

Historical and Doctrinal Roots of Scandinavian National-Populism

Dottoranda

Anja Hansen

Tutor

Prof. Paolo Armellini



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

Summary

There has been an increase in the number of populist parties and movements, especially in Europe, yet their electoral successes have been sporadic. In Scandinavian countries the presence of such parties and movements has become a steady and, it seems, permanent feature of the political landscape. Their once shocking rhetoric and policies have become part of the political mainstream. The ability of populist political parties in Scandinavia to gain electoral success, hence to stabilise, may suggest that populism in Scandinavia may either result from a peculiar type of diversification within the very broadly conceived populist political stream, or may be one of unexpected outcomes of the so-called Scandinavian model of politics to be regarded then as a rather fertile ground for populists. The contribution that this study aims to offer is two-fold: placing Scandinavian populism in a wider context, thereby addressing the issue of the uniqueness of Scandinavian political culture; problematizing the rather common assumption that the variance among populist phenomena has increased exponentially over time. Indeed, the following specific key-questions have been asked and answered: are there distinctive facts that set today's populist movements in Scandinavia apart from populist and nationalist ideas and programmes of the past? What are the ties relating the different populist movements in Scandinavia to each other? Are there any compelling indicators that may convince us that Scandinavian populism is somewhat different from its counterparts elsewhere? Finally, based on a number of findings, we shall evaluate the claim that a distinct, Scandinavian form of populism exists. The first part of the text deals with the complex question of choosing a working definition of populism. It then moves on to describing the historical understandings of 'populism' and 'nationalism', as well as identifying some of the main distinguishing features of populist and nationalist movements in the past, for then to describe, through case studies, some of the many features we may find in different, contemporary, populist party 'families'. We sustain the claim that a typology defined by two overarching families of populism - whether it allows for further sub-families or not - fails to capture the full range of phenomena referred to as populist politics in Scandinavia. By first identifying some of the historical cases in which evident traces of populism are detectable, we shall see that the split nature of populism itself is not a result of a process of diversification, but rather a case of different phenomena that, from the very outset, happened to share a few common features. We propose an interpretation by which, rather than fascism being a form of populism, or combining populism with another ideology, the two belong to a similar type of ideology: they can both be understood as belonging among the so-called 'thin-centred ideologies'. Here we do not mean that a similarity in content is necessarily significant, but rather that they both, when combined with ideological content from the more traditional left – or right-wing, or with a combination of policies from both ends of the spectrum, become political programmes with high potential and appeal, especially during times of (perceived)

crisis. Thus, what we have been able to observe is that the theory that nationalism arises in times of crises where, typically the lower middle classes, or the lower classes, feel the pressure of economic decline in combination with factors such as immigration, seems to hold the first test against historical cases. We further conclude that populist radical right parties in Europe share a core ideology of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism. In the contemporary context, we conclude that a definition of populism in terms of one or more fixed, necessary and exclusive common feature(s) is unfeasible, and we must then continue with a definition of populism which is in line with Sartori's minimal definition, in combination with the presumption that a plethora of sub-categories may exist. The common denominators are thus: the reference to the 'people' as harbouring the real essence of a particular society, to the 'populists' as having discovered the best way of letting the spirit of the people speak, and to the perceived conflict of interest between the people on the one hand and a particular, or general, elite on the other. The investigation of the parallels between the historical definitions of 'populism' and 'nationalism' helps us understand the ideological roots of each of the populist parties and movements in Scandinavia. For example, the abandonment of the use of the rational and legal concept of 'citizenship' in favour of the use of the vague concept of 'Volk' among the German romantics is one of the features that emphasize how the Scandinavian parties have adopted many of the ideas of this particular movement; especially in terms of defining the concepts of 'nation' and 'national-culture', or '-character'. The second part of the text includes a general introduction to some interesting social and political features of each of the national contexts within which our subjects of study belong. We propose the term 'national-populist' to denominate the general typology of most Scandinavian populist parties and movements. We also show how many of these parties have direct links with both national-socialist parties of the past and with each other, and how the promotion of Scandinavian regionalism has created a sense of shared experience and ontology. We also show, however, how local circumstances and historical features have shaped some of these parties. We then move on to treat the societal features that are most frequently used by journalists and scholars, not to mention by Scandinavian populist leaders themselves, to explain the founding of the populist parties and movements in Scandinavian countries on the one hand, and their relative popularity on the other. It becomes clear that many of the features of the populist parties in Scandinavian countries are shared (such as ideas about what constitutes a 'folk' and a nation, a shared Scandinavian regionalism and a common perception of economic and social crisis), the emphasis on each of these features differs from party to party. It also become clear, however, that the features that are shared among these parties, cannot claim exclusivity. Scandinavian national-populist parties and movements do thus not constitute a separate sub-category of populism, but rather constitute examples of the slightly wider sub-category of 'national-populism'.

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Introduction

This introductory section has the purpose of rendering the analytic framework of our research intelligible. By analytic framework we mean the set of basic assumptions on which we relied, and through which some light can be shed on the problems that marked our attempt to understand the concept of populism at the intersection of theory and practice, and to examine the question of the historical and doctrinal roots of Scandinavian national-populism. Towards the end of the section a reference shall be made to the method we employed in our attempt to exam and interpret the historical roots of Scandinavian National-Populism.

Research on populism encompasses a large body of scholarship. In 2013, Marco D'Eramo examined the University of California Library database, which is of particular interest because it includes journal articles that do not figure in other catalogues on an initial search. The examination shows an exponential growth in scholarly work since 1920. In particular, in the period between 1980 and 2013 more than five thousand five hundred studies have been published on the topic. Hence, the systematic use of the word 'populism' appears to be a distinctively post-war phenomenon¹. This extensive body of literature presents specific features that deserve our attention in so far as they constitute issues that are relevant from the methodological point of view. We are going to focus on some of these issues, although given the complexity of the latter, and the limited scope of this introduction, our account cannot be expected to be exhaustive.

Provided that the distinction between populism as a phenomenon and as a concept may be maintained for analytic purposes, even though the two spheres appear to be interwoven, the first issue we wish to address is related to the indeterminateness of the concept of populism. Scholars have made numerous attempts to identify the core, or the essence, uniting a multiplicity of phenomena which have been taken to have a populist nature. What is it, for a phenomenon, to have populist nature? This qualification is the result of either an activity of self-perception within groups or movements that styled themselves populist, or, more often, of a definitional activity carried out by scholars claiming to identify analogies between one group or movement and another. Margaret Canovan pointed out that whoever has used the word 'populism' has also been able to attach to it a variety of meanings. "The more flexible the word has become", the English political theorist noted, "the more tempted political scientists have been to label 'populist' any movement or outlook that does not fit into any established category". Canovan provided a short list of definitions of populism: the type of socialism which emerged in backward peasant countries facing the problems of

¹ D'Eramo suggests that the increased use of the word 'populism' developed in proportion to the decreasing use of the word 'the people': "the more peripheral the people in political discourse, the more central populism becomes". See M. D'ERAMO, *Populism and the New Oligarchy*, in «New Left Review», 82 (2013), pp. 5-28, 15-19.

modernization; the ideology of small rural communities threatened by industrialization and financial capitalism; a rural movement seeking to realize traditional values in a changing society; the belief that the majority opinion of the people is oppressed by an elitist minority; the belief that true virtue resides in the ordinary people who are the majority in a country, and in their ways of life: the belief that the will of the people as such is supreme over every other standard; a political movement supported by the mass of the urban working class and/or peasantry but which does not result from the autonomous organizational power of either of these two groups. Each definition, in spite of some overlaps, stands for a family of related ideas, some of them contradictory to others. It seems we cannot hope to reduce all cases of populism to a single definition, or find a single essence behind all established uses of the word². Ought we then to stop using the word 'populism'?

A plethora of scholars lamented the vagueness of the concept to an extent that, as Luca Scuccimarra pointed out, the semantic quagmire with which we are accustomed to associate it, has become a common-place³. In 1969 Ghița Ionescu and Ernest Gellner opened the book they edited comprising a limited number of papers originally read at the London conference of May 1967 on populism⁴, asserting that a new spectre is haunting the world – populism. At the end of the preceding decade, a question frequently asked was how many of the new nations that were emerging into independence were also to join the Communist camp. Ten years later, this question appeared to have been superseded by the question of populism. The latter was not an outlook restricted to the new nations. In the Communist world too strong currents seemed to move in a populist direction, and in the liberal democracies populist themes had become prominent. If there were no doubts about the importance of populism, there was no clarity about what it is. Ionescu and Gellner viewed the concept of populism as “elusive and protean”, having made its appearance everywhere, but in many and contradictory forms⁵. Canovan too acknowledges that, frequently used, the word 'populism' is vague for it refers, in different contexts, to “a bewildering variety of phenomena”. The general usefulness of much of the studies available on the topic seems to be impaired for want of conceptual clarification⁶. Pierre-André Taguieff noted that while the suggestion has repeatedly been made that the concept of populism must be erased from the vocabulary of the social sciences, the exponential growth of interest in the topic, and the familiarity with which the concept continues to appear self-evident in public discourse, make its obliteration

² M. CANOVAN, *Populism*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York-London 1981, pp. 4-6.

³ L. SCUCCIMARRA, *Democrazia e populismo. Un itinerario storico-concettuale*, in C. CALABRÒ, M. LENCI (a cura di), *La democrazia liberale e i suoi critici*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2017, pp. 269-287, 269.

⁴ The conference was entitled “To Define Populism” and held from 20 to 21 May 1967 at the London School of Economics and Political Science. A summary of the proceedings appeared in «Government and Opposition» 3/2 (1968), pp. 137–179. The complete transcript of it can be consulted at the library of the LSE and is entitled London School of Economics Conference on Populism, May 20–21, 1967: *Verbatim Report*, HN 17 C74.

⁵ G. IONESCU, E. GELLNER (eds.) *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson-Macmillan, London-New York 1969, pp. 1-5, 1.

⁶ M. CANOVAN, *Populism*, cit., pp. 3, 16.

impossible to achieve⁷. In more recent years, Paul Taggart spoke of the “essential impalpability” and “slipperiness” of the concept of populism⁸. Not all scholars view negatively the vagueness of the concept of populism. Yves Mény and Yves Surel, for example, see its ambiguity as constitutive⁹. Ernesto Laclau too sees vagueness and imprecision as “an essential component of any populist operation”. Populism, he argued, is not a type of movement identifiable with a special social base or a particular ideological orientation, but a “political logic”, that is, a system of rules of inclusion and exclusion related to the institution of political subjectivity by the bringing together a plurality of social demands that in turn work towards the construction of internal frontiers and the identification of an institutionalized Other. The language of populist discourse - whether of Left or Right — is “always going to be imprecise and fluctuating”. After all, it is so because “it tries to operate performatively within a social reality which is to a large extent heterogeneous and fluctuating”, certainly not on account of a cognitive failure¹⁰.

Once upon a time Ludwig Wittgenstein argued that a name represents an object in a proposition, although a proposition can only say *how* a thing is, not *what* it is¹¹. If there is one thing that the existing literature makes clear beyond any reasonable doubt is that it is impossible to establish unequivocally what populism as a noun stands for. To ask what populism *actually* is amounts to pose an ontological question, one about being and reality. Attempts to identify a fixed substantive referent, an essence, behind all current uses of the word ‘populism’ seem to have resulted in a series of conflicting statements about what populism *really* is. In spite of its relevance, Wittgenstein’s idea that in a large number of cases “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” does not solve the problem of the ontological status of populism¹². That is one of the main reasons why, in dealing with it, many scholars have doubted whether the concept itself could be said to mean anything at all. Yet, the notion of populism is far from being dropped. According to Canovan it is so partially because it has comparatively clear and definite meanings in a number of contexts – notably U.S. and Russian history and Latin American politics - and partially because it functions as a “pointer” with regard to a very intriguing area of social and political experience and expertise¹³. This argument is one of axioms of our study. We too, as already suggested by Canovan and others, shall rely on the notion of ‘family resemblance’ (*Familienähnlichkeit*),

⁷ P-A. TAGUIEFF, *Le populisme et la science politique. Du mirage conceptuel aux vrais problèmes*, in «Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’Histoire», Numéro special: Les populismes, LVI (1997), pp. 4-33, 4-7.

⁸ P.A. TAGGART, *Populism*, Open University Press, Buckingham 2000, p. 1.

⁹ Y. MÉNY, Y. SUREL, *The Constitutive Ambiguity of Populism*, in Y. MÉNY, Y. SUREL, *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2002, pp. 1-21

¹⁰ E. LACLAU, *On Populist Reason*, Verso, London-New York 2005, pp. 117-118.

¹¹ L. WITTGENSTEIN, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922), 3.22, 3.221, ed. C.K. Ogden, Routledge London-New York 1996, p. 49.

¹² L. WITTGENSTEIN, *Philosophische Untersuchungen/Philosophical Investigation* (1953), I, 43, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford-Malden (Mass.) 2008, p. 18.

¹³ M. CANOVAN, *Populism*, cit., p. 6.

one of paramount importance for Wittgenstein's later philosophy. So, instead of assuming that a number of diverse phenomena have definitely nothing in common justifying the use of the same word for all of them, we will be assuming that the latter can be examined in the same way in which the proceedings that we call 'games' are examined. All we can establish is internal and external relationships, namely a "complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing". These are sometimes "overall similarities", sometimes "similarities of detail"¹⁴. It is worth mentioning here that Taguieff suggested that a solution may be sought by selecting a case that functions as a recognizable prototype in order to present its basic constitutive features – for example, the case of Peronism – and subsequently search for sub-types and empirical variants which with a reasonable degree of certainty can be said to share some of the basic features originally attributed to the prototype¹⁵. It remains to be established how the latter strategy can be expedient as a way to bridge the gap between the two strategies generally employed in the study of populism which Canovan herself has identified. In an essay published in 1982 the English political theorist argued that on the one hand, a fairly large number of scholars is primarily interested in edifying a general theory of populism in order to identify the "essential characteristics" and "conditions of appearance" of populism as a phenomenon, regardless of both the historical circumstances in which this phenomenon manifests itself, and the ways in which it does so. In this respect, obviously, the very question of whether a general theory of populism is justifiable at all is posed and answered in different ways. On the other hand, an equally large number of scholars is primarily concerned with surveying in a descriptive, comparative and pluralist manner, the existing, historically determined, hence observable, types of populism¹⁶.

In current scholarly work, the 1967 London conference on the meaning of populism is mostly mentioned in connexion with the book edited by Ionescu and Gellner two years later, a book which is still widely cited. Not a few scholars take the latter to be an account for the conference proceedings. Certainly the book does not reproduce the richness of the discussion as it actually took place at the conference. In fact, while the volume provides the texts of ten authors, of whom nine participated in the conference, the latter was attended by forty-three scholars, including Isaiah Berlin, whose contribution, in the capacity of one of the seven chairmen of session, did not appear in the 1969 book. The circumstance is curious because Berlin's metaphor of the Cinderella's complex, which he presented during the conference, is cited ceaselessly. One of the first to cite it was the sociologist John B. Allcock, who participated in the conference¹⁷. We believe it is worth offering a brief account of the reasoning behind Berlin's metaphor. What is not widely known perhaps is that at the

¹⁴ L. WITTGENSTEIN, *Philosophische Untersuchungen/Philosophical Investigation*, cit., I, 66-67, pp. 27-28.

¹⁵ P-A. TAGUIEFF, *Le populisme et la science politique. Du mirage conceptuel aux vrais problèmes*, cit., p. 7.

¹⁶ M. CANOVAN, *Two Strategies for the Study of Populism*, in «Political Studies» XXX/4 (1982), pp. 544-552, 550.

¹⁷ J.B. ALLCOCK, *Populism: A Brief Biography*, in «Sociology» 5/3 (1971), pp. 371-387, 385.

conference Berlin used another metaphor - "the biting of the sour apple" – to point at the problem of the formulation of the definition into which to make the types and nuances of populism, which can be possibly described, fit. He acknowledged that that producing, or attempting to produce, a model useful to identify populism - either populism everywhere at all times and in all places, or populism in specific circumstances at particular times - was a task of paramount importance methodologically. On one side, an attempt can be made to produce an analytical model of populism irrespective of all empirical and historical determinations. On the other, on account of the problem of historical change, the need is felt to emphasise the specific nature of the development of populism in particular areas and times, namely the characteristics of specific populisms. According to Berlin most scholars would agree that a single formula to cover all populisms everywhere would not be helpful. "The more embracing the formula, the less descriptive". Viceversa, "the more richly descriptive the formula, the more it will exclude". He warned against the risk of suffering from "the Cinderella complex", namely from the assumption that "there exists a shoe – the word 'populism' – for which somewhere there must exist a foot". In fact, "there are all kinds of feet which it nearly fits, but we must not be trapped by these nearly-fitting feet". The prince is "always wandering about with the shoe", and somewhere "there awaits it a limb called pure populism". This would be its essence, all other populisms being derivations and variants of it. Possibly, "somewhere there lurks true, perfect populism". That is the idea of "Platonic populism", all the others being "dilutions of it or perversions of it". This approach would be useful to all persons who think that words have fixed meanings. One must not be tempted in the opposite direction to suppose that the word 'populism' is simply a "homonym", argued Berlin. This would in fact mean that there are movements in America, in Russia, in the Balkans and in Africa that are called populist "owing to confusions in human heads", while they have too little in common. Given that their differences are far greater than their similarities, confusion can be sown by using general descriptions. The solution in this case would be trying to fit a number of perfectly precise terms to all the different things that have little in common. Berlin was of the opinion that whenever a word is much used, even if it is an exceedingly confusing word, "something real is intended; something, not quite nothing". Eventually, "there is a sense in which one should look for the common core"¹⁸ This assumption too is of fundamental importance in the context of our investigation.

The question of the lack of clarity surrounding the concept of populism must now be addressed and possibly answered. Canovan noted that scholars have generally looked at populism from two broadly different perspectives, and that many of the contradictions in the literature that caused confusion result from the clash between "two families" of populism

¹⁸ I. BERLIN, London School of Economics Conference on Populism, May 20–21, 1967: *Verbatim Report*, HN 17 C74, § 114, 136, 139.

corresponding to “two different sorts of interest” that play a major role especially on the part of the scholars concerned with the study of populism. In the first place we find “agrarian populism”, a kind of radicalism, namely a type of movement with a particular kind of socioeconomic base - peasants or farmers - liable to arise in particular socioeconomic circumstances - modernization of one sort or another. This approach, Canovan argued, does not give rise to a unified and internally consistent image of populism because there exist too many differences among the numerous agrarian movements usually so named. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify “an extended family of rural populism”, and to argue intelligibly about their similarities and differences. The second, broad, family of populism corresponds to “a particular kind of political phenomenon where the tensions between the elite and the grass roots loom large”. In this case, the emphasis is upon certain political characteristics, and the word ‘populism’ is employed to indicate either devices of direct or participatory democracy such as referenda, or phenomena such as the mobilization of the masses, as well as the idealizations of the man in the street, and of the virtues of the common people. Even within this second broad category, that is, “political populism”, we find highly controversial differences. The very distinction between agrarian and political populism is controversial to begin with. The People’s Party in the U.S.A., for instance, can be seen both as an agrarian uprising, and as a grass-roots revolt against the elite. The second relevant source of confusion, according to Canovan, is related to the role that analysts and commentators play in identifying and labelling populist movements. When we seek to clarify the concept of populism, the object of our enquiries is not so much determined by the features of the object itself, that is, the movements concerned, but especially by the attitudes of the intellectual community that has been interpreting them. Inevitably, interpreters force their interpretations upon the findings they assume to have gathered, and in this way they construct the very object of their investigations. Interpretations of populism have therefore been influenced by the fears and hopes of the scholars who have tried to understand populism¹⁹. As Michel Foucault once put it, “there is never [...] an *interpretandum* that is not already *interpretans*”²⁰. On these grounds, it is only logical to conclude that the normative or ideological nature of some of the assumptions that are in the background of the study of populism are, or might be, a significant source of confusion.

So far we have established that another distinctive feature is that the existing body of scholarly work vehicles both negative and positive evaluations, depending on whether populism is equated either with an anti-systemic threat to the current functioning of liberal democracy, and even with certain kinds of dictatorships, or with the most effective remedies

¹⁹ M. CANOVAN, *Populism*, cit., pp. 8-11.

²⁰ M. FOUCAULT, *Nietzsche, Freud, Marx* (1964), in *Essential Works of Foucault: 1954-1984*, ed. J. Faubion, Penguin Books, London-Ney York 1998, vol. 2, pp. 269-278, 275.

against the pathologies of representative politics. It is existentially, if not politically, significant that a powerful motivation in studying populism derives from both its positive and negative normative valence, which is in turn something presupposing the complex distinction between judgments that are directly concerned with the phenomenon entailed in a concept, and judgments that are concerned with the consequences of this phenomenon. Tim Houwen spoke of populism as a ‘motivating concept’²¹. Within the range of the ongoing controversies on conceptualization and classification, either in relation to democracy²², or to fascism, as exemplified in one of his studies by Paolo Armellini²³, populism continues to be examined and valued either for itself, or because it has valued consequences. Paul Taggart saw populism as the most effective remedies against the pathologies of representative politics²⁴. Jan-Werner Müller viewed it as “a permanent shadow of modern representative democracy”, and “a constant peril”. He argued that a proper grasp of populism helps deepen our understanding of democracy today²⁵. Along this line some links can be found, or established, between populism and the Anti-political, which is the label that Geoff Mulgan employed to indicate the major paradigm shift which has made the industrial logic that sustained ‘the age of politics’ archaic and obsolete. It is a shift whereby transaction took precedence over production, economic organization moved towards more fragmented and flexible configurations, the physical aggregation of people in cities and productive units were replaced by small-scale forms, and information and finance became driving forces flowing through every pore of society²⁶. Matteo Truffelli too agrees that some ties between populism and the Anti-political do exist, yet he warned against any incautious synonymical employment of such terms that, due to their undeterminedness, may easily be turned into misleading conceptual devices²⁷. How are we to solve the problem of confusion surrounding the concept of populism?

In an essay published in 1956, Walter Bryce Gallie distinguished conceptual confusion from conceptual contestation. In the first case, confusion partially derives from the repeatedly inconsistent usage of a concept, that is, the inability to specify the relationship between words and meanings, partially from the failure to grasp the definitions employed by other scholars.

²¹ T. HOUWEN, *The Non-European Roots of the Concept of Populism*, Sussex European Institute, Working Paper 120, University of Sussex, Brighton 2011, p. 12.

²² L. SCUCCIMARRA, *Democrazia e populismo. Un itinerario storico-concettuale*, cit., pp. 269-287. Scuccimarra relies on the work of Reinhart Koselleck in emphasising the constitutive polyvocality of the basic concepts of politics. See R. KOSELLECK, *Begriffsgeschichte und Sozialgeschichte*, in Id. *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1979, pp. 107-129.

²³ P. ARMELLINI, *Populismo e fascismo: un confronto tra categorie politiche affini e diverse*, in R. Chiarelli (a cura di), *Il populismo tra storia, politica e diritto*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2015, pp. 161-176

²⁴ P.A. TAGGART, *Populism and the Pathology of Representative Politics*, in Y. MÉNY, Y. SUREL (eds.), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, cit., pp. 62-80.

²⁵ J-W. MÜLLER, *What is Populism?* University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia (Penn) 2016, p. 11.

²⁶ G.J. MULGAN, *Politics in an Antipolitical Age*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1994, pp. 1-6.

²⁷ M. TRUFFELLI, *L'ombra della politica. Saggio sulla storia del pensiero antipolitico*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2008, pp. 20-31.

In the case of conceptual contestation, the strong normative valence associated with some concepts motivates users to prefer a particular meaning, whereas others contend that alternative meanings are the best or simply correct²⁸. We may feel tempted to conclude that populism is both conceptually confused and a contested concept. After all, its meaning has been debated for at least fifty years. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the confusing character of the concept of populism is in itself a contested issue. To the extent that it is actually so, populism can be seen as a confused concept only within the epistemological paradigm of classical descriptivism. Laclau, for example, maintained that in descriptivism the operations that naming performs are limited “by the straitjacket within which they take place”. The descriptive features inhabiting any name “reduce the order of the signifier to the transparent medium through which a purely conceptual overlapping between name and thing - the concept being their common nature - expresses itself”. The semantically libertarian drive of the Post-Structuralists, and in Laclau’s perspective Lacanian psychoanalysis, have marked “the beginning of an autonomization of the signifier”. The parting of the ways between naming and description, naming and conceptual determination has not necessarily led to any increase in the complexity of the operations that naming itself can perform, Laclau added. In the anti-descriptive perspective “the identity and unity of the object result from the very operation of naming”. This, however, is possible only if naming is not subordinated either to description or to a preceding designation. In order to perform this role, “the signifier has to become, not only contingent, but empty as well”. Hence, Laclau maintains, “the identity and unity of an object result from the very operation of naming it”²⁹. This position reflects some of the major instances discussed in French philosophy throughout the 1960s and beyond. Foucault insisted on that “interpretation has at last become an infinite task”, and as such “it will disappear as interpretation, perhaps involving the disappearance of the interpreter himself”. This, in his view, did not mean that interpretation would be deprived of its primacy for the idea that “interpretation precedes the sign” just implied that “the sign is not a simple and benevolent being”. Signs are “interpretations that try to justify themselves”³⁰. For his part Jacques Derrida had announced the historical closure of the epoch of the sign. He argued that “the thematics of the sign have been for a century the agonized labor of a tradition that professed to withdraw meaning, truth, presence, being etc., from the movement of signification”³¹. By contrast, according to Herbert Paul Grice, in speaking a language we attempt to communicate things to our hearers by means of getting them to recognize our intention to communicate just those things. The meaning is conveying the intention to

²⁸ W.B. GALLIE, *Essentially Contested Concepts*, «Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society» 56 (1956), pp. 167-198.

²⁹ E. LACLAU, *On Populist Reason*, Verso, London-New York 2005, pp. 104-105

³⁰ M. FOUCAULT, *Nietzsche, Freud, Marx*, cit., pp. 274, 277.

³¹ J. DERRIDA, *Of Grammatology* (1967), trans. G. Chakravorty Spivak, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore (Md) 2016, pp. 14-15.

produce particular effects³². John R. Searle argued that this account of meaning “does not show the connection between one’s meaning something by what one says and what that which one says actually means in the language”. According to Searle «one’s meaning something when one says something is more than just contingently related to what the sentence means in the language one is speaking». Meaning is connected to the relationship between intentionality and the conventional aspects of language³³.

In our study, as already pointed out, we shall follow Canovan’s recommendation to use the concept of populism, within certain limit of fluctuation concerning the meanings extrapolated by its usage, as a pointer. We need now to make a reference to another important source of inspiration. How have we analysed the normative or ideological content of the politically relevant and sensitive messages embodied in Scandinavian national-populism? We have relied on instances that are to be found in the work of Max Weber. In his 1904 essay on objectivity in social science and social policy (*Die «Objektivität» sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis*), in line with a long-standing tradition in Western philosophy, Max Weber attacked the mixture of ethical evolutionism and historical relativism, popular at the time in the social sciences, in the light of which it was assumed that what was normatively right was identical with “the immutably existent”, and, within the latter, with “the inevitably emergent”. Weber noted that in their modern configuration the sciences treating institutions, processes, and events pertaining to human culture arose in connexion with practical considerations, in particular the attainment of value-judgments concerning measures of State economic policy. The German sociologist lamented that the modification of this paradigm still required the establishment of a firm distinction between knowledge of what is (*das Seiende*) and knowledge of what ought to be (*das Seinsollende*). The inspiration that has guided our research may be called Weberian in the sense that it presupposes that historical-political investigation extends beyond technical skills, to encompass knowledge for its own sake, provided that the process of intellectualization or rationalization of which all specialized sciences is an important segment, does not necessarily produce increased general knowledge about our conditions of existence. As Weber pointed out, nowadays no one believes that science can teach us anything about the meaning of the world, or, if anything, it tends to eradicate the belief that there is such a meaning. Our inspiration is Weberian also in the sense that it accepts the idea that every type of scientific inquiry must presuppose that its findings are of interest. The social sciences presuppose value-judgments that guide the selection of topics for study. In this perspective tacit presuppositions must be replaced with self-conscious value analysis

³² H.P. GRICE, *Meaning*, in «The Philosophical Review», 66/3 (1957), pp. 377-388

³³ J.R. SEARLE, *What is a Speech Act?* in M. BLACK (ed.), *Philosophy in America*, Allen and Unwin, London 1965, pp. 221-239

(*Wertanalyse*). It is part of the moral duty to foster clarity and responsibility³⁴. Eventually, in his 1906 *Critical Studies in the Logic of the Cultural Sciences* (*Kritische Studien auf dem Gebiet der kulturwissenschaftlichen Logik*), Weber argued that subjective judgments regularly influence our decisions in the selection and delimitation of research problems, namely they play a decisive role in determining what is worth knowing as an object of research, and why. Max Weber, who strenuously opposed the practice of deriving 'scientific' prescriptions from the empirically given, stressed the importance of transforming our vague understanding of socio-political notions, including the most confused and the most contested, in so far as affected by personal commitments, into explicit judgments of value relatedness. Value interpretation (*wertbeziehende Interpretation*) or value analysis (*Wertanalyse*) can help clarifying the grounds of our interest in certain objects if we separate those grounds from the causal analysis of these phenomena³⁵.

Is populism an unstoppable trend? Is it the political actualization of the *Zeitgeist*? There have been many references in scholarly work to the phases of populism in a variety of socio-political contexts. A large number of references, Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser recalled, are concerned with Latin American politics, within which several waves of populism have been identified. Many others are concerned with European countries, where new populist parties and movements gained ever more influential positions in political action and debate. As a phenomenon, populism has been called sometimes a 'wave', and sometimes a 'contagious' trend³⁶. In public discourse it has been repeatedly suggested we had better defend democracy from the threat of populists in opposition and in government alike. Indeed, in recent decades we have seen a remarkable increase in the number of populist parties and movements especially in Europe, although their electoral successes have been sporadic. Nevertheless, in Scandinavian countries the presence of such parties and movements has become steady and their once shocking rhetoric and policies have become almost mainstream by now³⁷. It is thus the case that while populism fares well in some countries, it is unable to gain influence in others³⁸. The ability of populist political parties in Scandinavia to gain electoral success, hence to stabilise is an element suggesting that populism in Scandinavia may either be the result of a peculiar type of diversification within the very broadly conceived populist political stream, or one of unexpected outcomes of the so-called Scandinavian model of politics to be regarded after all as a somewhat fertile ground for

³⁴ M. WEBER, "Objectivity" in *Social Science and Social Policy*, in *Max Weber on The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. E.A. Shils, H.A. Finch, Free Press, New York 1949, pp. 49-112, 80-81, 86-87, 92-95, 103-104.

³⁵ Ivi, pp. 113-188.

³⁶ C. MUDDE, C. ROVIRA KALTWASSER, *Populism: Corrective and Threat to Democracy*, in Id., *Populism in Europe and the Americas*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012, pp. 205-222, 218.

³⁷ C. MUDDE, *The Populist Zeitgeist*, «Government and Opposition», 39/4 (2004), pp. 541-563, 550.

³⁸ In arguing that despite the increasing socio-economic homogeneity among the European nations, the fortunes of populist radical right parties differ significantly country by country, Mudde meant to react to the idea that deepfelt and widely shared socio-economic discontent within a democratic system will surely lead to populism. See C. MUDDE, *Who's Afraid of the European Radical Right?*, «Dissent», fall 2011, pp. 6-11, 9

populists of different kinds. The diversity among the parties and movements we nowadays tend to place within this popular catchall category is notable, yet not necessarily increasing over time. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser believe that studying different types, or sub-families of populism, as well as comparing specific cases with each other, are feasible activities. The main types, or sub-families they identify are populism of the so-called inclusionary type as far as Latin America is concerned, and of the so-called exclusionary type as far as Europe is concerned³⁹. We shall be investigating how the Scandinavian cases fit within these types, and therefore, either sustain, or challenge, their overarching typology. Thus, in investigating the ideological roots of the Scandinavian national-populist parties, we also wish to show the extent to which, and on which account, local nationalist-populist parties fall within the category of exclusionary populism, and to what extent the distinction between inclusionary and exclusionary populism is a useful tool in the attempt to understanding the ideological roots of such parties and movements. We will attempt to show that it is not only feasible, but also clarifying and conceptually useful, to identify, and consistently use, several, distinct categories of populism. Although, we will also show that a typology that is defined by two overarching families of populism - whether it allows for further sub-families or not - fails to capture the full range of phenomena referred to as populist politics in Scandinavia. By first identifying some of the historical cases in which evident traces of populism are detectable, we shall see that the split nature of populism itself is not a result of a process of diversification, but rather a case of different phenomena that, from the very outset, happened to share a few common features. The contribution that this study aims to offer is two-fold: placing Scandinavian populism in a wider context, thereby addressing the issue of the uniqueness of Scandinavian political culture; problematising the rather common assumption that the variance among populist phenomena has increased exponentially over time.

Part I: The many faces of populism

When we examine the galaxy of political parties and movements, we may realize that not all protest parties, that is, parties or movements that rely on popular engagement in politics, regardless of the degree of emancipatory force they embody, are radical right parties precisely in the same sense in which not all radical right parties or movements possess a protest-charge. However, the distinction between the many names given to related phenomena such as 'protest party', 'anti-democratic movements', 'right-wing populist parties' and 'radical right parties' is, to say the least, blurred. What is certain is the negative connotation which most of these names bear. This is the reason why parties and movements

³⁹ C. MUDDE, C. ROVIRA KALTWASSER, *Populism: Corrective and Threat to Democracy*, cit., pp. 221-222.

themselves are generally reluctant to use these terms while engaging in self-descriptive practices, with the exception, perhaps, of 'protest parties'. Furthermore, many parties or movements have, either in the press or by scholars, been assigned to several of these categories. It is symptomatic that in Scandinavian countries the tendency to make use of all these different terms is considerably strong. We see that parties call themselves *Folkeparti* (Party of the People, or People's Party), *Sverigedemokraterna* (Sweden Democrats), and, like the cases just mentioned imply, they are called 'right-wing populist parties', or 'radical right parties', by scholars as well as by journalists and media commentators. Rather than a lack of definitions or of failing definitions, the problem seems to be rooted in how scholars and analysts of different kinds tend to take one or several specific cases as their starting point for a definition. This strategy is legitimate, but it introduces complications whenever an attempt is made to amplify its heuristic validity. Efforts made at granting a clear and overarching definition of populism have, contrastingly, but not surprisingly, led, as we have emphasised already, either to malleable definitions that take shape after the subject they try to capture, or to definitions so vague that further division into sub-categories seems to be inevitable. The circumstance points at two factors at least in contemporary democratic politics that are of importance to understanding the diversity of populist parties and movements: core, populist traits appear to be shared among different parties and organisations throughout the world, especially in democratic countries; definitions of populism are occasionally so far-reaching that it is difficult to tell them apart from mainstream political parties.⁴⁰ While these widespread phenomena take different forms under different circumstances, they are generally critical of elitism and liberal-democratic pluralism. In fact, the wish is to either limit liberal-democracy, to implement different, more participatory, variants of democracy, or to exchange the democratic political elite for another.

Firstly, we shall look at some of the historical manifestations of populism to determine the elements of continuity and discontinuity with current manifestations of populism in different parts of the world. Then we shall present the specific cases chosen for this study, in order to see if, and to what extent, these movements resemble previously historically determined cases of populism. Finally, the question of whether a so-called 'Scandinavian populism' exists, or has existed, will be addressed through the the analysis of several parametres. The following specific key-questions shall be addressed: are there distinctive facts that set today's populist movements in Scandinavia apart from populist and nationalist ideas and programmes of the past? What are the ties relating the different populist

⁴⁰ On example of such a broad definition of populism has been advanced by Ivan Cerovac. More specifically, he juxtaposed a system where the role of experts in a decision-making process is emphasized (elitism) and a system where "a capable and considered population" should have equal access to all aspects of the decisionmaking process (populism). See I. CEROVAC, *Egalitarian Democracy between Elitism and Populism*, in «Journal of Education, Culture and Society», 2 (2014), pp. 31-42.

movements in Scandinavia to each other? Are there any compelling indicators that may convince us that Scandinavian populism is somewhat different from its counterparts elsewhere? Finally, based on a number of findings, we shall evaluate the claim that a distinct, Scandinavian form of populism exists.

Ancestry of National-populism

It is popular fancy that the current populist movements and parties in Europe have no equals in history, that is, they are mostly disconnected from history, from a shared ideological background, and they only exist because of current economic, political and/or social crises that are local, or regional, in scope and nature. In other words, the portrayal of the different populist phenomena shows that besides developing independently from one another, they are also detached from political phenomena that occurred in the past. Certainly, one part of the assumption we are examining derives from the rhetoric employed by the leaders of the movements or parties themselves, who, with very few exceptions⁴¹, are keen on keeping the rigidity of the dividing line separating their own ideas and policies, and the ideas and policies of the national-socialist and fascist parties. Downplaying the emphasis on the possible connections with such movements of the past elsewhere also seems to encourage the projection of the following ideas onto the image, and self-image, of the party leadership: innovation of mind; stamina; uniqueness. In addition, by not clearly referring to the connections between similar parties in different countries, the party leadership can more easily appeal to the protectionist-nationalist segments of the electorate, which are quintessentially against any contamination of ideas. It is, however, not only the parties themselves profiting from the 'hush-hush approach' to party genealogy and external sources of inspiration. It is convenient to both the political adversaries and to tendentially sceptical political commentators and analysts to stick with this tendency⁴². In the case of historical references, this is maybe more penetrable than in the case of references to other national contexts. By drawing parallels between either the ideologies, or the methods, of contemporary populist parties on the one hand, and those of fascist or revolutionary

⁴¹ Tatjana Festerling, co-founder of the PAGIDA in Germany, is a case in point. In an interview, she claimed that Germans are "more afraid of being called racists or nazi than they are of their children being abducted, thrown down the stairs or under a metro-train". She believes that "the West has long since been lost, it is also morally so depleted". "We have nothing left that we want to defend. There is only this collective, suicidal madness. The people hang onto illusions and do not care at all about the future, not even the future of their children". The interview has been posted on Gates of Vienna, an anti-islamization website. See T. FESTERLING, "There is no will to defend; there is only this collective suicidal madness", in Gates of Vienna: viewed at <https://gatesofvienna.net/2017/09/tatjana-festerling-there-is-no-will-to-defend-there-is-only-this-collective-suicidal-madness/> (last accessed 30/05/2018).

⁴² Especially in Denmark, and despite a generally harsh tone in the national political debate there, the critics of *Dansk Folkeparti* (Danish People's Party) have, more often than not, lost legal disputes regarding the use of references to what they found to be international or historical parallelisms.

movements on the other, journalists and politicians expose themselves to excessive risk, as they can expect an indignant reaction from the parties in question, and even face legal, and more generally political, repercussions. Moreover, by identifying how they fit within a wider tendency, critics using this type of examples to point out what they perceive as dangers in the ideology or political methods of these parties and movements, may end up lending them legitimacy through parallelism and an idea that stimulate a sense primordial belonging. Finally, the electorate itself will be reluctant to admit that the ideas and core-values they share, wholesale or in part, may be reminiscent of such ideologies as socialism, fascism, and national-socialism. This reluctance results in a lack of positive response and accusations of exaggeration on the part of public opinion when direct or indirect criticism is voiced in public debates. Some historical comparisons can be made between the crisis in which the ideological flame of fascism was kindled during the 1930s, and the critical situation in which the new populist parties have enjoyed, and are enjoying, wide support. In both periods, the economic crisis seemed as profound as to call for extreme measures, and in both periods, the so-called 'established' political parties seemed apathetic, turned away from the problems that part of the population deemed in the need of a solution, and stubbornly continued along the line of compromise and consensus-seeking. We shall now take a step back and try to determine what the past has meant to our current perception of nationalism and populism in general, and national-populism in particular. Why do these terms have a negative connotation? Did they always have such negative connotation? How do contemporary Scandinavian national-populism fit with the historical populist and nationalist thoughts and ideals? Are they simply a combination of the two, and, if so, how do the latter fit together in the context of the life of contemporary parties and movements? If not, then has there been some continuation of the two earlier political ideals within contemporary national-populist parties and movements? We must thus, first of all, attempt to identify the doctrinal roots of both populism and nationalism.

Populism

Populism, as it has been repeatedly said, is an elusive concept, or, at least, it has become an elusive concept. It has taken different shapes from the very outset, covering emancipatory movements belonging to diverse political orientations at the extremes of the political spectre. Indeed, the concept of populism has been used to characterise a plethora of instances from the Russian *Narodniki* to fascism⁴³, from the American Agrarian movement

⁴³ As far as Fascism in Italy is concerned, Armellini emphasised, in a manner which is typical of the investigations that are part of the vast field of the critique of ideology, how deep the gap has been between populism and

and to present-day anti-establishment movements in various parts of Europe⁴⁴. It is thus not a simple task to determine what is meant by populism in the national and international political and theoretical discourses today. We may become the wiser, by looking at what populism used to mean and then identify how the current understanding compares to the historical one. Most authors concerned with the concept of populism trace its roots to the French Radical tradition of thought.

French Radicalism

During the French Revolution, it became accepted by the part of the population that had gained the upper-hand, that the people was the only legitimate source of political power. The contrast with the ideas of the Ancien Régime could hardly have been stronger. Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès expressed this view in *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-État?* (1798) in the following way:

subtract the privileged order and the Nation would not be something less, but something more. What then is the Third Estate? Everything; but an everything that is fettered and oppressed. What would it be without the privileged order? Everything; but an everything that would be free and flourishing⁴⁵.

The people could thus not only govern themselves, but govern themselves better than the political elite. This was the real revolution in thought; that even the humble classes had the capacity, with proper guidance and institutional infrastructure, to be their own masters. Many of the intellectual movements in Europe took the French example to heart, and tried to pressure their own authorities to embrace some, similar, kind of radical form of constitutionalism⁴⁶. The French radicals were populist because of their idea that the people had a collective will, and that, in one way or the other, it was possible to distill the people's will and place it at the helm of government. Of course, there were differing opinions as to which role popular consultation should play in the new society, but there was wide-spread agreement that efforts should be made, not necessarily to listen to the people, but to

Fascism. See P. ARMELLINI, *Populismo e fascismo: un confront tra categorie politiche affini e diverse*, cit., pp. 170-176.

⁴⁴ On the topic see G. HERMET, *Les populismes dans le monde. Une histoire sociologique, XIXe – XXe siècle*, Paris, Fayard 2001

⁴⁵ The passage is cited in U. ÖZKIRIMLI, *Theories of Nationalism. A Critical Introduction* (2000), Palgrave-Macmillan, Basingstoke 2010, p. 16.

⁴⁶ See also J. ISRAEL, *A Revolution of the Mind. Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton (NJ)-Oxford 2010, pp. 37-91.

implement the people's wishes. Two premises must be made about the understanding the radicals had of 'the French people'. The first premise is that the radicals conceived of 'the people' as a united and uniform, essence-like unit, and certainly not as a collection of individuals. That is not to say that they disregarded individual freedoms, but merely that, when determining socially and politically relevant questions, they would seek to think of the 'ideal French citizen', rather than try to distinguish diverging opinions or interests. Therefore, the majority became the imagined whole constituting 'the French people'. The second premise is that they thought that it was possible for the political leaders to identify this 'extended' popular will and to implement the necessary policies and instate the necessary institutions to turn the people's will into reality. This was a radical age, alive with humanistic, and populist ideals⁴⁷.

Russian Pre-Revolution Populism

The developments concerning the Russian populist movement are particularly relevant, because many of the traits that distinguish families of populist movements in the twenty-first century were already present in this movement. The movement was born out of concerns very similar to those harboured by many of the supporters of the so-called 'new populist parties': the weakening of the state in favour of new economic powers, and economic crises, in combination with wider societal modernizing changes. The reasons for supporting the populist movement then, or the new populist parties today, only in part, and indirectly, describe the actual ideological aspirations of thinkers and leaders within the movements. During the first half of the nineteenth century, in Russia, there were ongoing discussions in liberal intellectual circles, about the special position of Russia in the history of the world. In Orlando Figes' view, they welcomed the recent emancipation of the serfs as 'a national reawakening', and threw themselves into the support of the resulting new rural class by building rural schools and hospitals. Figes, along with several other scholars, see the populist movement (*Narodnichestvo*) foremost as a pre-cursor to the October revolution⁴⁸. The populists (*narodniki*), although by no means uniform in their methods of political action, shared a common and distinctive epistemology and ideology of progressive and emancipatory self-development. Among the early *Narodnichestvo* groups, a particularly

⁴⁷ S. SCHAMA, *Citizens. A Chronicle of the French Revolution*, Penguin Books, London-New York 1989, pp. 123-247, 333-368

⁴⁸ Figes suggests that it was these groups of intellectuals who would eventually spur the Revolution. Their ideas of a more just future for Russia, many suggest, were a consequence of their identification of the rural way of life as the evidence of true virtue. See O. FIGES, *Revolutionary Russia: 1891-1991. A History*, Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company; New York 2014, pp. 7-38.

developed, tendentially Rousseauesque, understanding of the virtues of the simple, rural, population of Russia existed, although with a twist. As we shall see, it were their ideas of Russian particularism, and of the importance of bookish instruction of the masses, which set them apart from the French Revolutionaries. One could argue that they were nationalist, but without support for the national, centralised state. More than a decade later, some factions of the movement were to manifest this particularist idea through expressed patriotism, but that was not the case among the early *narodniki*. It has been argued, by persons such as Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Nikolay Mikhaylovsky, that Russia might be an exception to the Marxist idea that industrial revolution, by then well underway in England and at its beginning elsewhere, was a necessary step in the economic development of modern society. Although they assumed that either a social or an industrial revolution was necessary in most other cases, they insisted that Russia had a unique position in history, but not, as one might expect from such a claim, because of a high level of economic, social, or political development but precisely because of its economic and social backwardness. After many years of strict Tsarist control of the economy and societal structures, especially through the policy of keeping the manufacturing class under control and operating under restrictions, and because of the long duration of bound serfdom of the majority of Russia's population, the claim was advanced that the road of industrialisation was much longer in Russia than elsewhere⁴⁹. In addition, the fact that the vast Russian rural areas were, economically, still organised by, and divided into, village-based communes, spurred these liberal thinkers to believe that the Russian population was somewhat in a privileged position to learn from the mistakes made abroad and, thereby, to avoid suffering the consequences of such mistakes. In other words, they believed that, if only the Tsar could be convinced to transfer most of his powers to a democratically elected council, Russia would be able to pass directly from an oppressive, and feudal, system to a democratic and egalitarian one, without having to pass through the miseries of urban overpopulation. This nostalgic and egalitarian ideas seem, at a first glance, to be compatible with the French progressive and humanistic ideals. However, the favour shown to the simplicity of rural life by those supporting the early populist movement in Russia was more extensive than that experienced among the French humanists. Yet, the Russian populists did not share Rousseau's mistrust of education and study with regard to those allegedly unsuited for it⁵⁰. On the contrary, they believed that e civic education would be a benefit to all members of the lower classes: serfs, farmhands, and small land owners.

⁴⁹ A process of emancipation of serfs in Russia started only in 1861, after the publication of the Proclamation of Statues on the Abolition of Serfdom on 5 May. This process was concluded slightly prematurely in 1907. See D. MOON, *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia: 1762- 1907* (2001), Routledge, London-New York 2014, pp. 84-109.

⁵⁰ On learning from experience versus bookish study, see J-J. ROUSSEAU, *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts*, in Id. *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Two Discourses and The Social Contract*, ed. J.T. Scott, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago-London 2012, pp. 1-36; Id. *Émile or Treatise on Education*, trans. W.H. Payne, D. Appleton, New York-London 1918, pp. 130-190.

The populists were organised in groups, not surprisingly mostly urban groups. The groups that orbited around figures such as Tchaikovsky and Mikhailovsky, called themselves populists because of their belief that the role of intellectuals and revolutionaries within the movement should be very restricted, and exclusively facilitative to letting the real, spontaneous will and intelligence of the population come to its fruition. Mikhailovsky, one of the main characters among the realy populists, and one of the few who continued to believe in the value of the emancipation of the individual, refused to believe that the division of labour constituted progress. Yet he maintained that progress consisted in evolution from the simple, or homogenous, towards the complex, or heterogeneous. In the view of Mikhailovsky, the central mover of history was not class struggle, but rather “the universal struggle for the fullness of human personality”.⁵¹ The Tchaikovsky circle, to which Mikhailovsky belonged, and of which he had been a co-founder together with Tchaikovsky and Mark Natanson, in turn the founder of the *Partiia Narodnogo Prava* (People’s Rights Party)⁵², inspired sister-circles in several other cities, such as Kiev and Odessa. The focus of the circles was, at the out-set, the setting up of a solidarity system in which each member was expected to help other members in need and could expect the same help him/herself in difficult times. Each of the circles had its own, illegal library from which members could (and were expected to) borrow reading materials. In the view of the founder of the circle, self-perfection, or improvement of the self, and development of personality were the final objectives and this could happen, in their opinion, only through the accumulation of knowledge. Their goal was thus not economic emancipation, but intellectual emancipation, that is, not the emancipation of the lower social classes, but the emancipation of the individual⁵³. They were, as such, to be the beacon of the supposed ‘authentic Russian peasantry’ rather than acting on their own on what they believed to be the will of the people. The difference might not yet be evident but let us focus on a specific comparison which may shed some light on this. Where populism (*Narodnichestvo*) started with the same concern for the oppressed and struggling rural workers as the French radicals had for the starving French rural population, their ideal of emancipation was built on instruction of basic literacy- and economic skills, next to the political propaganda needed. Where the French republican ideas relied on a natural

⁵¹ J.H. BILLINGTON, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism*, Clarendon Press: Oxford 1958, pp. 34-35, 40.

⁵² M. HILDERMEIER, *The Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party before the First World War*, St. Martin’s Press, New York 2000, p. 382.

⁵³ The authors mostly selected for these illegal libraries included Proudhon, Blanc, Lamennais, Lange, Lasalle, Marx, Comte, Mill, Spencer, Chernyshevsky, and Lavrov. The circle regarded Louis Blanc as ‘the father of modern socialism’. Author of the formula ‘from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs’, Blanc preached a socialism that appealed to sentiments of justice and brotherhood. Even more permeating than the influence of Blanc, however, was that of Proudhon, who was admired for his moral passion and his belief in the mystic force of ‘the people’ as bearer of the new ‘social order’. The populists were not on a large-scale Marxist, although it was populist writers such as Mikhailovsky who made the thoughts of Mill, Spencer, Marx, and, above all, Proudhon available in the Russian language. See J.H. BILLINGTON, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism*, cit., pp. 64-65.

inclination among men towards democratic participation, the Russian populist view regarded democratic developments as long-term goals. The priority for them was neither conflict, nor revolution. Only after a successful civil education programme, designed to broaden the knowledge of the rural and urban workers, would populism turn to major political reform, or revolution if you will. Populism, as Billinton noticed, was begun by Aleksandr Herzen, whose vision of the originally medieval, peasant organisation into *mir*, the self-governing assemblies of free landowners that distributed farmland in an equitable way, and where everyone could be heard, would be the perfect organising principle in a reborn, equal, and just Russia⁵⁴. These romantic ideas about a harmonious, self-governing existence were adopted and adapted by several populist authors, such as Gregory Eliseev, who believed that the *obshchina*, which can be understood to mean a commune, would be the more appropriate organising body. He claimed that in the *obshchina*, a 'brotherhood' could be found, which was unequal to any seen in Western Society "despite the equality there of equal rights". Eliseev also emphasized that it was by no special merit of the Russian rural population or religion, but by the "natural profusion of types and the preserved family character of the village commune – a commune not corrupted by bureaucratic transformations and enforced changes". He pointed out that the spontaneous collaborative and mutually respectful organisation of the village commune had also existed elsewhere "until bureaucracy interfered in the internal life of the commune and violated the moral element in it". The scope and the social purpose of the populist project was thus set to re-create the natural and balanced organisation of life, whether into *mir* or *obshchina* as it had been in the village before the process of state centralisation began⁵⁵.

The early populists also saw their own agency as very limited. They were waiting for the suppressed, with the exclusive stimulation of instruction, to 'wake up and smell the coffee' and act on their own accord, which unfortunately did not happen. In fact, the most important contribution to the history of political movements was the so-called 'movement to the people' (*khozhenie v narod*), which reached its peak in 1874. This was the actual, spontaneous, and disorganised movement of more than three-thousand intellectuals and students, who left the cities, and in many cases their studies, to venture into all corners of the vast territories of European Russia. They were responding to Bakunin's call, and their scope - as it was said in the 1873 manifesto published in Lavrov's Paris-based journal *Vpered!* - was "to develop our *obshchina* in the sense of the communal working of the land and the communal use of its products, to make of the *mir* the basic political unit of the Russian social order". Their method was to work the land together with the peasants during the day, and at night, teach

⁵⁴ The *mir* were places in which each member of the community could be heard and in which it would be decided on the equitable distribution of farmland and resources among those living within its territory.

⁵⁵ See J.H. BILLINGTON, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism*, cit., pp. 47-48.

and study together with the same peasants. For them, emancipation had long prospects and would certainly not see them, the intellectuals whose duty it was to kindle the flame within the rural population until the time was ripe for the people to take control, as frontfigures. Their main demands included cheaper credit and popular education. Regrettably, the response of the peasants was not to be as heartily felt as the populists had hoped, and in several cases, their presence was denounced to the authorities by some of the very people they wished to help. In spite of the non-political message and non-violent methods, the authorities treated the movement as they might have a budding revolution. The movement was perceived as a clear threat to the Tsarist regime and status-quo. For this reason, the Tsarist supporters and forces clamped down hard on the movement which, as a result, was decimated within a few months. Although the movement continued for a few years in the more resilient enclaves, it practically disappeared as a large-scale movement, and due to the disenchantment with the reaction of the population whom they were trying to help, the Russian populist thinkers moved onto considering more violent alternatives⁵⁶.

Many strands would develop within Russian populism, some unrecognisable as part of the same moment as the first populists. In addition to this division, or rather as a significant contributing factor to the division, the views of the social intellectuals in Russia were -more often than not- influenced by events abroad. A significant split within the populist movement resulted. At first between the Slavophil and the westernizers⁵⁷. However, as nihilists took over leadership of the radical wing, with accompanying requirements of loyalty and discipline, the more moderate 'westernizers' became more and more estranged from the existing movement. They felt room was needed for subjectivity and the valuation of each individual. Later, another noteworthy division of the movement took place between those who believed in a moderate, and exclusively social and economic oriented political programme on the one hand, and those who believed that violent revolution was both inevitable and would awaken the vast population in favour of swift political reform, as it happened in the French revolution. The ideals of these factions remained a dream, as they would be dissolved and/or integrated in the ideology of yet other political groupings before Russia was to see the important political changes they were hoping for⁵⁸.

After the apparent failure of the French revolutionaries to establish a better society, free of the 'tyranny of the masses, the revolutionary wing of the movement (*Zemlya I Volya*) lost momentum. The disillusioning unwillingness of the new Tsar, Alexander II, to introduce

⁵⁶ Ivi, pp. 79-81.

⁵⁷ We may, for example, count Constantine Aksarov and Yury Samarin among the Slavophil, whereas figures such as Vissarion Belinsky and Michael Bakunin should be considered Westernizers.

⁵⁸ For further details about the development of each of the main factions of the Russian populist movement, see the doctoral thesis by G.J. GAMBLIN, *Russian Populism and its Relations with Anarchism 1870-1881*, University of Birmingham, December 1999: viewed at <http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/1401/1/PhD1999Gamblin.pdf> (last accessed 30/05/2018).

economic and social reforms, as well as his severe treatment of the revolutionaries captured by the authorities, contributed to the disheartenment. The so-called '1860 Generation' of Russian populists that followed were dedicated to two main, moderate ideas. The first was that the people was simply in need of instruction and once it would have received such instruction would organize itself and put pressure on the authorities to draft a constitution. The other main idea was that the Russian people possessed a reasonableness and simplicity in its economic organisation which was unique in the modern world, although only unique in its resistance to change. This dedication is what makes these populists stand out from the populist and nationalistic movements in Europe today. They thought their country had an advantage over others, not due to national virtue, skill, history, or military or economic power, but because it was underdeveloped. They did not regard this underdevelopment as a positive factor, but simply as a circumstance which should be exploited in order to explore viable alternatives to society organised around industrial production. It was a return to the initial ideas of *narodnichestvo*.

Even after the demise of the populist movement in Russia, individual fragments of its main ideas were presented in the political program of, for example, the Union of the Russian People (*Soiuz Russkogo Naroda*), founded in 1905. The element that lived on in this, in the eyes of the establishment, more acceptable movement, was the claim it represented the people, although the leadership of the movement consisted of individuals from the higher strata of society. In this movement, we can recognise many of the features of nationalism that we will be studying below: the popular movement in defense of the fatherland and autocracy, although it was also in favour of the Tsar and the Church. They requested popular representation in government councils and recognition of the grievances of the peasants and workers. While its deputies sat on the Duma - in the third Duma, there were about fifty deputies of the extreme Right, more than ten percent of the total - they worked hard to discredit it and to keep it from doing any useful work. This party had picked features from the previous populist movement (i.e. the romanisation of the *mir* and the simple, rural life promoted by an elite). Only, this time around, it was not an intellectual elite, but the landowners who promoted the 'old, spontaneous ways'. It had also adopted the anti-Semitism which was, according to F.L. Carsten, probably promoted by the government. In this sense, the party's violence was almost in the norm, and so was its ideological stance. In 1909, the party split. It continued in a moderate form, more closely connected to the Conservatives, and in a smaller, more radical group, with moderate success in areas where national and religious differences and conflicts played into its hands⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ F.L. CARSTEN, *The Rise of Fascism*, Methuen & Co., London 1967, p. 43.

As ideology in Russia, in the 1870s, populism implied several political programs, diverging more in terms of method than scope. The question is whether or not it already showed the volatility that so characterises the term 'populist' today. Let us compare it to Breuille's idea that whenever the branched-out nationalist ideology is adopted by political movements, it must necessarily start to compact and solidify. The Russian populist movement either falls outside this pattern, or is not to be considered a full-fledged, or mature, ideology. If Breuille is right, as far as nationalism is concerned, then our observations about the Russian populist movement must mean that a qualitative difference existed between the nationalist doctrine on the one hand, and the populist doctrine, as interpreted in the Russian context, on the other. In what does this qualitative difference consist? We thus conclude that the Russian *narodniki*, who initially almost exclusively belonged to the urban, well-educated, middle-class youth, tried to gain the support of all classes of society for their programme of - by order of importance in their eyes - social, economic, and political emancipation of the less fortunate. Furthermore, when they spoke of the virtues of the rural population, they were actually speaking in ideological terms of the societal effects which the administrative organisation in rural *mir* or *obshchina* could have on the poor and simple-minded rural population, as well as of the emancipatory effect that the implementation of a parallel type of socio-economic organisation in other parts of the Russian economy could have. They imagined that this effect would, to an overwhelming degree, take the form of increased societal and political awareness among the population, an increased level of education among the entire population which, in turn would make each individual wish to reach their highest potential. It was, in other words, far removed from, for example, contemporary Latin American populist movements which, as we shall see below, were majority-based populist movements which combined populism with more 'thick-core ideologies', such as socialism, revolutionary Peronism, and/or nativism. Nevertheless, the features that were shared by Russian populists and the national socialists, have become clear. Did it share more, or more important, features with the American populist movement of landowners than it did with nationalism? Let us turn our gaze across the Atlantic to see what other populist movements at the end of the nineteenth century were like.

American Agrarian Populism

The United States saw a new type of populism, distinct from the link between land and the original people. Although American Agrarian Populism appealed to racial sentiments, the reference was not to the original people because of the presence of Native Americans. This

movement would become a defining type of populism too⁶⁰. For the Russian populists, at the basis of a naturally organising principle should be the connection between the individual and the land on which he grew up, and/or toiled, and the social connections that facilitate the life of peasants. For the American populists the question was one of social identification, rather than one of geographical identification. But that was not the only point on which the two populisms diverged. According to Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, the common feature among the Russian and the American populists was that both regarded the peasantry as the main pillar of society and the economy⁶¹. However, there were significant differences between Russian and North American populism as well. The American movement and political party, was based in the North American West and Midwest and was strongly anti-urban, anti-capitalist and prohibitionists. The movement started out as many separate movements, such as the 1870's Farmer's Alliance in the South and the short-lived, anti-slavery Free Soil Party in Ohio, New York and Massachusetts⁶². Furthermore, because of the completely different context in which it arose, in a society where there was already popular representation and which was moving forward at full speed in the process of mechanisation, accumulation of agrarian land, and urbanisation- the movement had the need foremost to attract the support of the voters. The eyes of the North American populists were more on their perceived adversaries and ways to damage them, than had been those of the early Russia populists. In this, the American party shared more with the radical wing of Russian populism than with the 1860s generation of populists.

One aspect of Mudde and Kaltwasser's treatment of the concept of populism may be cause for reconsideration. When defining which phenomena to consider populist, they include, for example, the Social Credit Movements. We would argue that although such initiatives are based on populist ideals, they do not, on their own, constitute a populist, political movement. Moreover, if a shared ideal of mutual help among the sections of the population under threat from industrialisation and urbanisation would land whichever initiative the label 'populist movement', also the corporatist movements should receive such a label. Furthermore, one could include most liberation movements and nationalist movements in this category. They certainly did regard 'the common people' of this or that country, region, or

⁶⁰ C. MUDDE, *The populist Zeitgeist*, cit., p. 548

⁶¹ C. MUDDE, C. ROVIRA KALTWASSER, *Populism and (Liberal) Democracy: a Framework for Analysis*, in Id., *Populism in Europe and the Americas*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012, pp. 1-26, 3.

⁶² The Free Soil Party originated in New York and was active in the period around the 1848 and 1852 elections. See G. HERMET, *Les populismes dans le monde*, cit., p. 6. There were also significant social movements in Canada in the early twentieth century, but they were most significantly in the form of social credit movements and lacked a clearly defined and coherent ideological stance. They initially based themselves on the economic theory of social credit by Clifford Hugh Douglas. Their political stance was not developed beyond increasing both redistributive measures and the independence of farmers until much later on. See J.A. IRVING, *The Evolution of the Social Credit Movement*, in «The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science», 14/3 (1948), pp. 321- 341. Although these local movements have been called populist movements, they were just as much social movements with conflicting political implications.

town, as the genuine nation and appealed to their support. This slippery slope brings up to a point where 'populist' is nothing more than a synonym of 'popular'. We must then ask ourselves whether it is useful to distinguish between popular politics and political populism at all. This a point to which we shall return in a later section. Although there certainly were undeniable differences among the Russian and American populist movements, there were, as Kristoffer Löfgren has observed, several important similarities. We may argue that these similarities are in no way perfect and do not allow us to claim ideological correspondence among the two phenomena, but they may indicate a path towards a definition of just what exactly is a populist party. Indeed, Löfgren writes that both movements reacted against production of scale and centralisation, as well as against the inequality and xenophobic effects that were suggested to be caused by it, although some Russian populist groups briefly embraced antisemitism as we have seen above. Moreover, both movements were suspicious of the state and idealised the small-scale producer, "but on unequal terms". Another common feature, again shared among the early populism movements on both sides of the Atlantic, was the focus on a social distinction between the upper-classes on the one hand and the exploited -but virtuous- lower social classes on the other. Löfgren represents the Russian movement as part of a "collectively minded community", whereas the American movement, he observes, was inserted in an individualistic social environment. He observed:

[B]oth movements claimed to speak on behalf of the people and turned to it from a petit bourgeois image of the world. In spite of the inequalities among the movements, they utilized the same methods, appealed to the same target groups, in the same tone, and wanted to create a third way between capitalism and communism⁶³.

Although part of his claim seems to have the purpose of enthusing his readers about the similarities, rather than understating the subtle, as well as the overt, differences, we will take with us the notion that even the two first populist political movements should not be assumed to have made use of the same methods. In addition, because they didn't wholeheartedly buy into Marxist Socialism as formulated by Marxists in Russia during those years, the Russian populists did not formulate themselves in Marxist terms, or see any need for a transitional 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

⁶³ K. LÖFGREN, *Sunt förnuft. Populismen i politiska partiers valpropaganda*, Högskolan i Gävle, Akademin för utbildning och ekonomi, Avdelingen för humaniora, Politik och medierprogrammet, June 2010 (unpublished), p. 12. Communication made available by the Author.

Conclusion

Having, in this way, searched the historical uses of the term 'populist' for any common denominators, we may conclude, as both Isiah Berlin and Margaret Canovan did before, that the assortment of populist phenomena offer only limited help in defining the term. We must therefore look elsewhere for this important methodological starting point. One could, as René Cuperus did, try to identify the type of parties that European populist parties are, by explaining who their voters are. He thus writes about the 'new populists' that: "[They] did fill the new vacuum of left/right-depoliticization", and that they wish to attract "the worried working classes [...] segments of the middle-class and *nouveaux riches* who don't feel represented by today's political system"⁶⁴. This approach, however, will account for the motivational factor behind each individual's sympathy for populist ideas, but will not explain differences in the ideas proposed to these individuals. The ideological legacy of contemporary populist parties in Scandinavia has been associated, not only to the populist movements in Russia and North America, but also to nationalism. This link does exist, but the question is whether nationalism can be perceived as part of a distinct type of populist ideology, exclusive to, or at least typical of, Scandinavian populism.

Nation and nationalism

"It is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny", argued Benedict Anderson⁶⁵. The first question to be confronted is "what is a nation?" It is not for us to sit in judgement over the many definitions. We merely wish to consider some of the definitions to understand what it is that scholars, lay persons, and nationalists refer to as the nation: Is it connected to ethnicity, culture, shared history, shared contemporary experiences, uniformity of language, religion etc., or is it defined mostly by a state of conflict with other nations, or yet, is it an imagined community? This, in turn, we wish to make use of to understand the logic which lies behind, either the instrumental use of nationalism as a political tool, or the sincere quest for national independence. There are at least four main theories of the nation that most scholars relate to, either individually or in combination. They are the so-called primordialist, or perennial, theory, the modernist theory, the ethnosymbolist theory, and the functionalist theory. We shall treat each of these theories briefly in the following paragraphs, for then to

⁶⁴ R. CUPERUS, *The Fate of European Populism*, in «Dissent», Spring 2004, pp. 17-20, 19.

⁶⁵ B. ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), Verso, London 1991, pp. 11-12.

propose the positioning of our interpretative framework within this wider theoretical framework. Firstly, the primordialists refer to nations as another form of group identity. They maintain that nations are inevitable because it is in our nature to try to group our fellow human beings into in-groups and out-groups. This means that “there is no definitional way of distinguishing ethnicity from other types of collective identity”. It also means that there is no significant, qualitative difference between nations and other social groupings, such as family, school class and/or religious community, but there is a quantitative one. Humanity, according to primordialists, consists of a, more or less, fixed set of distinguishable nations, each with a consciousness of being united by history and destiny, and some even claim, of being metaphysically connected to a bespoke ‘homeland’. True primordialists also claim that each of these nations should be sovereign and have a spatial claim. The claims primordialists make, are often connected to the idea of glorious periods in the (distant) past, the future awakening of the nation, national heroes and/or titans that will come to the defence of the nation in troubled times⁶⁶. There has been significant criticism of the primordialist idea of nation. Rogers Brubaker presents such a criticism when he argues that the idea of nations as primordial and unchanging has been surpassed and, much like Canovan, he deliberates how we are often left with what he calls a “substantialist treatment of nations as real entities” which “adopts *categories of practice as categories of analysis*”⁶⁷. In other words, those who analyse politics, take the existence of distinct nations for granted because the political actors do so. This is again reflected in Canovan’s observation from 1996 that “assumptions about the existence of bounded, unified political communities that seem suspiciously like nation-states” were, at the time, still present in all aspects of political thinking and, we may add, remain so today⁶⁸. According to Brubaker, scholars should move away from using the nation as a starting point for studying nationalism to avoid indirectly sustaining the commonly held misconception that nations are real entities, independently of where and when they were first constructed. And yet, this is the exact picture which some of the nationalist populist leaders in Europe are attempting to construct of their own nation.

A group of scholars, otherwise supportive of the primordial theory, have moved away from the idea that nations are stable and objective ethnic groups. Although they believe that nations are a manifestation of a natural group identification, they regard their significance to have been recurring and circular through history. Although, also here there is some deviance in the interpretation, as some view the modern state as having permeated many more

⁶⁶ Those who have adhered to this idea included medieval historians Adrian Hastings, John Gillingham, Colette Beaune and Bernard Guenée. They found there was proof of “the existence of ‘nations’ and ‘national sentiment’ in Western Europe”, although they found no proof of nationalism as ideology. See U. Özkimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, cit., pp. 51, 58, 146. In his study Özkimli also describes the primordialist theory.

⁶⁷ R. BRUBAKER, *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996, pp. 15.

⁶⁸ M. CANOVAN, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham 1996, p. 27.

aspects of the personal life of co-nationals than other facets of our social identification, and certainly when compared to pre-modern nations. Based on such views, the modernists claim that the nation is a wholly modern phenomenon. Indeed, the distinction between the primordial camp and the modernist camp continues to blur. We shall try to identify some distinguishing features. As suggested by Bauman and Giddens, a combination of factors in modern life have, effectually brought about the nation as we know it today. For instance, Giddens insists that the nation-state arose as a consequence of the expansion of industrialisation. He maintains that the nation may be understood “as symbols or beliefs” which attribute “a communality of experience” to the members of a particular regional, ethnic or linguistic category, which may or may not be convergent with the demarcation of a nation-state⁶⁹. The post-modern way of life broadly understood carries with it an uprootedness, which the poor and dispossessed struggle to feel at home in. Furthermore, transnationalism has caused anxiety about the ability to maintain national autonomy, especially among the citizens of small states without a strong international presence⁷⁰. Gellner adds an emphasis on just how influential a generic education system has been in spreading the ideas of nationhood. He claims that the industrial state must disconnect the loyalty of the masses from the land, the monarch and the faith, and instead link it to a national culture⁷¹. Even if Gellner’s theory does not aid our understanding of the choice in favour of a nationalist identification over other, possible, identifications it does contribute to the understanding of how the power that nationalism seems to sway over the larger population, even in modern, democratic, knowledge economies, first arose. The national education system thus unifies language, creates national history as opposed to local, regional, administrative and religious history, and identifies the ‘physical’ borders of the nation-state⁷². In a parallel fashion, Hobsbawm emphasizes the influence of history writing, and the fashion of national historiographies, on those same processes. Within the stream of modernist theory of the nation which we treat presently is the so-called ‘functional’ understanding of the nation and, ultimately, of nationalism. It is the idea that nationalism serves the purpose of, for example, providing uprooted individuals with a form of identity, or promoting the middle classes wish for a different political representation or promoting modernisation⁷³. Michael Billig’s idea of ‘banal nationalism’ connects two central observations, one about what produces national sentiment and another about how and why this sentiment may be actively cultivated. He does thus not

⁶⁹ A. GIDDENS, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, Macmillan, London-Basingstoke 1981, p. 13. See also Id., *The Nation-State and Violence*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1985, p. 116. See also P. SCHLESINGER, *On National Identity. Some Conceptions and Misconceptions Criticized*, in A.D. SMITH, J. HUTCHINSON (eds.), *Nationalism. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, Routledge, London-New York 2000, vol. I, pp. 69-111, 99.

⁷⁰ M. BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, Sage Publications, Los Angeles 1995, pp. 129-137.

⁷¹ E. GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford 1983, pp. 35-36.

⁷² P. SCHLESINGER, *On National Identity. Some Conceptions and Misconceptions Criticized*, cit., p. 91

⁷³ J. BREUILLY, *Approaches to Nationalism*, in A.D. SMITH, J. HUTCHINSON (eds.), *Nationalism. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, cit., vol. I, pp. 324-352, 332-334

focus on the origins, but on the reproduction and instrumentalization of national sentiment. He defines banal nationalism as the collections of everyday activities, events and circumstance that reproduce nationalist feelings or, in his own words, the “ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced”. Everyday items like coins, stamps, flags on public buildings, (national hymns) become small reminders of one’s place as part of a nation within a world of nations, with ideas of nationalism instrumentalised to reinforce a sense of cohesion and shared experience⁷⁴. Benedict Anderson conceives of the nation as an ‘imagined’ community because, among other reasons, “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship”⁷⁵. One of the main thesis in Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, is that sepecially the development of a venicular languages in protestant Europe helped the development of national identity within this region. John Breuilly, sees nationalism as purely political movements that aim at seizing and/or maintaining their control over the state, through the use of nationalist argumentation and strategies. The nationalist arguments thus include that nations of distinct character exist and that they should have control of their own states. Nationalism then uses historicist (re)interpretations to mobilize the masses and create a sense of community. To Breuilly, the nationalist feeling within the community creates a sense of ownership of the state, whereby the unity of identity becomes political unity⁷⁶. This is a likely explanation for the motivation of the parts of the ‘elites’ that promote nationalist ideas, but, as Smith and Hutchinson have pointed out, it does not account for the deepfelt cultural inspirations and contents of the nationalisms in question. Is it a question of the elites simply grabbing at any historical fact that may be interpreted in nationalist terms? Or is there something more behind the idea of the individual nation; something which accounts for the fact that so many are willing to sacrifice so much in the name of ‘their’ nation? According to Özkimli, in the ethno-symbolism of Anthony Smith, the emphasis is on the role of “myths, symbols, memories, values and traditions in the formation, persistence and change of ethnicity and nationalism”⁷⁷. Yet, Smith does not claim to belong among the perennialists, as he gives due attention to transformations. Neither is Smith a modernist, like Kedouri, Minogue and Gellner. His emphasis is on the cultural and ethnic aspects of what defines a nation⁷⁸. He thus understands the nation as a contemporary phenomenon which, nevertheless, springs from earlier, existing ethnic groups⁷⁹. Smith’s

⁷⁴ M. BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, cit., pp. 6-8.

⁷⁵ B. ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, cit., p. 16

⁷⁶ A.D. SMITH, J. HUTCHINSON, *General introduction*, in Id., *Nationalism: Critical Concepts in Political Science*, cit. vol. 1, xxv– xlii, xxxii.

⁷⁷ U. ÖZKIMLI, *Theories of Nationalism*, cit., p. 146.

⁷⁸ A.D. SMITH, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Blackwell, Oxford 1986, p. 17.

⁷⁹ Smith made a distinction between ‘lateral’ (aristocratic) and ‘vertical’ (demotic) ethnies. In the former, the elite promotes ethnicity among the various strata through initiatives such as citizen rights, conscription, taxation, infrastructure etc. In vertical ethnies, the main motor is organised religion which would emphasize ideas of a chosen people, sacred texts and scriptures and the like. Thus, in Özkimli’s interpretation, Smith’s theory leaves

analysis emphasizes just how many factors contribute to explaining the rise and development of nations, however, a clear distinction between ethnies, nation, and nationalism is absent from his work. Not with regards to definitions, but with regards to the use he makes, throughout his work, of all three concepts. Smith's definition of nationalism is: "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its [...] members to constitute an actual or potential *nation*"⁸⁰. It thus includes a process of forming and maintaining the nation, a consciousness of belonging to the nation, a language and symbolism of the 'nation', an ideology (including a cultural doctrine of nations), and a social and political movement to achieve the goals of the nation and realise the national will⁸¹. Furthermore, Smith and Hutchinson, although they acknowledge that elites are in a special position to promote national identity, they write that mass feeling of nationhood

[...] are created through a complex interplay between rival elites and other strata of the designated population, and elites are constrained by the beliefs and traditions of 'the masses' (the other strata) whom they wish to mobilise and whose culture they usually share⁸².

There is thus competition about which elite may associate itself with the nations, but there is also restriction in terms of the willingness of the population to accept a certain image of the nation – a sort of critical consensus⁸³. Montserrat Guibernau points out the absence of a clear-cut distinction between nation and state in Smith and has suggested to integrate Smith's theory with more thorough considerations of the political implications of nations⁸⁴. Moreover,

the reader with the following considerations: In a lateral ethnies, social divisions were overcome through a shared culture, which helps unite the members of the ethnies, and therefore makes for a stronger in-group ties and higher 'barriers to admission'. Integration in a vertical ethnies could be promoted in two ways, both of which involved the 'return' of the past; either in the form of an original, often primitive, 'poetic space' (usually nature) that represented the birth-place of the nation, or by reverence to a golden age (in the past) of the nation. Either way, these strategies were first promoted by 'educator-intellectuals'.

⁸⁰ U. ÖZKIRIMLI, *Theories of Nationalism*, cit., p. 154. See also A.D. SMITH, *National Identity*, Penguin Books, London-New York 1991, pp. 73-77.

⁸¹ Ivi, pp. 154, 157. In this historical interpretation, the distinction between ethnic, ethnies, nation, and ethnic group is blurred. In fact, as Özkirimli points out, "O'Leary puts this very succinctly, when he argues that it is not too surprising to find nationalism in the 1500s if one grants the term such empirical range". According to him, most of those who discuss 'nations' before 'nationalism' are in fact "establishing the existence of cultural precedents, and ethnic and other materials, which are subsequently shaped and re-shaped by nationalists in pursuit of nation building".

⁸² A.D. SMITH, J. HUTCHINSON, *General introduction*, in A.D. SMITH, J. HUTCHINSON (eds.), *Nationalism. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, cit. vol. 1, xxxvi.

⁸³ Ivi, xxxvii. This is an argument that accords with Hobsbawm's argument that a link between 'proto-national' communities and modern nations is dependent on continuous political and/or ecclesiastical dynasties/traditions. In principle, Smith and Hutchinson agree with this observation, but they do not second Breuille's and Hobsbawm's conclusion. They assert that there are many more cases of such long-term institutional traditions than Breuille or Hobsbawm seem prepared to concede. Second, there exist "other kinds of durable institutional 'carriers' of identity such as laws and legal institutions, customs and family observances, festivals and commemorations repeated regularly, and linguistic codes preserved". Again, it is the refinement of the argument offered by Smith and Hutchinson that makes the theory applicable to the Scandinavian context.

⁸⁴ M. GUIBERNAU, *Anthony D. Smith on Nations and National Identity. A Critical Assessment*, in «Nations and Nationalism», 10/1-2 (2004), pp. 125-141.

Walker Connor accuses Smith of focusing too much on nationalist feelings among the elite and thus overlooking the nation as a phenomenon of mass appeal⁸⁵. Although the first of Connor's criticisms is well grounded, we consider his second criticism to be misdirected. Indeed, we believe it to be a matter of different definitions of 'nation' and 'nationhood'. Connor's modernist point-of-view will not allow him to embrace, as Smith does, that a national consciousness could exist before the modern period, and among a relatively large minority only. We wish to build on Smith's ethno-symbolism, and especially on the idea that, although nation-states are a modern phenomenon, they are usually constructed on a foundation of already existing ideas of group identity, be it ethnic, religious, monarchic etc., or any combination thereof. However, there is another point which must be considered: the choices made about which elements of history, cultural objects, dress, language, religion and custom should be included in the representation of the nation. An additional, problematic aspect of ethno-symbolism is that it is an attempt to explain current nationhood and nationalism merely in terms of pre-existing ethnicities. After all, not all ethnicities from the past can reasonably be considered nations and there is a special challenge in rendering justice to the qualitative difference between the collective identities of the past and the ethnically based nations of today⁸⁶. The question here could be whether we even need to make such a distinction. We might alternatively consider them all as part of the same category of phenomena, and at that point, it becomes interesting to consider whether populism could also be considered on equal terms with them. Many have emphasized that the formation of a nation is an ongoing process of selection. The purpose of this selection is to among all possible representations of the nation, at every given moment, make choices and thereby limit the legitimate interpretations of that nation's identity. In other words, mechanisms are in place through which choices are continuously made about what a given nation is. It is up to the analyst to always beware of choices made and, especially about the fact that choices, whether inclusive or exclusive, are usually motivated by underlying interest and are almost never inevitable, but rule ruling out or alternative representations. For example, Schlesinger agrees with Gellner's statement that nationalism "sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures". Those who are its "historic agents" do not know what they do, and this is another matter⁸⁷. Schlesinger's comment that, as a matter of sustainable fact, historic agents may know very well what they do is a matter of overzealousness, as it can reasonably be assumed that Gellner hinted not at ignorance of outcome, but rather at a lack of serious consideration for long-term consequences on the

⁸⁵ Connor's criticism is reported in U. ÖZKIMLI, *Theories of Nationalism*, cit., pp. 158-159.

⁸⁶ Especially Susan Reynolds has heeded this criticism in *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1984.

⁸⁷ E. GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism*, cit., pp. 48-49. P. SCHLESINGER, *On National Identity. Some Conceptions and Misconceptions Criticized*, cit., p. 101

side of these agents. Nevertheless, these decisions continuously limit the possibilities of understanding a particular nation available to its members. This brings us to the Foucauldian 'eventualisation' procedure of analysis. "Eventalization", Foucault asserts, "means making visible a singularity at places where there is a temptation to invoke a historical constant, an immediate anthropological trait, or an obviousness which imposes itself uniformly on all". What one must do, is to identify all the interests, connections, encounters, strategies etc. that help the choices to later be seen as "self-evident, universal, and necessary"⁸⁸. This observation could also be applied to other types of identities. Rather than presenting an exhaustive account of the main streams of thought about the concept 'nationalism', it is our purpose here merely to describe the main arguments behind our choice in terms of our utilisation and understanding of the concept. Hans Kohn tries to account for a substantial change in nationalism, from the first nationalism in Western Europe, which sprang from ideas of individual liberty and rational cosmopolitanism, to the later nationalism which arose in many areas outside Western Europe and North America, and which was largely a reaction against external interference. Kohn presents the example of German nationalism, which substituted for the legal and rational concept of 'citizenship' the vaguer concept of 'folk', which, first discovered by the German humanists, was later fully developed by Herder and the German romanticists. "Its roots seemed to reach into the dark soil of primitive times and to have grown [...] in the mysterious womb of the people, deemed to be so much nearer to the forces of nature". Kohn further interprets this difference as being a consequence of the 'geographical division' between renaissance and reformation in Europe. If so, the protestant Scandinavian nations should have developed nationalism according to the pattern of the German example. Before addressing the case of Scandinavia, let attention be given to understanding what the German humanists and romanticists saw as a nation⁸⁹.

An idea of national pride is as old as the establishment of the first national groupings, although it has been called by many names and it has, certainly, had more spontaneous connotations than those that have been added over time. The main cause of the shifts in connotation has been the accumulation of practical examples of nationalism at work, in the form of political doctrines. We may regard early nationalism simply as another form of inter-group competition. Some authors argue that national attachment goes back several centuries⁹⁰. Even if we accept the distant historical roots of national feeling, it does not make claims about nationalism as a political programme or doctrine. Neither does it explain exactly how it is different from other group formations. Through the observation of historical

⁸⁸ M. FOUCAULT, *The Impossible Prison* (1978), in Id. *Foucault Live. Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, ed. S. Lotringer, Semiotexte, New York 1996, pp. 275-286, 277-278.

⁸⁹ H. KOHN, *The Idea of Nationalism*, in A.D. Smith, J. Hutchinson (eds.), *Nationalism. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 64-68, p. 67.

⁹⁰ Adam Smith, according to Billington, traced the strong attachment to a nation back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. See J.H. BILLINGTON, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism*, cit., p. 126.

phenomena, however, we have come to accept that a fundamental prerequisite for the development of nationalism as a doctrine is that an idea of the existence of an identifiable and distinct, genuine, 'people' is widely shared, although not necessarily among the majority of the population. The defining features of the genuine 'people,' as opposed to the outsider, vary over time and space. One of the most influential clusters of ideas about what defines a genuine people, however, has been that developed by the German Romantics.

German Romanticism and the Nation

Nationalism as a doctrine is often traced back to German Romantic thought, and its contribution has, without doubt, been of a most direct and long-lasting influence. The German Romantics were a quite diverse grouping of thinkers at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century⁹¹. These thinkers were strongly influenced by earlier political thought. Umut Özkirimli claims that particularly Immanuel Kant and Jean-Jacques Rousseau - two influential figures of the Enlightenment tradition – determined the possibilities of thought available to the romantics⁹². Rousseau pointed out the weakness of social man to the tyranny of his fellow men. To prevent this, his will must be exchanged for the general will. Formulated differently, we must be citizens before individuals. But what do individuals gain from subjecting themselves to the general will? Rousseau writes: "each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will", and "as a body our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an invisible part of the whole". Rousseau's idea of popular sovereignty took for granted that an option always exists, which is in the general interest. He claimed that the sovereign cannot have an interest which contradicts the interests of the individuals that make it up. "Consequently, the sovereign power has no need of a guarantor towards the subjects, because it is impossible for the body to want to harm all its members, and we will see below that it cannot harm any of them individually. The sovereign, by the mere fact of what it is, is always all that it ought to be"⁹³.

German romantics, and some pre-romantic authors, reflect in a clear manner the basic idea of the existence of a link between the land and a so-called 'Ur-Volk', or 'original people'. Identification with the land had become important – not only to the personal life of the individual – but to international relations. For example, Johann Gottfried Herder believed in the unique and diverse national cultures. He especially paid attention to the factor of language

⁹¹ We may count Friedrich Schleiermacher, Friedrich Schlegel, F.W. Schelling, Adam Müller, Friedrich Schiller, Ernst Moritz Arndt, and Friedrich Jahn among them.

⁹² U. ÖZKIRIMLI, *Theories of Nationalism*, cit., p. 11.

⁹³ J-J. ROUSSEAU, *On the Social Contract or Principles of Political Right*, in Id., *The Major Political Writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, cit., pp. 153-272, 173, 175.

in determining the natural borders of a nation. In fact, he saw the nation as a phenomenon as natural as the family, resolving to compare it to 'extended family'. The fundamental idea behind this claim was that there are different levels of social organisation and social links that are each equally valid and that vary only in the number of individuals that it links together. Consequentially, he was against the conquest of other nations because it would mean the weakening of the bonds of sentiment that held the nation together. Although Herder viewed the separation of Prussia from the rest of Germany as unnatural and against the completeness of the German 'Volk', the German nation had, according to him, no claim on other nations. Germany was, in other words, not an especially privileged nation. This was to change with the cult-like popularity that arose around Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who presented *Die Reden an die deutsche Nation* after Prussia's defeat by France at Jena, more precisely in the period 1807 and 1808. He claimed that Germans were the 'Urvolk', or 'genuine people', and, because of their High culture and superior language, they had a mission towards humankind, that is, the creation of the perfect State. He believed that each nation must be linguistically homogenous, and as a logical consequence, when individuals wish to use a language different from the dominant language in the physical area in which they live, he/she should migrate to a place where their own language is the dominant one. If no such place exists, they should give up on their language altogether for

it is true beyond doubt that, wherever a separate language is found, there a separate nation exists, which has the right to take independent charge of its affairs and to govern itself... Where a people has ceased to govern itself, it is equally bound to give up its language and to coalesce with conquerors⁹⁴.

Fichte's understanding of the nature of nations was thus not of a static, but of a social entity whose aim is to become less composite. It is this development of increasing identification with other nationals that give expression to the 'Volksgeist'. The most popular interpretation of Fichte's thought is that he aimed at extolling patriotism and enthusiasm among the German people. For this purpose, he had identified education as the most efficient way for a state to ensure its survival and proliferation. In effect, his philosophical idea was subtler than that. He identified the end of the individual with his existence, not as an isolated spirit, but as part of society, acknowledging his place in the world. The end of the individual and the end of society should thus be in balance and could be formulated as the development towards the perfection of humanity. A society, or what at a particular level of abstraction we may call a nation, was thus considered successful if it was a harmonious, homogenous, expression of

⁹⁴ The fragment is cited in D. HEATER, *The Theory of Nationhood. A Platonic Symposium*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1998, pp. 69, 79.

a general will to move towards perfecting all aspects of social life as a social manifestation of philosophy. His idea was that German culture had made a fundamental contribution to this in the form of philosophy and that it should, therefore take position as the leading society among societies. The model for others to follow as a step towards their own contributions to the perfection of humanity. This implies that each individual should seek, not only to achieve his highest potential, but also to disseminate his ideal among others. This ideal that each individual should be acting according to, can be defined in negative and positive terms. In prohibitive terms, the prerogative is that we must always treat others as ends and not means. This is to keep to the fundamental idea that society is the reciprocity of action in freedom. In prescriptive terms, the fundamental moral imperative tells us to strive for both our internal unity and the spiritual unity of society as a whole. The progressive unification of individual aspirations and sentiment was thus, according to Fichte, the final end of society⁹⁵. The tool that can be used to streamline the collection of individual wills and ideals was instruction. This tool was not to be employed lightly because of its power over weaker minds, but was to be performed by particularly enlightened individuals. The key was philosophical instruction, which would convince each individual to leave behind freedom of will and creating, in its place an inevitable mechanism whereby each individual sees the necessity of unity of will, and that this is the highest he could possibly attain. Only in this way could the individual be completely free, and at the same time create the perfectly harmonious society. Is national feeling then a matter of instruction as Fichte suggested in his *Reden*? Certainly, Fichte made explicit the use that national elites can make of education in furthering their cause by fashioning the minds of the people. When such uses are made of education, they can only be partial implementations of Fichte's idea of the purpose of educating the members of a society. Indeed, nationalist instruction, especially instruction of children, tries to streamline the minds of the population and is an effective way to create 'banale nationalism'. However, it only aims at nationalist ends, and not at the perfection of humanity. Where Fichte would most likely have encouraged enlightened individuals to disseminate their ideal, also among other societies and nations, nationalism seeks to separate societies and, at its worst, to divide humankind⁹⁶. Fichte's thought is an example of how the later use made of German Romantic ideas has stringly influenced our perception of these ideas. Thus, although there is a clear link between National-Socialism and German Romanticism, it is not a direct link and, as is

⁹⁵ J.G. FICHTE, *The Vocation of the Scholar* (1794), trans. W. Smith, John Chapman, London 1847, pp. 17-27.

⁹⁶ Kedouri's comments are representative of the more popular interpretation of Fichte's intentions. On nationalist theory, "education must have a central position in the work of the state". Its purpose is "not to transmit knowledge, traditional wisdom, and the ways devised by a society for attending to the common concerns". Its purpose rather is political, "to bend the will of the young to the will of the nation". Schools are instruments of state policy, like the army, the police, and the exchequer. In his dialogue *Der Patriotismus und sein Gegenteil*, published for the first time in 1918, Fichte says that a state which adopted his educational policy could dispense with an army, for then it would have a nation to put in arms, which simply could not be defeated by any mortal power. See E. KEDOURIE, *Nationalism*, in A.D. SMITH, J. HUTCHINSON (eds.), *Nationalism. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, cit. vol. 1, pp. 251-270, 258-259.

always the case, history could have seen the romantic inspiration go in a very different direction, had the circumstances been different.

Nationalism as Political Doctrine

“In a world where everyone is a nationalist”, wrote John Breuilly, “in some way or another, it becomes more important to distinguish between nationalism than to have a theory of nationalism”⁹⁷. Having looked at what the romantics believed define a nation, it is now time to turn our gaze at nationalism. It is, it seems, a less evasive concept than populism. For although German Romanticism was later taken up and transformed by the initiators of the First World War, it did not, in its early form, have a political programme, least of all an expansionist one. Although the details are inconsistent among the numerous definitions of nationalism, the core concept is very often similar. It is a collection of shared beliefs that should have practical consequences on actions and preferences of individual members of nations. These shared beliefs include 1) that distinguishable nations exist, 2) that a nation shares some of the following features: language, religion, history, a shared, contemporary experience or an especially elevated level of civilisation - or societal organisation – each of which can be propped up by means of foundation and/or creation myths, heroes, great statesmen etc., 3) that nations should strive to gain a nation-state within which its members are sovereign, and 4) that the members of the nation owe their political allegiance to the nation to which they belong. Hastings tries to depict a clear relationship between nationalism in the sens of an understanding of the world as divided into national entities on the one hand, and as ideology on the other. Nationalism as ideology, he uncontroversially thinks, implies a belief that each nation should be harboured within its own state. He adds, however, that nationalism as ideology also implies the idea that one’s own nation merits more consideration and acknowledgement, which it can get through the founding or expansion of a nation-state that corresponds with the physical boundaries of the nation⁹⁸. Over the last couple of decades, it has been claimed repetitively by theorists, researchers, and journalists alike, that the nation-state is in decline and, consequently, so is nationalism as ideology. After having looked at the different theories of the origins of nations, we may now move towards a qualitative understanding of nationalism as either an ideology or a political instrument. John Breuilly sought to set up a systematic study of nationalism by introducing a typology. Furthermore, his definition of nations as “political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments” relies heavily on the Weberian

⁹⁷ J. BREUILLY, *Approaches to Nationalism*, cit., p. 348.

⁹⁸ For a description of Hasting's theory see U. ÖZKIMLI, *Theories of Nationalism*, pp. 58-59.

idea of the state as a community which can exercise a legitimate monopoly on violence in a specific territory, but adds the use of nationalist arguments as the signifier of nationhood⁹⁹. The main nationalist arguments, according to Breuilly, are that characteristic and distinguishable nations exist, that the interest of the nation reigns supreme over all other interests, and that the independence of nations is paramount¹⁰⁰. The underlying idea is of the general will of (a portion of) the subjects of the modern state being stimulated, if not manipulated, by a powerful elite to believe in a collective character-focused nationalism, or cultural nationalism. The growing need for support from the masses led to a mixed approach by the elites, depending on their own programme, power, and position. Nationalism is therefore, according to Breuilly, ideologically neutral. What is meant here is not that it is free of ideological content, but rather that it does not belong to any specific position along the left – right political continuum. The defining features, or typological criteria, of nationalism are instead 1) the relationship between the nationalist movement and state (i.e. opposition or control); 2) the goals of the movement (is it a program of separation, reform, or unification); 3) whether the (opposed) state poses itself as a nation-state or not. Depending on these criteria, we may, according to Breuilly, be able to predict how particular nationalist movements will behave, and which strategy they will employ to gain and maintain nationhood. Indeed, to all the various categories of nationalist movements, the purposes served by nationalist ideas are 'coordination', 'mobilization', and 'legitimacy'¹⁰¹. A consequence is, as Paul R. Brass notes, that the nationalists have the possibility to choose to, depending on the historical circumstances, downplay the differences of opinion and seek collaboration with other groups or with state authorities¹⁰². Nationalism does, therefore, not exclude a collaborative attitude or belonging to greater alliances and even wider collective identities, as long as they are not in competition with the identifying features of the nation.

This idea of nations being instruments, constructed and invented, is reverberated in both the theories of Hobsbawm and Anthony Smith. Hobsbawm's theory builds on instrumentalist theory as well as on Smith's idea that nationalism is a tool applied to overcome insecurities. This idea, to some extent, is based on the observation of German Romanticism as a reaction to economic and social instability. Hobsbawm presents us with the 'invention of Tradition' theory. The idea that invented traditions establish a perceived continuity with the past. These traditions can either be adaptations of older traditions to new situations, or entirely new inventions. The complete invention of traditions, according to Hobsbawm, occurs when the political and social need to create order and unity is preeminent; more specifically,

⁹⁹ J. BREUILLY, *The State and Nationalism*, in M. Guibernau, J. Hutchinson (eds.), *Understanding Nationalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2001, pp. 32-52, 32.

¹⁰⁰ J. BREUILLY, *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1993, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ U. Özkimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, cit., pp. 86-87.

¹⁰² P.R. BRASS, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, SAGE Publications, Los Angeles 1991, pp. 13-16.

during periods of hefty, or rapid, social change. For him, nationalism is the principle that there should be correspondence between political unit and national unit, in a nation-state. Hobsbawm uses the example of the period preceding the introduction of mass democracy to introduce a range of tools with which the elite may promote the unifying idea of nation, or rather nationalism: the development of primary education, the invention of public - or state - ceremonies, and the multiplication of state monuments. These approaches, in combination with initiatives such as the introduction of a national church, the promotion of a royal family and so forth, rolled nationalism in position as the substitute for previous social cohesion¹⁰³. To Hobsbawm, the implication is that nationalism aims to make the political duties to the nation the main obligation of its members. It is this high level of required commitment that places modern forms of nationalism apart from all earlier forms of collective identification.

What used to be called nationalism has, Billig writes, through “a rhetorical sleight of hand”, and for reasons connected to the negative connotation that nationalism has gained over recent decades, been reframed as ‘patriotism’, revival of cultural identities or tribalism¹⁰⁴. An interesting interpretation that links the criticism of the modernist theory of nation to the populist idea among the Russian *narodniki* is the ideas fostered by the Neo-Marxist, Tom Nairn. According to Ozkimli, Nairn wished to, in his *The Breakup of Britain*, compensate for Marxism’s failure to develop a theory of nationalism. The presumption is that economic and social developmental phases are universal phenomena and that, therefore, it is enough to know about the economic developments in one part of the world in order to predict what will happen in another part of the world. This is somewhat similar to the ideas that the Russian *narodniki* harboured, although with two very significant differences: 1) that they sincerely thought Russia could become the exception to the rule that society had to go through a period of exploitative capitalism and revolutions before it could really start to prosper, and 2) that Nairn maintains that the fundamental conflict is that of nationality rather than class as Marxists claim, or levels of freedom and autonomy, as the *narodniki* claimed¹⁰⁵. The *narodniki* were not, in general, concerned with nationality, or with ethnicity¹⁰⁶. Elie Kedourie sees nationalism, as distinct from patriotism and xenophobia and as depending on a particular anthropology. It thus contains an, at least partial, ideological goal in terms of its doctrine of state. This, according to Kedourie, leads to nationalism often making use of the naturally occurring patriotic and xenophobic sentiments “to the service of a specific anthropology and metaphysics”. In order to sustain this last point, Kedouri must transpose from the romantics

¹⁰³ E. HOBBSAWM, *Mass-Producing Traditions. Europe 1870-1914*, in E. HOBBSAWM, T. RANGER (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1983, pp. 263-308, 270-271, 303.

¹⁰⁴ M. BILLIG, *Banal Nationalism*, cit., pp. 129-137.

¹⁰⁵ U. ÖZKIMLI, *Theories of Nationalism*, cit., p. 76.

¹⁰⁶ The exception was when some of the *narodniki* thought to show support of the anti-semitic agitations, which were possibly state-sponsored, among the rural communities and provincial towns. Some of the intellectuals belonging to the movement also published texts aimed against Jews, but anti-semitism never became part of the core ideology of the *narodniki*.

their endeavour to reach perfection, in the sense of the particular ideas that they held about what real freedom might entail, onto the other nationalist movements. This is where the interpretation of nationalism as metaphysics comes to fruition. He writes:

the total demand which nationalism makes on the individual originates, we must remember, in the solicitude for his freedom. Real freedom, it holds, is a particular condition of the will which, once attained, ensures the lasting fulfilment of the individual and his bliss.¹⁰⁷

The tools of xenophobia and patriotism serve the nationalists well in this endeavour, and politics becomes a method of reaching a metaphysical goal. This is in sharp contrast to Smith's attempt to put the profile of elite manipulation of nationalism in a wider context. Furthermore, Kedourie claims that it is a political doctrine which is detached from the left-right distinction in politics. This distinction, to Kedourie, loses its meaning when observed separately from the specific historical context in which it first arose. So, he points out that the perception of nationalism has fluctuated throughout contemporary history between progressive and left-wing on the one hand, and racist and right-wing on the other. Indeed an impressive number of nationalism political leaders have moved from being markedly left-oriented to being decidedly right-oriented. He mentions Pilsudski, Mussolini, Chiang Kai-shek, and Hitler. He mentions that the measuring sticks we used to measure whether a movement was left- or right-wing, whether it was progressive or retrogressive, was the extent to which they supported revolution. Nationalism could thus be right-wing in Europe, and left-wing in Asia and Africa. Therefore, the left – right distinction, according to Kedourie, only confuses our understanding of nationalism as phenomenon. In fact, political policies, aiming at equal opportunities, as a rightist party would do, or at social and economic equality, as a leftist party would do, is subsidiary to the nationalist aim of increasing national autonomy and the level of self-fulfilment the individual may realise, living in a sovereign state. We have a natural need to 'belong together' in a coherent and stable community. What happened at the time of the German romantics - and among any revolutionary movement one might add - is that the sense of belonging shared among family members, in a town or neighbourhood, and within a religious community, has had uncertain horizons and has become weak under frequent attacks. This explanation is to be preferred, Kedouri thinks, because its alternative conception (i.e. that nationalism was the revolt of the middle-classes), fails to account for the nationalist movements that arose outside Europe, as the middle class is a categorisation

¹⁰⁷ E. KEDOURIE, *Nationalism*, cit., pp. 252, 259.

which makes sense only in the particular history of Western Europe¹⁰⁸. His argument does, in fact, imply that nationalism could be, like populism, a so-called thin-centered ideology. In any case, it implies that it, of its own accord, does not determine the political programme of a movement or party, and that it is a symptom of social discontent. Moreover, one may be tricked into believing to have somehow understood more about the nationalism or populism which one is studying by referring to the left and right categories, but in reality, Kedourie says, it does not help us move forward. Yet, the questions we as readers of Kedourie are confronted with are at least two. The first problem, which appeared in Anthony Smith's considerations, is that in his sense of urgency, Kedourie may have, excessively, emphasized the influence of the elite on motivating the population to support nationalist ideals. In Smith's view, concentrating on elite manipulation and instrumentalization only explains why the tool of imbuing nationalist pride and feeling in the population could be useful for different elites, but misses the motivations of the ordinary people who support nationalism. In other words, he criticises the interpretation that holds that nations are, fundamentally, rooted in the modern epoch and serve, foremost, an instrumental purpose. From this vantagepoint, he sets out to answer the question of why nationalist revival and xenophobia takes hold also, but not only, in stable and relatively affluent societies¹⁰⁹. Breuilly's criticism of instrumentalism is similar to this argument; that such an approach will not enable us to understand why nationalist ideas were, at times, so well received among the wider population. Certainly, moving closer to such an understanding is a necessary effort when we wish to understand popular support for nationalism at times when nationalism demands almost unbearable sacrifices. The second, potential problem with Kedourie's account is that it does not sufficiently clarify the grey area between nationalism as orchestrated by the elite and nationalism as a shared ideal form of state. For example, Kedourie mentions Napoleon as a forbearer of nationalism, but we should present a word of caution, as what Napoleon acted on, may not have been a nationalist ideal, but something closer to self-preservation. Is Kedourie then overlooking the difficulty in extrapolating the element of nationalist metaphysics from the drive for self-preservation? In other words, is it possible, building on Kedourie's analysis, to make a distinction between nationalism as a metaphysical goal on the one hand, and nationalist politics on the other? Germany was forged, not by nationalists but by Bismarck who had Prussian interests at heart. Of the post-revolution generation that turned nationalist, Kedourie observes their restlessness, caused by the return to regular, dull life but also by a feeling of having missed out on the action. The restlessness, Kedourie continues, was also caused by the already mentioned exposure to new, enlightenment, ideas and ruptures of the social tissue. The older

¹⁰⁸ Ivi, pp. 262-263, 269-270.

¹⁰⁹ A.D. SMITH, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1995, pp. 1-7.

generation, however, wanted to settle into the peaceful and harmonious life they had fought for¹¹⁰.

Keeping in mind the purpose of the present study, it seems reasonable to attempt an application of Kedourie's theory, not only to the post-colonial societies, but also to the nationalist revival movements in Western and Central Europe today. As such, the rupture in the social tissue which these countries have experienced, i.e. the demise of Church and family, were indeed promoted by those who, today are in their last years at the helm of economic and political life, at the same time as European youth finds themselves in a precarious economic situation, especially when compared to their parents' generation. The 'youth' may justifiably feel unrooted and detached from any stable community, but the destruction of the social tissue has been reoccurring for a relatively long time, since the movements of the late 1860s. Can this really be the cause of the recurrence of nationalist ideologies? It is also interesting to ask the question why, in the nationalism of thence, the enemy were foreign states and cultural-imperialism, whereas today the foreign enemy is, much like post-WWI nationalism of the Nazis, aimed foremost at the enemy within. Surely this has to do with the lack of any external threat, or at least the difficulties in identifying the source of the external threat, due to its spontaneous, non-central organisation, its lack of official representation, and its lack of state status. We shall attempt the application of this theory to the Scandinavian nationalist-populist parties below.

John Breuilly's juxtaposes his own theory to the theories of Kedourie and Jacob Talmon in as much as he concerns himself with the political message of nationalism, rather than with who instrumentalises it. He defines the scope of nationalism as politics, in terms of political content, as making the following claims: 1) there exists a nation – a special group which is set apart from all other human beings; 2) political identity and loyalty are, first and foremost, with and to the nation; 3) the nation should have political autonomy, normally in the form of a sovereign state. This is a more engaging definition of the ideological aims of nationalism than we have seen above. The refinement is contained in the second component of the definition about the primacy of political identity and loyalty to the nation. We have seen that some theories of nation struggle to explain this aspect of nationhood. Breuilly's explanation can, partially, be found in his distinction between the primordial image of the nation held by nationalists themselves on the one hand and the theorists who claim that all nations are primordial entities on the other. After all, the fact that one thinks some traits of one's nation has existed for centuries does not mean one believes it to be primordial, or even that one holds that the same is true for other nations. Nevertheless, Breuilly writes that "it is the

¹¹⁰ Kedourie goes as far as to say that "nationalism movements are children's crusades; their very names are manifestos against old age: Young Italy, Young Egypt; the Young Turks, the Young Arab Party". See E. KEDOURIE, *Nationalism*, cit., pp. 265, 268-270.

discontinuities with modern national identity that I find most striking". He then presents the invented myths proposition: "we know that in many cases nationalists have invented myths". What is more, "it is clear that modern nationalism transforms such myths and also that it ignores those which cut across its own purposes". Although he acknowledges that there must be something in the way of a shared experience for nationalism to be sustainable, Breuille emphasizes that in many cases, the actual amount of history a claimed nation shares, might be very little, and that it is, most often, supported by a shared language and institutional promotion of a collective identity.¹¹¹ Against the argument that nationalists are not the only forces to promote collective identity in a systematic way, which is held to be true of dynasties and churches, Breuille claims this was done only in the face of competition from other such institutions. Here, his emphasis on the need to consider alternative histories. Sometimes, for example, nationalism has been strengthened over time in spite of an all but glorious national history. Although Breuille allows all these influences on the idea of a nation, he also writes that it is only when a nation takes on the part of a political movement that it consolidates and becomes explicit: "the nationalist 'imagining' is changed in intellectual character through becoming part of the political process". Through these processes, influenced by the aforementioned factors, and subject to manipulation, according to him, "nationalism has taken a bewildering variety of forms". Breuille cautions us to pay close attention to Gellner who adequately explains the origins of a standardised culture within a geographically limited system of institutions. Gellner, according to Breuille, pays sufficient attention to the need for alternative identities necessitated by the advancement of industrialisation and urbanisation. In order to establish clearly at which level my main analysis moves, it is useful to look at the distinctions made by Breuille when he argues in favour of his preference for studying nationalism, not as ideology or political doctrine on the one hand, nor as a matter of broadly shared sentiment on the other. Breuille's preference is, indeed, for the study of national movements, thus his starting point is one in which a nationalist program has been consolidated and is being acted upon. "A nationalist movement may ignore nationalist intellectuals and draw instead upon religious values, and it may achieve success more through elite contacts and relationships with governments than by mobilizing mass support"¹¹². When studying Scandinavian national-populist parties, one realises that, much in the logic of this type of movements, although there have certainly been nationalist intellectuals, they lived a long time ago, and there is, so to speak, nothing new under the sun. That means that the policy inspiration of the parties must come from some other source. It will be interesting to try and answer the question of whether the contemporary parties draw more on religious values, mass support, or elite contacts or/and relationships with

¹¹¹ J. BREUILLY, *Approaches to Nationalism*, cit., pp. 326-327, 329.

¹¹² Ivi, pp. 330-332, 338, 340, 343.

governments. In the Scandinavian cases, it may very well be a case of all of these. This is a very useful schematization for us, since we wish to analyse the relationship between the movements in Scandinavia and the political doctrines of nationalism and populism. The question that remains is whether the same sort of schematization can be made for the relationship between political doctrines of populism and the populist movements in Scandinavia. Breuille describes the process of modernity as one in which the 'generic division of labour', to borrow from Gellner's concepts, changed from a 'corporate division of labour' into a 'functional division of labour'. This change came about, Breuille claims, because of the spread of enlightenment ideas and liberal economic ideas. Here, Breuille himself suffers from the flaw of the narrative approach which doesn't leave enough space for alternative histories or for explaining the causes of this transformation. Breuille admits that his approach makes much sense when applied to the first national movements, but adds that "once the modern, territorial and sovereign state had developed, there was an overwhelming tendency for the population of that state to identify with or against that state on national terms". In effect, this constitutes a drastic narrowing of the possible alternative interpretations. Indeed, as he points out, nationalism seems to have become a safe realm of political argumentation, as it does not imply the speaker belong to any specific position on the left-right divide. Thus, as he adds, "merely speaking the language of nationalism can suit the interests of political movements that are not really national in any other respect"¹¹³.

What type of populism was Fascism in general, and Nazism in particular? They were certainly very different to Russian populism, where it was the moral interests and self-realisation of each individual member of 'the people' that mattered. They were also different to American Agrarian populism, where it was the class-struggle for economic reforms that mattered. Was there a hint of populism in Bismarck's Prussia? When Hitler arrived in Vienna, he supported Schönerer and the Pan-Germans, but he sympathised even more with Dr. Lueger's understanding of the social question. Even if war had not broken out in 1914, the Germans – a minority of about thirty-five percent in the Austrian half of the monarchy – could not have held their own against the rising tide of Slav nationalism. Any attempt at the Germanisation of the non-Germans, at reducing their influence or rights, at making the Germans the sole ruling group was bound to end in failure. Somewhat more realistic, was the expectation of the break-up of the Habsburg monarchy which might allow its German parts to join the German *Reich*. But this would have meant that this *Reich* would lose its only reliable ally – a severe setback to the dreams of expansion and world power cherished in Pan-German circles¹¹⁴. According to the American historian Carlton Heyes the end of the eighteenth century marked what was expected to prosper as democratic nationalism into Jacobin

¹¹³ Ivi, p. 348

¹¹⁴ F.L. CARSTEN, *The Rise of Fascism*, cit., pp. 39-41.

nationalism. On a parallel basis aristocratic nationalism took the shape of traditional nationalism, while nationalism which was neither democratic, nor aristocratic took a liberal turn. Jacobin nationalism, in Hayes interpretation, was based on Rousseau's ideas, and developed by revolutionary leaders in order to safeguard the Revolution¹¹⁵. Relying on, and yet going beyond Michael Freedon's argument that nationalism is best studied as a 'thin-centered ideology', namely that it must rely on other ideologies to provide direction to its political programme, Hellström invites to join him in viewing nationalism not as an ideology at all, but as "discursive construct", or a communication act aimed at strengthening the bond that each citizen feels with the nation. This can be accomplished with references to national origin, but it can also be done by appealing to civic virtues, and by heralding a certain national way of thinking in opposition to that of the Other, preferably the immigrants, which represents backwardness in cultural terms. The message is that immigration poses a threat to the nation, both economically and culturally. In order for these claims to have an effect on the dominant discourse on national identity and immigration and on related policies, the sender must construct stable *ethos*-positions from which they can make their voices heard in the public zone of acquiescence¹¹⁶. In other words, they need to first be accepted as a legitimate political player before they can bring their ideas to the forefront. Besides that the "backwardness in terms of cultural refinement" is clearly a matter of what one defines as cultural, it is unlikely that any of the Scandinavian countries could reasonable be considered a country of refined culture, especially when compared with immigrants from places like Persia. Of course, the country of origin of the immigrants has an impact on this point, and as many of the immigrants in Scandinavia are originally from such places as Afghanistan, Turkey etc., it may have some validity, but only when referring to specific national groups of immigrants.

Conclusion

In pre-war Russia, after the defeat at the hands of the Japanese, and the eruption of revolutionary disorders and strikes in large parts of Russia, the Czar, Nicholas II, declared his intentions to call a national assembly, a State Duma to be elected on the basis of a wide franchise, together with other concessions. The same year, a new party was founded, the Union of the Russian People (*Soiuz Russkogo Naroda*). It was formed, not with a strict party

¹¹⁵ C. HAYES, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism*, New York, Macmillan 1931, p. 42. This form of nationalism at the heart of Italian and German Fascism and National-Socialism respectively.

¹¹⁶ A. HELLSTRÖM, *Trust Us. Reproducing the Nation and the Scandinavian Nationalist Populist Parties*, Berghahn, New York-Oxford 2016, p. 184.

structure, but in defence of the Czar, the Church and the fatherland, and of the autocracy against any attacks, representing the Russian people (*narod*) itself, argued Carsten. This combination of claiming to defend the oppressors in the name of the oppressed was justified by the fact that they saw a need for inclusion of the population in government council as well as for conceding better conditions for peasants and workers. This middle way assured some support from the lower middle classes, as well as the lower classes who tended to prioritise a minimal level of security above revolutionary aspirations. The party leaders belonged to the higher classes though. While its deputies sat in the third Duma - there were about fifty deputies of the extreme Right, more than ten percent of the total - they worked hard to discredit it and to keep it from doing any useful work. The first party leader, Dr. Dubrovin, made references, like the populists had done before him, to the importance of retaining the *mir*, which he viewed as a tool for social equity and justice. He also declared that “business and financial enterprises only benefited Jews and foreigners and were classified as essentially un-Russian”¹¹⁷. Besides being anti-constitutional and anti-Liberal, the programme did not contain other clearly defined aims. Its protest frequently took violent form, and its violent wing, the so-called ‘yellow-shirts’, beat up political adversaries and Jews. These latter features were to be employed also by the Italian fascists and the German national-socialists. This party had picked features from the previous populist movement (i.e. the romanisation of the *mir* and the simple, rural life promoted by an elite. Only, this time around, it was not an intellectual elite, but the landowners who promoted the ‘old ways’. It had also adopted the anti-Semitism which, as we have seen, was probably promoted by the government and which had been the safety-valve that had prevented the toppling of Czarist regime. In this sense, the party’s violence was almost in the norm, and so was its ideological stance. In 1909, the party split. It continued in a moderate form, more closely connected to the Conservatives, and in a smaller, more radical group. After the presentation of nationalist ideas and ideas about what constitutes a nation, we have gained some understanding of the processes behind, and the content of, nationalism as an ideology. At the end of the day, it is not theoretical discussion but people’s perceptions about their nations and nationalism that matters. As Walker Connor put it, identity “does not draw its sustenance from facts but from perceptions”. Whatever historians may say, in popular perceptions nations are ‘eternal’¹¹⁸. However, we are still left with some unanswered questions: What is it that binds people more closely to the destiny of a nation than to the fate of, for example, political parties or social classes? Is it a phenomenon that requires a completely separate framework of understanding, or is it, as we shall try to treat it in the present volume, possible to place nationalism in the same analytical framework as other political doctrines? To answer the

¹¹⁷ F.L. CARSTEN, *The Rise of Fascism*, cit., p. 42.

¹¹⁸ The passage is cited in U. ÖZKIMLI, *Theories of Nationalism*, cit., p. 199.

question of what it is that binds people more closely to a nation than to, for instance, social class, we need to combine two observations. Özkirimli recalled that John Stuart Mill thought that the essence of nationality was a special sympathy among individuals, members of groups too large for the individuals to know all other members personally. This sympathy makes them more willing to cooperate and provides them with a desire to create a community under the same government, and that the government be performed by this community, or members of this community. He added that peoples without a national feeling of bondedness, especially through history, did not possess the requirements for successful representative government. Furthermore, Mill thought that lesser nations, that is, the 'inferior' or 'more backward portion of the human race', should be absorbed, with advantage to that nation, within the state of another nation. This then explains why people have a natural inclination to feel a bond to an entity the size of a nation, but it does not explain why some features, such as shared language, common history, shared culture, myths or religion are selected as the uniting feature any particular nation. This is where we need to employ the method of historical analysis which Foucault called 'eventalisation'. Furthermore, in order to understand what links the individual to nationalism, Durkheim suggests it is patriotism, arising, for example out of national celebrations¹¹⁹. This introduces us to the question of manipulation of nationalist sentiment.

There is reason to think, as we have seen, that the political and economic motivations of political elites greatly influence the perceived ties with a particular nation on the one hand, and the possible understandings of the content of these ties on the other. In respect of the latter, especially religious elites and historians have great influence thanks to the power of learning. Fichte's notion that shared interests can be taught, possibly to the detriment of individual freedom of choice as most contemporary persons would understand this freedom, but to the great gain of civility and strife for improvement of humanity, has proven to be correct in many respects. Which contemporary historian does not remember the nationalist imagery of his/her own national history, or histories, with which they had to come to terms before attempting to approach objectivity? It may reasonably be argued that the distinction between nationalism as belonging either to the sphere of political ideology, and in the case of societies that have struggled for an independent nation-state also a political program, or to the sphere of emotions and cultural identity formation, proliferation, preservation and re-invention still needs to be resolved. This particular distinction is very similar to the distinction which we'll have to define and sustain later on, between populism as an ideology, thus with a set political program, and as rhetoric, thus a way of presenting a political program in a manner which is

¹¹⁹ Ivi, pp. 25, 27.

likely to convince the electorate and including a fairly fixed set of linguistic references and tactical manoeuvres.

About the relationship between populism and nationalism, we may conclude, on the basis of this first historiographical step, that although early populists did not necessarily approve of the patriotic endeavours of, for example Bismarck, there are points on which the two movements communicate. A more explicit example of how populists disapproved of nostalgic patriotism is what Mikhailovsky wrote upon returning from a visit to Kissingen in the summer of 1870, during the mobilisation for the Franco-Prussian War. He asked: does this ever-recurring idea of the unity of Germany represent a progressive principle? The profound and original mind of Proudhon insisted that the unification of Germany and of Italy runs counter to the federative principle and is in essence retrogressive. Mikhailovsky, according to Billington, was particularly critical of Bismarck, described as “the first purely practical politician to appear on the European scene, recognizing no standard of values apart from the exercise of power”¹²⁰. He thus accused Bismarck of calculated self-interest and a lack of consideration for the ideal of societal progress. With the ideas among those nationalists who shared this ideal, the populists would thus find common ground, but in a shared ideal, but also in their belief that the spontaneous organisational unit of local democratic forms, were, somehow, more genuinely an expression of the people (populists) or of the national character (nationalists).

Fascism: nationalist and populist

In the first part of his book, *The Rise of Fascism*, Francis Ludwig Carsten has investigated the early manifestations of what was later to become the fascist movements in Western Europe. Thus, he traces a general outline of nostalgic nationalism, combined with monarchism in pre-WWI France and a combination of liberalism and anti-Semitism in Germany, and especially Austria around the turn of the nineteenth-century. Those of his observations that may help us understand the kind of nationalist populism that is manifest in the contemporary Scandinavian parties, are the following. The general pre-WWI conditions in Europe were of peace and a slowly but surely increasing level of organisation among the working classes. Among the lower middle classes, however, a relatively strong threat of downwards mobility created a sense of insecurity and need for action. Especially the lower middle classes perceived their socio-economic position under threat and found an adversary in the Jewish community. According to Carsten, the targeted community could have been any other, such as Protestants or Czechs, any of these would have been on the increase. He

¹²⁰ J. BILLINGTON, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism*, pp. 71-72.

mentions that several pre-war movements, also referred to as 'the new right', appealed not only to the (lower) middle classes but also to the lower classes, whom they tried to steer away from socialism and nationalism. Some did this by means of Protestant references, others by means of nationalism, in addition, many of these groups found anti-Semitism a fertile ground for drumming up support. The reciprocal inspiration among the new right in several countries was evident. For example, in France, the *Action française's* aspirations to undertake actions similar to the March on Rome and *fasci* purges of Socialist offices and clubs were explicit from the outset. George Valois, in 1924, founded a movement of former military servicemen whose purpose it was to intimidate socialists. After the Franco-Prussian war, in 1898, the *Comité d'Action française* was founded by Maurice Pujo and Henri Vaugois. The group's purpose was to undermine parliamentarianism and individualism. Carsten interprets their main message as follows: France must become as strong as she had once been, must be 'remade into a state as organised at home, as powerful abroad, as she had been under the *Ancien Régime*', before the revolution of 1789. Thus, clearly a nostalgic aim. Germany and Britain as symbols of capitalism - together with Jews, foreigners in France, Protestants, Switzerland, the freemasons and anti-clericals - were seen by another of the leading figures in the group, Charles Maurras, as the arch enemies of the Goddess-like France. He saw democracy as a weakening of the state. When comparing the *Action française movement's* main ideological ideas, one can observe a combination of clear conservative protectionism, clericalism and anti-liberalism, together with the conviction that organised mob-gangs of supporters, upsetting public gatherings of whomever they perceived to be their ideological enemies. The movement's supporters were mainly, but by no means exclusively to be found in the capital. The economic policy which the movement proposed as an alternative to capitalism was a "corporate order, in which labour was to be organised in guilds". Carsten saw the main weakness of the *Action française*, in respect of the post-war fascist movements, its ideological orientation towards the past, rather than towards the present and the future¹²¹.

In Italy, the recent unification had been more problematic than the unification of Germany, and now suffered from the complication of the strongly differentiated economies of the North and the South. In 1896, Prime Minister Francesco Crispi ordered the North-African expansion into Eritrea. The attempt at conquering the planned territory resulted in the fall of Crispi from power. His supporter, Enrico Corradini, however, founded *Il Regno*, which was nationalist, anti-parliamentarian, anti-democratic, anti-freemasonry and anti-socialist, in 1903. It asserted the values of war and expansionist imperialism. At the 2nd congress of the Italian Nationalist Party, *Associazione Nazionalista Italiana*, it was pronounced that all universal ideas (pacifism, internationalism, egalitarianism) were incompatible with

¹²¹ F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism*, cit., pp. 10-17, 80.

nationalism. In the 1913 elections, however, only three nationalists were elected to the chamber. Carsten comments:

there was a marked affinity of [Corradini's] thought with that of the Socialists in his definition of Italy as a proletarian nation, engaged in a struggle against the 'plutocratic' nations of Europe. It was the class struggle elevated to the international plane¹²².

In this movement, it was thus proletarianism and anti-socialism that seemed to determine the use of the nationalist arguments to rally support. On the other side of the political divide, Benito Mussolini was developing another idea of nationalist politics. It is interesting to note that before WWI, Benito Mussolini was violently against the war in Libya and a convinced socialist internationalist and revolutionary, who rejected parliamentary procedure. According to Carsten, he resented the intellectuals who led the Socialist Party. He was even sentenced to five years of imprisonment (of which he only served a few months) for his anti-war agitation. Germany was seeing rapid modernisation and an increasingly poor urban working class. This gave rise to the Social Democratic Party. It grew quickly, but in 1877, it reached only 12 seats in parliament. The old elite was still in place under Bismarck, so there was no place for an *Action française*-type party. In 1879, the court preacher, Adolf Stoecker (Berlin) tried to set up a Christian-Social Workers' Party, whose aim was to make the working classes embrace the Church and the existing state. After poor initial support, Stoecker introduced his anti-Semitic message in 1879, with increased success. He claimed that Jews constituted an ungodly power which was trying to transform themselves into the new aristocracy in Berlin. It was especially small traders, shopkeepers and craftsmen, but also some officers and burgers, who felt threatened by the new order and who supported the Christian-Social Worker's Party. Stoecker's Christian-Social Workers' Party's popularity declined towards the end of the century, as prosperity increased. In 1896, Stoecker was forced to resign from the party executive as a result of the agrarian turn the party was taking, with increased support by the Junkers¹²³. The German expansionist and anti-semitist ideas of Paul Bötticher were presented in his *Deutsche Schriften*¹²⁴. Among other things, he wrote that Jews must be either deprived of their religion or forced to leave central Europe. This was a plan to make national and state boundaries correspond, or in other words, he was envisioning a nation-state defined by exclusionary, ethnic criteria. His extreme position led him to attack Bismarck's foreign policy, parliament and the Reichstag and support instead a strong national

¹²² Ivi, pp. 21-22.

¹²³ Ivi, pp. 23-28

¹²⁴ Bötticher wrote under the pseudonym de Lagarde.

leader, with the Reichstag as advisory council. His ideas were later taken up by the National Socialists. In Hesse, where “many peasants were indebted to Jewish money-lenders”. In 1890, a librarian of Marburg University, Otto Böckel, and four others became Reichstag deputies for Hesse, as members of an anti-semitic movement. The peak of the movement’s popularity was in 1898 (284,000 votes). However, after friction arose between Böckel and Hermann Ahlwardt, who besides attacking Jonkers and Jews, attacked high society just as hard. In Carsten’s interpretation, the general increase in prosperity towards the end of the century also contributed to the weakening of protest-movements such as this one. We can thus observe a support for the idea that it is especially during periods of crisis that national feelings consolidate into nationalism. With increased prosperity came a shift towards a more civil, yet not less fervid, political tendency; in the 1890’s, the *Alldeutscher Verband* (Pan-German League) was founded. Its purpose was to promote germanism in the German-speaking areas beyond the borders and to preserve germanism through promoting foreign expansion. Anti-semitic policies were not part of the League’s programme, but its leader, Heinrich Claß, in 1907, suggested Jew should be treated as foreigners. Not because of cultural differences, but because of their promotion of modern materialism. At the same time, he suggested that the constitution should be replaced, and an imperialist dictatorship be instated. The League managed to keep its possibilities open through maintaining good relations with several other important political parties and organisations. Thus pre-WWI German nationalism movements contained streams of racialism and the idea of a great destiny of the German Volk, and were accompanied by a veneration for war, blood, and soil, an Aryan mysticism, neo-paganism, and the rejection of Christianity. According to Carstens, the more rationally minded among Germans, the French and the Italians found this rather ridiculous¹²⁵.

In Austria and Bohemia, anti-semitism was increasing, an economic crisis embued, and the lower classes felt the pressure from foreign immigration.¹²⁶ At the same time, the pressure for political recognition on the side of the non-German and non-Hungarian groups was increasing. There was a financial crash the same year that Georg Ritter van Schönerer entered the Reichsrat, in 1873. He was at first a progressive with a radical programme of nationalisation of the railways, universal and direct franchise, as well as the economic, and political, union with Germany. He gradually gradually expressed himself more and more in anti-semitic terms. In 1887, he depicted Jews as hostile to ‘the Aryan descent’ and to the

¹²⁵ F.L. CARSTEN, *The Rise of Fascism*, cit., 26-29, 31.

¹²⁶ By 1910, what had been a small Jewish population, had increased to 175,000 persons and they were highly educated and controlled a large part of industry and trade. Already in 1890, 33,6% of students at Vienna University were Jews. See F.L. CARSTEN, *The Rise of Fascism*, cit., pp. 32-34.

Christian culture of the German nation¹²⁷. It was thus not pagan mysticism that was initially at the forefront of Schönerer's thought. Later on, however, his pagan tendencies only increased, and he encouraged people to give real Germanic names to their children, to leave the Roman Catholic Church, and to celebrate the commemorations of pre-Christian defeats of the Roman legions in 113 B.C. In the Reichsrat, Schönerer and his co-representatives, time and again obstructed the procedures and managed to get parliament prorogued on one occasion. In northern Bohemia, where a large influx of Czech workers had undercut German wages and living conditions, the new *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (German Workers' Party) was founded in 1904. This new party, Carsten observes, was radical but not necessarily right-wing. In describing itself, the party wrote that they were a *freiheitliche nationale Partei* (Liberal National Party) "which is fighting with all its strength against the reactionary tendencies, feudal, clerical and capitalist privileges as well as all foreign national influences". This was a completely new type of nationalist ideology, a precursor for National-socialism, and may serve as additional evidence that nationalism is another, 'thin' ideology. In other words, it is a political shell that can (partially) be combined with different ideological ideas, and yet is able to preserve its integrity. Further evidence of this is the fact that many among the German trade union leaders connected to the Pan-Germanic League later became well-known National Socialists¹²⁸. Within a month after the outbreak of World War I, Mussolini went from supporting the German and Austrian allies, to claiming that Italian socialism had from the outset tendentially had an anti-German and anti-Austrian flavour. As we have mentioned, Mussolini initially belonged among the Socialists and was an anti-war campaigner. He was also the editor of the socialist *Avanti!* but was later relieved of his duties because of his change of heart and sudden support of Italy's expanding attempts on the African continent. He then founded a new, pro-war journal, *Il Popolo d'Italia*. This resulted in his being expelled from the party altogether. In Carsten's interpretation, he probably "sensed the nationalist mood prevailing in the country and was carried away by his thirst for action and his hatred of Austria, by a belief in war as a means to obtain revolutionary ends". Thus Carsten clearly isn't convinced about the sincerity of the nationalist aspects of Mussolini's programme. He used *Il Popolo d'Italia* demand the suppression of the Socialist press and the persecution of anyone who was not doing his/her utmost for the war effort, or who undermined the spirit of resistance. He also demanded the establishment of a non-parliamentary government to lead the nation. In January 1919, Mussolini joined forces with the *arditi* who had performed raids on enemy positions in the war. They had become particularly susceptible to his cause after the Post-War Peace Treaty failed to acknowledge Italy's efforts in the war. In Milan, a few

¹²⁷ The quotations are from an important unpublished London Ph.D. thesis, entitled *The Political Career and Influence of Georg Ritter van Schönerer*, defended by John Christopher Peter Warren in June 1963. The point is mentioned in F.L. CARSTEN, *The Rise of Fascism*, cit., pp. 34-35.

¹²⁸ Ivi, pp. 37-39.

weeks after, Mussolini founded the *Fasci di Combattimento*, whose purpose it was to agitate and threaten so that the regime could be overthrown. However, it is unclear what Mussolini had planned as a next step at this point. What was clear, nevertheless, was the focus of the programme on policies that would support ex-service men. This implied an expansionist foreign policy, a progressive tax on capital and a record-high tax on war profits, universal franchise – also for women-, a paid national militia, minimum wage, nationalisations of industries, confiscation of all ecclesiastical property and industrial corporations. Their first victory was to attack the offices of *Avanti!* and the *de facto* invasion of Fiume in September 1919, led by the soldier-poet, Gabriele D'Annunzio, also plaid into their hands. Many of the habits of D'Annunzio's private army were also adopted by Fascists. For example, the followers of the latter would regularly gather in large crowds to hear him speak, would hold out their arm in a roman salute, and would shout *Italia o morte!* As the government lost its authority and several militias, both fascist and nationalist, began assaulting socialists in the streets, D'Annunzio made plans to march on Rome and the economic situation worsened, the *fasci* movement spread to the country-side. In the parliamentary elections of November 1919, the Socialists gained 156 seats out of 508 – 104 seats more than in 1913. The Italian Socialist movement, although weakened by a failed lock-out, was far to the left of the Social Democratic or Labour parties in most of Europe and the middle classes' fear for their existence was maybe exaggerated but very real. They felt abandoned to their own devices by a state that refused to interfere with the rioting and disorders, while big landowners and industrialists supported the *fasci*, who would protect them from the seizure of their land. Government sanction of these violent squads arrived on October 20th, 1920, when Bonomi (Minister of War) permitted that ex officers who joined the *Fasci di Combattimento*, were to receive four-fifths of their former pay. The number of *fasci* multiplied (800 by the end of 1920 and 1000 by February 1921), as did their violent actions against the Socialists who did not know to muster organised defence. The *fasci* were not centrally controlled, and extreme instances of random executions occurred. In 1921, Mussolini himself had to resign his party offices when he wanted to steer the Fascists in a more moderate direction, seeking rapprochements with the Socialists. The local *fasci* did not agree to this change in direction and, effectually, took control of the party. In the end, Mussolini accepted the move within the party towards the nationalists. The profile of the movement had taken on the shape which was to characterise Italian fascism: a strong nationalist current, strong anti-socialist feeling, and distrust of the weak leadership of the parliamentarian system, which was unable to create consensus. An interesting occurrence was when, in 1922, the socialists organised a general strike and the fascists simply organised the running of the public services, which severely undermined the ability of the socialists to bring government to the negotiating table. On October 24th, 1922, a monster rally at Naples took place. Mussolini declared his intentions

for the fascist party “to become the state”. Later in the day he added: “either the government will be given to us or we shall descend upon Rome and take it. It is now a question of days, perhaps of hours”. Considerable uncertainty about the prospects that Mussolini thought achievable, but the fascists planned the March on Rome, although Mussolini was in intense negotiations to form a coalition government, with the support, in writing, from landowners, bankers and industrialists. On October 27th, the Fascists occupied provincial administrations and military barracks all over northern Italy, camping at a 20-30 miles distance from Rome. Mussolini accepted to come to Rome only when he was promised the function of Prime Minister in a coalition government. He became Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs in a coalition government which accepted all constitutional forms, including the oath to the constitution. An overwhelming vote of confidence was given to the government. Not even all the Socialist deputies voted against it. The fascist party had not yet become what it was to be. The new government asked for, and obtained, the right to issue decrees in the fields of taxation and government budget spending and economic reorganisation¹²⁹. In reality then, the fascist disapproval of parliamentary government was intermitted when they gained enough potential electoral support to be an inescapable partner in a coalition government. A new electoral law in 1923 undermined representational democracy and was an anti-pluralist, ‘winner takes all’ system, where the largest part to reach a quarter of the votes was assigned two-thirds of the seats in parliament¹³⁰. Even after the kidnapping and murder of Matteotti, orchestrated by Fascists connected with the Ministry of the Interior, the opposition limited itself to a parliamentary walk-out and demonstrations. Mussolini’s strongest opposition was thus to be found within the fascist party, where the so-called ‘movement of the consuls’ opposed Mussolini’s ‘soft leadership’. Now the Fascist violence, although still targeting the political opposition, was aimed at forcing Mussolini’s hand. The result was the elimination of the freedom of the press, which caused even coalition party leaders to join the opposition and the Fascist party took over all government posts in January 1925. From then onwards, all opposition parties and hostile press were suppressed. The perception of the Italian fascists abroad was varied, but it is interesting to look at the arguments foreign observers used in favour of the fascist movement. For example, they emphasized the order the regime was imposing on the economic development of the country, the popularity of the ideological principles implemented by the fascists and the fact that a strong leader figure reminded of earlier monarchic periods¹³¹. When reading the words of

¹²⁹ Ivi, pp. 47, 51, 53, 55-60, 62-66.

¹³⁰ The reason why the other parties in the coalition supported this law, was that they believed Mussolini would otherwise dissolve parliament and that a safe majority would strengthen Mussolini against the more radical elements within the Fascist party. See F.L. CARSTEN, *The Rise of Fascism*, cit., p. 68.

¹³¹ C. MOLINERO, *L’immagine del regime fascista italiano nella pubblicistica spagnola*, in G. DI FEBBO, R. MORO (a cura di) *Fascismo e franchismo. Relazioni, immagini, rappresentazioni*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2005, pp. 353-375, 359.

Mussolini to the people of England, one understands why the fascist movement was seen by many mainly as an anti-revolutionary and to some extent reactionary movement:

Il fascismo Italiano non ha significato solamente una rivolta politica contro I Governi deboli e incapaci [...] ma è stata una ribellione spiritual alle vecchie ideologie che corrompevano i sacri principi della Religione, della Patria e dalla famiglia¹³².

In Germany, several movements, including the National Socialists, planned a 'March on Berlin' in 1923. The reference to the fascist March on Rome could hardly be clearer. General Ludendorff, was to be at the head of the March, to which ex military servicemen and nationalists flocked¹³³. Later, during the Nazi period, Hermann Esser, Joseph Göbbels, and Adolf Hitler were all to maintain their admiration for what Mussolini had done in Italy¹³⁴. The admiration was not reciprocated in the early days of National-socialism¹³⁵.

Spanish Francoism and Italian fascism shared some of their main features, such as their totalitarian and authoritarian nature, while their main differences were the Italian focus on corporatism and the Spanish focus on national syndicalism. Nevertheless, the positive propaganda of Francoism in Italy was taken over by the effort to underline the idea that fascism was compatible with Catholicism, whereas Francoism was not¹³⁶. An interesting observation about the fascist revolution, which might be made about other, populist, movements was made in 1924 by Francisco Cambó. According to him, the masses who supported the revolution had not thought to inform themselves about the political programme of the fascists. They chose to support it mainly because it fought against communism and for the fatherland, as opposed to internationalism. He thinks this is a general tendency among the supporters of revolutions. It is better not to discuss the post-revolution reality beforehand, since people intuitively understand that doing so could undermine the unity of the revolutionaries¹³⁷. This is a clever characterisation of what binds many supporters of populist parties together and may also be an explanation for why so many of these parties suffer irreparable damage from spells in government. After all, when in government, the gaze must be, at least partially, aimed at what lies ahead and on construction, rather than towards destruction itself. This begs the question of why certain populist parties are more resilient to 'winning' than others. Here we may think of the U-KIP, as examples of parties that do not manage to keep together their supportive backing after having gained power, unless they are

¹³² Ivi, p. 365

¹³³ F.L. CARSTEN, *The Rise of Fascism*, cit., p. 80.

¹³⁴ J. GÖBBELS, *Der Faschismus*, Junker & Dünnhaupt, Berlin 1934, pp. 8, 10, 18.

¹³⁵ F.L. CARSTEN, *The Rise of Fascism*, cit., pp. 80-81.

¹³⁶ In 1932, in his *Genio de España e La Nueva Catolicidad*, Ernesto Giménez Caballero writes that the main substantial difference between Hitlerian and Mussolinian fascism is that the former is a pagan fascism, whereas the latter is a Christian fascism. See C. MOLINERO, *L'immagine del regime fascista italiano nella pubblicistica spagnola*, cit., p. 361.

¹³⁷ Ivi, p. 355.

placed there purposefully to sit in opposition to something. This theory, however, does not provide tools for understanding why some other populist movements and parties do not lose their support when entering government coalitions.

A representation of the 'new democracy' put in place by the fascist regimes was presented in 1942 by the director of the Instituto de Estudios Políticos, Alfonso Garcia Valdecasas:

Anche se 'il concetto di Stato totalitario risponde più propriamente alla teoria italiana che a qualsiasi altra [...] oggi vengono designate con il nome di Stati totalitari tutti quelli che rappresentano nuove forme d'organizzazione diverse da quella parlamentare e che hanno adottato un atteggiamento polemico rispetto allo Stato liberale e democratica.

To him, the Spanish state was a totalitarian instrument in the *service of the Patria* and the salvage of historical inheritance¹³⁸.

Some of this volatility in popular support was also present during the last months of Italian fascism. That public sentiment had turned thoroughly anti-fascist becomes clear when reading that already in February 1945, in the popular newspaper of the resistance, *L'Unità*, the following was said about the maintenance of diplomatic ties with Spain: it is a scandal "which the Italian population cannot tolerate and an offence to the memory of seven hundred Italian garibaldini fallen on Spanish ground in defense of the republic" besides 'an attack on the Spanish population which hates Franco's regime and await with anxiety the moment of liberation'¹³⁹. What we may then observe about fascism is that the idea that such an ideology was needed, most likely, sprang from the discontent of the lower middle classes; especially the ex servicemen, who had seen their possibilities of making a livelihood decrease significantly, but also land owners, who feared the alternative to fascism which, at the time, seemed to be socialism. Carsten implicitly makes a case for the decisive influence of the wishes of one man on the direction that fascism took: that of Mussolini himself. He was young, and inspired to action, which was curtailed by a weak government. He therefore decided to take matters in his own hands; allying himself with returned soldiers. Was the anti-socialism then a result of the new alliance, given that the *fasci* were nostalgic of a strong state, with expansionist ideals. In any case, Carsten does not analyse the ideological transformation of Mussolini further, but we may, from what we know, conclude that some opportunism may have guided Mussolini's political strategy, at least until he managed to establish some internal uniformity within the movement. Hitler had also started his political life within the leftist

¹³⁸ Ivi, p. 371.

¹³⁹ P. ALLOTTI, *L'immagine della Spagna franchista nei quotidiani italiani del dopoguerra (1945-1950)*, pp. 455-467, in G. DI FEBO, R. MORO (eds.), *Fascismo e franchismo*, cit., p. 458.

movement, before turning to nationalism. His break with socialist policy was, however, less convinced than that of Mussolini, and we get the idea that he was genuinely an anti-semitic long before entering the political arena. May we therefore conclude that he was less populist than Mussolini? In any case, Hitler managed to keep the national-socialist ideology under his control, while Mussolini was maybe more easily influenced by circumstances, pressure from inside the movement, and council given to him. Hitler, on the other hand, maintained his position as the father of national-socialism, also among his collaborators.

Conclusion

In Federico Finchelstein's view, as suggests in his 2017 book, *From Fascism to Populism in History*, fascism and populism are intimately related. In fact, he suggests that fascism combines populism with some other political ideas, the most important of which is militarism, but including also "extreme right-wing nationalism, imperialism, and non-Marxist antiparlamentarian leftist tendencies of revolutionary syndicalism"¹⁴⁰. However, it is clear that Finchelstein's definition of populism is hollower than the understanding we have derived from looking at the first occurrences of populism. Indeed, we hold that fascism and national-socialism were very different to Russian populism, although not incomparable in every sense. More specifically, in Russian populism, it was the moral interests and self-realisation of each individual member of 'the people' that mattered, and in American Agrarian populism, it was the class-struggle for economic reforms that mattered. Does Finchelstein's understanding of populism then significantly differ from that which we have constructed so far? Partially yes, but we find resonance in the compatibility between his definition and American Agrarian populism. Nevertheless, rather than fascism being a form of populism, it seems to belong to a similar type of ideology. Here we do not mean that a similarity in content is necessarily significant, but rather that they are both, in our view, 'thin-centered ideologies' that, when combined with ideological content from the more traditional left – or right-wing, or with a combination of policies from both ends of the spectrum, become political programmes with high potential and appeal, especially during times of (percieved) crisis. Thus, what we have been able to observe is that the theory that nationalism arises in times of crises where, typically the lower middle classes, or the lower classes, feel the pressure of economic decline in combination with factors such as immigration, seems to hold the first test against historical cases. In this context, an interesting parallel may be drawn between the unsettled social reality of the post-revolution world on the one hand, and the post super-power Europe of today. Are parts of the European populations experiencing similar uncertainties and feelings

¹⁴⁰ F. FINCHELSTEIN, *From Fascism to Populism in History*, University of California Press, Oakland (CA) 2017, pp. 33-34.

of alienation in respect of the world order and lack of social ties set up by their predecessors? If yes, does this mean that these feelings of alienation may result in a new-found nationalist fervour? And, finally, to what extent would a nationalism resulting from these uncertain times be similar to the nationalism that arose with the romantics?

Another scholar who seems to bring populism and nationalism together is Sir Isaiah Berlin. Populism, according to him, has a notion of an intergrated and cohesive society, a disinterest for political institutions and a superstitious belief in the society. It strives towards a previous condition which is believed to have existed before the perceived crisis, it strives to revive traditional norms and values, and it refers to the 'will of the people'. This definition could be a definition both of populism and of nationalism, with the expectation that nationalism specifically strives to maintain, or create, a nation-state.

Populism as Ideology or Style

The ideals of modern political movements that are considered populist differ significantly from the ideals of the first populist movements. Although they share certain features, such as a reference to the moral superiority of a simple life and the ability of populist leaders to interpret what the people really want, the new feature, that populist leaders claim to be a beacon of 'the people', was not present among neither the narodniki, although some claim that the parts of the 1860 generation of Russian populists partook in such an interpretation. Even if some did, it was out of frustration with the ingratitude shown towards the populists by the rural population. Taggart's understanding of 'the heartland' may help us understand what is meant by 'the people' in contemporary populist movements. 'The heartland' is a place in which, in the populist imagination, a virtuous and unified population resides. Mudde explains:

The concept of the heartland helps to emphasize that the people in the populist propaganda are neither real nor all-inclusive, but are in fact a mythical and constructed sub-set of the whole population. In other words, the people of the populists are an 'imagined community', much like the nation of the nationalists. At the same time, the notion of the heartland does not overcome the main problem of the people, its vagueness¹⁴¹.

¹⁴¹ C. MUDDE, *The populist Zeitgeist*, cit., pp. 545-546.

We follow Mudde in observing that populists argue that the political elite attempts to corrupt the members of their community and, through their use of rhetoric and propaganda, seek to create artificial cleavages in the naturally homogenous will of the people. They do this to further their own, personal aims. This, much like Fichte where the nation was concerned, is in the tradition of Rousseau. In fact, some populist movements believe, or at least claim to believe, that they, if given political power, would be able to diverge from this corruptive practice, other populists, instead, blame the political party system. According to Mudde, populism is a discourse about the relationship between the elite and the people, but this still leaves the question of what populism actually is: an ideology, a syndrome, a political movement or a political style? Mudde considers it to be ideology which sees society as fundamentally split in to two homogenous but opposing groups, 'the pure people' on one side, and 'the corrupt elite' on the other, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will. He further pointed out that populism, according to this definition, has in fact two opposites: elitism and pluralism¹⁴². A definition which incorporates the new features of contemporary populist movements, is that presented by Paul Taggart. His is a definition in themes, and the themes that define populism are 1) distrust of representative politics; 2) a shared idea that a 'heartland' exists within the society in question; 3) an empty ideology, independent of a moral compass; 4) a perceived need to react in a situation of crisis; 5) an adjustment to the ideological 'colours' of the surroundings; 6) the interests of the people is perceived to be contrary to the interests of the elite broadly understood; 7) a claim on the side of populist leaders to be able to interpret what the people really want and, effectfully, becoming a beacon for the popular will. In terms of an explanation for how they determine what the people want, the populist leader will offer explanations along the line of 'I am an average person' or 'I have spoken to many, real people, all around the country about this issue'. Furthermore, Kristoffer Löfgren explains, "when populists construct a picture of their 'heartland', they build it on the idealised picture of the wisdom of the people, or the common sense of the people"¹⁴³. To this definition we may add that populists tendentially refer to the opinion of the people as a uniform and coherent opinion.

The question of why populist parties are so popular in politics today is answered by Mudde. He identifies two main factors that have contributed to the increased popularity: increased corruption in politics and the increased distance between the electorate and the political elite. Whether it is actually true that the frequency of political corruption has heightened or not, people are in any case more exposed to scandalous news about it than they used to be. Furthermore, conspiracy theories thrive on instant communication media. As signs of the increased distance between the people and politics, Klaus van Beyme has mentioned the

¹⁴² Ivi, pp. 543, 546.

¹⁴³ K. LÖFGREN, *Sunt förnuft. Populismen i politiska partiers valpropaganda*, cit., p. 9.

following tendencies: 1) the public financing of parties; 2) monopolization of political activities; 3) the co-operation of government and opposition. As Mudde mentions, it is especially the latter tendency which has been mentioned by populists and investigated by scholars. Nevertheless, he goes on to argue that the perception among the majority of the electorate (due to increased level of education) is that being a politician takes no special skills or knowledge and that, therefore, they could probably do a better job themselves. Although this is certainly true of a significant part of the electorate, it seems at first glance to contrast with Mudde's claim that the perceived distance between the people on the one hand and the political elite on the other has increased. Mudde, nevertheless, claims that it is a matter of the perceived presence of such tendencies, rather than the actually proven presence of them, which determines the popularity of populist parties¹⁴⁴. Mudde assigns responsibility for the perceived presence of these phenomena to the media which has become increasingly receptive to sensationalist news coverage. With television and internet, populists can find a direct outlet to the people, unmediated by journalists. Furthermore, Mudde mentions that post-industrial society, and the end of the cold war, has created space for less ideological parties, such as single-issue parties, and has meant more self-critical assessments of existing democracies. At the same time, Mudde mentions that globalization has presented itself as a problematic limitation to the power of established political parties¹⁴⁵. An additional factor, which has contributed to the recent popularity of populist movements, is the fact that just because people appreciate democracy and the right to participate actively in politics, it doesn't mean that actually feel compelled to participate. Therefore, having someone at the helm who seems to be able to, more or less, understand the populations needs, without even having to ask people to declare their opinion, is for many people the ideal. Thus, drawing on arguments presented by Robert Dahl, Mudde concludes that even though a large portion of people want to be heard in the case of fundamental decisions, first and foremost they want *leadership*. They want politicians who *know* what to do, how to lead, and who make their wishes come true. Mudde then handles another 'misconception', according to him, about populist voters, namely the view that they resent the elite because they are not like them. He thinks, instead that supporters of populist movements prioritize that the problems of 'the common man' should be solved, according to their own values, which are usually taken to be the values referable to common sense, and they accept that this will have to be done by a remarkable leader¹⁴⁶. Although he emphasizes that this does not mean that all populist parties are led by charismatic leaders. Populism is usually treated by scholars either as a

¹⁴⁴ C. MUDDE, *The Populist Zeitgeist*, cit., pp. 552-553. For his presentation of Katz and Mair's argument, Mudde refers to R.S. KATZ, P. MAIR, *Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy. The Emergence of the Cartel Party*, in «Party Politics» 1/1 (1995), pp. 5-28.

¹⁴⁵ C. MUDDE, *The Populist Zeitgeist*, cit., pp. 555-556.

¹⁴⁶ Ivi, pp. 558-560

pathology, or symptom, of democracy, or as part of a remedy against such a health condition¹⁴⁷. Some scholars have even called it the shadow of modern democratic practices. As Revelli writes, in any case it is the product of a representational deficit¹⁴⁸. Although cumbersome, the conciliation of this interpretation with the interpretation by Robert Dahl, that many do not wish to participate actively in representational democracy, is possible. In fact, we could claim that the two interpretations are even complimentary if we accept a premise. This premise is that supporters of populism may have an ideal level of political participation in mind which, substantially, exceeds their own willingness to participate. Intuitively, such a premise does not seem unreasonable. This also supports Mudde's interpretation that populism, is not an attack on representative democracy as such, but rather on liberal democracy and constitutional democracy, including principles of diversity and inclusiveness, as well as the independence of key state institutions¹⁴⁹. Jan-Werner Müller, in what has been called a "sweeping critique of populism" confronts the reader with, on the one hand, the inevitability of populism as democracy's 'shadow' and, on the other hand, the observations that 1) populism does not have a particular political colour and, as such, may belong at either end of the classical political divide between left and right-wing party politics, and that 2) the determining factor is not the policies it tries to implement, but rather the underlying anti-pluralism is what, to Müller, defines a political party, or movement, as belonging to the populist category¹⁵⁰. It is, in any case, an interesting perspective that the premises for the development and fruition, not to mention proliferation, of anti-(political) establishment movements and parties in many parts of the world, is the expansion of the political sphere over the last several decades. The fact that national governments, as well as opposition parties, have all claimed to have science on their side, together with the idea that world-peace was within reach, promoted by the setting up and empowerment of international and coordinative organisations, has led to a massive disappointment among large parts of the western population. After the cold war, we were promised a move away from an excessive focus on party- or bloc-politics, where the aim was to promote one's own ideology and ideal society, and towards a society of scientific advancement and economic prosperity. Scandinavia was the crowning glory in as much as several political parties, and even entire political systems, in this region strove for political inclusion (as the low cut-offs for parliamentary representation, at only 2% of the votes indicates) and consensus seeking, thus effectively eliminating true political conflict for several decades. As new security threats and economic crisis showed their ugly face on the one hand, and national politics seemed unable,

¹⁴⁷ Ivi, p. 541. See also J. de RAADT, D. HOLLANDERS, A. KROUWEL, *Varieties of Populism. An Analysis of the Programmatic Character of Six European Parties*, in «Working Papers Political Science», 4 (2004), pp. 1-28.

¹⁴⁸ M. REVELLI, *Populismo 2.0*, Einaudi, Torino 2017, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ C. MUDDE, *The Populist Zeitgeist*, cit., p. 561.

¹⁵⁰ J-W., MÜLLER, *What is Populism?*, cit., pp. 75-99.

or unwilling, to effectively deal with these threats, the populations lost patience with their leaders, thinking either that they could do a better job themselves, or that a new political elite with different visions of politics were needed. Geoff Mulgan, possibly with prescriptive outcome, points out many of these tendencies¹⁵¹. To another group of scholars, populism represents only a 'tactical device' or a 'style of communication'¹⁵². After all, a certain general terminology and way of speaking about the people is employed by populists. They often speak about 'the people' and 'the citizen', but they also use specific, commonly occurring characteristics of individuals to represent much larger portions of the electorate. For example, 'nurse Cat' could be employed to signify the anything from the average health sector employee, anyone working in shifts, a typical single-mother, or anyone with a higher vocational education level, depending on the context. Van de Raadt et al. also mention that populists, where they make appeals to independence, may also employ ethnic distinctions, linguistic traits, and/or regional references. This, they claim, is what the Vlaams Blok would do. They would represent the Flemish population as victims of the establishment and their self-interested politics. They continue:

We thus consider statements in party programmes populist if 'the people' are understood as a monolithic entity without internal cleavages, and if references reflect an understanding of the people as 'common and ordinary', in need of protection against the establishment¹⁵³.

However, approaching populism as mere tactics, or political style, is problematic. It is recalled that according to Taggart, often the populist style is confused with a style that seeks to be popular. This tactic of appealing to a broad electoral clientele is closely associated, either specifically, to the 'catch-all people's party' which is not necessarily populist or, generally, to most political parties who try to appeal to new, potential voters, by using popular appeal. In turn, such a broad understanding of populism – as political leaders saying what is popular, or what the leaders of the movements think people wish to hear- opens our discourse to the distinct possibility that all political parties are, at least partially populist. The concept of populism is thus emptied of significance or, at best, is nothing more than political campaigning techniques. However, concluding, as Jasper de Raadt et al. have done, that by understand populism as a 'thin-centered ideology', or as a hollow ideology, which is flexible enough to be

¹⁵¹ G. MULGAN, *Politics in an Antipolitical Age*, cit.

¹⁵² See, for example, J. JAGERS, S. WALGRAVE, *Populism as Political Communication Style. An empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium*, in «European Journal of Political Research», 46/3 (2007), pp. 319-345.

¹⁵³ J. DE RAADT, D. HOLLANDERS, A. KROUWEL, *Varieties of Populism. An Analysis of the Programmatic Character of Six European Parties*, cit., p. 6.

promoted in combination with any progressive, reactionary, autocratic, leftist or rightist policy, we deny populism its substance and, effectually reduce it to a tool. Moreover, Shils and Kitschling have argued that populism is essentially oppositionalist. Van de Raadt et al., on the other hand, conclude that populism is an ideology. They base their conclusion on the following minimal requirements for defining an ideology. Ideologies present ideas about the present order, about an ideal-typical situation, and about ways to move from the current to the desired situation. They go on to argue which content-related arguments, used in populist policy, qualify to support their claim that populism is an ideology: populist parties develop a unique set of arguments about the malfunctioning of representative democracy and the ruling class¹⁵⁴. Thus the idea they present about the present order is that it does not correctly represent the people. The ideal-typical situation they present is one in which there is close communication between the people and their representatives, as well as correspondence between the will of the people and the political establishment. What is particular about the populist understanding of the people's will is that they take for granted that it actually exists, that it is uniform and shared among a large majority, as well as that there exists a reliable way for a new, populist, establishment to discover precisely what it is. Moreover, populism, at least as formulated by contemporary movements in Europe, does not suggest any coherent and comprehensive alternative economic organisation of society. We therefore maintain that there is good reason to doubt both of these assumptions. As far as ways of moving from the actual to the ideal situation is concerned, some populist movements suggest the implementation of more direct democratic tools, such as online surveys (*Sweizerische Volkspartei*, SVP) or referenda and popular consultations (Lijst Pim Fortuyn and Movimento Cinque Stelle). Indeed, some definitions of populism add, besides the appeal to the people and anti-establishment aims, also a pro-direct democracy conception of the ideal political system. However, by including the latter, 'pro-direct democracy stance', among the three main dimensions, common to populism as an ideology, they run the risk of excluding those parties, or movements, whose voters are against the political establishment and the democratic order as it stands now, but who, nevertheless, seek to have their interests better represented; possibly through actions on the part of political leaders who seek to know more about them, rather than through their own political participation through the tools of direct democracy. As Carlos de la Torre shows, in regards to Latin American populism, these movements exist, and they are genuinely not seeking to participate but merely to be represented by strong leaders who know their needs, fears, problems and concerns¹⁵⁵. Mudde about distinctive leader-figures within the parties. While charismatic leadership and

¹⁵⁴ Ivi, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵⁵ C. DE LA TORRE, *In the Name of the People. Democratisation, Popular Organisations, and Populism in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador*, in «European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies», 95 (2013), pp. 27-48.

direct communication between the leader and 'the people' are common among populists, these features *facilitate* rather than define populism. Indeed, the current success of populist actors cannot be separated from the general trend towards strong party leaders and more direct communication between party leadership and party supporters, which has developed over the past decades. Following this logic, it is evident that one can successfully check that populism as an ideology presents something in the way of meeting each of the three requirements of an ideology, as presented by van de Raadt, Hollanders, e Krouwel. However, also Mudde's observation that the ideological content of populism, when seen apart from other ideologies that often accompany it, it cannot muster, on its own, a spectrum of ideological refinement and political programme comparable to the classical ideologies of socialism, liberalism and conservatism. This is why we call it a 'thin-centered ideology'. Furthermore, we borrow from Mudde when we claim that thin-centred ideologies (yes, populism is not alone in this category), can be combined with other -thin or full- ideologies, including communism, nationalism or socialism. According to Mudde, populism makes its supporters think of those with different priorities, or values, as evil. Compromise is thus impossible, as it 'corrupts' the purity¹⁵⁶. Although one may not agree with the view that anti-elitism is the only distinguishing factor of populism, Mudde's characterisation of populism's anti-elitism and his concept of it being a 'thin-centered ideology', does hit a cord with our definition of national-populist ideology. However, when we look at the Scandinavian cases in particular, we may also conclude that populist parties are sometimes willing to reach compromises, especially when the party has become well-established and/or when it has had experience as a supportive party to the government, whether part of the governing coalition or as a coalition partner. Although we embrace this part of Cas Mudde's awareness, it seems he is challenged by trouble with remembering to implement it.

Indeed, when Cas Mudde refers to populism, as being used by mainstream parties both in opposition and in government, what he refers to is rather a rhetorical tool than a 'thin-centered ideology'. It seems, indeed to be a reference to occasions in which opportunism leads political leaders to draw on anti-elitist rhetoric. The unpersuasiveness of the argument comes mainly from the fact that the cases from which Mudde draws his examples are exclusively oratory and are not, at least by him, connected to actual policy goals¹⁵⁷. In a 2015 article in *The Guardian*, Mudde's tune had changed somewhat. Here he pointed out that defined populism in the following terms: the main difference between leftwing and rightwing populism "is not whether they exclude, but whom they exclude, which is largely determined

¹⁵⁶ C. MUDDE, *The populist Zeitgeist*, cit., pp. 544-545.

¹⁵⁷ Ivi, pp. pp. 551-552.

by their accompanying ideology (eg nationalism or socialism)¹⁵⁸. And here he especially warns against populists with a majority in government, such as Viktor Orbán in Hungary and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. He further explains that the two problems with populism are that it “denies the existence of divisions of interests and opinions within “the people” and rejects the legitimacy of political opponents,” since they speak on behalf of a unitary ‘people’, anyone who holds a different opinion, or who questions the populist position, must necessarily be acting in the interest of particular groups, usually the elite. In addition, although populists speak for the ‘oppressed people’, they do not wish to emancipate them by improving their way of life. They had rather condone and promote their present lifestyle. There is thus very little connecting them to early Russian populism in Mudde’s description of contemporary populisms¹⁵⁹. He furthermore points out that it is not the populist politicians themselves that are reluctantly political, but that it is rather their ‘Heartland’ which is so. A possibly suitable concluding remark to this section is one made by Matteo Truffelli, when writing about the prescriptive effect of some scholars’ starting-points for their definitions of the anti-political establishment movements or parties: “The variety of interpretations suggested by different scholars, intellectuals and politicians who have measured themselves against a phenomenon with such undefined contours as ‘anti-politics’, radica itself foremost by the diversity among the ideas of the political from which they depart. A point of departure which inevitably brings in not only descriptive– but also prescriptive argumentation¹⁶⁰. Moreover, it really makes little sense to be keep busy trying to distinguish whether the nature of populism is more ideological, or more of a rhetorical style when it is accepted just how many different movements and parties actually act - and function - as populist, and their reciprocal incompatibility. Indeed, maybe we must accept that it is both. The incompatibility is significant at first glance at a geographical scale, with the Narodniki and the People’s Party at opposite sides of the earth, on a historical scale, with the main streams of populist thought (*Narodniki*; American People’s Party; Latin American populisms, and the many present streams of populism in Europe), as well as an ideological scale, where some populist parties or movements belong at either end of the left-right spectrum. As an utmost relevant example, we have the transformation of the Danish People’s Party, from a libertarian party, to the strongest defender of the social welfare model among the Danish national parties¹⁶¹.

¹⁵⁸ C. MUDDE, *The Problem with Populism*, in «The Guardian», Tuesday 17 February 2015, viewed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/17/problem-populism-syriza-podemos-dark-side-europe> (last accessed 19 April 2017).

¹⁵⁹ C. MUDDE, *The populist Zeitgeist*, cit., p. 546.

¹⁶⁰ M. TRUFFELLI, *Autorità versus libertà. Il pensiero antipolitico nelle democrazie contemporanee*, in N. Antonetti (a cura di) *Libertà e autorità nelle democrazie contemporanee*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2008, pp.191-226, 199.

¹⁶¹ With the major change in political orientation, effectuated with the seizure of power within the Progress Party by Pia Kjaersgaard, came also the change of the name of the party into *Dansk Folk eparti*.

National-, Neo-, or Right-wing? Defining the Populist Party Families Today

Before initiating our main analysis, it is necessary to clarify the meanings, and consequently the choice of the central concepts of the analysis. Thus, we speak of national-populism, rather than right-wing populism. Since this is by no means an inconsequential choice, and since it, to some extent, determines the cases relevant to this study, we should like to take the space to explain it more exhaustively. Let us linger for a moment at the choice of 'national-populism' as the term with which to delineate this study. We have seen that contemporary populism in itself may be defined as a 'thin-centered ideology' because, although its main political principle is anti-liberal in its anti-pluralism and conservatism, it nevertheless needs to be flanked by other policies in order for it to develop a full political programme. As discussed, these policies may belong to either the traditional left, such as the Russian narodniki, or the traditional right, or any combination thereof, as is the case with the Agrarian Populist parties.

The reader may very well be asking themselves why 'right-wing populist' is not the term we will be using to define the concept at the centre of this study. To answer this question, we must look at the difference between this concept and the chosen concept, national-populist. To this purpose, we propose to pursue two levels of analysis: that of the literal and historical meanings of the two concepts on the one hand, and that of the use of the two concepts in the contemporary debate about new political phenomena. It is our hypothesis that the current use of the two concepts bears little resemblance to the literal and historical meanings. In addition, we have noted that nationalism, because it may also base its economic and/or social policies on either traditional left-wing or right-wing policies; or a combination thereof, is also such a 'thin-centered ideology'. Will the choice of 'nationalist-populism' not also result in a 'thinly' defined ideology? We claim that, although it is not as refined and full-bodied as some other ideologies, and although it is more inclusive than the term 'right-wing populism', it still can give us a fairly clear idea of which types of political programmes might be considered national-populist. We thus sustain that although populism may be considered separately as a political style and ideology, national-populism belongs to a clearly-enough defined ideology to be workable as a basis for this study. It is precisely because these parties do not wish to be associated exclusively to either leftwing or rightwing politics, that the parties, or movements, in question opt for a populist imagery. Nevertheless, we need to ask ourselves whether it is the choice of political audience that makes it impossible to fit either side completely. Is it then the case that these parts of the population are intrinsically ambiguous in terms of left-right orientation? This, if we assume pursuing policies that belong to either end of the right-left spectrum simultaneously, means a lack of logical consistency, or stubbornness in not accepting the principle of logic. The willingness to accept logical

inconsistency then seems to be a political companion to the populist appeal, urging such parties to adopt fusionist political agendas, combining typically left- and right-wing policies, and eventually forcing them into some form of populist mold/modality. Indeed, populist parties in government have often been the fatal, destabilizing factor in their coalitions; adopting behaviour which has been irresponsible and, indeed, destabilizing. We may observe that those parties and movements that are currently identified as right-wing populist often, but not always, adhere to a nationalistic worldview, while those that are called national-populist are often more extreme in their nationalistic proposals. Furthermore, the national-populist label is used much more sparingly in the public debate than its right-wing cousin; and while this is maybe not very surprising finding because of the historical connotations, popularly -and almost by reflex- linked, especially in Europe and North-America, to concepts of national-socialism. It, nevertheless, offers an insight into the reasons for the cautious political and journalistic reactions to the emergence of the new national-populist parties in Europe in general, and in Scandinavia in particular. Some populist movements, such as the Green Parties for example, fall outside the definition of a national-populist party, but within the definition of populism. Furthermore, the populist phenomenon is provoked by social crisis and differently from other protest movements, the mobilisation is not 'spontaneous', or bottom-up, but rather top-down, with the initiative necessarily coming from a populist leader. Populist parties, therefore are never grass-root movements. Cas Mudde used the term 'Extreme Right', although he claimed that it was different from fascism because the populist radical Right is not antidemocratic. It embraces popular sovereignty and majority rule, but it rejects both cultural pluralism and minority rights. In other words, "its advocates do not want to overthrow democracy, they want to weaken liberal checks on pure majoritarian rule"¹⁶². The question is whether they would really support this principle of political organisation if they happened to think the majority was significantly different from themselves. The answer is a partial yes. After all, their 'mission' is not to *be* the people, but to implement the *will* of the people, as they understand it. Although Mudde's use of the term 'extreme right' is closely related to our preferred term, 'national-populist', his takes account of the situation in the Americas. Indeed, in his "The Populist Zeitgeist", he rejected the normal pathology thesis and argued instead that "populist discourse has become mainstream in the politics of western democracies." He points out that populism is no longer reserved for the extreme right, nor is it reserved for parties in opposition.¹⁶³ We must, however, remember that Mudde uses the term 'radical right parties', rather than 'national-populist parties'. The consequence is that he loses the historical reference of the phenomenon. After all, it is relatively easy to understand the phenomenon of the radical right as an exclusively contemporary phenomenon, whereas

¹⁶² C. MUDDE, *Who's Afraid of the European Radical Right?*, cit., p. 7.

¹⁶³ C. MUDDE, *The Populist Zeitgeist*, cit., pp. 542-550.

the national-populist movement carries within it part of the history of both the terms of which it is constructed.

Contemporary Party Families

Many contemporary scholars have written about national-populism, extreme right-wing parties, anti-politics parties, and other definitions of related phenomena. For example, Guy Hermet interprets modern European populism as an originally Scandinavian invention. Presently, it is useful to make a short inventory of some of the very different contemporary populist movements. The Latin-American political movements and, later on, - parties that have fashioned themselves as populist, do not belong to a uniform type of populism, although they share some core features.

Peronism

Latin American national and regional histories are filled with violent, political conflict. It is important to understand that the region has witnessed the most convinced Marxists, as well as the most extreme supporters of national-socialism, not to mention dictators and other, authoritarian leaders. It is inevitable that this history influences the increasingly popular perception of populist policy as a stabilizing factor in the region. Here we will quickly summarise some of this history. In many countries in Latin- and South America, populist movements have enjoyed some, although often short-lived, popularity. In Colombia, the lawyer, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, who has been considered an “epitome of populism and demagoguery”, broke away from the Liberal party and formed his socialist Unión Nacional Izquierdista Revolucionaria. The movement was to last until 1946. In Venezuela, Rómulo Betancourt’s (1908-81) Acción Democrática came to power in 1945 following the revolt of officers. The movement clashed with all the establishment and it ended that Betancourt had to go into exile for a second time¹⁶⁴. In Brazil, where the working class was weakened by the apparently limitless supply of labour, the establishment of Vargas’ (1882-1945) Estado Novo in 1937 seemed to nourish the intelligentsia’s faith in ‘authoritarian democracy’. Indeed, Francisco José Oliveira Vianna believed the population of Brazil unable to handle, and therefore, immediately benefit from, liberal democracy, which, to him, seemed to work only

¹⁶⁴ T.S. DI TELLA, *Political and Social Ideas in Twentieth Century South America*, in F.J. Devoto, T.S. Di Tella (eds.), *Political Culture, Social Movements and Democratic Transitions in South America in the XXth Century*, pp. 13-45, Feltrinelli, Milano 1997, pp. 21-23.

in countries with a tradition of public opinion. He discarded the idea of a fascist single-party system, which would soon degenerate into oligarchy, and, after WWII, he rejected totalitarianism but retained his belief in corporatism, which he forecast would become dissociated from fascism, and pointed to the experience of such countries as Sweden, France, Australia and Argentina, where what we would call today neo-corporatism was being applied as a tool of social and economic planning. Similarly, Antonio José Avezedo do Amaral showed extensive similarity to European fascist thought, although he criticised German fascism for focusing too much on 'plebeian elements' and Italian fascism for being weak. He envisioned a new authoritarianism, which was to be legitimated by genuine consensus, which he hoped would be finally established in Brazil by Vargas' Estado Novo constitution¹⁶⁵. Indeed, he made an effort to dissociate corporatism and fascism in people's minds. He wanted Brasil to establish corporatism from the bottom-up, and not top-down as had been done in Italy. He believed that such an achievement would be a democratic alternative to the liberal democratic order. In 1935, an attempt was made by Vargas at changing the Estado Novo regime into a populist regime (*queremismo*)¹⁶⁶. Almost every country in Latin America has experienced populist politics. Internationally, the most widely commented populist leader in Latin America, nowadays, is Chavez, but another, historical examples is that of Peronism in Argentina. In some cases, the populist movements stayed just that; movements, typically present in rural areas. In other cases, the inspiration was clearly from within the political establishment and, although support was popular, the manoeuvrings followed a clearly political pattern. Yet other populist parties and movements have transformed over time and/or have persisted over time and are still a significant feature of the political system. It would be imprudent to try and fit all of the populist realities in Latin America into one common history, not to say type. However, Peronism is a well-known example of Latin American populism, and will let us illustrate some of the features populism has had on this continent. Peronism was basically formed thanks to the strong support of trade unions. Indeed, Juan Carlos Torre writes that what gave Peronism its singular quality was the coexistence of a plebiscitarian leadership and a trade union organisation within the same political movement¹⁶⁷. Trade unions in Argentina had been politically neutral until 1936. Afterwards, most unions were taken over by socialists. In Argentina, by 1943, there was a great fear among the dominant classes and the military that social unrest could be unleashed in the conditions of the post-war period. Juan Domingo Perón was to introduce what, following Di Tella, we may call 'Developmental Fascism'. He, then the Labour Secretary, admired Mussolini, while he

¹⁶⁵ Ivi, pp. 25-26.

¹⁶⁶ Ivi, pp. 27-28.

¹⁶⁷ J.C. TORRE, *The Formation of Populist Trade Unionism in Argentina*, in F.J. DEVOTO, T.S. DI TELLA (eds.), *Political Culture, Social Movements and Democratic Transitions in South America in the XXth Century*, cit., pp. 193-208, 193.

antagonized the Left and the Liberal intelligentsia. On 17th of October 1945, “crowds thronging into the city with no formal leadership”. Perón was the preferable alternative to a return to Conservative rule for the less ideological unionists, the FORJA group (nationalist and radical), and some Trotskyists. His *comunidad organizada*'s idea would imply corporatism to spur pluralist social practices, undiscussed leadership, and a strong, planning state, including the nationalisation of public services. The latter element would fail mainly because the technologically qualified community was against Peronism in general, and against the nationalisation of these services in particular. The idea that Peronism was fascist has been coupled with the idea expounded by the sociologist Gino Germani that Peronism was a form of national populism, “capable of incorporating the lower strata, contrasting with fascism in the type of support it got, and in being much less repressive”¹⁶⁸. As the 1960s advanced, large numbers of the younger generation, both in political and academic circles, reconsidered their earlier opposition, becoming to a greater or lesser extent fascinated with the experience of populism, which they started seeing as a necessary evil, and soon an indispensable component of progressive Latin American politics. Perón's seizure of power in Argentina was unexpected and seems to have been the result of several processes and developments. Despite that the choice for a populist strategy was initially a strategic choice made by Peron and a few other confidants of the military, it ended up gaining the upper hand and becoming unavoidably linked to the political, and personal, fate of Perón.

With the imminent Allied victory, in 1945, the regime declared war against Germany and Japan, and called for democratic elections in 1946. However, the opposition organised a march on the regime, to which the regime reacted with oppressive measures. The opposition nevertheless gained control of the Campo de Mayo and forced Perón to resign. In the end, the unions brought Perón back to power, after he promised to concede institutional rights to the unions and raise wages and salaries. The latter happened on the 10th of October. On the 12th, the opposition wanted to send the military to their barracks and transfer power to the Supreme Court, but General Carlos Avalos, who was in charge of army politics, wishes to retain power and stop Perón. The latter was imprisoned on the island of Martín García. The result was that on the 15th of October 1945, a general strike was confirmed for the following day. Early on the 17th of October, people took to the streets and arrived, unhindered by the police, to the Plaza de Mayo, in front of the main government offices. Avalos then decided to negotiate with Perón's supporters about his release. Perón's conditions for saving what has been called the June 1943 revolution (i.e. military government), was that his main adversaries within the army administration (i.e. General Avalos and the Navy Minister) resign and that a new cabinet with men who were loyal to him be instated until the 1946 elections¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁸ T.S. DI TELLA, *Political and Social Ideas in Twentieth Century South America*, cit., pp. 34-36.

¹⁶⁹ J.C. TORRE, *The Formation of Populist Trade Unionism in Argentina*, cit., pp. 200-204.

When we speak of Latin American populism, it is necessary to mention also a very different group of phenomena that have been called populist movements, the violent revolutionary groupings roaming the mountains. These, while reflecting a real concern for the well-being of the majority of the rural population, are concerned chiefly with local leadership rivalries. Each local boss has at his disposal one of these groups, and since each locality under attack must defend itself (lack of centralised control), each locality must create such a grouping and will, predictably, support its own, claiming it is acting in the interest of the 'people' of the area. It is difficult to see a link between such a system of sectarian conflicts and the idea of populism that has become known to most contemporary Europeans. Carlos de la Torre - summing up ideas of Weyland, Madrid, Hunter, Cameron, Hershberg, Levitsky and Roberts – maintain that the normal pathology theory of populism applies to the radical populism of Hugo Chávez', Evo Morales', and Rafael Correa's regimes. He summarises the main features of these regimes:

These governments, on the one hand, are undermining the institutions that guarantee contestation, pluralism, and civil liberties. Power is concentrated in the executive, reducing the authority of counterbalancing powers. These regimes selectively deny the civil and political liberties of the opposition and of the privately-owned media to express alternative points of view¹⁷⁰.

The policies of Latin American populism in power thus correspond largely with what we would expect from populism in power. However, this contradicts the theory that populists in power will significantly change their tactics, in order to give the voters an image of their regime as a stable and responsible regime. Moreover, these regimes have been successful in doing what they declare as their objective: the inclusion and participation of the previously disempowered. As predicted by theory, this has been done at the expense of pluralism. The regimes have been promoting, as would be expected, forms of direct democracy, and have used populist rhetoric that pits the virtuous people against, especially the economic elites. In addition, in Latin America, the populist leaders claim to speak on behalf of 'the people', with the difference that in this region, their movements are not the only movements claiming this privilege. Organizations of the subaltern and of the oppressed also claim to be the voice of the people. Their interpretations of who are the people, and what are their interests might clash with how the populist leaders imagine the people¹⁷¹. There is in this sense a special clash between populists in power and grass-root subaltern groups who also claim to be the 'voice of the people'.

¹⁷⁰ C. DE LA TORRE, *In the Name of the People. Democratisation, Popular Organisations, and Populism in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador*, cit., p. 28.

¹⁷¹ Ivi, pp. 29-30.

In Venezuela, Chávez's regime has been implementing a programme of Twenty-First Century Socialism. The regime has made frequent reference to the transcendence of representative liberal democracy in favour of the daily exercise of direct democracy. This is thus a case where the thin-centered ideology of populism has been combined with socialist policies. The attempt to implement local democratic institutions, right down to the street level, tells us that the ideas about what constitutes a good society to Chávez in Argentina is very similar to what constituted a good society to the Narodniki in pre-revolution Russia, yet the local democratic institutions depended on the unilateral and centralized decisions of president Chávez to determine the amount of money to be distributed and how to spend it. This is a sign of a more authoritarian system which, it is therefore confirmed, is not in contradiction with a populist ideology, at least at the level of practice. Chávez uses populist discourse and favours leftist nationalism, with a high level of militarisation¹⁷². The main difference with Morales regime in Bolivia is the latter's instrumentalisation of peasant organizations and unions. President Morales follows the practices of communal democracy when he elaborates policies with social movement organizations. For the government this is a democracy of social movements. For critics, the regime uses followers to intimidate the opposition through mass rallies and other forms of collective action. Nevertheless, his attempts to speak on behalf of the population are not always well received, and organised opposition groups have on occasion been successful in negotiating with the regime. 'The people' to Morales, are the indigenous, peasant population, and the regime relies heavily on mechanisms of social control to compact the 'people's will'. Morales' party, the MAS, sees events of collective mobilization as a manifestation of popular sovereignty. This policy, in a very definite manner, leaves little room for peaceful objection. In Ecuador, Correa runs a regime in which the keyword is 'national interest' rather than 'will of the people' and participation under Correa is mainly reduced to voting in elections. After the people vote, the role of the leader is to design policies on behalf of the poor but without seeking their engagement. Correa is thus fashioning himself as a sort of 'father' to the people. In true populist fashion, all organised interest groups have been depicted as sectionist and disruptive to the unity of the people. Moreover, the regime regularly makes references to indigenous culture as *the* national culture of Ecuador, and the traditional values are permeating the objectives of the public sector¹⁷³. Correa's regime is in continuous conflict with indigenous and other collective organisations whose right to voice their opinions is seriously curtailed by policy and rhetoric. The claim is that 1) these organisations represent only the personal interests of their leaders and that 2) these leaders live a privileged lifestyle and are thus out-of-touch with the real needs of those whom they

¹⁷² Ivi, pp. 31-32. Chavez reiterated the phrases "I am not myself, I am the people", and "I represent, plainly, the voice and the heart of millions".

¹⁷³ Ivi, pp. 34-37, 42.

represent. What we see in Ecuador is a regime run on practices that are more similar to fascist political practices than to populist ones. It is righteousness combined with paranoia. What, according to de la Torre, is happening in these three Latin American societies is that civil society and civil liberties are under threat. At the same time, however, new social classes among the poorest parts of the populations are experiencing an unprecedented surge in political participation and experience a chance to push for their interest.

When Perón initially came to power in 1943, as leader of a pro-fascist officer group, measures were initially taken by the army against union leaders. However, a small circle around Perón secretly held meetings with union leaders and on 27th of October 1943, Perón became head of the Departamento de Trabajo, which changed name to Secretaría de Trabajo y Previsión Social. Perón's attempts at approaching entrepreneurs in order to involve them in his new scheme failed. Mainly, as Torre points out, because the main threat to their existence was the mobilization of the workers initiated by Perón himself¹⁷⁴. In spite of Perón believing the unions should be exclusively professional bodies because he wanted also the support of the radical and conservative dissident groups, his rise to power, and his release from imprisonment, rested mainly on their political engagement. The influence of the experience of Peronism on domestic politics in other Latin American countries was considerable. Attempts at imitation Peronism were undertaken by Chilean Socialists, by Manuel Odría in Peru (1948-56) and General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla with the socialist intellectual, Antonio García, in Colombia (1953-57). This was happening at the same time as the use of the word 'Peronist' was proliferating in contexts that were quite far from what Perón himself had in mind. For example, in 1966 – 1968 there was a reproachment between Guevarism and so-called revolutionary Peronism in the organisation of some small guerrilla pockets inside Argentina¹⁷⁵. Guillermo O'Donnell observed that in severely underdeveloped conditions, under the conditions of dependent capitalism, he made a specific reference to the more industrialised countries in Latin America as examples of these conditions, an authoritarian reaction to the precarious situation of the population was to be expected. This was, he argued, because

if the working class were free to organize it would turn revolutionary, not reformist as in the more prosperous parts of the world. Thus, an authoritarian reaction was highly likely, establishing a repressive regime which, however, was also bent on rapid economic growth¹⁷⁶.

¹⁷⁴ J.C. TORRE, *The Formation of Populist Trade Unionism in Argentina*, cit., pp. 198-199.

¹⁷⁵ A.C.G.M. ROBBEN, *Political Violence and Trauma in Argentina*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia (PA) 2005, p. 103-106.

¹⁷⁶ T.S. DI TELLA, *Political and Social Ideas in Twentieth Century South America*, cit., p. 42.

In this sense then, it was most likely that the economies in these countries, under repressive authoritarian regimes would remain dependent, but would become nationalised, rather than capitalist. This analysis seems to have been true, at least for the period covered so far.

Populism in the periphery, according to Torcuato S. Di Tella, shows the following traits:

- (i) a mass support among a working class and/or peasantry which has a high social mobilization (breakup of traditional loyalties) but a low level of autonomous organization;
- (ii) a leadership drawn from anti- *status quo* elites in the middle or upper echelons of the social pyramid, often of a status-incongruent, downwardly mobile, or insecure position;
- (iii) a charismatic, caudillista-type leadership, to replace the weakness of autonomous organisation¹⁷⁷.

He thus includes everything from right-wing nationalism to Leninism in Cuba. – Includes all levels of moderation, from violent and/or revolutionist to reformist. His definition is, in other words, an organisational definition. The first claim makes it impossible for a political movement to start out as populist. After all, and it seems rather banal to state this, a movement does not usually start out already enjoying a large following and widespread support. Furthermore, one may claim that such initial popularity is usually reserved for single-issue parties or movements. One may draw the attention to the fact that many of the populist parties started out as single-issue parties, which is true, but what then is the difference between the single-issue parties in the green camp, protest parties and the populist parties we are trying to pinpoint? The answer may very well lie in the combination of nationalist and populist traits. Mudde and Kaltwasser sustain that there is an important similarity between Peronism and Vargas regime on the one hand, and Russian and American populism on the other. They write that in Latin America, from the 1930s onwards, leaders such as Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina, Getulio Vargas in Brazil and others, “were actually part of a new generation of politicians, who by appealing to ‘the people’ rather than to the ‘working class’ were able to build multi-class coalitions and mobilize lower-class groups¹⁷⁸. A way of integrating this argument with the argument made by Di Tella, is to observe that the feature of appealing to the rural population was certainly shared by all these movements, and that the Russian Narodniki referred to the decision-making customs and traditional societal

¹⁷⁷ T.S. DI TELLA, *Political Parties in South America. Historical Trends and Prospects*, in F.J. DEVOTO, T.S. DI TELLA (eds.), *Political Culture, Social Movements and Democratic Transitions in South America in the XX Century*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1997, pp. 265-292, 279.

¹⁷⁸ C. MUDDÉ, C. ROVIRA KALTWASSER, *Populism and (Liberal) Democracy. A Framework for Analysis*, cit. p. 3.

organisation among the rural population, rather than to the population itself. Furthermore, the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in Western Europe has had the effect that present-day populist movements must have a much broader electoral base than merely peasants. Following this logic, one may observe that in certain federal states in the US, as well as pre-revolution Russia, the peasant population in effect made up the majority of the population, irrespectively of whether they had the right to vote or not. In Latin America, from the 1930s onwards, industrialisation and labour-migration and/or -immigration had already reduced the proportionate importance of the peasantry, and therefore, the leaders of the populist movements, although relying heavily on the support of the indigenous and rural population, also had to acquire the support of the professional representations, such as the workers' unions. This was nothing new, in the sense that already the Russian populists had tried to engage the industrial workers; and with some success. Contrarily, and in an interpretative direction which is much more compatible with particularism, Di Tella, in a 1997 compilation of articles, sees the presence of populist parties as a typical trait of the political structure in Latin America, and its main difference with the Western European pattern. To the question why these parties are not simply called Socialist, we may answer that they do not all share Socialist ideologies. To the question why they are not called labour, we may, similarly answer, that many of these parties, just like many of the European workers' parties, are supported by other groups as well¹⁷⁹. The problem with this answer is the lack of consideration for the fact that exactly the same lack of autonomous organisation exists among the supporters of populist parties in Europe, where a supposed lack of development can be sustained with much more difficulty, or not at all. Although trade unionism is strong in some Western European countries, at least in terms of membership numbers, they sway little power over political organisations. Di Tella makes a reference to three considerations in the explanation of the change from social democratic to national-populist patterns of organisation of the working class in Argentina: (1) the change in nature of trade unionism from voluntary associationism to inclusive form of corporatism, leading to a mobilizational form of caudillismo, (2) the increased social mobility of the working class and ongoing urbanisation, and (3) the important conflict at the level of the upper and middle classes, creating a minority which feels insecure and threatened¹⁸⁰. Foreign political decisions have also had a stimulating effect on the creation of diverse national-populist movements in Latin America. For example, the Organisation of American States dealt with the anti-democratic practices of Fujimori and Chávez, but said nothing about G.W. Bush's anti-terrorist measures. The result in Latin America was that "... many populists have made their struggle against the clearly

¹⁷⁹ T.S. DI TELLA, *Political Parties in South America. Historical Trends and Prospects*, cit., pp. 281-282

¹⁸⁰ T.S. DI TELLA, *The Role of Peronism in the Consolidation of Democracy in Argentina. From Corporatism to Pluralism*, in F.J. DEVOTO, T.S. DI TELLA (eds.), *Political Culture, Social Movements and Democratic Transitions in South America in the XX Century*, cit., pp. 334-335

self-serving US interference in the region a key part of their populist struggle of *Americanismo*
181.

Summarily, although there are some differences between the Latin American formulations of populism and the Western European formulations, there is at least as much variation among the different national (or regional) and historical formulations within the South American continent as there is among the different European formulations. Even though the policies pursued by many of the populist movements in Latin America clearly reflect one version of the essence of populist ideology, namely anti-pluralism and anti-elitism, they are nevertheless far removed from what most populist parties in Scandinavia would like to pursue. Especially the emphasis placed on the leader of the Latin American movements as a sort of 'father-figure', although he/she is cast more as a father to 'the people', than as a father to the nation, is much stronger than the one placed on the leaders of, for example, the Scandinavian movements. With our presumption that populism is a thin-cored ideology, we discover that rather than a difference in type of populist ideology, the variation is determined by other, often pre-existing, conditions that are rooted in the self-perception of the particular part of the population towards which the populists turn their attention. So, for example, fascist sympathies among key political players have been of longer duration within some of the Latin American populist movements than within the European movements. It seems to imply that the more stable democracies, in combination with the close-up experience of the defeat of European fascism in WWII, have been the conditions for the high propensity to distance ones movement from fascist ideology and any ideas remotely connected to fascism. Surely, none of the populist leaders in South America today would directly refer to their own policies in those terms, their predecessors occasionally did so in the past. While it remains true that European populist parties strongly reject the idea that they partially endorse fascist ideology, their policies are, undeniably fuelled from the same source. So why is this kind of hateful and exclusionary rhetoric and policies making a comeback in European politics?

Belgian Separatists: Vlaams Belang

We will now have a brief look at the separatist *Vlaams Belang*. In the case of Belgium, there is a presence of several types of populist parties. Indeed, the *Vlaams Belang* is traditionally a party with a strong nativism. When it was still acting under the name of *Vlaams Block* (before 2004), its declared three ideological pillars were conservatism, secessionist nationalism and solidarism. In the early 1980s the party embraced nativism and populism. Its

¹⁸¹ C. MUDDE, C. ROVIRA KALTWASSER, *Populism. Corrective and Threat to Democracy*, in Id., *Populism in Europe and the Americas*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012, pp. 205-222, 216-217.

vision of 'the Flemish people', in its written party magazines, programmes and propaganda (2003 and 2004), is of a homogenous, morally just, possessive of common sense, honest, and industrial mass of people, and thus makes it clear that the populism of the party is strong. This is emphasized by the fact that, in the same party writings, one finds an image of a moral struggle between the Flemish people on the one hand, and 1) the francophone people in Brussels and Wallonia, 2) the asylum seekers and immigrants that have come to Flanders, and 3) the political elite, both on the Flemish and the Walloon side of the language barrier. The political elites, in the view of VB, are to be found at the sub-national, national and supranational levels and are portrayed as arrogant, corrupt, egoistic, incompetent, irresponsible, unreliable, criminal, cunning, and politically fraudulent. Indeed, the party describes established politicians as 'bandits and swindlers' and view the Flemish politicians as weak and submissive, whereas they see the Walloon politicians as cunning and determined. They are, according to de Lange and Akkerman, more critical of left-wing politicians than of politicians from the right. The reforms suggested by the VB are institutional and include the abolition of provinces and senate, the election of mayors and OCMW council members as well as binding referenda. Furthermore, the party claims to be in favour of the *trias politica* - especially the division between judicial and executive powers-, representative parliamentary democracy, constitutionalism and the rule of law¹⁸². However, as de Lange and Akkerman have shown, it is likely that the regard for liberal democracy and fundamental rights are only propagandistic tools, since many of their policy proposals go against these fundamental rights. What becomes evident by reading de Lange and Akkerman's account of the *Vlaams Belang*, is that some main-stream parties, such as VLD and the SP have had to become more responsive to their voters' preferences, more populist, or have moved towards the political right as a response to the campaigns run by the VB. It is also the case that the VB have been successful in bringing new issues to the political agenda, such as immigration and integration as well as law and order issues. They were less successful in gaining issue - ownership over European integration issues. Finally, de Lange and Akkerman mention, as has often been done, especially in the Belgian case, that in Belgium, a true *cordon sanitaire* has been in place around the VB for decades. This unwritten agreement among main-stream parties to keep populist parties in general, and VB in particular, out of government has been a successful tactic to limit the direct influence of populist parties on national policy-making, but has also worked in favour of further legitimizing the populist attack on liberal democracies. In terms of party organisation, the VB is strongest in and around Antwerp. It has 25,000 members in a period when party membership is steadily decreasing, its members have tendentially never been politically active before joining the VB, as it campaigns in

¹⁸² S.L. DE LANGE, T. AKKERMAN, *Populist Parties in Belgium. A case of Hegemonic Liberal Democracy?* in C. MUDDE, C. ROVIRA KALTWASSER, *Populism in Europe and the Americas*, cit., pp. 27-45, 31-32.

neighbourhoods where the main-stream parties do not, or where they are no longer active. Moreover, the party runs a community centre in Antwerp where supporters can come to meet party officials. In addition, the VB organises many popular events, such as community barbeques and music festivals, not to mention party congresses that have a particularly low-cultural appeal, as opposed to the high-culture of the establishment¹⁸³.

Le Pen and French nationalism

Revolutionary France was different from the France that emerged after the revolution, when universalism was replaced by particularism and nationalism. Pierre Birnbaum argues that, unlike the loosely governed Prussian state, the centrally administered post-revolution France, was able to contain tendencies towards the mobilisation of identity and divisionism. Fundamentally, Birnbaum stresses the important distinction between holistic particularism and universalism as being what probes the ground for violent nationalism. Indeed, he refers to Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu when he writes that the doctrine of roots (*doctrines de haine*), allowed by nationalism has left space for Franco-French wars (*guerres franco-françaises*). Violent internal confrontations, pitting those who were engaged in the name of a culture proper to French identity, which they believe has been cemented by its long history of Catholicism against those who lean towards the universalist principles implemented at the time of the Revolution¹⁸⁴. Thus, the time of universalism had finished and was replaced by efforts to strengthen the national identity and unity. This was the environment where things like the Dreyfus affair could happen. During times of conflict, national identity is usually strengthened, as was the case in France during both World War I and II. France saw recurring 'internal' conflicts based on nationality, such as the complications around de-colonisation, and in 1972, around the same time as many other populist parties in Europe, the French Front National (FN) was founded. The FN was initially a coalition of several, far right, groups, brought together by Jean-Marie Le Pen. The internal divergence found its expression in internal divisions and conflicts. Its success began in 1983, when it won a local election in Dreux. Three years later, in 1986, it experiences explosive growth and obtained almost 10 percent of the vote in the national elections, which gained the party thirty-five seats in the National Assembly. It continued to sway significant political influence in France over the next decades. Nevertheless, like in Belgium, a *cordon sanitaire* was constructed around the party, and it was never invited to be part of a governing coalition. Marie Le Pen has taken

¹⁸³ S.L. DE Lange, T. AKKERMAN, *Populist Parties in Belgium. A Case of Hegemonic Liberal Democracy?*, cit., pp. 34-38, 40-43. An important case in point were the Antwerp elections of 2006, where a CD&V, Green!, N-VA, SP.A, and VLD coalition was necessary to keep the VB out, after it had received 33.5% of the votes.

¹⁸⁴ P. BIRNBAUM, «*La France aux Français*». *Histoire des haines Nationalistes*, Seuil, Paris 2006.

considerable distance from those supporters of her father who were openly racist and/or neo-nazi. This she has done at the risk of splitting the party irreparably. Her strategy seems to have enjoyed some success, as the party is now considered much more mainstream than before, and many who previously voted for the Left-wing, now would no longer feel uncomfortable honing up to the fact that they have voted for Le Pen at the Presidential elections in 2017.

The Canadian Reform Party

Canada, with the Reform Party of Canada's successes in the 1990s, has seen the rise of a populist right-wing party with different characteristic to the US agrarian populist parties. David Laycock argues that the identities of both people and elite in Reform Party of Canada discourse were strikingly at odds with those understood in much of North American populist history and appeal has been vital to the Reform Party's distinctive role in Canadian politics¹⁸⁵.

Laycock mentions the following reasons behind the sudden success of the Reform Party, especially in Western Canadian states. Western Canada has a long tradition of populist politics with strong western provincial leaders or national party leaders as spokesmen. The Progressive Conservative government had neglected western economy to the benefit of Ontario and Quebec. It also failed to satisfy right-wing conservatives' desires for major tax and social spending cuts and for traditionalist approaches to social issues. Overall, the Reform Party of Canada won prestige after the rejection of the Charlottetown constitutional Accord in the 1992 referendum. During its campaign, the party argued that the agreement had been reached by members of the unaccountable political establishment behind closed doors. It was fundamentally against the conditions of the agreement on the grounds that it would have increased minority rights and increased consideration for special interests. The party specifically referred to native peoples, Quebec nationalists and feminists. The Reform Party instead portrayed itself as the voice of 'the people', that is, of the people that had not benefited from the social programmes or from the intrusive state presence because they were hard working, law abiding, and overtaxed, and because they were not members of the special interests. In other words, in perfect accordance with the most current definition of contemporary populism, the party is the voice of the silent and pure majority which is not being politically represented and which, therefore, has been exploited by the political establishment (and the cultural elites?) that protects the rights only of the special interest

¹⁸⁵ D. LAYCOCK, *Populism and democracy in Canada's Reform Party*, in C. MUDDE, C. ROVIRA KALTWASSER, *Populism in Europe and the Americas*, cit., pp. 46-67, 46.

groups. Laycock describes the dichotomy as presented by this party in the following way: “direct democracy/small state/pure people” versus “representative democracy/strong state/corrupt elite”. In terms of the extra-populist components of the party, they were essentially a typical post-1980 new-right party, proposing the decentralisation of power, tax cuts, ‘workfare, not welfare’, privatisations, no support for multi-cultural groups, less support for ‘welfare mothers’, harsher treatment of criminals, and elimination of pay equity programmes¹⁸⁶. Thus, as case of the thin-centered ideology of populism combined with neo-liberal economic ideas. Furthermore, they pushed for the employment of direct democracy on issues such as abortion, capital punishment, and gay rights, as well as (and this is a particular point which I haven’t come across elsewhere) provisions for the possible ‘recall’ of MPs. When the Reform Party entered an alliance with the other Conservative parties in 2000, and merged with Progressive Conservative parties in 2003/4, it took, according to Laycock, the former Reform Party away from both regionalism and populism. It eventually changed name to simply Conservative Party. However, I don’t quite agree that it moved them so far away from populism. Possibly, it rather took them away from their radicalism. After all, anti-elitism persists in the Conservative Party. In 2004, the party leader, Stephen Harper, asked CP members – and the broader public – to imagine a ‘country of freedom and rights for ordinary people, taxpayers and families, not just for criminals, political elites and special interests. Even after 2006, when the Conservative Party was in government, “it continued to campaign against its own bureaucracy as one of the ‘special interests’ aligned against the people”. This, as we shall see, is one of the main points on which the Reform Party differs from Scandinavian types of populism. Indeed, most Scandinavian populist parties have not gone quite so far in their contempt for representative democracy (yet). The negative impact of the Conservative government, according to Laycock, has been that it has demonstrated its contempt for Parliament and minimized government accountability in a variety of ways. He further emphasizes the opportunism of the Conservative Party leadership: Indeed, now that the Conservative Party is the best organized, best financed, and most strategically adept of the national parties, and is running the least transparent and most tightly controlled administration in Canadian history, Manning’s interest in direct democracy has been set aside¹⁸⁷. Thus, the Canadian Reform Party embodied most of the characteristics common to national-populist parties: a nationalist ideology, combined with anti-elitism and anti-pluralism. It even incorporated the populist rhetoric and criticism of the established representative political system. However, once the New Conservative Party had been formed, the former Reform Party leadership diverged from many of these points. These fundamental changes within populist parties is something we shall see again when discussing the Scandinavian

¹⁸⁶ Ivi, pp. 47-50.

¹⁸⁷ Ivi, pp. 52-58.

cases, and it supports the sense that populism is very often used as a tool to gain political influence, and then abandoned when it would isolate the party politically. In the case of the *Vlaams Belang*, a change of the national-populist line has not happened as a result of the risk of political isolation. Both *Vlaams Belang* and the Reform Party operated in a multi-national setting, so this difference merits a closer study. Although the popularity of national populist parties in Western Europe has been steadily increasing ever since the European economic crisis and especially ever since the so-called refugee crisis became a real European-level concern, the last year has shown a more widespread acceptance of the idea that this type of party participate in government, whether in Europe or in America. A concern remains, which is the consideration that this tendency may rest more on the popular wish for political protest against the political system as it is in place, than on an actual preference for the political programs proposed by these parties. Although, if we accept to consider this possible explanation for their successes, we also introduce the danger of taking upon ourselves the assumption that the populations in many Western European countries are fundamentally ignorant of the political programs of these parties, or that they are simply irresponsible voters. This is a dangerous assumption, especially in an epoch in which civic education has been emphasized in schools. What remains to be seen is the impact in Scandinavia of the substantial increase in popularity of national populist parties in other Western European countries, such as Germany and the United Kingdom. Will it help to consolidate the populist presence in Scandinavian politics, or will the even more radicalised national populism serve as a dissuasive factor?

Conclusion

Upon comparing theoretical studies of populism, the core of what makes a certain political program populist remains elusive. Some scholars point to the fact that the group of right-wing populist parties share immigration-sceptical attitudes, while others emphasize the wide extent to which populist methods and messages have been adopted by the mainstream parties – whether in opposition or in government-, others still emphasize that what unites populist parties on a global scale is their anti-elitism and scepticism of liberal democracy. It has even been suggested that the factor which connects populist parties is their tendency to have charismatic leaders who use politically incorrect statements to create sensationalism and/or a sense of threat or danger. When looking instead at some historical understandings of populism, we see that there is little connection between why the Russian populists were given that name, and the reason contemporary Western-European parties and movements are called populist. Besides the fact that the social, occupational and educational characteristics of the populations in question are very different, the very understanding of

what part of the population constitutes 'the people' which the parties or movements claim to represent has changed fundamentally since those days. In addition, the political goals of the Russian populists – although diverse within the wider movement – included the emancipation of 'the people'. Is this more similar to the populist vein within the Green movements, or are their references to a completely different kind of emancipation? The Russian populists were tendentially pluralists, although they also reserved the most prominent economic and societal role to the peasants. Later, after the 1860s movement had been broken, the Russian populists began to aim at involving the urban working class, although with the same strategy as they used earlier. In the towns, among the workers, there was a stronger wish for quick reforms and terrorism as a populist tool picked up momentum for a while, before also this movement disintegrated and parts of it joined the Revolutionaries. Also the term 'anti political establishment' parties, or movements, is related to the phenomenon we are currently investigating. Indeed, the two kinds of political parties actually share one of their core-ideological points which is that the current democratic order has failed and must be replaced by something radically different. And yet, as Matteo Truffelli has pointed out, it is exactly because of the progressive growth in the importance of anti-politics that many of the studies that have tried to isolate its characteristics and political- and cultural purposes, have ended up acting, or in any case concentrating the attention, almost exclusively, on elements of crisis that seem to characterise society and politics in contemporary democracies¹⁸⁸. Truffelli continues to connect this with the decline of bloc politics as we have known it from Westminster, but also from the Scandinavian countries in the three decades following World War II. The idea that there is a non-ideological core to the political programmes of the new populist parties has many adherents, some of whom are convinced that populism is merely a matter of rhetoric and of organising a political party for personal gain. Others adhere only partially to such a claim. Because, even if the core value, commonly shared among populist parties, is one of anti-political establishment, this has implications that define ideology. Who would claim that anarchism was not a type of political programme, even if that is not how anarchists would have liked to present themselves. The distance between a political programme and ideology is trial and error combined with negotiations. Furthermore, a possible distinction can be made between ideologies that lend themselves well to a negotiation- or discussion-based, democratic system of party politics, and those that do not. In the prior category, we would find the traditional five parties, although already the Royalist and the Communist ideologies sit more uneasily within this system than do the Liberal and the Social Democratic parties. Indeed, it may be claimed that Royalist and Communist parties, because their main objective is to fundamentally change the political organisation of

¹⁸⁸ M. TRUFFELLI, *Autorità versus libertà. Il pensiero antipolitico nelle democrazie contemporanee*, cit., p. 197.

a country, are already performing a violence on their ideological basis in order to participate in modern party-based democratic processes. In other words, there have been anti-party parties throughout the history of parliamentary democracy, but what distinguishes these new populist parties is the fact that they have not (yet) opted for participating in political compromise, at least not at the level of their own policy-aims and rhetoric. It may be argued that those of the new populist parties who have participated in government has compromised the principle of non-participation in established politics, but if one investigates further, one discovers that, while in government, they have always pursued policies in accordance with their fundamental principles, although the government decisions have usually fallen short of their real objective. While in government, these parties have also distinguished themselves by their willingness to go against the wider cabinet, with the result that they have often been the cause of the resignation of the government¹⁸⁹.

Premises are that we accept that the phenomenon may be best described as a particular form of national-populism; Particular in the sense that it is different from some other particular forms (maybe the main reason it is different is because of the fact that it has not had success in power yet – which distinguishes it very clearly from the present-day populism in South America and Nazism, and at the same time not so particular as to not include important ‘internal’ variations. Truffelli also discusses the fact that anti-politics, over the last three to four decades has become ever more central to political processes. It is faced with this fact that Geoffrey Mulgan, among others, has spoken of an anti-political age, which is a time marked by the unstoppable tendency of citizens to abandon the structure of modern politics that has become “irreparable damaged by social, economic and cultural transformations”¹⁹⁰. One possible solution to the difficulties of avoiding this sort of prescriptive analysis, which doesn’t apply only to anti-political parties, but also to the type of populist parties we encounter in Scandinavia, is to follow Giovanni Sartori’s principle of so-called minimal definitions. Mudde and Kaltwasser, for their 2012 edited volume on *Populism in Europa and the Americas*, chose to follow this method, and in applying this principle to populism, they progressed in the following way. One of the crucial tasks was to separate populism from features that might regularly occur together *with* it, but are not part of it. For example, populist radical right parties in Europe share a core ideology of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism. All three features have a strained relationship with liberal democracy, but we are only interested in the effect of *populism*, even though, admittedly, the effects are not always easy to disentangle in reality. In a similar vein, scholars have convincingly demonstrated that populism in Latin America is compatible with both

¹⁸⁹ See the contributions in E. DAMGAARD (ed.), *Parliamentary Change in the Nordic Countries*, Scandinavian University Press, Oslo 1992.

¹⁹⁰ M. TRUFFELLI, *Autorità versus libertà. Il pensiero antipolitico nelle democrazie contemporanee*, cit., p. 197.

neoliberalism and state-centred development. In fact, even contemporary Europe hosts both left-wing and right-wing populist parties¹⁹¹. They also observe that populism is different from clientelism. As Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson have recently pointed out, clientelism involves a whole organisational structure (mostly of informal character) in charge of both monitoring voter behaviour and delivering the expected goods to the clientele. One would have to take for granted that clientelists actually deliver on their promises, and that their promises demand the action or approval of third persons. We would like to conclude, as Mudde and Kaltwasser have done, that the best way forward towards a useful definition of populism is to follow a Sartorian theory of definitions, which distinguishes between intension, which is the better, more specifically defined, and extension, which is applicable to more cases. In Sartori, we also find the concept of 'radial categorisation, which relies on Wittgenstein's idea of family resemblance. Radial categories derive from a pool of features that, although not present in every case, are present to such a degree as to be significant. Next to the radial categorisation, Sartori also considers 'classical categorisation', which is the idea that all members of a specific group should share all defining variables. This is what is commonly known as the lowest common denominator and has the consequence of narrowing significantly the range of cases. Following the latter strategy, Mudde and Kaltwasser recalled that Margaret Canovan indicated that all forms of populism, without exception, involve some kind of exaltation of and appeal to 'the people', and all are in one sense or another anti-elitist¹⁹². However, since Mudde and Kaltwasser themselves applied the criteria that a definition should rely on a defining feature, or combination of features exclusive to populism, also this element should be excluded as the basis of the definition, since not only populist movements are against the political power of a minority or several minorities. Unless, of course, what we wish to gain is a catch-all category encompassing so many phenomena as to include any political movement that shares this feature. Is that what they want? Although he runs a risk in assuming that Dutch domestic dynamics are mirrored elsewhere, Cuperus, nevertheless analyses a shared development in several of the welfare strongholds of Europe; several Scandinavian countries included. The disruptive effects of globalisation and the retrenchment of welfare states have been accompanied by fundamental changes in the party systems. The older mass parties that have ruled most of the region since the end of the Second World War – the Christian or Conservative Democrats and the Social Democrats – have lost members, voters, élan, and a monopoly on ideas¹⁹³. The solution to the problem of Radical Right Parties in Europe, as Mudde suggests, is for the other, established, political parties, especially the social democratic parties that have lost many of their votes to the new

¹⁹¹ C. MUDDE, C. ROVIRA KALTWASSER, *Populism and (Liberal) Democracy. A Framework for Analysis*, cit. p. 2.

¹⁹² C. MUDDE, C. ROVIRA KALTWASSER, *Populism and (Liberal) Democracy. A Framework for Analysis*, cit., pp. 2, 7-8.

¹⁹³ R. CUPERUS, *The Fate of European Populism*, «Dissent», Spring 2004, pp. 17-20, 17.

radical right parties, return to their ideologies and withdraw from the opportunistic path towards the middle which they have taken merely in order to reach executive power. Most social democratic parties have 'forgotten' about the workers and therefore do not address the immigrant question from an economic point-of-view, but rather from a cultural point-of-view which can either take a form similar to that of the Green parties, or to that of the conservative parties¹⁹⁴.

Part II: Contemporary National-populism in Scandinavia

Many aspects of public, and private, life in Scandinavia, have laid the ground for the current political situation in the region. Scandinavia is a region, consisting of several different countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland), but nevertheless with a strong sense of regional identity. This did not come about on its own, especially since history has not exactly consolidated the idea of Scandinavia of one mind, with international conflict more often than not, seeing Scandinavian countries on both of the opposing sides. Today, however, the domestic political landscapes in each of the countries share many similarities. One of these similarities has been a simultaneous occurrence of populist parties in several of the Scandinavian countries.

In the Scandinavian countries, there has been a strong folkish tradition. The fact that in the 1930s Germany, the words 'Volk' and 'völkisch' were used both by those who supported and those who opposed the fascists, is reflected in the words' current use in Scandinavia. This was emphasized by the many pre-World War I social projects developed, mainly in Germany, but also elsewhere, and implemented in Scandinavia; such as the Danish/Swedish/Norwegian Folk, *Folkeskolen*, *Folkehjemmet*, *Folkekarakter* etc. The use of these terms was certainly promoted by the state. In the specific Scandinavian use of the terms 'Folk' and 'Folkelig' the connotation is not only a reference to the nation, the popular, the national, or simply the people. It is also, according to Guy Hermet, a reference to a mindset, a set of ideas and political tendencies¹⁹⁵. This diverse use of the terms may indicate to the reader the extent to which 'banal nationalism' has infiltrated life in Scandinavia. In Norway, national dresses are worn every year for the midsummer feast and in Denmark, no party table is set without the presence of miniature national flags (*Dannebrog*) and no New Years Eve is passed without the compulsory Queens address and singing of nationalist songs. It is thus maybe not so surprising that populism in this part of Western Europe should be of the national-populist type. However, we shall try to deconstruct some of the historical

¹⁹⁴ C. MUDDE, *Who's Afraid of the European Radical Right?*, cit., pp. 10-11.

¹⁹⁵ G. HERMET, *Les populismes dans le monde*, cit., p. 6.

facts and popular ideas that have contributed to the emergence and transformation of the populist parties in Scandinavia, as well as identify the ideological influences that have shaped them.

The 'Saga' of a Scandinavian Model

The three Scandinavian countries, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, all became parliamentary democracies in the short period between 1884 and 1917, with the meaningful exception of Iceland, which had a kind of parliament in place already in the Middle Ages. The introduction of parliamentary democracy also meant the institutionalisation of political parties, which in Scandinavia, as in most other Central and western European countries, included a liberal party, a conservative party, and an agrarian party. In Scandinavia, however, we also find the peculiar construction called the Nordic Council. *Norden* (the Nordics) is a term used to signify five northern-European countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. It is understood that the two countries under Danish control, the Faroe Islands and Greenland are included in this group. 'Scandinavia', instead is a term used to signify only 'Scandia', which is the Latin term for the three of those countries that had formed states in the middle ages; that is Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The three Home Rule territories within the Nordic region are *Landsting* in Greenland, the *Lagting* on the Faeroe Islands, both of which belong to the Kingdom of Denmark, and the *Landsting* on the Åland Islands, which is a self-governing province of the Republic of Finland. In fact, modern Finland was under Swedish rule until 1809 after which it was under Russian control until the declaration of its independence in 1917. Iceland, on the other hand stayed under Danish rule until 1944. Besides this, Norway was ruled by Denmark between 1385 and 1814, when it was conquered by Sweden. Norway finally gained its independence in 1905. Both these terms are used in politically relevant ways today; especially by the native population of the relevant countries. Firstly, a special solidarity and striving for reciprocal aid and reliance for growth has been encouraged in those famous post-WWII days, when a bright future seemed to hinge exclusively on Europe's ability to create an all-encompassing balance of power. In those days, and to some extent still relevant up until the height of the Credit Crisis a decade ago, is the fact that everyone at the time seemed to think that economic prosperity from international trade, and peace and stability were intertwined and reciprocally reinforcing factors. In line with this 'faith', a local initiative was taken in the Nordic region, to set up a regional council, the Nordic Council. The Council was instituted in 1952 and has helped lay the basis, for example, for a harmonised and free internal labour market. The idea that there is a special bond between the Nordic countries is fed to the citizens of these countries through what one might, paralleling the reasoning behind Michael Billig's concept of 'banal

nationalism', rightly call 'banal regionalism'. When students seek international experiences, they see their economic support upped if they choose to go to a fellow-Nordic country, or when filling in their tax-forms, citizens who have income from abroad see that there is a separate, simpler procedure for those who have business within the Nordic region. Although the power over the imagination that the concept of the Nordics as a virtuous corner at the outskirts of Europe once wielded over the minds of the region's inhabitants has declined over the last couple of decades, and although it never received much external consideration, the Nordic Council is still an important organ internally in the region. This is where large-scale coordination of policies, but also the framing of the internal image of the 'Nordic region' take place. Scandinavian countries are known for a few things, but most prominently for what has been called the 'Scandinavian model'. This term refers to different things, depending on what aspect of society one focuses. The most general use refers to the system of social welfare set up in these countries. Furthermore, the Scandinavian model implies a system of low-intensity political conflict, because of a consensus-seeking political culture. The history of the introduction of the element of combination between political competition among parties and political cooperation at the level of government, was introduced in Denmark by an agreement among the leftist parties and the greens called *Kanslergadeforliget*, in Norway by the *Kriseforliket* in 1935, and in Sweden by *Kohandeln* in 1933. In Finland, something very similar was agreed in the 'Puntamulta' in 1937. Besides the political parties, also the main labour and employer organisations were represented during the negotiations. The scope and effect of these agreements were to integrate a universal welfare state with an efficient capitalist economy. The agreement of the left and the labour unions was achieved in exchange of a promise of social security to all members of society on such a scale that the purpose was to redistribute, in an equitable fashion, the income of the state. The agreement of the right-wing and the employer organisations was achieved in exchange of a promise to keep wages low and protect the free functioning of the market economy. This culture of consensus-seeking has also translated itself into political procedures that discourage conflicts. The tendency towards political compromise can thus be seen in the large number of Parliamentary commissions - where ample representation of all interest groups is consulted -, wide public inquiries and other cooperative practices. In Finland, the tendency towards corporatism exhibits itself in a different way, through the tendency towards wide, majority government coalitions that include parties from both the political left and -right. This was, historically, necessitated by the fact that until 1992 one third of the MPs in the Finnish *Edescurta* (67 out of 200) could postpone the passing of an act already approved by Parliament until the time they assembled again, the year after¹⁹⁶. Furthermore, a two-thirds majority was needed to

¹⁹⁶J.E. LANE, S. ERSSON, *I paesi nordici: competizione, compromesso e corporaticismo*, in *La politica in Europa: Introduzione alle istituzioni di 15 paesi* (1995), Laterza, Roma-Bari 1999, pp. 421-464, 423-424.

approve tax decisions. However, after 1992, the situation changed. The constitutions in the three Scandinavian countries differ significantly, mostly because of the age of each Constitution. The oldest constitution is the Norwegian, from 1814, which has no mention of the principle of parliamentarism. The Danish Constitution, from 1953, has a plebiscean base, as it requires a binding referendum for constitutional changes, whereas the Norwegian Foundational Law requires a two-third majority in the *Stortinget*. Finally, the Swedish Foundational Law, from 1974, prescribes a procedure similar to the Finnish Constitution in order to effectuate Constitutional change, with two majority votes in the *Riksdag* with intermediate elections, thus significantly slowing down the process. In spite of the fact that the Nordic countries are believed to be very similar in terms of their political and social life, there are several important differences. For example, Finland has a dual system of parliament and, as in Iceland, presidential rule. In all the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Denmark and Norway), the head of state is a monarch. Common to the Nordic parliaments however, is that a non-confidence vote against government in at least one of the (or two) houses of parliament results in the government stepping down, either by immediate resignation or by calling new elections. All five Nordic countries have parliaments consisting of a single chamber, and none of the countries have Constitutional Courts, although in Norway, there is space for a legal revision of Parliamentary sovereignty, exclusively by the ordinary courts. In spite of the exclusive power of Parliament, all the Scandinavian countries have witnessed the development of extensive decision-making powers rested in local government, thanks to the delegation of the administration of public funds destined to such diverse purposes as the maintenance of infrastructure, education and health service, not to mention social benefits. The electoral systems in Scandinavia are all based on the principle of proportional representation, inserted in fundamental legislation already in 1907 in Sweden and Norway, and in 1915 in Denmark¹⁹⁷. This stimulates electoral participation and helps minorities to voice their opinions. Sweden has the highest minimal percentage for parliamentary representation (4%). In Denmark, for example, only 2% of votes are needed to gain parliamentary representation. This is another indication of the institutional belief in the cooperative strength of the system. The power of the political parties has increased over time, with the result that personal votes are, practically inexistent. In other words, you always vote for a national list. Indeed, according to calculations performed by Lane and Ersson, on the basis of Mackie and Rose's as well as Bartolini and Mair's methods, all the Scandinavian countries have a very high degree of proportionality of representation¹⁹⁸. The Scandinavian

¹⁹⁷ Finland was the first among the Nordic countries to introduce proportional representation in 1906. At the other extreme, Iceland introduced the principle only in 1959. It must be mentioned that Icelandic representatives were included in the Danish *Folketing* during the time prior to the independence of the country in 1944.

¹⁹⁸ T. MACKIE, R. ROSE, *The International Almanac of Electoral History*, Macmillan, London 1982; S. BARTOLINI, P. MAIR, *Identity, Competition and Electoral Availability: the stabilization of European electorates 1885-1985*,

model is often used as an ideal social state model by persons and organisations that tend to the left on the political spectrum. In a certain sense, the introduction of welfare provisions for the more vulnerable part of the population for which Scandinavia is so well known, was another attempt by the elite to counter the sense of insecurity and uprootedness among this part of the population. Erik Damgaard tries to capture the image of Scandinavia:

In a global perspective the Nordic countries traditionally appear as small, peaceful and homogenous modern welfare states with political systems that largely work through party compromises, corporativism and consensus. That picture emerges from a number of publications which are a bit dated and may be an overdrawn rendering of the message in more recent works, such as Einhorn and Logue (1989) and Elder at al. (1982). Nevertheless, if one inspects the details of contemporary Scandinavian politics then other, and perhaps less comforting, traits emerge... [W]hat still seems to be the general view of Scandinavian politics does not capture several important changes in the past two decades¹⁹⁹.

The Nordic Council, is a 87-member council, thus not an actual parliament. It cannot pass laws or sanction the implementation of tis recommendations. Its delegates are not elected by popular vote, but nominated by the five national assemblies and the three devolved assemblies. It has no chamber of its own, but does have several secretariats in the different Nordic countries. The actual council meets only once per year, for one week. Furthemore, it has a list of topics that conventionally are not discussed in the council. It has thus become conventional to preclude matters of security, defence and, invariably, foreign policy from the agenda of the Nordic Council. This convention arose to safeguard the so-called 'Nordic Balance'. The Nordic Balance was the agreement among the Scandinavian countries to prioritize stability and peace in the region by, effectfully, splitting the alliances. Thus, during the cold war, when Finland was militarily linked to the Soviet Union by a Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance, instead of creating tension with the neighbouring countries, Sweden prioritized armament in order to stay neutral, and Norway and Denmark were Nato members. It was clear enough to both Americans and the Soviets that, whatever

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990. The reference is to J.E. LANE, S. ERSSON, *I paesi nordici: competizione, compromesso e corporaticismo*, cit., p. 427.

¹⁹⁹ E. DAMGAARD, *Denmark: Experiments in Parliamentary Government*, in Id. (ed.), *Parliamentary Change in the Nordic Countries*, cit., p. 19.

should happen, the Scandinavian countries would not engage their neighbours in combat. The Nordic Council attempted to control such issues as an atomic weapons-free zone, requesting that allies not bring atomic weapons into the region., although the Council's weakness in terms of implementation and control were later evident when it was revealed that atomic weapons had, nevertheless, been present on and off in Greenland much later than that. In a real sense, however, the Nordic Council has been immeasurably more important an assembly than a review of its formal powers might indicate²⁰⁰. It has been a long-standing arena in which to express the string-felt connections between the member-states, as well as a forum for exploration and experimentation, as the member states have continuously found new ways of collaborating. The council has a fairly simple infrastructure, which reflects the structure of the national assemblies of the member states. It has specialised standing committees, the yearly plenary sessions, as well as party group meetings. Besides this, the strong perceived bonds between the Scandinavian countries, in large part caused by the similar history and constitution of the three countries, and partly because of the linguistic similarities among the three main languages and the exchange of cultural production which has resulted from that. All three countries have relatively small linguistic minorities (in the case of Denmark: German, in the case of Norway and Sweden: Laponian). Why is there talk of a Scandinavian, and not a Nordic socio-political model? The particularities of the model, according to Lane and Ersson²⁰¹, are in the constellation of national and local government, the party system, interest groups, and the economic system. Thus, maybe there are the real basis for maintaining that a specific Scandinavian model exists, even though there are many internal variations, both in the quality of the institutions, and in the relationship among these. Lane and Ersson defines the core of the model in the following way: "Its nucleus is a mixture of oppositional politics and compromise in which inter-party competition places itself within the political and social cooperation"²⁰². But this definition completely overlooks how Finland has, possibly, been the most consensus-prone political system in the Nordic region. Furthermore, it overlooks the fact that all three Scandinavian countries are constitutional monarchies. Little doubt should remain that the social democratic parties in Scandinavia have enjoyed great and stable success. Arter wrote in 1984 that in 1983 the party could claim well over a quarter of the active electorate in Finland, just below and rather more than one-third of the vote in Denmark and Norway respectively and as much as 45.6% in Sweden. Only in Iceland has support for social democracy been relatively weak at under one-fifth of the total poll. The regional strength of the movement has been founded upon notably high levels of political cohesion among the industrial work-/ ing class. At the

²⁰⁰ D. ARTER, *The Nordic Parliaments. A Comparative Analysis*, St. Martin's Press, New York 1984, pp. 1-3.

²⁰¹ In their analysis, Lane and Ersson rely on analysis performed by Esping-Andersen; Heclø, Madsen; Lewin; Damgaard.

²⁰² J.E. LANE, S. ERSSON, *I paesi nordici: competizione, compromesso e corporaticismo*, cit., p. 422.

Swedish general election in September 1982, for example, 72% of the industrial working class voted for the Social Democratic Party compared with only 8% of the blue-collar population supporting the Conservatives²⁰³. Parties that are national nostalgic, such as Dansk Folkeparti, often include in their policy programme a reference to the local Lutheran church, which in most Scandinavian cases means a state church, or People's Church. This fact provides these parties with a large part of their historical pondus and creates a sense of historical continuity. For the state churches in question, the support by the populist parties is not unilaterally a positive instrument to be used in the attempt to reenter public life. It is likely to damage the image of the church, as the parties themselves are happy to approve, or even propose, laws that go against basic Christian ideas, such as the sanctity of life, generosity towards your neighbour and those in need etc. In addition, the fact that these parties, in several of the Scandinavian countries, are one of only two parties to even mention the Christian religion means that in the popular mind, the distinction between the opinion of the populist party and the opinions of the People's Church becomes blurred. This may be of more severe consequence for the Church than for the Party, as the Party has much more space in the public media than the Church does, and since the Party members can, in a credible way, explain which part of Church life the Party identifies with, which is often solely the history of the Church as a national institution that has spoken to the people and unified the fragmented population. Everything else, for example the Church's doctrine, does not need to be accepted by the party. Put in other, more exacting, words, the parties accept the Church as a symbol of the history and distinctiveness of their nation, but not usually as religious truth.

Explaining the Rise and Transformations

The Scandinavian countries have witnessed the typical distribution of the political parties along the left-right continuum, according to the socio-economic policy of each party. Fragmentation has increased over the last decades, especially since the mid-1970s. The interesting observation of the new parties that are now, or have since then been, represented in parliament tells us that they, rather than attaching themselves to one position along the left-right continuum, combine diverse and changing positions depending on which subject is being treated and the general political atmosphere. As the political orientations available to the electorate diversify, a significant number delineate from the traditional parties' policies and reorganise themselves in a stable manner around the new parties. This is what Lane and Ersson call the dealignment and re-alignment of the electorate. All the Nordic countries have a relatively high number of parties represented in parliament, especially Denmark and Finland. The only exception is the Icelandic parliament, which has, generally speaking, had

²⁰³ D. ARTER, *The Nordic Parliaments. A Comparative Analysis*, cit., pp. 22-23.

4 to 5 parties in parliament. Tendenciaally, the three Scandinavian countries have seen the main political contrast between two coalitions; the social-democrats, possibly backed by another leftist party in the form of either a socialist, or a communist, party on the one hand, and the conservative party, necessarily backed by one or more centrist parties on the other hand.²⁰⁴ Also this coalition forming has changed character in most of the Scandinavian countries over the last three to four decades. What often happens, is that the new, mix-and-match parties are left out of the initial coalition negotiations prior to the general elections, for then to be invited into which ever coalition eventually forms government. This, evidently, lends them a disproportionately high level of influence on government, since it is clear that government stands or falls with their support. We may add as a factor that the national-populist parties in Scandinavia may have benefitted from the fact that the political establishment in each of the countries is relatively small. Afterall, there can only be very few new faces in national politics every year in Norway, for example. The argument here is that the populist parties appear as the only 'fresh' members of the establishment, with the rest having already had their try at governing the country. This leads us to look at the behaviour of the members of populist parties when they enter parliament. At that point, their individual behaviour determines the fate of their party in parliament, but they must first solve the dilemma of whether to change their image to a less critical party, in order to get more direct influence and a possibility to enter government, or whether they wish to stay true to their voters, which often means being in perpetual opposition. As Mudde has suggested, many parties have imploded *after* their initial electoral success, unable to deal with the new pressures of parliamentary work and increased media scrutiny²⁰⁵. To this consideration we would add the concern of whether the parliamentary majority will construct a 'cordon sanitair' around the party in question.

The Role of Economic Crisis and globalisation

The Scandinavian region is known for its social welfare experiments. Especially notable are the early introduction in Sweden of a universal pension system, and the post-WWII social economic and financial reforms in Denmark. These, and numerous other welfare initiatives, have determined the picture of Scandinavia which, thanks to statistical research that places Scandinavian countries among the best and happiest countries to live in. What often goes unnoticed abroad, but is very much felt internally, are the consequences of the expensive welfare system in terms of economic and social crises. We shall consider these

²⁰⁴ J.E. LANE, S. ERSSON, *I paesi nordici: competizione, compromesso e corporaticismo*, cit., pp. 428-429.

²⁰⁵ C. MUDDE, *Who's Afraid of the European Radical Right?*, cit., p. 9

superficially. The sort of paternalistic considerations that were presented by John Stuart Mills, are what have focused Danish parliamentarians' work on 'improving day-to-day conditions in, for example, Greenland and the Faeroer Island, rather than aiming at their independence. No one would claim that the Greenlandic people belong to the same ethnic group, but since their community is seen as a 'weak' community, or a lesser, more primitive nation, the Danish state sees itself as the Greenlandic people's 'protector and patron'. In Denmark, especially one person has been identified as a sort of initiator of the extremely centralised control of industry and trade and simultaneous widening of the scope of the welfare model. That person was Jens Otto Kragh. The young Kragh joined the Social Democratic party and obtained a masters in political science. At 27, he was elected to parliament, but he was already a wellknown member of the party and was, undoubtedly, the main author of the 1945 work programme of the Social Democratic Party, "Fremtidens Danmark". The programme was much more radical than any preceding programme, and ended with the following words:

Should this task succeed, it will be well worth the while. The Danish people vil obtain not only material things, such as food on the table, clothers on the back and tools in hand. But also a social emancipation, a *spiritual, cultural and moral redemption* will follow in the wake of a well-organised economy – in line with the increase in wealth. Against the dark background of the war, a completely new people will grow up. A people who will feel ownership of the Country it calls its own, who will love it, and who, within the framework of increasing collaboration with other nations, can give the example from a country of democratic pioneering, from a *Denmark for the people*²⁰⁶

The Scandinavian welfare model refers to the particular experience of the Scandinavian countries, especially in the decades following World War I. Early Scandinavian welfare projects were very similar to the Beveridge reforms in Britain. The precondition for the unfolding of these reforms was the ascent to governmental power of the Social Democratic

²⁰⁶ Translated by the author from: Social Demokratiet and Jens Otto Krag, "Fremtidens Danmark' – Socialdemokratiets Politik", 1945, accessible at Aarhus Universitets Institut for Kultur og Samfund, Afdeling for Historie og Klassiske Studier, danmarkshistorien.dk, <http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/fremtidens-danmark-socialdemokratiets-valgprogram-1945/#note0>, last accessed 14/11 2017. The original: "Lykkes denne nationale Opgave, vil Lønnen ikke udeblive. Det Danske Folk vil ikke alene opnaa materielle Ting som Mad i Gryden, Tøj paa Kroppen og Værktøj i Haanden. Men en social Højnelse, en *aandelig, kulturel og Moralsk Rejsning* vil følge i en velordnet Økonomis Spor- i Takt med den voksende Velstand. Paa Krigens mørke Baggrund vil et helt nyt Folk vokse op. Et Folk, der føler, at det selvejer det Land, det kalder sit, som vil elske det, og som i et voksende Samvirke med andre Nationer kan give Eksemplet fra et Demokratiets Foregangsland, fra et *Danmark for Folket*."

parties. The peak of the reforms was in the 1960s and 1970s. Peter Baldwin writes about what made these developments so unique:

These developments were noticeable for two things: first turning the state's attention to a broad, all-encompassing series of risk and thus distinguishing intervention here from those nations in which the state remained restricted to a more modest role, and second, creating a solidaristic, egalitarian, democratic alternative to the old-fashioned, socially conservative and hierarchical Bismarckian and Bonapartist version of social insurance for the working class²⁰⁷.

Both of these features were later shared with welfare systems elsewhere, but at the time, the extent, rather than the initial idea, was groundbreaking. Bent Greve writes with a distinction in mind, between welfare states and welfare societies, without making explicit in what this distinction consists. It is true that one may have an instinctive, yet partial, perception of what the difference is between the two types of systems. He mentions that “[t]he Scandinavian welfare state has been characterised by its ability to make compromises between classes and different interest groups. Further, it seems to have been able to respond to citizens’ demands and changing needs. In this century the Scandinavian model gradually moved towards a universal type of welfare state with an all-encompassing state activity – in Beveridge’s words, ‘From the cradle to the grave. Bent Greve concludes that it is not really possible to give a single definition or description of the Scandinavian welfare state. However, some features can be outlined. The main one in Scandinavia is universality. Greve explains the universality in the Scandinavian model in the following words. Traditional Fordist model of welfare: participation in the workforce was the prerequisite. Over time, the need to provide for workers who were ill and/or their relatives increased. In fact, these systems were built differently in different countries which would cope with the increasing problems of the workers²⁰⁸. The basis for the consensus necessary to set up this elaborate system was the old social pact between workers, employers and the state. The welfare system such as it stood in the 1960s and early 1970s was the result of slow developments. Furthermore, the Scandinavian model has had to respond, and therefore transform, to changing political wishes over time. For example, for a period, everyone was guaranteed a fairly high standard of living, even if unemployed. Over the last decades, however, there have been severe cuts to transfer incomes, in favour of investment in education and health care. This has been the famous ‘backlash’ of welfare. Nevertheless, it seems that the Scandinavian economies have

²⁰⁷ P. BALDWIN, *Can we Define a European Welfare State Model?*, in B. GREVE (ed.), *Comparative Welfare Systems. The Scandinavian Model in a Period of Change*, Macmillan Press, Basingstoke 1996, pp. 29-44, 33-34.

²⁰⁸ B. GREVE, Research Core, Overview and Synthesis, in Id., (ed.), *Comparative Welfare Systems. The Scandinavian model in a period of change*, Macmillan Press, Basingstoke 1996, pp. 1-10, pp. 2, 4-5.

managed to come out on the other side, with some damage to the social tissue, which it is difficult to directly ascribe to the changes in welfare, but with a stable economy. The Norwegian situation here is a bit different because of its decade-long high income from its oil-industry, which has been invested, rather than spent, allowing the country more space for maneuvering its budget spending. One of the factors that has made the maintenance of the Scandinavian model possible, has been the small size of the population and the high sense of national pride, without which, not many state would be able to sustain support for 25% standard VAT, and taxation on fatty foods. Real social conflict appeals little when you are a member of such a small community, because of the real risk of social exclusion.

In all the Scandinavian countries, there is a dual income taxation system; meaning that taxation on private income is higher than on capital. Nevertheless, both types of income tax are among the highest in the world. The tax systems in Scandinavia are, in general designed to be equitable, following these criteria: everyone should be guaranteed a fair level of income, all families should be sustained economically, income should be distributed, but it should always pay to find a job. Although income taxation and duties remained numerically the most important ways of financing welfare in the Scandinavian countries in 1996, the level of reliance upon other ways of financing these policies were very varied among the Scandinavian countries. The welfare backlash has resulted in a rethinking of government spending, resulting in privatisations, but also in a decreased quality of the health care system. The question is how the approach to welfare will be in the future, whether it will persist, or whether it will succome to pressure from an aging population and sustained immigration²⁰⁹. The Scadinavian countries have, in general, been able to switch to the so-called knowledge economy in pace with industrial jobs being moved abroad. However, the part of the population which had reached middle age by the time globalisation had ransacked most of the Scandinavian industry, were left behind. Although they were offered re-integration schemes, many felt alienated and discarded. This, together with the lenient position taken by the trade unions, has fed the resentment among these people against the political establishment and the trade unions.

We may conclude that the economic crisis, which also influenced the Scandinavian countries, in a certain sense appealed to the unity of the nation, in as much as a sense of common purpose arises from acknowledging that one is in a situation of crisis. The appeal to personal sacrifice for the purpose of sustaining the welfare state through this difficult time permeated in government awareness campaigns, and largely, the populations accepted cuts in government spending without too much fuss. On the othe hand, however, the standards of welfare that the Scandinavian population has been used to, easily creates consensus around

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

national-populist policies of restrictions to immigration, and increased taxation on large companies and managerial jobs.

The Role of Increased Immigration

Literature about the success of both national-populist, but especially radical-right parties in Western Europe almost always include references to 'the problem of immigration'. The importance of this issue to the founding and later development of these parties is emphasized by the fact that it very quickly became one of the main concerns of the Fremskridtspartiet in Denmark. In fact, already in its 1973 programme do we find mention of what they frame as a threat to the Danish population. The object of the concern was already at that time, not the fact that other ethnicities lived in the country, but that too much Muslim immigration would threaten the survival of the native population because of the high fertility rate among this group of immigrants. It is true that there was a voluminous immigration, especially from Turkey at that time. The two main arguments as to why immigration was a threat were the following: 1) immigrants – especially the women who were brought to the country as wives of work-migrants - who are illiterate and do not speak the Danish language will not work and will, therefore, receive social benefits. This would put too high a strain on the universal welfare economy in the country 2) our culture will be under threat when there will be more Muslim inhabitants than ethnic Danish. The second argument presupposes that a sort of multicultural integration policy would be applied. The problems, as perceived by the Scandinavian populists, regarding increased immigration actually is combined with the national autonomy crisis, not only in the context of European integration. Immigration is perceived as a problem at three geographical levels: The European-wide and the nation-wide levels are joined by the third, Nordic-wide, level. The recent European refugee problem has also created problems within the otherwise harmonious relationship between Sweden and Denmark, where the open border between the two countries has become a political 'hot potatoe' that the populist parties in both countries like to speak about, but that none of the governments wish to resolve. The problem is that Sweden accepts considerable more refugees than Denmark, and very quickly provide them with a residency permit. With this permit, the asylum seekers are allowed to move freely into Denmark. The Dansk Folkeparti has complained loudly about this arrangement. For example, another Dansk Folkeparti member, who is also part of the Danish representation in the Nordic Council, Henrik Brodersen, 24th of May, 2017, asked the Danish Immigration and Intergration Minister the following question:

Does the minister think it is a threat to the Nordic cooperation that Sweden has a very different view of immigration from the third world

from the view of the rest of the Nordic countries, since they indirectly impose troubles and expenses on their neighbouring countries?

Continuing his explanation, we says:

The reason that I bring this up is precisely that Sweden, over several years, has worked as flypaper to immigration from the third world... because there have been some very, very lenient asylum rules etc. That which worries me is exactly that they... indirectly also become a country of transit to the rest of the Nordic region.

And finally the real concern is that it has been so destructive for the noble regulation we have had since the 1950s, that Nordic citizens may travel freely within the Nordic region, without having to show identification etc. This is then destroyed because they have had, in my eyes, a failed immigration policy. I also think about the terrible developments in Malmø, where there are sometimes war-like conditions, and it is only just over on the other side. When, at the same time, one knows how easy it is to get asylum in Sweden, and thereby become Swedish, and thereby become a Nordic citizen so that one can travel freely to the other countries; then I think it is cause for concern²¹⁰.

In more general terms, there are, according to Hechter, two ways of solving problems of ethnic conflict and assimilation: 'assimilation' or 'nationalism'. Assimilation would happen, according to Hechter's theory, when minorities are frustrated because of isolation from national culture. Education and socialization would solve the problem of for example ghettos and culture(s) of poverty. Hechter claimed instead that the core will exploit the periphery. Nationalism instead, occurs where "the cultural division of labour leads individuals to identify themselves with their groups and contributes to the development of distinctive ethnic identification."²¹¹ For these mechanisms to kick in, certain conditions must be in place. For instance, the economic inequality must be systematic and visible, and there must be social awareness of the situation in combination with a shared definition of the situation as being unjust. In the case of immigrants in the different Scandinavian countries, there are some differences from country to country. For example, immigrants in Sweden have, as a government policy, been encouraged to spread out over the whole country. This has ensured a fairly quick integration of, for example children into the education system. In Denmark, on the other hand, this process has been much slower because the first immigrants, in the 1970s, were work immigrants, and would thus go to live near their work.

²¹⁰ Translated by the author from Henrik Brodersen, "§ 20-spørgsmål S 1259 Om Sveriges syn på indvandring fra den tredje verden.", Folketinget, Samling 2009-10 § 20-spørgsmål, last accessed 25th of September 2017, at <http://www.ft.dk/samling/20161/spoergsmaal/S1259/index.htm>.

²¹¹ U. ÖZKIMLI, *Theories of Nationalism. A Critical Introduction*, cit., p. 80.

The Role of European Integration

The Nordic Council's precedent was the Kalmar Union in the 14th century. This short-lived union was formed when Denmark, Norway and Sweden, including Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands were under the rule of the first female regent in Europe, Margareth I, regent of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The attempts at bringing the administration of Denmark, Norway and Sweden closer together by writing a constitution failed miserably when arguments about which type of political union should be forged, either federal, or cooperative proved difficult to settle. When the initiative to found the Nordic Council was the remeniscent outcome of the failure of a Swedish initiative in 1948 to a Scandinavian Defence Union.²¹² Also other attempts were made, for example, at organising a Nordic Customs Union. An early achievement of the Nordic Council was the reaching of a Free Labour Market Agreement, already in 1954. This agreement, over the years, has helped about 2 million people to work outside their national borders. For nearly twenty years, however, regional co-operation mainly involved regular meetings of Nordic parliamentarians: indeed, until the 1970s the Nordic Council was the only institutional expression of the undoubtedly strong sense of regional affinity felt among the Nordic peoples. There are limited forms of inter-governmental co-operation which date back to 1914, when regular meetings of the Nordic Foreign Ministers were first organised. Between the wars, the Ministers of Social Affairs and then Ministers of Education did likewise. The Nordic Council of Ministers was founded in 1971. This was to remedy the length of the period that typically passed between a recommendation was issued and its passing into national legislation. The council of Ministers meets frequently, and its decisions are binding on member-nations, unless parliamentary acceptance is required. Already with the idea of a necessary connection between the primordial character of nationality on the one hand, and sovereignty as deposited solely in the nation on the other hand, we run into problems with the Scandinavian cases. The Scandinavian countries share the Nordic Council, which the national-populist parties support, at least to a much larger extent than they support NATO or the European Union. This should be in contradiction to the nationalist ideal, as well as the populist ideal, since it, effectfully alienates sovereignty *and* adds another, more distant layer, of representational democracy.

The Nordic Council's standing committees are subject-specific. In terms of institutional resources, the Nordic Council, and especially its standing committees, have been delegated more than even the standing committees of both the Danish and the Finnish national assemblies. It is interesting also to note that the party mechanisms within the Nordic

²¹² D. ARTER, *The Nordic Parliaments: A Comparative Analysis*, cit., p. 236.

Council and its standing committees has enjoyed increasing formalisation. It is interesting to note that most political parties of all the member countries are represented in the Nordic Council, but also that they are organised, not only according to their national belonging, but to their political orientation into the five party groupings: The Social Democratic Group, the Conservative Group, the Centre Group, Nordic Freedom, or Liberty, and the Left-socialist Green Group. At the moment, the vice-president of the Nordic Council is the Danish Mikkel Sjøberg Dencker, a member of the Dansk Folkeparti. All of the developments to enlarge and refine the Nordic Council have been costly, and have given the Scandinavians a sense of *dejavu*, in respect to European integration. In addition, the level of familiarisation, and therefore of trust, among the citizens of the Nordic countries is much higher than the trust Scandinavians have in the other European countries. We may then, cautiously entertain the idea that the complications in the European integration process of the Scandinavian countries is partially due to these factors. Denmark acceded to the European Community in 1972 whereas Finland, Norway and Sweden, at that time, signed only Free Trade Agreements with the Common Market. In the case of Finland, this was because of its commercial agreement with the Comecon countries.²¹³

In Norway, the discussions around the accession to the European Community and the negotiations around the European Economic Area and EFTA were direct causes of the difficulties of the established parties to create a stable majority government. Thus, as has happened so often in Scandinavia, in 1987, the Bundtland government in spite of having lost its majority. The Labour government was forced into varying allegiances, with both the left and the right, not to mention the populist Progress Party. After an unsuccessful attempt to form a non-socialist government in 1987, the minority government stayed in place until the 1989 election, where a Conservative Party, the Christian People's Party and the Centre Party coalition failed to get the majority and had to invite the Progress Party to be an external supporting party to the coalition. Hilmar Rommetvedt has studied the dynamics of this period and writes: "In the autumn of 1990, however, the Syse government had to resign because the parties in power could not agree on Norway's attitude to the negotiations between the EC and the EFTA concerning a European Economic Area." The affair led to a government crisis, and already in November, Bundtland became prime minister again²¹⁴. These days, we often hear mention of Brexit as the first real case of a country opting out of the EC after having joined it. However, in 1982, in Greenland a local referendum showed that 52% of the Greenland population were in favour of giving up membership of the European Community.

²¹³ Ivi, p. 237.

²¹⁴ Rommetvedt, Hilmar, "Norway: From Consensual Majority Parliamentarism to Dissensual Minority Parliamentarism", in Erik Damgaard (ed.), *Parliamentary Change in the Nordic Countries*, Scandinavian University Press: Oslo, 1992 (revised and updated edition of Erik Damgaard (ed.), *Parlamentarisk forandring i Norden*, Universitetsforlaget: Oslo, 1990) pp. 51-97, p. 60-61

Greenland had, in 1973, already joined the European Economic Community as part of Denmark, but when Greenland gained home rule in 1979, they opted out of the EU. The causes of the scepticism in Greenland were two: the fear that the Inuit-speaking Eskimo population would suffer from too large fishing quotas granted to fellow European countries and that the Inuit lifestyle was threatened by the European Union ban on seal imports. It was felt that, if these communities were to feel welcome in the European Community, the European Community should 'hold out a helping hand'²¹⁵. Mudde and Kaltwasser show us that outside intervention against populist developments strengthens the populist claim, and they give some examples: The double standards of the European Union – violent reaction when Austria saw coalition between FPÖ and ÖVP, but said nothing when Berlusconi formed coalition with Gianfranco Fini's National Alliance and Umberto Bossi's Northern League. The result was that in Austria "many right-wing people rallied behind the government mainly to protest the perceived illegitimate and hypocritical EU interference"¹⁸¹.

The Decline of Parties in Scandinavia

The relatively high election turnout in the Nordic countries, David Arter wrote in 1984, allows parliament to reflect the will of the people, in terms of support for party programmes. However, he warns, the internal selection procedures have led to the creation of a political establishments which is more like a social elite. The system thus is formally representative and yet, it provides populists with arguments to attack its representativeness. Ideally, of course, the mediation of the opinion of the electorate, should not depend on one's social position. Nevertheless, there is a case to be made also in favour of representatives using their intellect and ideals of 'national interest' when serving the voters.²¹⁶

In the Scandinavian countries, there never was much support for a classical conservative party, whereas the rural-based liberal parties were the stronger for a long duration of time. In Iceland, however, in 1929, a liberal-conservative, Independence Party, with the main goal of achieving independence from Denmark, was founded. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, managed to boost their proportion of the electorate in the 1960s, through moving further away from Marxist rhetoric. This made them the pronounced catch-all parties, bridging most social divides. If Western Europe, as Arter and Werner-Müller sustain, has entered a 'post-political' or 'post-ideological' era, the decline of political parties

²¹⁵ M. de la BAUME, Greenland's exit warning to Britain, «Politico», 22nd June 2016, last updated 24th June 2016, last accessed 31/10, 2017, <https://www.politico.eu/article/greenland-exit-warning-to-britain-brexit-eu-referendum-europe-vote-news-denmark/>.

²¹⁶ As Edmund Burke said in his address to the electors of Bristol, "a member own his constituents 'not his industry only, but his judgement' and betrays instead of serving the voters if he sacrifices his viewpoint to their opinion." Edmund Burke as quoted in D. ARTER, *The Nordic Parliaments: A Comparative Analysis*, cit., p. 13.

affects the wellbeing of the representative democracies in this part of the world. This point-of-view is supported by the studies that have shown how Scandinavian parliamentary systems are suffering from the decline of the political party as an organising and initiating entity in the representation of wishes of the voters²¹⁷. The decline of political parties in Scandinavia has been comparable to that in other parts of Western Europe. As government financial support has decreased, parties have taken less social tasks upon themselves. Furthermore, as we have seen, the electoral systems in the Scandinavian countries secure a low threshold to enter parliament and as a result, parliament becomes more fragmented and it becomes more difficult to form majority government. Moreover, the much higher frequency of minority governments this has led to in Scandinavia, has in many people's opinion crippled the strength of governments to implement political reform. In terms of their own organisational structure, some authors claim that populist parties thrive without a stable party structure. However, many populist parties have traditional party organisations of their own (Dansk Folkeparti in Denmark and Fremskrittspartiet in Norway), while others run a very tight ship and prefer a small organisation they can easily control (*Partij van de Vrijheid*). We thus, at least in the context of political movements that seek to become represented in parliament, dismiss this idea. It is quite different when we speak of populist protest movements.

Conclusion

It is often stated that populist movements, as a rule with few exceptions, cope badly with taking part in government. In support of this argument, two main supportive statements are used: 1) that these movements usually create instable governments and cause untimely elections and, 2) that they usually lose the support of a significant part of their electorate after any spell in government. Studying and comparing the Scandinavian cases of Sweden, Denmark and Norway may provide a more nuanced view of the objective problems these parties, or movements, actually experience as coalition partners; whether they are in government or in opposition. Another point often made by those that attempt to discredit populism as a widespread protest movement is, as the Social democrat René Cuperus puts it: "Their aversion to traditional party structures deprives them of political machines built around "cadres" that enable a degree of continuity and consistency in programs. Furthermore, the strong leadership that often comes with populism does not necessarily mean 'politics of personality'. People want leadership without losing too much time on

²¹⁷ J-W., MÜLLER, *L'enigma democrazia. Le idee politiche nell'Europa del Novecento*, Einaudi, Torino, 2012; E. DAMGAARD (ed.), *Parliamentary Change in the Nordic Countries*, Scandinavian University Press: Oslo, 1992.

democratic participation themselves, and without having to be confronted with lots of political dilemmas.

The problem with immigration in Scandinavia is the homogenous culture that has prevailed in this, rather remote, corner of Europe. The few colonial initiatives in the distant past never brought significant numbers of persons with different traits to this part of the world. The contemporary populist parties in Scandinavia have all been founded in the period between the early 1970s and today. They did not all start out as anti-immigration parties. Although the anti-immigration stand has been taken by the national-populist parties in Scandinavia, we cannot, as Cuperus attempted, reduce the political program of all populist movements and parties in Europe to the following: "halt all new immigration and compel old immigrants to adapt or to assimilate"²¹⁸. This is further complicated by the anti-immigration stance which traditionally liberal parties, and even some social democratic parties, have adopted.

Hilmar Rommetvedt points out that the general level of conflictuality in a national society also influences the conflictuality within parliament and, occasionally within government. The latter is only more frequently the case in countries that are known for their coalition governments, such as the Scandinavian countries are. He gives the example of the positive correlation between the number of working days lost on the one hand, and the number of dissenting remarks noted in the *Storting* on the other. It should be noted that he uses the measure of industrial conflicts although he does not in turn prioritize explaining the contributing causes of these conflicts, such as the oil crisis, which might also have had a more direct influence on the number of dissenting remarks in parliament. Hilmar Rommetvedt, while explaining the impact of societal conflict on the level of dissenting remarks in parliament, remarks that the largest increase in the number of dissenting remarks presented in parliament came especially from two of the new parties in Norwegian politics, the Progress Party and the Socialist Electoral Alliance, and that the number of remarks decreased after 1977 again. He links this decrease to the fact that the two parties had lost, or decreased their representation significantly. Rommetvedt's theory, however, does not explain the long term rise in dissenting remarks²¹⁹. There is thus a general tendency towards parliamentary conflict.

What arises from the study of the changes in the parliamentary systems in the Scandinavian countries performed by Damgaard et al. is a picture wherein there has been a move away from politicians concerning themselves mainly with the economic situation of the country and of specific social groups, and with the economic consequences to the individual

²¹⁸ R. CUPERUS, *The Fate of European Populism*, «Dissent», Spring 2004, pp. 17-20, 19.

²¹⁹ H. ROMMETVEDT, *Norway: From Consensual Majority Parliamentarism to Dissensual Minority Parliamentarism*, in E. Damgaard (ed.), *Parliamentary Change in the Nordic Countries*, cit., pp. 51-97, 90-91.

of government decisions, towards a race in which introducing ever more aspects of the life of the individual onto the political stage assures a good electoral result. This expansion of the range of politically laden aspects of life, has increased the level of political conflict. The question is what has caused what. Is it the introduction of non-economic concerns in the policies of the new parties, which are more conflict-prone than the old established parties for questions of visibility on the side of the new parties and for questions of maintaining an image of willingness to compromise on the side of the established parties, which, together with simultaneous, international developments - such as the rapid developments of European integration and the refugee crisis - has increased the level of political conflict in the Scandinavian countries? Of particular relevance, and something which could be investigated in future studies, is how the populist parties have contributed to this development by their transformation from agrarian/libertarian parties into social-nationalist parties. Anders Sannerstedt and Mats Sjölin put it niftily when they wrote that

The traditional image of Sweden is that of a “consensual democracy”: political debate being concerned with matters-of-fact and having few ideological overtones, and decision-making having the form of frequent compromising rather than heated conflict. Today, this image of consensus is less salient, although political negotiations continue to be of great importance²²⁰.

These words might as well have been written about any of the other two Scandinavian countries. What could also be said about any of the Scandinavian parliaments during this period is that historically there have always been two stable political blocks, with the Social Democrats and their left-wing supporting parties on the one hand and the Liberal and/or Conservative party and its right-wing supporters on the other. This two-block constellation has been changing ever since the EU debates started carving up the political field according to other criteria. This is where the populist parties come into the picture. Although some of them started out as libertarian parties, thus on the far right of the political spectrum, their move towards a combination of socialist welfare policies combined with nationalistic and patriotic imaging makes them a clear example of the fact that politics is no longer only divided into left and right, but also into nationalist and internationalist politics etc.

Contemporary Populist Ideology in Scandinavia

²²⁰ A. SANNERSTEDT, M. SJÖLIN, *Sweden: Changing Party Relations in a More Active Parliament*, in E. DAMGAARD (ed.), *Parliamentary Change in the Nordic Countries*, cit., pp. 99-149, 99.

Unlike Italy and Germany, the Scandinavian countries have enjoyed centralised government and administration for a long time already. This has contributed to promoting national pride and the popular belief in the nation as being, if not primordial, then perennial. Moreover, we have seen how 'banale nationalism' is reproduced on a large scale in the Scandinavian context and we know that populist parties exist in the region. Some of the parties have been successful, others less so. We must now turn our gaze to these parties in order to understand, first of all, what kind of populist party they are, and have been. If they are national-populist, we will try to understand why, and if not, we will try to understand why not. This we will do by looking at the history of the parties in question. Furthermore, we will try to identify which have been the most important influences on the parties. Finally, we will also consider the success of each of the parties and try to understand what has caused it, or what has undermined it. In this process, we will keep the following in mind: The peasantry of Europe has changed significantly since the time of the narodniki in Russia and the American Populists.

In Scandinavia, as in other Western European realities, based on their largely rural societies, there were, traditionally three types of political parties before 1970; an agrarian party, an urban-based liberal party, and a moderately right-wing conservative party. In the very early phases of the mobilisation of a mass electorate in the late nineteenth century, a non-socialist Left, an alliance of peasant farmers and a few urban intellectuals had opposed the Right, a loose union of officials, senior clergy and industrialists based in the towns and capital cities (there are interesting comparisons here with the contemporary leadership of the academics in the populist *raznochintsy* movement in Czarist Russia which was also founded on groups of urban intellectuals defending the peasants' interests). The Right remained predominantly town-based; the 'old Left', however, split. The urban intellectuals formed the core of the Liberals, leaving the farmers to found their own party, which they did successfully: on two occasions in Finland, in 1929 and 1962, the Agrarian Party, *maalaisliitto*, was the largest single party. However, a steady decline in the size of the farming population, accelerating after the Second World War, led the agrarian parties in the 1950s and 1960s to re-name themselves Centre parties with a view to adding an urban string to their bow. Incidentally, although interest-specific farmers' parties never emerged on any scale in Denmark and Iceland, the Agrarian Liberals, *Venstre*, in Denmark and the Progressive Party, *Framsóknarflokkurinn* in Iceland have relied above all on agricultural support."²²¹ Although the Danish Venstre once was an outspoken agrarian party, it has let its past image go, in favour of a simpler, Liberal stance.

²²¹ D. ARTER, *The Nordic Parliaments: A Comparative Analysis*, cit., p. 23.

Indeed, in Europe, the socio-economic profile of the peasant has changed dramatically with the automatization of rural production. As a result, rather than referring to the needs of real, present-day peasants, the populist parties in Western Europe, such as the Dansk Folkeparti (DF) in Denmark, now appeal to the rural populations that have been 'left behind' as industrialisation, automatization, and globalisation has taken hold of all facets of production - rural or urban. Their new electoral base are thus the industrial workers, those who work in the public sectors that are under pressure from liberal, neo-liberal, and socio-democratic governments, such as health and education professionals, those who work in sectors that are under pressure from (work) migration, and lastly, the unemployed. We will also consider the presumption that many of the populist parties loose support once they join government. We may, on the one hand, consider that some of the populist parties, such as the People's Party of Denmark and the Swedish New Right, not to mention the Italian Fascist party itself, did not loose the support of the electoral base after joining the government. Is this a sign that they have been successful in re-inventing their own image from a protest – to a responsible party? On the other hand, we acknowledge that populist parties that have policies which are irreconcilable with governing, or where their electorate will immediately recognise them as corrupt if they join government, will loose their electoral base as a result. Anders Hellström analyses the three main national populist parties in Scandinavia, the Swedish Sverigedemokratarna [SD], the Danish Dansk Folkeparti [DF], and the Norwegian Fremskrittspartiet [FrP]. He investigates the communicative strategies employed by these three parties in order to obtain support for their policies. He concludes that the SD and the DF "used national myths to attempt to cross the threshold of credibility," but that the FrP did not, in their party programmes, appeal to national myths²²². This begs the question of why the FrP does not make the appeal to national myths while the other two parties do. The following section will help us understand more about the types of populist parties all three parties belong to.

Denmark: One Party, Two Leaders, and Their Apparently Conflicting Political Orientations

Before looking at the contemporary populist parties in Denmark, some general observations about the political history of the country are necessary. The Kingdom of Denmark became a constitutional democracy in 1849. Several movements were operational, with broad bases of support in both urban and rural communities. For instance, in the cities, the

²²² A. HELLSTRÖM, *Trust Us: Reproducing the Nation and the Scandinavian Nationalist Populist Parties*, cit., pp. 170-171.

national-liberal movement was operational. Niels Finn Christiansen writes about the movement that it,

created organisations not of the workers but for the workers, with representatives from other classes. The aim was a double one: first to solve some very obvious social problems and secondly to mobilise the workers to support bourgeois or petit-bourgeois political causes, to create a sort of mass basis for the political élites in the towns and cities²²³.

Also the farmers put a lot of energy into their social organisation, but looked on the urban labour movement with scepticism, preferring to organise their own activities in the revivalist movements. Certainly, this was part of the protestant, nationalist ethics. The revivalist movements in all the Scandinavian countries were a very important factor in the early formation of democratic political awareness. In spite of the popularity of *Grundtvigianisme* among the independent farmers in Denmark, this particular revivalist movement, which encouraged political involvement, did not reach out to the lower rural working class. This social group was much more often reached by the *Indre Mission*. Within this religious community, political involvement was considered harmful to salvation. The revivalist movement thus served both to mobilise politically, and to pacify the poor, rural workers.²²⁴ One of the causes supported by the revivalist movement was the nationalist cause of reconquest of Slesvig-Holstein from Prussia. The underlying civilizing idea behind the national-liberal movement, was to keep the working class occupied in wholesome activities and simple educational engagements, so as to mold responsible and civil persons from those individuals. Although not at the forefront of their declared objectives, the idea that one day the working class might participate in elections, most likely, underlay their ideas. Within these organisations, cooperatives were established, but, foremost, the organisers worked to educate and instill a nationalist ideology among the workers.²²⁵ The socialists, upon finally entering the political arena, made these liberal organisations their main target, accusing them of passifying the proletariat and of trying to mobilise them for causes that lay outside their interests (and, some came to argue, in contrast with their interests). When, what we may call the *Bildingsbürgertum* split in the 1870s, with the more radical democratic wing splitting off to join, first Venstre, and later to ally with the Social Democrats. On the other hand, the remnants

²²³ N. FINN CHRISTIANSEN, *The Role of the Labour Movement in the Process of Democratisation in Denmark 1848-1901*, in B. STRÄTH (ed.), *Democratisation in Scandinavia in Comparison: Report from the DISCO Conference on Continuity and Discontinuity in the Scandinavian Democratisation Process in Kungälv 27-28 Augusti 1987*, Department of History Gothenburg University: Gothenburg, 1988, pp. 12-20, 13.

²²⁴ Ivi, p. 13

²²⁵ Ivi, p. 16

of the National Liberals, the landed aristocracy, and parts of the urban petit-bourgeoisie formed Højre, and the political landscape had changed, never to transform back. Reality was now a two-sided struggle about the contents of political democracy. In this process, the socialists, the third political grouping, were effectually pushed out of active politics for a while, confronted as they were with an unreceptive rural proletariat and, as mentioned above, a large part of the urban working class were organised in non-socialist organisations. As a clear minority they had the choice between organising in clandestine, revolutionary groupings, or ally with the democratic left in the struggle for democratic rights. In fact, the socialist movement had illegal status for a period, and its supporters were openly accused of being strangers to the Danish nation and illoyal in nationalist questions.²²⁶ They eventually chose to enter the democratic political arena, allying themselves, first with Venstre in order to secure parliamentary democracy, and then with the newly founded Radical Left (Det radikale Venstre) of 1905. Thereby, they completely integrated into the democratic system, and they slowly transformed into a typical Social Democratic movement.

The focus on nationalism in Denmark was thus present already from the outset of parliamentarianism. Another aspect of Danish democratic politics which, as we have already mentioned shortly and shall elaborate on further, has persisted over the ages, is the tendency towards compromise social and political compromise. In fact, the particular social and/or political structure of Denmark in particular, with each social class organised under its own representative group, never allowed one party to have a comfortable majority and, therefore, the ability to implement policies without having to compromise with the other social classes. Finally, the absence of a strong socialist movement in Denmark left a lot of room to the social democratic party.²²⁷ An interesting fact is that in Denmark it was the Social Democrats who tried to spread socialist knowledge, although they only accepted “the economic analysis of the laws of capitalist development and never the political implications, nor the Marxist concept of the state.” They believed that a democratised state would be able to transform capitalism. In fact, they quickly accepted the state as mediator in social conflict. In 1899, after a long-lasting conflict, the September-forliget [the September Agreement] came into place. This was the agreement between the workers unions, the employers, and the state. The agreement was that two central workers- and employers- organisations would always sit at the negotiation table together with a representative of the state. Indeed, as another example of how compromising and alliance-building across social divides have been a persistent element of Danish political history, was the fact that the Social Democrats were happy to form an alliance with the ‘capitalist’ Venstre for as long as it took to achieve the extension of the franchise to women, servants and the lower working classes. This happened in 1915, after

²²⁶ Ivi, p. 17

²²⁷ Ivi, p. 18.

which their alliance with Venstre dissolved and the two parties became the real political opponents. Especially, the first three decades of the 20th century were dominated by the 'battle for supremacy' between these two former allies. In 1953, a parliamentary reform led to the abolition of the Landsting, and parliamentary power has since been vested exclusively in the lower house [Folketinget].

Denmark is known for having frequent (extreme) minority governments. By extreme is meant that the government represented only a very small number of seats in Folketinget. Government formation after the 1973 elections was especially challenging and chaotic.²²⁸ The outcome was a liberal minority government, based on only 22 of the 179 seats in Folketinget, but that was not the most significant novelty. The first populist party in Denmark, Fremskridtspartiet [DFrP], entered Folketinget for the first time, with no less than 28 delegates. The party had been founded by the tax lawyer, Mogens Glistrup, in August 1972, after a short appearance on television in which he declared that he had been able to pay zero income taxes. Not even he expected his party to be so successful in the elections and, effectually, had to, at the last minute, go and recruit additional delegates. If we are to define the type of party it was, we must use vocabulary such as 'libertarian', 'popular' and 'grassroot organisation'. The party, at the outset only really have one objective: to diminish taxation, and all its other policy points were an effect of this. One of the provocative suggestions he made in those years was to dismantle the Department of Defence completely and put it its place an answering machine with the recorded message 'we surrender' in Russian. In more constructive terms, the policies of the party during the first years were the gradual abolition of income tax, the dismantling of bureaucracy and the majority of the civil service, as well as the simplification of legislation.

In the following elections, in 1975, the DFrP lost a few seats due to internal disagreements about the stance on collaborating with government, which was a Social Democratic minority government. In the years following this election, Glistrup incorporated an anti-islamic stance into his policy. He quite literally stated that one of his purposes was to have Denmark free of 'Mohammedanes', a term forged by Glistrup himself. He kept scrutinizing public spending, and on one occasion explained his theory of why public spending had been increasing exponentially:

Parliament is controlled by organised interests because pressure groups finance the leading parties and in consequence expect Folketing delegates to push excessive group demands for increased expenditure.' The increased subordination of the legislature to

²²⁸ See T. KAARSTED, *Regeringen vi aldrig fik. Regeringsdannelsen 1975 og dens baggrund*, Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1988

corporate interests, according to Glistrup, had contributed substantially to Denmark's poor post-war record of economic management.²²⁹

Over the first years of the existence of the party, Glistrup decided to include what some call anti-immigration stances but others would call scepticism of multiculturalism, which was in its hayday during the mid-70s, in the party programme. Glistrup had already won a large audience during his anti-tax campaigns, but with the new turn, with his outspoken critique of, and contempt for especially muslim immigrants, whom he famously called "muhammedanere", or muhammedanes, he managed to reach an even wider audience. While Mogens Glistrup was in complete control of the party programme at the beginning, during his spell in prison for tax-evasion, some of the other party members, and especially Pia Kjøersgaard, gained a strong leadership position within the party. A split within the party was inevitable, and the result was that Pia Kjøersgaard, together with a few other prominent former members of the Progress Party, founded Danks Folkeparti, or the Danish Party of the People. This party is often referred to as Danish People's Party, but this does not render justice to the Danish understanding of the prefix 'Folke-', which means 'of the people'.

Since the Danish parliamentary system is highly proportional, *Folketinget* has hosted a high, and increasing, number of parties, especially after the so-called new politics, which followed in the wake of the earthquake elections of 1973. In fact, another minority government followed in the 1978 elections. This tendency of short-lived, minority governments continued, and yet the DFrP was not invited to support the government.

When one such minority government resigned, in 1982, the so-called 'clover' government came to power. It was yet another minority government consisting of Conservatives, Liberals, Centre Democrats and the Christian People's Party representatives, and enjoying occasional support from the Radical Liberals and the DFrP. Surprisingly, the outcome of the next two elections was to confirm a Liberal-oriented minority government on the basis of varying alliances. In short, at least between 1971 and 1992 but possibly even longer, no guaranteed, majority coalition formed government in Denmark. One does well to remember that these were the years in which the major increase in public employment as well as increase in taxation and welfare provisions exploded. Although minority governments were common also before 1973, the volatility of the external supportive alliances increased noticeably. So much, in fact, that they are the most frequent cause of the fall of government.²³⁰

²²⁹ D. ARTER, *The Nordic Parliaments: A Comparative Analysis*, cit, p. 38. The statement is taken from an interview with Danish Progress Party leader, Mogens Glistrup, probably performed by David Arter, on 22.4.1982.

²³⁰ E. DAMGAARD, *Denmark: Experiments in Parliamentary Government*, cit., pp. 28-30.

Returning to the DFrP, Mogens Glistrup was sentenced to three years of imprisonment for tax fraud in 1983. During his absence, a deputy, belonging to the more pragmatic faction of the party, Pia Kjaersgaard, took over leadership of the party. On her watch, several agreements were made with government and when Glistrup refused to second the agreements upon his return, he was withdrawn as an MP by the party he had founded. Disgruntled, Mogens Glistrup ended up leaving the party to start another party, Trivselspartiet. The internal disagreements did not end there though, and in 1995, a group of DFrP MPs, led by the former nurse, Pia Kjaersgaard, broke away from the party, forming instead the Dansk Folkeparti. In 1999, Glistrup was invited back as the leader of the party, but he made such offensive statements against muslims, that the other MPs, by then only four, left to form yet another party, the Frihed 2000. In the 2001 election, the DFrP had lost almost all its backing and could not muster enough support to enter parliament.²³¹

We should not forget that 'banale nationalism' is still influencing the daily lives of the Danes, and is by no means confined to the national-populist party. An interesting case of a historical event being used to forge a sense of integration with the national history is the filmatisation of a mini-series about the second Dano-Prussian War in 1864. The build-up and progress of this war has been depicted in the Danish, statefunded, TV series "1864". The series, rightly, points out the strong nationalistic feeling that spiralled out of proportion when the past greatness of the Kingdom of Denmark and the victory of one military battle against Prussia were taken as signs of the invincible Danish fortress. The national history books depict the 1864 defeat as something unexpected and unjust, whereas, with a minimal sense of military realism, the outcome was very much predictable at the hands of the much superior and more numerous Prussian forces. Nevertheless, the nationalistic inspiration of several of the most influential Danish political leaders, their idea of the superiority of constitutional monarchy, and their belief in the Danish people as chosen by God, contributed to a sense of potency and infallibility of the nation. This is just one of the historical events, anecdotes and founding myths that are regularly invoked in history books, TV programmes, tours of historical sites etc.

Returning to the DF, we note that the party has, generally done well in elections and are, at present the second largest party in parliament with 37 mandates out of 179. To find out a bit more about the policies of the party, as well as the rhetorical style it employs in its promotional material, we read the current Programme, written in 2009. The opening statement sets the patriotic tone: "Denmark is the land of the Danes. The continued existence of our little country as a stable democracy is depending on that our population-mix will not be changed to an extensive degree." Then it goes on to suggest local solutions to migration

²³¹ Emilia Valbum, "Her er Fremskridtspartiet's Historie", Berlingske, 2. July 2008, last accessed 12/7 2018 at <https://www.b.dk/nationalt/her-er-fremskridtspartiets-historie>

problems and famine. About the population in Third World countries it states that “they can only obtain stable conditions through adopting significant cultural traits from the Western World, i.e. liberty, democratisation, equality, knowledge, economic reforms and a reduction in the population growth.” The tone is really quite spiteful when it says that “...we do not want to be forced to accept the immigration of people who despise the cultural principles that have created our country and who cannot provide for themselves.” We also recognise that the party perceives immigration as a threat to the societal structure as such:

The redistributive principle and the idea of equality behind our welfare model is completely incomprehensible for most cultures... There is no logic in changing our society radically, so that the standards of living are adapted to people who fled or migrated from the standards of living that they have at home. It is not Denmark that is in the wrong, it is not Danish culture or societal structure that is in need of change – if that were the case, so many people would not be trying to come here and to get a residence permit.” In this latter comment, we recognise the construction of the idea of a ‘heartland’.²³²

As an introduction to their political programme, the current leader of Dansk Folkeparti writes the following: “I Dansk Folkeparti er vi stolte af Danmark; vi elsker vort fædreland, og vi føler en historisk forpligtelse til at værne om landet, folket og den danske arv. Med denne forpligtelse følger nødvendigheden af et stærkt forsvar samt trygge og sikre grænser. Kun i et frit Danmark kan landet udvikle sig efter folkets vilje”²³³. This seems to be a reference to what Billig mentioned about the effects of permeating signs of ‘banal nationalism’; a feeling that one has the right to a sense of familiarity and security within the national borders, based on the idea that all other Danes share ones own values and traditions. It seems to almost be a question of the nation as extended family. That the parties try to appeal to the common, reasonable man-on-the-street is evident in what Peter Skaarup said at the Dansk Folkeparti’s annual meeting in September 2013: “In recent years there has been much discussion of a culture clash [Kulturkamp] and the ‘Danish values’. I think this debate has often been too abstract and too academic. In reality, I prefer to talk about ‘the struggle for common sense’ or ‘the struggle for common decency’. It should pay off to be a decent citizen and take responsibility for one’s own actions. It should pay off to endure training and feed oneself by

²³² Translation by the author from Dansk Folkeparti, “Dansk Folkeparti’s Arbejdsprogram 2009”, <https://danskfolkeparti.dk/arbejdsprogram/>, last accessed 4th of October 2017.

²³³ Kristian Thulesen Dahl, Letter: “The er mig en glæde at præsentere Dansk Folkeparti’s politik”, Last accessed 26th of September 2017 at http://www.danskfolkeparti.dk/Politik_ny.

means of honest work – for everyone, both the Danes and the foreigners. These are not extreme opinions’. It is sound politics at the centre!”²³⁴

The feeling of connectedness with the other Scandinavian nations is, as we have seen, an unusual feature of the DF world-view. At the same time, DF is a nationalist party in a multi-national realm, which includes both Greenland and the Faeroer. An illustration is the question which Henrik Brodersen (DF), asked the Danish Minister of Culture, Per Stig Møller, on 23rd of October 2017. In his question, Brodersen shows concern because, in his opinion, the Danish Broadcasting service had not been screening enough television programmes from the other Nordic countries, or the other countries within the realm.²³⁵ So far, DF has, by any standards turned out to be a very successful party. Its electoral base has shown to be stable, if not increasing. In addition, many of its proposals have, usually after vivid public debate and some revision, been passed. For example, Denmark now has a ministry dedicated to immigration and integration and a ban on forced matrimony, the so-called 24-rule. Dansk Folkeparti proposed amendments to the Law on Parliamentary Elections to stop members of Folketinget who are residents elsewhere in the country from receiving an accommodation allowance for the purpose of purchasing temporary accommodation in the Capital. The idea behind this proposed law was clear as day; to hit the “élite” where it hurts the most.²³⁶ Eventually, the amendment was passed with a unanimous vote in favour. On numerous occasions, Dansk Folkeparti’s parliamentary group has proposed amendments to the Criminal Code regarding the definition, abolishment of, or punishment for ‘hate speech’ free of punishment.²³⁷ It is an interesting contrast to their wish to otherwise increase punishment for other criminal acts, such as their 2005 proposal to put the burning or desecration of the Danish national flag, or the scuffing or ridiculing of Denmark, *at a par* with similar treatment of other nations and their national symbols.²³⁸ Finally, the former party

²³⁴ Translation from Anders Hellström, *Trust Us: Reproducing the Nation and the Scandinavian Nationalist Populist Parties*, Berghahn: New York, Oxford, 2016, p. 180

²³⁵ Translated by the author from Henrik Brodersen, “§ 20-spørgsmål S 1662 Om tv fra Grønland og Færøerne.”, Folketinget, Samling 2009-10 § 20-spørgsmål, last accessed 25th of September 2017, at <http://www.ft.dk/samling/20091/spoergsmaal/S1662/index.htm>.

²³⁶ Dansk Folkeparti’s Folketingsgruppe, “L 29 Forslag til lov om ændring af lov om valg til Folketinget.” Folketinget, Samling 2013-14 § 20-spørgsmål, last accessed 25th of September 2017, at <http://ft.dk/samling/20131/lovforslag/l29/index.htm>.

²³⁷ Dansk Folkeparti’s Folketingsgruppe, “Lovforslag nr. L 182: Forslag til Lov om ændring af straffeloven (Ændring af racismeparagraffen),” Folketinget, Samling 2010-11 § 20-spørgsmål, last accessed 25th of September 2017, at http://ft.dk/ripdf/samling/20101/lovforslag/l182/20101_l182_som_fremsat.pdf; “L 90 Forslag til lov om ændring af straffeloven. (Ophævelse af straffelovens blasfemibestemmelse).” Folketinget, Samling 2007-08 (2. samling) lovforslag, last accessed 25th of September 2017, at <http://ft.dk/samling/20072/lovforslag/l90/index.htm>; “L 103 Forslag til lov om ændring af straffeloven. (Demokratisering af og indførelse af ligebehandlingsprincip i straffelovens racismeparagraf),” Folketinget, Samling 2006-07 Lovforslag, last accessed 25th of September 2017, at <http://ft.dk/samling/20061/lovforslag/l103/index.htm>; “L 88 Forslag til lov om ændring af straffeloven. (Ophævelse af straffelovens blasfemibestemmelse),” Folketinget, Samling 2006-07 Lovforslag, last accessed 25th of September 2017, at <http://ft.dk/samling/20061/lovforslag/l88/index.htm>.

²³⁸ Dansk Folkeparti’s Folketingsgruppe, “L 44 Forslag til lov om ændring af straffeloven. (Danmark og Dannebrog sidestilles med andre nationer og deres flag),” Folketinget, Samling 2005-2006 Lovforslag, last accessed 25th of September 2017, at http://ft.dk/samling/20051/lovforslag/L44/som_fremsat.htm.

chairman and founder of the Dansk Folkeparti, Pia Kjøersgaard, is the current Speaker of Folketinget.

Norway: Lange's legacy

Also Norway got a parliamentary system early on, in 1884. However, the principle has developed through practice alone and has never been written into the Constitution. In fact, article 1 of the Norwegian Constitution grants the King the authority to select the members of his council among all Norwegian citizens qualified to vote. This thus conflicts with the Norwegian constitutional common law.²³⁹ In Norway, the Labour Party was dominant for many years. It gained a majority in the first elections after the end of World War II, and stayed in a majority government position until 1961, with Einar Gerhardsen (PM: 1945-51 and 1955-63) and Oscar Torp (1951-55) at the helm of government. Changing, sometimes right wing and/or minority governments followed, the first of which was the third Gerhardsen cabinet which stayed on in spite of being a minority government. Labour government was interrupted only by a Conservative, Christian, Centre Party and Liberal coalition which lasted only a few weeks in 1963. In the 1965 elections, the right-wing coalition gained a majority, and the fourth Gerhardsen cabinet stepped down. The liberal cabinet, headed by Per Borten lasted until internal disagreement on EC membership forced its resignation in 1971. When the right-wing parties failed to form a new government, the cabinet-formation was left to Labour to form another minority government which lasted until a referendum was held on membership of the EC. The result showed that the majority of the Norwegian population wanted to stay out of the EC, which was clearly against the political stance of the Labour Party and, in effect, a vote of no confidence not by parliament but by the Norwegian people. After this, a right-wing minority coalition government was constructed around Lars Korvald but this time without the Christian People's Party. After this time, although mostly in a minority position, the Labour party stayed in government until 1981; effectuating cabinet and PM changes according to internal Labour dynamics. After 1981 a Conservative one-party government based on the majority this party created in parliament together with the Centre Party and the Christian People's Party. The result of the 1985 elections meant that the Progress Party entered parliament with two pivotal seats. This was far from the initial electoral success the Danish sister party had the same year, but what the party lacked in initial success with the electorate,

²³⁹ E. DAMGAARD, *Nordic Parliamentary Government*, cit., pp. 11-17. "The Norwegian Storting cannot be dissolved within the constitutionally defined four year election period. In Denmark and Finland, on the other hand, there are almost no limits to the possibilities of dissolution, although [it] is resolved to with different frequency in the two countries. Sweden occupies an intermediate position since general elections are to be held every third year irrespective of possible intervening elections, which therefore are less attractive" (p. 14).

it made up for later. With the support of the FrP MPs, the conservative government could stay. Thus, the moment the party entered parliament, it was much discussed and could exert influence on government policy from the outset. But the happy union only lasted until 1986, when the FrP joined the opposition in a no confidence vote, paving the way for another Labour minority government, headed, for the second time, by Ms Gro Harlem Brundtland. In 1989, when a right-wing coalition received the expressed support of the Progress Party, the second Brundtland cabinet resigned. During 1990 however, the government headed by the conservative party PM, Jan P. Syse, "had to resign because the parties in power could not agree on Norway's attitude to the negotiations between the EC and the EFTA concerning a European Economic Area."²⁴⁰ The third Brundtland-led cabinet was the result. Norway, at least until 1992, had never had a Centre-Left coalition government, although that would have secured such a government the majority in Parliament.

Norway is an important oil – and natural gas exporter. During the 40s and 50s, the Labour Party was the parliament strong-man. The historian Jens Arup Seip even called Norway a 'single-party state' during this period. Even if such a statement is an incomplete reconstruction of the party dynamics during this period, it is certainly a witness to the strength of the Labour Party. The Labour Party lost its majority in the Storting in 1961. When, in 1963, the new Socialist People's Party withdrew the support of its two MPs on a matter of a no confidence motion, the Labour Party prime minister, Einar Gerhardsen, was forced to step down. From then onwards, although governments were generally majority governments, they were all coalition governments. The big electoral changes started only after the 1972 referendum on EC membership. The voters response was negative (53,5% against joining the EC). In December 1972, the New People's Party, consisting of the 8, of the 13 Liberal Party MPs, who had not been willing to join a Liberal anti-Marketeer government, was formed.

Already in the 1960, the political agrarian agitation, Anders Lange, had been trouring the country with his ideas of the minimal state. It was only, however, in April 1973 that Anders Lange established his 'minimal state' party which, following the model of the DFrP, founded by Mogen Glistrup, wanted minimum state intervention and drastic cuts on taxation. Also in Norway, like in Denmark, the general election of 1973 saw the fragmentation of the party system. The elections brought about the introduction of three new parties, at the expense of support for both the Labour Party, which lost 12 seats, and the Norwegian party with the longest history at the time, the Liberal Party, which lost 11 seats, leaving it with only 2 seats in the Storting.²⁴¹ In the period following the 1973 landslide elections, the Conservative party increased it's support from 17,4% in 1973 to 31,7% in 1981. The Conservative party lost

²⁴⁰ H. ROMMETVEDT, *Norway: From Consensual Majority Parliamentarism to Dissensual Minority Parliamentarism*, cit., pp. 56-61.

²⁴¹ Ivi, p. 52-56

significant numbers of votes in the elections after the 1987 local government elections, but over the whole period, the most significant decline was the one of the Labour Party, which had controlled 48,3% of votes in 1957, but which only swayed 34,3% in 1989. Fremskrittspartiet, on the other hand, gained 12,3% and 13,0% in the elections in 1987 and 1989.²⁴²

Anders Lange passed away within a year after having established his party. After his death, his party adopted a new name. The FrP is a libertarian party, and very similar to the DFrP. The programme of the FrP has consistently mirrored that of the DFrP: significant tax cuts, less bureaucracy, and market liberalism. It even adopted the anti-immigration message of the Danish sister party. The FrP was initially placed behind a cordon sanitaire, partially because of its populism and partially because the government could afford to leave it out. As we remember, the Danish minority governments were not in a position where they could completely ignore the DFrP mandates. The electoral support of the FrP has been steadily increasing, at least until the party entered government after the 2013 elections. What has characterised the party's time in government, has been its focus on symbolic cases that created a disproportionate amount of press coverage, but would have little impact on people's everyday lives. It is very interesting to observe how the public opinion is much less tolerant in Norway than in Sweden, in terms of anti-immigration and other, potentially hurtful remarks.²⁴³ See for example the case where the FrP Minister of Justice, Sylvi Listhaug, in March 2018, was forced to resign as a result of having written a comment which some thought would be hurtful to the relatives of the victims of the Utøya attack. In the comment she accused a labour party MP of being more concerned with the rights of terrorists, than with national safety. The media storm was fierce, and she chose to resign.

Sweden: Populist Parties in Passing

The founding of a national-populist party in Sweden, the Sverigedemokraterna [SD], came significantly later than the founding of the DFrP and the FrP in Denmark and Norway respectively. Furthermore, the connections between the party and the other Scandinavian national-populist parties has been much less intense. The general political history in Sweden is very similar to that of Denmark in terms of the struggle for the socialists to loosen the hold of the protestant churches and the revivalist movements on the poorest social strata. While Sweden had the first Liberal government, more precisely in 1913, the world's first universal pension system was introduced in this country. The scheme was financed by the introduction

²⁴² Ivi, p. 54

²⁴³ See "Støjberg forsvarer Listhaug: Norsk debat har været hysterisk", Politiken, 20 March 2018, last accessed 12/7 2018, at <https://politiken.dk/indland/politik/art6389692/Støjberg-forsvarer-Listhaug-Norsk-debat-har-været-hysterisk>.

in the same period of taxation of individual income. The need for the pension scheme was, according to the economist Andreas Bergh, more determined by the comparatively extreme old population in Sweden. Almost 1 million Swedish citizens, usually young adults, had emigrated most frequently to the United States.²⁴⁴ In Sweden, the important social agreement was the Kohandel, or 'the horse-trade' from 1933. In this agreement, the Agrarian party and the Social Democratic party agreed on an exchange: the Farmers supported the Social Democratic policy for dealing with the economic crisis, while the government increased support for the farmers.²⁴⁵ A political difference between Sweden and Denmark was that Sweden had a Communist party, while Denmark had not. The result was that political agreements with the opposition were easier to make in Danish politics than in Swedish. Nevertheless, the Social Democrats in Sweden also sought the alliance of the liberal party in order to increase the pressure for universal suffrage. Also in Sweden, a long period of Social Democratic rule (44 years), ended, around the time of the Danish and Norwegian landslide elections, more precisely in 1976. What followed were the well-known short-term governments. Also in Sweden there has been an increase in the number of written reservations in the committee reports, indicating more political conflict.²⁴⁶ (It is interesting that these authors do not mention anything about the new populist parties and how these may have influenced Swedish parliamentarism). In their own words, "Sverigedemokraterna is a social-conservative party with a nationalistic foundation." Thus, in other words, a national-populist party. The party sees the preservation of the welfare-model as the way to improve society. The programme even mentions explicitly, that the party aims at "combining the best elements of the traditional rightist- and leftist- ideologies."²⁴⁷ Under the heading 'Demokrati', they write about their support for more instances of direct democracy at local, regional and national levels. But they also spend many more words on explaining the following:

Democracy means government by the people and Sverigedemokraterna's opinion is that the word 'people' in the concept of 'government by the people' cannot be ignored and that government by the people may, in the long run, become very problematic to maintain in a state inhabited by several peoples, since it does not possess consensus about whom to include among 'the people' and since there may not even be a common arena for debate

²⁴⁴ A. BERGH, *The Swedish Economy: Triumph of Social Democracy — or Serendipity?*, Milken Institute Review, date of publication 17/1, 2017, <http://www.milkenreview.org/articles/the-swedish-economy-triumph-of-social-democracy-or-serendipity>, last accessed 15/11, 2017

²⁴⁵ A. SANNERSTEDT, M. SJÖLIN, *Sweden: Changing Party Relations in a More Active Parliament*, cit., p. 101.

²⁴⁶ Ivi, pp. 112-113.

²⁴⁷ Sverigedemokraterna, "Var politik: a - till -o", <https://sd.se/var-politik/var-politik-a-till-o/>, last accessed 1/10 2017.

because the residents of the state do not speak a common language. We do thus view the creation of a shared, national identity among the population as one of the fundamental cornerstones in a strong and well-functioning democracy.²⁴⁸

The idea of the nation as being homogenous, sharing a space and a language with each other. It is regrettable, that the programme does not include the intended strategy for instilling the national identity among the population. Here follows an example of SD's inconsistent socio-economic policy suggestions. In terms of increasing social welfare, they wish to significantly increase A-kassan's contribution to the recently unemployed to 1200 Swedish Kronar, during the first 100 days, and 800 kronar after that. They also want to make this insurance free for all. This, together with the fact that they wish to increase the defense budget and reinstate compulsory military service, means that if the party is to have any say in government, the overall budget for public spending would have to increase significantly. Regarding the safeguarding of the environment, they do not wish to have any increases in the level of taxation on driving, including petrol- and car taxes. In short, the only thing that they would wish to save money on is the help for developing countries (U-lands hjem). This policy of increased public spending is in sharp contrast to the Norwegian FrP's libertarianism, as it would have been to the DFrP if it had still existed. However, the policy is more similar to the socio-economic policies of the DF that also see the safeguarding of the welfare system as a way to, ultimately, safeguard the national identity. To the youth-organisation of the SD, mentions that it wishes to bring to full fruition the possibilities offered by Nordic collaboration: "We see ourselves, in order of importance, as a part of a Nordic, a European and a Western state. In line with this, we will work simultaneously to strengthen the Nordic identity as well as broaden and deepen Nordic collaboration."²⁴⁹ The website of the youth organisation is also more explicit about what the party understands by Swedish identity. "Swedish identity is generally constructed on the fact that one sees Sweden as one's country, Swedish as one's language and Swedish culture, history and traditions as part of one self." They also express their wish to, one day, see the implementation of a similar test to the Danish 'medborgerskabsprøve'.²⁵⁰ It is interesting then that the national-populist party which, historically, has the most clear roots in fascism, is the one that now promotes this sort of

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Translated by the author from Ungsvenskarna, "Utrikespolitik", <http://www.ungsvenskarna.se/2017/01/16/utrikespolitik>, last accessed on 3rd of October 2017.

²⁵⁰ Translated by the author from Ungsvenskarna, "Migration och assimilationspolitik", <http://www.ungsvenskarna.se/2017/01/16/migration-och-assimilationspolitik>, last accessed 3rd of October 2017

'open swedishness'. Indeed, after the party was founded in 1988, the political establishment, but also the media, refused to cooperate with the SD.²⁵¹

In the landslide election of 1991, two new parties gained representation, one of which was the Ny Demokrati [NyD]. NyD was a party that took the FrP and DFrP as models. It was in favour of curtailing immigration, tax cuts, cuts on public services and increased opportunities for direct democratic participation. The party's success was shortlived, as it already exited the Riksdag in the 1994 election. After the 1991 election, the political establishment on the political right could have chosen to cooperate with the new NyD. However, they preferred to form a four-party minority government instead. A pattern thus seems to develop which indicates that the political elite in Sweden, and to a smaller degree in Norway, seek an active policy of keeping the national-populist parties out of government office and, in the Swedish case, even out of a cooperative position.²⁵²

Conclusion: Scandinavian national-populism - Separate, yet the same

Before making the comparison among the Scandinavian national-populist parties, we shall see how these parties compare with the first manifestations of populism and nationalism. From the *Narodniki*, current national populist parties in Scandinavia can be said to have inherited the agrarian ideal society, as well as the perception that the country of origin is somehow 'on a different path' than the rest of the western world, and finally that it's 'native' population has some special, internal sense of what is right and just – in the latter exhibiting an almost religious belief in a moral hierarchy within the human species.

It is the lack of an appeal to violence which is the main distinction between the national – populist parties in Scandinavia today on the one hand, and the fascist movements of post-WWI Western Europe on the other. Undoubtedly, they have similar ancestors though, and thus share the hatred of foreigners, foreign influences, liberalism as well as their advocacy of strong leadership. They are not all largely oriented towards the past, rather than the future. Where they differ is in the lack of glorification of violence (possibly explained by the small size of the national populations and economies of these countries), anti-Semitism (explained by the events of the WWII, which is still a point of "glory" for the Scandinavian countries due to their official neutrality,) the resistance (which all of a sudden was tripled towards the end of the war) and efforts to help the Jews (in Denmark and Sweden, the trafficking of Jews across the canal in the night before the planned apprehension of the majority of Danish Jews has become national myths). Moreover, the national enemy is no longer to be found among

²⁵¹ Translated by the author from Kristoffer Löfgren., "Sunt förnuft. Populismen i politiska partiers valpropaganda", Högskolan i Gävle, Akademin för utbildning och ekonomi, Avdelingen för humaniora, Politik och medierprogrammet, June 2010 (unpublished), p. 6

²⁵² A. SANNERSTEDT, M. Sjölin, *Sweden: Changing Party Relations in a More Active Parliament*, cit. p. 107

the neighbouring countries, but in the European Union, which embodies the idea of the exploitative and bureaucratic, impersonal, democracy, with its highly educated elite which corrupts the efforts of the “real” citizens. Finally, there are no expansionist pretences in the core party programmes of these parties. This is most likely because such ideas would in any case cause self-harm during a process of retraction from the European Union (with the economic damages this would cause), and because such plans would have to be backed up by internationally recognised power – something which, in respect of German and Russia (the most obvious borders across which to extend are either with other Scandinavian countries, or with these two countries). It is also true that the Scandinavian country which has had an empiricist history, Denmark, has spent the last centuries trying to carefully balance the costs and benefits, not to mention the ethical questions related to governing non-national territory.

None of the Scandinavian national-populist parties have geographical expansion as a serious part of their political programme. However, some of them, Denmark and Sweden, deal with issues of multicultural states. What is interesting here is the fact that in this case, so when they may reasonably consider themselves an accepted political force within their national political system, they distinguish between the ‘other’ in terms of the other cultures (linguistic and cultural) that are represented within the nation because of the inclusion of their native geographical areas in the ‘mother state’, and the ‘other’ as immigrants and refugees. As regards the ‘banal nationalism’ which one may witness in Scandinavia, it includes all aspects of life; in Denmark it is everything from the traditional birthday song with its accompanying small national flags that greet each individual on the morning of their birthday, over the traditional ‘burning of a witch’ on mid-summer night, to the routine reference in talkshows and TV programmes to “us, the Danish” or “the small kingdom of Denmark”. Besides these everyday signals, there are proper institutions and projects of nationalism. Again about Denmark, there has been a very significant increase in the amount of the national broadcasting agency’s budget for programmes about national history. An interesting point is that the nationalist feeling in Scandinavian societies, but also in other Western countries is nowadays far removed from nationalist intellectuals. It is not acceptable to adhere to the political doctrine of nationalism, but its practices live on in the best of health. This has meant, with the political link officially removed, more people feel free to continue national symbolism than ever before, and they have taken the absolute priority all over the political spectrum (with the only exceptions being the communist and other Universalist ideologies). No political movement is thus needed in order to maintain nationalism as a political program, it is simply integrated, not at the level of political goals in party or movement programs, but as a basic assumption of a communal goal, which is beyond reproach and attack. So, what we have

seen in Denmark, and partially also in Sweden, is the sort of national revival thought of by Anthony Smith, but it doesn't fit entirely within either lateral or vertical ethnic promotion.

Ernst Gellner's argument that it is modernism, with its urbanisation, social uprooting, intra-class competition and breaking of traditional social ties which makes the invention of nations necessary in contemporary states. In Smith and Hutchinson's words; "If the newcomers resemble the old inhabitants and share their culture, the conflict remains purely social, a case of class conflict. But if they differ in terms of language, customs, religion and pigmentation, cultural and ethnic conflict is likely to ensue. The newly urbanised peasants and workers who experience discrimination tend to heed their co-cultural intelligentsias and secede from the polity, to form a new nation of their own. As a result, nationalism creates new nations on both sides of the divide."²⁵³ In other words, the confrontation with other cultures and nations reinforces our definition of the 'other', but also of our own identity. The process in Scandinavia is complicated by the extra layer of Nordic internationalism. From what we have seen, it is typical for members of the national-socialist parties in Scandinavia to create an image of other Nordics as a kind of extended group of co-nationals. That Scandinavia, as a region which incorporates Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland, compels a lot of feeling of companionship and belonging even down to the level of each individual is certainly because of the shared linguistic background of the whole region. Nevertheless, all the parties are either immigration sceptical or anti-immigration, emphasizing the differences in culture as the reason for exclusionist policy suggestions. The communality of this background is sustained through initiatives by the Nordic Council's Cultural Secretariat, which has been successful in obtaining the agreement of the different national broadcasting services to show a certain amount of hours of television, either in the language of one of the other Scandinavian countries, or about one of the countries. Furthermore, at the traditional Folk High Schools, youth and pensioners may indulge in singing each morning from the *Danske Højskole Sangbog*, by now an indispensable item in most Danish homes, which, with some exceptions, consists of nationalistic or Protestant songs from the three main Scandinavian countries, with the occasional song in dialect as well, so that the population may get to know, and try their best at pronouncing, all of the languages and dialects of the region. As Paul R. Brass mentions, elites may use nationalist sentiments as tools to achieve their political goals. The relevant elites may also be the national-populist party leadership, which can choose to emphasize or downplay ethnic differences during periods with differing exigences. So, for example, the leadership of Dansk Folkeparti chose to change their tune regarding the regulations for foreign immigrants with medical or social service training to have

²⁵³ A.D. SMITH, J. HUTCHINSON, *General introduction*, cit., xxx-xxxii.

their diplomas recognised by the Danish authorities, when the country turned out to be in severe shortage of social service workers and nurses.

The images utilised to reinforce national sentiment in the Scandinavian countries are by no means restricted to the use made by the national-populist parties. The national-populists seem to promote 'lateral ethnies' in the sense of the image of a 'golden age' and a return to 'romanticist images of nature'. However, they are not the only source of such images. On the contrary, this sort of nationalist romanticism seems to be part of a much wider social code in Scandinavia. There have been intensive national revivals against other states in the past (Sweden against Denmark; Denmark against Prussia; Norway against both Sweden and Denmark). Possibly the difference this time is that the revival is posed against 'internal enemies'. Hutchinson's idea that conflicting ethnic repertoires that are inevitably present in any nation, lead to competition between different political projects. This seems similar to what is happening in Scandinavian nationalism, where each political party pick and choose which elements they wish to emphasize; for example cooperationism, Nordic identity, plainness, gender avant-guardism, emancipation of the individual, specific Protestant tradition etc. How then may we explain that sometimes nationalism, not as a political goal but as a sense of community, can thrive even better in periods where outside threats to the national community are relatively weak? This was the case in Denmark until a few years ago. Now, the perception of the threat posed by increasing immigration and the difficulties of integration has increased drastically and (as a result maybe?) the idyllic picture of social life within the nation all of a sudden appears as empty as it really is (and has been already for decades). Therefore, possibly, the nationalist programme has been surrounded by a sense of urgency which otherwise might not have been there. Small nation-states have the advantage, from a nationalist point-of-view, that the number of citizens is quite small. If we look at Iceland, which is a clear example of a small nation-state, within which the citizens speak a language which is not spoken anywhere else in the world, the shared space is known to each and every individual citizen, and the country has its own values, traditions and traditional pre-christian popular beliefs. In addition, the country has a history of being subdued to another state. These conditions make it easy to create a bond among the Icelandic population, which can quite clearly designate the national ethnic group. The level of homogeneity is simply so high that every question with any cultural, linguistic, historical, economic or geographical implications will, necessarily be interpreted in a nationalist key. That is not to say that the Icelandic are particularly hostile towards other ethnicities. This lack of aggressivity is determined by the absence of external threats in the form of foreign states, of internal threats, such as high numbers of immigrants and of class conflict.

We may, on the basis of our study, conclude that there are two main types of national-populist party in Scandinavia; the first type was founded in Denmark, but quickly established

a parallel in Norway. These are, of course, the DFrP and the FrP. Initially, these parties drew on the American libertarian tradition, but they were quick in changing their focus to include nationalist elements as well. When considering the definitions of populism that we have consulted in this study, there is only a narrow basis on which to call these parties populist, namely the fact that their anti-bureaucratic ideals are somehow an expression of anti-elitism. However, from the moment they adopted anti-immigration rhetoric and thus combining their libertarian idea with a nationalist ideology, they became national-populist. As we have seen, the situation in Sweden was different. The later DFrP, the DF, and the DS are similar in that their ideological stance is not libertarian, but neither does it belong to any fixed point on the left-right divide. They see it as their prerogative to combine policies as they wish. The danger, which the DF was quick in recognizing and circumventing, is that the political establishment will keep the party outside the sphere of influence, such as it happened, with the exception of a short period in which it supported the minority government. A remedy against this danger which the DF quickly found, is to quickly choose the combination of ideological ideals the party will pursue and stick with it. As a result, the DF has gained much more influence than both the DFrP and the DS did. The last political party we have looked at is the Swedish NyD. Since its policies were just a slightly diluted version of the FrP policies, we shall be looking more at why it arose so much later than, for example, the FrP. Certainly, the fact that the political establishment had already had luck in creating a *corde sanitaire* around the DS made it difficult for the NyD to get a foothold. Overall, we may conclude that there is some ground for claiming that there is a special Scandinavian model. This model consists in a combination of a strong welfare-state and a high level of regional integration, thorough cultural exchange, similar languages, and, to some extent, a shared history, all promoted through the activities of the Nordic Council, which means by the national assemblies of all the Nordic countries. Although there are many similarities among the political systems in Scandinavia, and although some of the populist parties in these countries share key ideological points, they are never completely coordinated. Especially when studied over the course of time, one can identify different streams and, especially, significant transformations within each country as well as within most of these parties. There has been a general movement towards what we have defined as national-populist policies. We thus question the 'saga' of Scandinavia-wide uniformity of political systems and political ideologies, at least as far as national-populism is concerned. Overall, we may say that in the three Scandinavian countries, the tendency towards more minority governments has been uniform in form, but different in strength.

We have studied first the historical and then the contemporary political genealogy of contemporary forms of populism. Firstly, by tracing influences from the classical streams of populism in Revolutionary France, Russia, and North America. And, secondly, by looking at some similarities and differences between populism and nationalism. We found that in some

respects, contemporary forms of populism, which exist in very diverse contexts, are similar to one or more of the classical forms of populism. However, we have also come to accept that populism is a so-called thin-cored ideology. This means that, as a collection of features which fulfil their potential as an ideology only when combined with a thick-cored ideology, it is able to stand alone, but only as a rhetorical modus and an anti-elitist, and anti-pluralist, critique of liberal democracy. As such, it is not able to serve up an alternative set of political ideals. Populists would most likely say that their core policy is to express the 'will of the people', but as we have seen, there are inconsistencies in this regard. One inconsistency is the very conception of 'the people' by populists. The other inconsistency is the claim that populists make to know the real, unspoken, 'will of the people', even when confronted again and again by the fact that the majority of the electorate does not feel they are represented in the views and ideas of the populist parties. Furthermore, we have seen that also nationalism, although in some of its forms it may be regarded as a fully-fledged ideology - significantly in the form of German romanticism -, in other of its forms, it also constitutes a so-called thin-cored ideology.

Through an attentive reading of the definitions of populism that are current in international scholarly literature, we have tried to problematise these definitions, proposing alternatives which variably appear either more or less inclusive than the classical definitions, depending on the latter's ability to comprise and describe the populist phenomenon. This was followed by a detailed explanation of the motives for prioritising the use of "national-populist", rather than the alternative "radical populism", "right-wing populism" and "anti-elitism". Why do these parties do so well? Partially because of the natural reaction consisting in the aversion to change when people feel insecure. A sort of glorification of a, sometimes imagined, better past. In Scandinavian countries, because of the extent of the welfare policies implemented in the past, it is maybe not so difficult to imagine that a large part of the population would prefer turning back time by a couple of decades, and in many the idea has taken root that it is a real possibility, and that their current political establishment is simply too preoccupied with protecting their own interests or the interests of certain, economically potent, interest groups to wish to make such a return to a more humane, more tranquil and more ... past, as it were. In conclusion, what stands between large parts of the population in Scandinavia and their nirvana, is the political establishment. Although many people are convinced it is not so, such a return to the past is impossible in a world that has moved far along the line of global integration, both in terms of trade and finances, but certainly also in terms of language, communication modality and cultural production. A romantized past, in other words, may easily be presented to us as a possible salvation from the real threats that are perceived to be a consequence of global economic and cultural integration.

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