Adult Education and the Media

The challenge is significant. It is not a matter of convincing Trump supporters that his policies conflict with theirs, since his defying Republican orthodoxy on everything from entitlement spending and protectionism to global alliances and the FBI caused no discomfort for his partisans. Clearly adult education, via the media or otherwise, is a dead end. This need not be the case as far as youth focused civic education is concerned, since it is offered an age where its recipients are not likely to have yet come to accept misinformation as knowledge. But, in the context of emerging communications technology, what we know so far is not reassuring.

With regard to young people, we would expect that a key component of political knowledge is the quality and availability of civic education. I tested the effects of civic education in a survey in 2006 with the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), at the University of Maryland. Its Civic and Political Health Survey updated a previ-

ous youth survey (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, & Jenkins, 2002), telephone interviews were conducted with a nationally representative sample of 1,765 Americans, of which 1,209 were aged 15 to 25 posing three political knowledge questions. For this second round, five questions were added, so that the resulting questionnaires allowed for 8 possible correct answers (the list of questions can be found in Appendix 3 of the Supplementary File).

Political knowledge was found to be low, especially among young people. Out of a possible score of 7, the mean of correct answers was 2.12 for young Americans as compared to 2.89 for those 26-plus. The results of the responses to the specific questions were the most glaring, with 55% of young Americans unable to name one permanent member of the UN Security Council (i.e., including the US), and 56% unable to identify citizens as the category of people having the right to vote.

The CIRCLE survey then asked the student respondents whether their classes required them to keep up with politics or government, either by reading a newspaper, watching TV, or going onto the Internet. The effect of such a reported requirement did not quite attain significance, but the reported frequency that history, government, or social studies teachers encouraged students to discuss political and social issues over which people have different opinions did significantly correlate with political knowledge (see Milner, 2007).

In observing civic education programs in a number of countries (see Milner, 2010), I have noted the importance of designing and targeting civic education programs to bring political knowledge to individuals low in the requisite home and community resources, supplemented by government-supported programs affecting the supply of political knowledge in such areas as political party financing, information dissemination, voter registration, and mock parliaments. Moreover, since these young people are frequently potential dropouts, civic education is most effective when offered at a time when they are still in school but close to voting age, and in a form most likely to appeal to them. Our knowledge in this area is, however, limited by the absence of even minimal systematic comparative data on basic aspects of civic education such as the hours of teaching time involved and whether it is compulsory and required for graduation. What we do know is primarily based on American studies, which suggest that civic education in the US is markedly skewed toward constitutional history and voluntary community participation, avoiding addressing partisan issues and, thus, political misinformation (see Milner, 2010). It is hard to imagine, in the context of populist and anti-populist polarization, how educational authorities could do otherwise.

This, it would seem, is insufficient to prepare young Americans for the systematic misinformation around them. Lowering the voting age to 16, as proposed by Franklin (2004), who argues that because the period in a young person's life after leaving the parental home typically at age 18–20 is unsettled, and thus a bad time to develop habits related to voting. However, in the context of an information world comprised of Internet-based subcultures consisting of chat rooms, blogs and the like, one wonders if one can really count upon adolescents getting information from family discussions of the news over supper.

Lowering the voting age, combined with increasing the years of compulsory education could place young potential voters in a position to benefit by combining civics classes with complementary activities, such as the mock elections that are carried out in many countries among high school students, by organizations like Kids Voting USA, which arranges for teachers in most states to help students gather information about candidates and issues, so that, on election day, they cast their ballots in special booths. Whether such simulations, like the *Minitinget* in Norway (see Milner, 2010) would they have an effect in the US today is an open question. According to the National Center for Science education (https://ncse.ngo/research), more than half of American students are inaccurately taught about evolution and climate change.

5.2. Electoral Arrangements

An article by Grönlund and Milner (2006) placed countries' electoral institutions on a continuum based on how close to proportionality was the number of seats won by each party compared to the votes it received. The method used was to quantify the dispersion of political knowledge among educational attainment categories by calculating the variation from the mean for each CSES country of the average political knowledge score in the group with the lowest level of education. We found that overall, as party outcomes become more proportional to popular support, political knowledge becomes less dispersed, less dependent on formal education.

Clues of a relationship between the electoral system and the knowledge required to cast a meaningful can be found in the literature focusing on the ideological reputation, ideological coherence and historical consistency of parties (Merolla, Stephenson, & Zechmeister, 2014). Brader and Tucker (2012) found that party labels are more effective in older, more stable systems, and Lau, Patel, Fahmy, and Kaufman (2014) found that "ideological distinctiveness" of the parties increases citizens' ability to cast a correct vote. Turning to the US, we know that a "positive" effect of the extreme polarization has led to far greater "correct" votes (i.e., conservatives supporting Republicans and liberals voting Democratic). Given the institutional arrangements, a rigid two-party system, primaries, and the extra weight of smaller rural (typically older and white) states in the electoral college, and the ability of states to set their own rules of eligibility, the Trump supporters are assured of continuing to dominate one of the two parties even after he is gone from the scene.

There is little indication that this could change in any fundamental way. Third parties have neither the re-

sources nor incentive to mount a campaign to get on the ballot state by state. The Supreme Court has refused to step in in cases partisan redistricting, and changes affecting the electoral college would require a constitutional amendment, since there is no reason to believe that the efforts in a handful of states to allocate electoral college votes proportionally rather than winner-takes-all will catch on.

6. Conclusion

Given the underlying wider societal developments taking place, we should not harbor any illusions. The growing polarization in certain modern societies, including, and especially, the US, between the growing metropolitan regions and those left behind in smaller towns and rural areas is compounded by the digital revolution that creates separate echo chambers through which relevant information—and misinformation—is filtered. And we know, for example, how this was used in highly sophisticated targeted data by Cambridge Analytica and Russia, which probably changed the outcome of the 2016 election, and possibly the Brexit vote.

The challenge could not be greater. But so are the stakes. In closing, the reader is referred to an important new work by Acemoglu and Robinson (2019) which draws the fine line between despotism and anarchy and tells the story of how infrequently societies were able to walk it for any lengthy period of time and how important trust in the institutions now under attack from the populists for maintaining prosperous, stable, well-governed, law-abiding, democratic, and free societies.

A lot will depend on the emerging generations. One thing we do know is that we need better and more comprehensive comparative data related to the level of and relationship between political misinformation and populist attitudes especially among members of this generation before we can hope to effectively address the challenge.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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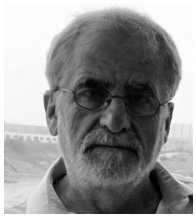

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