

Populism in Old and New Democracies: Comparative Analysis of True Finns, Sweden Democrats, ANO and OĽaNO

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Abstract

The article aims to critically assess, through discourse analysis of their respective political programmes, the way populist parties in old and new democracies approach different questions in their societies. The representatives of the old democracies include the Sweden Democrats and the True Finns, while the new democracies are represented by the two Central Eastern European parties – the Czech ANO and the Slovak OĽaNO. The biggest contribution of this paper is the analysis of how these parties in their discourses approach the idea and definitions of the people (*populus*), the enemy, both as a cultural enemy and the establishment, in addition to critically dissecting their influence on liberal democracy (corrective or threat). The distinction between old and new democracies does not hold its ground anymore because the parties from new democracies are gradually following the same course set by the well-established populist parties, mainly in altering the perspective of the external enemy, currently depicted in immigration.

Keywords

populism, discourse, democracy, old, new, populist parties

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Introduction

In recent years, populist parties have been gaining popularity among voters. They have gained political power which granted them important coalition partners' mandates. Many authors connect this success to globalisation and the cultural and economic anxiety that comes with it (Rydgren, 2005; Agerberg, 2017). Populism arises, in many cases, as a response to erosion in support for mainstream parties (Albertazzi & MacDonnell, 2015: 166), when people complain that no one represents their voice (Rydgren, 2004b; Berger, 2017). Thus, their increasing political and social importance has been attracting political scientists for many years now. This article will further explore differences between populist parties in old and new democracies in Europe. Democracies with a longer tradition of embedded democratic values and institutions as well as electoral support might respond to populist challenges in a rather different way than the countries that adopted these values no longer than three decades ago.

Populism is a chameleonic phenomenon (Rooduijn, de Lange & van der Brug, 2014: 564) that many theoreticians also call an 'empty signifier' (Laclau, 2005) or a 'loose set of ideas' (Inglehart & Norris, 2017) due to the diverse shapes and characteristics which populist parties can adopt in their ideology or discourse. Populists can move more to the left and appeal to the working class (Lefkofridi & Michel, 2017), shift to the right by strengthening national identity (Inglehart & Norris, 2017) or do both moves at the same times due to their flexible political nature.

Scholars generally refer to the three main perceptions of populism. The most common one is defined by Mudde (2004), who calls populism 'a thin ideology' focused solely on the antagonistic relationship between two homogenous groups - the pure people and the corrupt elite (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008), where "politics should be an expression of *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (Mudde, 2004: 543). The ideology does not possess any coherent ideological tradition, and therefore it is usually attached to other ideologies (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017: 6).

Another conceptualisation of populism sees it as a form of a political strategy that parties, not necessarily only populist, adopt in order to attract a broader audience and gain supporters (Pauwels, 2011: 99). Their populist slogans are, however, not the only tools for electoral mobilisation. Specific features, appealing to ordinary voters, might also be found in their party organisation. They generally have a

small bureaucratic apparatus and their party cohesion is ensured by a strong affinity of party members towards a charismatic leader (Heinisch & Mazzoleni, 2016: 2).

The final general perception of populism is as a discursive style which holds many similarities with populism as an ideology. It refers mainly to the dichotomy between two homogenous communities. However, in this case, populism is not that stable, as it is built on the symbolic relationship of 'Us' against 'Them' (Wodak, 2015). This discourse depends on the social context, and 'Them' or the 'Other' does not necessarily mean the corrupt establishment, but it represents an enemy of the people ('Us'). By naming the 'Other', the concept of 'Us' could be identified, and, therefore, populism is an anti-*status-quo* discourse (Panizza, 2005: 3). Compared to populism as an ideology, the discursive style is a form of political expression, which is embodied not only in agitation, speculation, exaggeration, but also in deliberate provocations, and it aims at opening political and social taboos (Heinisch, 2003: 94). It is a very fluid concept that could be strategically used by both the left and the right. The analysed parties in this research are scattered across the political spectrum; therefore, we applied this conceptualisation of populism in our cases.

Regardless of the definition of this concept, scholars cannot agree whether populism is a threat to or a corrective for democracy (Panizza, 2005; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Mudde and Kaltwasser claim that "populism *per se* is neither good nor bad for the democratic system" (2017: 79). Due to their arising political importance, they draw electoral support from mainstream parties that changes the party politics, government coalitions and public *policy*-making (Ford & Goodwin, 2014; Hooghe & Marks, 2017). Moreover, they question the existence of unelected independent institutions which protect fundamental rights of the citizens, since these put constraints on the power of the *demos* (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017: 82). Populism supports popular sovereignty and majority rule, but in many cases, opposes pluralism and minority rights, which puts it not in opposition to democracy *per se*, but to *liberal* democracy (Rupnik, 2006; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017: 95).

On the other hand, Laclau (2005) believes that populism strengthens 'democratisation of democracy', since it mobilises all members of society, primarily those that might feel left out by the political establishment. This way even excluded groups can express their demands, because the primary characteristic of populism is that "all the people, and only the people should determine politics"

(Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017: 83). Fârte also claims that populism is a side effect of liberal democracy and an indicator of the vitality of liberal democracy (Fârte, 2017: 89). If democracy is well-embedded, populism cannot threaten its existence. However, if populism arises, illiberal majoritarianism can gain enough power to overthrow the liberal foundations of the democratic state.

Fârte's argument also provides a basis for our research, since 'old democracies' are perceived as those whose democratic values and institutions have a longer tradition of independence and professionalism (Bugaric, 2008: 198), and thus populism should not pose a threat to their highly-functioning democratic system. On the other hand, scholars argue that even though EU member states from the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region are democratic, in many cases the independence of the media or the courts' decisions are disputable, while the protection of human rights, in particular minorities, are rather weak or non-existent in the context of strong ethnic nationalism (Bugaric, 2008). Since populist parties constantly point out the corruptibility of the establishment, question traditional liberal institutions and name themselves as the only true representatives of the 'pure people', they challenge the liberal paradigm (Rupnik, 2006: 19) which can in the end cause a major shift towards its illiberal opponent.

Experts on populism focused on CEE throughout studies of single cases and comparisons of limited number of cases (Ucen, 2007; Bugaric, 2008), but there are also a few systematic studies of populism within this region (Kocijan, 2015). Due to the rising dissatisfaction of citizens with the evolution of post-communist democracy, populism attracts the attention of academic researchers. Since populism is rather flexible, in CEE it adapted to a different political and social context than in Western Europe. Their discourse differences are visible in the definition of the 'Other' (Țăranu, 2012: 134). In Western European states, the 'Other' symbolises an external threat that endangers the homogeneity of the nation, which mainly includes immigrants. On the other hand, in Eastern European discourse, the 'Other' is depicted as an insider who co-exists with the majority population for a longer period of time, which usually refers to the Roma people, Jews or Hungarians, or an external enemy such as Russia (Țăranu, 2012: 138). Mudde reasons this difference with tolerance of racism and anti-Semitism which he holds to be more widespread in CEE than in the West (Mudde, 2005: 161).

Another difference can be found in the anti-establishment discourse. Pareto states that an anti-elitism rhetoric in CEE is often connected

with national communism, which practically means that populists target the main left-wing party, which is generally perceived as a party succeeding their previous communist counterparts (Pareto, 2011). In Western Europe populists attract mainly those who felt at loss because of globalisation, while in the East they attract those who are unsatisfied with the democratic transition, while the number of such people is increasing with spreading corruption and economic downturn (Țăranu, 2012: 136). Some scholars question the anti-systemic characteristics of populist parties in CEE since the system has not yet stabilised in the western form and is relentlessly under pressure from the nationalist backlash and anti-consensual sentiment (Pauwels, 2011: 1009; Țăranu, 2012: 137). These arguments will be further tested in the comparison of Eastern and Western European populists which might bring more insight into this complex topic.

Methods of Analysis and Data

Four actors – True Finns (PS), Sweden Democrats (SD), ANO and OĽaNO – were chosen for the analysis of the populist parties and their impact on democracy. These parties were selected since they are well-established and relevant actors in the domestic political arena, even though their party affiliation is not the same. The populists from the Czech Republic and Slovakia belong more to the centre-right of the political spectrum, while the Scandinavian parties are leaning more towards the far-right side. However, an identical position in the political spectrum was not a relevant factor since the research is aimed at discourse, in which ideology can vary with populists' ideology. Another reason is that far-right parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia only have a marginal or volatile position, and thus their impact on the democratic composition of the state and politics might not be significant. This way, the reliability of the research is assured.

Since populism as a discourse is the main subject of the study, discourse analysis was determined as the best method to be applied. Discourse analysis is a method of research which encompasses a number of approaches which analyse written, vocal or sign language (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 16). In this research, frame analysis is utilized as a part of the broader discourse analysis research strategy. The goal is to identify the frames used by the populist in order to explain their discursive style. All choices will serve to draw attention to certain aspects of identity that will be associated with

certain kinds of discourses (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 77). Discourse analysis in political science is a qualitative approach to the study of politics which aims at critically assessing the way language is used in order to achieve a goal (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 15). It is a useful tool to understand how language forms ideas, ideology and political reality by allowing the examiner to access written, spoken or visual content, dissect it, and make sense of it through critically assessing it in order to see the way words and images form reality and in what way they do so. The most critical downside is that it is very open to self-interpretation of the language and is thus on the subjective side (Machin & Mayr, 2012). To avoid bias, discourse analysis does not offer normative suggestions and conclusions, but rather, again, as in the actual assessment, leaves it up for critical evaluation by the readers themselves.

There are three most common discourse approaches that are used in the study of populism (Poblete, 2015: 202). The first one is the post-structuralist approach, based on Laclau's theory, and it is the broadest theoretical approach. Here, every social practice has a meaning and is considered as constituting discourse; everything has political potential (Poblete, 2015). The second approach also understands populism as discourse, but in a more postmodern sense, as a set of ideas or latent frameworks of meaning, unintentionally manifested by individuals through speech, writing or some other type of symbolic action (Hawkins, 2009). The third approach understands discourse as an explicit linguistic allocution, clearly stated in the context of text and it has roots in the field of content analysis (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). In this research, the second approach was utilized. The reason lies in the fact that the post-structuralist approach has a methodological weakness – it is missing clear research strategies, while the third approach is purely positivist and quantitative. The second approach proposes a hermeneutic way of accessing the discourse but within a positivist research context. It is possible to access the latent meaning of the text through interpretative analysis and subsequently classify evidence to defined positivist categories, which are following further down this section.

In the study of populism, scholars focus mainly on the binary relationship between *the people* and *the establishment*. This will be analysed in our cases since a contemporary comparative study of these regions is missing in academia. Moreover, researchers found many differences in the discourse of Eastern and Western populists, which pose as our main categories, and which this research will also test.

1. *Definition of the People* – opposite to the enemy based on populist perception of divided society stemming from the theory of social mental landscape (Derks, Ötsch, & Walker, 2016). ‘We’ who are located in proximate distance such as ‘we stand together’ – and ‘Them’, who are placed far away from us. This phenomenon is connected to the process of de-personification in which people who are portrayed as being further away are perceived less as ‘real people’.

2. *Definition of the Enemy*

a) *Cultural Enemy* – Eastern European populists are expected to be more xenophobic, even racist, due to their embedded nationalism. However, they should focus mainly on the internal culturally different groups, such as Roma or Hungarians. With the refugee crisis, it is presupposed that they will also focus on the external enemy – refugees. Western populists should focus mainly on immigrants who are threatening their national homogeneity, but they should not so openly be proponents of racism.

b) *The Establishment* – Eastern populists use anti-establishment discourse to target national-communist parties as the ‘establishment’ since these remnants of the communist regime are threatening the ‘pure people’. On the other hand, the fight of the Western populists is of more general nature, since they should depict establishment as those who do not comply with the *volonté générale*.

3. *Populism and Democracy* – the main positive effect of populism was its inclusive character for all groups in society. Thus, in case they devote their attention to potentially excluded groups from society – not necessarily based on ethnicity, but any groups who are seen as dependants in society – the impact of populism on democracy might be rather stimulating. On the other hand, a negative effect on democracy might occur in cases when they question or criticise democratic institutions and values. There is no assumption which parties might be more corrective to (liberal) democracy.

The data chosen for this analysis consists of the last parliamentary elections’ programmes in respective countries. This data source was selected because parliamentary elections are not that affected by a low turnout as e.g. European Parliament elections, which means that these first-order elections are the most important for all citizens and include agenda that should involve everyone. It is also a rather complex document which indicates a more stable discourse of parties. In comparison to for instance press releases, in which

the party rhetoric might be more fluid, the comparison of findings might not be very reliable.

Even though the programmes were issued in different years (Sweden Democrats in 2014, True Finns in 2015, OLaNO in 2016 and ANO in 2017) and only two parties could respond to the refugee crisis of 2015 in their programmes, the crisis *per se* was not perceived as a crucial factor. The reason is that in Scandinavia immigration has been one of the most salient issues for a longer period of time (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012; Breidahl, 2017), while Czech and Slovak populists also had the opportunity to refer to the 'immigration threat' from which they have been exempt before. Thus, the definition of the enemy should not be affected by this.

The Four Populists

Sverigedemokraterna - Sweden Democrats

Sverigedemokraterna (Sweden Democrats - SD) is a relatively young political party. Formed in 1988, as successors of the Swedish Party (*Sverigepartiet*), which was formed in 1986 by two far-right political parties - the Swedish Progressive Party (*Framtjepartiet*) and Keep Sweden Swedish (*Bevara Sverige Svenskt*) (Rydgren, 2004a). Jimmy Åkesson became the party leader in 2005 and since then, the party has been trying to reposition and emulate the success of the Danish People's Party and enter the state parliament - *Riksdaget*. In the 2014 elections, Sweden Democrats emerged as the third largest party in the Swedish Parliament with 12,86% votes won (Val.se, 2014).

The party can be termed far-right, and it focuses on the national identity of Sweden and the composition of the population (Nordensvard & Ketola, 2015: 365). The ideological backbone of the SD base is based on linking people and culture to the concept of a nation state. They take for granted the idea that virtually every nation embodies an ethnically determined culture. SD nurture a nostalgic relationship with the past, when Sweden was a homogenous society (Rydgren, 2004a). Returning to the "good old times" is one of the main mechanisms of the populist parties, when addressing the voters.

Although the party sees itself above the division between the left and the right - they also focus on traditional right-wing issues, such as law and order, nationalism and protection of tradition and heritage, as well as the protection of the welfare state, care for the

elderly and the poor, and the protection of the environment. Radical approaches to politics are seen when it comes to national identity, history, and common culture and civilization.

Sweden Democrats advocate protecting the welfare state and support the idea that tax should not be reduced in order to protect the welfare state. Their economic policy somehow tried to move away from the right economic standpoint by advocating progressive taxes and maintaining the welfare state, provided it is oriented and aimed at ethnic Swedes.

The role of the charismatic leader is well in place. Jimmy Åkesson plays an important role in the general image of the party. Authors suggest that the party elite stands out as their greatest asset (Loxbo, 2015). David Art strengthens this conclusion by arguing that the top leadership of the SD is “a small group of educated men with clean records” (Art, 2011: 90). Åkesson and his close affiliates present the new face of the Swedish far right, appearing presentable, cultured and eloquent. This is, in regard to older ultra-nationalist attempts of Swedish far-right parties, a new approach which has in turn proved fruitful.

To summarize, SD are in many ways a populist party with many radically right-wing sentiments (nationalism, national state, xenophobia, security), but their party programme contains some civilized Nordic values, such as a strong support of the welfare state and the opposition to the death-penalty (Nordensvard & Ketola, 2015: 366). This is especially the case when the SD are surrounded by the adherence of Islamic communities in the country, which they claim to be against liberal values.

True Finns Party

The True Finns Party was formed in 1995, after the bankruptcy of the Finnish Rural Party *Suomen maasedun puolue* (SMP), under the name of True Finns* *Perussuomalaisen puolue* (PS) (Arter, 2010: 484-485). SMP framed its political agenda around the interests of the rural smallholders and other groups whose interests were not served by actions of the political elite, such as the urban working class (Nordensvard & Ketola, 2015: 361). True Finns have become the third largest party in the 2015 elections, with 19,1% support. They entered the ruling coalition together with the Centre Party

* In the meantime, PS broke into two parties – the Blue Reform and the Finns Party.

and the National Coalition Party (Stat.fi, 2015).

True Finns are not as nationalistic as the Danish People's Party or the Sweden Democrats, but they do support a mix of traditional conservative and nativist values which places the party strongly in the populist radical right parties of Europe (Arter, 2010). True Finns aim to muster up support for a more nationalistic understanding of the Finnish welfare state. Arter points out that the pivotal concept in True Finns' ideology is "the notion of (true) Finnishness" (Arter, 2010: 502), an idea that informs much of True Finns' perception of Finland's future (Nordensvard & Ketola, 2015: 361).

They are garnering Eurosceptic beliefs as well as the belief that the True Finns should protect the national sovereignty. They present the EU as a threat in socio-cultural terms and problematise the current political arrangements through the national lens (Nordensvard & Ketola, 2015: 364). They also stress the guilt of political elites, who are watering down the national welfare state by attacking 'elitism' of the political class on multiple fronts. They distinguish between 'neutral' and 'bad' immigration, accepting positive contribution of highly skilled immigrants, while highlighting others as a burden (Nordensvard & Ketola, 2015).

True Finns were led by Timo Soini from 1997 until 2017, who also presents the case for a charismatic and outspoken leader, which is one of the main characteristics of populist parties. The BBC wrote a report on Timo Soini in 2011, saying that "he draws a crowd like flypaper catches flies... ..He is a very good talker in a way that speaks to common people and makes complicated things look very easy" (BBC.com, 2011).

ANO

The party was established in 2012 as a reaction to the political crisis of corruption affairs which resulted in low voters' support of political parties and government* and early parliamentary elections. Andrej Babiš, the second-richest Czech businessman (Forbes.com, 2017), proclaimed himself as a fighter against corrupt elites and established the business-firm party ANO which stands for "Action of Dissatisfied Citizens"**. The party was set up in a rather unusual

* Satisfaction of citizens with the political situation was only around 5%, while confidence in the parliament fell to 12% (Havlík, 2015: 301).

** Translated from Czech: *Akce nespokojených občanů*. The acronym ANO also means "yes"

way since the group of people with similar views was concentrated around the leader Babiš, and after that, the political programme was modified according to the public opinion (Eibl, 2014: 27). The main goal of the party was to establish “a more just society and well-functioning rule of law” (ANO Political Programme, 2011). ANO achieved huge success after the parliamentary elections in 2013 when it became the second largest party in the parliament with electoral support of almost 19%, which is the best result ever recorded for a newly established political party in the Czech Republic (Havlík et al., 2014: 144).

Babiš declared that his party will cooperate with anyone whose policies are aimed at benefitting the citizens and who will not lie and steal (Novinky.cz, 2013). Ideological ambiguity was not resolved even after Babiš defined ANO as “a right-wing party with a social conscience” (Echo24.cz, 2014). The political programme lacks any substance, which on the one hand offers party flexibility, and on the other hand, there is space for populist discourse that mainly involves the binary relationship between the pure Czech nation that has the potential of reaching similar levels to Sweden or Switzerland, and incompetent and corrupt elite (Kopeček, 2016: 742). However, on the European platform they present themselves as liberals, as a member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

Moreover, the party also has a rather weak organisational structure with one strong leader and several public figures. Kopeček (2016: 732) even compares Babiš to Berlusconi, with his high public popularity*, ownership of media and party organisation in a “broader movement of the discontent”, which is not like any other political party, which resembles Forza Italia as *movimento*. Babiš was, similarly to Berlusconi, also investigated in relation to the unfair practices in tax fraud or manipulation with media, due to which the prime minister replaced him as a minister with other party members (ČeskéNoviny.cz, 2017).

However, even these affairs were not fatal for ANO since in the last parliamentary elections in 2017 they gained almost 30% of electoral support, which brought them the position of the biggest party in the parliament. Before the elections, ANO declared the clientelist-corrupt system as their biggest enemy and the need for majority

in Czech language, which became part of the main campaign slogans: “Yes, things will get better.”

* Babiš, with 56% of citizens’ support, was declared as the most trustable Czech politician in April 2017 (iDNES.cz, 2017).

rule, since coalition governments pose problems everywhere in Europe. The main problem occurred when nine parties entered parliament, and none of them wanted to cooperate with ANO and form a coalition (Novinky.cz, 2017). However, ANO is backed by the president and the party might form a minority government only with independent candidates.

OLaNO

The party was formed as a movement of 'Ordinary People'* in 2010 around the persona of Igor Matovič, reacting to potential gain of a constitutional majority of the left-wing party Smer-SD in the upcoming elections (SME.sk, 2010). Since political movements cannot participate in the election, the members of the movement were placed on the bottom of other political parties' electoral lists. However, due to the preferential votes, they entered the parliament. This rather unusual political step secured the movement its legitimacy which was very important for their future political position. They became a coalition partner. However, since other parties in the government did not support their bill amendment to the Electoral Law, by which even independent candidates could run for political positions (Aktuálne.sk, 2011a), they established their own political party, OLaNO**.

In 2012, early elections took place, and OLaNO became the third biggest party in the parliament, winning almost 9% of the overall votes (SME.sk, 2012). At the birth of the movement, the main ideology was embodied in the fight against corruption (Baboš & Malová, 2017: 238), clientelism, nepotism and partocracy (Rolko, 2010: 27). However, after the incorporation of the independent candidates, there is a visible anti-ideological shift. The party believes that politicians should follow their own conscience and reason, not ideology (Rolko, 2010: 82). Their political programme from 2012 encompassed rather general goals, such as an anti-corruption crusade, transparent and effective public policy, abolition of the immunity for politicians or the tangible responsibility for politicians' decisions (IVÖ.sk, 2012).

The party itself had only minimal organisational structure,

* Translated from Slovak: *Obyčajní ľudia*.

** Acronym for: *Obyčajní ľudia a Nezávislé Osobnosti* (translated from Slovak: Ordinary People and Independent Personalities).

respectively, four members who act as party co-founders and enable independent candidates to run for elections through their political party (Aktuálne.sk, 2011b). The party is usually associated with the leader Matovič, a small businessman and the owner of a regional magazine, who is also an avid political critic and represents the loudest opposition towards unfair practices of all political parties. He claimed he became a politician in order to 'oust the thieves', which eventually transformed into a campaign against the leader of the left-wing party Fico, with the main slogan: "Fico protects the thieves" (HNOnline.sk, 2016). It was printed on T-shirts that Matovič was wearing in the parliamentary hearings.

Generally, the party chose typical populist communication to gain publicity, like breaking political taboos, which caused several verbal and physical conflicts between politicians (Aktuality.sk, 2012), and raising awareness on corruption affairs. This discourse and their political flexibility is apparently very beneficial for the party that succeeded in 2016 elections as the third biggest party (SME.sk, 2016).

Discourse of Party Programmes of Populist Parties

The discourse of political parties is dissected through a meticulous study of the party programmes in this section. Firstly, the Sweden Democrats and True Finns will be compared as the members of the old democracies. Next, the comparison of the representatives of the new democracies, ANO and OLaNO will follow. Lastly, the discursive approach of old and new democratic populists will be compared.

Populism in Old Democracies: Comparison of Sweden Democrats and True Finns

The party programmes of Sweden Democrats and True Finns have been issued in 2014 and 2015 respectively. Both present a very dense version of the main points addressed by both parties, with sufficient space to point out the most important perceived shortcomings and solutions. The party programmes/manifests are simple, and use common language in order to be widely accessible to readers of every strata of society in respective countries.

Definition of the People

The people in terms of SD are proud, courageous people, who have been living in Sweden for a very long time and have a particularly long and special historic role. They are people who love Sweden and are part of the genetic and cultural heritage of Europe (Sweden Democrats Party Programme, 2014). The people are the ones that love Sweden, the language, its natural wonders. They are the elderly, who are forgotten, the young who are not given a chance, because others are taking their benefits. They are the Swedish employees, the everyday heroes at the workplace. A lawful resident population which belongs to the Nordic, European, Christian and Western cultural heritage (Sweden Democrats Party Programme, 2014).

True Finns approach the definition of people similarly. The real Finns are working people who are misused by the system and the establishment, taken for granted by the elites. Their homes are invaded by foreigners. Immigration puts them at risk because they lose their jobs. They are taxpayers, who do not get their money back, but they are nonetheless defiant and proud (True Finns Party Programme, 2015), much like in the presentation of the people by SD.

Definition of the Enemy

a) Cultural Enemy

While True Finns and Sweden Democrats originate from different Nordic countries, their definition of the enemy is quite similar. The external enemy of the 'true people' is the migrant, the distant 'other', the one who is inherently different from the Finns or Swedes. Immigration will change the population profile and is responsible for the formation of ghettos, ethnic conflicts and disrupted societal cohesion. It is not about race anymore, it has more to do with culture. Both True Finns and Sweden Democrats see the enemy in Islamic faith, finding it incompatible with their cultural heritage of West, Nordic and Christian roots.

True Finns, in order to make their point against immigration play the 'number game', making numbers the ammunition in the everyday discourse about their own perceived danger of immigration. This is visible on the page 2 of their Immigration Policy part of the Party Programme, where they establish, that Finland has 300.000 people born outside of Finland, which makes up for 5,5% of the entire

Finnish population; and over the last 10 years, this number has been increasing by 20.000 people a year (True Finns Party Programme, 2015).

Immigration, True Finns stipulate, is driving the people out of the city, taking homes of hard-working and lower income Finns and keeping the poor away from the welfare system set up to protect them. "Taxpayers are leaving Helsinki and only unemployed migrants are left" (True Finns Party Programme, 2015). The same can be said for low-income foreign students, who are "enjoying free education in Finland [and] are consuming financial resources and [taking away Finnish] student places" (True Finns Party Programme, 2015).

Dual citizenship is also a trait of the immigrant enemy since it represents a security risk. The question of loyalty to another country is posed as a threat to Finland as well as Sweden. In Finland it is mostly linked and implied for the Russians, which True Finns mark as a threat on its own, linking the volatility of the relationship to Russia with the evidence from Ukraine and the crisis there.

Crime is a major threat in Sweden. Organized crime is taken as a factor, which puts the country at risk. It is insinuated that organized crime is coming from the outside, from the immigrants. They become a social welfare burden, not only by being on welfare, but undermining Sweden's liberal tradition and cultural heritage. Both parties see language to be under threat from the outside world, particularly because of the multicultural practices, which are there to protect the immigrants and cater to their needs but not to the ethnic co-nationals, Swedes, respectively Finns.

b) The Establishment

The internal enemy, coming from Swedes and Finns themselves is the establishment. Their actions, by catering to the needs of big business, the EU, and immigrants instead of taking care of their own people, are against the people. The establishment, by putting in place a bureaucracy which is treating the common people like a bully, rather than a helping hand, seems distant and detached from the people. It works against the cultural heritage and history of Swedes and Finns respectively and is therefore, in their eyes, corrupt and unfit to rule.

For True Finns, in the 2015 party programme, the enemy is found

in many different spheres. The thuggish bureaucracy which keeps the investments and development at bay bullies the 'small people' and impedes the overall advancement of society. It is important to note that the enemy is found in the established political parties like the Centre Party, National Coalition Party or the Social Democratic Party. They are deemed responsible for the policies which destroyed the competitiveness of Finland.

One of the main enemies for True Finns is the rigid EU bureaucracy which halts progress. The EU is considered an enemy because it imposes climate control regulations, which will cost Finland billions of Euros of high energy costs for industry and consumers in the long run. Finland, as a sovereign country, should be able to decide for themselves what to do. For SD, established parties have let Sweden deteriorate into an unnatural and culturally mixed country, which has forgotten about their cultural heritage and proud history. The politicians and the people that rule the Swedish society have turned Sweden "into a less amazing country and they did it by misguided priorities" (Sweden Democrats Party Programme, 2014).

Populism and Democracy in Old Democracies

Both True Finns and Sweden Democrats approach democracy as a tradition, a way of life passed on by generations. This is seen in both of their programmes as statements of a long tradition of democracy, Western culture and adherence to human rights and dignity, alongside with gender equality and a welfare state. While they try to keep these achievements, they are nonetheless exclusionary in their practices. Their approach is in some consideration anti-liberal, since they do not believe in the plurality that can exist within a society *per se*. They reserve most of the services of the state, such as welfare, healthcare or other benefits for their co-ethnics, the ethnic Finns and ethnic Swedes. This can be seen within their exclusive rights for ethnics in the approach to welfare, education, language policies and healthcare.

This is somewhat typical for Nordic countries and is labelled 'welfare chauvinism' (Andersen & Bjørklund, 1990). "Welfare chauvinism is employed in combination with appeals for restoring 'traditional values', and reinforcing order and authority" (Nordensvard & Ketola, 2015: 365). In this respect, the populist radical right combines welfare chauvinist stances with authoritarian arguments, opposing liberal permissiveness and tolerance of migrants, ethnic minorities,

and other groups that are deemed to deviate from the 'common man in the street' standards (Rydgren, 2006: 11). This makes it harder for all people to access democracy, and thus, rather than being a corrective to democracy, Nordic populists, or populism in old democracies, seems to, from the evidence provided, pose a threat to democracy.

Populism in New Democracies: Comparison of ANO and OLaNO

The political programme of ANO had more of a general character using rather simplistic language that populist parties usually choose as 'the language of the people' (Gidron & Bonikowski, 2013: 14). On the other hand, OLaNO's programme was not only bigger in volume, but also finely structured in its argumentative character, which evokes a level of professionalism in defining policy problems and solutions, in many cases based on previous research of e.g. the OECD or Eurobarometer (OLaNO Political Programme, 2016: 14, 19, 31). Their arguments thus had much more representative value. In both documents, the set of four categories was detected that in most of the cases overlapped, although there were some crucial differences as well.

Definition of the People

Both parties support the idea of the citizen being above the government, of a citizen who creates laws and policies and of good, poor citizens who are victims of a decayed establishment. ANO, as well as OLaNO chose a fairly balanced approach to all citizens that does not put preference to certain groups. ANO tackles the problems of socially disadvantaged groups, people with disabilities (ANO Political Programme, 2017: 19), as well as all age groups from children care to the retirement system. OLaNO also adds the problem of homeless people (OLaNO Political Programme, 2016: 43) and ethnically marginalised groups, such as Roma people.

The Roma question constitutes an important part of OLaNO's programme in particular. OLaNO focuses mainly on the integration in the education system, labour market, housing and society, while also highlighting the problem of negative media attention to Roma issues, which perpetuate stereotypes and prejudice (OLaNO Political Programme, 2016: 60-63). The Slovak party aims at building the bridges between the majority population and the minority,

implementing anti-discrimination laws and ending stereotypes. The inclusion of Roma as part of the 'people', not as the 'Other' poses as a contra-argument against the usual perception of Roma as an internal threat to ethnic homogeneity depicted in countries of CEE.

On the other hand, ANO ignores the topic of Roma, even though it is nowadays the biggest minority in their country (Vlada.cz, 2017)*. During Babiš's last visit to a Roma village for a commemoration of the holocaust against the Roma, Babiš called the concentration camp only a "work camp in which Roma at least worked, unlike nowadays" (iDNES.cz, 2016). The shift from populism to ethnic nationalism cannot be applied to the position of the whole party, but it indicates the visible difference between 'normal people' and Roma who do not work and who are dependent on social benefits. Moreover, the prime minister of the government in which ANO was a coalition partner claimed that ANO never put forward any suggestions on solving the Roma issue (Aktuálně.cz, 2016), which only insinuates that their primary attention is on ethnic Czech citizens.

Definition of the Enemy

a) Cultural Enemy

Both parties put the protection of the national identity as one of their priorities, however ANO focuses mainly on the migration threat, while OLaNO sees the biggest external enemy in Russia. In the case of ANO, illegal migration is a major problem, because Europe leaves its borders open helping terrorism to expand, threatening the national security (ANO Political Programme 2017: 21). Overall, they propose a very practical approach of protection of the Schengen borders and promotion of migration solutions in origin countries by putting asylum procedures in place outside of Europe and highlighting the final word of the Czech Republic in groups of migrants they are willing to relocate. They do not specifically tackle the question whether migrants who come legally and integrate into the host society, will be seen as part of 'the people'

* In comparison, the Roma community in Slovakia is approximately twice the size of the one in the Czech Republic, while Slovakia has half of the overall population of the Czech Republic (DeníkN.sk, 2016). The size and very bad living conditions in Slovakia for Roma might also be a factor of policy urgency but it is mainly important how parties approached this ethnic minority – whether as a part of the general population or an outsider.

in the future. Similar practical and rational position is presented by OĽaNO, which claimed that “migrants mostly see the region of Central Europe as only transit station on their way to Western Europe” (OĽaNO Political Programme, 2016: 127), while stressing the need of integration in case migrants want to become part of the host society, ‘the people’.

Nonetheless, OĽaNO perceived Russia as the bigger threat due to territorial revisionism in Ukraine and espionage in other European states, which, according to the party, makes it unacceptable to normalise relations with Russia, without the return to the previous *status-quo* (OĽaNO Political Programme, 2016: 126). Undoubtedly, the Slovak geographical proximity to Russia makes the perceived threat bigger than for their Czech counterparts. Thus, ANO only voiced a need to develop relations between EU and Russia without specifying Russian failures of compliance with international law (ANO Political Programme, 2017: 14). However, it is common practice that populist parties in CEE often define the ‘Other’ as an external threat coming from Russia, which fits OĽaNO’s approach perfectly.

b) The Establishment

Both parties perceive the establishment as their main enemy, which they are fighting against, since it does not adhere to the citizens’ interests. The establishment consists mainly of corrupt elites, outdated, corrupt, non-transparent and ineffective bureaucracy, biased, slow and undersized justice and lobbyist groups which are not regulated, as well as too involved in public policy while their interests differ from the ones of citizens. The most often mentioned characteristics of the establishment is the corruption that should have been ended after the fall of communism in 1989, but on the contrary, it is still spreading, not only through the government, but also within bureaucracy in e.g. EU funds, and other policies like health care (ANO Political Programme, 2017: 1; OĽaNO Political Programme, 2016: 8, 51). Oligarchy and clientelism are another problem coming from the establishment, and ANO declared that “the government is not run by the prime minister, but by a variety of behind-the-scenes groups, lobbyists and consultants” (ANO Political Programme, 2017: 1).

It is peculiar that both actors do not perceive the European Union as the enemy, as part of the establishment working against the people.

ANO claims that “despite the supranational institutions, the Czech Republic has a greater influence on events on the continent” (ANO Political Programme, 2017: 13), while OĽaNO committed itself to contribute to increasing citizens’ confidence in the European project (OĽaNO Political Programme, 2016: 128).

The main difference between ANO and OĽaNO was the inclusion of certain political parties to the establishment. ANO profiled itself generally against right as well as left-wing parties who are corrupt and influenced by lobbyist groups (ANO Political Programme, 2017: 1). In case of OĽaNO, the discourse about corrupt elites is targeted more specifically at the main government left-wing party Smer-SD. OĽaNO specifically held them responsible for “crumbling roads, hospitals and schools”, due to the lack of investment from EU funds. This is the case because Smer-SD were in power for nine out of ten overall years of the EU project funding period (OĽaNO Political Programme, 2016: 51).

This anti-Smer-SD rhetoric fits to Pareto’s (2011) argument that connects anti-establishment discourse in CEE with national-communism. Fico, the leader of Smer-SD, was a member of the Communist Party of Slovakia (SME.sk, 2003), and after the fall of communism, its political successor, the Slovak Democratic Left SDL (Aktuality.sk, 2017a). However, he did not manage to hold any government positions in SDL, and thus established his own party Smer-SD that in 2002 integrated the political survivors of the failing post-communist party, SDL (SME.sk, 2004).

Nevertheless, the anti-establishment rhetoric depicted in communist remanence does not apply for the Czech Republic because there the Communist Party is still a rather successful actor which ANO does not specifically target, while ANO’s party leader Babiš was an alleged agent of ‘State Security’ (Štátna Bezpečnosť - ŠtB)*, secret police force, as well as an ordinary member of the Communist Party before 1989. He claims that his membership was purely because of the benefits it brought, not the communist ideology and that is why now he considers his anti-establishment crusade as a compensation for the lack of courage to rebel during communism (EuroZprávy.cz, 2016). His previous links to communism might be a reason why their anti-establishment discourse stays symmetrical for both political right and left.

* According to the preserved records, Babiš was supposed to provide intel on people suspected of bribery and corruption. Babiš denies any allegations, while saying that he only came into contact with secret service officers who were interested in business activities (Aktuality.sk, 2017b).

Populism and Democracy

Looking at the coverage of democratic principles in the programme, ANO only declares its priority to promote democracy in the country, and willingness to fight any kind of right or left-wing extremism and religious fundamentalism (ANO Political Programme, 2017: 23). They also do not specifically open the question of populism, and its relation to democratic values. Therefore, since they ignored the problem of ethnically marginalised groups, and focused mainly on the critique of all political parties, the justice system and bureaucracy, their position seems to lean more towards the threat rather than the corrective to the democracy. In the public sphere, many voiced a fear of the negative impact that ANO can have on democracy, while calling it an 'oligarch's party' (Kopeček, 2016: 726). Reflex.cz (2017) even compared the victory of ANO in the last elections to the year 1946, when communists rose to power, because of the anti-systemic and anti-democratic parallel between ANO and the Communist Party.

On the other hand, OLaNO considers strengthening the democracy as their main priority in the programme, due to a wave of extremist and populist groups that "undermines foundations of European integration" and democracy (OLaNO Political Programme, 2016: 125). Specifically, their approach to populism is rather paradoxical since they "want populism to end" (OLaNO Political Programme, 2016: 144), while officially belonging to the typical populist parties. The stigma of populism connecting it with far-right rise might result in OLaNO distancing themselves from such characteristics in the public eye.

However, there are also positive sides of the specific type of populism which OLaNO also encompasses. They highlight the need for a strong civic society that they see as the main pillar of democracy and support more citizens' involvement not only in policy formulation but also in decision-making (OLaNO Political Programme, 2016: 138-140). This rhetoric indicates a clear shift towards direct democracy that pursues the agenda of giving back the power to the pure people which might cure the political apathy of many citizens when it comes to public policy. The clear willingness to give more control over policies to the citizens, to strengthen the checks and balances in the governance system, to point to non-transparent and corrupt decisions and to incorporate different social and ethnic groups into society, such as Roma, puts populism of OLaNO more in the corrective position of democracy.

Comparing Populism in Old and New Democracies

As populism is an anti-*status quo* discourse (Panizza, 2005: 3), one can detect that there are many similarities within the populist parties of the old and new democracies. They all have the typical features in common – they are a form of political expression which agitates, speculates and exaggerates. But most of all, they deny the possibility that the *status quo* can go on, and there is a need for the people to take back power.

This is presented in the common denominator all of the parties have – an utter disregard for the establishment. It is interesting that ANO does not adhere to the typical Central Eastern European definition of the establishment. It does not take the initiative to blame the corrupt descendants of the former communist regime, which can be explained with the fact that their leader, Babiš, was put in connection with the old communist regime. While this might be the case, the ANO party is still moving towards a more general facet of the populist discourse, which targets politicians in power, big business interests, and lobbyist groups – in general, elites detached from the *populus*. OĽaNO, on the other hand, still sees a big threat in the leftovers of the communist regime in their definitions of the establishment, connecting it to the left leaning party Smer-SD, which has formed out of the ruins of the Communist Party.

The biggest difference is most likely that the establishment is considered to be the EU in Sweden and Finland. Central Eastern European populist parties would beg to differ in this regard, since they count on the stable position of the Czech Republic and Slovakia within the EU and find it being able to help their countries, not halt their progress. Sweden Democrats, as well as True Finns see the supranational EU as a threat to their countries' sovereignty. This approach of the True Finns and the Sweden Democrats can be partially explained by the fact that they find themselves in nationalist and far-right place of the political spectrum, while Czech and Slovak parties are both situated on the right, but on a more central position. On the other hand, the explanation might be that they receive less benefits from their position within the EU than the CEE states do.

There seems to be a discrepancy in the way in which OĽaNO defines the cultural enemy as opposed to previous research on CEE populist parties. While ANO disregards the question of the Roma (even though they are the biggest ethnic minority in the Czech Republic), OĽaNO takes steps to include the Roma in 'the people',

which is an exception to the common populist discourse in CEE targeting the internal enemy represented by the ethnic minorities within the state.

In all cases, 'the enemy' was defined as the one coming from the outside. This is done by finding the threat in immigration and migrants, which is supposed to have a homogenizing internal effect. Particularly interesting is that migration did not seem to be an issue beforehand in Slovakia or Czech Republic, since these countries were not the usual destination of migrants, but the recent refugee crisis in Europe could explain the inclusion of the policy in the agenda. Due to the European relocation scheme, the perceived threat is more tangible for the public, and with populist discourse evolving around these questions the Central Eastern European populists can attract voters. Migration seems to become an integral part of populism in both new and old democracies, however the approach of ANO and OĽaNO stays much more rational and focuses mainly on illegal migration that threatens the security of the state.

There was also another external enemy, besides migrants, found in the parties. Both True Finns and the Slovak OĽaNO perceive Russia as a threat to their countries, which was most likely intensified because of the war in Ukraine and the annexation of the Crimea. The Russian threat usually appears in populist discourse in CEE countries (Țăranu, 2012: 138), however, the relative proximity of Finland and Slovakia to Russian spheres of influence and historical experiences with the Soviet Union might have influenced the perception of the enemy, independently of belonging to old or new democracies.

While some authors (Pauwels, 2011; Țăranu, 2012) claim that the liberal democracy paradigm is more under threat from populism in CEE, since their democracy is not embedded, the opposite has been found in this research. OĽaNO is an example of a populist party working more on inclusion of all strata of society, arguing for more direct and participative democracy, as well as a return of the power to the people, while keeping intact the minority safeguards and the checks and balances of the liberal democratic system. This being the indicator of populism as a corrective to democracy in CEE.

On the other hand, True Finns and SD are aiming at the ethnic base of their co-nationals with ethnic welfare chauvinism and destruction of the minority programs and multicultural practices which are an integral part of liberal democracy. This puts Nordic populist parties

in a position leaning towards illiberal majoritarian principles. Lastly, ANO in its programme does not make any considerable attempts at liberal democracy, while attacking all kinds of extremism, both from the left and the right. However, it ignores the issue of the Roma as a marginalised group, does not devote much space for tools of promoting democracy and focuses on critique of all political parties and bureaucracy. Taking into consideration not only their programme, but their overall discourse, this party leans more towards the threat to democracy, as defined by other researchers (Kopeček, 2016; Reflex.cz, 2017).

Conclusion

This research has revealed that populism seems to adapt and move towards a certain *modus operandi* which is typical for both old and new democracies. New democracies, so it seems, have been moving from the problem of the internal enemy (although the internal enemy is still persistent in the ideas about the establishment), towards an external one. All of the researched parties have been on the right ideological political spectrum, thus the enemy is found in migrants and different cultures, but also, in a closer external enemy, such as Russia in the case of Finland and Slovakia.

The implications of the findings point to the conclusion that CEE populist parties move towards the same way of reasoning although there are important exceptions. While the Scandinavian populists seem to be moving towards exclusive majoritarian rule, and cultural racism in their programs, the CEE populists present a chance for correction of democratic rule by trying to include formerly marginalized groups, such as Roma, with empowering them and making them part of the *populus*, which now has only one common internal enemy – the establishment.

Further research is to be conducted in order to find out if the populists from the left side of the spectrum can adhere to the commonalities between populist parties. One thing is certain: populism has become a stronger part of the political playground, making moves towards established politics, as can be seen in Italy with the Five Star Movement, in Slovenia with United Left, Germany with the Alternative für Deutschland or the Front National's Marie Le Penn's success in the French presidential campaign as well as earlier success of UKIP with the Brexit plans. A common identified denominator can help change the way we talk about populism and

make it easier to identify when or how they pose a threat to liberal democracy or present an advancement inside it.

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