

POPREBEL

**Populist rebellion against modernity in 21st-century
Eastern Europe: neo-traditionalism and neo-feudalism**

Working Paper no. 1

The POPREBEL and FATIGUE Manifesto

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POPREBEL Working Paper series

POPREBEL (Populist rebellion against modernity in 21st-century Eastern Europe: neo-traditionalism and neo-feudalism) is a large Horizon 2020-funded research project on the rise of populism in Central and Eastern Europe. The aim of the project is to describe the phenomenon, create a typology of its various manifestations, reconstruct trajectories of its growth and decline, investigate its causes, interpret its meanings, diagnose its consequences and propose policy solutions.

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The POPREBEL consortium comprises six universities – UCL (co-ordinating institution), University of Belgrade, Charles University, Corvinus University of Budapest, Jagiellonian University and University of Tartu – and Edgeryders, a social enterprise.



Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Definitions of populism.....	5
3. Explanations of the rise of populism.....	8
4. Consequences.....	22
5. Responses/policy proposals.....	23
6. Understudied issues and dimensions	24
7. References.....	26



FATIGUE and POPREBEL: What Are They All About? A Programmatic Statement¹

1. Introduction

This is a document that constituted the foundation of our two successful applications. It has been written by Jan Kubik, in collaboration with several members of the team, during the fall of 2017 and early spring 2018. Its content – only slightly revised in October 2019 and September 2020 – presents our basic approach and summarizes the literature that we had managed to review before submission. This literature is growing exponentially and like many other colleagues working on these issues we are trying to keep up with it. In the future, we will share in this space our updated reflections on the field of populism studies.

FATIGUE and POPREBEL aim at taking stock of the recent rise of populism – in its various forms – in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). We will describe the phenomenon, create a typology of its various manifestations, investigate its causes, interpret its meanings, diagnose its consequences, and propose policy solutions. Our focus is on the CEE region, but we welcome comparative projects with populisms in other parts of the world, particularly Western Europe. Our approach is going to be thoroughly interdisciplinary.

Post-communist transformations have never run smoothly and in the same direction in all CEE countries. Since 1989, many states have struggled with corruption and the oligarchisation of politics, the high costs of often-botched economic reforms, and cultural disorientation generated by the fast pace of change. But roughly until the mid-2000s the political processes, although moving at various speeds and in a variety of directions, had features recognisable from the earlier waves of democratisation. There was also a certain path-dependent predictability in the country-specific dynamics initiated in 1989/91. While some countries were moving closer to the ideals of liberal democracy and others were drifting away, the cast of political actors ranged predictably from the left to the right, dominant constitutional dilemmas revolved around the choice of presidential or parliamentary systems, economic debates and conflicts focused on the choice of type of capitalism and welfare state optimal for a country or – more often – a given interest group, to take just a few examples. Importantly, liberal strands of many countries' political cultures were strong enough to matter politically, achieving in some states a rather unchallengeable – it seemed – position.

However, around the mid-2000s these ostensibly predictable processes stalled, and the political trajectories of several countries veered off in new directions. It remains to be determined to what degree this rightward and populist shift of the political scene – the most striking feature of this change – had been presaged, underpinned and fuelled by the emergence or reactivation of *neo-traditional* subcultures and trends in several areas of European life. Over the last several years, such re-traditionalising cultural tendencies often including high levels of ethnic or racial prejudice and fuelled by the increasingly boldly asserted right-wing ideologies, have become more acceptable in everyday lives, the media (particularly the new ones) and in political debates. More recently, they have helped to bring to the fore of the political life explicitly traditionalist right-wing populist parties that tend to play fast and loose with democratic procedures.² There is evidence that this process is more pronounced in the post-communist part of Europe (Zick, Küpper, and Hövermann 2011) and its appearance there is troubling to many observers, because – as it is sometimes argued – people's views and actions are not yet anchored in democratic habits and institutions as strongly as in the older democracies of the West.

A *Weimar Redux* thesis, once a far-flung speculation, has become a viable even if unlikely scenario (Sunstein 2018). It holds that the economic crisis of 2008 and multiple political crises have brought to the forefront of public life right-wing populists whose commitment to the procedures of democracy is tepid. As a result, the process of *democratic*

¹ I owe gratitude to the whole FATIGUE/POPREBEL team for an amazing flow of ideas that inspired me in many ways. In particular, I want to thank Richard Mole for his careful, critical reading of several drafts; Marta Kotwas for illuminating discussions of several issues presented here; and Naman Sarda for his editorial assistance. And special thanks to my Rutgers students who participated in the 'Seminar on the Rise of Right-wing Populism' (Fall 2017, Spring 2019, Fall 2019, Spring 2020) and through our animated discussions and their own research work helped me develop several ideas presented in this document.

² Müller (2016) emphasizes three main strategies of populists in power: state colonization, mass clientelism and discriminatory legalism. See chapter 'What Populists Do, or Populism in Power.'



backsliding has commenced, and it may – as an increasing number of observers worry – lead to the weakening of democracy and even the rise of some forms of authoritarianism.

The consequences for Europe may be serious. As the EU is trying to come to terms with Brexit and the general sense of malaise, the rise of right-wing populism spells trouble. The rightward reorientation of the political scene can destabilise domestic politics in several countries, undermine the established ways of doing business among European partners and lead to the rise of ‘uncivilised’ political behaviour and even violence. In Poland, the number of prosecutorial proceedings related to cases ‘motivated by racism, anti-Semitism or xenophobia’ increased from 473 in 2012 to 835 in 2013 and 1632 in 2016.³

The mechanisms and consequences of these cultural and political changes are the subject of intense debate. Our approach to understanding the rise of illiberal and populist politics in Central and Eastern Europe is based on the concept of delayed transformational fatigue. This concept is designed to attract attention to two phenomena at the centre of our approach. *Fatigue* helps to capture the condition of the economy, society and culture conducive to the emergence of support for populist ideology and its champions: people’s normative disorientation, impatience, disappointment, and the general lack of ‘sense,’ not necessarily related to the poor or declining economic performance. The basic idea of the project is that the multi-faceted and at least partially manufactured *fatigue* is the reason for the rise of populism, particularly its right-wing variety. It should be understood as a *cultural syndrome*, a *condition of the society*, and a form of *political crisis*, not just a psychological state. We will catalogue the manifestations of fatigue, the concept belonging to the study of the *demand side* of politics, in four interrelated dimensions: social, cultural, economic and political.

But we also observe that the rise of (right-wing) populism in CEE appears to be curiously *delayed*, given the evolution of the economic, political, and cultural situation in the region.⁴ While the economic crises and the sense of disorientation were often intense in the 1990s in several CEE countries, right-wing populism was either absent or marginal. Over time, as the economic situation was improving, particularly in Poland, the right-wing populist parties began gaining influence and eventually power. This suggests – as the scholars of social movements have realized some time ago – that the impact of economic factors on people’s behaviour is often, if not always, indirect. Poverty or a downturn in economic fortunes becomes a motor of politics when people have access to resources and organisations. Perhaps even more importantly, to become an effective political force, economic misfortunes need to be interpreted in a manner that makes the call for action attractive, feasible and sensible. Populists were initially, in the 1990s, neither well organized nor ideologically prepared. Over time they got their act together, started building their organisations and developed resonant ideologies (frames). For example, in Poland and Hungary, they poured time and energy into tedious mobilizational work at the level of civil society (Greskovits 2017, Ślarzyński 2017) and eventually started achieving political successes. The concept of delay highlights the significance of the *supply side of politics*.

The basic philosophy of FATIGUE/POPREBEL is laid out. The rest of this document proposes an initial set of conceptual tools (definitions, key analytical distinctions, and dimensions of analysis), based on a preliminary review of the existing literature. In order to assure the coherence of the final product (books and/or a set of papers), the individual FATIGUE and POPREBEL projects are strongly encouraged to adopt the basic concepts laid out here and strive to contribute to at least one of the reviewed thematic areas.

2. Definitions of populism

³ ‘Wyciąg ze sprawozdania dotyczącego spraw o przestępstwa popełnione z pobudek rasistowskich, antysemickich lub ksenofobicznych prowadzonych w I półroczu 2017 roku w jednostkach organizacyjnych prokuratury,’ Rzeczpospolita Polska, Prokuratura Krajowa (PK II P 404.4.2016), p. 10. Accessed at <https://pk.gov.pl/dzialalnosc/sprawozdania-i-statystyki/wyciag-ze-sprawozdania-dot-spraw-o-przestepstwa-popelnione-pobudek-rasistowskich-antysemickich-lub-ksenofobicznych-prowadzonych-polroczu-2017-roku-jednostkach-organizacyjnych-prokuratury/> Accessed on 5 July 2018.

⁴ Mutz, who challenges the idea that most people who voted for Trump did so because they were economically ‘left behind,’ observes a similar delay: ‘A second reason for scepticism regarding the left behind thesis involves timing. Trump’s victory took place in the context of an economic recovery. Throughout the year preceding the election, unemployment was falling, and economic indicators were on the upswing’ (2018:2).



There are two basic definitional distinctions that need to be carefully incorporated into the research designs of all ECR projects and /POPREBEL as a whole. They include:

- Thin versus thick populism
- Left versus right type of populism

2.1. *Thin versus thick populism*

The concept of populism has several meanings and definitions. This definitional embarrassment of riches is partially due to the fact that ‘actually existing’ populisms not only share similarities but also display considerable differences. Several authors have provided systematic reviews of these definitions (Müller 2016, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, Eatwell 2017a, and Moffitt and Tormey 2014) and a consensus seems to be emerging that there are three major ways to define the phenomenon: an ideational approach, a political-strategic approach, and a socio-cultural approach.⁵ Following the dominant trend, in FATIGUE/POPREBEL we adopt Mudde’s ideational definition (see for example Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017) and enrich the conceptual field this definition opens with insights offered by Moffitt and Tormey’s (2014) and Ostiguy (2017).

Mudde (2004) and later Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017) propose an *ideational approach* to populism and accordingly define it as an *ideology*. It is:

a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite,” and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017).⁶

In an earlier article, Mudde writes: ‘Populism presents a Manichean outlook, in which there are only friends and foes. Opponents are not just people with different priorities and values, they are *evil!* Consequently, compromise is impossible, as it “corrupts” the purity’ (2004:544). Thin populist ideology thus tends to be Manichean and strongly moralistic.⁷ There two principal rivals of this populism: *elitism* and *pluralism* (Müller 2017).

The intensity of populist ideology varies from one manifestation to another and many political programmes include at least some populist leanings (Muis and Immerzeel 2017:911). Importantly, thin ideology populism can be easily combined with other ideologies and in this process ‘thickens.’⁸ I propose to think about *thickening*, a process via which populist ideology acquires additional features, as one of the central conceptual foci of our project.

There are several ideologies – in themselves often incomplete – that may be mixed with thin populism to generate its thicker versions. (Radical) right-wing populism, an ideological formation of particular interest for many scholars – including us in this project – is an ideology fashioned by thickening thin populism with *nativism* and *authoritarianism* (Mudde 2007).

For Mudde, nativism is ‘an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state’ (2007:19). In turn, authoritarianism ‘is defined here as the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely. In this interpretation, authoritarianism includes law and order and “punitive conventional moralism”’ (2007:23).⁹

⁵ See Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser *et al.* 2017.

⁶ Kindle Locations 703-705.

⁷ As Müller writes: ‘Populism, I suggest, is a particular moralistic imagination of politics, a way of perceiving the political world that sets a morally pure and fully unified— but, I shall argue, ultimately fictional— people against elites who are deemed morally inferior.’ (2016: Kindle Locations 288-290).

⁸ The concept of thin ideology is defined and analysed by Freedon 1996.

⁹ Authoritarianism needs to be understood both as an ideological stance and a specific personality predisposition (Rensmann 2017:125, 128). Both share the emphasis on ‘the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely.’ It is related to Stenner’s influential formulation that the essence of authoritarianism is ‘a predisposition to intolerance’ (2005:2). Stenner reviews the literature and concludes: ‘The idea that there is a readily recognizable disposition that somehow brings together certain traits – obedience to authority, moral absolutism and conformity, intolerance and punitiveness toward dissidents and deviants, animosity and aggression against racial and ethnic out-groups – remains



The manner in which both nativism and authoritarianism function as thickening agents in concrete ideological elaborations of populism depends on specific socio-cultural contexts that, moreover, evolve over time. It is thus essential to both specify specific context-dependent features and try to identify general, context-independent patterns of thickening. While engaging in the former task, researchers need to consider other thickening agents, such as religion, that seem to be playing a more elevated role in the post-communist world than in Western Europe (Allen 2015).

Poland, for example, is a country whose culture is permeated by religious themes, where the Roman Catholic clergy and Catholic activists occupy positions of influence in public life and often use religion, both through discourse and action, as a tool of political mobilization, also in the service of populist causes (Stanley 2016). More often than not, such mobilizations invoke exclusivist, nationalized versions of Roman Catholicism. The general lesson is that in all our projects we must pay attention to the role of cultural resources usable or used in populist mobilisations. Such analyses should not, however, focus exclusively on discourses and public performances and displays, but also on the organisations cultural entrepreneurs build and rely on while engaging in politics.

Thin populism can be also thickened with discourses derived from *economic doctrines*. As is amply demonstrated in various studies on Latin American populisms, they have been ‘thickened’ by economic ideas coming either from the left (say, Chavez’s redistributive system) or the right (say, Fujimori’s neoliberalism).

I propose that we adopt in our project the *ideational approach* to populism but enrich it with insights from Moffitt’s (2016) Moffitt and Tormey’s *political style approach*. In a nutshell, while the ideational approach concentrates on the *content* of populist discourse, the political style approach urges us to pay equal attention to its *form*. For example, we want to study populist aesthetics that has something to do with its emotional appeal. Moffitt and Tormey write:

In this light, we define the concept of political style as *the repertoires of performance that are used to create political relations*. There are a wide range of political styles within the contemporary political landscape, including populist, technocratic, authoritarian and post-representative styles, all of which have their own specific performative repertoires and tropes that create and affect political relations. Key examples of practitioners of these respective political styles are Hugo Chávez, Angela Merkel, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Subcomandante Marcos (2014:387).

In this approach researchers are asked to focus their attention on the manner in which populist (particularly right-wing) rallies or demonstrations are staged and thus can be seen as a specific form of *political theatre*. Two dimensions of this theatre need to be observed and analysed: the form and content of symbolic displays and performative styles.

Some observers point out that populist displays and performances often employ elements from the ‘popular’ (‘low’) rather than ‘elite’ (‘high’) registers of their respective national cultures; we want to verify this observation and develop a deeper understanding of its significance.¹⁰ For Ostiguy populism is ‘the antagonistic, mobilizational *flaunting of the “low”* [emphasis added – JK].’¹¹ Populists routinely perform in the ‘low’ register of a given culture and use ‘slang or folksy expressions and metaphors, are more demonstrative in their bodily or facial expressions as well as in their demeanour, and display more raw, culturally popular tastes.’¹² Their performances are calibrated to emphasize the ‘native’ over the ‘cosmopolitan,’ ‘from here’ over ‘from there,’ ‘vernacular’ over ‘sophisticated.’¹³ Additionally, the political style associated with the ‘low’ register of culture is personalistic, rejecting and often mocking the procedural and impersonal manners of politicians performing in the ‘high’ register.¹⁴ Ostiguy thus asks for producing an inventory of various symbolic vehicles used in ‘flaunting the low’ and showing how they help populists achieve their political goals.

widespread’ (2005:3). See also Wodak 2018:62.

¹⁰ Ostiguy (2017), whose work is crucial here, relies on the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu who studied systematically the relationship between the cultural capital, analysed in terms of the low-high binary, and the economic determinants of class positions. See his *Distinction*.

¹¹ Ostiguy, 2017:Kindle Location 2429.

¹² Ostigut 2017: Kindle Locations 2286-2287.

¹³ For the analysis of the concept of the vernacular knowledge see Aronoff and Kubik 2013: 244-51.

¹⁴ For example, populist leaders often define their strength as ‘raw,’ and themselves as having ‘the balls.’ “‘Ballsyness,” however exactly defined, is a central attribute of the low in this political-cultural dimension.’ (Ostiguy 2017: Kindle Locations 2370-2371).



2.2. Left versus right types of populism

Left versus right distinction allows us to observe and compare such phenomena as, say, SMER in Slovakia (initially, at least, left-leaning thin populism), Syriza in Greece (left-leaning thick populism) and Fidesz in Hungary (right-leaning thick populism). It seems that there is not much thick left-leaning populism in Central and Eastern Europe, though SMER in Slovakia clearly belonged to this category, though eventually its political style and ideology have drifted right (Pytlak and Kossack 2015).

It is increasingly accepted in the literature that while the left-leaning (economic) populism can be usefully analysed in terms of the basic horizontal populist binary, that is *people versus elite* trope, right-wing populism is better approached in terms of a triad: *people-elite-enemy*, or – as Brubaker (2017) has it – in terms of a two dimensional-space.¹⁵ The logic of this triad (or space) is simple: ‘good’ people are juxtaposed horizontally to and threatened by ‘enemies’ (usually some ‘aliens’) and separated vertically from and ignored by ‘bad’ elites. Moreover, these elites are often seen as ignoring or even exacerbating the danger posed by ‘aliens’ (refugees, immigrants, ethnic or gender others, etc.). It is important that specific projects identify the instances of binary and tertiary logics in constructing populist ideologies.

The construction of ‘us-as-good-people’ against ‘them-as-aliens/enemies’ is accomplished through discursive manoeuvres that entail both setting up a *symbolic boundary* between these two imagined groups and defining the *cultural substance* of each group, usually by identifying its putative attributes. In CEE the populist mobilization of recent years has been aided by intensifying production of enemy images.¹⁶

The literature on populism (Mudde 2007, Inglehart and Norris 2016) emphasizes the significance of studying simultaneously two dimensions of populist politics, or for that matter any politics: the demand and supply sides. In projects focused on the former, researchers want to know *why* people look for and accept populist political projects. Studies of the supply side concentrate on *how* populist projects are constructed and delivered to voters. It is desirable to study both dimensions together to understand their interactions, but often it is not done for practical, for example financial, reasons. The FATIGUE/POPREBEL researchers need to be very clear which dimension they will focus on or emphasize in their projects. The issue is discussed further in Section 3.

In general, we should heed the appeals of several seasoned researchers of populism and try to reconstruct the patterns of interaction between the three mechanisms of populist mobilization: personalist, movement, and party. For example, Greskovits’ trailblazing study (2017) documents how civil society mobilization underpins the strengthening of the populist Fidesz’s party machine in Hungary.

3. Explanations of the rise of populism

While the demand for new political solutions has intensified in the last several years, populist ideas have gained political traction because of the concerted actions by populist actors (parties and movements) who improved their ‘products’ and increased their supply. Thus we need to study both the demand and supply factors that are responsible for the rise, maintenance, and decline of populist political formations.¹⁷ The rising popularity of populism is a result of a self-reinforcing (vicious or virtuous - depending on the ideology of the observer) cycle of causation in which demand and supply factors influence each other in an iterative fashion. Since such interactions develop across time, we adopt a *diachronic approach* to the studied phenomenon. In general, we are mindful that demand does not automatically generate (populist) supply.

¹⁵ ‘The notion of the people as nation is typically associated with right-wing populism, while the notion of people as a class (the class of the downtrodden which stands for the people as a whole) is characteristic of left-wing populism’ (Kriesi 2014:362). Rensmann (2017:125) warns against placing too much emphasis on this distinction. One of his examples is the German Left Party that is economically left but it also embraces nativism.

¹⁶ For the most recent analysis of these processes see the special issue of *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics*, 3, (3), 2017, entitled ‘Mobilization through Enemy Images in Central and Eastern Europe.’ Mudde (2007) provides a useful typology of ‘enemies’ in Chapter “Who is afraid of...”

¹⁷ ‘Irrespective of the type of political success, populist actors can thrive only when elite and mass populism come together’ (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017:98).



We also focus on the concept of *interaction* to carefully conceptualize the interplay of demand and supply factors over time. For example, a robust explanation of the “Orbanisation” of Hungarian politics or the Law and Justice’s somewhat unexpected 2015 electoral victory in Poland (and their predicted victory in 2019) needs to focus equally on *both* sides of politics. On the demand side, it is a delayed response to the transformational hardships (at least for some sectors of the society) and the sense of exclusion, alienation and the lack of existential security, intensified by the effects of the economic crisis of 2008. This seems to be the hallmark of the *late phase* of democratic consolidation. On the supply side, it is the skilful elaboration and propagation of illiberal/populist narratives, displays, and performances that are directed against various adversaries, most prominently: pluralism and the procedural understanding of democracy (liberal democracy), elites (often construed as tainted by their links to communism), and assorted internal or external enemies/aliens.

For the sake of the clarity of exposition and in an attempt to introduce some order into the existing array of explanations, in what follows I review the literature on the demand and supply factors separately, but I cannot overemphasize the idea that these factors produce outcomes of interest (the growing support for populist ideas and institutions) through *interactions that unfold over time in sequences that this project attempts to identify*.

There are several theories or theoretical sketches designed to explain the rise of populism, particularly its more extreme, right-wing variety (see, for example, Muis and Immerzeel 2017, Eatwell 2017b; Hawkins, Read and Pauwels 2017). But the debate tends to revolve around two central distinctions:

- Supply versus demand side in the explanations of the rise of populism
- Culture versus economy as the dominant dimension of the society “responsible” for the rise of populism

While the latter dichotomy is useful in focusing our attention on the arguably central theoretical debate, in this review I will rely first on a more complex conceptualisation of both the demand and supply sides, and consider: (1) social, (2) cultural, (3) economic, and (4) political dimensions of the rise of populism.

3.1. Fatigue (demand side)

3.1.1. Social demand

The social dimension of transformational fatigue, thus a set of social causes of the populist solutions’ rising popularity (demand for populism), has been usually studied in combination with either economic or cultural dimensions, rendering, respectively, socio-economic or socio-cultural explanations. This seems to be the case because it is the social effects of economic downturns or the actors’ interpretations of their situations rather than socio-structural changes alone or the situations in themselves that cause people to turn to populism for solutions. Nonetheless, there are important studies that see the rise of populism’s attractiveness as the consequence of such social phenomena as:

- breakdown of ‘old’ social structures
- progressing recomposition of the society due to immigration
- ethnic competition
- emergence of ‘losers’ in the new global division of labour
- appearance of a new class of *precariat*
- deepening class fragmentation and resultant social anomie
- disintegration of traditional communities

The *social breakdown thesis*, in one of its versions, holds: ‘that traditional social structures, especially those based on class and religion, are breaking down. As a result, individuals lose a sense of belonging and are attracted to ethnic nationalism, which according to psychological research increases a sense of self-esteem and efficacy.’¹⁸ The main

¹⁸ Eatwell 2017b (Kindle Locations 12885-12887). Kitschelt and McGann (2017) argue that ‘The structural change of society that has made possible the rise of the extreme Right is the transition to a postindustrial economy in which citizens’ political



reason for the breakdown is often seen in the acceleration of immigration and the societies' inability to integrate the newcomers that results in the growing sense of the collapse of 'the world as we know it.' The sense of social breakdown tends to be associated with the intensification, real or perceived, of competition with ethnic minorities, though also here causal patterns are complex (Rydgren 2007:250). In general, the impact of unemployment or immigration on the vote for populist parties does not seem to be straightforward and among other factors depends on the type of populism (supply factor). For example, Golder concludes that 'the level of unemployment and immigration matters for populist parties but not for neofascist parties' (2003:459).

Equally influential is the *global losers thesis* (Betz 1994) that sees the social downward mobility caused by economic troubles resulting from industrial relocations as a major cause of the rise of support for populists and their ideology. For another group of scholars, the rise of populism is related to what they see as the most important change in the class structure of the last decades: the emergence of a new social class, the *precariat* (Standing 2011, Braga 2018). It is argued that the growing ranks of precariat are particularly susceptible to the promises of populism.¹⁹ The emergence of this class is associated with the deepening social fragmentation²⁰ and growing isolation of individuals.²¹ As the mass society thesis formulated in the 1920s had it, isolation tends to breed anomie and that in turn predisposes people to accept radical ideologies, often on the right.²² Ethnographic case studies, often autobiographical (see for example, Vance 2016), portray communities whose social tissue is frayed and fractured and where the attractiveness of populist promises is on the rise.

Socio-psychological studies that seek to identify psychological attributes (cognitive, evaluative, and emotional) that predispose people to accept or at least be sympathetic to populist ideas and political solutions also seem to belong to the 'social' demand side. The literature is vast and I lack both competence and space to do justice to its many important findings, but I just want to note the elective affinity between the key attributes of populism and specific personality characteristics. Populist ideology, in both its thin and thick versions, portrays the world in a strongly polarized manner; there is little room for nuances and grey areas. It attracts people who are predisposed to black-and-white modes of conceptualising the world related to the need for *cognitive closure* (Golec de Zavala 2011a), displaying authoritarian tendencies (Stenner 2005) and prone to *collective narcissism* (Golec de Zavala 2011b). It is, however, important to remember that latent psychological predispositions become actual motivators of action when propitious situational triggers are present (Stenner 2009, Knowles and Tropp 2018). Such triggers are to be found among the economic, social, political, and cultural factors studied in the /POPREBEL projects.

3.1.2. Cultural demand

While the fourfold typology (social, cultural, economic, political) helps to systematize the factors that are invoked to explain the rise of (right-wing) populism with considerable precision, the debate on the dominant causes comes into the sharpest focus when it is couched in terms of the binary *culture versus economy*. Like all binaries this one is also dangerous as the price of an elegant formulation may be a conceptual map of distorting simplicity. It has, however, a venerable pedigree as one of the most influential distinctions in the history of social thought. It is enough to recall Weber's contrast between value- and instrumental-rationality, Coleman's discussion of homo sociologicus and homo economicus, March and Olsen's elaboration of the difference between the logics of appropriateness and

preferences and salient demands differ from those that prevailed in the Keynesian Welfare State of the post-World War II era, peaking in the 1960s.' (Kindle Locations 11175-11177).

¹⁹ "The precariat hovers on the borderline, exposed to circumstances that could turn them from strugglers into deviants and loose cannons prone to listen to populist politicians and demagogues" (Standing 2011:132).

²⁰ "Thinking in terms of social groups, we may say that, leaving aside agrarian societies, the globalisation era has resulted in a fragmentation of national class structures. As inequalities grew, and as the world moved towards a flexible open labour market, class did not disappear. Rather, a more fragmented global class structure emerged" (Standing 2011:7).

²¹ Eatwell 2017b: "There are undoubtedly studies which have found a connection between a high level of urban social isolation, including low religious and trade union ties, and voting for parties such as the FN or the REP" (Kindle Locations 12896-12897).

²² Eatwell 2017b: "In the Netherlands, a significant correlation has been found between ethnic Dutch nationalism, a preference for anti-immigrant parties and feelings of social isolation" (Kindle Locations 12897-12898).



consequentiality, Hawkins *et al.*'s distinction between the Durkheimian and Downsian logics,²³ or – simply – the never-ending discussion on the principal engine of human motivation: interests versus values/identities.

The matter is impossible to settle by empirical investigations alone, as their results are in some – albeit difficult to assess – measure determined by the accepted definition of the human being, assumptions about the nature of social reality, and the choice of concepts. While we are aware of these complications and prepared to entertain a range of ontological and epistemological choices in FATIGUE/POPREBEL projects, our ambition is to try to ascertain empirically if and when the emergence of populism is driven *predominantly* by economic and/or cultural factors, or to reconstruct the *actual iterative patterns of interaction* between the factors belonging to these two categories.²⁴

The culture-economy dilemma in the field of studies on the rise of populism has been analysed in several highly influential works (see for example Hawkins *et al.* 2017), largely focused on the demand side of analysis. While trying to complement or substitute economic explanations, the authors of such works emphasize various cultural factors, including:

- cultural backlash against modernity and/or globalization and/or multiculturalism²⁵
- silent counter-revolution (against cosmopolitan-liberal modernity)
- existence of dormant yet easy to mobilize (neo)traditional sub-cultures
- dread resulting from the desacralization of the world and the growing desire for counteraction
- growing mistrust in elites and political institutions
- loss of (subjective) social status

Bale (2017) captures the reason for the growing interest in the cultural dimension of the rise of populism with eloquence:

Just as political scientists had begun to take it for granted we had moved from an era of 'position politics' (the clash of big ideas between two tribes) to an era of 'valence politics' (where competence and credibility counts most), culture and identity came back with a bang, made all the more explosive by a pervasive feeling – especially among voters dispossessed and disoriented by the dizzying pace of social and economic change – of 'disconnect' with mainstream politicians.²⁶

In an influential paper based on the data collected in the World Values Survey, Inglehart and Norris (2016) argue that 'the surge in votes for populist parties can be explained not as a purely economic phenomenon but in large part as a reaction against progressive cultural change' (2-3) that is seen by a substantial portion of the populace as 'eroding the basic values and customs of Western societies' (30). In another formulation, the backlash becomes a more specific *silent counter-revolution* that's has been gathering strength for a while in reaction to the liberal-cosmopolitan cultural trend, often referred to as the 'revolution of 1968' (Ignazi 1992, Rensmann 2017, Bornschieer 2010:422).

It is however still not clear why populism has become the dominant ideology to frame this backlash. Taggart and Rovira Kaltwasser pointedly ask 'Why is it that people adhere to the populist ideology?' and answer:

This is a question that so far has received little attention, in part because many scholars and practitioners are inclined to assume that populism is a top-down phenomenon. However, recent research has shown that *the populist set of ideas is relatively widespread in society and, under certain circumstances, can be*

²³ They distinguish 'two broad causal mechanisms in the populism literature: (1) a Durkheimian "mass society" thesis that revolves around threats to culture and feelings of identity loss and (2) a Downsian "economic" thesis based on spatial and materialist conceptions of political representation' (2017:268-9).

²⁴ It has been observed that 'citizens perhaps do not clearly distinguish between cultural and economic grievances (Golder 2016)' (Muis and Immerzeel 2017:912).

²⁵ Eatwell (2017b) calls it 'the (reversed) post-material thesis.'

²⁶ 'Truth to tell: populism and the immigration debate', LSE Politics and Policy, 1 March 2017. <https://proftimbale.com/2017/03/11/truth-to-tell-populism-and-the-immigration-debate-lse-politics-and-policy-1-march-2017/> (Accessed 7 June 2018).



activated to mobilize voters who are angry about the current state of affairs (emphasis added – JK) (2016:360).

In search for the origins and cultural ‘location’ of this set of ideas, we will focus both on long durée of CEE countries’ trajectories and the continuities as well as ruptures in their cultures, but also on the more recent experiences of both the communist period and the post-communist transformations. Our work will be organized around the concept of *neo-traditionalism*, related to cultural illiberalism, authoritarianism, and conservatism. The adherents of neo-traditionalism are more interested in outcomes rather than procedures of the political processes; cherish the protection of a (national) collective rather than an individual; are determined to cultivate ‘traditional’ social roles, particularly when it comes to gender and sexual orientation; and are always vigilant to protect the purity of the (national) community against the perceived threats of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. In some places, such as Poland, they also play the role of guardians of the public space that they see as inevitably defined by Roman Catholic values, themes and concerns.

Quite a few researchers argue that neo-traditionalist²⁷ and (proto)populist ideas and sensitivities, even if not fully articulated, lay dormant in at least some socio-cultural niches of society and can be activated under specific political conditions (Hawkins *et al.* 2017:276), for example when the sense of ‘normative threat’ intensifies (Stenner 2005, 2009). What we will study are the conditions under which such threat emerges more organically and when and how it is ‘manufactured’ by political entrepreneurs (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017:106; Bornscheir 2010).

More generally, we share Rensmann’s observation that the cultural backlash should be seen ‘in the context of reproduction of stable, resilient authoritarian legacies and cultural undercurrents within liberal democracies’ (2017:127). Accordingly, one of the important issues several FATIGUE/POPREBEL projects address is the relationship between the *silent* counterrevolution, which by definition is a reactive phenomenon, and *dormant* (neo)traditionalism, a more durable feature of at least some subcultures of today’s European societies. The question is what are the institutional and cultural mechanisms, both at the national and local levels, which serve as conduits of neo-traditionalism. This will be discussed in the section dealing with the supply side.

Another group of authors emphasises the decline of trust in politicians and public institutions that plagues almost all European societies and is seen as one of the reasons of the rising popularity of populism (Ignazi 1992:23; Dustmann *et al.* 2017). For example, writing several years ago about Bulgaria, Avramov noted that:

While the populist radical right represented in Parliament is in decline, the abysmally deep and systematic popular mistrust present in all public institutions creates a fertile ground on the demand side for political forces on the margins. It seems that the reemergence of ‘hard’ populism is neither a transient phenomenon nor necessarily related to post-EU accession disenchantment (2015:315).

Finally, there is a group of important studies that link the rise of right-wing populism to the sense of loss of social standing. Mutz (2018), for example, concludes that Trump supporters were not driven *exclusively* by economic concerns, but primarily by the sense of loss of *subjective social status* and/or the lack of social mobility. What these studies have in common is the idea that the sense of economic deprivation as an explanatory factor is insufficient; the demographic and cultural changes, often quite rapid, unnerve many people who realise that the hierarchy of social statuses they used to take for granted is crumbling and they need explanations and solace. This area of study is particularly interesting because it is precisely here that the economic and cultural factors are intertwined in often-unanticipated combinations. For example, it has been shown that ‘Economic and cultural developments intertwine most deeply in the realm of gender relations, where they combine to increase the subjective social status of women relative to men’ (Gidron and Hall 2017).

3.1.3. Economic demand²⁸

²⁷ I prefer to talk about neo-traditionalism rather than traditionalism, to indicate a degree of caution, as it is not entirely clear to what extent the “traditions” in question are spontaneously reproduced from the past via more or less unreflective community mechanisms and to what degree they are manufactured by cultural entrepreneurs and endowed with new features.

²⁸ While I am indebted to the whole FATIGUE/POPREBEL team for invaluable input and advice I received while writing this text, the sections on the economic factors rely particularly heavily on the ‘economic’ sections of another grant proposal prepared



The idea that the turn toward populism is a reaction to economic woes, whatever they may be – a sudden economic downturn, persistent un- or underemployment, or the loss of jobs due to the globalization-driven industrial relocations – has been thoroughly examined. Some authors argue that it is simply the economic factors alone that are sufficient to explain the phenomenon (Guiso *et al.* 2018); others postulate and document more complex causal patterns (usefully reviewed in Rydgren 2007:247-50). And although most scholars see populism's rising popularity, acceptance, and political influence as the *predominantly* politically, socially and culturally driven phenomena (Inglehart and Norris 2016), very few discard the role played in this process by economic factors, particularly economic crises (Kriesi and Pappas 2016).

By far the dominant group of explanations focuses on the socio-economic impact of *globalisation* on the rise of populism. According to standard trade theory, for example, globalisation is expected to narrow income disparities within developing countries (Stolper and Samuelson 1941). But, contrary to such theoretical expectations, a number of empirical studies found that globalization is associated with the expansion of income inequality (e.g. Lee 2005; Rudra 2008; Rodrik 2017:8-10). Furthermore, inequality as a consequence of globalisation can be an ideal context within which certain authoritarian political forces can thrive (Huber *et al.* 2006; Lee 2005).

In another influential study, Dustmann *et al.* (2017) point out that there is a high correlation between the populist vote and the poorer economic conditions of the Euro-area countries. In principle, the welfare states of European nations were supposed to moderate the adverse effects of globalisation. However, globalisation largely constrained the room for manoeuvre of EU governments. Anti-EU, euro-sceptic, highly populist forces have gained momentum in Europe. The situation of CEE countries has been even more contradictory. The economic transformations of post-communist economies were driven by the Washington Consensus. After being introduced to private property and exposure to market forces, CEE economies experienced a painful transformational recession (Kornai 1994); the rise of their living standards did not happen overnight. Moreover, international financial institutions along with the European Union conditioned both their technical and financial support on the unwavering commitment of CEE to their prescriptions.

As argued earlier, the task is to figure out specific, context-dependent combinations of economic and cultural factors. For example, Rodrik (2017) provides a very useful overview, concentrates on the interplay of the demand (economic) and supply (political-cultural) sides, and proposes an analysis of why populism in Europe tends to be right-leaning, while in the US and Latin America it is left-leaning. He shows that the impact of globalization on a given society depends on the salience of one of the two cleavages: ethno-national/cultural or income/social class.

With some simplification, we can say that populist politicians mobilize support by exploiting one or the other of these two cleavages. The 'enemies of the people' are different in each case. Populist who emphasize the identity cleavage target foreigners or minorities, and this produces right-wing populism. Those who emphasize the income cleavage target the wealthy and large corporations, producing left-wing populism. It is reasonable to suppose that the relative ease with which one or the other of these cleavages can be targeted depends on their salience in the everyday experience of voters (Rodrik 2017:24).

FATIGUE/POPREBEL will contribute to an important debate on whether people's turn toward populism is driven more by (rising) *inequality* or (intensifying) *insecurity*.²⁹ We will test the idea – mostly in Work Package 3 – that *inequality* is associated with the rise of welfare/leftist populism (as in Latin America and Southern Europe), whereas *insecurity* is more pronounced in countries where populism takes the right-wing turn (CEE). In other words, we will examine the validity of the idea that insecurity-driven fears and frustrations have led to the growing support for security populism that tends to be rightwing. We also try to (1) clarify how governments, particularly populist, utilize and sometimes

by our team (*Populist rebellion against modernity in 21st-century Eastern Europe: neo-traditionalism and neo-feudalism* (POPREBEL)) and authored by István Benczes, András Tétényi, Krisztina Szabó, István Kollai, Judit Ricz, and Gábor Vigvári.

²⁹ Guiso *et al.* (2017) argue that economic insecurity – including exposure to competition from imports and immigrants – is a driving force for the rise of populist parties. Eatwell (2017) observes that 'The economic argument can be expanded by hypothesizing that extreme right voters are not simply likely to come from those already suffering disadvantage, but from those who fear economic change.' (Kindle Locations 12977-12978).



aggravate people's fears of (economic) insecurity and (2) determine what (economic) policy regime is established if populists make it into the government.

3.1.4. Political demand

Explanations of political demand are usually multifactoral and in addition to 'purely' political 'variables,' they also include factors I have classified as social, economic, or cultural (see for example Ignazi 2017 or Betz 2017). In general, such explanations are constructed as follows: in democracies, the demand for new political solutions, institutions and organisations arises when some voters develop a conviction that the existing system does not represent their interests and outlooks or is simply underperforming. The culprits are often seen among political parties, diagnosed as out-of-touch, inept or corrupt. But sometimes it is a more generic sense that something is fundamentally wrong with the whole political system: 'Instead of being a purely material response to interests, populism is a normative response to perceived crises of democratic legitimacy' (Hawkins *et al.* 2017:268). This line of argument is further developed by Betz, who argues – echoing other analysts – that the politics in Western Europe was transformed in the decades of 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and:

Crucial to this transformation was the political climate of the 1980s. It was marked by disenchantment with the major social and political institutions and profound distrust in their workings, the weakening and decomposition of electoral alignments, and increased political fragmentation and electoral volatility (Betz 2017, Kindle Locations 10669-10671).

As much as I can see, the political demand factors can be grouped into four categories:

- search for new forms of representation because the role of 'traditional' political parties as effective instruments of political representation has dramatically declined
- anger and disappointment with what is diagnosed as unresponsiveness and ineffectiveness, often associated with the transnationalisation and internationalisation of the system of governance
- growing sense of being un- or poorly represented by the culturally liberal-cosmopolitan elites, parties, and organisations
- disappointment, if not rage, with (perceived) corruption

Offering one of the most celebrated generalizations about European politics, Peter Mair (2009) argued that the system of political parties that used to merge effectively two basic functions of democratic governance, representation and responsibility, has disintegrated.

First, they [parties – JK] acted as representatives – articulating interests, aggregating demands, translating collective preferences into distinct policy options, and so on. They linked civil society to the polity and did so from a very strong and well-grounded foundation in society. Parties gave voice to the citizenry. Second, parties governed. They organized and gave coherence to the institutions of government. From their positions in government and in opposition, they sought to build the policy programs that would serve the interests of their supporters and of the wider polity (Mair 2009:5).

This system in which 'the same organisation that governed the citizenry also gave that citizenry voice' has gradually disappeared, as the two functions grew apart. One of the key consequences of this decoupling has been the citizenry's escalating sense of alienation and a growing demand for new modes of representation, including new political parties (Katz and Mair 2009; Kriesi 2014:367; Roberts 2017; Pedahzur and Weinberg 2017).

Among the more specific demand factors scholars list the growing sense of soulless technocratisation and bureaucratisation of politics that has been increasingly 'delegated' to faceless and unelected officials, usually representing the EU interests rather than those of the people (Kriesi 2014:365). There is also a growing sense of alienation from the national of transnational elites who do not understand – it is felt – people's 'true' national interests and/or identities. Finally, in many countries voters complain about the corruption of the politicians, who are only interested in protecting their own interests and not those of the people (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017:100).



Kriesi (2014:372-6) argues that Mair's influential analysis is largely limited to Western Europe. While the rise of populism in the post-communist part of the continent is also attributable to 'a party system that does not fulfil its representative function' (2014:372), additionally there are more specific reasons that are limited to the CEE countries. They include:

- the weak institutionalisation of the party system, rather than this system's erosion
- strong anti-elite sentiment, particularly 'backlash against the liberal politics of post-communist transition and the elites responsible for implementing these reforms'
- 'dissatisfaction with corrupt and incompetent leaders, rather than rejecting the politics of transition' (Stanley 2017:140)

As Stanley (2017) argues, it is useful to distinguish between radical and centrist theories of the rise of populism in the CEE countries. The former theory emphasises the 'backlash' against the liberal reforms, while the latter concentrates on the dissatisfaction with incompetent and/or corrupt leaders. Stanley shows that both theories are born out by empirical evidence.

3.2. Delay (supply side)

The disappointment with the results of the early post-communist period, felt by the 'losers' of the economic reforms, opponents of the initially dominant liberal elites (Wasilewski 2010), and critics of some consequences of joining the EU, was expressed in the CEE region since the early 1990s. Over time, the liberal elites have been increasingly blamed for the shortcomings of the new system and many undesired outcomes of the transformations, such as the growing economic polarization of the society (winners and losers), insufficiently fast growth of living standards, the perceived loss of political and cultural sovereignty, and the sense of political exclusion for some political options, mostly on the right.

The economic woes in particular, real or perceived, eventually prompted some people and organisations to begin a search for novel interpretations of the situation and innovative political solutions. As Ost observes:

Many turned to the right because the right offered them an outlet for their economic anger and a narrative to explain their economic problems that liberals, believing they held sway over workers, consistently failed to provide. In the end, workers drifted to the right because their erstwhile intellectual allies *pushed them there* (2005:36).

Ost's explanation captures an important part of a complex process, but it is incomplete. He identifies – correctly in our view – the emergence of the *delayed demand* for new ideas, narratives, and political solutions. But while some 'callous' intellectuals and politicians might have been guilty of *pushing* (via indifference), others have been hard at work at *pulling* workers (and other people) toward (right-wing) populist explanations and policy recommendations. Thus a careful analysis of the rising *demand* for new solutions needs to be combined with the study of the *supply* of populist fixes as there is an iterative process whereby populist elites via innovative framing exacerbate the sense of disillusionment and provide new 'illusions that are the antithesis of the previous ones.'³⁰

3.2.1. Social supply

The concept of social supply seems to be forced, but what I have in mind are various forms of mobilisation conceptualised either as social movements or civil society. It is also important to examine understudied informal types of mobilization in neighbourhoods, circles of friends or spontaneous groups of people (these days often formed on social media platforms).

Mudde and Kaltwasser contend that there are three basic methods or vehicles of populist mobilisation. The most common is *personalistic leadership*, a form of mobilisation that often takes place outside or even against the existing

³⁰ Istvan Benczes, personal communication.



organisations. It is enough to list 'Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Beppe Grillo in Italy, Ross Perot in the United States, or Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand.'³¹ What is worth examination is the relationship between the top-down impact of a charismatic leader and the bottom-up emergence of more or less inchoate sentiments operating at the level of the everyday. A charismatic leader can mobilise people with little or no help from organisations if s/he manages to tap into budding proto-populist sentiments usually linked to neo-traditionalism discussed later. But the formation of such sentiments is not automatic; they usually emerge due to the actions of identifiable local leaders of opinion.

The second method is via *social movements* and some FATIGUE/POPREBEL researchers are explicitly dealing with this area of mobilization. The standard conceptual and data-collection tools (for example, event analysis) of social movement analysis will be utilized here. Classically, in this kind of work one is advised to focus on four phenomena: (1) political opportunity structure (POS), (2) mobilizing structures (organisations), (3) frames, and (4) repertoires of action. One of the key issues here is the pattern of interaction between civil society organisations (CSOs) and social movements on the one hand and political parties on the other.³² Mudde reviews briefly a related issue of front organisations used by some populist right-wing parties to create and sustain 'roots' in the society (2007:268-9). The third method, mobilization via political parties, is discussed later.

While the closing or opening of POS influences all social movements in a given society, though not evenly (for example, right-wing populists may be banned or restricted by the authorities), and all movements need to work hard to maintain their organisational viability, populist movements stand out as they employ specific cultural frames to mobilize their supporters. The core ideological motifs we expect to find in all populist mobilizations are identified above, but FATIGUE/POPREBEL provides a unique opportunity to catalogue specific variants and delve into the ideological nuances of concrete mobilizational frames, aesthetics of their displays, and features of their performative practices.

New social actors, often espousing thick populist ideologies, have been successfully mobilizing for quite a while in CEE (Mudde 2003, Backes and Mudde 2000, Minkenberg and Kossack 2015), and their interactions with political parties as well as their confrontations with the liberal sector of civil society need to be carefully examined. There is already a growing literature that shows how the right-wing sector of civil society has achieved spectacular successes in the recent years (Kasprowicz 2015; Płatek and Płócienniczak 2017; Ekiert, Kubik, Wenzel 2017; Ślarzyński 2017; Greskovits 2017). This literature forces us to re-think the relationship between the state, political parties, and civil society, also because 'As the cultural anthropologist Margit Feischmidt (2014) suggests, it is not the state that plays the decisive role in recasting Hungarian nationalism but civic actors, far-right political groups and their media outlets backed by a vigorous industry that has turned nationalist identity politics into a profitable business' (Molnár 2015:170).

Several FATIGUE projects address these issues.³³ In particular we will focus on:

- the relationship between political parties and civil society organisations both on the populist right and liberal left in Poland (ESR 1)
- the role of LGBTQ organisations in shaping institutions and introducing legislative changes in the post-Yugoslav region (ESR13)
- the trajectory of politicisation in the Hungarian civil society after 1989 (ESR14)
- the impact of protest movements on the politics of Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary (ESR15)

3.2.2. Cultural supply

Like all other political phenomena, also the rise of populism, including its more radical right-wing versions, is driven by a combination of demand and supply factors. When it comes to the latter, it is as much a result of effective political

³¹ Mudde, Cas; Rovira Kaltwasser, Cristobal. *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (Very Short Introductions) (Kindle Locations 1254-1255). Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition

³² 'The last two decades of the twentieth century have produced new conditions which permit alliances between political parties and what we prefer to call the "uncivil society"' (Pedahzur and Weinberg 2017: Kindle Locations 5710-5711).

³³ I provide references to all ESR projects in this section for the sake of simplicity. Most of them deal with the supply side, but several touch also on the demand side of the rise of populism.



mobilization as of adroit deployment of resonant cultural frames, discourses, visual symbols, etc. (Wodak 2015, Pytlas 2016). At least since the mid-2000s we observe in the CEE region not just a rearrangement of the political arenas, but also a considerable, deliberate remapping of cultural fields. Populist cultural-political entrepreneurs create new organisations, set up new media outlets, and promote their visions of the world with growing effectiveness.

On the demand side, the relative success of *populist framing* and the growing acceptance of the *populist style* have something to do with the prior existence and eventual re-mobilisation of *neo-traditionalism*, a (vernacular) cultural formation that needs to be carefully diagnosed and theorized in our work not only as a set of discourses but also a set of cultural practices that may be inimical to what Dawson (2018) calls ‘everyday democracy.’ On the supply side we need to study the formation of populist narratives as well as visual displays and public performances via which these narratives are disseminated. Some projects will focus on the theatricalization, or – more broadly – *symbolization of politics*, as it is indeed one of the key features of the populist political style. We want to study the impact of that theatre on public opinion. It has been noted that: ‘populism gets its impetus from the perception of crisis breakdown or threat’ (Taggart 2000 in Moffitt and Tormey 2014:393). There is no doubt, however, that staging threat- and anxiety-inducing performances or displaying threatening images can magnify or even manufacture this perception.³⁴ Wodak (2015) has devoted a whole study to the politically motivated manufacture of fear, whose generation – via a variety of discursive techniques she dissects – is central to all populist narratives aimed at various ‘others’ (Muslims, Jews, refugees, etc. See Wodak 2018, Kallis 2018), cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and modernity itself.

Therefore, the study of the supply side of populist politics cannot be limited to resources, organisations and strategic (often behind the scenes) manoeuvres; *the performative dimension of ‘populist supply’ needs to be an integral part of any comprehensive analysis*. A crisis can be and often is used by populists to spring to action, but equally often, it seems, they either trigger or exacerbate a crisis by bombarding the public with images and discourses that induce or intensify collective anxiety. This is usually achieved by raising the level of xenophobia, misogyny (Pető nd), and/or homophobia and frequent targeting of immigrants and refugees as unwanted ‘others’ (*Mobilization 2017*, Krzyżanowski 2018). We will analyse systematically the rhetorical, visual or performative tools, guided, at least initially, by the idea that the populist style relies on binary simplifications and generates or exacerbates the polarization of (political) culture. It often achieves this effect by employing the aesthetics of coarseness, or what Ostiguy sees as ‘the flaunting of the low’ and Moffitt and Tormey refer to as ‘bad manners’ (2014:392).³⁵

Our work will also focus on the discursive, visual and performative techniques of constructing the image of the (pure) people. This is done by postulating lists of attributes the people are said to have and – simultaneously – by claiming of what the people *are not*, that is by constructing the opposites of the people.³⁶ It seems that the former task is more difficult than the latter.³⁷ As the ‘vertical-horizontal’ discursive architecture of right-wing populism has it, the enemies of the ‘pure’ people exist both ‘above’ (elites, ‘deep state,’ ex-communists holding hidden power, etc.) and ‘outside’ (aliens, immigrants, ethnic others, etc.). Their existence is postulated in the discourse often with cavalier disregard for empirical evidence. In the CEE region, right-wing populists often argue that the post-1989 transformations have been wrong-headed, incomplete and botched, because the former communists and particularly organized groups of former communist secret service operatives have retained too much power, at least behind the scenes. Blamed for many if not all shortcomings of the new system and the unwanted outcomes of the political and economic changes, the ‘post-communist’ elites had been the target of occasional criticism before the rise of right-wing populism (Wasilewski 2010). Right-wing populists have magnified and embellished such criticisms, accusing the liberal elites of a broad range of ‘sins,’ from the haughty lack of sensitivity and compassion to incompetence and malicious self-interest. They promise to complete the revolution, but before they do so they attempt to mould the public opinion by promoting narratives

³⁴ ‘The mobilizational potential can also be increased through targeted exaggeration, dramatization in the media, provoking collective fear, or referring to the common, for example, cultural, background of the potential protesters’ (Gunter 2016).

³⁵ ‘An American example of this high–low distinction would be to compare the patrician Al Gore to the populist Sarah Palin. Gore’s virtues are those of the establishment: seriousness, earnestness, gravitas, intelligence and sensitivity to the positions of others. Palin’s are those of the ‘outsider’: directness, playfulness, a certain disregard for hierarchy and tradition, ready resort to anecdote as ‘evidence’ and a studied ignorance of that which does not interest her or which does not go to “the heart of the matter”’ (2014:392).

³⁶ See, for example, Richardson and Wodak on referential (nomination) and predicational discursive strategies (2009:47-8).

³⁷ ‘While the defining features of the in-group in politics often remain rather vague, descriptions of the out-groups tend to be very clear’ (Geró *et al.* 2017:20).



in which communists and their ‘collaborators’ (often including everybody who is to the left of right-wing populists) are portrayed as unequivocal villains.

The people of right-wing populism are ‘the nation’ and thus the relationship between populism and nationalism as potentially complementary discourses is the subject of many studies and some controversies (Wodak 2015, Mudde 2007). The construction of the national narrative relies often on at least some elements of neo-traditionalism, related to cultural illiberalism and cultural conservatism.³⁸ While neo-traditionalism and the discontent with broadly understood liberalism had seethed in many subcultures, only in the 1980s did various political entrepreneurs manage to channel this cultural energy into crisp ideological formulations that started fuelling the political rise of the right, including its populist variety. The ‘silent’ anti-liberal and anti-cosmopolitan counter-revolution (Ignazi 1992) has often been reproduced at the level of small, mostly rural, communities, and had been driven by mechanisms that preceded and were mostly independent from the emergence of populist political formations, both in civil society and the political party system. It is however clear that silent (counter)revolutions are not automatic and they have their own agents, cultural entrepreneurs (intellectuals, priests, journalists, various activists) whose organisational work may be for extended periods of time limited to the domain of culture with no direct political foothold. These need to be examined before we turn our attention to the study of the moment when the silent revolution acquires champions among the right-wing segment of the national elite, who have in recent years invested a lot of energy and resources in staging what Rensmann (2017) calls the ‘noisy cultural counter-revolution.’ This revolution contributes to the deepening of ideological polarization, increasingly organized around a new political-cultural cleavage, between cosmopolitan,³⁹ ‘universalistic’ and ‘traditionalist-communitarian’ values (Bornscheir 2010), or – in another influential formulation – between ‘Green-Alternative-Libertarian’ (GAL) pole and a ‘Traditionalist-Authoritarian-Nationalist’ (TAN) pole (Hooghe *et al.* 2002).

FATIGUE/POPREBEL will study the cultural means and institutional vehicles that are used in the development, enhancement and promotion of neo-traditionalism (Csillag and Szelenyi 2015; Kristof 2017). We will zero in on the interaction between political, economic, and cultural factors that define and sustain the new GAL/TAN cleavage, which is increasingly dominant in the CEE countries. Right-wing political parties are the prime vehicles of this process, but not the only ones (Rensmann 2017, Stanley 2016). It is important to study also cultural institutions and cultural entrepreneurs that develop and cultivate the Traditionalist-Authoritarian-Nationalist syndrome. In some countries, such as Poland or Russia, churches and religion-inspired lay organisations carry out this task (Chmielewska-Szljajfer 2018; Freeze 2017).

In the countries where secularization has been more advanced, symbolically charged politics takes often the form of ‘missionary politics.’ As Zuquette explains:

this missionary form of politics should be understood as a cluster concept, defined as a political religion, and characterized by a dynamic interaction between charismatic leadership, a narrative of salvation, outsiderhood and ritualization, and the creation of a moral community invested with a collective mission of combating conspiratorial enemies and redeeming the nation from its putative crisis (2013:264).

Missionary, moralistic passion seems to characterise all forms of thick populism, which is almost always symbolically ‘hot,’ by contrast to liberalism that is rather ‘cold’ (Lakoff 2016).⁴⁰ How does it happen? Populist discourses combine

³⁸ Ivan Krastev, ‘The New Europe: respectable populism, clockwork liberalism,’ https://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-europe-constitution/new_europe_3376.isp. Accessed on 2 January 2017.

³⁹ ‘Cosmopolitan values emphasize the value of open national borders, shared multicultural values, diversity of peoples and lifestyles in outward-looking and inclusive societies. /.../ Moreover, Cosmopolitan ideas emphasizing open borders and open societies are combined with Liberal values which challenge the authoritarian component of populism, emphasizing the importance of horizontal checks and balances in the institutions of representative democracy, protection of minority rights, participation through elections and membership of political parties, tolerance of social, intellectual, and political diversity, the process of pluralistic bargaining and compromise, the contribution of scientific expertise for rational policymaking, and the post-war architecture of global governance and international cooperation. Social liberalism is also linked with support for equal rights for women and minorities, flexible rather than fixed gender roles, fluid gender identities and LGBT rights, environmental protection, and secular rather than religious values’ (Inglehart and Norris 2016:6-7).

⁴⁰ Writing about the US, Lakoff observes: ‘As long as liberals ignore the moral, mythic, and emotional dimension of politics, as long as they stick to policy and interest groups and issue-by-issue debate, they will have no hope of understanding the nature of the political transformation that has overtaken this country and they will have no hope of changing it.’ (2016:19).



some or all themes from a cultural and ideological toolbox, including traditionalism, authoritarianism, religion, and nationalism. These themes are narrated, displayed, and performed in a variety of symbolic languages that ‘naturally’ belong to cultural contexts of specific countries. But a common axiom of the populist worldview is that human existence achieves its fullness in unspoiled organic, for example national, communities held together by religious or quasi-religious bonds and sentiments. Since the symbolic languages of (fundamentalist) religion and (exclusivist) nationhood are rich, elaborate and highly charged emotionally, populists who routinely rely on them make public spaces red hot and skilfully use the resulting excitement to rally their support base.

Missionary zeal is also present in the construction of cultural forms that accompany and enforce the rise of neo-feudalism. Here we observe the revival of mythologies of the strong state, the home of a blameless, pure nation. Such monolithic and monochromatic mythologies are often constructed through strong programmes of *historical policy* fostered by right-wing populists and implemented when they are in power (Hungary and Poland).

The study of these phenomena needs to take into account a new media environment (Rensmann 2017). The last decades of the 20th century and certainly the first decades of the 21st, brought about a far-reaching revolution in the media, with tremendous consequences for politics. Several authors point out that the politics in the 21st century, particularly populist politics, is rapidly undergoing *fictionalization* (Wodak 2009:161) and *mediatisation* (Moffitt 2016:74)⁴¹ and this process has, for example, a powerful impact on the relationship between political parties and their electorates (Kriesi 2014:365-7). ‘Depoliticisation’ of politics ensues, as ‘politics either becomes a technocratic exercise (‘back-stage’ politics) or a largely symbolic contest between figureheads (‘front-stage’ politics)’ (Kriesi 2014:366).

Several FATIGUE projects deal with the complex patterns of interaction between political and cultural mechanisms influencing the rising popularity of right-wing populism. They deal with:

- the role of historical factors in shaping the cultures of illiberalism in the Visegrad Four countries (ESR2)
- the impact of Russian illiberal democracy on the rise of right-wing populism in Ukraine and Georgia (ESR3)
- the politics of memory and identity in Pegida’s populist discourse in post-socialist Dresden (ESR4)
- the relationship between populist mobilisation and the mythologized understanding of the past in the discourses of the Magyar minority in Romania (ESR6)
- the joint effect of cultural, social and economic factors on the increased level of prejudice (particularly anti-Semitism) in Serbia and Poland (ESR10)
- the manufacture of anti-refugee and Islamophobic discourse and its effects on the mainstream politics in the Czech Republic (ESR11)
- the securitization of migration policy in CEE and its impact on the increase of xenophobia in the discourse of right-wing parties and movements (ESR12)

3.2.3. Economic supply

Populists do not necessarily opt for redistributive thus left-leaning economic programmes. Sometimes they propose neo-liberal solutions, Menem in Argentina, Collor de Mello in Brazil, and Fujimori in Peru being the best-known examples (Weyland 1996, Kaltwasser 2013). They may support radical anti-tax programmes (Betz 1994:4-7). In the CEE countries, however, the left version of populist economic policies is dominant. And as Benczes shows for Hungary (2016), economic populism in CEE is not without redistribution – but its object is wealth rather than income.

In FATIGUE/POPREBEL we aim to test the hypothesis that once they win power, populists embark on both wide-scale privatisation and re-nationalisation programmes (from public utilities to the banking sector) in order to actively support an elite change they are engineering. In Hungary, the new national capitalists are the almost exclusive beneficiaries of public procurement projects financed mostly by EU funds. Rent-seeking activity and corruption are

⁴¹ ‘There certainly seems to be some affinity between the increasing mediatisation of politics and contemporary populism.’ (Moffitt 2016:74).



natural side effects of these politically motivated acts and the system that is emerging resembles feudalism, although it certainly has new characteristics as well. Csillag and Szelenyi (2015) analyse the evolution of Russian economy as a transition from a *neo-patrimonialism* (under Yeltsin) to a *neo-prebendalism* (under Putin);⁴² we use a more general concept of *neo-feudalism* and seek to understand how this system gets stabilised. We suspect one of the reasons is that in CEE people are increasingly preoccupied with stability rather than equality, but we will also study the ‘supply’ factors such as the construction of the ‘prebendal’ state apparatus.

The literature is unanimous that globalisation leads to an increasing gap between the top and the ‘left behind’ across countries and individuals within countries. This tension creates a perfect context for radical views to develop and thrive. We claim that the economic regimes of the region should not be assessed by the usual binary dialectics of democracy and dictatorship, but in relation to feudalism, which was dominant in the region until the end of the 19th century. The most recent right-wing or national economic populism does not promise the delivery of the living standard of the most developed Western countries; instead, it promises socio-economic security. In turn, we argue that a special form of economic populism has emerged in CEE, one that can be directly linked to *neo-feudal capitalism*. The project will try to demonstrate that *neo-feudalism in the subsystem of economy and neo-traditionalism in culture and politics are the twin-pair* in CEE.⁴³

Three FATIGUE projects will focus on:

- the economic ‘reasons’ for the growing support for populists but also the evolution of policies designed to meet this demand and their impact on the whole system (ESR7)
- the effects of populist economic programmes on market openness, business environment and the changes in living standards (ESR8)
- the discrepancy between the real levels of inequality in the CEE region and the perception of these levels that are influenced by political actions and cultural framing (ESR9)

3.2.4. Political supply

Populist parties, the third method of populist mobilization and one of the key methods of ‘populist supply,’ are thoroughly studied, particularly those that belong to the right side of the political spectrum (Mudde 2007, Mudde 2016, Kriesi and Pappas 2015, Melzer and Serafin 2013) also in CEE (Stanley 2017, Minkenberg 2015, Pirro 2015, Pytlas 2016, Hanley 2016, Hanley and Dawson 2016). Populist parties are not alone on the (extreme) right side of the political spectrum; therefore the discussion of the relationship between populism, radicalism and nationalism continues. In FATIGUE/POPREBEL we adopt a conceptual solution proposed by Mudde (2007). It is outlined in Section 2.1.⁴⁴

Rydrgen analyses various supply factors contributing to the growing political attractiveness of right-wing parties, but the typology he has developed works well also for the rise of any form of populism or any political phenomenon for that matter. He proposes that:

Among the supply-centred explanations, we can distinguish three subgroups, those that focus on (a) different political opportunity structures; (b) party organisations; and (c) the message of the radical right-wing parties, that is, their ideology and discourse (2007:252).

While examining the features of the political opportunity structure (POS) that are conducive to the rise of populist parties scholars list ‘electoral system and the “political space” left open by political competitors’ (Muis and Immerzeel 2017:912). The study of electoral systems is indeed important, as it is often hypothesised that radical right-wing parties (that are often populist) benefit from the proportional representation systems and fare much worse in the single-member district first-past-the-post (or majoritarian) systems. The evidence is however mixed (Rydrgen 2007:254; Muir

⁴² ‘Under “patrimonial” authority, property holders receive their property at the grace of their master (fief), but their property rights are usually secure and their property is inherited. Under prebendal authority, property (benefice) given to the followers for their services, but rulers can revoke this property at any time’ (Csillag and Szelenyi 2015:21).

⁴³ ‘Post-communist traditionalists/neo-conservatives are rather statist, not only in social issues but also in matters of economic policy’ (Csillag and Szelenyi 2015:28).

⁴⁴ Stanley (2017:158) concludes, after surveying the literature, there is no one pattern to be discerned for ‘While many parties at the extremes of the dominant dimensions of political competition are populist, not all populist parties are at the extremes.’



and Immerzeel 2017:913). Nonetheless, a careful examination of the specific features of electoral systems, including the thresholds and the significance of the difference between unitary and federal systems, is in order and will be carried out in several FATIGUE/POPREBEL projects.

The opening of the political space can happen in several ways. First, the weakening or disappearance of a specific party or a group of parties leaves a section of the political space empty. Here, several authors examine the relative demobilization of the “old” parties, particularly on the left (Berman 2010) that creates an opportunity for left- or right-wing populists simultaneously espousing left-leaning (redistributive) economic programmes. Second, the convergence to the middle, that is a growing programmatic similarity between the mainstream parties of the left and the right generates dissatisfaction with the whole political system and creates openings on both extremes, left and right (Muir and Immerzeel 2017:913). Third, the weakness of the traditional liberal-conservative centre, occupied for example by “classical” Christian-Democratic parties, has been diagnosed as the main reason for opening opportunities for the organisational and electoral successes of more radical and often populist forces (Ziblatt 2017).

In general, what needs to be carefully observed is the re-arrangement in the structure of dominant political-ideological cleavages. The traditional division of left and right has been gradually replaced by other divisions, for example the GAL/TAN scale that measures party positions on the socio-cultural conflict dimension between a left ‘Green-Alternative-Libertarian’ and a right ‘Traditionalist-Authoritarian-Nationalist’ pole (for details and operationalization see Hooghe *et al.* 2002; see also Pytlak and Kossack 2016).

Finally, POS may be more or less closed, depending on the quality of democracy in a given country. The key issue to observe here is the general state of the rule of law that guarantees freedom of the political competition. In the countries where the quality of democracy is declining (as in Hungary and Poland at the moment) we will utilize the concept of an *uneven playing field*, developed by Levitsky and Way (2010) in their study of competitive authoritarianism.⁴⁵

With the exception of Mudde’s (2007) chapter on radical right populist parties ideologies, leadership, and organisation, the literature on the populist party organisations seems to be sparse as the matter is not easy to study particularly among the parties that are infamously secretive. Mudde notes that ‘many recent studies note the crucial importance of party organisation for the electoral success of populist radical right parties’ but warns that this factor may be more important for the persistence rather than breakthrough (2007:264). He also observes that populist radical right parties tend to have smaller staffs and organisations than other parties (2007:268).

The role of ideology in determining the fate of (radical right) populist parties has been extensively studied,⁴⁶ arguably because the political battles are fought at least as much about socio-cultural issues as about economic ones.⁴⁷ It is sometimes argued that success comes when these parties moderate their ideologies (Mudde 2007:257). It is an important issue and one of the tasks for the FATIGUE/POPREBEL researchers is to determine whether, when and why ideological moderation or radicalization are effective. The choice of optimal political strategy, it may turn out for example, depends on the phase of the political competition: a strategy for winning the votes may be different from a strategy necessary to keep them.

The study of ideology is related to the examination of discursive opportunity structure (DOS), a conceptual sister of POS. This is a study of the relationship between the supply of new ideological frames that propose new types of claims to legitimacy and the conditions under which such claims are accepted by various sectors of the electorate. For example, a very important issue here is the ‘normalization’ of the right-wing populist parties and their ideological messages in the party systems of Europe and the increasing difficulty of distinguishing their platforms and ideologies from the ‘mainstream’ right-wing parties. As Mudde argues: ‘Establishing boundaries between populist radical right

⁴⁵ ‘We consider the playing field uneven when (1) state institutions are widely abused for partisan ends, (2) incumbents are systematically favored at the expense of the opposition, and (3) the opposition’s ability to organise and compete in elections is seriously handicapped. Three aspects of an uneven playing field are of particular importance: access to resources, media, and the law’ (2010:10).

⁴⁶ ‘I focus on the ideologies that parties have used to mobilise the new cultural conflict’ Bornschier 2010:420).

⁴⁷ Hanley and Sikk study a related family of political parties, anti-establishment reform parties (AERPs) and conclude that: ‘One pattern is immediately striking: contrary to the view of AERPs as ‘crisis parties’ they are often not products of economic contraction’ (2016:529).



parties and mainstream right-wing parties has been significantly complicated by the rise of populist radical right *politics* in Europe, i.e. nativist, authoritarian, and populist discourses and policies from mostly mainstream parties' (2016:15).

An associated issue is the rightward shift of the discursive field in many if not all CEE countries, a shift that to a large degree is caused by the rise of right-wing populist parties and the growing saturation of the public space with their discourses, displays, and performances (Pytlak and Kossack 2015), as well as with the discourses and performances produced by cultural organisations and churches that are sympathetic to the right-wing causes.

Several FATIGUE projects study various aspects of the party systems. Some focus on right-wing populist parties more centrally. Two projects will focus on:

- the role of (un)civil society organisations in the intensification of illiberal trends in various parties (ESR1)
- the role of cultural factors in the rise of populist parties in CEE (ESR2)

The analysis of the four dimensions of the demand and supply side of the rise of (right-wing) populism in CEE is summarized in Table 1. For the sake of clarity only a few examples drawn from the above analysis are used.

Table 1: the rise of (right-wing) populism in CEE: four dimensions and two sides (with examples)

Dimension	Side		
	Demand based on:	Supply	
		Populist	Mainstream
Social	Fracturing/polarization/ downward mobility/ inequality	Mobilization of (populist/right-wing) civil society	(De)mobilization of mainstream (centrist) civil society
Cultural	Disorientation/thirst for meaning (sense)	Populist narratives, discourses, symbols, rituals	Loss of attractiveness by liberal-democratic narratives
Economic	Stagnation/deprivation/ inequality/insecurity	Economic programs (economic nationalism)	Crisis of neoliberalism
Political	Dissatisfaction with the incumbents/ disengagement with politics 'as usual'	Mobilization of the populist right parties	Worn-out left, centre, and conservative right

4. Consequences

The emergence of populists of all stripes as viable political actors and – in some cases – their electoral victories lead to dramatic shifts in the political fields of the countries where it happens. What are the consequences of this rise? In order to answer this question, the analyst must begin by introducing three analytical distinctions. First, the impact of a populist actor on the rest of the political field depends on the type of political regime. Second, it depends on the position of this actor in the system: an *incumbent* has obviously different capacities than a *challenger* (a political actor out of power).⁴⁸ Third, the impact itself can be political (a change in the field of political forces) or cultural (a change in the field of political discourses).

As Rowira Kaltwasser and Mudde (2017) observe, populists can play a very positive role in bringing down non-democratic regimes, while their role in liberal democracies is predominantly, though not exclusively, negative. It is worth investigating further to what degree both roles depend also on the type of populism. Thin populism can be

⁴⁸ 'The most important factor is the political power of the populist actor. Whether populist forces are in opposition or in government can affect not only the strength, but also the nature of their impact on the process of democratization.' (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017: Kindle Locations 1981-1983).



indeed beneficial for bringing down an authoritarian regime (Polish *Solidarity* is an excellent example) and increase chances of successful democratic consolidation. Thick populism is not so beneficial, as its exclusivist tenor tends to alienate various groups of people, instead of offering a broad discursive umbrella under which many groups can feel comfortable. It is also imperative to study the populist challenges to non-populist authoritarian incumbents.

As with the emergence of any new significant political force, the consequences are multiple and need to be observed in several areas, including politics, economy, society, and culture. Mudde writes about four areas West European politics impacted by the rise of the populist radical right: people, parties, policies, and politics. He sees the following sequence: ‘... mostly oppositional populist radical right first influenced the people, leading to a response from the mainstream parties (worried about electoral competition), which introduced new policies (either in coalition with the populist radical right or not) and thereby possibly changing the whole political system.’⁴⁹

Müller (2016) argues that there are at least four types of political consequences of the (right-wing) populists winning power: (1) colonization of the state, (2) clientelism, (3) discriminatory legalism, and (4) harsh treatment of ‘disloyal’ or ‘improper’ organisations of civil society. As the recent Hungarian (Kornai 2015, Magyar 2016) and Polish experiences show, the list is spot on, but within FATIGUE/POPREBEL we are able to provide detailed analyses of relevant mechanisms.

Finally, the emergence of populist parties and movements, together with a host of civil society organisations that champion populist causes, changes the composition of the society’s discursive field, rearranges the salience of specific themes and their legitimacy,⁵⁰ and reorders the mechanisms regulating agenda setting in political battles (Pirro 2015b: 81).

5. Responses/policy proposals

The rise of right-wing populism is almost always met with alarm by the liberal-democratic forces, both at the centre and on the left of the political spectrum. It is however not easy to come up with effective countermeasures. Writing against the rise of Fascism, Karl Lowenstein coined the concept of ‘militant democracy,’ to argue that the pro-democratic forces, faced with the anti-liberal and anti-democratic threat, need to take off the (political) gloves and punch hard their opponents. How do you do this, without destroying the very essence of democracy, that is tolerance of pluralism? The defenders of liberal democracy may want to become ‘militant’ but, as Rovira Kaltwasser and Taggart observe:

Although there are strong reasons to be in favour of this solution, it is also true that it brings to the forefront a significant democratic paradox, namely the possibility of a democracy destroying itself in the process of defending itself (2016:209).

As Rovira Kaltwasser and Taggart (2016) suggest, a study of responses to the rise of populism, like the study of consequences, can be conveniently organized along two analytical axes: supply versus demand side of politics and the relation to political power. Populists participate in politics either as challengers (on the way to power) or as incumbents (in power). These distinctions are captured in Table 2:

Table 2: Types of responses to the rise of populism (with examples):

	Supply	Demand
Populists as challengers	Use legal means to block or eliminate extreme actors from public life	Work to solve social problems exploited by populists

⁴⁹ Mudde 2016: Kindle Locations 16729-16731.

⁵⁰ At some point ‘Scholars no longer only tried to explain their electoral successes (and, to a much lesser extent, failures), but started to investigate their effects as well’ (Mudde 2016: Kindle Locations 309-310). See also Kasprócz 2017:157.



Populists as incumbents	Mobilise support from abroad (role of external actors)	Propose 'liberal-democratic' solutions to problems raised by populist
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Each situation calls for different measures, but – by and large – there are three areas the analysis of responses needs to focus on: (1) actors, (2) strategies, and (3) timing.

Populists tend to be nationalistic ('heartland is central to populism,' as Taggart influentially observed), so they focus on internal issues and as a result their main opponents tend to be domestic *actors*. Rovira Kaltwasser and Taggart (2016) discuss four broad categories of such actors: (1) mainstream political parties, (2) civil society organisations and social movements, (3) constitutional courts/independent institutions, and (4) the media. They further list four types of external actors: (1) transnational civil society actors, (2) international federations of political parties, (3) foreign governments, and (4) supranational institutions. It will be the task of FATIGUE/POPREBEL researchers to test the usefulness of this typology and propose amendments should we determine that they are needed.

The general conclusion of the literature on *strategies* is that the response should be multifaceted and measured yet decisive. Lowenstein's 'militant democracy,' that calls for strong measures in defence of liberal democracy is only one, and not necessarily recommended, option. Rovira Kaltwasser and Taggart review three typologies of strategies. They begin with Capoccia who came up with four types of strategies:

- militancy (implement legal measures to limit the civil and political rights of extremist actors)
- incorporation (convert semi-loyal into loyal political actors)
- purge (prosecute the architects and administrators of anti-democratic activities)
- education (strengthen democratic beliefs by, for instance, developing forms of civic education and designing programmes aimed at integrating activists who want to abandon extremist parties)

Rummens and Abts propose a *concentric model of containment*, i.e., the employment of a dual strategy whereby actors take an inclusive stance to take into account concerns of extremist voters in devising policies, on the one hand, and where they, on other hand, prepare to adopt an exclusive line in pressuring extremist parties to push out pernicious radical elements from the process of decision-making (2010:656).

William Downs (2016:31) wrote a book-length analysis of the range of strategies available to democracies while they try to deal with what he calls *pariah parties*. These are not just populist parties or movements, but all extreme political formations that are usually shunned by other political actors. Examples include Austria's Freedom Party, Germany's National Democratic Party, UK's British National Party, or Hungary's Jobbik. Criss-crossing two criteria, Downs comes up with a very useful typology of responses. They are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: typology of responses to pariah parties (Downs)

	Militancy	Accommodation
Engagement	Co-opt	Collaborate
Disengagement	Ban/isolate	Ignore

Taggart and Rovira Kaltwasser (2016) conclude that under most circumstances isolation and ostracism do not work very well and the best strategy is 'regulated inclusion.' It is however clear that the strategy needs to be tailored to the specific situation and differentiate between facing populists out of power (the above strategies) and populists in power (here the increased role of international actors is desired).

The *timing* of reaction to the rise of populism is also a very important factor to consider. The general idea is that international actors should come in after the domestic actors exhausted their opportunities.

It is also important to consider that populists, particularly when they are in power, anticipate resistance to their rule and 'develop strategies that seemed either overtly or explicitly to target possible reactions and to minimize their



effects' (2016:360). When they come to power populists target all institutions that may threaten them. In no particular order populists' 'enemies' include: (1) independent judiciary, (2) other parties, (3) independent (and non-populist) civil society, (4) the media, and (5) cultural institutions and schools. Hungary and Poland these days provide full confirmation of these expectations.

6. Understudied issues and dimensions (partially after Mudde 2016)

- The relationship between social, cultural, political, economic, and historical dimensions/contexts of the rise of populism.
- Distinction between various types of populism and their respective political, social and cultural origins, functions and consequences. The distinction between thin and thick populism seems to be central here.
- The link between parties, movements ('street politics'), and personalistic forms of mobilization.
- Mainstreaming of populist radical right ideas and politics. 'In the twentieth century populist radical right politics was the almost exclusive domain of populist radical right parties. Few other parties would problematize immigrants and immigration, linking them to social problems such as crime, terrorism, and unemployment' (Mudde 2016: Kindle Locations 19163-19165). In the twenty first century, many populist planks have appeared in the platforms of other parties, particularly on the centre right. Populist *parties* and populist *politics* are increasing separate and this separation needs to be understood.
- The changing nature of nativism. While initially populists focused on immigration, now they tend to concentrate on integration (and (barriers to) assimilation). For example, definitions of 'us' have been evolving, as more (right-wing) populists define Muslims as enemies of liberal democracy. This is linked to one of the FATIGUE/POPREBEL's key concepts: neo-traditionalism.
- The increasingly blurred boundary between the *Eurosceptic* and *Euroreject* projects. We need more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon.
- The distinction between illiberal and anti-democratic stances. It needs to be re-examined as neo-Nazi parties gain more support and acceptance while their position on democratic procedures is not clear.
- Organisational structures of populist (particularly radical right) parties, movements, and civil society organisations. Their youth sections need particular attention.
- Diffusion and/or contagion of populist ideas, resources and organisational tools, particularly across national borders.
- Varieties of Islamophobia and its role in specific cultural-political contexts.
- Styles of personalistic populist leadership and the types of (populist) charisma.
- Members of the populist parties and movements, particularly on the radical right. Their views and various reasons for joining these parties and/or movements.
- Discrepancy between sharing (right-wing) populist views and (non)voting for (right-wing) populist parties. As Mudde notes 'The answer to that question is to be found in the supply-side rather than the demand-side of populist radical right politics.'⁵¹
- Consequences of the rise of populism (particularly its radical right variety) on liberal democracy and European integration. Also consequences for socio-economic policies and foreign policy.
- Responses to the rise of populism. A notoriously understudied area.

⁵¹ Mudde 2016: Kindle Locations 19332-19333.





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