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# Voices of the People: Populism in Europe and Latin America Compared

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**VOICES OF THE PEOPLES:  
POPULISM IN EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA COMPARED**

**Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser\***

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## ABSTRACT

While populism is a hotly debated topic around the world, most scholarship suffers from conceptual confusion and regional singularity. This paper compares European and Latin American populism, on the basis of a clear minimum definition, along three dimensions that dominate the scholarly literature on the topic: 1) economy vs. identity; 2) left-wing vs. right-wing; and 3) inclusion vs. exclusion. Empirically, our particular focus is on four prototypical cases of the predominant *type* of populism in these regions in the 1990–2010 period: Jörg Haider and the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Austrian Freedom Party, FPÖ) and Jean-Marie Le Pen of the French Front National (National Front, FN) in Europe, and Bolivian President Evo Morales and his Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement for Socialism, MAS) and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and his Movimiento V [Quinta] República (Fifth Republic Movement, MVR) in Latin America. While our findings confirm some generally held beliefs, they also challenge and clarify some others. Among the more notable conclusions are: 1) populism in Latin America is more ethnic than populism in Europe; 2) the difference between “right-wing” populists in Europe and “left-wing” populists in Latin America is mainly a consequence of their affiliated ideologies, not their populism; 3) in material, political, and symbolic terms European populism is primarily *exclusionary*, while Latin American populism is predominantly *inclusionary*; and 4) populism is more important in Latin America than in Europe in electoral, political, and *ideological* terms.

## RESUMEN

Si bien el tema del populismo es ampliamente debatido a lo largo del mundo, la mayor parte de las investigaciones al respecto sufren de confusión conceptual y aislamiento regional. Este artículo compara el populismo europeo y latinoamericano basándose en una clara definición mínima y en función de tres dimensiones que dominan el debate académico sobre el tema en cuestión: 1) economía versus identidad; 2) izquierda versus derecha; e 3) inclusión versus exclusión. En términos empíricos, el foco de la investigación radica en cuatro casos prototípicos del *tipo* de populismo que es predominante en cada una de estas regiones en el período 1990–2010: Jörg Haider y el Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) y Jean-Marie Le Pen del francés Front National (FN) en Europa, y el presidente boliviano Evo Morales y su Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) y el presidente venezolano Hugo Chávez y su Movimiento V [Quinta] República (MVR) en América Latina. Mientras nuestros hallazgos confirman una serie de opiniones comunes, también ponen en cuestión y clarifican ciertos argumentos. Entre las más notables conclusiones cabe destacar las siguientes: 1) en América Latina el populismo es más étnico que en Europa; 2) la diferencia entre populismo de ‘derecha’ en Europa y de ‘izquierda’ en América Latina es antes que nada una consecuencia de las ideologías que aparecen afiliadas a cada uno de estos populismos; 3) en términos materiales, políticos y simbólicos es posible indicar que el populismo europeo es fundamentalmente *exclusivo*, mientras que el populismo latinoamericano es principalmente *inclusivo*; y 4) en términos electorales, políticos e *ideológicos* el populismo es más importante en Latinoamérica que en Europa.



## INTRODUCTION

Like most political phenomena, populism is studied mostly nationally and partly regionally. The first studies of populism were focused exclusively on the United States, while later work looked at Latin America and Western Europe. Few cross-regional studies of populism exist (notably Weyland 1999), while most generic studies of populism remain fairly theoretical and empirically voluntaristic (e.g., Laclau 2005; Taggart 2000). This situation is neither unique to the topic of populism nor without compelling reasons.

Despite an ever-growing body of academic and nonacademic studies of populist leaders and movements in individual countries, much of this work is still limited to a small number of usual suspects (e.g., Peronism in Argentina, the Populist Party in the USA, or the National Front in France). Hence, even regional comparisons often suffer from significant blank spots, being overly influenced by developments in a few countries. At the same time, it is often hard to find regional patterns, given the many disparities among European and Latin American countries. For instance, despite the plethora of articles and books on populism in Europe, giving the impression that it is the dominant ideology throughout the continent, populist parties are relevant in only a minority of European countries. Moreover, European and Latin American countries differ from each other on so many levels—economic, political, social—that a cross-regional comparison is often seen as comparing apples and oranges.

While these are all valid concerns, there are also important potential gains from cross-regional comparisons. By looking at a phenomenon outside of its context, one could develop new insights. First of all, a cross-regional comparison could help better explain generic aspects of populism, i.e., elements that are part of populism in every context, and, second, it could also shed light on the different forms that populism takes in particular world regions. These are the key aims of this paper, which analyzes both the core attributes of populism and its specific features in Europe and Latin America.

In theory, populism is an independent ideology, unattached to any particular other ideology. In practice, populism is almost always combined with one or more other

ideological features. Which ideological features attach to populism depend upon the socio-political context within which the populist actors mobilize. Seen in this light, the rise and consolidation of populism is highly determined by national, regional, and historical circumstances, since the latter influence the shape of political ideologies, particularly when it comes to addressing “the people” living in a given territory in a particular point of time. At the same time, while populism does take a different shape in Europe and Latin America, populist actors always favor a particular type of politics, which is not anti-democratic per se but, rather, at odds with *liberal* democracy. We will illustrate these arguments in our comparison of contemporary populism in Europe and Latin America.

It is important to note that the literature on populism in Latin America is much older and more diverse than that on Europe; for example, it includes major works by economists and historians, whereas European work is almost exclusively by political scientists and, though less, sociologists. As far as the phenomenon of Latin American populism is concerned, most literature on Latin America considers it to include three key features; it is 1) predominantly *left wing* (see, e.g., Freidenberg 2007; Gratius 2007; Vilas 1994); 2) chiefly *economic* (see, e.g., Cardoso and Faletto 1969; Dornbusch and Edwards 1991; Weffort 1978); and 3) mostly *inclusive* (see, e.g., Collier and Collier 1991; de la Torre 2000; Panizza 2005).

Populism in Europe did not become a major concern of academic research until the 1990s; whether or not this is a reflection of the more recent emergence of (mass) populism in Europe is a matter in dispute. Within the past two decades the literature on European populism has exploded, easily overtaking that on populism in North and South America. While many issues are still heavily debated, the literature does seem to agree on the following points: populism in Europe is 1) predominantly *right wing* (see, e.g., Betz 1994; Decker 2000; Zaslove 2004); 2) chiefly ethnic *identity* based (see, e.g., Mudde 2007; Geden 2005); and 3) mostly *exclusive* (see, e.g., Betz 2001; Taggart 1996).

Given that the conclusions above have been drawn in regional isolation and mostly based on largely different definitions of populism, this paper will investigate them 1) cross-regionally and 2) by consistently using one definition of populism. Empirically, our particular focus is on four cases in the 1990–2010 period: Jörg Haider and the

Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Austrian Freedom Party, FPÖ) and Jean-Marie Le Pen of the French Front National (National Front, FN) in Europe, and Bolivian President Evo Morales and his Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement for Socialism, MAS) and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez and his Movimiento V [Quinta] República (Fifth Republic Movement, MVR)<sup>1</sup> in Latin America. We selected these particular cases because they represent prototypical examples of the current *type of populism* that is prevalent in each of these world regions now.

Although we are dealing with “only” four cases in this paper, our analysis aims to draw at least some tentative conclusions about major differences and similarities between European and Latin American populism in general. In other words, we are of the opinion that the four cases under consideration form a good basis on which to start thinking about contemporary populism cross-regionally. Future studies should test the plausibility of the tentative conclusions offered here.

The paper is structured in two sections. In the first section, we introduce our minimal definition of populism and, based on this conceptualization, show that the four cases under discussion can indeed be categorized as “populist.” The second section compares European and Latin American populism (by means of our four cases) along three dimensions that dominate the scholarly literature on the topic (see above): 1) economy vs. identity; 2) left wing vs. right wing; and 3) inclusion vs. exclusion. We conclude with a short analysis of the major differences and similarities between European and Latin American populism, after which we present some ideas for future cross-regional research on populism.

## **POPULISM DEFINED AND APPLIED**

Before we can actually compare populism in Europe and Latin America, we first have to establish 1) what populism means and 2) whether the four selected cases indeed meet the definition we adopt. Given the essentially contested nature of populism and the very different definitions and traditions in the two parts of the world, this is crucial and not necessarily straightforward.



## Defining Populism

The concept of populism has been contested for decades, between disciplines and within disciplines, between regions and within regions. This is most visible in the seminal edited volume of Ionescu and Gellner (1969), in which the different authors present a broad variety of highly diverse definitions. While some progress towards consensus has been achieved, particularly within the European literatures, dissensus still reigns supreme, particularly between regions.

As Ruth Berins Collier (2001: 11814) has pointed out, the main problem of defining populism lies in the fact that the existing conceptualizations encompass very different traits as constitutional elements of it. Thus “populism” is usually defined on the base of quite incongruous and even opposite attributes. Moreover, the very notion of populism tends to carry a negative connotation both in the scholarly and public debate, since it is commonly analyzed as a pathological phenomenon. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to state that populism is usually seen as a dangerous trend, which, by emphasizing the idea of popular sovereignty, may pursue problematic goals, such as the exclusion of ethnic minorities and the erosion of horizontal accountability (see, among many others, Rosanvallon 2008). In short, establishing a definition of populism represents a challenge not only because of the absence of a consensus on its core features but also because of the normative assumptions about it.

How can we develop a concept of populism that overcomes normative and regional biases? Mouzelis (1985: 329) distinguishes three approaches to defining populism: 1) include all phenomena labeled populism at the expense of finding any features they all have in common; 2) base the definition on a prototype, i.e., one of the most often mentioned phenomena; or 3) “construct more inclusive definitions in order to account for the majority of the movements conventionally labeled as populist.” For our purpose, Mouzelis’s third approach, which is close to Sartori’s (1970) approach of minimal definitions, is the most promising. Minimal definitions include *only* the core—necessary and sufficient—attributes of a concept. This means that minimal definitions have a high level of abstraction and, in consequence, can be applied to analyze a great range of cases. However, to understand the differences among the cases, it is useful to

descend one step on the “ladder of abstraction” in order to identify subtypes, in which the attributes of the minimal concept *plus* other attributes can be recognized.

Accordingly, we prefer to work with a minimal definition of populism as “*a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite,’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people*” (Mudde 2004: 543). This definition has several advantages over alternatives and, for the sake of clarity, it is important to stress the following four points:

- This concept can be and has been applied in empirical research around the globe (e.g., Jagers 2006; Mudde 2007; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012), and it is close to many definitions used in studies in Europe (e.g., Arter 2010; Stanley 2008) and, increasingly, Latin America (e.g., Cherith Ramirez 2009; de la Torre 2000; Hawkins 2009, 2010).
- As a minimal definition it is particularly suited for a cross-regional comparison, because it helps us to identify the constitutional elements of populism as such and, at the same time, it paves the way for distinguishing subtypes of populism that have emerged in Europe and Latin America.
- By using the notion of “thin-centered ideology,” developed by Freedman (1996), we are postulating that particular expressions of populism are almost always combined with very different (thin and full) ideologies, such as conservatism, liberalism, nativism, or “Americanismo.” This implies that in the real world there are few, if any, pure forms of populism (in isolation) but, rather, subtypes of it, which show a specific articulation of certain ideological features (Laclau 1977).
- This definition takes for granted that the notion of “the pure people” and “the corrupt elite” can be framed in different ways (Canovan 1999: 3–4). Therefore, particular expressions or subtypes of populism might vary according to the actors and groups that are seen to be included and excluded from society (Filc 2010).

Before continuing, it is important to underline that other minimal definitions of populism have been proposed. In fact, in recent years a growing group of scholars have started to work with (personal interpretations of) the definition developed by Weyland (2001: 14), who argues that populism “is best defined as a political strategy through which a personalist leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers.” Relying on this definition, Roberts (2006) has analyzed the formation of subtypes of Latin American populism, which differ in their respective levels of organization in both civil society and the partisan arena.

Although we agree with Weyland’s methodological approach—i.e., the establishment of a minimal definition, which seeks to avoid the problem of conceptual overstretch and tries to suspend normative considerations about populism—we disagree with the core attributes of populism that he proposes. While we do not deny that particular expressions of populism might have an elective affinity with certain organizational aspects, e.g., charismatic leadership and a style of communication characterized by the absence of intermediaries, we argue that these kind of organizational aspects are not *constitutional* elements of populism. As Hawkins (2010: 40) has pointed out, “political organizations such as religious parties and millenarian movements have charismatic leaders and low levels of institutionalization early in their organizational life cycle, but usually we do not consider them as populist.”

By criticizing Weyland’s definition, we are not downplaying the role of leadership for populism. As our paper will show, populist leaders are indeed very relevant. They not only try to mobilize the electorate but also are among the main protagonists in the process of defining the morphology of the populist ideology. However, an excessive focus on leadership narrows the analysis to the supply-side of the populist phenomenon, thus generating a kind of modern version of Carlyle’s “great man theory,” which presupposes that the leader is the main and almost only factor that explains political development. In contrast, an ideological definition of populism takes into account both the supply-side and the demand-side of the populist phenomenon, since it assumes that the formation, propagation, and transformation of the populist ideology

depend both on skillful political entrepreneurs and on social groups, who have emotional and rational motives for adhering to the populist discourse.

Hence, we define populism as a thin-centered ideology, which seldom exists by itself and as a result has a “chameleonic” character (Taggart 2002: 70). Indeed, populism can be left wing as well as right wing, and it can be organized in both top-down and bottom-up fashion. Nevertheless, neither are populist actors ubiquitous nor do they have absolute freedom in developing ideological partnerships (Stanley 2008: 107). To maintain their populist nature, they must keep the Manichean distinction between “the pure people” and “the corrupt elite” central in their discourse.

### **Categorizing Populists**

Given the fact that the adopted definition is much closer to those used in the work on European populists, such as Haider and Le Pen, than on Latin American populists, such as Chávez and Morales, this section will mainly focus on the latter. However, first we will provide some evidence for the assertion that Haider and Le Pen meet our definition of populism.

Initially much of the populist propaganda of the FPÖ focused on its charismatic leader, Jörg Haider, who was presented as one of “the pure people” and implicitly contrasted to the other parties and politicians who are all part of “the corrupt elite.” Posters with a smiling Haider would feature slogans like “he for you” (Er für euch), “one whose handshake counts” (Einer, dessen Handschlag gilt), or even “simply honest, simply Jörg” (einfach Ehrlich, einfach Jörg). In perfect populist fashion, the party would argue that the elite were against Haider because he was with the people. As one famous slogan on a Haider poster reads: “They are against him, because he is for you” (Sie sind gegen ihn, weil er für Euch ist).

The FN was one of the first parties to refer to “the corrupt oligarchy of parties at the centre of French politics” as one block (Davies 1999: 4). One of the favorite terms of the party was “the gang of four” (la bande des quatre), referring to the infamous group of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Against this cabal stood “the voice of the people” (la voix du peuple), FN leader Jean-Marie Le Pen. Various posters of the party and its leader, and recently his daughter and successor, Marine Le Pen, use this slogan or alternatives

like “Le Pen The People” (Le Pen Le Peuple) and “We Are the People” (Nous sommes le peuple).

To many observers, Hugo Chávez has become the prototypical Latin American populist, almost rivaling the continent’s most famous classic populist, Juan Domingo Perón. Whether pro- or anti-Chávez, few authors dispute his populist character. This is not without reason, as the Venezuelan president seems to meet every single definition of populism, including the one adopted here. Take, for example, this statement during his closing campaign speech of 2006, in which Chávez rather worryingly refers to himself as Chávez:

You the people are the giant that awoke, I your humble soldier will only do what you say. I am at your orders to continue clearing the way to the greater Fatherland... Because you are not going to reelect Chávez really, you are going to reelect yourselves, the people will reelect the people. Chávez is nothing but an instrument of the people. (In Hawkins 2009: 1040–41)

With regard to anti-establishment positions, Chávez often uses religious terminology in his populist discourse. Hence, the struggle between the people and the elite becomes between “the side of the Devil and the side of God” (in Hawkins 2010: 55). Still, the prime motivation is clearly populism, not Christianity, which he seems to invoke fairly opportunistically. Explaining the essence of his “revolution,” Chávez said: “As you know, the revolution would have no meaning if it did not return to the people what belongs to the people, what the people were denied by the anti-Bolivarian and unpatriotic oligarchy for so long, for all these centuries” (in Hawkins 2010: 64).

While Chávez’s populism is beyond dispute, the idea that Morales is a populist is highly debated in Latin American studies. For example, a prominent scholar like Roberts (2007) explicitly opposes this categorization. However, most opposition is grounded in the specific organizational definition of populism discussed before. After all, Morales came to power as leader of a political party that is linked to a broad social movement. But if one applies our ideological minimal definition, there is ample evidence that populism is a main element of his ideological core (see, e.g., Cherith Ramirez 2009; Hawkins 2009, 2010).

Key to Morales's ideology is the distinction between the people (*el pueblo*) and the elite (*la oligarquía*). While there are socioeconomic and ethnic dimensions to this distinction (see below), the key distinction is moral. The people *are* pure and good, the elite *are* corrupt and evil. In a speech to the UN General Assembly on September 26, 2007, while reflecting on his first year and a half in power, Morales said:

What is most important about this short period is that we have begun to de-colonize Bolivia internally and externally. I say internally because in the past masters ruled our country. If we review our history we find that viceroy masters, religious groups, and the oligarchy have ruled. The people have never had any power.... Now we are establishing the people's power, so that sovereignty belongs to the people instead of to a group of families and so that the people have the right to decide their own destiny. That is the best democracy we can implement.

Similarly, in a roundtable discussion after the successful referendum on the country's new constitution, Morales proclaimed:

I want to acknowledge the Bolivian people for their participation and for their awareness of a profound transformation in our country...[which] has permitted for Bolivia to be refounded...in search of...equality, dignity, and the unity of the Bolivian people, still respecting our diversity...despite deceitful campaigns [by the opposition], a dirty campaign, despite the fear that oligarchic groups tried to arouse in the population.... We are happy, very happy about this, the sovereign election of the Bolivian people.... I believe only in the conscience of the Bolivian people. (In Cherith Ramirez 2009: 36)

In conclusion, all four actors meet our ideological minimal definition of populism. In fact, Le Pen and Haider as well as Chávez and Morales share a common Weltanschauung, in which “the people” are seen as the only legitimate source of political power. Thus, they do not enact routine politics, but rather—and to paraphrase the language of Canovan (1999)—they reassert the redemptive face of democracy. Whatever their ideological differences, all share an interest in repoliticizing society; i.e., they try to put certain topics on the public agenda that, either intentionally or unintentionally, are not being considered by the elites. Having established this crucial similarity between our four case studies, we can now focus on the (alleged) differences.

## POPULISM IN EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA COMPARED

Before we start comparing our four cases in detail, it is worth briefly discussing their electoral and political relevance. As we are dealing predominantly with parliamentary systems in Europe and presidential systems in Latin America, we present the share of the vote for the last two decades in parliamentary elections for the European cases and in presidential elections for the Latin American cases.<sup>2</sup>

These data permit us to state an obvious but nevertheless important fact: while in Europe populism is a modest electoral force, reduced to political minority status, in Latin America populist actors belong to the strongest political forces, sometimes obtaining even more than fifty percent of the votes. Consequently, populist actors in Latin America at times receive a direct mandate to govern from the people, as with Evo Morales in Bolivia (since 2005) and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (since 1998), while European populist radical right parties have come to power only as junior partners within a coalition (as was the case in Austria 2000–2007).

In short, European populist are much less successful in both electoral and political terms than their Latin American brethren. This means that actors like Haider and Le Pen may have many ideas but few chances to implement them, while leaders like Chávez and Morales can promote new initiatives and have the power to put them into practice. Hence, and as we will analyze later, European populists may well *try to* exclude certain groups (e.g., immigrants) from the polity, while Latin American populists might *succeed* in the inclusion of underprivileged groups (e.g., the poor) within society.

Having provided some crucial background information on the main populist actors in the two regions, it is now time to compare populism in Europe and Latin America based on the three dimensions that are most debated in the scholarly literature: economy vs. identity; left wing vs. right wing; inclusion vs. exclusion.

**TABLE 1****RESULTS OF THE FOUR POPULIST ACTORS IN THE KEY NATIONAL ELECTIONS, 1990–2010 (IN %)**

EUROPE				LATIN AMERICA			
Austria (FPÖ/Haider)		France (FN/Le Pen)		Bolivia (Morales)		Venezuela (Chávez)	
2008 (a)	17.5	2007 (a)	10.4	2009 (b)	64.2	2006 (b)	62.9
2006 (a)	11.0	2007 (b)	4.7	2005 (b)	53.7	2004 (c)	58.3
2002 (a)	10.0	2002 (a)	11.1	2002 (b)	20.9	2000 (b)	60.3
1999 (a)	26.9	2002 (b)	16.9			1998 (b)	56.2
1995 (a)	21.9	1997 (a)	14.9				
1994 (a)	22.5	1995 (b)	15.0				
1990 (a)	16.6	1993 (a)	12.7				

(a) Parliamentary elections

(b) Presidential elections first round

(c) Presidential recall referendum

Source: European Journal of Political Research/Political Database of the Americas

**Economy vs. Identity?**

In Latin America populism is often linked closely to economics, while in Europe it is tightly connected to identity. But is this distinction really that sharp? And in what way does it reflect on the populism, rather than the accompanying ideologies, of the populists? This section will first address the role of economics in the ideology of populists in the two regions and then that of ethnic identity.

***Economy***

Economic arguments have played a key role in the study of Latin American populism. For instance, the seminal work of authors such as Cardoso and Faletto (1969), Germani (1978) and Weffort (1978) is characterized by the idea that the successful implementation of a particular mode of economic development—Import-Substituting Industrialization (ISI)—facilitates the constitution of “populist regimes” that rely on multi-class coalitions,



which among other issues favor progressive economic redistribution and government spending to foster job creation. Thus, this first generation of studies on Latin American populism drew on an economic-structural approach by which populism was seen as a sort of “superstructure,” i.e., the reflection of an economic base that gives rise to a particular class formation that, in turn, produces a specific type of political mobilization.

Led by economists, a second generation of studies on Latin American populism emerged at the end of the 1980s (e.g., Sachs 1989). In this vein, authors like Dornbusch and Edwards warned against the negative consequences of “the macroeconomics of populism,” which they defined as “an approach to economics that emphasizes growth and income redistribution and deemphasizes the risks of inflation and deficit finance, external constraints, and the reaction of economic agents to aggressive nonmarket policies” (1991: 9). From this point of view, the coming into power of populist leaders represents a major challenge for Latin American development, since at the end of the day they aggravate rather than alleviate poverty and unequal income distribution.

However, these views were called into question in the 1990s, when political actors started to combine a populist discourse with economic policies favoring the free market. Against the first generation (economic-structural approach) and second generation (economic approach) of studies on Latin American populism, authors such as Roberts (1995) and Weyland (1996) convincingly argued that leaders like Collor de Mello in Brazil, Fujimori in Peru, and Menem in Argentina should be labeled *neopopulists*, i.e., as political entrepreneurs who combined a populist style with a neoliberal economic agenda. As a consequence of the so-called neopopulists, populism was no longer related to a *specific* economic program (Weyland 2001: 11). That said, populism and economics remained closely related in Latin American studies, which was reinforced by the emergence of a third wave of populists, i.e., the “socialist populists” like Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia (see, e.g., Castañeda 2006; Vilas 2006).

We are of the opinion that the economic agenda is not a constitutive element of their populism. As we stated before, economics is a secondary feature of the populist ideology. In fact, the economic programs of Morales and Chávez are much less coherent than is often claimed. Certainly they are against neoliberalism, but the ways in which

they have developed both their critiques of “the invisible hand of the market” and their own economic paradigms are very different.

This is quite evident in the case of Venezuelan president Chávez. In 1992 he led a failed coup d'état against President Carlos Andrés Pérez, who faced a difficult economic situation that demanded a major and painful adjustment. At this stage, Chávez did not have an accurately defined economic program. Moreover, when he won the presidential elections in 1998, there were no clear signs that he was radically opposed to neoliberalism. His economic approach was first of all pragmatic. Not surprisingly, he explicitly advocated Tony Blair's “Third Way” (Buxton 2003: 124). In his first presidential speech in February of 1999 he stated: “Our project is neither statist nor neoliberal; we are exploring the middle ground, where the invisible hand of the market joins up with the visible hand of the state: as much state as necessary, and as much market as possible” (in Meltzer 2009: 94).

The turning point seems to have been the abortive coup of April 2002, together with the general strike of 2002–2003, which ended with the government firing a large number of the state oil company *Petróleos de Venezuela* (PDVSA) employees. After these incidents, Chávez radicalized the government's agenda both at the political and economic level, and a socialist ideology as such began to gain predominance (Hawkins 2010: 20–25). Furthermore, without the deterioration in Venezuelan-US relations after President George W. Bush assumed office in 2000 and the continuous rise in the international price of oil, Chávez's ideological change would probably have been much more difficult to achieve. In other words, as Buxton (2009: 163) has argued, Chávez's anti-neoliberalism and socialism emerged by default, not by design, and were driven by both internal and external factors.

In contrast to Chávez, Morales espoused a more genuine anti-neoliberal and socialist approach from the beginning of his political career. During the 1980s, coca-growing peasant unions emerged in Bolivia as a reaction to US-led efforts to destroy the supply and production of cocaine (Domingo 2009: 119–20). Morales started his career in these unions and later on formed the MAS, which is staunchly against neoliberalism. In an interview with journalist Yvonne Zimmerman in 2003, Morales stated about MAS: “We have a (governing) program based on the propositions of the people, from an anti-

neoliberal and anti-capitalist position.... Now that the neoliberal model has failed, it's time for the poor to impose their own model" (in Cherith Ramirez 2009: 23).

This "own model," while referred to as socialism, is much more grounded in the past of Bolivia's indigenous communities than in the books of Western ideologues such as Karl Marx. When asked whether he was a Marxist, Morales answered:

What is Marxism? I come from peasant communities, from the people, not from universities or other educational centers. I can speak of Marxism, but what importance does it have? It doesn't involve importing policies, ideologies, or programs. The people know this. Our organizations are wise enough to solve their problems, in fact they are the reservoir of knowledge until scientists came to power in defense of life and of humanity. Don't talk to me about Marxism, Leninism, Trotskyism, we're just wasting time. (In Cherith Ramirez 2009: 28)

Morales's approach to the economy became more relevant during the 2000s, since the government in power supported the policies of the Washington Consensus and implemented orthodox economic stabilization programs that reinforced patterns of economic exclusion (see, e.g., Silva 2009). However, a radical critique of neoliberalism neither emerged automatically nor was solely the result of the bad performance of the market reforms. As Weyland (2009) has pointed out, the decisive factor for the radicalization of Morales's approach to economics was the discovery of huge gas reserves in the late 1990s. The latter permitted him to intensify the critique of the constraints posed by the paradigm of the Washington Consensus, since the country had enough resources to implement economic policies that went beyond the neoliberal ideas. Moreover, Morales's government has been very pragmatic and has shown an eclectic policy agenda, in which the state has an important role but the prescriptions of the Washington Consensus have not disappeared (Gray Molina 2010).

Much scholarship on European populism in the 1980s and 1990s argued that neoliberal economics was a key aspect of the phenomenon. In his seminal 1994 book Betz distinguished between two subtypes of radical right-wing populism, national populism and neoliberal populism, while Kitschelt and McGann defined the radical right as a combination of "extreme and economically [speaking] rightists, free-marketneering as well as politically and culturally authoritarian positions" (1995: vii).

While one can still find authors who stress the importance of neoliberal economics to the populist radical right in Europe (e.g., Höbelt 2003; Jungerstam-Mulders 2003), more and more scholars have either downplayed their importance or outright denied their presence (e.g., Eatwell 2003; Bastow 1997). In fact, an analysis of the economic position of populist radical right parties in Europe shows that it is neither neoliberal nor primary statist (Mudde 2007: chapter 5; Kaillitz 2005). Although some parties (including the FN and FPÖ) initially used some neoliberal rhetoric and advocated selected “neoliberal” policies (e.g., lower taxes, select privatizations), their economic program as such was not neoliberal. In fact, often the motivation for the policies was political rather than economic, i.e., aimed at undermining the power of the mainstream parties.

The best example of this is the FPÖ, which remained loyal to its neoliberal rhetoric much longer than most other European populist radical right parties. Still, its preferred economic model, referred to as a “fair” rather than a “free” market economy, was juxtaposed explicitly against “the coldness of turbo-capitalism,” a system that sounds much like a neoliberal free market economy (FPÖ 1997: 10). Moreover, the party would be brutally honest about the real reason for its support for neoliberal hobbyhorses like privatization: “Through a program of genuine privatization, the withdrawal of political parties and associations from the economy, the reduction of influence of interest groups and their restriction to their real tasks, the power of party functionaries in the public economy should be eliminated” (FPÖ 1997: 21). In other words, the true motivation was not neoliberal economics but political strategy, and the real aim was not to create a free market economy but to establish a level playing field for the FPÖ in the Austrian political arena.

The FN probably made one of the most radical transformations in terms of economic policies. For much of the 1980s Le Pen claimed to be a Reaganite *avant la lettre*, having developed the economic model of “Reaganomics” two years before the former US president (Bastow 1997: 61). In the 1990s the party lost most of its enthusiasm for the free market, becoming one of the most vocal Eurosceptic and anti-globalization voices within the European populist right. Seeing the European Union as a “Trojan horse” for US-dominated globalization, the FN argued that “globalization leads to

company relocations, thus to unemployment, and Maastricht<sup>3</sup> brings about the deregulation of public services, thus insecurity (in Bastow 1998: 60). Today the FN defends a highly protectionist economic model, which defends French businesses against foreign competitors and protects strong welfare provisions for the “native French” population against claims of “immigrants.”

As far as the European populist radical right does advance a coherent economic program, it is guided by nationalism, not neoliberalism. Regarding the classic distinction between market and state, it takes a middle position, not unlike the Christian democrats or Blair’s “Third Way”—which, incidentally, was a clear inspiration to Haider (Thompson 2000). While the market is accepted, it should be regulated actively by the state to protect the nation against foreign domination. Hence, neoliberal globalization is mostly seen as a threat, and some parties even advocate a modest form of national capitalism (see, e.g., Mudde 2007: chapter 5). Finally, while fairly generous welfare state provisions are supported, they are to be limited to the “natives” only (i.e., immigrants are to be excluded from them).

### ***Identity***

The European populist radical right is a modern phenomenon, an example of the new politics that emerged as a consequence of the “silent revolution” (Inglehart 1977). While identity politics are usually associated exclusively with “left-wing” or “progressive” political actors, such as the new social movements or the Green parties, the populist radical right is in essence also a post-material phenomenon based first and foremost on identity rather than (material) interest. As Ignazi (1992, 2003) has postulated, the new extreme right can be seen as a “silent counter-revolution,” which detaches from fascism and defends a neoconservative agenda that proposes more sophisticated notions of national identity than just race.

Key to the identity politics of the populist radical right is the elaboration of a cultural distinction between “natives” and “aliens” (see Mudde 2007: chapter 3). Although radical right populists devote more attention to identifying (and vilifying) the outgroups (them), implicitly the ingroup (us) is defined *ex negativo*. The ingroup-outgroup differentiation of European populists is multifaceted, and various parties focus

on particular outgroups. Hence, favorite targets of populist radical right propaganda are ethnic minorities, immigrants, foreigners, refugees. Particularly since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States, Muslims have become the main enemy, which for some populists has made Christianity more central to their definition of European identity (Betz and Meret 2009).

While the European populist radical right emphasizes ethnic identity, this is the result of the predominance of *nativism* within their ideology, not of their populism. Nativism refers to a combination of xenophobia and nationalism and must be understood as an ideological feature, which “holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (‘the nation’) and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde 2007: 19). Nativism, and *not* their populism, is the reason the parties in question define the “the pure people,” who incarnate the ultimate source of political power, on the basis of ethnic identity.

Regarding the distinction between “the people” and “the elite,” ethnic identity plays hardly a role. The elite are always considered to be part of the same ethnic group as the people. As far as ethnicity does come into play, it is through claims that the elite represent the interests of ethnic minorities (immigrant or indigenous) or foreign powers (mostly the EU and the United States). For example, for the European elections of June 2009 the FPÖ campaigned with the slogan “Real Representatives instead of EU-Traitors” (Echte Volksvertreter statt EU-Verräter). Similarly, a poster featuring Haider and another FPÖ candidate featured the slogans “two real Austrians” (zwei echte Österreicher), implying that the candidates of the other parties were not.

Similarly, the FN and Le Pen would accuse mainstream French politicians of being lackeys of ethnic minorities and multiculturalists engaged in “anti-French racism” (see, e.g., Davies 1999). In recent years, anti-EU and anti-globalization sentiments have become more prominent in the party propaganda. While the former is mostly a mix of populism and nativism, the latter evinces a mix of populism and left-wing economics that is reminiscent of Latin American populism. For example, in a poster referring to the recent economic crisis, the FN lists the main parties and states: “All globalists! All guilty!” (Tous mondialists! Tous coupables!).

Interestingly, the situation is almost completely opposite in Latin America. Here, few authors consider ethnic identity to be relevant to populism, even though some authors have linked classic populism to nationalism (e.g., Germani 1978; Weffort 1978). With regard to Chávez and Morales, this is undoubtedly largely because they are seen as “left-wing” and “socialist,” while ethnic nationalism is mostly associated with the right in the literature. Moreover, Morales came to power as the leader of a social movement for the indigenous people, and his electoral success is not related to the use of an exclusionary rhetoric but rather to his appeal to a variety of ethnic groups. As Madrid (2008) has demonstrated, the key point—and here lies the main difference from the ethnic language of the European populist radical right—is that the current wave of Latin American populism combines a pro-indigenous discourse with a strong emphasis on the mestizo nature of Latin American identity, i.e., the mixture of European and native American heritage and descent. From this point of view, there is nothing like a “pure” national identity, since the latter is always constructed in a process of continuous interaction between different cultural and social groups.

But while it is true that Latin American populists are not nativist, this does not mean that ethnic identity does not play a role in their discourse. In fact, where ethnicity is linked to nativism in Europe, it is linked more to populism in Latin America. Both Chávez and Morales use ethnic identity to distinguish the people *and* the elite. Chávez, for example, has said that “[u]ntil we recognize ourselves in the faces of the indigenous peoples who have battled for 500 years we will not find our true direction” (in Lindholm and Zúquete 2010: 27). Similarly, he stated: “[A]ccording to the neoliberal thesis, we, the black, Indian, mestizo peoples, have missed the train of history. But they are wrong because we are on our own train, we are building our own train” (in Lindholm and Zúquete 2010: 28).

Not surprisingly, ethnic identity plays an even more important role in the discourse and ideology of Morales. During a national interview in 2002, he said:

The indigenous peoples are achieving the recuperation of their land, their territory that was snatched from them more than 500 years ago....now we possess awareness and it's impossible for them to do away with us because we are daring to recuperate the political power that belongs to us,

as it should be, we are the absolute owners of this noble earth. (In Cherith Ramirez 2009: 25)

It is important to stress that Morales does not just represent the interests of the indigenous population of Bolivia. This would be ethnic politics rather than populist politics. He clearly wants to install the moral values of “his people” in Bolivian politics. In an interview with the German magazine *Der Spiegel* Morales said literally: “We Indians are Latin America’s moral reserve. We act according to a universal law that consists of three basic principles: do not steal, do not lie, and do not be idle. This trilogy will also serve as the basis of our new constitution” (*Spiegel Online*, August 28, 2006).

Similarly, ethnic identity plays a role in defining the elite, who are often depicted as serving the interests of foreign powers, e.g., multinational corporations and the US government. Chávez, for example, referred to the (former) elite as “lackeys of imperialism” and “the anti-Bolivarian and unpatriotic oligarchy” (in Hawkins 2010: 61, 64). Similarly, Morales, in his inaugural speech in January 2006, referred to the former regimes as “politics that service powerful groups in Bolivia or in the exterior” (in Cherith Ramirez 2009: 27).

In this respect, both Morales and Chávez have revised and adopted the ideology of “Americanismo” that emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the Latin American countries in connection with the anti-colonialist struggles against the Spanish and Portuguese empires (Chasteen 2003: xv; Lynch 1987: 40–41). One peculiarity of the ideology of “Americanismo” is that it appealed not only to the creoles, but also to the mestizo and even the indigenous population. Consequently, it had the capacity to integrate very different ethnic groups under one common umbrella, thus promoting the formation of a common identity (Rovira Kaltwasser 2009: 152).<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, it is correct to argue that European populists emphasize ethnic identity more than their colleagues in Latin America, but one could also argue that in Latin America *populism* is more ethnic than in Europe. The reason is that in Europe ethnic identity is part of the nativism of the populist radical right, i.e., the “pure people” are defined, first and foremost, on the basis of xenophobic and nationalist criteria. By contrast, populists in Latin America are not necessarily nativist, but Chávez and Morales do use ethnic identity in defining “the pure people.” Hence, Madrid’s (2008) term



“ethnopolitism” is much closer to the mark than is often argued. In addition, Latin American populists employ another type of identity politics, which rely on a revival of the idea of “Americanismo,” i.e., the notion that Latin American countries have been and are being exploited by foreign powers and their local helpers.

### **Left-wing vs. Right-wing Populism?**

In the case of Latin America, populist actors and parties have represented a true puzzle for scholars working with the left-right dimension. As Angell has noticed in his analysis of the left in Latin America during the twentieth century:

The political space occupied in Europe by social democracy would be occupied in Latin America by nationalist populist parties. The nature of these parties reveals the problem in searching for an adequate definition of the Left. They draw heavily upon Marxist ideas and Leninist practice, though their relations with the orthodox parties of the Left varied from close co-operation to bitter rivalry. Moreover, populist parties were never constrained by ideological orthodoxy. (1998: 77)

Accordingly, classical populist leaders like Perón in Argentina and Vargas in Brazil endorsed a kind of corporatism, in which the state should not only organize and regulate the demands of different social groups but also be able to defend the interests of “the nation” above those of foreign forces. In this sense, they were prime examples of a new generation of Latin American politicians who adhered to the notion of the “third world,” which implied that developing countries could and should take a path of development beyond capitalism (first world) and socialism (second world) and strength the nation-state in order to counter the dependency of the periphery on the center (Rovira Kaltwasser 2003).

The appeal of these populist actors has promoted the establishment of a particular political cleavage that is orthogonal to the left-right dimension and divides the political space between populists and anti-populists (Ostiguy 2009). For example, within the Argentine Peronist party alone it is possible to find both left-wing (e.g., Néstor Kirchner) and right-wing (e.g., Carlos Menem) agendas, defined in socioeconomic terms, though the populist ideology is always present (Novaro 2006). Hence, the constant reference to

the multi-class nature of Latin American populism is not unjustified; it is built upon the idea that the populist ideology—by constructing the notion of “the people”—has the capacity to overcome traditional economical and political left-right divisions.

Nevertheless, there is a consensus among scholars working on Latin American populism that it is predominantly left wing. For instance, two reviews of the different waves of Latin American populisms demonstrated that most of them are characterized by their egalitarian stance and their support for a growing state intervention in the economy—the cases of Fujimori in Peru, Menem in Argentina, and Collor de Mello in Brazil representing the exceptions to this trend (Freidenberg 2007; Gratius 2007). Furthermore, the current wave of Latin American populism is unambiguously distinguished by its leftist nature. Indeed, both Evo Morales and Hugo Chávez see themselves as left-wing leaders and, at the same time, the scholarly literature considers them to be prime examples of the new (radical) left in Latin America (see, e.g., Castañeda 2006; Seligson 2007; Weyland 2010).

Within the European literature populism is firmly associated with the right. This is somewhat surprising as few populist radical right parties define themselves openly and unequivocally as right wing. In fact, both Haider and Le Pen would stress that they are “neither left, nor right.” Instead, they would argue that the left-right distinction is no longer relevant and is mainly used by the mainstream parties to give the people a false sense of difference and competition. That said, while no party openly claims to be left wing, some do self-identify as right wing (e.g., the Belgian Flemish Block or the Hungarian Justice and Life Party). Moreover, at least in the West European context, most European populists would see the mainstream right as the lesser evil.<sup>5</sup>

From a cross-regional perspective it is worth asking what left and right mean when it comes to analyzing and comparing European and Latin American populisms. The easy answer would be to follow the state/market distinction. After all, both in Europe (see, e.g., Schwartz 1993) and Latin America (see, e.g., Alcántara Sáez 2008) there is a tendency to distinguish right and left on the basis of the economic dimension: while the former favors the free market, the latter privileges state intervention in the economy.

Although this approach has some plausibility, it has at least two problems. First, transformations at the global level (e.g., the fall of the Berlin Wall, the rise of the

Washington Consensus, growing internationalization of the financial sector) have shrunk the space for political projects aiming to interfere with the idea of the self-regulating power of the market; in consequence, a substantial part of the left has accepted and adapted to this new scenario (Noël and Thérien 2008: chapter 7). Second, as shown in the previous section, neither in Europe nor in Latin America is economics a definitional attribute of populism.

A more fruitful distinction is provided by Bobbio (1996), who defines left and right on the basis of the key feature of (the propensity to) egalitarianism. In these terms, the left considers the key inequalities between people to be artificial and wants to overcome them by active state involvement, whereas the right believes the main inequalities between people to be natural and outside the purview of the state (Mudde 2007: 26). Accordingly, the left/right dimension refers to different ways of both conceiving of the sources of inequalities and designing strategies to confront them.

At first sight, one would think that populism is inherently egalitarian, as it considers the people to be homogeneous, and thus left wing. However, this is not necessarily the case. While it does believe that the people have essentially the same interests, populism is first and foremost moral. And, as a thin-centered ideology, it does not say much about socioeconomic or sociocultural issues. However, as stated in the conceptual part, in the real world populism virtually always appears attached to other ideological features. These features actually allow us to disentangle the left or right nature of different types of populism.

Both the FPÖ and FN can be seen as right wing, not because of their economic programs but rather because of their nativism. The latter is based on the idea of ethno-pluralism, which sees the differences and inequalities between ethnic identities as natural phenomena that neither can nor should be eradicated. Not surprisingly, actors like Haider and Le Pen claim that the Austrian and French identities must be preserved and kept pure. The main argument behind this is that certain groups cannot be integrated into society and, accordingly, these groups represent a fundamental threat to the values and cultural integrity of “the people,” i.e., the natives (Betz and Johnson 2004: 318).

By contrast, the type of populism that is currently prevalent in Latin America is clearly on the left. Yet, neither their economic programs nor their eclectic notions of

socialism constitute the main attribute that makes Chávez or Morales leftist. In this regard, the key feature is their adoption of the ideology of “Americanismo,” which assumes that Latin America is underdeveloped because it suffers dependency on and exploitation by foreign powers. This asymmetry of power is considered to be not natural but rather the product of “imperial” mechanisms. In fact, Chávez and Morales condemn this global inequality and appeal for the development of “anti-imperialist” policies to overcome it (Ellner 2008).

In short, European populism is predominantly right wing as a consequence of its link to nativism, whereas Latin American populism is chiefly left wing because of its close connection to “Americanismo.” Consequently, in Europe populism is more inward-oriented, fighting primarily internal enemies (e.g., ethnic minorities and immigrants), while in Latin America populism is more outward-oriented, fighting predominantly external enemies (e.g., foreign powers) and their local agents (e.g., the oligarchy).

### **Inclusion vs. Exclusion?**

The issue of inclusion vs. exclusion is probably the most important of those discussed here, particularly in terms of the relationship between populism and democracy. However, while most literature on Latin America speaks about the inclusive capacities of populism and virtually all literature on Europe emphasizes the exclusive character of populism, few authors are very clear about the exact nature of the inclusion/exclusion.

Besides the differences between Europe and Latin America, the inclusion promoted by populist leaders is anything but frictionless. Since they define political competition in moral terms, democracy is considered a zero-sum game. Accordingly, the very idea of including underprivileged groups goes hand in hand with the promotion of the exclusion of those groups that are labeled as the enemies of “the people.” As Canovan (1984: 320) has pointed out, populism is always inclusionary and exclusionary at the same time.<sup>6</sup> While it might speak for the inclusion of certain subjectively or objectively marginalized groups (e.g., the poor, women, natives) into the polity, it may also stand for the expulsion of specific privileged groups (e.g., foreign elites, immigrants, the oligarchy) from society.

The main thesis of this part of our paper is that there are good reasons to think that we are actually dealing with two “types” or “families” of populism: while Latin American populism can be labeled as predominantly *inclusionary*, European populism can be conceived of as primarily *exclusionary*. To substantiate this thesis we will offer a brief review of the arguments delivered in the body of literature on Latin American and European populism respectively. In addition, we will apply to our case studies Filc’s (2010) appealing distinction among three dimensions—material, political, and symbolic—which can be used to understand the way in which populist actors might seek to include/exclude social groups.

### ***Inclusionary Populism in Latin America***

From its beginnings the study of Latin American populism has been characterized by an emphasis on the inclusive rhetoric and praxis of populist actors. For instance, in his pioneering analysis of Peronism, Germani (1978) indicated that Peronism must be understood as a movement that allowed the incorporation not only of the working class but also of women into the political arena. Indeed, Perón introduced universal voting rights for men and women in 1951 and, accordingly, it is not an exaggeration to state that “populism in general propelled democracy forward, both by encouraging democratic behavior and by enrolling lower class groups and their quest for social justice in political life” (Drake 2009: 164). In a similar vein, the seminal work of Collier and Collier (1991) convincingly demonstrates that in countries such as Argentina, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela populist forces were crucial to fostering the political incorporation of the labor movement.

The inclusionary nature of Latin American populism can be seen not only in past but also in contemporary cases, and it is worth demonstrating the ways in which Chávez and Morales are trying to foster material, political, and symbolic inclusion.

***Material inclusion*** Both Chávez and Morales have put into practice original policies seeking to improve the life quality of people in weak socioeconomic groups. For instance, Chávez’s government has implemented several *misiones sociales* (social missions), which are organizations and policies specifically targeted to the poor that bypass the traditional institutions of the Venezuelan state and are financed directly by the

presidential office (Meltzer 2009). These missions include, among other initiatives, health care programs, expansion of primary education, distribution of subsidized food, and housing provision services. In turn, Morales has promoted policy innovations in order to foster the inclusion of the poor in Bolivia, e.g., through the implementation of cash transfer programs to school-age children and the improvement of an old-age pension paid to all Bolivian citizens over the age of 60 (Domingo 2009: 132–33).

This increased spending on social policy is evidence of these leaders' emphasis on the necessity of establishing pro-poor measures, which are financed from two main sources: on the one hand, the rising prices of commodities such as gas and oil in the world economy, and on the other hand, the attempt to build a new political economy of development, in which the state has to play a key role, particularly in terms of imposing new rules of the game on foreign companies. Accordingly, the material inclusion of the poor promoted by Chávez and Morales is directly related to their factual and rhetorical redefinition of the development model of their respective countries.

***Political inclusion*** Radical democracy is the type of political order that best represents the aspiration of the leaders who are conducting the current wave of populism in Latin America (de la Torre 2009). They criticize the elitist character of Latin American democracies and plead for a broader political participation. For them, political inclusion means less the expansion of the right to vote and more the generation of new instruments to strengthen the “voice of the voiceless.” In this respect, neighborhood associations and social movements are seen as mechanisms by which the popular sectors can be empowered, while intermediary organizations in general and political parties in particular are mistrusted.

Chávez, for instance, promotes the formation of a “protagonist and participatory” democracy, which is based on both plebiscitary mechanisms and communal councils. The latter are structured as so-called *círculos bolivarianos* (Bolivarian Circles), i.e., groups of eight to ten people who seek to engage in consciousness raising and community projects at the grassroots level (Hawkins 2010: chapter 6). At the same time, Morales has supported the formulation of a new constitution, which establishes that political participation can be exercised through direct democratic channels, such as a Constituent

Assembly, referenda, and town meetings (Gray Molina 2010: 62). Furthermore, in an interview in 2002, admittedly before he came to power, he stated that “for me the vote is a secondary issue, I believe more in social struggles, because protests and blockades allow us to change laws, annul decrees and enforce the passing of laws” (in Stefanoni 2008: 367).

***Symbolic inclusion*** Without a doubt, the inclusionary processes guided by Chávez and Morales have also a symbolic dimension. By offering a discourse that elevates the worth of “the people,” they dignify the existence of a significant part of the population that is not only poor but also suffers various forms of cultural discrimination. Not surprisingly, Chávez and Morales do not dress and talk like the elites but, rather, like ordinary people, thus facilitating the identification of the masses with the leader. To paraphrase the terminology of Canovan (1984), they attain symbolic inclusion through the shift from defining the people as “the plebs” to portraying them as “the whole nation.” Thus, they help subordinate groups to become political subjects.

In this regard, the political trajectory of Evo Morales is particularly interesting. Before winning the presidential elections, he stated that in Bolivia “there is a national sentiment of dignity. The elections are going to be an arm wrestling between the consciousness and the money. The poor and the excluded are helping us to advance” (in Stefanoni 2008: 361). Morales has put special emphasis on the incorporation not only of the indigenous population but also of the coca-grower communities, a segment of Bolivian society that has a veiled identity on account of the war on drugs promoted by the United States (Rivera Cusicanqui 2008).<sup>7</sup>

### ***Exclusionary Populism in Europe***

The scholarly literature on populism in Europe is relatively new. There are some classic studies, however, most notably Lipset’s seminal *Political Man* (1960), which interprets the movement led by Pierre Poujade in France in the 1950s as a case of European populism. It is worth noting that neither Lipset nor other early authors on European populism explicitly refer to the inclusion/exclusion dimension. This only emerged within the study of the third wave of the postwar radical right (von Beyme 1988), i.e., the populist radical right, which constitutes a new party family characterized by the

promotion of a particular kind of identity politics (see, e.g., Mudde 2007). In contrast to earlier extreme parties, the European populist radical right is not against democracy per se. They are against *liberal* democracy, because it gives too much power to (ethnic) minorities, altering the general will of “the pure people.” Much of the literature considers the populist radical right as an explicitly exclusionary phenomenon, targeting most notably ethnic “others” such as immigrants and ethnic minorities (see, e.g., Berezin 2009; Betz and Meret 2009).

***Material exclusion*** One of the key aspects of the radical right program is welfare chauvinism, whereby a fairly generous welfare state is generally supported, but “aliens” (e.g., immigrants, refugees, Roma) are to be excluded from most of the provisions. Populist parties have proposed a wide variety of policies, which would more or less introduce a different legal system for “aliens” with regard to general social services, jobs, and social housing. The most infamous example of these proposals is the fifty-point program of the FN (1991), which was copied and elaborated into a seventy-point program by the Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest, VB) in Belgium a year later (Dewinter 1992). Criticized by opponents for attempting to create an “apartheid regime,” these programs include proposals for limited child and unemployment benefits as well as restricted property rights for “non-European aliens” (Dewinter 1992: 27–28).

The motivation is not just exclusionary, however. Much of these proposals follow the guiding principle of “national preference” or “Français d’abord” (The French First!), i.e., the idea that “our own people” should have priority in jobs, housing, and welfare (see, e.g., Davies 1999). The argument for introducing a policy of national preference is often at least in part almost inclusionary, in the sense that the populists argue that these basic requirements can only be guaranteed for the socially weakest member of the “natives” if “aliens” are excluded.

***Political exclusion*** European populists do not really advance a radically different model of democracy, but they do want it to be more responsive to the people. They believe that the right to vote and free and fair elections are not enough, because the main parties do not provide the people with a real choice in vital matters such as European integration or immigration. They argue, not without reason, that “the elite” have decided, behind closed



doors, to keep these issues off the agenda. To circumvent this elite conspiracy, and in Le Pen's terms to "rendre la parole au peuple" (return the word to the people), most populists call for the introduction of plebiscitary measures like people's initiatives, referenda, and recall. The FPÖ was particularly active, and partly successful, in calling for referenda on "party patronage and privileges" (1987), "the foreigner question" (1993), and the European Union (1997) (Müller 1999: 311). They also argued that "(p)remature removal from office" should be made possible by referendum for a broad variety of positions, ranging from the federal president to local mayors (FPÖ 1997: 17). All these measures were meant to break the power of "the corrupt elite" and give it back to "the pure people."

At the same time, the populist radical right has vehemently opposed the extension of political rights to "aliens." Most notably, it opposed the extension of local voting rights to noncitizens—as did most right-wing parties, incidentally. But some parties would go so far as to call for limited political (and religious) rights for "alien" citizens, such as Muslims. For example, parties like the FN and VB want to revoke official recognition of Islamic religious services and drastically limit the number of mosques (see, e.g., Dewinter 1992). In essence, what they support is an ethnocracy, or ethnic democracy, which is based on a distinctly ethnic *Leitkultur* (leading culture) that is above political debate. This fits perfectly with populism's radical interpretation of majority rule and its negative position on minority rights, which are often denounced as "special interests" (see, e.g., Mudde 2007: chapter 6).

***Symbolic exclusion*** While European populists have always claimed to be the voice of the (classless) "silent majority," they have increasingly spoken for the working class. This is in part a consequence of the "proletarianization" of their electorates (Betz 1994); at the end of the 1990s both the FN and the FPÖ had the strongest support among blue-collar workers in their respective countries (see, e.g., Mayer 2002; Plasser and Ulram 2000)! In a more cultural and moral sense, the populist radical right speaks for the "common people," i.e., the less-educated working people, who are disenfranchised because of an elite conspiracy (see above). In this sense, European populists fight for the inclusion of the key issues and positions of the politically excluded.

That said, the European populist radical right mainly focuses on the exclusion of nonnative groups (Mudde 2007: chapter 3). The groups that are to be excluded range from criminal illegal aliens (opposed by all parties) to legal noncitizens (e.g., guest workers, refugees) to citizens of foreign decent (e.g., Muslims) to ethnic minorities (e.g., Hungarian speakers in Slovakia). The proposed exclusion is multifaceted but always refers to cultural elements. So, even though the European populists claim to be the “voice of the people,” it is always an ethnicized people, excluding “alien” people and values. This symbolic dimension of exclusion is arguably the one in which European populists have been most successful. As Jean-Marie Le Pen proclaimed triumphantly on the evening of his defeat in the second round of the 2007 presidential elections: “We have won the battle of ideas: the nation and patriotism, immigration and insecurity were put at the heart of the campaign of my adversaries who spread these ideas with a wry pout” (in Berezin 2009: 246).

## CONCLUSION

In this paper we have analyzed and compared contemporary populism in Europe and Latin America along three interrelated oppositions, which dominate the different literatures: economy vs. identity, left vs. right, and inclusion vs. exclusion. While we did find that the general conclusions of the regional literatures had cross-regional validity, some important nuances and insights came to the fore. To conclude, we will first say something about both the a) differences and b) similarities between European and Latin American populism, and then we will propose c) some ideas for future cross-regional studies on populism.

***Differences between European and Latin American populism*** European populism is more focused on ethnic identity than economics, and Latin American populism more on economics than ethnic identity. That said, we found 1) that economics is not as fundamental to Latin American populism as is often claimed and, at least as important, 2) that ethnic identity is not absent from Latin American populism. In fact, one could even argue that populism in Latin America is more ethnic than populism in Europe, in the

sense that the distinction between “the people” and “the elite” has no ethnic aspect in Europe, while it does have some ethnic aspect in Latin America (“indigenous” vs. “white”). This does not mean that European populists are not predominantly focused on ethnicity; rather, they address ethnicity exclusively as part of their nativism, not of their populism.

We also found that a distinction between a predominantly left-wing populism in Latin America and right-wing populism in Europe holds up; although left-wing populism in Europe and, especially, right-wing populism in Latin America do exist. However, the distinction is not mainly socioeconomic, since European populists have a slightly left-leaning economic program too. The left–right distinction makes more sense in terms of Bobbio’s definition of equality, even if it is not so much the populism that differs in this respect but the accompanying ideology. European populism is predominantly right wing because of its close link to nativism, while Latin American populism is mainly left wing because of its close association with “Americanismo.”

Inclusion vs. exclusion is probably the most important aspect of the cross-regional comparison. In effect, the analysis of Le Pen and Haider vis-à-vis Chávez and Morales permits us to hypothesize that we are dealing with two “types” of populism. We found that in material, political, and symbolic terms European populists can be labeled primarily as *exclusionary*, while Latin American populism can be conceived of as predominantly *inclusionary*. In this regard, it is important to note that in both “subtypes” of populism the conception of the groups that should be excluded from, and included into, society varies over time. While the emphasis of the populist radical right in Europe on excluding Muslims is relatively recent, and strongly related to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the idea of including the indigenous population is also a fairly new development within Latin American populism.

Finally, we noticed another, more suggestive difference: populism is more important in Latin America than in Europe. We are referring here not just to electoral or political importance but to ideological importance too. Whereas populism is secondary to nativism in the ideology of the European populist radical right, (“socialist”) economics is secondary to populism in the case of Latin American populists. In other words, Haider

and Le Pen are nativists first and populists second, whereas Chávez and Morales are populists first and socialists second.

***Similarities between European and Latin American populism*** From reviewing two cases of European populism and two cases of Latin American populism in some detail, the following question arises: are we confronting the emergence of a similar political phenomenon in both regions, or are European and Latin American populists fundamentally different “political animals”? While it is true that the political agendas of leaders like Le Pen and Haider have much in common and are very different from those of figures like Chávez and Morales, it is also possible to identify some interesting similarities, which are related to the populism of all these leaders.

First of all, in all four cases populism is based on the denunciation of the elites on account of their incapacity and/or lack of interest in dealing with the “real” problems of the people. Hence, populist leaders tend to foster a process of *repoliticization*, since they put new topics into the public agenda and force the establishment to take position on them. Of course, European and Latin American populists raise different issues, but the logic behind them is the same: those who govern systemically bypass the will of the people, and in consequence the political system is nothing more than a corrupt machine. Thus, what is at stake for populism is the alleged misuse of political representation and the intention to rule against the ideas and interests of “the pure people.”

Therefore, it is worth noting that both European and Latin American populism favor the implementation of a particular type of politics, in which the core dimension of democracy (i.e., free and fair elections) is praised and even seen as a remedy to combat political alienation (e.g., through frequent plebiscites and referenda), but at the same time *liberal* democratic procedures are highly mistrusted. Not by coincidence, Dahl (1956) refers to “populistic democracy” as a kind of political rule that is marked by the notion of the unlimited power of the majority and the belief that “the people” should be the main actor when it comes to controlling the government. In a similar vein, O’Donnell (1994) coined the term “delegative democracy” to characterize contemporary populism in Latin America because of its assumption that, since democratically elected presidents incarnate

the will of the people, these presidents have the right to flout constitutional checks and balances.

In other words, one of the main affinities between contemporary European and Latin American populism is the call for the construction of a political system that is not anti-democratic per se but, rather, at odds with liberal democracy. Accordingly, by hypothesizing that European populism is predominantly exclusionary and Latin American populism is primarily inclusionary, we are not saying that the former inevitably represents a negative development while it generally embodies a positive force. We should be very cautious when it comes to making normative judgments about populism, since the latter can be *both* a threat to and a corrective for democracy (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012; Rovira Kaltwasser forthcoming, 2011).

For instance, populist actors usually give voice to groups who do not feel represented by the elites and motivate these groups to react by demanding a change in the political agenda. But populist entrepreneurs may also appeal to the idea of popular sovereignty with the aim of dismantling the checks and balances that are inherent to liberal democracy. In other words, the repoliticization of society that is fostered by *all types of* populists has an ambivalent impact on democracy.

***Future research questions*** Given that the empirical basis of our paper rests mainly on four case studies, the conclusions that we draw must be seen as *tentative* and their validity should be tested in future studies. In this regard, however, it is worth stressing that the four cases were selected because they represent prototypical examples of the dominant types of populism in their respective regions. While we are aware of the fact that both in Europe and Latin America other types of populism have appeared in the last decade (e.g., “Die Linke” in Germany and Fujimori in Peru), our analysis focuses on the dominant type of populism that has emerged in these regions in recent years—and that probably has the best chance of enduring in the near future.

Moreover, though our paper maintains that Latin American populism has a predominantly socioeconomic dimension (including the poor) and European populism has a predominantly sociocultural dimension (excluding the immigrants), it does not offer an explanation for these divergent developments. Without attempting to offer a

conclusive causal account, we believe that the formation of these two different types of populism can be partially explained by the different socioeconomic situations in the two regions. In Inglehart's (1977) terms, Europe has reached a level of development at which post-material politics are at least rivaling socioeconomic politics, whereas Latin America is still a long way from this "silent revolution" because of its continuing high levels of socioeconomic disparity and poverty.

In other words, the comparison of Latin American and European populism helps us to distinguish the unique qualities of populism from those of its accompanying ideological features. After all, populism seldom emerges in a pure form; it is virtually always attached to other ideological features that are related to particular grievances existing in different societies. Future studies could draw on this insight and explore in more detail how the sociopolitical and socioeconomic contexts of these regions determine the emergence of a particular type of populism. At the same time, further research could use the conceptual framework developed in this paper to examine the constitution of different families of populism within regions (e.g., Scandinavian populism vs. Eastern European populism) and/or across time in specific countries (e.g., progressive vs. conservative populism in the United States).

In summary, cross-regional and cross-temporal studies of populism are still in an embryonic phase. We are not claiming to have said the last word on how to analyze and compare European and Latin American populism. The aim of our paper is much more modest: it tries to show that it is possible and worthwhile to do cross-regional research on populism, and it develops a helpful framework for starting to identify generic aspects of populism as well as the formation of different types of populism in particular world regions.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> In 2007 the MVR was dissolved and merged into the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (United Socialist Party of Venezuela, PSUV).

<sup>2</sup> France is an exception in Western Europe, as it has a semi-presidential system, in which both the directly elected president and the indirectly elected (by parliament) government make up the executive. However, to stay with the mainstream of European politics and because at least formally the government is the most powerful branch of the French executive, we present the results for the parliamentary elections for France as well.

<sup>3</sup> The party refers to the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which transformed the European Economic Community into the much more integrated European Union.

<sup>4</sup> In the language of Laclau (2005), this is a perfect example of the generation of a “logic of equivalence” by which very different groups leave aside their particular demands and adhere to a common view, which is first of all against the establishment.

<sup>5</sup> One of the few examples of electorally successful European left-wing populism is the German party called “Die Linke” (the left), which has a populist discourse that is not based on ethnic identity and does not make xenophobic claims (Decker 2008; Hough and Koß 2009). For more examples, from Eastern Europe as well, see March (forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Formisano (2007) in his study of American populism emphasizes that populist movements always incorporate both progressive and reactionary elements.

<sup>7</sup> It is worth stressing that Morales’s approach is quite novel, since Latin American populists have normally elaborated a notion of “the pure people” that left no room for the indigenous population as such. In fact, classical populists were inspired by a corporatist mode of political incorporation, which assumed that the excluded population were either workers or peasants but not indigenous (Yashar 2005).

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