Introduction: Toward Populism as a Dialogical Perspective
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This collective volume aims to create a dialogue between populism and some key concepts in social and political science. While the literature on populism is very rich and diverse, a widespread trend in the current scholarship is the effort to consolidate it as an insular academic sub-field. Populism is a notion that has been adopted by almost all humanities and social sciences. In some disciplines, especially in political science and political sociology, there is a desire to consolidate as a kind of "populist scholarship". Although it does not narrowly form a "paradigm" in the sense of Thomas Kuhn (1970), the populist sub-field has gathered a growing community of scholars sharing concepts and research questions to address the challenges facing contemporary democracies. There are some advantages to building an academic sub-field as such, but the shortcomings are also worth exploring. This book asserts that it is time to move beyond the sub-field and enhance the capacity of populist scholarship to cultivate a dialogue with consolidated traditions in social and political sciences.

1 A Populist Sub-field

In the last decades, an increasing number of global phenomena have been considered through the lens of populism. More and more research on populism is being published in specialized journals and book series, and many recent handbooks on the topic are available (e.g. Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 2017; de la Torre 2019b; Heinisch, Holtz-Bacha and Mazzoleni 2021; Oswald 2021). Thus, the time has come to recognize that, in academic fields, populism is not just a theoretical concept or a label used to describe political reality. The growing importance of this literature in social and political sciences has encouraged the institutionalization of a sub-field usually labelled as "populist scholarship". In academia, populism is more and more a self-referential mood shared by a growing group of scholars and is becoming a global academic sub-field in which theoretical reflections and empirical analysis are shared. Of course, populist scholarship is not just the product of the vast number of academic productions but also the outcome of ongoing controversies surrounding populism – namely, the debate over populism as an ideology, political style, political strategy, or political logic, all of which contributes to forming a kind of common ground among scholars. The main consequence of this development is the feeling that populism represents a distinct social and political phenomenon and should be studied as such and not necessarily in connection with other theoretical legacies.

This evolution should not be a surprise. Similar experiences usually occur when a new community of researchers seeks academic legitimacy. For instance, in sociology, successful scholarly community building occurred around different topics, such as the economy, culture, and politics, among others, and in political science between electoral studies, political parties, public policies, and, above all, international relations.

The institutionalization of populist scholarship entails some advantages relating to common conceptual issues and research topics. Firstly, it allows scholars to create communities and improve in-depth reflections, discussions, and analyses. The more the legitimate literature is circumscribed, the more the sub-field allows specific places for publication (e.g. journals on populism), and the more scholars can see their own reflection and conduct their own research while building their academic careers. Secondly, the sub-field strengthens the possibilities of interdisciplinary dialogue between scholars interested in populism in disciplines like sociology, political science, communication sciences, history, economics, and geography. To some extent, populism entails a crossdisciplinary language for some key issues (e.g. the "people" and the "elite"). Thirdly, a populist sub-field helps boost international exchanges among scholars specializing in different world regions and legacies. Thus, it might correct the ethnocentrism of scholars who otherwise do not consider conceptual debates originating in the Global South. In this sense, populist scholarship is not just a series of national sub-fields but virtually an international and transnational sub-field.

However, the institutionalization of populist scholarship also has some shortcomings. The first is what one might call the supremacy paradox. In the sub-field, it is often taken for granted that populism allows a heuristic superiority in understanding social and political challenges, despite ongoing internal disagreements over what populism is. Because it is not easy to accept the use of a concept supported by scholars who do not use a common definition, many scholars tend to be sceptical about its usefulness for academic research. The historian Enzo Traverso (2019, 16), for example, contends that the concept of populism is an "empty shell, which can be filled by the most disparate political contents". This does not mean that he refuses to use the term, however, as in the same volume he describes Trump as a "populist politician" (ibid., 20).

Other scholars consider populism to be the expression of specific ideological orientations and argue that either right-wing or left-wing populism is the real form of populism. The Argentinian political theorists Paula Biglieri and Luciana Cadahia (2021) build on Ernesto Laclau's theory to cast left-wing populism as "just populism" because they argue it is emancipatory, plebeian, republican, egalitarian, and intrinsically emancipatory. According to them, right-wing populism is better understood as fascism because right-wing populists construct the people as one, dissolving the population's heterogeneity into the fantasy of an unitary community. The rejection of the analytical utility of the concept of populism and the artificial classification of "proper and authentic populism" as either right-wing or left-wing showcase the inherently controversial nature of the term.

Other scholars (e.g. Alfio Mastropaolo in his contribution to this volume) maintain that populism is a reactionary rejection of the Enlightenment and challenges the utility of the notion of left-wing populism. We contend that conceptual debates on populism might not disappear because populism is part of our political and social vocabulary. It is what some German scholars consider "a basic concept deployed in the public languages in which political controversy is conducted" (Ritcher 2005, 227). As such, it does not carry a single indisputable meaning, and a variety of conflicting constituencies passionately struggle to make their definitions "authoritative and compelling" (Baehr 2008, 12).

A second and relevant shortcoming of the populist sub-field is the illusion that improvements in theory and research might be achieved within populist scholarship alone. Quoting only articles and books specializing in populism enhances the belief that populist research has a self-reliant heuristic

capacity and that the only interesting knowledge is provided by scholars working within these paradigms. However, the concept of populism is always in conversation with classic concepts, such as the people, gender, elites, leadership, class, parties, emotions, etc. While scholars assume that populist parties and leaders might challenge societies, discourses, ideologies, and political systems in the "real" world, most of them surprisingly overlook how populism addresses concepts and theories traditionally discussed in social and political science. Working in a distinct community where scholars cite and debate each other could deprive them of engagement with some other critical debates in the realms of social and political science.

2   The Aim of This Book

The perspective adopted in this volume aims to move beyond an insulating approach. The different chapters focus on some of the key concepts in the social and political sciences. We explore how the concepts of "citizenship", "gender", "class", "sovereignty", "cleavages", "leadership", "mobilization", "parties", and "accountability" were used by scholars of populism in relation to how classical and current theorists developed them. The different chapters explore the concepts' genealogies, their uses in populist studies, and implications for broader conceptual and theoretical debates. The chapters follow a double movement: They address the question of how populism challenges established concepts and theories in social and political science and simultaneously focus on what the category of populism can learn from key conceptual discussions in social and political science. The volume in sum explores what populism tells us about the heuristic advantages and limitations of concepts like "citizenship", "gender", "class", "sovereignty", "cleavages", "leadership", "mobilization", "parties", and "accountability".

The book develops what we term a dialogical perspective between classical and current social and political theory and the conceptual and theoretical understandings of populism. The book is inspired in the history of populist scholarship and on some innovative authors' interactions with social and political theories – above all, the dominant traditions of their times. For instance, the Italian-Argentinian scholar Gino Germani (1971; 1978) engaged the most important paradigms of his time: structural functionalism, modernization theory, and mass society. He not only applied these theories to Latin America but also contributed to the development of theoretically informed comparisons between two variants of authoritarianism: Italian fascism and Argentinian national populism. In his earlier work, Ernesto Laclau (1977) engages with Marxist theory, especially Althusserian post-structuralism. He uses the notion of populism to show that, in addition to class struggles, the population could be split into two antagonistic camps: the people (the underdog) vs. the power bloc. Although he abandoned Marxism in his later work, Laclau (2005) built on his earlier work to argue that populism is a political logic that constructs the people in antagonistic confrontation with the elite. Margaret Canovan (1981) developed a typology of populism following Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance (Anselmi 2018, 23–29). Cas Mudde (2004) built on Freeden's notions of ideology, Kurt Weyland (2001) on theories of the relative autonomy of politics from the economy and society, and Ostiguy (2017) and Moffitt (2016) on performance theories.

The authors of this book are scholars from different generations and have studied populism in Europe, the US, and Latin America from distinct perspectives. This makes it possible to focus on experiences in both the Global North and South. Some of our contributors focus on key scholars of Latin American populism, like Gino Germani, Ernesto Laclau, and Guillermo O'Donnell, to show the global relevance of their contributions to the study of accountability, leadership, and the relationship between populism and democracy. At the same time, this volume recognizes that populism is an inherently contested category that is used to make theoretical and normative arguments about the nature of democracy, citizenship, national belonging, and the role of political

actors. Our contributors combine different concepts or develop their own. For instance, Reinhard Heinisch and Klaudia Koxha use an ideational definition in their chapter, Kenneth M. Roberts builds on Laclau's theory, and others provide their own definitions. Thus, the objective of this volume is not to provide a new universal definition applicable to all geographical and historical contexts.

3   The Chapters

Since it is impossible to address a vast range of concepts in a single book, the editors chose to focus in depth on the historical uses of citizenship, gender, class, cleavages, sovereignty, accountability, participation, leadership, and political party. Luis Roniger engages with the wide debate over citizenship in sociology and political science. His chapter illustrates the different historical patterns of how the state includes those previously excluded by recognizing different demands in terms of citizenship. In Europe, there was a sequence of entitlements to civil, political, and social rights, and in Latin America, political and social rights have had priority over civil rights. Some Latin Americanist scholars argue that there are specific models of populist citizenship (Spanakos 2008; Rein 2013). These are based on the active participation of people in politics beyond elections, and on the individual's right and capacity to spend in the market.
Roniger argues that populism is not a particular type of entitlement to rights but rather reshapes citizenship. "It recalibrates strategies of representation and participation, granting salience to participatory mass mobilization, albeit through state regulation and leadership ameliorating the autonomy of civil society". Roniger shows how populist leaders and movements move the concept of citizenship "beyond the domain of electoral formalities". Populists use emotions and reason to mobilize their social base and create senses of belonging and identity between leaders and followers and among supporters.
Populists "often succeed in reformulating people's lifeworld and markers of certainty". By mobilizing followers beyond electoral moments and by linking political membership, identities, and access to markets, populists reshape liberal and participatory conceptions of citizenship. Populist mass mobilization often constrains the autonomy of organizations of civil society because access to resources depends on loyalty to the leader and the party.
Roniger argues that populists, while claiming to defend national interests, have projected transnational and international strategies of legitimation. The Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DiEM25) was an attempt to construct a transnational leftist project "to 'democratize' Europe against Brussels's unaccountable elites". Hugo Chávez conceived of his Bolivarian Revolution as a Latin American and even a global event. His project sought to unite Latin American nations against US imperialism, neoliberalism, and limited bourgeois democracies. Bolivarianism halted free trade agreements. Chávez and other left-wing populists of the twenty-first century increased citizens' expectations of the expansion of rights, and when they could not deliver, they faced massive strikes and marches. Populist understandings of citizenship challenge liberal and republican models by emphasizing participatory mass mobilization, "albeit through state regulation and leadership ameliorating the autonomy of civil society". Populists rely "on performance, embedding claims of citizens' legitimacy in highly affective bonds, and ideally developing a mutual connection and devotion towards leaders supposedly working for the wellbeing and dignity of the people, while citizens respond with an affective cult of the leader's persona".
Paula Diehl explores theoretically the relationships between gender and populism focusing on debates within the gendered democratic imagination that imagined the masses as feminine and irrational, whereas the citizen and the leader were masculine and rational. Despite excellent historical and social scientific studies, the theoretical relationship between populism and gender

continues to be underdeveloped (Navarro 1977; Kampwirth 2010; Abi-Hassan 2017). In her chapter in the Oxford handbook on populism, Sahar Abi-Hassan writes that because populism is explained by relying on the moral distinction between "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite", gender is an almost unnecessary or even an irrelevant category for the construction of the people (AbiHassan 2017, 428). Instead, Diehl shows the need to include gender seriously and not as an add-up variable in populist studies.

Followers, for example, are gendered by the anti-populist camp as irrational and dangerous and contrasted with the rational male citizen. She also shows how leaders and followers use gender images to cast elites as effeminate and how male populist leaders are represented as extraordinary figures.

Diehl argues that populism promises emancipation: "The 'feminized', passive, and easily manipulated crowd should become an active and sovereign people in order to reverse power relations". It promises to transform the feminized and leader-dependent crowd into "the people as sovereign, inscribed in the male tradition of democratic empowerment". The leader is the one who helps the people change their gender to become male (the promise of sovereignty) and, at the same time, reaffirms the traditional "female" attributes of the guided crowd.

The relationship between gender and populism is more complex than sometimes explained in the literature. Are macho populist leaders, for example, "more attractive to people with a more traditional and machismo culture", as Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017, 77) assert? What does one make of leaders like Donald Trump, who emerged in cultures that these scholars characterize as more gender-emancipated? Diehl argues that while populism promises universality and equality, it also "affirms gender (class and race) hierarchy and exclusion". On the one hand, populism reproduces the gendered democratic political imaginary and historical traditions based on masculine constructions of the people, the leader, and the emasculation of elites and rivals as feminine. Yet, it is an outcome of the performative efforts of populist actors. In some right-wing populism cases, it is a response to the crises of representation performed as a crisis of masculinity and the articulation of bipolar gender roles, hegemonic masculinity, and sometimes misogyny and sexism. Diehl writes: "[D]espite all efforts to overcome gender-traditional roles and masculine-dominant politics, left-wing populism is still struggling to frame gender in different terms. […] [They tend to] reinforce female stereotypes of motherhood, emotionality, and 'sensibility', as opposed to the masculine authority, rationality, and aggressive competition".

Kenneth M. Roberts's chapter focuses on the key concept of social class. In the past, this concept used to be at the heart of populism debates. Throughout his academic career that started in the 1950s, Gino Germani argued that fascism and national populism differed because of their class bases. Whereas fascism was supported by a downwardly mobile middle class that attained substitute satisfaction with nationalism and racism, the social base of Perón's movement was the new working class that attained rights to collective bargaining, redistribution of income, and social mobility. Germani's critics use Marxism to argue that populism in Latin America was multiclass movements consisting of the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle class, and the working class (Ianni 1975). Philip Oxhorn (1998) links populism to class formations where most of the population makes a living in the informal sector of the economy and only a few have formal employment with benefits. Surprisingly, class analysis has almost disappeared from most recent populist studies, which focus instead on ideologies (Mudde 2004), political strategies (Weyland 2001), performances (Moffitt 2016; Ostiguy 2017), and populism's formal logic (Laclau 2005).

Roberts develops Laclau's theory to highlight the complexities of historically and geographically situated cases. He shows the crucial roles that social class and the political economy play in distinguishing between right and leftwing variants. He builds on Weberian and Marxist

understandings of class to argue that, even though populism is not a class project, a wide range of class formations and subject positions have given rise to different types of populism. Moreover, he shows that social heterogeneity, fragmentation, and crises of representation are incubators of populism. In Latin America, due to social fragmentation, populism first emerged in the 1930s and 1940s with leaders like Juan Perón in Argentina. It returned with the social dislocations produced by neoliberalism in right-wing variants like Alberto Fujimori in Peru in the 1990s or as a left-wing alternative to neoliberalism with Hugo Chávez and other populists on the left at the turn of the new century. In Europe and the US, populism is the product of weakened class formations that have led to diffuse inequalities, social heterogeneity, political fragmentation, and fluid alignments. The types of populism vary in whether "the people" are built as an ethnos or a plebeius. The latter does not correspond to the Marxist notion of a class subject but fits better into the Weberian view of non-privileged social strata defined not only by property, occupation, and income but also by education, power, and prestige. Roberts argues that populism is not the reflection of a particular class but linked to class formations. In both the Global North and South, capitalist development has weakened class cleavages without eliminating social classes while increasing inequalities. Under these conditions, appeals to the people replace classic class discourses of social democrat or communist parties. He concludes by writing that because populism "is most likely to thrive in societal contexts where diffuse inequalities are neither structured by a central class divide, nor organized and represented politically as a class cleavage", populism may prove to have sustained longevity.

Alfio Mastropaolo reconstructs Lipset and Rokkan's classical theory of cleavages. He shows how their theory came in response to a particular historical moment in Western democracies and transcended dominant Parsonian approaches to modernization. He explains the limits of Lipset and Rokkan's conceptualization of cleavages and develops a novel interpretation of populism. Mastropaolo writes that a "cleavage is a point of reference, which a political enterprise can exploit and stabilize" and is made up of "shared experiences, symbols, and political action". He argues that populism corresponds to a cleavage forgotten by Lipset and Rokkan: the one between the Ancien Régime and modernity, between the reactionaries nostalgic for the former and modern politics. Left-wing populism does not fit into Mastropaolo's vision because it promises emancipation. If populism is a member of a reactionary family tradition, fascism is its sibling.

Mastropaolo shows that, despite familiarities, these two reactionary ideologies and movements differ in terms of three fundamental characteristics: the use of violence and paramilitarism, the obsession with Bolshevism, and whether elections are used to rise to power legitimately. Unfortunately, Mastropaolo's original interpretation does not analyze non-European variants of fascism and, hence, excludes how formerly fascist sympathizers like Juan Perón in Argentina adapted fascism to democratic times (Finchelstein 2017). The historian Loris Zanatta (2008) offers an alternative argument about the reactionary nature of populists by focusing on their anti-modern notion of community. He argues that populism aims to reinstate antiquated notions of the people understood as an organic and holistic community. Populism dismisses individuation, pluralism, and the rejection of tradition that comes with modernity and the Enlightenment. It is a secular religion with a prophet, a doctrine, cults, and liturgies.

Culturalist perspectives like those of Mastropaolo or Zanatta offer interesting interpretive clues but are of limited use for comparative analysis. According to Zanatta's overarching depiction of populism as a holistic reaction to the Enlightenment and modernity, there are no differences between its right and left-wing variants. Mastropaolo does not see how class is articulated in right-wing populism. He does not analyze how some left populists reacted to the processes of individuation, pluralism, and autonomy that came with modernization and the unfulfilled promises of the Enlightenment by promising a return to an imaginary and golden past. In Bolivia, Evo

Morales imagined a precapitalist time of harmonious relationships between humans and nature without class exploitation or gender inequalities. Similarly, Hugo Chávez aimed to recreate Bolivarianism as an imaginary golden age in the past, an age that never existed, in which Bolívar and other liberators conquered South America in the name of freedom (de la Torre 2010, 148–160; Neuman 2022). However, Mastropaolo is right in arguing that a fundamental difference between populism on the right and the left is that the former politicizes race and racism, while the latter does not.

The relationships between populism and sovereignty are explored by Reinhard Heinisch and Klaudia Koxha. They explain the genealogy of sovereignty in the history of political thought and show that this concept "possesses a collective dimension that is directed both outwards (national sovereignty) and inwards (popular sovereignty)" and argue that sovereignism describes how populists instrumentalize sovereignty. This notion has three dimensions: popular, national, and economic. The first refers to how elites have usurped power from the people. National sovereignism in right-wing populism refers to the distinction between their own people and the cultural others, and left-wing populism focuses on groups, classes, or movements of people that can act transnationally for a common purpose. Economic sovereignism refers to the idea that economic policies should primarily benefit their own people's wealth. Whereas the right stigmatizes the foreign worker as usurpers of jobs for nationals, the left focuses on the state's role in addressing structural inequalities. However, some right-wing populists reject neoliberalism and instead propose welfare chauvinism.

The authors argue that populists offer a promise of change: Instead of producing uncertainty, they vow to return to something familiar, idealized as a glorious past. They promise to restore "popular sovereignty by acting in the present to return to a status quo ante in the future, i.e. to a time and place before elites supposedly usurped power as the central emotional hook". However, the right is not alone in promising a return to the glory days of yore. As argued before, Hugo Chávez promised the return of the Bolivarian utopia of Latin American unity and Evo Morales the return to a glorious preHispanic past (de la Torre 2010; Lindholm and Zúquete 2010). Heinisch and Koxha write that "the concept of sovereignty may take on different meanings or at least contextual hues. Populism studies are illuminating in this respect as they trace populism's capacity to adapt sovereignist claims to cater to particular contexts".

Enrique Peruzzotti explores different uses and understandings of the concept of accountability in the liberal and populist understandings of democratization. His chapter contrasts two interpretations of accountability. The liberal approach focuses on horizontal and vertical mechanisms. The former "refer to intrastate exchanges among accountability agencies while vertical ones involve the control of an external actor over the state, be it the electorate, the media, or civil society". The populist approach argues that the horizontal dimension of state accountability and the institutions that structure accountability (e.g. parties, parliament, and the public sphere) must be dismantled because they encroach on the will of the people. Populist accountability aims to eliminate the horizontal institutions and replace them with multiple presidential elections and plebiscites as the sole vertical mechanism of accountability. Unlike the liberals, who aim to improve the quality of democracy by making the principle of limited government effective, populists seek to establish a constitutional order "that would bring to life the idea of 'unlimited elected government'".

 Against liberal models, populists argue that existing institutions protect the domination of elites who constrain the power of the people. They assert that democratization comes from the constituent power of the people that is prioritized over the legal and constitutional order. In practice, they strengthen the power of the elected executive as the figure that incarnates popular aspirations. "Elections are to serve the principle of identification" transforming the institutional

mechanisms of liberal democracies into plebiscitary certification. Contrary to the argument of those who consider it the path to radical democratization, populism in power leads to a reduction of the institutional mechanisms that constrain the unlimited power of the executive and replace horizontal accountability with multiple elections. As long as elections are free and competitive, populists remain in the democratic camp; when elections do not count, populism becomes a dictatorship. Elaborating on Guillermo O'Donnell's contrast between liberal and delegative democracies, Peruzzotti shows how the lack of it leads to processes of hybridization and, eventually, to what O'Donnell (2011) describes as the "slow death of democracy". Peruzzotti argues that populist critiques of malfunctioning electoral representation are correct. He also suggests that liberal approaches focused exclusively on controlling governmental abuses of power and authority are insufficient. He concludes by advocating that horizontal and vertical models of accountability should be integrated.

Cecilia Biancalana surveys the political science literature on populism and participation and shows that the concept of participation is crucial to understanding how the people's sovereignty must be restored and how the people reclaim their own voice in politics. She distinguishes between expressive dimensions of participation, which give a sense of collective belonging and identity, and instrumental types of participation. Biancalana differentiates the supply side of participation from the demand side and the impacts of populism on the political system. Finally, she distinguishes between right and left-wing types of populism. Her survey of the literature shows that Mudde's argument that right-wing populism in Europe does not promote participation does not hold. Populists increase participation, and parties like the Five Star Movement and Podemos, which claim to be beyond left and right, implemented an online participatory mechanism. Even though the participation of common citizens has increased, the type of participation promoted by populism is plebiscitary as the rank and file often approve of the decisions already taken by the leadership. Similarly, in Latin America, left-wing populist parties have promoted top-down participation.

Scholars of US populism have focused on the innovative participatory mechanisms created by the People's Party and other populist movements (Grattan 2016). The legacy of populism in the US from the People's Party to the Tea Party, despite profound ideological differences, lies in their promotion of grassroots democracy. Until Trump became president, populism was on the margins of US politics, and scholars did not have to deal with it in power. By contrast, in Latin America, populists rose to power much earlier, with Perón establishing the first populist regime in Argentina. Latin American scholars have argued that populist movements and parties promoted the participation of citizens beyond the election. Mass demonstrations, rallies, and other forms of collective gathering imbued in common people the sensations of being actors and not passive observers of politics. Yet Latin Americanists had a less optimistic assessment of populist participation in democratization.

Germani (1971) uses the concept of heteronomous mobilization to refer to top-down mass participation on behalf of undemocratic leaders like Perón. Left-wing populists like Hugo Chávez implemented institutions for participatory democracy at the local level. Citizens responded by joining these institutions in large numbers. Grassroots populist participation ultimately depended on the limits imposed by the charismatic leader. Common people used the spaces opened by populist challenges to elites to articulate their claims and were successful as long as their demands recognized the absolute authority of the leader. Focusing on the demands of populism, Biancalana also illustrates that citizens demanded more participation and engagement in politics beyond elections, and they increased their participation in elections and other forms of political participation. Biancalana concludes by arguing that populist participation promotes a pseudo or plebiscitary kind of participation, or what Germani called heteronomous mobilization. Yet

populism also shapes collective identities against the establishment or in defence of the people's identity from a threatening other, thus triggering citizens' participation in politics.

Carlos de la Torre's chapter focuses on the role of the leader in the scholarship of populism. Whereas many scholars contend that the notion of populist leadership based on a charismatic leader is crucial, others argue that the definition of populism should not necessarily include it. The point is key because it also relates to historically contextual legacies. While it is difficult to understand Latin American populism and some experiences in Eastern and Southern Europe, where leaders have dominated the political arena for decades without focusing on strong or charismatic leadership, the emphasis on Northern European populism in the past few decades has been more on party organization, ideology, and communication. De la Torre distinguishes between light and full-blown populists. Light populists politicize issues that other parties and leaders do not address, personalize politics at the cost of platforms, and remain within the boundaries of constitutional democracies.

Full-blown populists seek to bring about regime change by altering the constitutional rules of the game. When populism emerges in conditions where all institutions of democracy have lost legitimacy, civil society is in disarray, and the media is weak, they often provoke regime change. Strong civil societies, an autonomous media, and public, and resilient institutions might block undemocratic populist moves to concentrate power and change the constitutional rules of the game. De la Torre argues that populist scholarship gains from seriously engaging with some classic and contemporary theories of leadership. His chapter underlines some key points: 1) Building on Max Weber, he argues that leadership is not a position but a social relation between the leader and the followers where myths, ceremonies, the body, and collective emotions play crucial roles. 2) Strong leadership is not a proxy for a charismatic leader. Not all authoritative leaders are necessarily "transformational" in the sense of MacGregor Burns (1978) that they would have a transubstantiating effect on the leader and the led. 3) Charismatic leaders are not necessarily populist, as some favoured autonomous institutions and did not build a personalist party. 4) In line with Nadia Urbinati, de la Torre contends that for populist movements or parties to move from the margins of the political system to the centre, they need a leader.

Oscar Mazzoleni challenges the self-referential understanding of what a populist party is. For scholars focusing on ideologies, the answer is simple and lies in their ideology, but can populism be reduced to just an ideology? What does one make of most parties characterized as such by external observers while refusing the label because of its stigma? Moving away from these approaches, Mazzoleni challenges the naturalist prejudice and essentialist labelling of some parties as populists. According to an essentialist epistemological perspective, the researcher can differentiate populist from non-populist parties. Essentialist scholars assume that parties are homogenous and that there is a shared essence of this type of party, regardless of geographic or historical context. However, it is problematic to clearly demarcate a party as populist. Firstly, and with very few exceptions, it is a label of external observers and not a self-definition. Secondly, it is often used in political cultures where this word implies irrationality and demagoguery and is seen as a danger or threat to liberal constitutional democracy. Thirdly, it is quite difficult to clearly differentiate between populist and non-populist parties, as the latter occasionally use populist tropes to attack elites and appeal to the general will.

Mazzoleni's alternative to essentialism is a Weberian approach based on the constructions of ideal types. He writes that "concepts and theories should be considered as ideal types (i.e. approximate attempts to capture the complexity of reality)". He analyzes "parties as associations with ideological supply" but which are also "shaped by different organizational patterns with factional logics and characterized by individuals and groups with different interests and strategies and, consequently, different styles of communication". Thus, in the intellectual process that scholars use

to classify political parties as populist, he analytically distinguishes four moments: defining populism, defining political parties, selecting, and labelling populist parties.

The first step is to consistently define populism as a provisional ideal type. In the second step, one must recognize that populism and party are not the same. An ideal-typical, party-based populist perspective can fruitfully engage with party politics literature. For instance, populist parties can be constructed as charismatic parties. The third step is to look at how populist traits are shared in geographical and historically located party systems. Instead of an essence, populism is a gradation. Finally, it seems better not to label single political parties as "populist" but rather as facets of the political party provisionally labelled as populist. Mazzoleni writes that "[t]his means that discourse, ideology, and style are seen as crucial to party selection, depending on how the party ideal type is defined. Only with an empirical investigation would it be possible to know how and to what extent each party corresponds to this ideal type". He concludes by noting that "[t]he notion of populism cannot travel in time and space without considering the contextual dimensions shaping its meaning and relevance".

4 Between Reductionism and Complexity

The dialogical perspective developed in this volume pushes scholars to take more serious account of the limitations of a self-referential use of the concept of populism, as well as the illusion of insular superiority, to understand the complexity of the social and political challenges facing democracy. The dialogue with "external" legacies helps scholars enrich their own approaches but also to be more aware of the necessity of an internal dialogue in terms of both conceptualization and context-oriented knowledge.

Our contributors focus on the complexities of populism. They see it as a gradation, distinguish movements and parties seeking power from populists in office, and often differentiate between types – right and left, light and full-blown – and locate populisms in different historical and geographical contexts. Roniger illustrates the peculiarities of populist views of citizenship that prioritize mobilization, often at the cost of autonomy. Diehl shows how populism partakes in the gendered democratic imagination of the virile people and effeminate elites and of the passive feminized masses that a leader will allegedly transform into autonomous virile citizens. Roberts illustrates how populism forces us to analyze different class formations and the importance of class to distinguish types of populism. Peruzzotti argues that populists favour a particular type of democracy based on constant elections and plebiscites at the cost of the institutional fabric of horizontal accountability.

In Latin America, Asia, Africa, in some Southern and Eastern European nations, and recently in the US with Trump, populisms are leader-centric. Charisma must be studied as a social process where followers recognize a leader who presents him or herself as extraordinary. In the Global South, parties use informal clientelist networks to exchange votes for services, and many are more personalist and leader-centric than ideological. Moreover, populists promise the people redemption by a charismatic figure and construct politics as antagonistic confrontations with the oligarchy. Western Europe illustrates that right-wing populist parties are not always charismatic, as they have a complex and formalized organization that persists after the departure of the "charismatic" founder (Heinisch and Mazzoleni 2016). As Mastropaolo and Roberts show, cleavages are crucial to understanding populism. Yet they differ in whether populism is a new type of cleavage based on the reactionary rejection of the Enlightenment, or whether it is linked to class formations and experiences. Focusing on the classical notion of sovereignty allows Heinisch and Koxha to analyze the different populist promises to restore economic, national, and political sovereignism.

Several chapters in this volume differentiate between right-wing and leftwing variants. Roberts distinguishes populism when they build the people as an ethnos from constructs as a plebeius. Both flaunt the low and desecrate the culture of elites constructed as the high. Yet they differ because right-wing populists construct the people by focusing on particularistic cultural identities associated with nativism, ethno-nationalism, and/or religious nationalism against cosmopolitan, multicultural, and universalist identities. Left-wing populists construct the people in opposition to pro-market and propertied elites. Their counterparts on the right politicize emotions of fear regarding pollution and contamination with the alien ethnic, racial, or cultural other. Left-wing populists politicize resentment regarding socio-economic exclusion, promise to improve democracy, and do not use racist tropes to mobilize electors. Left-wing and right-wing populists create different types of cleavages around socio-economic distinction or ethnic-cultural differences that could last a long time. Alfio Mastropaolo argues that right-wing populism like fascism are products of what he labels as a forgotten cleavage: the reactionary responses to the Enlightenment and modernity. These movements differ in the fact that fascists used violence and paramilitarism to deal with enemies and were a response to the Russian revolution and fears of Bolshevism. Accepting the complexity of populism allows dialogues to be had with broader concepts in the social and political sciences but also highlights the opportunity for plural approaches to populism. This volume argues that controversies about the definition of populism allow opening debates with broader theoretical issues connected to concept formation. Instead of dreaming about a perfect and concise definition that captures the essence of populism and could travel unproblematically across time and space while reducing populism to one of its components, we propose to accept that populism is a murky and contested concept in epistemological, political, and academic debates.

Following recent critiques of reductionist theories (Arato and Cohen 2021; Diehl and Weber 2022), one might argue that a complex and non-reductionist concept needs to be constructed as an ideal type focused on ideology, organization, and style of communication, or a combination of all these traits. Ideal types make it possible to differentiate between populisms while acknowledging their complexities. Focusing on populist challenges, one could claim that populism promises the further democratization of society. However, populists in power have, at best, included at the cost of limiting contestation and pluralism. Left-wing and right-wing populism are different, and they are both present in the Global North and South. When challenging power, in office, and as regimes, populists present different characteristics.

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