

ON THE CONFLICT BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND POPULISM

A cross-country analysis of Belgium, Netherlands and the United Kingdom



Niek Hinsenveld – s1009788

Prof. Dr. M.R.R. Ossewaarde (University Twente)

Dr. L.A. Nguyen Long (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster)

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UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.



ABSTRACT

This research delves into the tensions come forth within a liberal democracy when populist parties arise. It is argued that populism is an aspect which automatically comes forth within a liberal democracy when it transitions towards a post-democracy. Something which might happen automatically due to inherent tendencies happening within a liberal democratic society. A liberal democracy is a society in which the majority decides but the civil liberties are protected. Populism in this research is defined as a thin-ideology with chameleonic a chameleonic nature. This research focusses on the evolution of populist discourse within the party manifestos of five distinguishable parties over the course of four elections across three countries, the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands. It does so in order to determine how the tensions between populism and the liberal democratic tradition comes forth within party manifestos and election programs.

Key-words: Populism; liberal democracy; post-democracy; discourse analysis; Tocqueville;

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

During the course of history democracy has always been a much-debated concept. Its origin is often said to be in ancient Athens. In current day politics democracy is, again, at the heart of the debate. But what exactly is democracy? The word democracy is derived from the Greek word of *Demokratia*, which in essence means rule, *Kratos*, by the people, *demos*. Democracy is a form of governance. But democracy is also a form of society. At first glance the concept 'Rule by the people' seems unambiguous. But it is not. As David Held (2006) asks his readers: 'Rule?'- 'Rule by?'- 'the People?'. Who are these people? What does being ruled by the people mean? The concept of democracy is used differently within rival theories just like concepts as 'justice' or 'freedom'. Whilst democracy can be conceptualized in many ways, there are also multiple forms in which it comes to practice. Making democracy and the study of democracy all the more difficult. (Lijphart, 1999). Democracy is a much sought after and widely advocated (Inoguchi, Newman, & Keane, 1998). It is sought after by different types of political regimes who describe themselves as democracies, as it appears that democracy legitimizes them in modern day political life (Held, 2006). The American philosopher Siney Hook (1949) once stated that '*the most curious phenomena of our time was the manner in which totalitarian regimes sought to wrap themselves in the language of democracy*'.

At the end of the 20th century democracy is proliferating geographically. And through this, democracy evolves and diversifies in each situation. This happens, amongst others, due to the differences between established democracies and transitional states. Making a standard definition for the concept and model of democracy more and more difficult (Inoguchi, Newman, & Keane, 1998). Even though democracy as a form of government is as old as the ancient Greek society, the proliferation of modern democracy starts around 1820. And although democracy did not consolidate in all nations in which it emerged the total amount of democratic nations world-wide grew immensely in the last two centuries (Hague & Harrop, 2007). Huntington (1991) describes that during the period 1800 – current three waves of democratization emerged. The first one between 1820 - 1922, in which the first nations of the world transitioned towards a democracy. The second wave initiated after the allied victory of the Second World War. These first two waves were directly followed by a 'reverse wave' which reduced the total number of democratic states, or in other terms made the world less democratic in total (Huntington, 1991). The third wave, which was a product of the last quarter of the twentieth century, is where the world is in now. In his paper *Democracy's Third Wave* Huntington (1991) wonders if the third wave will also be followed by a reverse wave.

The concept *Democracy* has always been linked with the concept of crisis. This link starts in the ancient era with writings of, for example, Plato and Aristotle and continues in the beginning of the modern era with writings from Tocqueville, Marx and Weber. Currently there is an active academic discourse about the "crisis of democracy". According to Merkel (2014) there are three types of 'crisis of democracy' debates; the general public discourse, the political theory which connects crisis with democracy from the origin of the concept and the academic debate which starts in the 1970's (Merkel, 2014 b). The three most influential crisis theories within this last debate are: "*the legitimation crisis in late capitalism* (Habermas, 1975)", "*The report of the trilateral commission* (Crozier, Huntington, & Watanuki, 1975)" and "*the Post-Democracy Discussion* (Crouch, 2004).

What *the crisis* within a 'crisis of democracy' actually embodies differs per discussion and between academics. Many distinctions can be made within this topic. Some examples of distinctions are; 'the functioning of democracy' and 'if the world is getting less democratic'. An example of the latter is the reverse wave of Huntington (1991) in which the total number of democratic states in the world declines'. The reverse-wave is an example of a 'crisis of democracy' in which global society is the central theme. The central theme within the 'crisis of democracy' debate does not necessarily need to be the global society. The failing or declining of democracy within nation states is an example hereof. Merkel (2014) writes about the latter and distinguishes at least two types of crisis. One is what he calls an *acute crisis*; which is a form of crisis with a direct danger to the political order. For example, a crisis in which a nation can revolt back into autocracy. The second he calls a *latent crisis*; one which slumbers within a functioning democracy and drags on but if left unchecked can, for example, result in a post-democratic façade (Crouch, 2004).

Post-democracy is a concept which focusses on the functioning of democracy in Western countries. The thesis in Colin Crouch's book (2004) is that Western democracies are approaching post-democracy. He uses a metaphor of a parabola. One end of the parabola embodies the pre-democratic history of the 19th century and before. On the other far end of the parabola is 'post-democracy'. In the centre is the peak; which embodies an optimal functioning liberal democracy which he identifies as something that happened somewhere in the mid-twentieth century. Post-democracy is a form of hollowed out democracy in which participation is at a low, lobbying activities are unchecked and there is little polity interfering with the 'capitalist economy'. His analysis comes forth from three separate concepts; the rise of the global firm, decline of the manual working class and the loss of the idea that there is a public sector which is distinct from the interests of business. Post-democracy is, as Crouch (2004) states, "*a model that has little interest in widespread citizen involvement or the role of organizations outside the business sector*". The post-democratic society is a society which is democratic according to standard definitions, but is in essence not democratic anymore.

The construct of post-democracy and the parabola metaphor are constructs which can be used to measure the functioning or health of a democracy (Crouch, 2004).

However most of the crises theories discuss a complete failing of democracy. Merkel (2014) notices that a 'crisis of democracy' does not necessarily have to embody an entire functioning democracy. He acknowledges the fact that democracy can also face several partial challenges and not just a crisis *in toto*. So there are two ways of looking at the 'crisis of democracy' whereas the first way is to look at one general crises, with one cause, and possibly even one solution or by looking at the crisis by searching for several, possibly independent, problems. In his article "The problem with Democracy" Flinders (2015) argues that there are seven inter-related problems within democracy. He argues that the amount of articles written about the democratic decline paint a worrisome picture. And thus he wonders if democracy can 'retain its magic' and be restored back to its mid-20th century peak. The concept of democracy is something which consistently gets high public support and attachment. Even though, at the same time, the concept of 'politics' gets lower and lower public support and attachment. In his article Flinders (2015) tries to explore the democracy – politics paradox. As according to him it seems that there can be no democracy without the politics (Flinders, 2015). A general theme in the 'crisis of democracy' debate is the increased distance between voters and politics. It is attributed to a changing civic culture (Flinders, 2015), changes in class structures (Crouch, 2004) or as a reaction towards malfunctioning democratic rule (Kaltwasser, 2011).

The growing distance between voters and politics and politicians corresponds with another problem described by Flinders (2015); (the rise of) populism. Populism is seen as a force which is impatient and unwilling to accept the slow and bureaucratic nature of democratic policies and democracy (Flinders, 2015). However populism within a democratic context can be identified in several ways. The first is as a way of political mobilization with a specific style of communication (Abst & Rummens, 2007). Populism can also be defined as a political ideology (Abst & Rummens, 2007) (Flinders, 2015) consistent with something like the ideology of a political party (Pappas, 2012). Lastly populism can also be described as a democratic pathology (Kaltwasser, 2011). Kaltwasser (2011) uses this 'liberal' approach towards populism which he sees as a pathology of democracy. Stating that there is a reason behind the emergence of populism in liberal democracies. He argues that in times of crises, but not only limited to times of crises, the electorate will often shift preferences which facilitates the emergence of populist leaders or populism in general. Which would imply that populism can be perceived as a reaction to malfunctioning democratic rule.

In this research we will explore the possibility that populism might be one of the causes for our current sense of democratic crisis. This research will treat populism as a pathology of

democracy and through this it will argue with Flinders(2015) that populism is not just a problem within democracy that can be easily solved. It will argue that it is part of and has a starting point on the parabola which is used as a metaphor by Crouch(2004) in describing his concept of Post-Democracy. This research will argue that populism can be used as one of the measurements when determining if a democracy is becoming more susceptible to transition into a post-democratic state. Thus this research argues that when liberal democracy is left unchecked it will show the tendency to move towards a certain point on this parabola where it is inevitably for populism to emerge. Which means that populism can be used as an indicator for measuring the health of a democracy.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

Western society is in a democratic crisis, or so might one think if he reads all the different academic debates on this topic – *Democratic deficit*, *Why we Hate Politics*, *Disaffected Democracies* and so on. One of the leading authors, Huntington (1991), himself wonders if what he calls the third wave of democracy will be followed by a reverse wave of democratic decline? This reverse waves in his hypothesis transformed newly democratic nations back from democratic states into autocratic controlled nations. Thus making sure that newly emerged democracies will not consolidate. But what if there also is a danger within consolidated democratic states itself such as Crouch(2004) suggests? Are we moving towards a post-democratic society? Which means that although our society has the characteristics of a democratic society, its democracy characteristics are not functioning in the way they should. This research will focus on the question if populism might be one of the causes for the sense of decline in democracy within Western society. And it will do so by answering three different research questions of which the first is:

Can populism be used as a measurement in determining whether a democracy is transforming in a post-democracy according to Colling Crouch's (2004) post-democracy thesis?

The second step in this research will explore how this conflict between populism and democracy comes to bear within political party manifestos and election programs. It will do so by examining the way populist discourse reveals itself within party manifestos and election programs. This leads towards the following research questions:

How does the tension between populism and liberal democracy come forth in the party manifestos & election programs of five distinguishable & comparable parties within the Western countries of Belgium, United Kingdom and The Netherlands over the course of the period 2000 – 2016?

During the last phase of the research it will try to determine whether the populist discourse has altered during the course of time in such a way that one could state that society is becoming more post-democratic. It will do so by analysing in what way the alteration of populist discourse have taken place through looking at the frequency of populist discourses but also how the discourses are being framed and if the intensity of the discourse has altered through time.

What can be said about the evolution of the populist discourse in the party manifestos & election programs of five distinguishable & comparable parties within the Western countries of Belgium, United Kingdom and The Netherlands over the course of the period 2000 – 2016?

This research provides the 'crisis of democracy' debate and the academic debate about populism with new vantage points. This research will argue that populism is something which effects the entire society and thus when it progresses it should also eventually become clearly visible in most if not all established parties. In most populist research parties are labelled populist, mixed or non-populist, I argue against this and state that populism takes hold of a society and through this effects everyone. By using this way of arguing one populist party might just be the first symptom of larger a 'disease'. This research also tries to contribute to the hypothesis of Colin Crouch(2004) by providing it with a possible indicator, *populism*, which can be used in empirical research determining whether a society is becoming post-democratic. Lastly this research is one of the first to look at the evolutionary process of the populist discourse through time in this sample size which might provide the academic debate with new and refreshing insights (Gidron & Bonikowski, 2014).

One of the strengths of this research is thus that it considers populism as something being part of an evolving liberal democratic society. When this liberal democratic society is not remembered and educated in why certain things are the way they are. It will most certainly try to alter them and in this course it will hollow itself out. This will lead towards rising discontent amongst its population which than again opens the door for populism and populist parties. When using Colin Crouch metaphor; when one leaves a liberal democratic society unchecked it will by itself move on the parabola towards post-democracy. When it passes a certain point on this metaphorical parabola populism will sprout up. Meaning that it is a trend which should be visible society wide and not just in singular parties labelled populist.

1.3 APPROACH

The first part of this research will be to see if there are theoretical connections between the tendencies within a liberal democratic society, populist theory and the hypothesis of Colin Crouch (2004). It will explore the tendencies from within liberal democracy step by step and connect each danger it finds with aspects of populist parties. Combined these will be linked with the characteristics of post-democracy.

The second part of this research will be about analysing the populist discourse through time within the political parties of the three selected countries, Belgium (Flanders), Netherlands and the UK, a content discourse analysis has to be done. Parker (1992) describes a discourse analysis as a "system of statements which constructs an object". The purpose of a discourse analysis is to "... identify categories, themes, ideas, views, roles..." (Fulcher, 2012). Within social sciences the 'discourse' is a term which is interchangeable with others such as 'ideology', 'concept', 'frame' and 'opinion. The discourse is thus a *"linguistic action, be it written, visual or oral communication, verbal or nonverbal, undertaken by social actors in a specific setting determined by social rules, norms and conventions"* (Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008).

The analysis looks for a pre-defined set of concepts or discourses within the party manifestos & election programs. These concepts which will be chosen from core and primary indicators which links the populist discourse with liberal democratic theory together. Example concepts could be *Volante General*, the 'good' people vs. the 'corrupt' elite, but might also look how general concepts like liberty and/or freedom are used. These discourses will be defined in a coding scheme which describes their underlying meaning and not their exact words. These underlying meanings will be made clear by contrasting the popular discourse on that certain concept with the liberal democratic definitions of these concepts. Each party manifesto and/or program will have defined these concepts in its own way. The conceptualization of these populist discourses from each individual party manifesto and/or program will be analysed according to the coding scheme and how they develop over time.

The parties are chosen from Western countries with a comparable democratic system. Within these countries, parties with a similar political background will be chosen. This is done to increase comparability through time but also between parties from different countries. Making it possible to, for example, compare all liberal parties from the three countries during the last election together.

2. (LIBERAL) DEMOCRACY AND ITS DEMONS (THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK)

This chapter will take the reader down the path of what might happen in a liberal democratic society when certain tendencies are left unchecked. The chapter starts with what democracy and liberal democracy are, it then follows with a conceptualization of populism as a thin-ideology. After having done so it will continue with explaining the dangerous tendencies within democracy Alexis de Tocqueville foresaw when he experienced what he called the democratic revolution at the first half of the 19th century. After this it will explain to the reader why a liberal democracy needs checks and balances by providing examples of what might happen when these are ignored. The chapter ends with a description of post-democracy and ties everything together in one preliminary conclusion.

2.1 WHAT IS A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY?

The fact that the concept "democracy" is interpreted differently is generally accepted. The interpretations vary from a clear practical means of application as expressed by experts up to the high conceptual plains of great thinkers¹. But so far no words were spend on the conceptualization of democracy in this research. Democracy is a contested concept and, as said, can mean various things. And even when conceptualized its meaning is often ambiguous (Bassiouni, 1998). One of the most common definitions used for democracy is from Joseph Schumpeter (1949) who defines democracy as:

'an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will'.

But people are part of groups through their entire life. From families, neighbourhoods and school project groups up to being part of a country. For each of these 'groups' decisions need to be made. These decisions can be made either on an *individual* level or on a *collective* level. Democracy is a form of *collective* decision-making. It is founded on the idealism that the entire community for which the decision is taken should have an equal part in the decision making process. The majority wins. In academic terms; democracy is a decision making process that entails two principles. These principles are *popular control* (the majority decides) and *Equality of rights* (each member is equal in the exercise of its control) (Beetham & Boyle, 2009). When democracy is seen in this way it becomes clear that it is not a concept which just belongs to the sphere of the government or the state. The democratic principles are relevant for all collective decisions. For this research we focus on democracy at

¹ Thomas Hobbes – Leviathan, Plato – The Republic, Thomas Paine – The Rights of Man, Alexis de Tocqueville – On Democracy in America, etc.

the level of the nation-state as this is the organ which has the power to regulate the affairs of society (Beetham & Boyle, 2009).

But democracy in itself is more. It is often described as a state or condition. The French word, *Un Etat*, more respectably conveys this meaning. The democratic state is a condition which is applied to a civil society and its governance. It includes a democratic process but also the democratic outcomes. L'Etat Démocratique is thus a condition which envelopes both society and its governance. This Research will focus on L'Etat Démocratique as this is in line with the notion that populism is something which also affects civil society and its governance (Bassiouni, 1998). There are many different types and forms of democracy. Francis Fukuyama(1992) stated in his paper *The end of History* that liberal democracy was humanities final form of government. And even though this claim may be false, nearly all democracies are generally described as liberal democratic (Cunningham, 2002).

2.2 CONCEPTUALIZING LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

In May 1831 Alexis de Tocqueville departed France on a journey to America. During his travels he observed virtually all aspects of American society. The work which came forth from his observations, *Democracy in America*(1835-1840), is often regarded as one of the greatest books written on the topic of (liberal) democracy. According to Tocqueville it was evident that, at the time, a great democratic revolution was happening. The route cause was the gradual development of equality conditions during the previous centuries. It was an unstoppable revolution. “*To attempt to check democracy would be in that case to resist the will of God*” (Tocqueville, 1835-1840). His description of this democratic revolution and the functioning of democracy in America lie at the basis of the concept which we now call *Liberal Democracy*. This research will focus on liberal democracy not as the only “true” form of democracy but as the most logical form of democracy to research. Doing so will bypass the debate about what the true meaning of democracy is.

2.2.1 WHAT IS LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

Democracy in a simplified and general fashion means, as said, rule by the people. Which is one of the only elements which all forms and usages of the concept have in common (Coppedge, et al., 2011). Beyond this essential element there is great difference between definitions of what exactly determines democracy. *Liberal Democracy* is one of many forms of Democracy which is used most on a day-to-day basis (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012). Liberal democracy is a form of government and elaborate political system, in which *representative government* functions under *liberal principles* (Bollen & Paxton, 2000). This is often called the two-strand theory of democracy (Canovan, 2004).

The essays of John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* and *Considerations on Representative Government* are often considered to be the first systematic description of Liberal Democracy (Cunningham, 2002). J.S Mill argues that the only reason for society to intervene with the dealings of an individual should be based upon the Liberty or Harm Principle:

"The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others... Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign (Mill, 1991 [1859])"

Through this principle J.S. Mill argued that freedom in a society should be as extensive as possible, without giving individuals the right to harm others. According to Mill there are three key features, or so called civil liberties, which are crucial to protect. These liberties are also at the core of any liberal democracy and constitute of; any individual can think about anything that he or she wants. Which means that, for example, in a strictly religious country one might be an atheist. The second civil liberty is that an individual may live his life as he sees fit without restrictions from others. The last civil liberty according to J.S Mills is that all individuals may unite with whomever they may wish. And even though these civil liberties are currently seen as logical they are still not globally accepted.

These civil liberties provide the moral compass or heart towards which a liberal democratic system should work. There should be parts of citizens lives in which there is no control through regulation or legal limitations. These 'private' parts should not even be accessible for a legitimately representative government. According to Mill there should be a clear distinction between the private and public realm and the rule of law. And each citizen should be allowed to participate equally in the decision making process (Cunningham, 2002). Finding a definition of liberal democracy which is not debatable seems to be most impossible. Scholars differ on their definition of equality, participation and how the checks and balances which protect our civil liberties should be implemented. One of the most widely accepted definitions is the definition of Robert Dahl (1971) (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012). Robert Dahl only uses the title democracy only for an ideally functioning political system. A political system which is completely responsive to all its citizens. It does not exist in reality thus for the conception of this research it is the best to use. An example typology from Dahl (1971) is the existing form of government which is called 'polyarchy'. Polyarchies are actual regimes which, according to Dahl's ideal type of democracy, would have a minimal amount of democratic standards, but are not enough to label them full liberal democratic. Using this vantage point, democracy is not focused on one type of political system. It is a dynamic concept which always remains uncomplete (Tilly, 2007). This is an important vantage point as it means that citizens might view the regime as democratic but are not satisfied with its functioning. This perspective bridges the conceptual difficulties between conceptualizations

of “ideal type” liberal democracies and of conceptualizations of “actual” real world functioning democracies (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012).

Dahl Structures his liberal democracy concept around two dimensions. The first dimension is public contestation; which allows for the option for citizens to freely formulate their own preferences and oppose the government. The second dimension is political participation; which is self-explanatory. To have an optimal system the two dimensions need a set of institutional guarantees. These institutional guarantees are also called the ‘checks and balances’ of a liberal democratic system. These checks and balances consist of deductions and specifications of the civil liberties comprised by J.S Mills. A grasp from the checks and balances are that everyone has the right to form or join an organisation. Each individual has the right of expression and the right to vote. But also less individual guarantees like alternative sources of independent information which does not come from any government controlled institution (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012).

When combining L'Etat Démocratique with the civil liberties from J.S. Mills and the institutional guarantees from Robert Dahl the following conceptualization of liberal democracy will ensue; Liberal democracy is a political system which is characterized by more than just free and fair elections with popular sovereignty and majority rule. It includes constitutional protection of minorities which makes sure that even though the majority decides the rights of minorities are not violated. Thus it is a complex government form of political equality in which a majority cannot deprive a minority of its rights. Thus a liberal democracy is a representative democracy which has free and fair elections on a regular basis and in which all citizens enjoy voting rights. However the liberal democracy also guarantees fundamental civil and political rights (Albertazii & Mueller, 2013).

2.2.2 THE TENSIONS BETWEEN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND POPULISM

Liberal democracy is build up by combining the liberal tradition (Rule of Law, Respect for individual liberty, small government, little interventions, etc.) and democratic tradition (equality, popular sovereignty, etc.). Which means that is possible to have a liberal state which is not democratic. But it is also possible to have a democratic state without liberal influences. According to Mouffe (2000) the link between liberalism and democracy comes forth from strife and will lead to continuous tensions. One of these tensions is the emergence of populist forces within a democracy. These populist forces, which are based on the notion of popular sovereignty, ask questions about the legitimization of liberal institutions like the rule of law (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012). This happens through the fact that their interpretation of popular sovereignty is different from those who favour liberal democracy. The difference lies in the aspect of rule by the people (Liberal democratic) and *direct* rule by the people (populism) (Abst & Rummens, 2007) (Urbinati, 1998).

Similar to democracy, populism is also a heavily contested concept. In one of the first studies of the concept, done by Ivanova (1994), several leading principles are identified. The will of the people has the primacy over all other (liberal) principles. There is a specific desire for a direct relationship between the ruling elite and the people, without interference of institutions. Popular participation and populism often needs extreme forms of democracy. And thus populists often use a direct form of policy and politics as this is a powerful tool to claim a legitimate share of political power (Urbinati, 1998). Populists legitimate their political positions and actions through 'the people'. Which is one of the ideal goals of populism; establishing direct contact with the popular masses or direct democracy (Todorov, 2007).

But how to conceptualize this concept? All forms of populism involve some kind of elevation of and appeal towards the people. They also agree on some form of anti-elitism. Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012) define populism:

" as a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people's and 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression the volante Générale (general will) of the people".

The logical consequence of this conceptualization is that it is probable that populists confront the existence of (powerful) minorities as these probably obstruct the will of 'the pure people' (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012). Populism is not an ideology which is limited to a certain political concept such as liberalism, nationalism or socialism. The difference between a full ideology, which offers a complete view of the political world, is that a thin ideology only focusses on a specific range of concepts (Canovan, 2004). Paul Taggart (2000) refers to this characteristic as the chameleonic nature of populism. Because populism does not have any core values. This definition is further defined through claiming that populism focuses on specific concepts like 'the will of the people or volante general' and the 'people vs the elite' conflict. This makes it possible to frame populism as a *thin-centred ideology which focusses on the structures of power within society* (Abst & Rummens, 2007). This is a direct result from the importance of the people and the will of the people which is one of the explanations why populism varies on the left/right political spectrum (Taggart, 2004).

Taggart (2004) suggests that there are common features within populism. When identified these common features will help enable a universally applicable approach towards populism. The first and foremost feature(1) of populism is that it is hostile to representative politics. The underlying reason for this hostility is that the representatives prevent a direct form of influence from the population on the governance of a nation. It hinders the 'volante general'. But also populists argue against the institutions providing the checks and balances needed for a proper functioning representative democracy. They argue that the media is not

independent. Or state that the court system is flawed. In the end it needs to be said that even though populist are hostile against the representative system they need the conditions created by representative political society in order to transform populism into a political style or thin ideology. As it needs the representative political institutions to function and compel against. The feature(2) which can be derived from the reason of hostility towards the representative system is the absolute primacy of the popular sovereignty. All decisions made by the majority should be enacted. If the majority wills it, it happens. Another feature(3) of populism is that it identifies itself with an idealized conception of the community it serves. This concept, called heartland by Taggart(2004), is an imaginative territory from which the concept of the people is constructed. 'The free or pure people' according to a populist are nothing more than the people who populate this heartland. It is a tool which can be used to better understand to whom populist refer to when they mention or emphasize 'the people' (Taggart, 2000). The Last feature (4) of populism is the animosity between the 'good' people and the 'corrupt' elite. The elite are the moral opposite of the people. They are evil and do everything in their power to keep the normal morally good people down and out of power (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011).

These four features give a clear perspective of what the thin ideology of populism represents. Combined with the fact that populism often comes in the company of 'needed' change, a crisis or a challenge as it itself is not a stable ordered polity. The crisis or challenge is not necessary a fact. The sense of a crisis can be enough. And because of this Taggart (2004) states that Populism, within liberal democracy, has a certain self-limiting quality. As populist only come forth from a sense of crisis they are reluctantly political. With the course of time they become institutionalized and might lose their popular appeal. Taken together, Taggart says, these four features and the fact that populism often goes hand in hand with the sense of a crisis could illustrate why measuring populism is a potential measurement for the health of a representative political system (Taggart, 2004).

2.3 (LIBERAL) DEMOCRATIC TENDENCIES AND THEIR AFFECTS ON SOCIETY

Even though Fukuyama (1992) stated that the final form of government for mankind would be liberal democracy. Does not mean that this form of government is perfect. Both the liberal characteristics as the democratic characteristics have elements in them which could lead end badly. In this part of the theoretical chapter the effects of an unchecked or distorted democracy can be seen. Each new subchapter is the superlative next step. This subchapter starts with undesirable tendencies within democracy itself and continues down the path to fascism and neo-totalitarianism in the next subchapter chapter. In this subchapter we will focus on the negative tendencies in a democratic society.

2.3.1 UNDESIRABLE TENDENCIES WITHIN DEMOCRACY

In the introductory chapter of his book Tocqueville clearly states that he favours no particular view. And even though he favours no particular view he feels the strong urge to educate society about democracy, because Tocqueville sees what tendencies an unchecked democratic society can possess. These tendencies, when left unchecked, develop into aspects of a democratic society which Tocqueville does oppose. These aspects vary from a negative effect on intellectual liberty to a strong urge towards materialism and from increased individualism to in extreme cases tyranny of the majority (Handy, 2001) (Hebert, 2007) (Maletz, 2002). And Tocqueville is not the only one who sees these tendencies within democracy. Many thinkers, like Aristotle, thought the same (Cunningham, 2002). So when left unchecked some of the basic principles of democracy, like popular sovereignty, have the effect to alter society in a potentially negative way. (Cunningham, 2002):

When for example one combines two of the features discussed in the previous paragraph, the hostility and thus abolishment of the representative system and the introduction of absolute primacy of popular sovereignty it is quite easily expected that one form of oppressive class is created. When that the majority wants directly happens minorities are easily overruled and whilst their civil liberties might be forgotten. This phenomenon is what Tocqueville calls the tyranny of the majority. Which is prevented in a liberal democratic system with some of the checks and balances. However this affect can also be achieved without the abolishment of representative government. When an elected leader or group justifies everything they do with the argument that they represent the popular sovereignty this can become a mask for oppression. This happens due to the fact that choices are made via a democratic process whilst the decisions itself are neither democratic nor the *volante* general. It however surrounds itself with an air of acceptance. Historically seen an example is the political exclusion of groups through being ignored or justified by political theory at the time. A repercussion of this is that when the majority will is always granted people tend to start agreeing with the majority will. This can be done either out of fear or out of suppression. When this happens some form of massification of morals, ideas and culture starts to take form. Which is one of the biggest fears of Tocqueville was that democracy would have an undesirable effect on culture and morals, *Les moires* because democracy might be open for a dominant political or social class, *i.e. the majority*, to set cultural and moral standards (Canovan, 2004). These are the most influential tendencies within democracy for this thesis. But scholars also agree that there are many aspects of democracy which could affect the governing of a country like; ineffective government or parliaments degrading back into a form of debating societies without actual influence (Schmitt, 1988 [1888]) (Cunningham, 2002).

2.3.2 DANGERS OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY ACCORDING TO TOCQUEVILLE

The biggest danger foreseen by Tocqueville is majority despotism or Tyranny of the Majority. It is as explained earlier, a situation in which the majority rule without regard to the minority. But next to this option towards totalitarian behaviour Tocqueville foresees a lot of other implications on society and its citizens through living in a democracy society. One of the most important characteristics of a society is, in accordance with J.S Mills, its aspect that it allows its citizens to be free. In Tocqueville's opinion intellectual liberty should be one of societies highest goals. Thus one might assume that a society in which one is free of moral authority would be a society in which intellectual liberty is highest. According to Tocqueville this is not necessarily the case; independence from moral authority would lead to intellectual conformism, which in itself will lead to the decline of meaningful intellectual liberty. He decrees that in America there is no liberty of mind. This is coming forth when the effects of the two aspects of individual freedom and the drive for equality have are combined. The effect of the individual freedom is that each man should be able to rationally reason the meaning of things by himself and for himself alone (Hebert, 2007). Tocqueville has a very firm view on mankind's drive for equality:

"there exists in the human heart a depraved taste for equality, which impels the weak to attempt to lower the powerful to their own level, and reduces men to prefer equality in slavery to inequality with freedom."

When this drive for equality is combined with individual freedom than you will get a society in which there only is intellectual conformity. This happens as not every individual is capable of reasoning every believe and decision for his or herself. Tocqueville states that even the greatest of minds must adopt certain believes without having to think about them in order to think greatly about a few other believes. But if everyone is supposed to be equal, as stated in the previous quote, also the greater minds within society are equal with the masses and thus might be prohibited or not allowed to take their minds to newer heights. The level to which the debates in these situations can go will thus be as high as the level which the majority can reach (Hebert, 2007). On the liberty of opinion in an unchecked democratic society Tocqueville thus says the following:

"In America the majority raises very formidable barriers to the liberty of opinion: within these barriers an author may write whatever he pleases, but he will repent it if he ever [steps] beyond them."

Tocqueville describes the true meaning of this intellectual conformity to the aspect that there is no moral authority. Because as Hebert (2007) describes: 'for intellectual liberty to be the independence of "the action of individual reason" in relation to authority as such'. One has

to be able to question the moral authority before this authority is granted power. There is no true moral authority in a democracy as the moral authority lies with the majority of the people. And it is not possible for an individual to question the majority of the people. One of the solutions Tocqueville gives is that there should be a moral authority which is not necessarily an institution appointed by the people. This institution could bear similarities with an institution like religion. The political parties who cling to principles instead of consequences and to ideas instead of people are therefor also what he favours.

"Liberty cannot be established without morality, nor morality without faith." – Alexis de Tocqueville

One of the other dangers foreseen by Tocqueville is one which originates from erroneous human nature; individualism. And Individualism is of democratic origin. In his reasoning a lot is cause and effect in a circular way. This can be seen clearly in one of the dangers which comes forth from an individualized society. In an individualized society citizens get isolated from the external order in which they would have belonged in another society type. And thus they lose their contact with that which might have been their moral authority. They are one and not a group. But being on their own also leads to a diminishing of superior reasoning as all individuals are equal and there is no moral authority to debate with or against. When debating against the majority, being the superior is impossible for an individual. They are the majority and the majority is always right. And as they are all equal nobody can surpass them and their minds. This confines individual reason and exerts an immense negative pressure on society. In a society in which no one can be morally or intellectually superior or different there only one way in which an individual can try being different from the masses and that is through material gains (Tocqueville, 1835-1840).

"When men living in a democratic state of society are enlightened, they readily discover that they are confined and fixed within no limits which constrain them to take up with their present fortune. They all therefore conceive the idea of increasing it; if they are free, they all attempt it, but all do not succeed in the same manner." – Alexis de Tocqueville

In the end Tocqueville foresees a democratic society that is not despotic because the vices and virtues of the democratic society are safeguarded by self-appointed guardians. The citizens will be happy as these guardians provide the security and solace needed by the citizens. It regulates the economy, it manages their concerns and makes sure man has everything it needs. In the end the people themselves are satisfied as they have chosen their own guardians (Tocqueville, 1835-1840). And under these conditions Tocqueville states:

"the will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided: men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting: such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd."

2.3.3 MASS DEMOCRACY – HOW TO RULE THEM ALL

But not only democracy itself has inherent characteristics which could lead to unwanted effects. The representational system used in liberal countries has in itself an optional flaw. The parliamentary system is according to Schmitt based upon the principles of openness and discussion. Schmitt was an astute believer of the fact that logic propositions lie at the basis of justification of political choice and action. Combined with a government style which governed by form of discussion. Discussion forces the ones in authority to declare their positions and debate alternatives in an open setting. These aspects are efficacies of liberal political theory such as free press and freedom of opinion which are also part of the institutional guarantees discussed in the beginning of this chapter. The free press could provide the public with independent and accurate information about the government. And through this citizens could exercise control on the government (Schmitt, 1988 [1888]).

Schmitt states that because discussion is so important in liberal democracy that it is one of the safeguarded or checks and balances for division of powers and the often constitutionally protected civil and political liberties. Together these safeguards would prevent abuse of political power. These discussions, which are absent of any form of political control, are used to alter political conflict into differences of opinion in search for the truth. The responsibility of the parliament is thus to, through open discussion, sort out evidence and conflicting opinions, in such a way that the citizens are informed in the best way they can. In this way, the absolute power of the government is limited and theoretically goes moves towards a responsible and accountable government (Schmitt, 1988 [1888]).

Schumpeter and weber foresaw in their analyses of the Weimar parliament that political parties were able to mobilize more voters and increase participation. However they were afraid that this would also appeal to the irrational element of the public. Party officials using this irrational element to increase votes was their biggest fear of this system. Especially when irrational factors became more important than substantiated debate. When there is no active debate, the liberal democratic function given to this organ is wasted. Substance and actual matters would be replaced by speeches directed at the mass audience (Schumpeter,

1949). Schumpeter continues his argument that through mass democracy, political parties will burst the bounds within which they could function effectively. According to Schumpeter this

"creates the professional agitator, the party functionary, the Boss. That makes political success a question of organization and produces the various leadership circles and lobbies who make the MPs their puppets. That makes parliament itself a puppet, because agitation and victories outside it will be more important than a good speech in the house. That has destroyed the original sense of parliament, broken its original technique, made its activity look like a farce".

This could result in parties which are ruled by elites who would only represent a specific social class and specific corporate interests. These elite controlled parties would be capable of compromising and working together. And they would do so without the necessary debate or discussion. Thus they lost the reason for their original existence (Schmitt, 1988 [1888]). Whether this loss of function is one of the causes why populists arise or that a populist might be part of the same problem is something this research will not go into any deeper. Suffice it to say that both situations provide their own set of problems and dangers for civil liberties.

2.3.4 DEMAGOGUERY – ONE TO RULE THEM ALL

One of the fears which Aristotle, Tocqueville and Weber shared was that democracy lends itself to demagoguery (Cunningham, 2002) (Schmitt, 1988 [1888]). As with many words, demagogue finds its origin back to the Greek language and the ancient Greek (or Athenian) society. Its meaning is roughly translated to "Leader of the Rabble". Weber argued that mass democracies have the potential to gather enormous political power around a "democratic" leader. The legitimacy of this type of "caesarean" leader comes forth from the idolization by and demagoguery of the masses. Whereas the legitimacy of a proper leader in a mass democracy gains his political leadership through building esteem as the result of his work in the political arena (Schmitt, 1988 [1888]). What thus concerned Aristotle and Tocqueville was that this unchecked form of power could easily be transferred to mass manipulators. Their fears were founded on the belief that in its unbridled form popular sovereignty was similar to a tyranny. As Cunningham (2002) says:

"In both, rule is by decree, not law, and disproportionate power is in the hands of those who can sway either the monarch or ordinary people, in each case masking their political privilege as monarchic or democratic rule; in each case masking their political privilege as monarchic or democratic rule".

These mass manipulators, or court flatterers as Aristotle called them, could easily assume "legitimate" power through the democratic system. The danger for democracy does not

necessarily lies within these demagogues but within the fact that there is a void space in democracy. This void space stems from the fact that "the majority" are part of "the people", and that the majority is not constantly the same group but is a fluid mass of the largest part of the people. The void space represents the situation that "the people" itself does not act, rule, or suffer consequences as an individual would. The demagogic individual would claim this void space to act for "the people" who as an entity could not. The question: *"In whose interest this leader would act"* is an important question to ask and a difficult one to answer (Lane, 2012). Because the majority of the people is an ever shifting group of citizens. This allows demagoguery to not only be aspired by populist politicians but also provides authoritarian figures with a mask when moving for power, as it is not clear in whose interest they take control (Cunningham, 2002).

The demagogue or court flatterer is an individual who is not necessarily a populist. As a populist says he does everything with the interests of 'the people' or 'the heartland' in mind. With the demagogue this does not necessarily have to be the case. He might just appeal towards the people. However still the populist figure has several overlapping characteristics with a demagogue. One of which is the fact that they both represent or say to represent 'the majority' or 'the people', another is that both say they speak and act in the people's name. Remember that in both a mass democracy and a demagogue ruled society liberal democratic institutions might still be present. Although they might not function in the way they were originally designed.

2.4 POPULISM AND ITS NON-DEMOCRATIC PARTNERS

With democracy being a concept as old as the ancient Athenian society, a concept such as populism is nothing new. In many different ways demagogues and populist individuals have tried to sway the masses. And also in our modern day representative democracy there are many attempts of this form of populism to see. At the end of the nineteenth century the first populist party emerged in the United States and during the same period, a populist party, albeit very different from its USA counterpart, came forward in Russia; the Narodniki. But also in eastern Europe a populist peasant movement appeared. But the first instances what we now label as populism can only be seen in Western Europe at the end of the 20th century (Todorov, 2007). There are however movements to be discerned in western Europe that, even though they are not necessarily populist in the extent of how it is framed in this research, they do have many overlapping characteristics. In this chapter we will discuss what other form of populist trends or movements there are to be discerned during the last century. One might say this is the chapter in which we will see what might happen when the undemocratic tendencies within a democracy are left unchecked for too long.

2.4.1 FASCISM & COMMUNISM, STAGE 4 POPULISM?

In the 20th century the European continent was torn apart by two world wars. And during and before these two world wars two very different albeit similar political views thrived; Bolshevism(communism) and Fascism(or national-socialism). Both had demagogic leaders such as Lenin or Adolf Hitler & Joseph Goebbels (Pellicani, 2012). Both political views have similarities with either populist characteristics or parties we currently describe as being populist have characteristics of these political views. Is it possible to draw a comparison between populism and either communism or fascism? Both communism and fascism are deeply interwoven as it is often said that fascism was a reaction to the socialistic communist threat (Wellhofer, 2003). The struggle within the Weimar republic between liberal democrats in favour of the system and Bolsheviks and fascists who were against the liberal democratic system is one of the first and most important "battlegrounds" which ended in the collapse of the Weimar Republic. And even though both are truly different in their political opinion they were natural allies within the Weimar republic (Ascher & Lewy, 1956).

When looking at both political views as if one is looking at a populist movement clear similarities can be seen. When using the five populist aspects of Taggart (2000): *hostile to representative politics, identify with idealized conception of the community, no core values (chameleonic nature), reaction to the sense of an extreme crisis, within liberal democracy has a certain self-limiting quality*, clear similarities can be seen. The definition from Seymour Lipset (1960), which is very popular in the Latin American studies of populism, there is a clear link between populism in Brazil and Argentina and European fascism. Both fascism and bolshevism had hostile reactions towards representative politics. They acted against the bourgeois upper class and in favour of "the people". Both had a clear view of their own heartland, one favoured the Marxist ideological state whilst the other wished to protect the nation against globalizing capitalism and create the perfect national socialist state. Within the citizens of the Weimar republic, but also outside of the Weimar republic, there was the feeling of a crisis (Holzer, 2002). Altering economic structure, the aftermath of a World War and the disappearance of the old ruling class are examples to mention (Pellicani, 2012) (Ascher & Lewy, 1956). The fact that both parties share similar populist threats supports the chameleonic nature. And the self-limiting quality of populism in a liberal democracy is never tested because the Weimar Republic soon collapsed into Nazi Germany. So was the NSDAP a populist party? The discourse of the Nazi-party can be identified as populist indeed (Todorov, 2007). But why do 21st century populist parties behave differently? An important difference between the current situation and the inter-war period is that the liberal democracies of that time were just gaining form. It was a new concept in which the liberal democratic institutions were not yet as established and stable as they are in the modern days (Breschi, 2012). And the quick political regime changes could be subscribed towards

combinations of a new liberal democratic regime, growing unrest, rise of fascism and bolshevism (Kitschelt, 1992). So the question arises what would have happened when they were similarly imbedded instead? Would the Weimar Republic than have collapsed? And would the NSDAP have behaved in a similar way as the Front National does now?

One of the facts that does remain is that currently a lot of radical right, neo-fascist and other right wing political parties are labelled populist. Or in other cases, populism is used as a construct to determine whether a party is right-extremist. These new right populist parties have three defining categories. They are authoritarian, nativist (nationalism with xenophobia combined) and populist (Copsey, 2013). These right wing parties do not all have the same ideological background nor have they identical vantage points (Mammone, 2009)? Mudde (2011) states that these parties are not a "normal pathology" within liberal democracy -e.g. they are not alien towards the democratic values. They are just part of the normal spectrum of political parties. So it is possible that not the extreme right or fascist part is the part which is a threat towards liberal democracy but the populist part is. It could be that the tendencies in liberal democracies together with the populist nature of these parties and their demagogue leaders resulted in the collapse of a liberal democratic system instead. Which supports the suggestion of Taggart(2004) that populist parties have a self-limiting aspect. It just is two sided, they either lose their appeal to the masses or they change the system.

2.4.2 NEO-TOTALITARIANISM

In eastern Europe and the eastern European Union countries scholars see a rise of populist factions. The populism in these regions adapts parts of Bolshevik or fascism tradition. It is sometimes described as a fusion between neo-Nazi and communist ideas and it is subscribed towards regimes like those of Milosevic and Putin or countries like modern-day Belarus (Dimitrov, 2009). These regimes have characteristics similar to both Fascism & Bolshevism and populist theories. These movements are characterized by Dimitrov (2009) as having four characteristics. The first is restoring the "statehood" which is something similar towards the populist heartland. Only with the adaption that it refers to how communists framed the nation instead of using the more generally used nation state. Populism has a "people" vs "elite" power struggle. In these eastern European countries the elite are the western countries trying to alter their nations into "Western" nations. The third characteristic is nationalism, similar as it is used by Fascism and many modern extreme-right and right-wing populist parties. It is the national citizens vs. outsiders, which are in the case of the eastern European countries the "Westerners". The last characteristic is their anti-institutionalism. Which again is similar with populism in Western European countries only the focus is that they are corrupt and should be abolished instead of "taken over".

Similar to the situation in the Weimar Republic, eastern European countries have had little time implementing and embedding their liberal democratic institutions. Their liberal democracies have only flourished for short periods. It is not possible to draw the conclusion that these countries reverted back into neo-totalitarianism through populist trends. Nor is it possible to state that this is the result of their short democratic tradition. But either way, it is an example of how countries in which a populist style leading party have reverted back from liberal democracy into something more totalitarian or autocratic, while at the same time have the liberal democratic institutions needed to legitimize themselves.

2.5 WHAT IS A POST-DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY?

The concept of post-democracy came to Colin Crouch through the gathering of troubled thoughts. He saw a tendency in which society was favouring policy towards the wealthy. Which again lie at the foundation of the democratic decline of society. It would be the cause of a great unbalance of corporate interests versus the rest of society. The impact this imbalance would have on society is quite rigorous. Colin Crouch(2004) describes the post-democratic society as following:

"A post-democratic society is one that continues to have and to use all the institutions of democracy, but in which they increasingly become a formal shell."

Which means in other words that it is a democratic society in which the democratic traditions and the checks and balances are no longer functioning like they should be. So what does a post-democratic society look like? According to Crouch(2004) There are several possible and probable causes for a post democratic society to form. Each of these causes had its own type of consequences. The first of five causes through which a post-democratic society can form is that parliament loses its function. Its loses its function in a similar way as it would in a mass democracy. There are no more proper debates. The route cause for the loss of debate is attributed to the positions of the political parties. Which have become alike. Party campaigns start to look more like product advertisement. This makes the differences between them appear bigger than they actually are. Important issues thus remain undiscussed as parties appear opposites while they in reality might be closer allies than what might have been expected through their campaigns. Parties also tend to have a specific agenda per type of voter. This agenda appeals to each voter group in its own way, making the party appealing for all voters while the truth probably lies somewhere in between. The second cause for post-democracy is the entwinement of the public and private sphere. Groups, be they corporate elites, lobbyists or others, have more and more direct effect on the policy and legislation making. This disrupts the natural balance of power in a democratic society and shifts this away from popular sovereignty to something more like a plutocracy. Thus making sure that *Citizens of a post-democratic nation* have less influence on their own

country than elites like big companies, lobbyist and multinational corporations. The next cause is one which finds its origin within a democratic society; individualization. Within an individualized society citizens have difficulty identifying themselves with social groups. Making it difficult for them to see where they belong to. This results in their loss of connection with political parties or with party ideology. Citizens lose their sense for a more common goal, there is a void. The last couple of decades the world has experienced a trend of globalization, which also plays an important role in how post-democratic societies start to take form. Within a globalized world nations become less able to set their own economic policy agenda. Through globalization effects and the creation of global institutions economies and societies are becoming intertwined. These global institutions, like the EU, gain most of the power. As a result global companies gain more political leverage and are able to avoid national regulation. The last possible cause for a post democratic society, although less relevant for this research, is the privatization of public (Crouch, 2004).

When taking form these five causes for post-democracy can have several negative effects on society. The most influential effect is that citizens negate their right to vote as it does not appear to matter anymore. This sense of loss of control is strengthened by the fact private interests gain influence in policy and legislation making over societal interests. Which results again results in citizens losing their trust the effect of votes. One of the biggest dangers within a post-democratic society is that it might rupture and disunites as crouch(2014) also foresees the rise of political parties with xenophobic views.

2.6 INTERPRETATIONS AND PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Even though Tocqueville and his ideas & works are at the very core of democratic theory. So far there has not yet been made a direct link between the dangers he sees stemming forth from democracy towards a society and the post-democracy debate. This preliminary conclusion will theoretically link Tocqueville's views on the dangers for society stemming forth from democracy with the causes and effects of post democracy. Next to connecting the dangers of Tocqueville with post-democracy this preliminary conclusion will also provide an explanation why populism might be the cause or result of these democratic tendencies and post-democratic causes. This subchapter does so in order to be able to answer the first research question of this research:

Can populism be used as a measurement in determining whether a democracy is transforming in a post-democracy according to Colling Crouch's (2004) post-democracy thesis?

It will try to answer this question by explaining the logical connections between the three otherwise not necessarily connected theories. We will start the connection between these

theories by beginning to describe the overlapping causes of post democracy with the democratic tendencies which effect society in general. After this the effects on the liberal democratic system or decision making process will be described. In each of the two parts the populist theory will be the vector which binds them together or acts upon a similarity.

The individualized society is one of the causes for a post-democracy. Tocqueville states that individualism is an effect which democracy has on society because democracy fights for equality and freedom for all individuals. Everyone should be allowed to determine everything for themselves. In an individualized society there is a void. Either a void which is created by the lack of moral authority, *Tocqueville*, or by the loss of voter confidence or common goal, *Crouch(2014)*. This void is the same void space which a demagogic individual, or populist party, might claim in order for it to act and speak on behalf of the 'people'. This individual or party might even be excluded from the intellectual conformism, *Tocqueville*, as they represent themselves as the mouthpiece and embodiment of 'the people' or everybody who belongs in the 'heartland'. Which coincidentally also coincides with the 'majority'. Which opens the grounds for xenophobic actions and thoughts as there are always individuals who thus do not belong in this fabled 'heartland. Furthermore this party might even want to help 'the people' in order to restore popular sovereignty or the *volante general*. Because the ruling elites do not represent 'the people'. These elites only act in their own interests or in the interests of the corporations and lobbyists, *crouch(2014)*. Thus states the, possibly populist, party that the elites are 'corrupt' and that the 'good' people should take back the power. These elites may be all kind of groups; the ruling class, the rich or even politicians from a global institution like the EU. This coincides with the experienced loss of trust which the people experience in a post-democracy.

In both a mass democracy and post-democratic society parliament loses its function. There is no more debate as the politicians and political parties only target the population. Thus the parliament is no longer used for debate and for determining the position of the government. As the parliament is still being used by the elites in which the people lost their trust and whom are apparently corrupt the, still possibly populist, party is hostile towards the representative governments and its institutions. They want for example to increase the *volante general* by implementing more direct forms of influence for the people. When the party succeeds and starts tearing down the institutions, which are put in place as checks and balances, the direct control and influence of the majority increases. Making the risk for a majority which ignores or negates rights of minorities increases. Thus opening the way for tyranny of the majority or majority despotism when the majority truly is the one who decides. When it is in fact just a single party or individual it might be the start of a neo-totalitarian state or post-democratic state. In the end it is thus possible to conclude that populism can be used as one of several indicators when determining if a society is transforming towards a post-democracy as it is a

route cause or a direct result from the post-democratic causes and the post-democratic results. It is important to note that it is not certain whether populism is the driving force behind a liberal democracy transforming into a post democracy or that this transformation process has a populist side effect.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research ventures in the grey area which arises when the liberal tradition and the democratic tradition are combined in liberal democracy. It argues that liberal democracy, when left unchecked, has the tendency to evolve and move towards an empty hollowed out form of its original self. This new form of liberal democracy is what Colin Crouch (2003) calls post-democracy. During this transformation process it is assumed that somewhere on the line populism emerges within the political system. Populism in this research is thus the antithesis of liberal democracy. This research will analyse election manifestos of political parties for populist discourse over the course of several elections. This chapter will explain to the reader how this research is performed. And why the discourse analysis is chosen as the method to perform this research. Lastly it will also explain why the discourse analysis is the right method to produce the correct answer to the research question. The main objective of this chapter is thus to explain and justify the applied research method, the data collected and the procedure in which the analysis is performed.

3.1 WHAT IS A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS?

The discourse analysis can best be seen as the cluster of interrelated study methods which are used when studying any form of language and its effect on social life. It is the study of language either in text or in conversation. A discourse analysis can be performed in many different ways. It can, for example, be used to analyse how language is used in a specific context. The discourse in this way can be the words and the position of these words in their respective sentences. But a discourse analysis also allows a researcher to look at the context behind the singular words, sentences or paragraphs. Doing this makes the discourse an object of study in its own way (Stebbins, 2008). In this research we use the discourse analysis as proposed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985). They state that a discourse analysis aims at understanding the social as a discursive construct. In this construct all social phenomena can be analysed using discourse analytical tools. The main idea behind this way of looking at discourse is that social phenomena are never "finished" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). One of the most important implications of this statement is the conclusion that certain discourses can never be fully conceptualised. If tried one would engage in a process of constantly readjusting's ones concept. Because as the social phenomenon evolves so does the discourse. The means of discourse analysis provided by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) tries the exact opposite. Their aim is to map out the process in which the researcher struggles to find the meaning of a concept which needs to be fixed including the process by which these fixations become altered. The discourse in this way is the fixation of meaning of a certain concept. The discourse analysis is thus the process of attributing meaning to a concept through language.

The idea behind the discourse analysis is that language should be treated as social behaviour. It is not just a form in which messages are sent. When looking at language this way this has three implications according to Van den Berg (2004). The first implication is that language is a depiction of reality and not just a mere reflection or expression. In other words the language is a representation of the society, which implicates that if society changes so does the language. Secondly he states that concepts thus are not only the combination of words but also the idea behind those words. This idea might be called *the true meaning* of the concept the words represent. The last one is that language can have large influences on society (van den Berg, 2004).

A discourse analysis performed in this way is perfectly suited when researching populism. Populism in this research is a social phenomenon of a democratic society which was left unchecked. It is a concept which is constantly evolving and difficult to give a fixed meaning to. In this research the analysis of populist discourse in party manifestos will be done by describing the *true meaning* of several indicators of populism and looking how they manifest in the party manifestos. These manifestations of populist indicators will then be used to analyse how populism has evolved through the years in form, intensity of the chosen words and amount of manifestations.

3.2 CASE SELECTION – COUNTRIES & PARTIES

In the past few years the level impact and influence of parties labelled populist by the media has risen enormously. Almost every Western-European Country has its own version of a (new) populist party on the rise. For France it's the Front National, for Austria the FPÖ, in Belgium they have the Vlaams Belang and it is possible to continue this list on and on. Each of these parties have their own origin which in some cases comes forth from antisemitism or nativism and in others it was discontent with the current political parties. This research not only looks at the evolution of populist parties but also of how the normally considered non-populist parties evolve. In order to be able to see if this evolution is something which happens incidentally or structurally it is chosen to research three western European countries.

3.2.1 COUNTRY SELECTION

The three countries are selected using the following three criteria. It is important for this research that the countries have a similar democratic tradition with a liberal democratic origin. Next to the liberal democratic tradition it is also important that the countries are visibly experiencing some form of populist tendencies during the research period (2000 – 2016). The last criteria is language. To be able to assess and analyse political discourse in party manifesto's the researcher needs to possess a certain level of proficiency in the language of the country chosen. The chosen countries are the Netherlands, Belgium and the United

Kingdom. Each of these countries have similar democratic tradition which are all part of the liberal democratic family. Even though the political system in each country differs. Next to their democratic tradition all of these countries have a prolonged history with populist parties or events which are ascribed to populist tendencies. For the UK the political party is the United Kingdom's Independence Party (UKIP), For Belgium it's the Vlaams Belang (VB) and for the Netherlands it started with the Lijst Fortuyn (LPF) and the Partij voor de Vrijheid(PVV). beside these political parties the UK and the Netherlands experienced potentially populist motivated referenda during the last two years which might be used as indicators that populism is gaining foothold or growing in these countries.

3.2.2 PARTY SELECTION

Analysing party manifesto's from all parties who participated in elections from each of the three countries during the period of 2000 - 2016 would be too time consuming. Thus five parties from each of the chosen countries are selected for this research. There are two dimensions important for choosing parties. One of these dimensions is electoral success, the other is cross-country comparability. In other words; the parties are chosen in such a way that cross-country comparability would be possible without ignoring the electoral success of the individual parties. Increasing comparability between the parties can be done in two ways; looking at party ideology and their position on the political spectrum. Party ideologies vary from liberalism, conservative up to socialism. The position on the political spectrum represents if the party is left, central-left, right or extreme. In case two parties are closely together when measuring electoral success the least successful may be chosen in order to increase the cross-country comparability.

3.2.2.1 PARTY SELECTION THE NETHERLANDS

During 2000 – 2016 there were five parliamentary elections in the Netherlands; in 2002, 2003, 2006, 2010 and in 2012. During each of these five elections on average ten parties were elected in the Dutch second chamber. Between each of these ten elected parties 150 seats are divided. Traditionally the Partij voor de Arbeid (PVDA) – the social democrats, the Christen Democratisch Áppel (CDA) – the christen democrats and the Volkspartij voor Vrede en Democratie (VVD) – Liberal conservatives are the largest parties in the Netherlands. The rest of the parties vary from very Christian up to the Greens or a party for animals. Even though there are five elections during 2000 – 2016 this research will only include four. The election of 2003 is ignored as most parties used the same manifesto as they had used in 2002 with an additional small addendum. This was due to the small amount of time between these elections. Because of the method used in this research the election of 2003 can thus be ignored.

The Dutch parties chosen can be seen in Table 1 on the next page. There are five Dutch parties chosen to be analysed for this research. The LPF only participated in the elections of 2002, whilst the PVV did not participate in that election. Both can be seen as influential populist driven parties but as the LPF is no longer an active political party it is excluded in this research. For the cross-country comparability the D66 is chosen as the fifth party and was favoured above the SP, *socialist party*. The reason this is done will be clearly visible in Table 4 where the chosen parties of all three countries are put together in one table in order to visualize the comparability. All parties combined a total of 19 Dutch party manifestos and election programs were analysed for this research.

Table 1 Chosen Dutch parties including party ideology and position on political spectrum

Party Name	Party Abbreviation	Party Ideology	Position on Political Spectrum	2002	2006	2010	2012
Partij voor de Arbeid	PVDA	Social Democracy	Central- Left	23	33	30	38
Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	VVD	Liberal Conservative	Central-Right	24	22	31	41
Christen-Democratisch Appel	CDA	Christian Democracy	Central	43	41	21	13
Democraten 66	D66	Progressive Liberalism	Central	7	3	10	12
Partij voor de Vrijheid	PVV	Populist / Euro-Scepticism	(Far)Right	-	9	24	15

Election Results in seats won

3.2.2.2 PARTY SELECTION BELGIUM

During the time period chosen for this research there were 4 federal elections in Belgium. The Belgian federal elections for the house of representatives work differently than those in the UK and in the Netherlands. The Belgian system works with language groups. Members of Parliament (MP) are always a member of one of the two groups, which are either the French or Dutch language group. A MP is part of the language group towards which its constituency belongs. Only parties who have MP's in the Dutch group of the chamber of representatives are chosen for this research. During the period of this research between ten and twelve parties were chosen on average in the house of representatives. The parties depicted in table 2 are the ones used in this research.

Table 2 Chosen Belgian parties including party ideology and position on political spectrum

Party Name	Party Abbreviation	Party Ideology	Position on Political Spectrum	2003	2007	2010	2014
Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten	VLD	Liberal	Right	25	18	13	14
Christen democratisch en Vlaams	CVP/CD&V	Christian Democracy	Central-Left	21	23	17	18
Vlaams Belang	VB	Populist	(Far)Right	18	16	11	3
Socialistische partij anders	SP.a	Social Democracy	Central-Left	23	14	13	13
Nieuw- vlaamse aliantie	N/VA	Liberal Conservative	Right	1	8	27	31

Source: (Wetenschapsbeleid, 2017)

Election results in seats won

3.2.2.3 PARTY SELECTION UNITED KINGDOM

From 2000 – 2016 there were four general elections in the UK. The UK has a system which is in general dominated by the conservative party and the labour party. In total these parties gain almost 70% - 80% of the total amount of votes making the other parties less influential in comparison with similar parties from the other two chosen countries. What is remarkable to see in the UK elections is the steady perceptual rise of the UKIP party and the strong decline of the Liberal Democrats. The Scottish National Party is also growing slightly even though its growth is slim in comparison with that of the UKIP.

Table 3 Chosen United Kingdom parties including party ideology and position on political spectrum

Party Name	Party Abbreviation	Party Ideology	Position on Political Spectrum	2001	2005	2010	2015
Conservatives	CON	Conservative / economic liberal	Central-right	31,7*	32,4*	47,1*	36,8*
Labour party	LAB	Social Democracy	Central-left	40,7*	35,2*	39,7*	30,8*
Liberal Democrats	LD	Progressive Liberalism	Central-left	18,3*	22*	8,8*	7,9*
UK Independence party	UKIP	Populist / Euro-Scepticism	Right	1,5*	2,2*	3,1*	12,7*
Scottish national party	SNP	Social Democracy	Central-left	1,8*	1,5*	1,7*	4,7*

Source: (UK Political Info, 2017)

*Election results in % votes received

DATA AND THE DATA COLLECTION METHOD

In this research we define populism as a chameleonic thin ideology in the same way as (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012) (Canovan, 2004). Which means that populism is something which has no clear core values of its own like full ideologies such as liberalism or socialism but stacks an extra part on top of these ideologies. Thus the chosen data sources are the party manifestos & election programs. These documents can be seen as representing the party views at a certain point of time and will thus also show the evolution of party views across time. The main disadvantage of analysing party manifestos when conceptualizing populism as a thin ideology is that most voters will not read the party manifestos. However party manifestos are the documents in which parties explain all their views and vantage points per topic for an election. Thus it should contain everything from how they view society up to how they would like to alter and influence it. Making them the most logical choice to analyse.

The party manifestos were mainly collected using the internet. All party manifestos from the Netherlands could be retrieved from the official website of the Dutch parliament. For the party manifestos from the UK and Belgium google was used. When google did not provide the researcher with the proper documents contact was sought directly with the political party from whom the party manifestos were missing. The parties that were directly contacted were; NV-A, CD&V, VB, SP.A and UKIP. In all but two occasions the party bureaus were able to provide the researcher with the missing party manifestos or election programs. For the election program of the NV-A 2003 the researcher was directed to the Flemish archive and

research centre, ADVN, which provided a scanned copy of this election program. Only the party manifesto of the UKIP for the 2001 election could not be retrieved as it was not retrievable from the internet and the UKIP party bureau did not have a digital or printed copy in its archive. An overview of all party manifestos including details can be found in appendix one.

For the purpose of this research the party programs of 15 parties over 12 elections in three different countries have been analysed. As not all parties participated in every election and one party manifesto could not be retrieved the total number of party manifestos analysed is 58. The party manifestos differ in size and lay out. In total 3804 pages were analysed for this research making the average party manifesto 65,5 pages long.

The party manifestos represent the official election program for a political party per election. Thus each party has one party manifesto per election. Through the election program a political party shows the electorate what its views for society are and how it wants to implement these. Almost always done in a topic structured way whereas topics vary from democracy, safety, economy, society, healthcare up to mobility and the physical world. The party manifestos are written by the official party bureau per party and are often officialised through a party congress.

3.3 CODING SCHEME & METHOD OF ANALYSIS

As has become clear this research will mainly focus on populist discourse and the evolution of populist discourse across three different nations and through time. What is meant with populist discourse in this research is the true meaning behind the words. The first goal of the research is to see how the actual written representation of this true meaning comes forth within party manifestos and election program and if this true meaning has altered through the course of time. Did these statements become more condemning or belittling? And is the populist discourse becoming visible in parties in which one might not expect it. Is the discourse becoming more frequent with each passing election? How each of these questions will be answered becomes clear in this subchapter. In the following pages the coding scheme and the steps in which the research was conducted will be explained and made clear.

3.3.1 HOW IS THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED? – A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

This research into the populist discourse consists of several components. The first component was the research into the relevant scientific theories needed to combine liberal democracy, populism and post-democracy together. The next step in this research was how the populist discourse came forth within the party manifestos and election programs. The last step of this research was the analysis of the evolution of the populist discourse through time and

following how conclusions could be drawn from this evolution in the context of post-democracy. In this subchapter the way the last two steps were performed is going to be explained. This research was conducted using Atlas TI. After all the relevant documents were uploaded into atlas TI. The first step was to manually code each of the party manifestos and election programs. The coding was done using the coding scheme explained in the next subchapter which can be seen in table 5. Each paragraph from the party manifestos and election programs was individually coded. A paragraph was assigned a certain code in accordance with the coding scheme when the paragraph contained text which corresponds with the true meaning of one of the four populist characteristics. These true meanings are described per populist characteristics within the coding scheme. After this step was completed each of the quotations of each code was analysed using Atlas TI. The first analysis was to determine what form of similarities there was within each paragraphs which were labelled a specific type of code. This was done through looking in which way the true meaning of each quotations per code came forward. Looking at individual words and how these words were used in conjunction with other words and phrases. But also at the substance of each quotation; what did it state and what position in the text did it have? After this step quotations were compared between different groups. The manifestos and programs were grouped according to, country, party ideology and election year. The groups per county are visible in tables 1 – 3, and per party ideology and election, table 4 below.

Table 4 Parties sorted by political spectrum and party ideology

Position on Political Spectrum	Party Ideology	Netherlands	Belgium	United Kingdom
Central- Left	Social Democracy	PVDA	SP.a	LAB
Central- Left				SNP
Central- Left	Christian Democracy		CVP/CD&V	
Central		CDA		
Central	Progressive Liberalism	D66		LD
Central-Right			VLD	
Central-Right	Liberal Conservative	VVD		CON
Right			N/VA	
Right	Populist - Euro Scepticism			UKIP
(Far)Right		PVV	VB	

When this analysis was completed a clear picture of the populist discourse and its uses per country, per party ideology and per election became visible. The next step was to analyse the differences between each group. What were the differences or similarities between the countries and party ideologies? And did these differences and similarities alter during time or between elections? Did they become more in line with each other or did they grew further apart? When this part of the research was completed an answer to the second research question could be given. The last step of this research was done in order to be able to answer

the last and final research question. To do so another analysis had to be done in order to be able to determine if the populist discourse was becoming more generally applied across the political spectrum with each passing election. And if it was getting more frequently used in combination with a more vigorous and or zealous undertone. These two aspects combined will allow for a general assessment If populism is gaining more foothold within western European society and thus might reveal a decline towards post-democracy.

3.3.2 THE CODING SCHEME

In the theoretical chapter of this research several characteristics of populism and populist parties are mentioned. These characteristics are what one is looking for when performing the discourse analysis as the presence of these characteristics will determine if a paragraph has populist aspects. As can be read in the theoretical chapter for this research populism has four different characteristics. Populists are hostile against the representative democratic system and its institutions as this hinders the *volante general*. According to populist governance should always happen by the *volante general* and in order to do so they want to implement more direct forms of decision making by the people. These people according to a populist are the citizens of a mythical heartland – they are the people who belong there. And the last characteristic is that there is animosity between the 'good' people and the 'corrupt' elite. Table 5 Shows the four populist characteristics which will be looked for during the analysis and in short how they will be coded. Table 5 was used by the researcher as a quick reference table. After the table each code is explained with more detail and how and when it is applied to a paragraph.

Table 5 Codebook for the discourse analysis into populist discourse

Populist Characteristic	Discourse code	True meaning
The Heartland	"The people"	Homogenous group, ideal group which has one opinion, one desire One culture, nativism is a good example the we part in "We vs. Them" rhetoric
	"The others"	The them part in "We vs. Them rhetoric Those who do not belong to the heartland Inferior identity Belonging to another culture with another identity.
People vs. The Elite	"Anti-Elitism"	Elites are always a class or a group (not individuals) The corrupt ruling class against whom to battle against Representing their own interests.
Primacy of popular sovereignty	"Direct democracy"	Every reference towards an increased direct influence of the people. For example, referenda (binding and non-binding), chosen heads of governments, chosen mayors, all other direct forms of government.
Hostility representative government & institutions	"Anti-institutionally"	Flawed judicial system. Impartial media fake parliament

The People

A paragraph will be labelled as "the people" when there is a reference towards for example 'the people', 'the citizens', 'the society' or 'the Dutch'. But it can also be less direct like in terms of 'our nation', 'our culture', 'the public opinion' and so on. It does not include references to the country itself, such as the GDP or the Deficit. And should also not be coded if the group to which is referred is not the group towards which the authors identify themselves. The meaning of the concept can differ per times used. It can on the first instance be about values and ideas whilst on a latter instance it is used as a measure for sovereignty. The people are always the we part in a we vs them rhetoric. When the Them part is used this is coded the others.

Anti-elitism

A Paragraph is coded anti-elitist if it consist of a reference in which political, societal, economical or any other forms of elites are criticized. Examples could be the old parties, 'Brussels' etc. references to individuals or individual politicians are never coded as anti-elite as the elite are a group or a class and thus never individuals.

Anti-institutional

A paragraph is coded anti-institutional when a reference is made to alter change or discredit the rule of law, the representative system or one of its checks and balances (such as the independent judiciary system, the independent executive system or the independent media system).

Direct Democracy

A paragraph is coded Direct democracy when a paragraph mentions the empowerment of more influence for the people through referenda , chosen executives or any other form of direct influence on the policy and decision making process other than through elections. i.e. any reference to the implementation of more direct forms of democracy.

3.4 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION OF METHODS CHAPTER

This chapter has shown the steps which were needed to perform this research. In order to be able to answer the research question the following steps need to be taken. The first step is to upload all party programs into the coding program Atlas TI. The step hereafter is to group all documents according to country and party family and elections in order to be able to group the coded paragraphs. The following step is to thoroughly read each party manifesto and ask per paragraph has a reference been made to one of the codes mentioned in the previous table. When a reference has been made the paragraph is selected and coded accordingly. The next step is to check all codes in order what examples can be found from the coded fragments which would limit the liberal democratic fundamentals which can be found in paragraph 2.2.1 after this step the second research question can be answered . After this all coded paragraphs are going to be analysed. What is the topic of the code, where is it situated, what is it about, etc. The last step is to determine of the codes altered between elections within parties and within party families. After this step the last research question could be answered,

4. ANALYSIS OF THE POPULIST DISCOURSE

The main aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with an analysis of the quotations of the coded party manifestos and party program. The analysis of these quotations is necessary to answer the last two research questions. The second question of this research is “*how the tensions between liberal democracy and populism comes forth in party manifestos and election programs*”. This question will be answered in the first paragraph of this chapter. Which will be done by providing the reader with contrasting examples concerning civil liberties, representative government and popular sovereignty i.e. the liberal democratic tradition. These examples will be used to create a sense of how the political parties relate or do not relate with the liberal democratic values but also enables the researcher to determine in which manifestos this so called tension becomes most visible. By providing the reader with this information the researcher enables the reader in following the second paragraph of this analysis chapter. The second part of the analysis will be used to answer the last research question, *how the populist discourse evolved over time and what can be said about this evolution in relation with post-democracy*. And to be able to follow the implications made in this part of the analysis the reader needs a view of the party landscape in relation with the liberal democratic fundamentals. The second part of this chapter will be structured by following the four main indicators of populism; *Heartland, People vs Elite, Primacy of Popular Sovereignty and Hostility towards representative governments and its institutions*. Within each of these substructures the differences and similarities between each country and party will be made visible. Each of the two paragraphs of this chapter will be concluded with a preliminary conclusion on the research question.

4.1 THE VISIBLE TENSION BETWEEN LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC AND POPULIST DISCOURSE

As stated in the theoretical chapter of this research a liberal democracy is a society or a political system with majority rule and popular sovereignty through a representative government. Each individual has fundamental civil and political rights. These rights are protected through institutions and the rule of law in order to prevent the majority of the people to take away minority rights. In this paragraph we will describe whether there are similarities between parties from different countries or whether they differ greatly.

4.1.1 ANALYSING THE PARTY MANIFESTOS DISCOURSE ON TENSIONS

The way parties describe the way they look towards society and its governing is very diverse. As the party manifestos and election program' fluctuate in size per party per election the thoroughness in which similar concepts are described between each version differs greatly. As said in the methodological chapter there are several things important when looking at the tensions between the populist discourse and liberal democratic tradition within party

manifestos and election programs. These things are the way parties look at civil Liberties, the functioning and/or support of representative government, majority rule and popular sovereignty. These four aspects correspond with the populist characteristics. These are the four aspects in which populists views differ with parties which favour the liberal democratic tradition. For example with popular sovereignty, the liberal democratic way of describing this is rule by the people, when a populist would say *direct* rule by the people (Abst & Rummens, 2007). It is in the emphasis of these differences in which the discourse of parties alters. Thus when parties describing these four aspect in their party manifestos and election programs Thus the populist parties can be discerned from the non-populist parties. But even without these differences in definitions, there are great differences in how parties discuss these aspects within their party manifestos and party programs. These differences arise because these aspects are not discussed in every party programs and election manifestos. And even when they are discussed; the thoroughness and length of the discourse differs greatly, making a clear comparison between each party difficult. The clearest support for these liberal democratic system comes from the progressive liberal party family. They endorse the complete liberal democratic system with explicit wordings. The Belgium VLD describes the importance of the 'Trias Politica' from Montesquieu and how they think this should be enforced more properly in the Belgian situation. They also state that a diverse and open society is only possible when the right of freedom of speech, the right to self/determination in combination with the equality of all people is guaranteed by a democratic rule of law. The Dutch D'66 write that the cornerstone of Dutch society is the equality and equivalence of its citizens whilst the UK Liberal Democrats are firm in their wording of Civil Liberties:

"Civil liberties are the basis of a genuinely free society. They are essential to a liberal society in which people are enabled to fulfil their potential and make informed choices about their lives." - Liberal Democrats

And as one might expect the liberal conservatives also provide a clear view of society which lies in line with these four characteristics of the liberal democratic tradition. The VVD writes:

"Liberals are progress optimists. They stand for a tolerant modern society which is based on the principles which belong to a democratic rule of law and a free market economy. Civil liberties, democratic institution, the open market and those which advocate these are under constant pressure,,....., these threats should be combated by the Netherlands." - VVD

However within the liberal conservative political family there are differences between the UK conservatives and the Belgium N-VA & Dutch VVD. When looking at the liberal democratic traditions one might conclude that the latter are liberal first and conservative second whilst the conservative party is conservative first and liberal second. There can be no doubt that all

these parties do support the liberal democratic traditions, this becomes clear from all party manifestos, however the conservatives do put much less focus on describing these aspects than the VVD and NV-a. The same is true for the two parties which belong to the Christian-democratic political ideology family, which parties are the Flemish – CD&V and the Dutch – CDA, and the social democratic party family in which the UK parties Labour & SNP, Belgium SP.a and the Dutch PVDA belong. Both party families put more emphasis and focus on values which can be associated with their political ideology. The Christian-democrats for example put more emphasis on values such as religion, family and solidarity than on the equality of individuals and civic liberties. The Dutch CDA has for example their own assumptions for society.

"The CDA has faith in people. Each talent needs to be used. This vision is based upon our, bible inspired, Christian-democratic assumptions: 1 – spread-out responsibility, 2 – Public righteousness, 3 – solidarity, 4 – Stewardship." – CDA

The social democrats have a less clear origin of their assumptions but their focus is more on the aspects of the working man. However for both of these two political families one can only read that each of these party families values the liberal democratic traditions with the highest regards. When, for example, one tries to determine from the party manifesto of the CDA what the four previous stated assumptions from the CDA actually mean one quickly sees the shimmer of the liberal democratic tradition lie at the basis of these Christian-democratic vision. Up to this point it has become clear that most parties endorse the values of the liberal democratic tradition. In chapter 2 can be read what the key features, according to J.S Mills, are which are at the core of any liberal democracy. Two of these features are; an individual can think about anything that he or she wants *and* an individual may live his life as he sees fit without restrictions from others. Up to so far, according to the party manifestos, all parties agree. However when looking at the populist and Eurosceptic parties certain differences can be discerned.

'UKIP will promote a unifying British culture, open to anyone who wishes to identify with Britain and British values regardless of their ethnic or religious background. – UKIP

&

Flanders is no immigration country. Strangers,.....//....Respect. Furthermore they need to adapt to our culture, our norms and values, our way of living and adhere to important traditional principles from a society developed on European soil such as democracy, freedom of speech and equality between man and women. -VB

Both fragments are about migrants. But the underlying message might be more generally applicable. There is but one culture, one set of values and one way of living. You either fit in

or you don't. This is not completely in line with the civil liberties which are, partially, based on the writings of J.S Mills. So what about the other civil liberties? On the basis of the party manifestos and election programs it can be concluded that all parties fully support the freedom of the press and the freedom of speech and thought. Amongst the parties which are considered to be either populist or Eurosceptic one can find the staunchest defenders of both the freedoms and values. The Dutch PVV states that freedom of the press is the most fundamental civic liberty of a democracy. They say that a democracy can only function appropriately when the "mass-media" report the daily relevant political happenings. The PVV continues by stating that the freedom of speech should be better protected and the party therefor wants the introduction of a first amendment according to the American model. In general all parties endorse the civil liberties. Even though the question arises if for the populist and euro-sceptic parties these should liberties apply to everyone living in the country or just to a part of the group.

But as stated in the theoretical chapter a liberal democracy is a governing system apprised of the liberal traditions and the democratic traditions (Dahl, 1971). When looking at the democratic part of the liberal democratic tradition the biggest differences between parties arise and thus also the biggest tensions come forward. Starting with the parties which also stood out in the previous part of this chapter – the populist and euro-sceptic parties. When looking at this group, the most striking differences arise when comparing how they value the liberal democratic traditions with any of the other four party families. The origin of the three parties categorised in this group differs greatly from each other. The Belgium VB describes itself as a Flemish nationalistic party, the UK UKIP is mainly an anti-EU party whilst the Dutch PVV says it's the party which truly represent the normal Dutch population which he calls "Henk & Ingrid". These three parties express a clear wish to alter some of the liberal democratic fundamentals.. The VB for example writes in their election manifesto of 2003 that:

*"The Flemish Blok is a political party which strives for more democracy in an independent Flanders. This means that the highest power lies in the hands of the Flemish people: **The People Decide**. The will of the majority of the Flemish always needs to be guaranteed and respected."* - VB

All three parties are in favour of a more direct form of influence from "the people". They all express this through their wish of a binding referendum or even other forms of direct democracy. The binding referendum is a form of direct influence in which the people have direct control of a certain policy without giving the chosen representatives the possibility to intervene. The Dutch PVV call the binding referendum their crown jewel.

"The citizens needs a bigger say. Our crown jewel is the binding referendum. We gladly put political button Issues in front of the people. The progressive elites are terrified of the voice of the people. We are not." - PVV

Direct influence of the majority in the decision making process circumvents the checks and balances spoken about in chapter 2. These checks and balances are implemented in a liberal democracy to prevent imbalance (Dahl, 1971). Giving the people a direct influence in the decision making process thus alters one of major fundamentals of a liberal democracy. Which might cause instability within society. The majority decides but the rights of the minorities have to be protected. This protection is given through the checks and balances and when these are circumvented the majority might become tyrannical like Tocqueville feared. When one continues to explore the party manifestos with the previous line of inquiry in mind more information is there to divulge. The most striking detail is that each of these parties use a certain discourse which shows that is no true equality between each individual living inside of its country. It appears that each of these parties have an "in-crowd" and an "out-crowd". It is not always very explicit even though in the majority of their references both the PVV and the VB are quite explicit. The UKIP has a strong "British People" discourse whilst they strongly reject multiculturalism. Even though they want people to integrate they see the detainment of once own culture as a fragmentation of British society. The VB clearly states a Flanders for Flemish people with Flemish culture. Whilst the PVV mostly uses a discourse of people who do *Not* belong within the group which they do count towards the people. All three descriptions are forms of exclusion and show that in their societies not everyone can be expected to be treated equal. This point lingers on in another crucial point. As explained, The reason why this is against liberal democratic fundamentals is that it opens the door for a tyrannical majority. But when the party who opens the door does not see all people as equals the impact might be bigger. The representatives within a representative democracy are part of the checks and balances which should prevent a minority being oppressed by a majority. But when the representatives themselves discern differences within the population this might become problematic. Which is perfectly illustrated in one of the party manifestos of the VB. They state that in a "true" democracy any subject might be the topic of a plebiscite (or referenda) on the initiative of the people.

"Example topics for this plebiscite might be the voting rights of strangers"- VB

And when this voting right might be taken away through a plebiscite/referenda one has a clear example of a majority revoking one of the civil liberties each individual should have in a liberal democratic society. Because everyone should be treated equally and everyone should have an equal part in the decision making process. Strangers in the VB manifesto is used very ambiguously so even though it is implied that the term is about migrants this does

not necessarily have to be true. These three parties continue to pressure the checks and balances of the liberal democratic system by continuously questioning institutions which are created to as checks and balances for the liberal democratic system. One of the institutions which is mentioned the most is also one of the institutions which represents the civil liberties these parties say they want to strengthen and protect the most; the media and public broadcasting corporations. As stated in the theoretical chapter an independent media is important in a liberal democracy as through independent media coverage the population can adjust its electoral support. The PVV agrees and argues that newspapers are of crucial importance for the information level of the population. However the PVV continues with the following:

"Trouw (newspaper) devolved from a renown protestant newspaper towards a "naming-and-construction" newspaper whilst the ones authoritative newspaper NRC Handelsblad nowadays is controlled by the main financier of the Socialist Party" – PVV

Thus discrediting the independency, reliability and expertise of two of the biggest newspapers in Dutch society. In another program the PVV continues this argument by targeting the state broadcaster. The state broadcaster is politically biased to the left. Only "left" politicians are allowed to use it to express and debate their opinions. The state broadcaster also abuses its position to propaganda 'climate change hysteria' and also state that the PVV has similarities with the Dutch fascist party NSB. In other words. Thus the PVV concludes they cannot be trusted. The PVV does not stop with targeting institutions because also the judiciary and executive powers within the Netherlands undergo similar discourse. The executive power, the police, are called unwilling dogs which cannot even be used to hunt. Furthermore the media and the judiciary are called biased and partisan. This partisanship of the Dutch judicial power is the direct reason, according to the PVV, why the PVV party leader, Geert Wilders, was accused when expressing discerning thoughts about the Islam. This form of undermining the independent institutions by discrediting them is something which is not only done by the PVV. The Belgium VB has a very similar undermining discourse. The judiciary or court system should not be able to give a verdict about party programs and propaganda of political parties. Only the people are allowed to do this according to the VB. They continue stating that the accusation of the VB, which was tried by the Flemish court of appeals, on the basis of opinions and written texts was an extreme abuse of the independent judicial power. Whilst the PVV and the VB actively talk the judicial and executive systems of their respective country down other political parties use somewhat toned down discourse. They talk about a political system under pressure or about the citizens who are detached from their own democracy. The conservatives for example state:

"The events of recent months have revealed the size of the fissures in our political system. millions of people are angry and disillusioned. this endangers our ability to work together to solve our common problems". – The conservatives

When ignoring the fact if these statements are true or not, when they are not true these false statements undermine the independence of these institutions but also undermines the faith which the people might have in these institutions. This might lead into a vicious circle where the people do not trust these institutions and want them revoked or removed. When the people have more direct influence in the democratic process they also gain the power to do so which furthers the possibility for a majority to oppress a minority.

And even though the UKIP does not have an outspoken discourse about the media, the executive and the judicial system they do want to increase the influence of the people into the functioning of the Parliament and the government.

" UKIP wants far reaching political reform to ensure that government answers properly to Parliament and that Parliament is accountable to the people" - UKIP

This change allows for the opportunity to impede the independence of the Members of Parliament as they are more likely to do what they think the majority wants. But does this mean that only the populist / Eurosceptic parties are showing a discourse in which they state that they want to improve the influence of the people in their party manifestos? The answer to this question is no. Even though this form of discourse is shown the most within the party manifestos and election programs of the three populist and euro sceptic parties there definitely also is discourse to be found within the party manifestos and election programs of the other parties. Let's go back to the previous example of the UKIP where it wants to make the parliament more accountable to the people. The UK Conservatives want to give citizens more power as this reflects a core conservative belief; *Power to the People!*. They also claim that through their rule this principle can now be seen more in practice throughout Britain. The conservative party wants the same as UKIP in other wording:

"To allow electors to kick out MPs" - Conservatives

But the conservatives have a wider 'power to the people' discourse as they want to give people democratic control over, for example, policing priorities. This is, according to the conservatives, a huge step forward in the empowerment of local communities. And even though this is not necessarily a direct view of what is conceptualized as a form of direct influence of the "volante general" it is something which, on a community scale, might lead towards a majority controlled executive branch of government. Increasing the popular influence in policy making is a familiar topic to several parties through the implementation of a referendum. The Dutch Parties of D66 and PVDA and all UK parties are in favour of

influential referenda. The institutional level (municipality, provincial, national) and actual influence of these referenda differs per party. The British parties all want major referenda for the transfer of sovereignty from Westminster in the broadest sense, i.e. towards the EU, but also on internal reform within the UK or about independence in Scotland. Several parties want more civilian influence on a local level and thus want to transfer more powers to community governments and want to enable binding referenda on this level in order to give people the sense that they are more in control.

4.1.1 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION – TENSIONS WITHIN PARTY MANIFESTO'S

After having analysed the party manifestos on the tensions between populist and liberal democratic principles the second research questions can be answered

“How does the tension between populism and liberal democracy come forth in the party manifestos & election programs of five distinguishable & comparable parties within the Western countries of Belgium, United Kingdom and The Netherlands over the course of the period 2000 – 2016?”

Liberal democracy consists of two forms of traditions; the liberal tradition and the democratic tradition. As explained, populists need these traditions in order to fully develop into a thin-ideology (Taggart, 2004). It is however also in their views towards these traditions that the first tensions in discourse become visible. All parties have a discourse which is directly or indirectly relatable with their support for (most of) the civil liberties. It is in their definition 'who' is included within 'the people' where the first differences in discourse show. All non-populist and non-Eurosceptic parties use a form of the people discourse which is inclusive for all inhabitants of a country. The populist and Eurosceptic parties, UKIP, PVV & VB make a division between citizens of the heartland and non-citizens. It is unclear when you belong to the heartland group. And even though they support the civil liberties of all citizens it is only for the citizens of the heartland towards which they count. This is the biggest difference in discourse found when looking for tensions within the party manifestos and election programs of the parties. The research will divulge on the differences between each of these three parties in the next paragraph in which the research will discuss the evolution and differences between the populist discourses.

The main findings of this part of the analysis is that populist tensions come forth in party manifestos and election programs in three different yet connected ways. The first is thus a clear and distinctive form of “the people” discourse. Through this discourse style it becomes clear that for the populist and Eurosceptical parties you only belong to the people when you adhere towards the “culture, mores and rules” of this specific group, the citizens of the heartland (Taggart, 2004). It is not clear if it is possible for 'non-citizens' to obtain the rights to

be included. The other differences found are all within the democratic tradition and thus about the functioning of society / representative government or the checks and balances put in place to protect the civil liberties for all inhabitants. The effect of the differences within the discourse about the democratic traditions is stronger because of this significant difference between how each party looks at 'the people'.

All populist and Eurosceptical parties want to give the people direct influence in the policy and decision making process, i.e. direct democracy. They also state that the '*volente general*' should always be guaranteed and respected, even when taking away civil rights of minorities, because these minorities are not part of the citizens of the heartland. The chance for a tyrannical majority is bigger when the party who wants to implement a direct form of democracy views certain minorities as not welcome within the country. As these parties are, in their role of representatives, less likely to protect the rights of this minority. The last form of tensions within the party manifestos and elections programs is also found within the populist and Eurosceptical parties. It is found in the discrediting discourse of independent checks and balances of a liberal democracy like the judicial system, the executive system and the media & state broadcasting systems. Through discrediting these systems they weaken the rule of law of their nations.

There are multiple other parties who either want to implement director forms of democracy or think one or more of the independent checks and balances need thorough reform. In these cases it is concluded that these are other forms of a tension discourse than those earlier discussed in this paragraph as they are not necessarily a direct danger towards the liberal democratic principles. This is concluded because these parties use a direct or indirect discourse stating they support the civil liberties equally for all citizens. The reason they are mentioned in this part of the analysis is that even though the effect is less likely to take form they still might disturb the precarious balance within the liberal democratic system. And thus can be used maliciously. An example of cases where this happened can be seen in the effect of non-binding referenda within the Netherlands and the UK. In both cases there was no popular majority even though politicians talk and act about the referenda as if the decision of the referenda was one which was gained with the popular vote. Other examples of direct democracy like the directly chosen executives and statesmen in high positions, mayors and heads of state, open the door for demagogues and mass manipulators. Which, as explained, are both unfavourable types of characters for these influential positions.

4.2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE POPULIST DISCOURSE IN PARTY MANIFESTO'S

Having discussed how the tensions between the populist and liberal democratic traditions comes forth in party manifestos and election programs it is now time to analyse the populist discourse. In this paragraph of the analysis chapter the reader will be able to find out what the differences between each country are in populist discourse and if these differences have changed over the course of four elections. The main goal of this section is to answer the final research question.

4.2.1 ANALYSING THE POPULIST DISCOURSE

In this paragraph the evolution of discourse from each of the four populist characteristics will be discussed. This paragraph will start with a subchapter per populist characteristic in which the differences between each country will be discussed. After this per characteristic analysis the most distinctive parties and the evolution within countries will be discussed in order to be able to answer the third and final research question.

4.2.1.1 HEARTLAND

The populist characteristic heartland consisted of two indicators in this research. As was described in the theoretical chapter true populist discourse consists of a 'we vs. them' dialogue (Taggart, 2004). The we part was constructed as 'the people' the them part as 'the others'. Each and every party manifesto or election program used for this study had one or more references which were coded as a 'the people' reference. The differences between them however are striking. Which is of course something which was expected. Writing a party manifesto and an election program is done in order to gain electoral votes. In order to gain these votes, the voters need to feel activated in order to actually go out and vote for the party from whom they are reading the manifesto. Political parties try to motivate the readers by mentioning sub-groups the voter might feel connected to. Many of these ways of gaining voter attachment are not considered 'the people' discourse. When going through party manifestos and election programs all parties talk about the economy and about healthcare and thus all parties would at some point address the 'workers', the 'patients' or the 'caring parents'. Again other parties, like the Christian-democrats, would mainly focus on the concept of the 'family' throughout their programs. Each of these discourse styles are similar to the language style *pars pro toto*. These generic parts represent the whole society whilst still is acknowledged there are more parts of society. Everyone who works is a worker, each women part of a family is a family women and both thus might freely identify with this label in their own context. Most references to the concept of the 'people' were found in the introductory and concluding part of each of the party manifestos and election programs. These are the parts of the party manifestos which are not about specific topics but which are

the parts where the individual parties often express their views for society or their country in more general terms. These general terms often consist of phrases like: 'Our citizens should be proud', 'We are a working culture' or 'The British people should have a say, ...' and many other forms of which the following three are perfect examples.

*"Belgians are a **pacifistically** orientated nation" - CD&V*

&

"We will promote integration and British values" - Conservatives

&

"The Flemish people are sick of it. Sick to see that the executive power is more firm in Flanders than elsewhere. That the police officer is more firm in traffic controls in Flanders than in Wallonia." - NV-A

The above three fragments are a proper representation of what is generally in line with most of 'the people' discourse found in the party programs and election manifestos. And even though all of these fragments refer to the total population in relation to a feeling, a value or a culture, they do not necessarily give the feeling that they are exclusively reserved to a certain part of the population. They are 'the people' references there is however a superlative when putting the above statements with references to 'the people' next to fragments from certain other parties. There are parties who use their the people references in a more aggressive and frequent ways. Examples of a more aggressive use of a 'the peoples' reference are:

"Flanders is not an immigration country and it cannot have a policy which attracts migrants. Anyone who is a migrant and who wants to settle here permanently has to adept to our language, our culture, our habits, And should in the first place be loyal towards Flanders their new country"- VB

&

"We need to take pride in our country again and claim back our heritage from the 'chattering classes' who have denigrated our culture, highlighted our failings as a country, rather than celebrating our successes, and tried to make us ashamed to be British" – UKIP

These cases are more aggressive because they are target minorities. Because they target minorities these are perfect examples of the 'we vs them discourse'. You(Them), the migrant, do not belong in our(We) country. And if you do want to stay, you have to fully adept to us.

To become part of the society one has to assimilate. And even when one does that perfectly, there is no guarantee he or she will ever be fully part of the "in-crowd". This type of 'the peoples' discourse gives one the feeling that there is a hierarchy in people. There are only three researched parties who use this type of 'the peoples' discourse. And these three parties are the UK – UKIP, the Dutch – PVV and the Belgian – VB. But apart from 'the people' discourse these parties are also the only ones who often use a 'the others' discourse. The migrant in the previous example is still quite general. There are parties who narrow it down. The VB makes a difference between European and non-European migrants. They say that the integration process with European migrants like Italians, Poles and Greek is going a lot easier than people who are integrating from a non-European culture. Because the differences between cultures are larger. The PVV uses a different division of welcome and non-welcome migrants. They state that the Islamic religion does not belong within the Netherlands. It will cause ages of unrest. And to put power behind this statement they quote Abraham Kuyper:

"The Muslims can rule over other people, this is their privilege and their call, but they may themselves be never ruled over"

There are many differences between the three countries in the target groups they use in their manifestos when referring to their population and thus which are also most used in their 'the people' discourse. The most striking differences are to be found in the Belgian parties researched. These parties almost never, *the example given on the previous page is one of the only*, refer to themselves as the Belgian people. They are Flemish and they represent Flanders in the federal Belgian government. There is a big difference in using 'the people' discourse between the Belgian parties. The SP.a and VLD almost never use a 'the people' discourse in their party manifestos and election programs as they speak in general terms like citizens and families. The CD&V and NV-A do this more as they speak less in general terms and more in "name of the Flemish people". Throughout the latter party manifestos of the NV-A it appears that a 'the people' discourse is more often used throughout the entire NV-A manifesto. The VB is the most vigorous in using 'the people'. They also use it more in general through their entire program instead of only in the introduction and conclusion part of the manifestos. Furthermore the VB show an interesting development in their 'the others' discourse as this discourse begins with migrants in general and evolves to combinations in which migrants and the Islam and Muslims are more combined. For this research it has to be noted that only Dutch speaking Belgian parties were selected. It is expected that when looking at French Speaking parties Wallonia is the central theme in party 'the people' discourse.

The use of 'the people' discourse in the United Kingdom is in itself completely different from the Belgian situation. Even though both countries have a similar situation having both a federal and regional parliaments, many of the parties in the UK do not speak in terms of just a part of the population like they do in Belgium. Most of the UK parties refer to Britain and the British people when they use a 'the people' discourse. The only exception in the Scottish National Party, SNP, whom refers to the Scottish people and Scotland in a very similar way the Dutch speaking Belgian parties refer to Flanders. In the UK the Liberal Democrats and the Labour party almost never use a reference to 'the people'. Interesting to notice is the fact that the SNP and the Conservatives are starting to increase the use of 'the people' discourse throughout their manifesto's with each election. So in other words one will not only start to find 'the people' references in the introductory part of the manifestos but also during the thematic chapters. The UKIP is the only party in the UK which uses a 'the people' discourse on a consistent frequent way throughout each party manifesto. They use it almost in all chapters and sections of their party manifesto's.

The Dutch parties all refer to the same geographical area and population name. The Netherlands and the Dutch. The Netherlands does not have a federal government. Within the Dutch parties the PVDA and the CDA have a quite similar way in referring to 'the people' whilst the VVD is undergoing a similar development as the conservatives in the UK. With each passing election 'the people' discourse can be found more throughout their election manifestos and party programs. Again the PVV, like the VB and the UKIP, uses 'the people' discourse in a consistent manner throughout their entire program. Interesting to note about the Dutch party D66 is that they speak a lot with the term 'our'; 'our society', 'our economy', 'our environment' and so on. Whilst this is not necessarily a 'the people' reference in latter programs they start using the term '*The Dutch*' more generally which thus raises interests and makes it worthwhile to notice.

4.2.1.2 THE 'GOOD' PEOPLE VS. THE 'CORRUPT' ELITE

The struggle between the 'good' people and the 'corrupt' elites is a power struggle. It is about the elites not representing the people and their interests but themselves (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011). It is a very suggestive concept and thus it is not found in all party manifestos and election programs. This concept is, again, mainly, but not only, found in the parties labelled populist and Eurosceptic. There are almost no similarities between the parties themselves nor are there much similarities between the countries. The way the discourse is used and the topics it is used on differs greatly. Example topics can be the elites craving power:

"We regret that the democracy is undermined by parties and politicians who are often prepared to break their election program and personal promises in exchange for a share of the power" – VB

&

"Political party manifestos are usually filled with arbitrary, over-ambitious targets and pledges to some special interest group here or there. UKIP is different."- UKIP

Whilst these reference appear written in general terms and might be something which is well known amongst the citizens of the country. This reference itself does off course not count for the party which is stating it. That party, in this case the VB, is the 'true' representative of the people. But it is also about parties ignoring what its population or part of the population wants.

"For too long, the EU and the UK's major political parties have ridden roughshod over the concerns of farmers and rural people." – UKIP

But it's not only about politicians and political parties doing what they themselves want it is also about citizens who are often let down by the government, because the government only establishes barricades instead of tearing them down. It is about political parties who create expectations but cannot deliver and about politicians who do not deliver their promises. There are more than one examples of one of the three parties where the question the reader of their party manifesto if the democracy is not just a façade? That democracy is in its biggest crisis since ages. And that fault lies with the elites as these there is a world of differences in what these elites want and what 'the people' wants. And through this difference between ruling elite and 'the people' society is in danger.

"Our battle is not simple. Not only do the left elites have taken possession of many crucial positions in our society, their alliance with the Islam means there is also a physical thread. The fate of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh are to be used as a reminder and a warning" – PVV

So far we have seen elites who are willing to undermine democracy by breaking with their election program for a share of power. We have seen elites who are accused of ignoring all concerns of the people and we have seen that these elites in power are accused of being a physical danger for 'the people'. All of these elites are however democratically chosen. However some parties go a step further. They state that the true decisions are made not by parliament itself but by unelected individuals working at the party bureaus or labour unions.

"In Belgium the true decisions are not made by parliament but are made by the Parti Socialiste, the headquarters of political parties and labour unions. These decisions are being guided through parliament. This parliament has become nothing more than a voting machine" - VB

Up to this point all these examples are about national and federal politicians, political parties and governments, there is more. Just like there is multi-level governance it seems there is something like multi-level elites. Many of the anti-elite discourse of the parties stems forth from a sovereignty problem. The sovereign people are not properly represented at the level at which the decisions are made. And determining this might prove crucial in concluding the differences between different parties whom are now all called 'populist'.

In Belgium, for example, the anti-elite discourse is most commonly used when comparing it with the other two countries. This has to do with the confederal system in Belgium where there is automatically a competition between Wallonia and Flanders. Its citizens can only vote on representatives from the language of their district, i.e. French (Wallonia) or Dutch (Flanders). The combined languages form one federal government. However each MP represents a district thus the Wallonian MPs represent Wallonia and the Flemish MPs represent Flanders. Thus in Flemish parties the Wallonian politicians are quite often depicted as 'corrupt' elite not representing 'the people'. Which of course, somewhere, that's true. Because this clear divide within the federal government, the federal governments functioning is also something which is often discussed and criticized. The VB is the only party who depicts the other Flemish parties and politicians as non-representative elites while stating that they are the only 'true' Flemish people representatives. Thus in terms of determining populism they are the only party fit for this characteristic in that sense.

When having read the Belgian case one might think that the UK would experience a similar situation. Which might be partially true. The United Kingdom also has some form of federal government in which representative of its four regions, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern-Ireland are present in a similar way as in Belgium. Over the course of the period 2000-2016 the independence and influence of the regional parliaments has been one of the core themes within British elections. The main difference with Belgium is that Wallonia and Flanders are roughly equally represented and people can only vote on Wallonian parties when they live in Wallonia and vice versa. Within the UK there are parties, like Labour and the Conservatives, whom are represented in all regions. Decreasing the chance of a region vs region competition in the federal parliament and reducing the thereto belonging anti-elitist discourse. Within the UK there are two interesting forms of anti-elitist discourse and only two parties who, in general, use it. These parties are the UKIP and the SNP. As the saying goes; It's all-in the name. The UKIP is for an independent UK. Thus its anti-elitist discourse is mostly aimed

at the so called EU-bureaucrats and technocrats and their 'British puppets'. A perfect example of their discourse style is the following fragment:

"The current political elite - 'the LibLabConsensus' - need to hide this massive surrender of power from the voters. They employ tactics such as introducing EU laws as obscure statutory instruments and regularly deny the reality of who actually runs our country." - UKIP

The other UK party which often uses elitist discourse is the SNP. The SNP is a party which has the sovereignty of the Scottish people at the cores of its values. Over the course of the period of this research the SNP started using more anti-elitist discourse against 'Westminster' politicians. With each passing election the discourse became stronger. Especially during the last elections when the promises after the remain-referendum were not properly delivered. As this research only focused on the five most influential parties only the Scottish SNP was included but it is expectable that similar discourse exists in parties like Sin Fein (Northern Irish national party).

The Netherlands is the only of the three countries which does not have a federal government nor does it have a district system. Making the elections of the Dutch parliament different from both the UK and Belgium. Within the Netherlands there is only one party who uses anti-elitist discourse; the PVV. The PVV uses a similar discourse as the UKIP against the EU as the PVV also wants an independent Netherlands. The PVV anti-establishment-party discourse is however unique when comparing the PVV-VB-UKIP. The PVV majority of the established parties are ruling elites whom do not have the best interest of the people by heart. And this discourse is becoming more vigorously between each election. While its start with they being the only party which truly represents the people they end by laying the blame for the death of two well-known Dutchmen at the hands of the 'elites'.

4.2.1.3 PRIMACY OF POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

The first paragraph of this chapter discussed the way the tensions between the liberal democratic tradition and the populist tradition came forward in the party manifestos and party programs from the research political parties. Thus in this paragraph the research will only focus on the differences between countries and on the evolution of the indicator. For the sake of determining populism there are four parties who are either in favour of a form of direct democracy, PVV – VB – UKIP, or more direct influence of the population in the form of a referendum and chosen heads of government and other important representatives, D66. The discourse of each of these parties on this issues did not evolve or alter. For D66 the advisory referendum is something which dropped from their discourse as it was a wish which was achieved in 2010 (and active from 2014 onwards).

The only clear similarity between parties of these three countries is that all the parties labelled populist and Eurosceptic are in favour of direct democracy with popular majority. Of the researched parties within the Netherlands three out of five are in favour of the advisory referendum – D66, PVV, PVDA. From these three parties only the D66 is in favour of a directly chosen head of government. The PVV is the only party which is in favour of a form of direct democracy with a popular majority.

All UK parties used in this research are in favour of a referendum about an alteration towards their parliamentary sovereignty – i.e. in the case of transferring more power towards or transferring power from the EU. The support for an independence referendum in Scotland differs. Only the SNP is outspokenly about this. A big topic within the UK is however returning power to the communities and the regional parliaments. The argument to do so is to give the citizens the feeling that their opinion matters. "Bringing the power closer to the citizens" is the general verdict. The UK has a district system with a "first past the post principle". Several of the smaller parties are in favour of altering this system. Because this system allows for a party to gain a majority share in parliamentary seats without having the majority of the popular vote.

When taking the VB out of the equation all of the parties within the Belgium system are in favour of a confederal system. Increasing the independence of the Wallonia and Flemish parliaments and giving them more sovereign power and influence. They want a modern democracy which is down to top orientated. None are in favour of referenda except the VB.

4.2.1.4 HOSTILITY REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND ITS INSTITUTIONS

Active hostility and distrust against representative government and institutions like the independent media, the judicial system and the executive power as is described in the first paragraph of this chapter is completely inside the domain of the populist and Eurosceptic parties. Anti-institutional discourse against EU institutions is ignored for this research as this research does not want to touch the topic of the democracy of the European Union and its deficit. However there are signals in other countries about the functioning of the public broadcasting system, the working of democracy or the judiciary system. Within Belgium for example the judiciary system is apparently not working properly thus several parties give of signals like:

"On the fields of the judiciary system and safety we need great bravery in order to make large substantial reforms. Many people have lost the faith in the judiciary system, which is a great problem within a democracy" – Open VLD

Within the UK the Liberal democrats want to promote the independence of media by removing the minister's role in appointments at certain important executive boards of the BBC. They want a British First Amendment law just like the PVV wants in the Netherlands.

However these fragments within party manifestos are either substantiated , as the Belgium judiciary system is actually not working as it should, or too splintered and fragmented too take it more serious than election talk.

4.2.2 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION – EVOLUTION OF POPULIST DISCOURSE

The goal of the second paragraph of this chapter was to analyse the evolution of the populist discourse in order to see if this might help in determining whether a society is becoming post-democratic. When summing up all indicators present in all parties. There are three parties who are deemed populist according to the definition used in this research (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012). The true populist parties found in this research are the PVV – VB – UKIP. Before we delve deeper into the conclusions of the evolution of the populist discourse it is important to start with a general observation which was done by the researcher during the coding process. This topic has already been broached during the previous paragraph. It appears that differences between the way the 'people vs the elite' and 'anti-institutional' discourse is used comes forth in the different nations. It seems this is due to the way the country is constituted. When two or more regions with its own people are combined into one nation this opens the door towards a country inwards oriented discourse style, which is represented in figure 1; The Flemish against the Belgium system or against the Wallonian parties (I) . The Scottish against the UK(II). Whilst it is also possible to orientate this discourse style towards an external source like the EU(III). The last form if populist discourse is the traditional discourse the people vs the ruling class(IV).

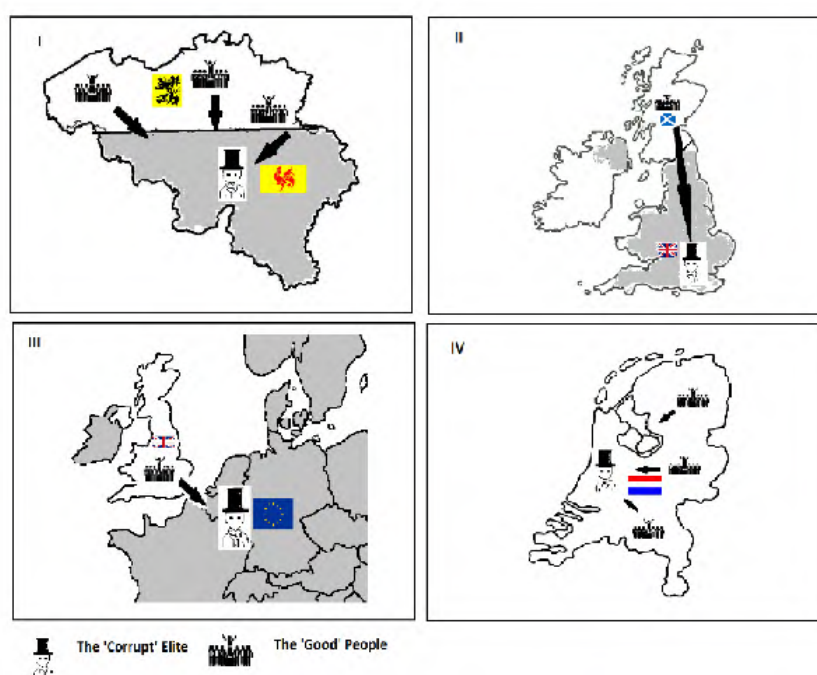


Figure 1 - differences in anti-elite rhetoric

Source: Author

Each of these forms of discourse has its own distinct forms and expects different results, whilst also having similar aspects. The researcher concludes that this has everything to do with conceptualisation of the Heartland. The 'citizens' of the heartland are the ones who have full sovereignty according to a populist. Giving another group sovereignty over the heartland is not acceptable for a populist. However if a country has several layers, like in Belgium or the UK, each layer can be used in order to determine a people and to argue against elites. One might conclude from this observation that countries with a combined population or consisting of several semi-autonomous regions have a bigger chance of sprouting populists.

As for the evolution of the populist discourse within the following interesting conclusions can be drawn. In accordance with the this first discovery of this preliminary conclusion there are great differences between parties actively using a form of 'the heartland' concept. In the party manifestos and election programs analysed for research there are four different forms of populist style conceptualizations of the 'heartland' found. The UKIP and the PVV use a conceptualisation of the heartland which envelops their entire country i.e. the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Whilst the Scottish SNP and the Belgium VB both conceptualize their heartland as a part of the country they are a member. For the SNP its heartland is built around Scotland instead of the United Kingdom whilst the VB heartland is built around Flanders instead of Belgium. The discourse used in the last NV-A party manifestos start looking more like a heartland discourse and is also Flanders orientated. Within the three parties concluded populist there are two parties who actively and vigorously use an anti-EU discourse – the PVV and the UKIP. One party uses a traditional the 'good' people vs. the 'corrupt' Elite discourse – Which is the Dutch PVV. The only populist party not yet mentioned – VB – uses several forms of anti-elitist discourse; an Anti-Wallonia and an anti-Belgium discourse. The SNP not necessarily uses an anti-elitist discourse. However it is sometimes suggested that 'Westminster' does not represent Scottish interests. The remaining interesting things to notice are that the liberal conservative parties start making more references to 'people' with each passing election. Their stances on migration do not make their discourse within the party manifestos that intense that it can be coded 'the others'. But it appears they are adapting some of the styles used by the populist parties.

The Dutch D66 is a party which stands out due to its very typical style of writing in their party manifestos and party programs which are not similar towards any of the other parties. They use a lot of generalist terms which are about 'us'. Most parties do use these words but use them to refer to themselves whilst the D66 uses these words to talk about all Dutch citizens. With the D66 the us and our discourse appears to be used in respect with society in total; us, Dutchmen. Next to this noticeable style of writing the D66 is the only party which is looking to increase the influence of citizens in the decision making process. Both might be determined as populist characteristics. The researcher concludes that this is not the case.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This last chapter of this research will be used for two things. The first is to provide the reader with a bundling of all preliminary conclusion and thus answer all three the research questions in full. The second part of this chapter is the discussion in which some of the conclusions of this research are put into the light of real-life events. But also to give comments on what could have been done differently and give pointers for continued further research.

5.1 CONCLUSION

In the introductory chapter of this research the main goal of this research can be defined. Is society becoming less democratic and is populism a proper indicator to measure this. In order to be able to answer this question the researcher asked himself three separate questions. In this conclusion we will briefly summarize the answer to all three of these questions and give a final answer to the main goal behind this research. We will start with the first research question

Can populism be used as a measurement in determining whether a democracy is transforming in a post-democracy according to Colling Crouch's (2004) post-democracy thesis?

In order to answer this research question the researcher has combined three separate theories together. The democratic tendencies seen within a democratic society by Tocqueville and the post-democracy debate started by Colin Crouch(2003). The negative tendencies which originate from within a democratic society are combined with the characteristics of Colin Crouch's (2003) post-democracy. The characteristics of a populist thin ideology comprises of many of the effects of the tendencies of a democratic society or of the causes for the transition into a post-democratic society. This research has shown that the causes and effects of post democracy combined with internal tendencies within democracy overlap and correspond with the characteristics of populism as a thin ideology. A democratic society has the tendency to become individualized whilst an individualized society is one of the effects which causes the transition from a democratic society into a post-democratic society. Within an individualized society there is a power void. This power void is created because one can impossibly have a discussion with a majority. Continuously this power void can be exploited by a populist or demagogic individual in order to be used to speak and act on behalf of the people. When this individual does so he/she speaks on behalf of the majority and might be seen as an embodiment of the majority. This individual can than act as if he/she wants to help 'the people' in order to restore the popular sovereignty or the *volante general* within the democratic society. This needs to be done, according to this individual, because the current ruling elites do not represent 'the people'. This individual states that

these elites only act in their own interests or in the interests of the corporations and lobbyists, which is in correspondence with a post democratic state. Thus this individual states that the elites are 'corrupt' and that he/she will restore the power of the people.

In both a mass democracy and post-democratic society parliament loses its function. The parliament is no longer used for debate and for determining the position of the government. As the parliament is still being used by the elites in whom the people lost their trust the populist individual wants to abolish the institution in order to restore the general and direct will of the people. When the party succeeds and starts tearing down the institutions, which are put in place as checks and balances, the direct control and influence of the majority increases. In the end it is thus possible to conclude that populism can be used as one of several indicators when determining if a society is transforming towards a post-democracy as it is a route cause and/or a direct result from the post-democratic causes and the post-democratic results. It is not to be expected that populism is the only driving force for the transition of a democratic society into a post-democratic society but is either the result of this transitioning process or one of the causes. Thus this opens the begin answering the second research question.

How does the tension between populism and liberal democracy come forth in the party manifestos & election programs of five distinguishable & comparable parties within the Western countries of Belgium, United Kingdom and The Netherlands over the course of the period 2000 – 2016?

A Liberal democratic society is a society in which the liberal traditions and the democratic traditions are combined into one. This means that it is a society in which the majority decides but the civil liberties of minorities are protected. This protection is arranged through the checks and balances within the liberal democratic system. Tensions within this system arise when one distorts the balance within this system. When analysing the discourse of the different party manifestos and election programs it appears at first glance that all parties are a staunch supporter of the civil liberties for its citizens and thus one might conclude that there are no tensions within the party manifestos towards the liberal democratic system. However the parties which are labelled populist and Eurosceptic use a discourse which suggests that not all inhabitants of its country belong to the group which should have all civil liberties. Which is interesting as democracy is founded on equality between individuals. According to the PVV, the VB and UKIP there is a certain in-crowd and an out-crowd. The in-crowd, i.e. the people, belongs within the nation whilst the out-crowd does not. It is unclear why and when one belongs to the first group and when one belongs to the second group. Thus even though these parties use a direct and indirect form of discourse in which they claim to support the civil liberties, they ignore one of the foundation necessary for a democratic society – equality for all citizens. And the right for all citizens to think freely and to be who they want to be.

The other tensions found are all connected with this major difference between the populist parties discourse and the other parties used discourse. As the balance within a democracy is very easily disturbed all alterations in the decision making process should be taken with caution. All populist and Eurosceptical parties want to give the people direct influence in the policy and decision making process, i.e. direct democracy. The differences found within the use of this direct democracy discourse are in line with Abst and Rummens (2007) the populist and Eurosceptic parties indeed want *direct* rule of the people. Their proposed forms of direct influence increases the chance for a tyrannical majority to arise. *Especially* because these parties are less likely to protect the rights of those of whom they think do not belong to the countries people. The last form of tensions within the party manifestos and elections programs is also found within the populist and Eurosceptical parties. Each of these parties uses a discourse through which they actively discredit the effectiveness and independence of the checks and balances put in place to make sure that the majority cannot negate minority rights. Through discrediting these systems they influence the balance within a liberal democratic society and thus weaken the rule of law of their nations. And even though there are several different other parties who also want to implement director forms of democracy. And there are also other parties who think one or more of the independent checks and balances need thorough reform. In each of these cases it is concluded that these are not tensions within the liberal democratic system as these parties use direct or indirect discourse in which they support the civil liberties and the liberal democratic system in combination with a direct or indirect discourse stating that all citizens are equal.

Even though the effect of the above described tensions for liberal democracy for the countries from which the party manifestos and election programs might still not be very visible. There are liberal democracies liberal democracies in which some of the above described tensions are already becoming more and more visible. For example within the United States where president Trump uses terms like 'fake news'. And where there are situations in which certain independent media are not allowed to partake in press conferences. Where judges are tried to be overruled as they state that a presidential decree is not in accordance with the law and violates civil liberties of citizens. These tensions have dire consequences for the people when they want to use their electoral power as it is unclear for them what is true and what is not. Which media source can they use and is the source they are using reliable? Each of these questions is one which undermines the balances within a liberal democracy. The biggest implication of the tensions which are posed by populism for a liberal democracy are thus that populism on the one hand opens the door for a tyrannical majority and on the other hand it disables the people in using their electoral power. Having answered the second research question how the tensions between populism and liberal democracy comes forth in party manifestos and election programs and what the

effect is on society and the people we can now continue to answer the last and final research question.

What can be said about the evolution of the populist discourse in the party manifestos & election programs of five distinguishable & comparable parties within the Western countries of Belgium, United Kingdom and The Netherlands over the course of the period 2000 – 2016?

The analysis of all party manifestos and election programs resulted on their populist discourse resulted in some interesting conclusions. Populism in this research consisted of four different indicators; Heartland, the people, people vs the elite and anti-institutional rhetoric. Only three of the fifteen researched parties have party manifestos and election programs in which all these four indicators can be found; the Dutch PVV, the Belgian VB and the United Kingdom's UKIP. Even though this is a conclusion which might have been expected beforehand. It is however when analysing the differences and similarities within the discourse used by these three parties where the most interesting conclusion of this research comes from. As can be read in chapter 4.2 there are major differences between the use of the 'anti- elite' discourse of each of these parties. The way each of these parties use this discourse type tends to lead the researcher to the conclusion that there are multiple forms of how populism as a thin ideology can take form. It all stems forth from how a populist theorizes his heartland and how a countries gain sovereignty. Each distinct people of a nation has its own sovereignty. So when several people of different nations are combined within one country, like in Belgium and in the UK, it allows for another level of elites. Thus when a country joins a supranational organization another level of elites arises. The following figure, figure 2, illustrates this. The first frame(I) is the populist category in which all citizens are of the same people and the elites are thus completely internal. The second frame(II) is an example of a country comprised of several nations where the elites are part internal and part external. The last frame(III) is a frame in which the elites are completely external.



Figure 2 - Different levels of elites

Source: author

This also results in different uses of the heartland discourse and also in differences which parties are the potential biggest threat towards a liberal democracy. Most scholars agree that the biggest threat to a democracy is a tyrannical majority (Handy, 2001) (Tocqueville,

1835-1840) (Cunningham, 2002). When the elites are partially external or completely external, like in the cases of the VB and the UKIP, this also might implicate that when the influence of these elites is reduced or removed their discourse might tone down and shift towards a more generally inclusive discourse. Because their biggest argument now is that they lost control over their own country to (partially) external elites. For the PVV in the Netherlands this is different. As the 'corrupt' elites are from the same people. This point of view might automatically lead to a minority which is oppressed by the majority. As the parties which are labeled elites by the populist might eventually become the minority. This might lead to the conclusion that the PVV is the one true populist party. As there might be other rational arguments to be found why the external elites should not have sovereign control.

Other smaller interesting evolutions of discourse can be found within the liberal conservative parties as they start to use more references to 'people' with each passing election. Even though it is still just only in their use of a 'the people' discourse. All other populist discourse indicators remain at a steady low or non-existent level. It appears they are adapting some of the styles used by the populist parties. Which is the only signal found within all party manifestos that the populist discourse is being used in a wider sense or that more parties are showing populist characteristics. A possible explanation for this trend within the liberal conservative party family might be that they are the party family with the closest distance on the left-right political axis to the populist and Eurosceptic parties as can be shown in Table 4.

In the introduction chapter of this research a lot of attention is given towards the crisis of democracy academic debate. And to try and give some insights towards whether western European society is or is not become less democratic has always been a secondary goal of the researcher. When combining the different aspects of the analysis in order to answer this question the researcher has to conclude that even though the analysis of the populist discourse of these parties has delivered very useful insights there can be given no clear definitive answer to the question whether western society is becoming post-democratic or less democratic. This is due to two different reasons. The first is that the evolution within the use of the populist discourse has been minimal. Only the liberal conservative parties start using a 'the people' discourse more frequently but this is the only party family which does so. Furthermore the five parties do not give a complete view of all aspects of society. The green parties and the socialist parties are missing on the left end of the political spectrum.

The last paragraph of this conclusion is going to be spent on the implications of this research for society. Populist characteristics will probably always be present within certain political parties in a liberal democratic society because the liberal democratic system has its own design flaws. It is in the presence of all characteristics in which the biggest threat towards the complete functioning of the liberal democratic system can come forward. In the current

modern times it might be possible that the current system needs to be evaluated. Social media is being used by many populist leaders. It is a medium which might have a bigger influence than the independent media. All these new and modern innovations have the effect to influence the balance of the liberal democratic society. Each influence should be carefully weighed and analysed in determining if it can tip the balance in a negative way. In the same way this should be done for a proposed alteration of the checks and balances or by giving the majority a bigger say in the decision making process. Within a liberal democracy balance is the key to a stable society. The balance is easily tipped which can have big consequences for society. But things can be done in order to prevent the balance from being tipped. The foremost solution seen by the researchers is one of the main reasons why Tocqueville starts writing about democracy; education. Educate the people what a liberal democracy is. Educate them why certain things happen certain ways and show them the effect of tipping the balance. Education and informing about liberal democracy lies at the heart of the solution when one wants to prevent populism in tipping the balance.

5.2 DISCUSSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

After having performed this research my main conclusion is that it has provided some interesting new theories and ideas which could be used in continued research and in strengthening theories. Even though this research has been conducted with the utmost precautions it has its limitations. The three chosen countries have a similar liberal democratic tradition. However their systems of government and nation specific problems make it difficult to compare certain parts of the discourse. Furthermore the chosen parties for this research are somewhat skewed to the right as there are no green parties and socialist parties chosen for this research. As the extreme right and the extreme left the first follow up for this research would be to determine if the extreme left and left parties would undergo a similar transition as the liberal conservative parties in using more 'the people' discourse. If this is the case it might mean that parties on the far ends of the left and right axis might be more susceptible in using populist discourse.

One of the most interesting questions of this time, whether society is becoming more or less democratic, could be answered due to the chosen research design. In order to be able to do so it would have been better to delve more complete into one of the three countries. And when focusing on only one country all parties who participated within the elections within the chosen time period should be taken into the equation. This way an increase in parties using more indicators of populist discourse might be discerned. If this research would be continued with a follow up research, the researcher would focus more deeply on the Netherlands. The beginning of 2017 was the election period within the Netherlands. And within the Netherlands the 2017 elections stood in the light of many new parties like GeenPeil, VNL, Denk and Forum

voor de Democratie. Each of these parties use a discourse in the media which has similarities with the chosen indicators of populism in this research, Thus even though this research can give no decisive answer if Dutch society is becoming more influenced by populist parties the researcher is not convinced of this fact. A thorough in depth analysis of the elections within the Netherlands between 2000-2017 taking all parties who participated in those elections into account would be able to give an answer to this question. Especially when data is taken from more sources than only party manifestos and election programs. Party manifestos are used by parties to present their core values and ideas including what they want to change in society. As most parties are not always in the government and governments really can't change things that drastically in four or five years, party manifestos tend to alter very little over time. Thus a wider data source would be recommended in a follow up research.

Also interesting for continued research is the situation within the UK. As the time period for this research was pre-Brexit referendum. All party manifestos researched talk about the possibility of a Brexit referendum. Now that the referendum has passed and the UK is leaving the EU one of the more interesting developments to follow would be to see towards what the UKIP will transition. Will it become a populist party like the PVV? Or is it going to become a mainstream right conservative party and will one of Taggart(2004) options prove right that with the passing of time each populist party will either become mainstream or render itself obsolete. Another interesting UK party to follow in the following period of time is the SNP. As said in the analysis part of this research the SNP is showing more and more populist discourse. After the Remain-referendum and the Brexit-referendum the Scottish party might transition more to a more populist natured party.

Interesting theoretical conclusions which could be drawn from this research lie in two aspects. The first is one which is about the chameleonic nature of populism (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012) (Taggart, 2004). As this research has shown some aspects of a countries nature appear to influence the form of discourse a populist party uses. When this is combined with one of the hunches explained said earlier in this discussion paragraph, whether the far ends of the left and right axis might be more easily susceptible for populism, might lead to the conclusion that although populism has a chameleonic nature which adapts more easily to some ideologies. Whilst it also might have a slightly different affect per ideology, type of country and form of government of country.

The final remark of this discussion chapter is going to be directed towards Colin Crouch(2003). The researcher sees a lot of similarities between the tendencies seen by Tocqueville for a democratic society and a society transitioning into a post-democracy. Most of the aspects causing the transition towards post-democracy argued by Crouch (2003) are coming from either a financial, monetary or economical perspective. The researcher is of an opinion that it

would be interesting in theorizing that the driving force behind the transition into a post-democratic society can also come from more sociological effects of democracy. Which might be given form through the populist theory and the tendencies seen by Alexis du Tocqueville.

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7. APPENDIXES

7.1 APPENDIX I – OVERVIEW OF PARTY MANIFESTOS

Country	Party	Election Year	Title of Manifesto	Total pages
UK	Conservatives	2001	Time for Common Sense	25
		2005	It's time for Action	32
		2010	Invitation to join the government of Britain	131
		2015	Strong leadership, A Clear economic plan, a brighter, more secure future	84
	Labour	2001	Ambitions for Britain	44
		2005	Britain Forward not back	56
		2010	A future fair for all	76
		2015	Britain can be better	86
	Libdem	2001	Freedom Justice Honesty	70
		2005	The real alternative	20
		2010	Change That works for you	57
		2015	Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone	158
	SNP	2001	The heart of the manifesto	29
		2005	Let's make Scotland matter	24
		2010	Taking Scotland forward	44
		2015	Stronger for Scotland	56
	UKIP	2005	We Want our country back	8
		2010	Empowering the people	16
		2015	Believe in Britain	76
Belgium	CD&V	2003	Voor mensen en Waarden	86
		2007	Samen Werken	64
		2010	Nooit opgeven	66
		2014	3D plan	257
	N-VA	2003	18 redenen voor zes miljoen Vlamingen	25
		2007	Voor een sterker Vlaanderen	61
		2010	Nu Durven veranderen	70
		2014	Verandering voor vooruitgang	96
	SP.A	2003	Politiek gaat over mensen	5
		2007	Gemeenschappelijke programmatekst sp.a-spirit	10
		2010	We moeten weer vooruit	44
		2014	Sociale welvaart	286
	VB	2003	Een toekomst voor Vlaanderen	98
		2007	Toekomstplan voor Vlaanderen	31
		2010	Vlamingen 1St	51
		2014	Uw stok achter de deur	40
	VLD	2003	Contract met de burger	20

		2007	De open samenleving in de praktijk	112
		2010	Een nieuwe start	61
		2014	Vlaanderen vleugels geven	56
<hr/>				
Netherla	CD	2002	Betrokken samenleving, betrouwbare overheid.	44
nds		2006	Vertrouwen in Nederland. Vertrouwen in elkaar.	109
		2010	Slagvaardig en samen	103
		2012	Iedereen	86
	<hr/>	2002	Toekomst in eigen hand	31
	d66	2006	Het gaat om mensen	98
		2010	We willen het anders	47
		2012	En nu vooruit	37
	<hr/>	2002	Samen voor de toekomst	82
	pvd	2006	Samen sterker werken aan een beter Nederland	121
		2010	Iedereen telt mee	45
		2012	Nederland sterker en socialer	77
	<hr/>	2002	Ruimte, Respect & vooruitgang	52
	vvd	2006	Voor een samenleving met ambitie	4
		2010	Orde op zaken	42
		2012	Niet doorschuiven maar aanpakken	64
	<hr/>	2006	Een nieuwe gouden eeuw, Klare wijn	6
	pvv	2010	De agenda van hoop en optimisme	60
		2012	Hún Brussel, óns Nederland	56