Populism: What We can Learn from Latin America and the World

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Abstract

Grounded on the (mis)understanding of populism in Thailand, this paper revisits a wide range of conceptual frameworks of populism in Latin America and the world. I propose that we should categorize them broadly into two groups according to their ontological significance: political or economic. Particularly fundamental in this paper will be theories, observations, and debates in Latin American populism studies, especially those put forth by Gino Germani, Torcuato di Tella, Kurt Weyland, Ernesto Laclau, Kirk A. Hawkins, Cas Mudde, Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, Carlos de la Torre, and Rudi Dornbusch with Sebastian Edwards. Drawing on different conceptual frameworks developed here, a number of Latin American cases that have frequently been mentioned in Thai media outlets when they refer to the perils of populism are concomitantly examined: Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Venezuela. Essentially, the analysis focuses on the three countries' socioeconomic developments and changes in public policies to assess how and why populisms in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Venezuela – depending on theoretical lens, time and space – can or cannot be qualified as political and/or economic populism.

Keywords: populism, Latin America, Thailand

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Introduction

The scene of Bangkok in 2006 was tumultuous and chaotic. Earlier that year, a group of leading media and opposition figures had established the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), also colloquially known as the "Yellow Shirts," and called for a street protest to voice their dissents against the Thaksin Shinawatra government's (2000-2006) suspicious deeds. Collectively wearing t-shits and scarfs in bright yellow, thousands of Bangkokian urbanites occupied the streets of the capital for more than half a year, demanding Thaksin's resignation and political reforms. To be sure, their demands would go further, from calling for King Bhumibol's intervention to crying for a military coup. Among many of the PAD's allegations against the popularly elected Prime Minister who held robust bastions in the poverty-stricken north and northeastern regions were corruption, suppression of freedom of expression, anti-monarchical inclination, and, perhaps the most important, his "populist" politics.

Several months before the prolonged mass demonstrations culminated into a successful, bloodless military putsch on September 19, a number of think tanks and news outlets fervently spurred opinion pieces and researches on the calamity of what they branded as "Thaksin's populism." Public scholars also turned to the media and newspapers to dissect the abnormalities and polarizations in Thai politics, assiduously ascribing the current civil unrests under Thaksin's growing authoritarian proclivity to his populist politics. In 2003, for example, Sawai Boonma, former Senior Country Economist at the World Bank and fierce critics against the government, released a book entitled *Populism: a disaster from Argentina to Thailand?* where he drew comparisons between Argentina's Peronism and "Thaksinomics". As the name of the book shows, the author considers populism essentially detrimental to democracy and destructive to the economy (Boonma, 2003). Anthropologist Theerayut Boonmee, in his 2004 book *Road Map Thailand*, saw populism as "clientelism through state policies"; that it is another form of clientelism in which the patrons are no longer the elites or individual politicians but the state (Boonmee, 2004, p.52). But perhaps the most important work on the issue was that of Anek Laothamatas (2006), a scholar-turned-politician who was one of the leading opposition figures. On the eve of the 2006 military coup, he published a highly problematic (but ubiquitously cited) research report entitled *Thaksin–Populism:*

meaning, problems, and solutions, sponsored by the government-owned King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI). In addition to Theerayut's idea of populism as "clientelism through state policies", Anek's publication was fundamentally based on Latin America's experience of populism and the structuralist views. All in all, this school of scholarly works saw populism as incompatible with democracy and inherently associated with redistributive policies and personalistic leadership.

Years later, a new wave of scholarly and journalistic pieces on Thai populism would essentially emerge again during the Yingluck Shinawatra government (2011-2014), grounded on general public perceptions, spurious comparisons with Latin American nations (especially Argentina and Venezuela), and a series of previous ill-researched literature in Thai language on Thaksin populism. For instance, Sawai Boonma in 2012 released the freshly updated edition of his 2003 book, but this time he additionally integrated the case of Hugo Chávez's Venezuela into his analysis in order to stress the "disastrous" effects of populism (Boonma, 2012). Similarly, Somkiat Tangkitvanich, president of the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), also extensively published articles criticizing fiscal irresponsibility and monetary unsustainability of Yingluck's "populist policies" and called for the government to "resolve populist policies by democracy" (Tangkitvanich, 2014). All in all, among many pretexts under which the opposition attacked Yingluck and which the military claimed for staging the coup in May 2014 was, unsurprisingly, the Shinawatra sibling's populist politics.

Grounded on the aforementioned (mis)understanding, this paper revisits a wide range of conceptual frameworks of populism in Latin America and the world. I propose that we should categorize them broadly into two groups according to their ontological significance: political or economic. Particularly fundamental in this section will be theories, observations, and debates in Latin American populism studies, especially those put forth by Gino Germani, Torcuato di Tella, Kurt Weyland, Ernesto Laclau, Kirk A. Hawkins, Cas Mudde, Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, Carlos de la Torre, and Rudi Dornbusch with Sebastian Edwards. Drawing on different conceptual frameworks developed here, a number of Latin American cases that have frequently been mentioned in Thai media outlets when they refer to the perils of populism are concomitantly examined: Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Venezuela. Essentially, the analysis focuses on the three countries'

socioeconomic developments and changes in public policies to assess how and why populisms in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Venezuela – depending on theoretical lens, time and space – can or cannot be qualified as political and/or economic populism.

Content

"*You don't know what it is, but you can tell it apart when you see one*": Towards what populism is and how it has been defined

For more than half a decade, both scholars and journalists alike have long been debating over and attempting to define what populism is. One of the pioneering efforts first began in 1967 at a conference led by Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner at the London School Economics. A group of leading scholars gathered to discuss and delineate what they saw as "the new specter haunting the world": populism (De La Torre, 2000, p. x). But despite such vibrant scholarly conversations and debates, no general agreement was reached. "There can, at present, be no doubt about the importance of populism," the conference report wrote, "But no one is quite clear just what it is. As a doctrine or as movement, it is elusive and protean. It bobs up everywhere, but in many contradictory shapes. Does it have an underlying unity or does one name cover a multitude of unconnected tendencies?" (Ionescu and Gellner, 1989, p. 1). Populism means different things to different people.

To be sure, the disagreements over the definition of populism have persisted well until today. While some consider it as a political strategy, an ideology, a discursive approach, a semi-authoritarian regime or an abnormal phase towards modernization, others see it as a set of irresponsible macroeconomic policies, a political style, a regime of "democratic illiberalism" or a moral and Manichean discourse. To make the matter further complicated, unlike "democrat", "conservative", "liberal" or "socialist", populism is a term which one rarely uses for calling one's self because it holds an intrinsically negative meaning. According to Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, only few politicians self-identify as populists – not even the most recognizable figures of populism such as Argentina's iconic Juan Domingo Perón or Thailand's Thaksin Shinawatra: "[P]opulism is a label seldom claimed by people or organizations themselves," Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017, p. 2) wrote, "Instead, it is ascribed to others, most often

with a negative connotation". From calling politicians as diverse as the conservative US president Donald Trump or Venezuela's radical left *El Comandante* Hugo Chávez as "populist," it is certainly not an exaggeration to argue that the meaning of populism remains a contested terrain in each and every one of disciplines in social science nowadays.

Traditional definition

An Italian-born sociologist who fled Mussolini's Italy to Argentina, Gino Germani was among the first scholars who pioneered the study of Latin American populism. In his seminal 1962 book, Germani scrutinized the rises of populist leaders of Latin America's three largest countries in the 1930s-1940s: Mexico's Lázaro Cárdenas, Brazil's Getúlio Vargas, and Argentina's Juan Domingo Perón (Germani, 1962). Grounded on modernization theories, he depicted politics as primarily shaped by economic policies and subsequent societal changes, hence populism could and should be explained by analyzing socioeconomic factors. According to him, the global economic crisis of the 1930s forced export-led nations in Latin America to make a substantial structural change in order to appease the external shocks that damaged the national economy. This essentially gave rise to what came to be called "import-substitution industrialization" (ISI) economic policies in the region's three major countries. Through this state-led, inward-looking strategies, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico were believed to be embarking on a modernization process similar to that of Europe. Therefore, such a progress should have given birth to a civil society and the masses/the working class, whose subsequent bottom-up mobilizations would develop into modern forms of institutions for social and political integration: unions, parties, organizations, and legislation. A Euro-centric, Germani saw this European-based process of mass incorporation as "natural", for the changes were led by the civil society, and the demands of the emerging masses/the urban working class could be channeled through self- organized institutions.

On the contrary, Latin American experiences of modernization fundamentally differed from the European model, he argued. While Latin America's ISI policies similarly engendered industrialization and urban working class, it was an endeavor led by the state rather than the private sector as in Europe. The masses were incorporated into

politics in a top-down manner without any formal institutions to channelize their demands, causing what he described as "asynchronousness" and an aberration of modernization process (Germani, 1969, p. 476). These eventually resulted in a lack of bottom-up civil society and an abnormal form of integration expressed in national-popular movements: populism. According to Germani's historicist structuralist view, populism is simply a phase within Latin America's transition from premodern to modern society in which the popular mass is vertically incorporated and manipulated by its leader. It is essentially a class-based movement associated with the ISI and expansionary, redistributive economic policies aimed at accommodating the masses through clientelist network.

Another Italian-born scholar who moved to Argentina, Torcuato di Tella, expanded Germani's observation further to highlight the elite leader's capability to maintain the backing from the elite while mobilizing his or her followers at the same time. In other words, it is a multi-class alliance rather than a class-based movement like Germani observed. "Populism", wrote di Tella (1965, p. 401), "is a political movement which not only holds strong popular support, but also has the participation of non-working-class sectors who have significant influence in the party and the support from those who hold anti-status quo ideology". In addition to the support from the elite and mass mobilization, another feature which he argued is pivotal to the populist leader's sources of strength is "a widespread ideology or emotional tie that favors [direct] communication between leaders and followers and creates a collective enthusiasm". This is precisely when charismatic leadership comes into play. Numerous studies on Perón and Peronist network in this regard – the excellent works by Plotkin (2003) and Auyero (2001), for instance – corroborate di Tella's observation.

All in all, these early theories of populism as defined by Germani and di Tella, although basically revolving around modernization and expansionary economic policies, are valuable for their characterization of an intimate relationship between a charismatic leader and the "people", urban-based labor as core constituency, and personalistic leadership/charisma.

Change in contexts

Following Samuel Huntington's theory put forth in his pivotal 1991 book, a number of Latin American nations, including but not limited to Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, and Brazil, can be located within the global context of the second wave of democratization (1945-1964). Mexico remained an exception due to the one-party rule by the PRI. Along with "classical populism", it was precisely a period in which the population also saw mass enfranchisement, popular elections, and progressive social movements. However, by the 1960s this wave of democracy in Latin America subsided and was replaced instead by the wave of military coups that started to plague the region with the 1964 Brazilian military coup ousting President João Goulart. As the Cold War intensity escalated, more and more Latin American countries fell under US-backed military dictatorship. Populism, as understood through a structuralist lens, was believed to be curtailed and exterminated. Another phase of history is believed to have come to pass.

As the third wave of democracy ushered throughout the world, Latin America was no exception. Beginning with the death of the caudillo Francisco Franco and Spain's subsequent democratization in 1975, Latin American military regimes followed a similar path. The "bureaucratic authoritarian regimes" – a term coined by Guillermo O'Donnell in 1988 – either collapsed with disgrace (as in Argentina) or retreated relatively smoothly back to the barracks (as in Brazil and Chile) throughout the late 1970s until the end of the 1980s. The return to democracy, however, was accompanied by a new wave of populist leaders such as Brazil's Fernando Collor de Mello, Peru's Alberto Fujimori, Ecuador's Abdalá Bucaram, and Argentina's Carlos Menem. The puzzle is that these presidents did not implement neither ISI nor redistributive policies that were largely characterized within a structuralist/traditional understanding of populism. As a matter of fact, certain contemporaries of Perón, Cárdenas, and Vargas – such as Ecuador's José María Velasco Ibarra – did not even implement ISI policies. De la Torre demonstrated in his work that the Ecuador under Velasquismo remained an agricultural-based society, yet Velasco Ibarra is consensually considered as populist (De La Torre, 2000). In a stark contrast of most populists in the first half of the 20th century, Latin American populist leaders in the 1980s were strongly pro-market, enacting a neoliberal agenda at full steam

and vowing to tackle the economic debacle left behind by the military governments, particularly hyperinflation and macroeconomic mismanagement.

Political populism

Kurt Weyland (2001) was among the first scholars to argue against the traditional "cumulative" definitions of populism. He contended that the previous studies which "assumed a close connection between populist politics and its social roots, socioeconomic background conditions, and/or substantive policies, especially expansionary economic programs and generous distributive measures" have failed to thoroughly explain why neoliberals like Fujimori and Menem were also regarded as populists. Proposing that populism should be first and foremost placed within a political domain rather than linked to economic or social realms, Weyland argued that the term should be defined as a "political strategy" or a "specific way of competing for and exercising political power." He wrote that this reconceptualization captures best the basic goal of populist leaders, which is to win and exercise power while using economic and social policy as an instrument for this purpose. Moreover, this redefinition also encompasses the dichotomic nature of populism which usually rests upon "the distinction of friend versus foe" or "a leader's promise to protect the people from a pernicious enemy." Populism in this sense, therefore, is more flexible and "most attuned to the opportunism of populist leaders and their weak commitment to substantive policies, ideas, and ideologies." As a result, he divided Latin American populists into two broad subtype categories: "classical populism" of the 1930s and 1940s and "neopopulism" of the 1980s and 1990s. Later on, when the rise of Hugo Chávez's anti-neoliberal influence engendered a series of similar phenomena in the region: Evo Morales, Rafael Correa, and the Kirchner, Weyland argued that this wave of left-leaning populist leaders was noticeably different from both classical and neo- populism in a number of aspects, although the political strategies they employed remained largely the same. He called them "radical populism" (Weyland, 2013, pp. 120-123).

According to Weyland (2001), populism is consisted of (1) an individual, personalistic leader who seeks or exercises government power, and (2) large numbers of followers from whom the individual leader received support. In fact, he stressed that

populism is crucially leader-centric and not the same as social movements. “Populism emerges,” he wrote, “when personalistic leaders base their rule on massive yet mostly uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of people”. As a result, populist leaders need a set of key instruments for mobilizing the largely unorganized masses and for demonstrating their distinctive power capability, such as “elections, plebiscites, mass demonstrations, and most recently opinion polls.” By mobilizing the masses through such direct means, they are typically inclined to have little to no regard or respect for checks-and-balances institutions. Additionally, because their mass support is naturally uninstitutionalized, fragile and fickle, they also have to “create a particularly intense connection to their followers” by drawing on “the potency of charisma”. Weyland also noted that some populist leaders, once in power, may choose to formally institutionalize themselves into an organization or a clientelist network by “routinizing their charisma.”

All in all, Weyland highlighted that his theory manages to preserve “the central rationale of populism [that is] the quest for political power” but at the same time “leaves the association of populist politics with specific social constituencies, economic settings, and socioeconomic policies open for empirical research.” Contrary to that of Germani or di Tella, Weyland’s theory of populism as a political strategy not only renders it timeless but also liberates it from being associated with any kind of ideologies or class alliance. Neither was it merely a transitional phase linked to economic policies, nor a result of aberrant modernization.

Along the same line, De la Torre (2000) studied both classical and neo-populism in Latin America – particularly the Ecuadoran cases of Velasco Ibarra and Bucaram – by situating populism strictly within political realm. Free from any economic inclination and focusing on the personalistic leadership, he defined populism “as a style of political mobilization based on strong rhetorical appeals to the people and crowd action on behalf of a leader”. Populist politics, in his view, is comprised of (1) Manichaean and moralistic discourse dividing society into two antagonistic camps; (2) clientelist networks; and (3) different forms of political participation that prioritize mass demonstration and leaders over citizenship rights and liberal democratic values. Through these frameworks laid by Weyland and De la Torre, it is now possible to begin explaining why politicians

as diverse as Perón, Chávez, Fujimori, Menem, or even Trump and Duterte, can be labelled as "populist".

Another breakthrough in the studies of populism and in the effort to develop its minimal definition can be found in Ernesto Laclau's remarkable 2005 book *On Populist Reasons* and his chapter in Francisco Panizza's edited volume published in the same year. Unlike conventional wisdoms which treat populism and mass politics with negative connotations (a transitional phenomenon, economic negligence, manipulation, demagoguery, anti-intellectualism or authoritarianism), Laclau proposed that populism should be studied and viewed as a political logic and a discourse. Similar to Weyland and De la Torre but greatly different from Germani and di Tella, he saw populism as a discursive form of doing politics which can emerge anywhere at any time. It generally involves a charismatic leader who employs dichotomic discourse to galvanize mass mobilization by constructing two irreconcilable political subjects: the people and the enemy.

The Argentine scholar began his approach to populism by stressing that it is imperative to start with "social demand" as the smallest unit of analysis in the formation of the social link. According to him, there are two kinds of social demands: the satisfied ("democratic demand") and the unsatisfied ("popular demand"). He argued that demands in the first type, if punctually or individually satisfied through institutions or formal channels, "do not construct any chasm or frontier within the social" (Laclau, 2005*b*, p. 36). On the contrary, if different sectors within a society see a number of their demands rejected, the accumulation process will take place: "[A]ll will share the fact that their demands remain unsatisfied. That is, the demands share a negative dimension beyond their positive differential nature". This very first circumstance – the aggregation of unsatisfied/popular demands – is part and parcel of what Laclau called the first stage of the preconditions of populism.

Against this backdrop comes "the logic of equivalence". It is a process in which all the unfulfilled demands, "in spite of their differential character, tend to reaggregate themselves, forming what we will call an equivalential chain" among the people. The more democratic demands "are differentially absorbed within a successful institutional system," he wrote, "the weaker the equivalential links will be and the more unlikely the

constitution of a popular subjectivity." On the other hand, the equivalential links will be created in a situation where "a plurality of unsatisfied demands and an increasing inability of the institutional system to absorb them differentially co-exist". According to Laclau, this constitutes the second precondition of a *populist rupture* or a breakaway with the status quo: the equivalential articulations of unsatisfied/popular demands. Once unsatisfied demands accumulate and the equivalential chain emerges, what follows in the next step is the discursive construction of an internal frontier. This is an idea which he called "the formation of antagonistic frontier" and which aims to divide the society into two camps: "the people" and "the power". This is precisely the third and final precondition: a dichotomic construction of the social around an internal frontier.

Laclau emphasized one of the most important elements in this theory: "the more the chain of equivalences is extended, the weaker will be its connection with the particularistic demands which assume the function of universal representation". Simply put, he argued that once the number of unfulfilled/popular demands increases, there will be a process in which the "particularities" of these demands are increasingly surrendered and reduced to a minimum until there is one "commonality." It is, therefore, imperative to construct a universal popular signification that can bring "equivalential homogeneity" to "a highly heterogeneous reality". This is what he termed as "empty signifier" – a word ["democracy", "poverty", "socialism", "immigration", "the oligarchy", etc.] that can mean different things to a myriad of people but at the same time fortifies the chain of equivalence and merge "the people" altogether into one single unit ("totality") against a discursively constructed "enemy". Interestingly, these ideas of Laclau effectively rebut a conventional wisdom that sees all kinds of populism as class-based, for the chain of equivalence and empty signifiers can very much cut through classes and bridge them altogether. Furthermore, because Laclau's populism is conceptualized as political logic, it can be employed to describe leaders from all kinds of political spectrum and economic preference.

Recently, a group of scholars such as Kirk A. Hawkins, Cas Mudde, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser have come up with a novel approach to explain the global reemergence of populism. Drawing largely from discursive theories of populism,

especially that of Laclau, Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017) proposed an "ideational conceptualization approach" to better understand and define populism.

Although there have been discussions over what populism really is (discourse, thin-centered ideology, political strategy, etc.), Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser's ideational approach first and foremost presents that populism entails "a set of ideas that can be combined with other ideological features," and that it always attaches itself to some "host" ideology. On an ontological level, they contended that populism contains some moral aspects, for it "sees politics as a struggle between the forces of good and the forces of a knowing, diabolical evil—hence, it is Manichaean or dualistic". It primarily "seeks the immediate political expression of the popular will and sees its opposition in such diabolical terms." At the center of populism, the authors stressed, is so-called popular identity or "the reified will of the ordinary folk who constitute the bulk of the citizenry," which is presented as the embodiment of democratic values. On the other hand, against this notion of the people is "an equally reified group of elites" who are seen as "anti-people" – a group that is "secretly aiming to subvert the popular will for selfish purposes." Crucially, Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser's ideational approach diverges from Weyland's populism as a political strategy in that it considers the role of the leader not necessarily central and hence populism can be used to describe attitudes, movements, and parties.

According to them, populism has at least two opposites: elitism and pluralism. The first – also shares the same Manichean worldview as populism – assumes that the people are dangerous, volatile and needs to be controlled while depicting the elite as a small group of actors who should be in charge of the government due to their intellectual and moral superiority. Pluralism, on the other hand, rejects the Manichaean distinction between the people and the elite and respects diversity of ideas and interests in society.

Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser argued that their ideational approach to populism is different from Laclau's discursive theory in that "it analytically separates the existence of populist language from its effect on politics". It also allows us, they continued, to "test propositions about the conditions under which populist rhetoric succeeds in its political goals" and could point to the fact "that a greater variety of movements and parties can be included under the populist umbrella, including minoritarian radical-right ones that may lack charismatic

leadership". As a result, based on the aforementioned theoretical foundation, the authors introduced a novel quantitative methodology drawn from a systematic reading of political speeches to empirically measure populist discourse and sharpen commonalities. The criteria and the analytical framework employed with the dataset tremendously help scholars to identify populists in a systematic way. Hawkins' 2010 monologue *Venezuela's Chavismo and Populism in Comparative Perspective* employed this framework to analyze how and why Hugo Chávez was qualified as populist. However, this article acknowledged the methodology's limitation. For example, it cannot reveal why populist leaders came to power or why their administrations had a positive or negative impact on democracy. Furthermore, focusing excessively on political speeches as the principal quantitative indicator could obscure and leave out a number of other populist traits, which would potentially weaken the result.

Economic populism

When asked what populism is, a number of ordinary people would possibly think of it a set of irresponsible economic policies. Indeed, this aspect of populism is equally important and should be looked at along with its political meanings. Following a structuralist approach based on Latin American classical populism, James Malloy (1987) saw it as "redistributive, nationalist, and inclusionary state policies" that are opposite to "exclusionary policies that benefit foreign capital, concentrate economic resources, and repress popular demands". However, the most comprehensive work on economic meaning of populism was better explained by Rudi Dornbusch and Sebastian Edwards in 1991, based largely on the Peruvian and Chilean experiences during the presidencies of Alan García and Salvador Allende, respectively. At the zenith of Latin America's left-leaning "radical populism" of the 2000s, Edwards published a book on the topic again in 2012. Purely from an economic dimension, Dornbusch and Edwards defined populism as a set of macroeconomic policies which "emphasizes growth and income distribution and deemphasizes the risks of inflation, external constraints, and the reaction of economic agents to aggressive nonmarket policies." It usually comes with high and unsustainable fiscal deficits, expansive monetary policies, and wage increases that are not justified based on increases in productivity. Although beginning with great euphoria, he added, the cycle usually ends "with rapid inflation—and in some cases hyperinflation—higher unemployment, and lower wages. Time after time these policies

ultimately fail, hurting those groups (the poor and the middle class) that they are supposed to favor". Vibrantly encapsulating this definition of economic populism were Chávez's economic policies during the oil boom era of the 2000s.

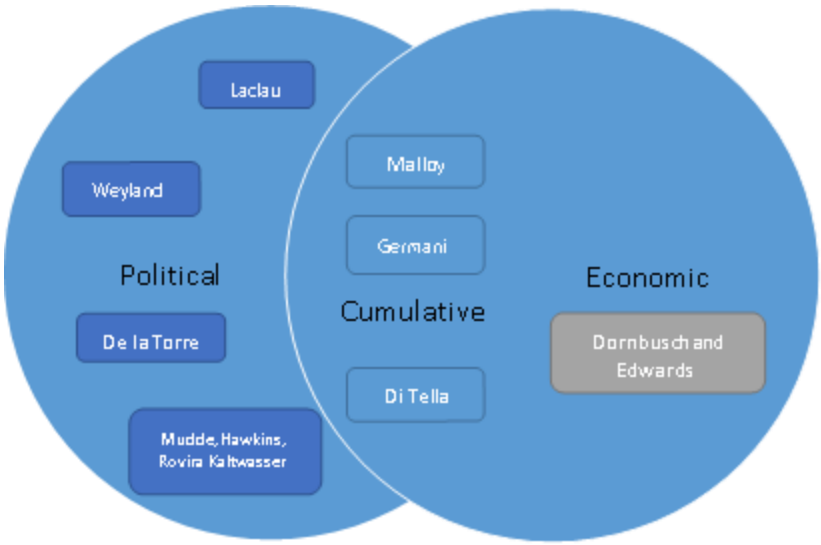

Figure 1: Main theories of populism according to their meanings

Conclusion

To conclude the article, Figure 1 summarizes the theoretical frameworks that have been reviewed so far in this paper. It divided them into two broad categories according to its definition: political or economic. The theories by Laclau, Weyland, Mudde, Hawkins, Rovira Kaltwasser and de la Torre are located within the political realm, regardless of their different subtypes (discourse, ideology, style, etc.). It should be noted that a number of theoretical frameworks on populism that have not been mentioned here – such as that of Canovan (1981), Panizza (2005), Finchelstein (2017), or Pappas (2019) – should be placed on the political side as well. On the other hand, Dornbusch and Edwards's theory of macroeconomic populist policies is situated within the economic meaning. In the middle between the two categories is the "cumulative definition," which is derived from an effort to clarify the classical populism that blends a political definition with redistributive, inclusionary economic policies.

To avoid conflating the different shades of populism in any analysis, I propose that we should refrain from employing the cumulative approach and that two dimensions of populism must be examined separately: (1) the ways in which these leaders were doing politics; and (2) the economic policies during their government. On one hand, certain leaders can be described as populist because of their ways of doing politics. In a strict sense, they are political populists because they claim to speak in the name of "the people", employ the unpluralistic discourse of "the people VS the other", and favor direct, personalistic communication between them and their bastion over liberal representative institutions. For example, Perón, Chávez, Fujimori are all notoriously well-known for their aggressive use of divisive discourse. Chávez labelled political elites and the opposition whom he saw as not part of Venezuela's "authentic people" as "imbeciles", "escuálidos", "traitors", or "pitiyanquis" (López-Maya and Panzarelli, 2012, p. 248). Likewise, the personalistic politics and the complete disrespect for checks-and-balances institutions of the popular Alberto Fujimori also prove the case. Perón's enchanting charisma among the crowd went along with a number of authoritarian attributes, such as the persecution of the opposition and the expropriation of newspapers that criticized him.

On the other, the leaders who are categorized into the group of "political populism" do not necessarily have to employ expansionary measures and/or "populist economic policies." For example, Carlos Menem, Alberto Fujimori, and Abdalá Bucaram all emerged into the national political arena because of the economic crisis and their promise to solve it. They all implemented strict austerity measures and did not employ redistributive policies like those of Chávez or Perón during his two presidencies. Contemporary "populist" leaders such as Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro, and Rodrgio Duterte fit precisely in this group of political populists.

In turn, those who use "populist economic policies" do not necessarily have to be classified as "political populism". For example, during his presidency Brazil's Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva employed redistributive measures, such as Bolsa Família, and issued a wide range of other public policies aimed at the low socioeconomic sector. Moreover, Lula was a charismatic leader, holding the enormous bastion of the urban poor. Nevertheless, he did not use political populist strategy nor style. He respected

institutions and pluralism and honored the opposition. Unlike his counterparts at the same period, he did not try to amend or rewrite the Constitution so that he could extend his presidential term limit.

Perón, Chávez and Morales are the ultimate examples of leaders that are qualified as populists both in political and economic sense. Not only did they encompass all the characteristics of political populism put forth by Laclau, Weyland, Mudde, Hawkins, Rovira Kaltwasser and De la Torre, but they also employed the macroeconomic populist policies as defined by Dornbusch and Edwards.

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