DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION

Thesis Presented to the Doctoral Council of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences for Preliminary Review

Populism in Africa: Political constant, Leadership Legitimator and Democratic Determinant

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Introduction

Populism is everywhere. Osuna (2020) argues that populism remains a contested concept despite being "one of the most prominent challenges to pluralist democracy." In geopolitical regions such as the West—historically considered stable liberal democracies—its re-emergence and growth have attracted widespread attention, especially after the events of 2016, including Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election and the United Kingdom's Brexit referendum. These developments triggered a global peak in populist discourse, reviving the term as a political buzzword alongside 'terrorism' and 'globalisation' (Art, 2020).

In contrast, populism has been a consistent feature in parts of the global South, most notably Latin America. Mickiewicz (2020) identifies Venezuela as the most recent manifestation of the region's long-standing populist cycle. Despite its global presence, Dai (2018) observes that most scholarly attention has focused on Europe and Latin America. In comparison, Africa remains underexplored, especially in terms of locating populism within its distinctive political history and social consciousness—one that does not automatically frame populism as dangerous or illegitimate. Carbone (2005) similarly notes that populism has received little attention in African political literature, despite its prominence in Latin American studies.

This "geographic segregation" according to Dai (2018), stems in part from the criteria scholars use to define populism. Terms such as "the people" or "the elite" are context-dependent and shaped by specific socio-historical realities. This conceptual variability makes it difficult to carry out globally consistent empirical research into populism's causes and consequences. In African and Asian contexts, the term "populist" was initially used to label anti-colonial and postcolonial movements, albeit in vague and reductive ways (Heinisch & Mazzoleni, 2017). These movements—often anti-imperialist and sometimes socialist—were frequently viewed as "difficult" or non-conforming by Western standards.

In Europe especially, there remains a presumption that populism is inherently negative. While its ubiquity is difficult to contest, its assumed "badness" is not self-evident. As Laclau (2005) contends, this moral framing reflects a broader discursive effort to preserve a vision of political normality, within which populism is cast as a disruptive force that must be excluded. In the African context, the populist label has often been applied to movements whose rhetoric mirrors populist appeals, particularly their emphasis on "the people" as protagonists in the liberation struggle.

Recent African populism literature has focused on two primary areas: populist leaders (e.g., Makulilo, 2013) and populism as a political or electoral strategy (Resnick, 2010; Cheeseman, 2019). Although often studied separately, party politics and populism are deeply intertwined. As Hinojosa (2021:387) notes, "any explanation for the rise of populism must inevitably address the shortcomings of the party-based modes of political representation for which populism claims to offer a corrective."

More recently, attention toward African populism has grown. This includes analysis of political leaders viewed as populist and the emergence of newer parties such as South Africa's Economic Freedom Fighters, which draw on populist sentiments. Examples of such figures include Jacob Zuma (South Africa), Frederick Chiluba (Zambia), and Mrisho Kikwete (Tanzania).

This thesis contributes to the growing literature on African populism by examining populist movements and leaders across various time periods who exhibit populist traits in their political performance. It explores the dual dimensions of populist personalities and movements, including those that may undermine democratic institutions as well as those that articulate a pluralist democratic vision. In addition to identifying expressions of populism, the study investigates the broader impacts of these leaders and their parties on political institutions, party systems, and foreign policy across selected African states.

Research Questions, Methodology and Scope

Against the above introduction, the thesis research objectives are concerned with the following: which factors have led to the emergence of populism, movements or actors in Africa, along with factors that have contributed to its growth. Supporting objectives are concerned with an evaluation of the overall presence of populism beyond the limits of elections in addition to what the impact(s) of populism has on Africa in terms of societies, institutions and marginalized communities. Informed by these, the guiding research questions are

Q1. What is the emergence, development, and manifestation of populist personalities/patterns in the focus countries?

Q2. To what degree is populism present in Africa, and what influences this (focus countries)?

Q3. What are the impacts populism and/or populist leaders have on the democracies, political landscape (referring to party systems and political parties) and legal systems in the respective countries?

The thesis takes on a qualitative and reflexive approach in its review of populist expression across historical periods and, through its reliance on secondary data and historical accounts, employs an approach that is deductive and interpretive, facilitated by a methodological trident consisting of the Critical Discourse Analysis (C.D.A), Discourse-Historical Analysis (D.H.A) and Visual Discourse Analysis (V.D.A) as the respective prongs.

The rationale behind these two approaches is their capacity to allow for the exploration of populist discourses both as text and as social practice, which is well suited for uncovering populism's surface-level languages as well as its influences from deeper ideological structures and historical occurrences.

C.D.A. offers the provision of a "context-sensitive, analytical procedure" on the ways in which populist discourse pulls from linguistic and discursive tropes and traditions as resources within those specific socio-cultural/regional contexts (Eskrom et al., 2018). It also allows for the examination of linguistic style as something that reflects identities or ways of being, allowing for

the examination of various populist linguistic styles as "contextual features that index social identity and hierarchical value systems. When speaking of C.D.A., there is a sub-section/methodology within it that holds equal application – this is (critical) Discourse Historical Analysis that, as mentioned earlier, is better equipped for situating political discourse within the the broader socio-historical context it is located in, as demonstrated by Mark Nartey (2022) in his book *Myth-making, Nationalist Resistance and Populist Performance: Examining Kwame Nkrumah's Construction and Promotion of the African Dream* of the Pan-African rhetoric of Kwame Nkrumah. D.H.A has been elucidated to subscribes to the socio-philosophical orientation of Critical Theory (Wodak, 2009), thus embracing three core and interconnected aspects;

(1) "Text or discourse immanent critique" aims at discovering inconsistencies, contradictions, paradoxes and dilemmas in the structures internal to the text or discourse.

(2) "Socio-diagnostic critique" is concerned with demystifying the – manifest or latent – (possibly persuasive or "manipulative") character of discursive practices. Here, the analyst makes use of her or his background and contextual knowledge and embeds the discursive event in a wider frame of social and political relations, processes and circumstances. We also draw on social theories to interpret the discursive events on this level. This indicates that the DHA is inherently interdisciplinary (see below, theory of context).

(3) Prognostic critique: This form of critique contributes to the transformation and improvement of communication (for example, by developing guidelines against sexist language behaviour or in order to reduce language barriers in hospitals, schools, and so forth).

In describing the differences between ideological analysis, discourse theory, and discourse historical analysis Lipinski (year) provides the below table to illustrate the analytical differences between the three;

An important matter connected to this is the scope of the research, and by extension what has been identified and highlighted needs to be briefly articulated. As further elucidated in Chapter 1 (1.10), the operationalized concept of 'populism' is based on Mudde's conception, although within the scope of political communication to allow for the inclusion of socio-cultural and

political styles, as used in a 2018 study that employed C.D.A in order to display how, again in terms of right-wing actors, populist performance is dependent on socio-historical context as well as the communicative context it is situated in and produced in Ekstrom et al (2018).

The Critical Visual Discourse Analysis method is an approach that is traditionally limited to the unpacking of how various visual images and texts contribute to the construction of propagation of certain ideologies, identities and power relations (Aiello, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2008). However, in theses featuring it, it is used to encapsulate other methods that are typically distinct, such as semiotic analysis (Barthes, 1977), visual analysis (Finnegan, 2004; Rose 2016), iconographic analysis (Panofsky, 1955), necessitated by the inclusion of songs, hymns, and chants in addition to the interpretation of the possible political or historical meanings in political iconography, like political party logos and analyses of visual representations of populist leaders.

Alongside the C.D.A. and C.H.A. methods, the thesis utilizes a methodological mix of several other methods to assist in better analysis and properly spotlighting populism within the African tradition to answer the research questions. This mix includes critical narrative analysis to examine how populist constructs like 'the people' or 'the elites' are crafted and analysed through narrative structures, intertextual and interdiscursive analysis that displays how populist language and performances in the contemporary setting constantly borrow across time, and contextualised discourse sampling that supports the selections of texts that are historically based and purposive as opposed to corpus-based.

As far as the scope of the study goes, the regional limitation is the largest eliminator. As with most populist studies, sample countries share an unofficial prerequisite of needing to be a functional multi-party democracy. This is because normally populist claims have an aspect of power redistribution to the public (the people) and often occur within electoral or democratic settings. Also, as mentioned earlier, populism itself is considered to be a kind of democratic corrective, as argued by Conovan (2002).

Initially, the study aimed to explore and review political parties and political personalities, but there has since been an expansion to include non-political actors who seem to espouse populist behaviours. For political parties, the material reviewed will be limited mainly to party manifestos and 'popular' policies (either proposed or actual depending on if that party is in government),

prominent slogans, or overall political stance. For personalities, materials included are speeches, interviews or articles (if those leaders publish articles). For realistic limitations, samples included are limited to those found in English and on the official websites of the relevant parties/actors in addition to interviews concerning larger issues of governance or societal importance.

Literature Review

This chapter surveys the existing body of scholarship relevant to the thesis' investigation into political discourse, performance, and identity in African contexts. The review does not aim to provide a totalizing overview of each individual discipline or theoretical strand but instead maps out the relevant intellectual landscape through which the thesis is situated. In particular, the chapter draws on insights from critical discourse studies, political communication, historical discourse, and performance theory to foreground the recurring debates, limitations, and conceptual resources that underpin the current study. The objective is to identify the key conceptual frameworks and empirical gaps that have guided this research project, while also demonstrating how previous works have approached similar questions of identity, legitimacy, and political expression across African and postcolonial contexts.

Populism has become one of the most relevant concepts to the study of contemporary social sciences and humanities. (show increase in publications from below) with scholars, analysts, commentators, and pundits having contributed litanies of work on the concept backing up Matthijs Rooduijn's opening statement in an analysis piece explaining the explosion in the interest of populism, "Populism is sexy" (Roodujin, 2023: page) in a statement used in an analysis piece by features in the *Guardian* aimed at explaining the sudden boom in populist interest. Despite that, there exists a lacuna in scholarly literature dedicated to understanding expressions of populism found outside of Latin America, North America and Europe.

There has been a gradual increase in the amount of attention given to populism in Africa, with references made to the appearance of populist leaders, populist parties and sentiments in countries in South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. Still, there is little academic literature that assists in locating populist narratives in Africa within Africa's particular political history that influenced and continues to influence African political culture, political socialization, political power and an overall political consciousness

This synthesised review of literature offered by this chapter is similar to John Abromeit's (2017) review of recent populism literature, where Abromeit surveys five selected contemporary works on populism to place into view some of the blind spots found in populism studies. In this text

Abromeit goes into sweeping detail of each publication reviewed, outlining the central aim and dissecting the content of each chapter. Similarly, this chapter takes a less intense approach to populism literature by seeking to provide a smaller-scale report on populist literature from selected texts concerning the instances of populism in Africa.

A key deviation from the article of inspiration is the number of works covered and the depth of review. Here, the concern is to give a general feel of some of the dominant themes and rationales that permeate the study of African populism, along with critical points on novel contributions or differences from the field's standard narratives.

Regarding the field's overall academic output, texts excavating the relationship between populism's theoretical contributions towards definitional and conceptual aspects are the most frequent. However, except for works that deal solely with concentrated reviews of populism conceptually, much of this is the consequence of giving a sufficient understanding of the concept or building a framework for what the main argument in that text is to be, as seen with Osuna (2009).

Populism's growing salience in the world has been reflected in the building cache of cross-regional studies. Arguably the earliest record of this is the 'To Define Populism' conference held at the London School of Economics and Political Science in May of 1967. Among (ideological, political, historical and general) the conference acknowledged the existence of different types of populism hinging on the geographical regions it is located in, identifying these regional types as Russian, North American, Latin American, African & Asian. Notably, the report stands as arguably the earliest introduction to earlier work recognizing populism as being regionally distinctive (Berlin et al., 1986). When looking at cross-regional studies, others have given fresh offerings to reasonings behind the demand for more fluid stances on understanding core concepts like 'populism' 'people' and 'elites' that are regionally appropriate for contexts in Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa (Hadi & Chryssogelos, year; Hatakka & Herkman, year).

Reviewing five recent studies Abromeit (2017) suggests a return to early Frankfurt School Critical Theory may aid in addressing some of these studies shortcomings. Considered a more prolific author of populism, Rooduijn (2019) tackles the current state of populist studies, tracking

the evolution of the concept of populism from London's 1967/8 conference but also its usage relative to adjacent topics like nativism or Euroscepticism.

Hunger & Paxton (2022) provide a comprehensive overview of populism research in political science by conducting a multistep system review that blends quantitative and qualitative analysis, part of which acknowledges the possibilities of variation in populisms across study fields. Although the main discipline of review is political sciences, they deploy a cross-discipline approach that aids in revealing the contribution of neighbouring fields like international relations, sociology, communication, history, area studies, law, religion, ethnic studies, cultural studies, economics for the increase of populism-related publications, something similarly covered by Girdon & Bonikowski (2013). Zhang and Liao (2023) provide a rare bibliometric and comparative analysis of the production, critical points and main trends of populism research from 2000-2020, thus covering the period blind spots (2000-2004 and 2018-2020) from Hunger & Paxton.

When speaking of the chronology of populism studies, there is building awareness reflected in the literature. In the first decade of the 2000s, populism studies had a more comparative and comprehensive outlook, albeit with a limited focus on Latin America and Europe (Roodujin, 2019). Zhang and Liao (2023) determined that a watershed moment in populist studies was in 2004 when Mudde's seminal works on the definitions of populism inspired publications addressing the new theoretical approaches.

In a study better grasping the extent of growth in populism literature, a multistep systemic review within the timeline of 2004 to 2018 Hunger & Paxton (2022) demonstrate that this increase in populism literature witnessed was in actuality steady and relatively slow increase mainly for the political sciences with other disciplines publishing a considerably lower paper, however, there is a notable change in 2012-2014 for political science where publications take off. This is ratified and visualized in a bibliometric analysis of populism research between 2000 and 2020 by Zhang & Liao (2023) note the field chronological distribution increased after 2014 as being related to the rise of international populist events like the popularity of Brexit, the early stages of the migration crisis and a slump in the global economy.

This is unintentionally verified by another study from Nexera et al (2023) mapping the types of populism determined by a textual analysis based on the most frequent word that immediately precedes the root word 'populis*' across papers included in the Social Citation Index within the Web of Science. An interesting part of the study is in how the authors quantified the frequency of root term 'populis*' usage, with results determining that populist research about right-wing forms is higher after finding that the root word was largely in combination with the word 'right'.

Despite populism being a global phenomenon, Yaoyao Dai (2018) notes how much of the already existing literature places focus on a select few regions, mainly Europe and Latin America. Data on the regional differences in populist output is also captured in Zhang & Liao's study. As further discussed, the yearly number of populism publications within political sciences concludes that the scholarly focus exceeds attention given to other regions, with Africa, Asia, and Oceania being the least studied regions. Leading the pack with the most publications are the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Australia, Canada, Switzerland, and Russia with Argentina, Turkey, Sweden, Hungary, Belgium, and Brazil. Germany, the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom show to have more influence over populism research internationally, also exhibiting more established cooperative relations with other countries (Zhang & Liao, 2023).

This 'geographic segregation', as phrased by Dai is a result of the ways scholars measure the concept of populism (2018). This is because in most cases the terminology used to define either 'the people or 'the corrupt few' is framed by the context that is determined by both time and space, and this dependency has made it difficult to carry out empirical research with regards to the causes and consequences of populism in a holistic global or even regional fashion.

Locating the relationship between populism and democracy has become an especially important research areas as it concerns the consequences of populism on democratic governance (Gidron-Boniwski, 2013) The question of whether populism is a threat to democracy or a correctional force within it is debated; nevertheless, in addition to its negative effects, populism may also have positive effects on the legitimacy of democracy (Canovan, 2002)

A bourgeoning portion of work notably frames populism as a threat to liberal democracies, more so in European contexts, a phenomenon articulated to be a legacy of Europe's 'sordid' history

with populist totalitarian politics. This framing is also likely due to populism being the most prominent, or most identifiable within liberal democracies. Across these works the common themes around populism's dangers are its anti-plurality, its tendency to attack liberal democratic institutions, its erosion of institutional autonomy and populism's spotlighting of liberal democracy practical issue by way of fixating on the two strands of liberal democracy. The two-strand theory can be summed up as thus;

Liberal democracy is the merging of the two separate concepts of (i) liberal and (ii) democracy. Liberalism is by nature underpinned by the notions of individual rights, universal principles and the rule of law as enshrined in a constitution, while democracy is typically seen to evoke the soveign will of the people meant to imply unqualified majority rule. People challenge the relations of liberalism and democracy by inciting the limitations placed on democracy by liberalism and by doing so implying that the collective will of the people stands above constitutionalism.

Populism Literature in and regarding Africa

As previously mentioned, literature that is academic or otherwise on the materialization of populism in and on the African continent lags behind the amount composed evaluating populism in the Americas and Europe. That said, there has been considerable traction on literature outputs in recent years, investigating instances of populism found in leadership, its electoral usefulness, its effect on democracy, and recounting economic and social realities that fertilized the ground enable a bountiful harvest for populism when it comes it supporters, more so given the proposition of viewing contemporary populism as a "distinctive reaction to the social dislocations of globalisation, which can be expressed in a dizzying variety of ways depending on the local, regional and historical context' (Haiz & Chyssogelos, 2017).

Some of the more abundant literature on African populism addresses the continent's unique history, but this abundance came as part of setting up arguments by prefacing the continent's colonial history Africa and not specific works concerned with the continent's populist history. On a historical perspective Martin Guy introduces the types of 'African' populism in African political thought that has manifested through the personalities of some early African leaders and their policies during the 1960's but lacks clarification of what characterises them as populist

outside of what Guy describes as their belief in socialist principles (Guy, 2012). Here, 'Socialist-populism' is the lens used to classify African personalities as socialist-populists, these are: (1) radical nationalism; (2) a radical mood, (3) anti-capitalism, (4) populism and an exaltation of the peasantry and (5) adherence to a moderate form of socialism/social democracy and a rejection of orthodox Marxism (Guy, 2012) .Adversely 'Populist-Socialism' makes use of the same markers for classification but place emphasis on the 'populist' aspect, whereas the 'socialist-populist' notion gave more focus to the 'socialist' aspect (Guy, 2012). Correspondingly, Ehioze Idahosa (2004) in a book on populisms importance for African political thought in earlier representations of populist leaders based on their expression of an entrenched concern for the liberation and develop of the people of like Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral and Julius Nyerere tries to find the distinction where also to between political theory, political practice as well as European and African forms of nationalism.

Daneille Resnick one of the more prolific, or most cited, scholars of African populism an early framework across three separate publications towards the provision of a temporary understanding of populism rise in Africa. In a 2010 comparative study utilizing Keyna, Zambia and South Africa as case studies, Resnick articulates two criteria that assist the successful use of populist strategies in Africa. Populist strategies in this context aim to rectify the exclusion of economically marginalized constituencies Resnick identifies as the urban poor. The first is the high level of rapid urbanisation that has occurred without matching economic growth that could be used to combat high levels of poverty, especially within cities that are the centres of political power (Resnick, 2010). The second being that some already existing political systems are conducive to populist leaders particularly those that have poor track records of clearly formulated developmental agendas, often used as a mechanism to advance personalities or revolving around the ambitions of party funders (Resnick, 2010).

Resnick (2017) in a later text provides a more complete framework, articulating the correlation between the continent's urbanization more extensively, linking it to the issues of largescale inequality and growing youth populations using a cumulative approach combining the three conceptualizations of populism (ideological, political strategy, and sociocultural performances). Here Resnick provides a fuller picture by reiterating the impacts of local political systems, economies and socio-ethnic realities that fertilize the ground for populist growth while

expanding on points briefly mentioned in the 2010 paper. The dominance of the informal sector dissuades the development of well-structured, institutionalised civil society organizations like worker unions, which leaves more opportunity for political leaders to build unmediated ties with the large, but poor, masses (Nyadera & Agwanda, 2019). A large portion of the continent's voting majority is still mobilized on ethnic alignment whereas the majority of the urban poor resonate more with economic issues like those of employment, improved delivery of public services, and increased access to housing and other infrastructure.

A refreshing inclusion here comes from Dan Paget's probe into the populist label applied to former Tanzanian president John Mangufuli on the premise that while his rhetoric exhibited behaviours normally associated with populism, Paget argues it to be 'elitist plebeianism' (Paget, 2021). Central to Paget's argument is that Mangufuli's narrative does indeed build an antagonism between the people and a different group that frustrates its demands, but this group is not the typical 'elite' (Paget, 2021). It revolves around three enduring strata', the people, who are the lowest; a middle stratum in a position of a minority of power and the elite with a power plurality. Crucially, the rhetoric sees the middle stratum as being in antagonism with the people and equates the elite as being aligned with the people, not as equals but as advocates against a common enemy. In a distinct break from populist discourse that as with the former, actively attempts to distribute power, elitist-plebeian discourses uphold power dynamics on the rationale that it is the elite that should correctly use its power to subdue the middle stratum in defence of the people.

Feeding in analysis on populism and democracy, populism's threat to constitutionalism is explained as exploiting the tension between constitutional democracies ideology that has power residing in the people and democracies reliance on the constitution to protect institutions and minority rights (Vincent, 2011). Amid widespread dissatisfaction South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) revived its 'pro-poor' credentials with a campaign that appealed to its mass base using an anti-elitist message, but that directly challenge its constitution or power entrenched in constitutional institutions that ideally are out of reach from populist influence (Louise, 2011) There are also provoking perspectives on populism gestation in relation to African democracies away from bids that discuss its threats to local democracies. Agbedejobi's approach discusses populism in 'non-Western democracies', that are democracies built on the

installation democracy by colonialism, that these democracies that run parallel to pre-colonial social-political values birthing 'hybrid democracies' (2024). These democracies experience a fractured historical political identity caused by the prioritization of Western ideas and institutions without addressing neglected indigenous belief systems that continue to function outside of the structure of formalised power.

Another one of the themes of populism and constitutionalism tackles the matter by placing weak constitutions or rather issues not firmly handled in constitutions as another tool in the populist toolbox. Boone (2009) examines property rights in Côte d'Ivoire where promises to rearrange property allocations were used to try secure electoral support and build a large support base. Since the 1990's land has long been a strategic source of patronage for politicians continent-wide needing to mobilize constituencies- the using state power to directly carry out redistributive policies that would immediately benefit. In Cote d'Ivoire rural land allocation has been more or less at the discretion of the central state and its agents, that is to say whoever is in power at the time, with varying intensities. In 1994 Henri Berdi, leader of the *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (*Democratic Party of Ivory Coast) (P.D.C.I.), utilized land based electoral populism to co-opt former opposition constituencies in the South of Ivory Coast to form a new super-majority to essentially guarantee an electoral victory when combined with core constituencies in south-central. Simplified, would give Ivorians in the South preferential rural land rights by revoking rights from foreigners, but in doing so toyed with the definition of citizenship, or rather the recreation of what it meant to be Ivorian. This was done by arguing that to one needed to have multi-generational roots in Côte d'Ivoire to two Ivorian parents, which in turn immediately denied land ownership and voting rights to the population of immigrants born in Côte d'Ivoire a number that could go anywhere between 25 to 40 percent of the total population (Boone, 2009) Land politics is a major issue for post-liberation Africa's constitutional design that acts a strong inhibitor to liberal democracy, the property rights regime. Ultimately this shows how populist waves are the consequence of weak constitutional autonomy or where institutions meant to protect or enforce the constitution are repeatedly undermined and defanged.

Writing on populist personalities and their performative populism characteristics is in many ways a staple in African contemporary populist literature. One example is in the describing of Zambian populism, with specific reference to the 2006 campaign of Micheal Sata's Patriotic

Front, as a manifestation of political theatre the party's failure to institutionalize and characterize its shift from populist to authoritarian (Fraser, 2017) Sata's improvisational style, lacking policy coherence, hinged on his ability to exploit crises promising to introduce order, expanded towards the inclusion of 'flaunting of the low' theorised by Ostiguy (2017). Another is Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni's 'quasi-populism' that Carbone unpacks as not a complete example of anti-political populist but instead displays a high amount of populism with the plebiscitarian pro-people discourse, mixing it with the tendency to informalize politics and undermine political institutions like parliament or the judiciary (Carbone, 2005). This is showcased by his rebrand from a successful military office and politician to an "out of the ordinary person that the people needed to trust" to bring in a new era of democracy using anti-colonial strategy as a legitimation tactic, a rebrand that paid off (Carbone, 2005:6). However, a critical factor reviewed is that he did not appeal to the use of over-simplistic or impractical solutions to the county's problems going as far as introducing unpopular policies like the return of properties to Asians who had been dispossessed during the tenure of Idi Amin (Cheeseman & Ford, 2014). His popular support stemmed from bringing about civil stability and solving the relationship between soldiers and citizens which had been a long-time qualm since the end of Uganda's civil war in 1994.

A critical addition to populist literature from a socio-economic sense is a 2015 paper by Cheeseman & Lamar that delved into the supply side of Zambian populism that made use of questionnaires targeting Sata's support base to outline what they want and obtain a sense of the prevalence of populist sentiments in his following and Zambian society and how these feelings can assist in predicting policies that Sata would be likely to pursue while in office. From the paper we are shown that Sata's support rested on two key pillars, the first was the assumed capacity of the interventionist state to directly intervene with the economy in order to improve the lives of ordinary Zambians, which would be the most salient as Sata's approach was focused on the country's economic conditions and the responsibility of the government to aid. The second was an enthusiastic criticism to international partners and China's growing influence on the continent gave Sata a broad-sided target, more so than the usual culprits (Cheeseman & Ford, 2014). This strategy proved effective because it framed the voter choice as taking destiny into their own hands by giving Sata the ballot or five more years of foreign dependency endorsed by

the opposition. A high number of Zambians related to the economy as needing active state intervention at the time, around 72 percent. Support for an activist state providing agricultural markets, state-owned businesses, education and healthcare, job creation crime control and purchase and sale of resources was consistently high ranging from 62 to 81 per cent depending on the issue for in 2009 (Cheeseman & Ford, 2014). The reflection of the state-interventionist legacy from the United National Independence Party that governed Zambia for close to three decades with a less robust version of African socialism was introduced curtailing private enterprise and bringing under state control large businesses and industries. During this time the state encouraged citizens to count on it to resolve their socioeconomic troubles, this period of populist mobilizations advocating for state-led development has entrenched the belief that the government is the best way to advance the collective interests of ordinary people, even if it has had limited successes in doing so (Cheeseman & Ford, 2014).

Ethnopulism's suitability here is discussed in its articulations around the reasons why opposition parties are found to be more ethnic than ruling parties and citing these as due to their lack of access to mobilization resources that would allow them to build more inclusive constituencies are forced to fall back on ethnic mobilization that is to say, their supporter base is comprised of a similar ethnic grouping. There are also shifts in how it has featured, like in the cases of Kenya and Zambia Ethno-populism narratives in the former centred the salience of ethnicity and it relied on co-opting a set of regional big men from across ethnicities to build a diverse support based. Critically, it did not look to supersede ethnic regional differences, only accommodate them as they still functioned under the same political affiliation. As a result, this strategy inflamed ethnic divisions resulting ethnic clashes while the latter skilfully of ethnic that overcame ethnic differences and in doing so briefly pacified ethnic tensions.

A refreshing incorporation for African populist literature is a 2022 paper that utilizes cartographic techniques to map and highlight networks of populism and the reception of populist sentiment within the digital space. Beseford et al (2022) looked at determining if a movement is either vanguardist or devolutionary by monitoring a South African populist movement that advocates on 'Radical Economic Transformation', phrased as an attempt at pitting black South Africans against 'White Monopoly Capital', which signifies the white business elites on four aspects. These aspects are i) the origins of the network of activists that formed a populist

movement, including the power dynamics between leaders and activists within the spaces it operates; ii) the epistemic heritage of the network, in terms of how its actors begin to articulate shared framings of politics as well as the discourses that could create horizontal and vertical affect between activists, leaders and, potentially, the wider public; iii) the methods and mediums used to try and generate affect between the movement and the general public; iv) how the movement's framings of politics and its discourses are received and engaged with by the public.

A less populated field in African populist literature has to do with the expression of populism towards non-indigenous minorities. A fascinating addition to the literature here is a study on the white minority in South Africa, in a light that frames it in contrast to the portrayals of global white racial and ethnic identity as fractured and on the defensive. Following South Africa's Solidarity Movement that claims to represent the Afrikaner minority interests in post-Apartheid South Africa a populist manifestation less preoccupied with personalistic but on the usage of classic populist tropes with nationalist populist logic (Van Zyl-Hermann, 2018). Foremost in their narrative is that the elites are not only the 'corrupt ANC government, African elites and also the black majority that is painted as threatening to the 'other' (other here referring to the White minority). The novelty here is that, unlike other White minority populist movements or parties that actively seek to political power using reduced political leverage and territorial dispersion to springboard an assertive nationalist populist channel for Afrikaner white autonomy, this is one is planted firmly in civil society as opposed to the political arena, revealing that nationalist populist discourses can survive and function outside of formal political structures in democracy and local alternative sources of legitimacy (Sibiri, 2021).

An alternative branch of literature that gives precedence to minority populism is anti-Chinese populism. China's influence is only growing in terms of more local small Chinese businesses globally. Painting China's large-scale interest in the continent as neo-colonial thus casting them in the same box as England, France or Spain, all of which were actual colonial empires. Consequently, there is festering exclusionary populism with anti-Chinese sentiments, a topic that is of importance in African populist discourse. This anti-Chinese populism follows a logic where China's presence as an international investor with companies, workers and migrants has become more visible in a negative perception of Chinese engagements in a particular country. Anti-Chinese sentiments are well-established and have been documented in a variety of contexts

including Australia, the United States, Myanmar and more obvious places like Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines (Sibiri, 2021). As such anti-Chinese populism can be viewed as one of few cases of exclusionary anti-foreigner populism against a particular citizenry or ethnic group that is not of African descent.

Conclusively, populism persists as an intricate and diverse phenomena that is difficult to neatly classify. Because of its anti-pluralistic, illiberal inclinations and reliance on emotionally charged rhetoric, populism is frequently portrayed as a destabilising force within liberal democracies; however, populism also has the potential to act as a democratic corrective by amplifying the voices of those who have historically been marginalised or excluded. Its malleable and adaptable character enables it to move and change with various political environments. Still, this adaptability also keeps it from settling into a single, all-encompassing ideological framework. Rather than existing as a coherent theory on its own, populism has been theorised to better function as a 'thin ideology,' supporting more expansive political systems.

Scholarly research on populism, once a relatively low-producing field, has doubled, especially around and after 2014. This is due to the rise of populist figures, movements, and expressions that have re-entered the political mainstream while challenging some of the fundamental elements of democracy, such as constitutionalism, in an effort to revive the power of the people. As was previously indicated, this rise is dispersed throughout several diverse sectors and issues that appeal to different facets of populist expression and interest. The link between populism and democracy is still a prominent issue in the literature due to the populist expression in democracies sometimes containing case studies or examples of populist actors who have attempted, in some way, to subvert constitutional authority for their own ends.

The ideological variations of populism are another field which has seen significant support by scholars yet arguments centring Right-leaning manifestations, have left research lopsided towards exclusionary types of populism. Leftist populism literature is shallow which is likely influenced by the low visibility of contemporary Leftist populist movements.

Comparative studies on the subjects of non-Western and Western forms of populism is a literary field that is in short supply. African populism is conceivably most overlooked in reference to global populism academic focus. The corpus of writing on populism's presence on the continent

is steadily swelling with dominant themes and scholarly patterns emerging. The continent's particular experience with colonialism and its impacts on the development of populist expressions are some of the earlies, coming up often in background sections of texts and historical accounts. Vital here is the acknowledgement of populisms connection to anti-colonial and post-colonial socialism, the exaltation of the poor and anti-elitist sentiments commonly associated with populisms Manichean worldview were staples of anti-colonial mobilization narratives.

Literature unpacking Africa's socio economic conditions and how these fan populist flames, as is the case with the tandem yet dichotomous roles of the urban poor and the rural poor in populist strategies should not be understated, as in a number of developing states' populist mobilization methods that galvanize these two different constituencies with starkly different needs has been some of the most effective, an effectiveness mirrored by its recurring mentioning in contemporary literature. What is appropriate to mention here is the featuring of ethnopopulism under literature relating to populist mobilization. Smaller parties are proliferating the political spaces, and as they do so they rely on easier lines of mobilization as they lack the ability to craft far-reaching, complex mobilizers as seen with larger parties.

Populists or popular personalities are a third theme of prominence. As in other regions, populism in Africa is driven by actors who see political parties are vehicles of personal ambition, this is coupled with the reality that weak party systems create parties are heavily influenced by individual personalities, there is a lot of focus on how parties narratives shift depending on which personality is at the helm. However, a fresh perspective on populism is offered by Dan Paget's analysis of former Tanzanian president John Magufuli and his elitist plebeanism, which challenges traditional populist classifications. This nuanced interpretation underscores the complexity of populism, illustrating that leaders may adopt populist rhetoric while simultaneously reinforcing elite control. Such insights broaden the scope of populism studies, demonstrating that it is not a monolithic phenomenon but one that can take on various forms depending on the political and cultural context.

The way that African populism manifests itself towards non-indigenous populations has received less attention. The Solidarity Movement, which uses nationalist populist language to paint elites like the ANC government, African elites, and the black majority as threats to the white minority,

is notable for representing the interests of the Afrikaner minority in South Africa. This movement demonstrates that populist speech may flourish outside of formal politics, in contrast to previous white minority populist groups that aim for political power. Instead, this movement has its roots in civil society.

Furthermore, populism opposed to China is increasing throughout Africa because of the perception that China's expanding influence is neo-colonial. This discriminatory attitude is distinct from other worldwide anti-Chinese movements since it targets non-Africans.

Chapter 1: Populism, General Considerations

1.1 Introduction

In this opening chapter of the thesis, the central concept of populism is conceptualized and its constitutive tenets disentangled for the purpose of providing the theoretical understanding of the term as well as its specific formulation and its operationalization within the main discussion of the study. The chapter first gives a succinct history of term, unpacking foundational historical movements and their context widely accepted to be the genesis of populism ideological framework, these being the nineteenth century Narodniki Movement in Russia, the United State's of America's the People's Party and twentieth century Latin American populism and its various waves. Following this, the chapter elucidates the conceptualize when positions within the Left-Right divide that constitutes political theory before unpacking populism's core concepts; the people, anti-elitism, and the romanticising of the general will of the common man. Subsequently, a summary of the central conceptualization of populism visible in its manifestation within the political sciences is given in addition to an expansion on populism's interactions with democracy, a theoretical relationship critical to for the understanding of populism within any contemporary democracy, more so in African contexts. In the chapter's tenth section, the conception of populism that this thesis operationalizes, derived from the political communication approach, is outlined and the rationale for the selection of this is provided.

1.2 Summarized History of Populism:

It is universally agreed that populism is in no way a new phenomenon, however recent inflation the term's uses and applications overtime have portrayed populism to appear as 'a concept without history and thus reduced to transhistorical or transcendental history of something else (Finkelstein, 2014). Thus, it is important, as agreed by Skenderovic (2021), to have a historical look at its (academic) conceptualisation because the conceptual history of populism is linked strongly to concrete historical contexts and conditions in which earlier expressions of populism are found in (Skenderovic, year).

23

There are a number of reasons that support the need for a brief historical overview of populism's genesis. Finchelstein (2017: 2) holds that the simplistic tracing of the origins of the term 'populism' or narration of earlier movements considered to be populist argues against 'the idea that populism is a political experience that has no deep history that has become commonplace' and stems Finchelstein calls "the current inflation of analyses of populist politics as a political malaise that has no specific point of origin" (2017: 102). Scholars find common ground in supporting a global reviewal of populisms 'historical itineraries' that places emphasis on the need for returning and reconnecting populism to history by replacing it into the specific historical contexts giving focus to the political style and not its contents, stressing that historically populism has presented a range of progressive possibilities, forcing us to rethink negative stereotypes about populism as a concept (Finchelstein, 2017; Blocker, 1972). Perhaps of the more poignant benefits is aids in the cleansing of populism from ideologies frequently found to share whatever room populism is found in. We find that when "properly historied, populism is not fascism" (Finchelstein, 2017: 6), nor is it nationalism, Euroscepticism, nativism or socialism. Populism, historically, has been reviewed to emerge in response to a particular context, more often than linked to feelings of dispossession or being forced to the sidelines of political life, existing within its own period of resistance when compared to its manifestations in modern constitutional democracy.

There are a vast number of contrasting opinions on the origins of populism, for example Hawkins et al (year) (in Stockemer, 2017) place the start of populism in the late Roman Republic and the political polarization between the popularies and the optimates.[1] Others (Giorgini, 2024) hypothesize populism to possibly have existed as in Classical Athens embodied in political figures like Cleon being the 'first populist leader in history'. That being said, it is the largely agreed (Janset el al, 2020; Canovan, year; Fuentes, 2020) that early nineteenth century agrarian movements found in Russia and the United States of America are regarded as the 'first rise' or foundational footsteps for modern expression of populism

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[1] The Populares were in favour of the people while the aristocrats were favoured by the Optimates (Stockemer, 2017)

1.3. Narodniki Movement & Russian Populism (19th Century)

For a number of populist scholars populism as contemporarily understood dates back to 19th century Tsarist Russia that was a largely agrarian, autocratic empire populated mainly by religious and illiterate peasants who maintained a certain level of self-sufficiency (Mylonas & Guerra, 2024)

Vergara **(year)**, Abts & Kessel (2015), Fuentes (2020), Robinson (2024) agree with Skenderovic in identifying the Narodniki movement as constituting "a second incarnation of the founding forms of populism" (2021:53) existing between the 1860-79s. Scholars and historians differ in the originating cause of Russian populism, some (Ely, 2022) place it as a response to cultural challenges experienced at the time. For Ely (2022) Russian populism is essentially described as having been a rebuttal to cultural, intellectual and socio-economic challenge of the 1830s in Russia. The challenge in short: Russian society had stagnated and that the mass imitation of foreign (primarily Western) cultures and values through contact with English travellers and French officers (Mylonas & Guerra, 2024) that had "inspired by the romantic conservative Catholicism that placed the grand moral inheritance of Western civilization in high regard" (Ely, 2022: 13), leaving Russians without "any organically inherited sense of ethical purpose" (Ely, 2022:13). It is within this cultural context that Russian populism looked to recover the limited sense of Russian authenticity had been lost, an authenticity seemingly held by the peasantry. Others (Vergara,; Robinson, 2024) cite it to have been a movement centred around help the Russian peasantry organize their forces to throw off the yoke of the Tsarist government, informed by earlier revolts by students and peasants.

While it is described as a movement there is more utility in approaching it as Walicki (1969) had, which is as less of an organized movement (although serious attempts were made at making it such), and more of broad current of political thought. Mylonas & Guerra (2024:page) offer an apt description, explaining it to be "a diverse ideological, spiritual and political movement with socialist aspirations that...focused on direction attention to the Russian people as a source of inspiration for redemption and social change and as an object of salvation from Tsarist autocracy and from the prospects of capitalism advancing in Russia". The central focus on earlier populist interest, or the earliest formation of the Russian people were the Narod (people) understood as referring to an ethnic group, national community, the collective of the Russian people or

exclusively the labouring masses in the earlier parts of it referred the labouring poor, or underprivileged majority of Russian society, while these were farmers and labourers it is a grouping that can be understood to include the rural clergy members, merchants and even non-Russian ethnicities (Fry, 14). In a way that mimicked the impact that the class divide contributes the mushrooming of contemporary populists, historical recollections show that the massive influence on the emergence and development of early populism in Russia populism was the divide between the Obshchestvo and the Narod, and how they found expression and through the of the Russian intelligentsia. Although focused on the people the movements main ideas were developed largely by intellectuals and students from in Russia and the abroad who, in order to carry out 'revolutionary education work' in the countryside, were moving from cities to rural areas in a way of 'going to and living with the people (peasant population) (Skenderovic, 2021; Knott, 2020). [2]

At its core the Narodniki movement was kind of romanticised belief the 'revolutionary potential' in that Russia's peasantry, emanating mainly from the belief in the insulated authenticity held by the peasantry through their traditions. Here that followers of narodniki believed stood the strength of the collectivist traditions of Russian village life and the peasantry that sustained it as hoping to save from bastardization under capitalist modernization Mylonas & Guerra (2024). In trying to describe these ideas the term *narodničestvo* emerged, pivotally in understanding the underlying thinking of the narodničestvo is that the people had not become the subject of the revolution instead it was that that "revolution not only correspond to the interests of the people", but that the "revolution was actually in direct accord with the will and desire of the people" (Skenderovic, 2021: Page number). The French invasion further cemented the Narod in their soon to be mythised role in Russian society. The Russian peasantry, working with the Russian army providing them with and knowledge of the terrain, proved vital to expulsion of the French army from Russian soil. These efforts gained the peasantry recognition, with some of the educated society portraying peasants as not only the quintessential defender of Russia and embodiment of the war effort, but as a force of national restoration (Fry, Year:). It was here when the Narod stood as the collective representation of Russian identity as a whole.

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[2] Crucial in understanding the rational for this 'going to the people' was that these intellectuals had wanted a revolution and a revolution without peasant support, who at the time was a bulk of the Russian population, would not be successful (Radkey, 19580.

1.4. American Populism & U.S. The People's Party (19th Century)

The 1891's People's Party, also known as the Populist Party' is commonly held as the earliest instance of U.S populism. This partly because of the movements self-identification with the term 'populist' and dealt with the themes of moral decay, conspiracy and corrupt elites betraying the common man (Postel, 2022; Nishikawa, 2020; Abts & Kessel, 2015). Additionally, the People's Party is the first, or at least most know, example of a populist movement that has taken on the form of political organization to contest in elections- as done by contemporary populist parties- and not simply a broad-based movement of cultural resurgence.

Scholars (Marin-Lamellet, 2022; Vergara, 2020) describe populist leaders during this period as egalitarian abolitionists whose broad class-based appeal to the people was tied to democracy as equal liberty. Scholars also recognise populism's role in the party empowered, bolstered calls for universal suffrage, especially regarding women's right to political agency, standing as one of the earliest introductions of populisms potential as a democratising agent for the marginalized and thus a progressive phenomenon. The party mobilized an 'unusually' large number of women, granting women more recognition and access to a political space to act as civil agents without suffrage than common from old parties, with more female member than W.T.C.U which was then the second largest women's organization 250 000 to 160 000 (Marin-Lamellet, 2022). [3] From a study exploring the party's electoral success, the party has been observed as a three pronged lesson on the appeal of (populist) third parties, their abilities to urge the adoption of third-party policies by major parties and their presentation of alternative paths of development (Hirano, 2008; Postel, 2024).

Under the party populism marked the cresting social movement that existed as a collection of different organizations including the Farmers Alliances, labour unions and other reformist movements and embracing millions of wage earners,, agricultural workers, the lower-middle working class and women looking for social, economic and political equality (Hicks, 1928;

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[3] Despite its claims of Equality and egalitairnism the Populists had at best a mixed attitude towards the suffrage of racial eqaulity, excluding African Americans and Asian (Chinese) participation, accommodating the dispossession of native Indian Americans and Jim Crow Segregation. Women too were still faced with ingrained genger stereotypes (Postel, 2022;Maris-Lamellet, 2022)

Miller & Ulbig, 2008; Poster, 2024). Republican turned Populist, William Alferd Peffer, who became the first Populist of Senator of Kansas, articulated the mission of the party to be demanding for the functions of governing to be exercised only for the mutual benefit of all the people and the emancipation of labour, believing private interest to be secondary to public good (1893; 1898). With the motto "Equal rights to all; special privilges to non" and espousing the belief in popular government the party was described by Pefer as Devoted to the objects for which the constitution of the United States was adopted, it proposes to " form a more perfect union " by cultivating a national sentiment among the people; to "insure domestic tranquility " by securing to every man and woman what they earn ;to " establish justice " by procuring an equitable distribution ofthe products and profits of labor ; to " provide for the common defence" by interesting every citizen in the ownership of hishome; to "promote the general welfare" by abolishing class legislation and limiting the government to its proper functions ; and to " secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity " by protecting the producing masses against the spoliation of of speculators and usurers (1893:665).

Fundamentally its emergence came as the response to shifts in agricultural and social conditions after the Civil War, namely rapid industrialization and capitalism and the political and economic turmoil caused (Hirano, 2008). Agricultural works opposed large corporations, capital powers like national banks and foreign investors control of the credit supply, transportation lines, namely freight rails, and the land these lines were on and surrounded (Hirano, 2008; Montgomery, 1923).[4] To elucidate, farmers in areas like Kansas and Nebraska, otherwise known as frontier states, had been locked in a devastating cycles of cripple debt brough on by interest rates on chattel loans and mortgages that ranged between ten and eighteen percent, debt that was exacerbated by financial policies including demonitzation of silver, a decade of crop failre causes by extreme drought combined with hot winds and excessive pricing for access to freight services (Miller, 1925; Farmer, 1924; Turner, 1980). In addition increased mechanisation threatened jobs, increased job competition and employers negotiating unhealthy work conditions with longer hours, more hazardous working condition and workers earning low wages, there was also the issue of immigration as labourers from Chinese and Europe has begun to settle

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[4] With regards to the railroads, the expansion of railroads were welcomed by farmers seeing as this opened their access to markets further away, however they opposed the high freight rates and Railroad companies owning the land the rails run on and surrounding land (Montgomery, 1923)

(Montgomery, 1923), further increasing the competitiveness of the job market had left the farmers and workers isolated and feeling cheated by unknown forces (Nishikawa, 2020). Although a common trait contemporary expression of populism, the people's party could reasonably be argued to be one of the earliest examples of a populist movement formed by economic conditions. In fact, the remedying of the economic conditions that gave it life was the proclaimed mission of the party, as stated by Peffer "Gold was king, and a new party was needed to shorten its reign" (Miller, 1925; Peffer, 1898:12). Results from the 1892 election highlighted the strength of the populist party's economic focus in areas that faced moderate to severe and unique economic hardships which were the Rocky Mountain and Great Plains states, but failed to find support in Michigan, Indiana or Wisconsin, crucial farm states with a population of prosperous farmers with no reason to embrace the populists (Olster, 1992). Jeffrey Ostler (1992;1995) further chronicles the support of the People/s Party in relation to the non-competitive state party systems like those of Kansan and Nebraska that were Republican Party dominated and without a strong opposition that abetted the populists' electoral support but fared poorly in Iowa that had a comptetive party system or states like Ohio where ethnic and cultural ties between traditional parties made difficult any potential of populists to gain support (Pierce, 2000.

1.5. Latin American Populism

Following the 19th century agrarian populisms of Narodniki movement in Russia and the People's Party in the United States, Latin American populism prevails as a third significant source of populist expression generally attributed to have contributed to the contemporary theorizations of populism. The significance emanates from elements key routinely witnessed in and considered constitutive of present day populism (mass mobilization, economic ridistribution charismatic leadership, anti-elite rhetoric, tensions beteween popular sovereignty and democratic institutions) having been theorised from following the evolution of recurring strains in Latin American populism on the left and the right.

For close to a century populism has been a vital strand in Latin American politics (Weyland, 2003; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013; Panizza & Miorelli, 2009), so much so that for a period of time populism was used mainly and arginally in reference of Latin America (Grigera, 2017;

Edwards, 2019),. The continnet's long had populist tradition dates back of the caudillos nineteenth century; colourful and popular strongmen who o promised political change, showing great great disdain for established and often corrupt elites, styling themselves as men of action on behalf of ordinary people (Heinisch et al,; Peterson, 2020; Di Tella, 1997). This history of personalized leadership forms te regions historically weak institutions has led to the fermentation of a political cultural that, unlike Europe or North America, has populism at the centre of politics and political change for a large majority, so long in fact that when Latin America was already moving from its second 'wave' of populism towards its third Europe was grappling with populism as a novel phenomenon (Piramo, 2009; Heinisch et al,).

A range of researchers (Conniff, 2020), Heinisch et al, () Finchelstein, (2017); de Lara, 2018; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013) identify the development of Latin American populism to have taken place within disticnt phrases or waves; protopopulism, the classical, neoliberal and radical populist Neo-populist (1986-2000) and the Radical-Leftist or Neoclassical neo-populist (2000-present) and possibly Neoclassical populism of the right and extreme right. However among these phases the most salient of is the Classical (1934-1966), as this in many ways stands as the foundation for contemporary populist scholarship as a whole.

Classical populism, occurring during Latin America's post-revolution, anti-colonial, anti-imperialist populist experiences, emerged at a time when the region was rocked by the economic fallout of the Great Depression and continued until the beginning of the neoliberal epoch in the 1980s. This period birthed a legitimacy crisis, as demands for political integration and social recognition became increasingly urgent (Petersen, 2014; 2020; Rosanvallon, 2021). Populism, in response to oligarchic societies with restricted franchise, extreme inequality, and elite control over national destinies, emerged as a democratizing force (de la Torre, 2017). Characteristically, Latin American classical populism is known for its charismatic and quasi-authoritarian leaders who forged heterogeneous class alliances and mobilized the masses—particularly the poor and working classes—for enfranchisement and inclusion (Left-Wing), aiming to lift them out of poverty through state-led economic development and by promoting a non-aligned foreign policy (Vergara, 2020; Stockemer, 2019; Hennessy; Petersen, 2014). This notion of democracy, based on the aesthetic and liturgical incorporation of the common people—rather than the institutionalization of popular participation through the rule of

law—has been a privileged and central feature of Latin American populism (de la Torre, 2007). This too is when consistent use of the term populist in reference to the charismatic populist leaders and governments gave populism a definitive entrance into the everyday political language (Rosanvallon, 2021). It is also within Latin America's classical populism do studies (de la Torre, 1992) locate the emergence, or rather galvanisation of the role of charismatic populist leadership (chap) in functionality of populism. Argentine Peronism, based on Juan Demingo Perron, who "redfifed democracy as social justice and national sovereignty" (Weyland, 2017:1) which stands at the centre of any study of the history of populism (Finchelstein, 2017: 102), was at the forefront, but this phase also encompasses the second stage of Varguismo in Brazil (1951–54), Gaitanismo in Colombia (late 1940s), and the José María Velasco Ibarra era in Ecuador (1930s to the 1970s).

The subsequent phase, marked by the return of democracy in a number of Latin American states, introduced newer forms of populism that emerged with the mainstreaming of neoliberalism in the region (Petersen, 2020). These forms of strongly market-oriented neo-populism were led by what can be called faux populists who, in their attempts to improve the governability of the neoliberal reform process, reinvented populist practices through vague promises regarding economic crises and by employing anti-elitist rhetoric, blaming traditional politicians for appropriating the people's sovereignty and bringing about economic chaos (Petersen, 2014; Vergara, 2020; Weyland, 2003; Weyland, 1999; de la Torre). Those who were not part of pre-existing organizations and the unorganized poor were targeted disproportionately by neo-populist leaders (Weyland, 2003:1098). Critically, instead of mass empowerment and enfranchisement, this populism saw the rapid embracing of neoliberal reforms and the development of a more capable police state, making a clean break from the original inclusive and egalitarian populism (Vergara, 2020; Weyland, 2001). Examples include Carlos Menem in Argentina (1989–1999), who oversaw the privatization of a number of state industries, or the implementation of IMF structural adjustment programs under Alberto Fujimori in Peru (1990–2000).

Radical populism, or neoclassical populism—due to its proximity to the tradition of classical populism—is considered the third wave of populist expression anchoring Latin American populism. Emerging at the turn of the millennium and following staunch resistance against neoliberalism, it was driven by the belief that national sovereignty had been surrendered by

neoliberal elites to institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and neoliberal actors including the United States (de Lara, de la Torre).

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Instrumental figures of the likes of Hugo Chávez, succeeded by Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, along with Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador, placed impetus on regional integration, wealth distribution, and poverty reduction through state intervention, radical mobilization on the principle of popular sovereignty, and the re-founding of the nation's economic, social, and political life with the drafting of new constitutions (Petersen, 2020; de Lara,). For Chávez, "democracy was understood as the participation of common people in

building a more equitable and sovereign society" (Weyland, 2017:1). While democratic legitimacy was believed to reside in popular sovereignty, it is in this third wave that democratic checks and balances were superseded by personalistic leadership-led majoritarian mobilization, and other mechanisms of accountability by other branches of government and democratic watchdogs were replaced by variants of vertical accountability (referendums, frequent elections, plebiscites) (de la Torre,).

1.6. Left- Right Divide

A needed but possibly overlooked aspect of populist expression and thus accurate examination of populism is the difference between populisms that fall on the Left of the political spectrum and those that sit comfortably on the Right.

Left wing populism, defined as "the combination of the populist impetus of expanding representation (through the appeal to "the people" against the elites) and higher participation and of the left tradition to promote equality and social justice" (Agustín, 2020:9) is primarily understood as relating to matters of wealth distribution and anti-capitalism and thus ordinarily works on the straightforward opposition to interests of institutions like banks, large corporations of pro-capitalist individuals. A class basis is used to define the people for the Left (March, 2011; Huber & Schimpf, 2017) Here the other/enemy are the is the collective rich, the 1%, rich while folks or White Monopoly Capital to put into Marxist sense the owners of the means of production. Those in connected to colonialism and imperialism (Ostiguy & Casullo, 2017). Populism of the Left wing is also typically pro-pluralism, even if populism is generally approached as 'incompatible' with pluralism (Agustín, 2020).

Right wing populism has less to do with wealth distribution and more to do with matter concerning socio-cultural cohesion with regards to nativism. At its core it is defensive, in its aiming to protect/preserve socio-cultural realities of natives against 'outsiders'. 'The people' for the Right are identified on a basis that is cultural or nativist (March, 2011; Huber & Schimpf, 2017) For the Right the other is depicted as either as native, cultural and religious outsider who should belong to lower societal standing/ be entitled to less than their 'native' social equivalents, these groups would be minorities or migrants (Ostiguy & Casullo, 2017; Greven, 2016; Dietz, 2021). This short clarification on the Right wing populism additionally allows for the opportunity to briefly highlight Some scholars have focused on explaining what drives the

electoral support for right-wing populists, calling attention to or the successful co-opting of left-wing talking points which enables them to reach lower-middle class and blue-collar voters (Sachweh, 2020; Pelinka, 2013), factors beyond what is typically painted as economic or cultural causes for right-wing support Past this Right-wing populism. Researchers fight that in instances of populism a critique remains that where present it undermines social cohesion and human rights (Garaschuk, 2024), combined in it being opposed to political pluralism.

It must be remembered that populism and populist logics across the Left–Right spectrum are fundamentally concerned with the (re)establishment of the people's will at the core of democratic action. Marine Le Pen and Pablo Iglesias, leader of France's right-wing National Rally and founder of Spain's left-wing Podemos, respectively, illustrate this. Despite representing opposing ends of the ideological spectrum, both they and their political formations share a belief in the existence of a singular, homogeneous people, a hostility to the establishment or political elite, and a commitment to the primacy of the General Will (Ostiguy & Casullo, 2017). They reject the European Union and traditional parties, offering themselves as viable political alternatives grounded in popular legitimacy.

1.7. Concept of Populism:

This subchapter (and subchapters following) provides a summary of the various conceptualizations of populism identifiable in the political and social sciences. Central here is that this subchapter cannot provide a profound theoretical background and expansive review of populism unpacking the most relevant and poignant understandings but instead lays the foundation for the type of populism operationalized in this thesis.

Undoubtedly, one of the larger difficulties of the proposed research lies in crafting a contextualized definition of populism that is suitable, as this has a direct impact on the scope of the study. A typical feature in any study concerning populism is mentioning populism's *cri-de-coeur,* that being its famed vagueness (Raadt et al, 2004). Precisely defining populism is a difficult task, for historical and contemporary scholars alike, due to conceptual slippage, practical flexibility and a limitation of the ontological tools of political analysis available (Aslanidis, 2018; Laclau 2005), more commonly known as its conceptual ambiguity. This ambiguity is the

hardened residue from by decades of culmination of the proliferation of multiple types and definition of populism unveiled by studies and scholars who approach populism different based on the academic school they form part of, best captured by Wiles who states "to each his own definition of populism, according to the academic axe he grinds" (1969:166), differences in populist expressions across geographical locations, conflation of populism with other terms and ideologies frequently found in connection or adjacent to it, or the fact populism as a label is rarely claimed or accepted by people or organizations that display populism (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Hidalgo-Tenorio et al (2019) explain of all the different kinds of populism articulated all the subcategories of populism share commonalities, which are that they are "a spectre, a challenge, a threat to global consensus and a collection of naïve solutions" (Ablertrazzi & McConnell, 2007; Akkerman, 2003; Gilly, 2005; Decker, 2003; Lawson 2017; Crick 2005). Coinciding with its various interpretations the term has been subject to a significantly large rates of abuse in its usage, employed to equally show the extremes of the Left or the Right, inflated or conflated to mean almost anything based on its context (Finchelstein, 2017: 4). Fuzziness on the meaning of populism is worsened when taking into consideration a foundational read of populism by Germani (1978) that characterizes it as including of contrasting components like those of equal political rights and universal participation of the common man but blended with some type of authoritarianism often under charismatic leadership.

For discussions on populism definitional opaqueness there has to have been, rationally, inclinations to move towards definitions with stricter boundaries or at the very least to search for the ideal expression of populism that can be used as a benchmark for populist studies. Such inclinations would in no way be recent and have been warned against by foundational populist scholar Isaiah Berlin, (1968) who suggested scholars not to be tempted in the direction of populism's 'Cinderella complex'. By this Berlin means scholars believing "there exists a shoe – the word 'populism' – for which somewhere exists a foot. There are all kinds of feet which it *nearly* fits, but we must not be trapped by these nearly fitting feet. The prince is always wandering about with the shoe; and somewhere ... there awaits a limb called pure populism." (1968:7; italics in original).

As it stands, there exists a litany of texts that hold value in the provision of definitions of populism however despite this there continues to be a lack of overall consensus creating a sort of

conceptual 'blur" for populism (Zeeman, 2019) as many others differ on their understanding of populism based on their respective aims. For some authors, populism can be as an ideology while others understand it as a political strategy employed to reach or exercise power (Osuna, 2020). In the case of Yasha Mounk, populism is framed as the narrative that there exists an issue globally, which is that leaders are focused more on the problems of the outside world and not as focused on the concerns of 'real people' (locals), this the solution to this problem is the electing/installing or someone who not only cares about 'real people' but seeks to represent them and their concerns (2020). Mickiewicz has an understanding typical to Mounk's, stating that populism consists of two main points, the first being that it is anti-elitist and the second being that it is anti-pluralist (2020: 2).

Still the conceptual murkiness does not void pioneer academics from being able to discern major themes in populist expression. Canovan (1981; 1991) points to populism having two features universally present, these people the appeal to the people and anti-elitism and provides a list of definitions of populism. Some of which hold populism as an ideology of small rural people threatened by encroaching industrial and financial capital, an ideology for a small rural people seeking to realise traditional values in changing society, a socialism from backwards peasant countries facing problems with modernisation, the belief that the opinion of the majority of people is checked by an elitist minority, and that populism proclaim that the will of the people as such is supreme over every other standard. Articulated as a particular kind of political phenomenon where the tensions between the elite and the grassroots loom large Canovan (1981) theorized populism to have two major categories of early populism considered agrarian populism, showcases by the People's Party and the Narodisheko* and political populism to be the general families visible in foundational populist literature. Scholars (Brass, 1997; 2013; Wells,2025) of agrarian populism see it as "way of doing politics" (White et al, 2022: 69) or a type of rural radicalism, approach populism as a movement with a 'particular kind of socio-economic base' liable to be active in response to particular socioeconomic conditions or part of a particular socioeconomic program, these include farmers' radicalism, peasant movements, intellectual agrarian socialism as types of agrarian populism. Before this Germani (1978) noted that populism has demands that are socialist, or at the very least demand social justice, stand in rigorous defence of small property, have a strong nationalist component, and

lastly deny the importance of class see in the quote "The affirmation of the rights of the common people as against the privileged interest groups, usually considered inimical to the people and the nation" (1978:88).

In his book *Fixing the System: A History of Populism Ancient and Modern* Adrian Kuzminski approaches populism to mean "the political economy of the people; it is their claim to private property as a correlate to their claim to public power" (2008: 57). To better illustrates what populism means here to ancient Greece Kuzminski goes back to Ancient Greece writes that that Phales of Chalcedon, an ancient Greek Thinker, reasoned that "for any democracy to be success its citizens must neither have so much personal wealth and power as consistently to be able to dominate others, nor so little as to be dominated consistently by bothers" (3). That Greek societies and political life operated vastly different to how we may understand them. Phaleas's rationalizings, as captured by Aristotle, were within the context of how best to divide the cities on the bases of societal classes and land types (Gorman, 1995). When looking at the best would be distributing its basic goods and set up either a community where citizens share everything or on where only certain things are shared Phaleas's contribution was 'to avoid civil unrest over the distribution of property, citizens should have property allocated to them in equal lots' (Gorman, 1995:388). [5]

In terms of a defined and visible conception of populism there has been wide consensus on the conception of populism pioneered in Cas Mudde's (2004) paper titled '*The Populist Zeitgeist*'. Mudde (2004) supported by Siva et al (2022), defines populism as a 'thin-centred ideology considers (i) society to be ultimately separated into two separate homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', (ii) this antagonism is informed by the rationale that the elite/others are a group that aimed at 'oppressing' the common/pure people, (iii) that the only goal of democratic politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.[6] From this there has been fair agreement for most populist scholars that for populism to be present there needs to be the highlighting of three general concepts of romanticization of the people, overall anti-elite orientation and pandering towards the

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[5] That the amount of 'property' would be determined by social class
[6] Social antagonism is crucial because it operates as a script, as a template for practical action (i.e., policy). The direction of antagonism is thus inseparable from the time orientation of the script (Ostiguy & Cassullo, 2017). Is normally future looking, for a better life in future, while right wing looks to rejuvenate an authentic and pure past.

implementation of the general will of the people. The inclusion of 'thin-ideology' in the definition points to articulations of populism as a partially parasitic (empty) ideology consisting of basic tenets that can be attached to host ideologies.[7] This argument has foundation in Freeden's (1996) conception of ideology that Schroeder (2020) summarizes to define a thin ideology as an ideology with an 'identifiable but restricted morphology' in that it lacks the ideological robustness, coherence and comprehensiveness present in ideologies like Marxism, Socialism, Liberalism or Conservatism that give their thickness/fullness. These are host ideologies, i.e., larger more substantive comprehensive ideologies with more specific ideological basis and points as revised by (Loew & Fass, 2019). In support for populism being thin it is argued to be "distinct ideology that conveys a particular way constituting the political in the specific interactions of its core concepts" but one is unable to fulfil the requirements to be a practical political ideology (Standly, 2008:95).

Although not the contribution this thesis seeks to make, with regards to populism's thinness, the thesis to a minor degree thesis posits the notion that populism, while not itself thick, does to some degree thicken the ideologies it is used in combination with, seeing as these ideologies, such as nationalism or xenophobia, themselves are just as impoverished due to their singular focus that strips them of the potential to be elaborated in ways that offer possible answers to a wide range of political questions. (Ben, 2008). There are some authors (Schroeder, 2020) that refute populism's thinness, arguing that outside of the West, populism takes on different meaning. Situating populism in a thin framework is useful for capturing populist movements and leaders across the spectrum of ideological diversity.

1.8. Populism Core Components: People centrism, the People, Anti-Elitism, the Establishment, a romanticism of the General Will of the Common Man

Most populist scholars find agreement (Rodríguez-Pose, 2020; Webber, 2023; Fukuyama, 2017; Panizza, 2017) in populisms possession of three basic components that may differ in how they are articulated but remain the same in content. The first two of these being the people and an

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[7] ironically, it being thin centred has in part led to its conceptual ambiguity

'anti-elite' or 'anti-establishment' sentiment, given that populism is not just a reaction against power structures but an appeal to a recognizes authority (Canovan, 1999:4). Populism also commonly involves some critiques of the dominant culture that sees the values and judgements of ordinary citizens/ the people suspiciously along with the moralizing of the people (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017; Webber, 2023).

1.8.1 The People

Within populists discourse and expression 'the people' hold a noteworthy, if not performative, role as the central protagonists and moral legitimators at the heart of populist ventures. There is widespread agreement on 'the people' standing as a discursive devive, hegemonic construction and empty signifier and tool taht is intetionally vagues and imprecise to assist in its use of crafting a mythical and malleable group idenity fromed through disource and not essence (Laclau,2005; Howarth, 2000: Mouffe, 2000; Sharlamanov, 2022; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017; Norval, 2004; Taggart, 2004). There are a number of ways in which the people can be linked to political movements seeking fundamentally to disrupt the power of elites through developing political hegemonies, creating new equality, horizontal power sharing or as a normative guide that specifies the terms of cooperation within a legal order in instances of approaching 'the people' from a stance that identifies their centrality to populism within the framework of democracy that places the people as rulers or legitimators of authority (Näsström, 2007; Rosanvallon, 2006) In the case of the first, the people have often been viewed as emerging during struggles for the creation of new political orders, i.e., during revolutions or wars of national liberation (Espejo, 2017) See Chap). For the second, the people are taken as people being the only source of political power in any functional democracy (Canovan, 1999).

Making it possible for it to refer to "either the whole polity or one part of the population" (Urbinati, 2019:77). Still, claims made to 'the people' by nature cannot be entirely devoid of ambiguity, but they can also in no way remain indeterminate (Kipfer, 2016). In granting 'the people' some definitional capacity scholars have limited it as having the potential to mean one of three key things (Urbinati, 2019: 78; Mudde & Kalwasser, 2017:9);

- (1) persona ficta, the people as sovereign or the collective sovereign that acts as one, and in whose name laws are made and enforced, granting legitimacy to the state's legal and institutional order
- (2) the nation or the sociohistorical body that lives in a specific territory and is sometimes identified with the nation, often treated as an organic entity endowed with ethical value
- (3) the political or cultural collective or constituency that claims and achieves political agency through movements of opinions, parties, and representatives or stands as a broad class concept combining socioeconomic status with specific cultural traditions and popular values

Within populism 'the people' does not exist "except as a group of individuals who in a certain geographical location share some common preferences" (Lemieux, 2021: 15) it is rather an imaginary community that is discursively constructed, and when used by populist its often in reference to a specific, idealized community (Taggart, 2000; Sharlamnov, 2022). Critically the use of the people, regardless of which of the meanings it is to imply, is intended as being both integrative and divisive, which is to say it aims to unite "an angry and silent majority" of people as a single entity with a consciousness and will, which can be called the people-as-one (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017:10; de la Torre, 2017). An alternative is that 'the people' could also be a diverse group, non-homogeneous group seeing as individual diversity is a staple feature of any modern human society and that the people is essentially made up of these individuals, whom each act according to their separate goals and preferences that the people or 'the plural people' (Lemieux, 2021; de la Torre, 12). It could also be used to define a larger cross-class concept combining socioeconomic status with specific cultural traditions and popular values (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017) Appeals made to the 'the people' also aims at mobilizing them against the second constitutive aspect of populism, 'the elite/the establishment'. Notably the relation or contrast between the people and the other component of populism, 'the elite' is created along the lines of political power, socio-economic status and/or nationality. A small caveat here is that when looking at non-ethnic nations or nations with a high level of ethnic diversity, a rushed equating of 'the people' to a country's citizenry risks misconstruing which group 'the people' may be referring to.

1.8.2. The Elite/The Establishment

Next in populism's foundational trifecta to be unpacked is the externality against which the people populism 'the people' is conceived (Urbinati, 2018)- 'the elite or the establishment'. There is not much on the theorization of who the elite are outside of the knowing that the distinction between the people and the elite is the primarily moral or ethnic antagonism that puts it in an adversarial relationship with the people (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Stanley, 2008). Depending on the type of populism featuring in populism the elite is "neither the bulwark of the social order championed by the conservatives; nor the enlightened legislative and administrative cadre of liberalism" (Stanley, 2008: 103), and it is rejected on lines. In combinations of nativism and populism the rejectr group, ethnic morities and immigrants are rejected on the grounds of ethnicity whereas morality is the basis for the rejection of the economic, cultural and political elite (Mudde, 2017).

Compared to the 'people', 'the elite' are more clearly defined on the basis of power (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Approached vertically, the elites are the rich, well-connected, (overly) educated and institutionally empowered, seen as living a different world insulated from economic hardships and out of touch with the worries and issues of the common man, abiding by a set of rules that is separate from the rest of society (Brubaker, 2017)[8]. The establihsment , however, is in reference to ruling political structue or high leveled peopple (politicians, bankers, financiers) and estalishied groups (political parties, corporations, businesses) that systematically collude as an oligarchy, to channel the phrasing of Hugo Chavez, agaisnt the interests of the people. These groups are considerd as inauthetic, and solely represent special interests such as the WB, IMF, the EU or other suprantaional organizations (Brunaker, 2017) Instead, proximity to power is the foremost thing that the elite in populism is formed on and seeing how power is concentrated in political and economic realms of modern democracies it is not shocking that the elite are 'favourite targets' of contemporary populists (Silva et al, 2017:415). The elites sit towards societies upper strata, occupying leading position in many parts of society and can be found 'dominating' politics, economics, culture, media or the judiciary (Roodjuijn, 2014:577). The elites thus are those who corrupt and self-serving group that seized power for their own

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[8] The mentioning of vertical here refers to Brubaker (2017) who argues that Mudde's definition of populism focuses only on the vertical opposition between the people and the elite, neglecting the horizontal opposition between the people and outside groups.

benefit, pursuing their own egoistic interests at the expense of/ in opposition to the interests of the ordinary people (Silva, 2017; Kyle & Gultchin, 2018).

1.8.3.The 'General Will'
The third component of populism is the 'general will' or 'volente generale', although typically a detail of populism's ideational approach (as seen in the following section) is generally present in populist discourse and evidently inspired by Jean-Jacques Rosseau's (Mudde, 2017).[9] Summarized There exist two strands when speaking of Rousseau's general will, the first suggests that the general will is meant to be something realistic that practically functions and has real effects within a relevant political community and the second suggests that the general will is meant to be something infallible and incorruptible (Sreenivasan, 2000). From the use of 'general will' in populist writing it can be inferred that the general will in populist discourse and theory exists as a fusion of both strands. Inextrcably coonected to the idea that the people are homogenous and pure, populism makes used of a pervesiojn of Roussou's concept where the people (within the context of a pure democracy) is understood as a collective majority with a unified singular will and shared conception of the common good belived to be sovereign in it being both the highest authority and highest power, which means consequently that there can be logically be no power that can limit its sovereignty, and if for whatever reason this power exists it is then not sovereign and this illegitimate (Kain, 1990; Mudde, 2017; Cohen, 1986;).[10] Beyond this, the general will is articulated as common sense as it is derived from the collective thinking of the people and thus presents logical, actionable solutions to the special interests of the corrupt elite (Mudde, 2017). By populist reasoning the general will comes from and applies to all (all here being the people), it cannot err, is always just and can never harm the individual as it

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[9] Rosseau's conceptualization of the General Will was introduced as a component of his solution to the *Social Contract* and its problem of escaping the state of nature. in relation to the theory of the Social Contract where in escaping the volatile situation where has each obeys only themselves and their wills (and thus creates a scenario of constant chaos and instability) each person gives (a part of) themselves over to the general will thus becoming a part of the social body, relinquishing their natural freedom in exchange for liberty' (Hiley, 1990: 159; Sreenivasan, 2000).

[10] Critically Rosseau distinguishes between the general will and the 'will of all' as the latter articulates the sum total of the various particular private interests, while the general will expresses the common interests (Kain, 1990). In any majority vote can be said to be the will of all, but not the general will. Where the outcome of an ordinary vote may not be right or in common interests the general will always is (Kain, 1990).

constantly tends to the common good and welfare of the whole, ultimately always tending to equality and preservation of the whole and each part (Sreenivasan, 2000; Canon, 2022).

However, the 'general will' faces a similar problem as faced by 'the people', or rather faces a critique caused by the critique placed by Lemieux against the conceptualisation of 'the people'. What is this problem? Simply put; if the people do not exist a homogenous group, as a type of superindividual, a singular biological organism then the general will "as imagined by Rosseau or his disciples, does not exist" (Lemieux 2021: 16). The sovereignty of this 'general will' emanates from the time of the French monarchy, an entity that undoubtably influenced French political thought. The line of thought is that as the absolute power the king once held was 'transposed' into the people the people then were imbued with absolute sovereignty – this principle can be said to explain the thinkings of early French democracy (Rosseliere, 2021)

1.9. Approaches and Kinds of Populism:

From the previous section it is been outlined that populism can recognized as mainly as an appeal to the people for the rejection of the establishment and the values they represent so that more direct type of democracy characterized by a direct link between the people and the political leaders can be erected, or restored. This subchapter giving prominence to three dominant conceptions or conceptual approaches of populism that feature to a larger degree within the thesis (put the chapters in which the specific kinds of populism features). Variations in the subtypes of populism that reflect the societies and the predominant political paradigms can aid in providing making populist research more accurate by allowing researchers access to an arsenal of analytical frameworks able to more accurately identity populist expression. Fink-Hafner (2016) posts that types of populism should be identified by the key characteristics and political paradigms of society and within historical periods an argument expanded on in (Chap on African populist history). An example given is pre-modern that is a domestic anti-modern form opposed to the influence of external capitalist forces.

Agrees with Naxera et al (2023) that hollowing out of populism caused by ever increasing types of populism emerging with the different contexts and approaches can be stemming by limiting kinds of populism to the dominant kinds identified in literature. That most of the literature

examine populism (Xiao and Liao paper on bibliometric). Authoritarian or non-authoritarian, nativist or non, radical democracy and conspiratorial populism (Kubat & Mejstrik, 2020).

Past its constitutive aspects and central philosophy populism, especially contemporarily, can be simplified and categorized as inclusionary or exclusionary (Peters & Pierre, 2020). The latter is with European and Northern America visible in attempts to isolate groups like minorities, refugees from the body politic and the benefits available to them while Latin America's creating of more inclusionary policies gives populism there a more inclusionary face (Peters & Pierre, 2020). (include table from P&P)

Often separated into its left-right variants, separation that has become the most common means of populist classification (Gagnon et al, 2018) with the Left of this to this Left-Right, Inclusive/Exclusive dichotomy being populist movements that are vanguardist and devolutionary populism being concerned with how power can be redistributed back to the people (Berseford et al, 2023) (Chap).

1.9.1. Ideational Approach

Here populism is best conceived as political logic that frames politics ultimately on a primarily moral scale in it being a Manichean antagonism between 'the people' and 'the elite' where the people represent the forced of good and the elite the forces of evil (Hawkins, 2012; Hawkins & Kaltwasser, 2017). Ideational theorists conceptualize populism as being 'moralistic instead of programmic' (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). The ideational notion is seen as a set of populist attitudes that are often used in highlighting the 'fundamental schemata' structuring the populist worldview found in politicians and voters (Hawkins, 2019; Weyland, 2019) the approach is mostly used in studies intended at capturing the level of support for these populist attitudes from both populist politicians and parties in speeches and party materials (chap) but amongst the general public, also known as the supply side populism (Benczes & Szabo, 2023; Medeiros, 2021; Guiso et al, 2017; Van Kessel 2011). The fundamental difference between the ideational approach is the emphasis on a Manichean and moral cosmology in addition to the standard proclamation of the people as a community that is homogenous and virtuous and depicting the elite as corrupt and self-serving (Hawkins & Kaltwasser, 2017).

1.9.2. Discursive-Performance frame

While the ideational approach suggests populism be tackled from within the walls of ideology the discursive-performace approach locates it within the domain of discursive-stylistic politics, focusing on the structure and content of populist rhetoric as well as the performative styles populist undertake in the search, use and sustaining of political power (Weyland, 2019; Barr, 2019), seeking to "capture the distinctive connection between the leader and the mass followers constitutive in populism" (Weyland, 2019). Discursive-performace scholars differentiate it from other approaches by highlighting it being a rhetorical style predicated on the conflict between the people and the elite (Moffitt, 2016; Aslandis, 2016; Hawkins & Kaltwasser, 2017) Over the course of its use discursive populism has been granted a litany of labels according to the scholars who use it, labels such as a 'style' (Knight, 1998), 'discourse' (de la Torre, 2000), language (Kazin, 1998) or appeal to the common man (Canovan, 1999) in Hawkins (2009). It is mainly characterized as a specific style of political discourse or framing aimed at mobilizing the people through the constructing of narratives that construct the people and the other and emotional arguments often appealing to a sense of belonging and identity mixed in with facts and to an extent empirical evidence (Karlson, 2023) and framing, as electoral majority, against the elites who and the institutions they occupy. Populism as a discursive political style is more empircally concersed with the repertoires of embodied, symbolically mediated performance made to audiences used to craft and navigate the fields of power that comprises the political that stretch from the domain of government all the way down to everyday life utilizing the appeal to the people against the elite, bad manners and a crisis (Moffit, 2016). While traditional political style was merely a matter of persuasion in which politicians adjust their performance according to their audience while contemporarily political style within the contexts of modern representative democracy is seen as an 'aesthetic representation' meant to fill the gap between the representative and the represented. In addressing the overlap between the discursive approach and it as a style it is put forth that discursive approaches tend to sideline the ways the discursive content is presents, giving more focus to the content. Instead links together ideology, style and content (Schoor, 2017; Moffitt 2016).

Off shooting from this discursive stance is a kind of populism found largely in consolidated democracies, electoral populism (chap), in which political parties normally situated outside of

45

the mainstream of political use populism as a political tactic to content for office (Peters & Pierre, 2020). Through this discursive populism can be presented as a democratic device (Stanley, 2008).

1.9.3. Political Mobilization Strategy

Prior to the development of the ideational approach, the strategic approach was the predominant ay of understanding populism, with its origins in the works of Max Weber (Kenny, 2023; Rueda, 2021), particularly in relation to his writings on charisma and political leadership

Weyland's (2024) political-strategy approach (PSA) conceptualization of populism that contends populism to be a form of political organization, mobilization and strategy used by personalistic plebiscitarian leadership for willing and exercising political power. In line with this, populism is defined as a specific political style used by personalistic and usually charismatic leaders, emphasised by, looking to establish unmediated links to an unattached or disorganized support base for the purpose of mass (political or electoral) mobilization (Kriesi, 2014; Weyland, 2019; Weyland, 2024; Kenny, 2023). Additional definition of include Barr who considered it as " a mass movement led by an outsider and plebiscitarian linkages" (2009) or Hans-George Betz who puts it forth as a political strategy whose rhetoric is the evocation of latent grievances and the appeal to emotions provoked by them" (2002) A good style for a political figure lacking a well-defined institutionalized links to the body of supporters (Kenny, 2023) Is that populist include anti-establishment, to some extent, form or flavour in their rhetoric.

As this conceptualisation best captures what Weyland (2001) supplies as the basic goal of populist leaders, which is to win and exercise power, opportunistically doing this by utilizing a a political tehcinite that activitesa and oranizatines mass contiuences through anti-institutional messagies, direct appeals and criss exploriation in combination with weak commitment to sound ideologies, rational ideas or substantive policies (Roberts, 2006; de la Torre, 2010; Tormey, 2019). A central feature of this approach to populism is leader-centrism (Rueda, 2021), in fact, for many (Barber, 2019) populisms needs to have, as its primary feature, a leader who makes claims of direct, unmediated connection to the people, and the ability to make good on this claim at a relatively high level. Outside of that populism has been theorised as a more utilitarian strategy. Urbinati theorises populism to exist as a strategy for the rebalancing of political power

distribution among social groups, both emerging and established, in more democratizing contexts (Urbinati, 1998).

1.9.4. Socio-Cultural Approach

Pioneered by Ostiguy (2019), this approach to shares affinities with the political style conceptualisation as it focuses on the performance and praxis of populists in the public sphere of society (Ostiguy, 2019; Anselmi, 2018). Populism, socio-culturally, is a mode or form of doing politics and seen as something done for relational purposes for the purpose of creating a specific bond between the populist and the social groups they are appealing to (Ostiguy, 2020:30; Westheuser & Ostiguy, 2024). This approach places emphasis on populisms' socio-cultural aspects in addition to introducing key dimensions in the differentiation of political appeals across a cultural high-low axis that is crucial for assisting in understanding what populism and how to locate it within a political space. It is cultural in the sense that it had to with ways of being, acting and relating to people in politics within the context of socio-cultural histories and cues. The high of this axis behaviour and language that is contextually well-mannered, relatively diplomatic and even polished shown through the use of rationalist discourse and 'stiff' restrained public behaviour. Conversely the low is associated with demeanours that include the use of coarse, foul language or slang, employment of folksy expression and metaphors or showing facial or bodily expressions that may be culturally popular but may be politically offense or insensitive and populism can be understood as 'flaunting of the low' (Ostiguy, 2017). There is a second axis that possesses a socio-cultural component, which encompasses manners, demeanours, ways of speaking and dress, vocabulary and public displays of taste and political-cultural component that is concerned with the forms of political leadership and preferred ways of decision making in the polity. Here populism is best defined as always being on the low (Ostiguy & Roberts, 2016)

1.10. Populism and Democracy

Throughout the breadth of literature populism is most positioned within the context of liberal model democracy, a model which it is fundamentally best juxtaposed if compared to other

models of democracy (Mudde & Kaltewasser, 2016). This means that empirically speaking, most 'relevant' populist actors, and populism itself within the frameworks of liberal democracy. That no matter the approach populism can be universally understood as a means of political mobilization, rhetoric of ideology that critically is not limited to democracy- is most commonly theorised within the boundaries of liberal democracies.

The linking of populism to democracy is rather apt as, detailed in earlier subchapters populism, no matter the conceptualization, deals with the matter of political power being returned to, administered or guided by 'the people' to some extent, identified as the socio-political majority in any context. Not to mention that populism root word 'populus' (the people) exhibits a clear link between populism and the democratic idea (Decker, 2003). Democracy within populist through can be considered in a number of ways, Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser (2017) offer that under the minimalist definition of 'the combination of popular sovereignty and majority role'. A more detailed undertaking of liberal democracy within populism can be found within Albertazzi & Mueller (2013) who quote Coppedge et al (2011) in identifying liberal democracy as stressing the intrinsic importance of transparency, civil liberty, rule of law, horizontal accountability and minority rights all underpinned by the constitutionalism's fundamental principle that no matter how large a majority is at a certain point in time, power cannot be absolute. Rainer Knopff (1998) Supports this by explaining liberal democracy's liberalism to be the limiting of goverments purpose to the protection of rights expressed through a judicially enforceable bill of rights. Understanding the 'ambivalent relationship' between democracy and populism required acknowledging populism to be a feature of democracy, just at odds with democracy's liberal model, its two strand model and with a habit of leaning towards authoritarian tendencies (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013; Abts & Rummens, 2007; Schmidtke). [11] In developing the idea of populism being a part of democracy Canovan (1999) explains it as central to having a healthy democracy. Populism in this case functions as sort of auto-cleaning operation that is occasionally needed to 'redeem representative democracy', as such populism exists as a vital, redemptive politics (Canovan, 1999; Akkerman, 2003). Another way populism is linked to democracy can be said to be populism formed on the 'inevitable gap' in democracy

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[11] The two strand model argues that democracy is founded on two strands or pillars, the liberal pillars refers to the claim that the supreme authority of the state (should) resides within the law and the democactic pillar which emphasises the anonymous rule of law is not neutral but coneals the dominance of particpar groups in society

between the ideal and reality, promise and performance (Canovan, 1991) or that occurs as populism simultaneously attempts to fulfil democratic promises while working against the pluralism and freedoms that make democracy possible (de la Torre, 2015).

A major feature of populism's conceptualization and theoretical underpinnings is its hostility towards liberal democracy. Salient is that the it is understood that populism does not have an disinclination towards democracy; in fact populism stands in advocacy of the basic principles of democracy however it possesses a more flagrant scepticism, and in some cases direct rejection, of liberal democracies hallmark features like constitutionalism or liberal protections of minority groups of individuals Galston (2018). This hostility is (i) based on populism's key tenets like the rejection of pluralism through the assesion of the singple people (and their leader) as the only legitimate body, favouring of strong leaders over democratic inistutions, and rejection of modernity and modern values like globalisation and muliculrualsm and callsfor the preserve the status quo (Marsh, 2018; Calléja, 2020) and (ii) the premise that liberal procedures and rules limit the exercit of popular soverignty (Carrion, 2023) all of which often materializes in a numner of wyas most glaring being the erosion of institutional checks and balances and consolidation of power. This erosion unfolds standardly with the limitations of 'watchdog' institutions like the media or the corrupting of parliament or the invalidation of scienitific scienitfic experities whihc in its provision of universal, ultimate truths and foundation on values and principles important to liberalism (transperency, honesty, presence of differing yet respectfully accommodated views, provision of (counter) evidence, extensive corroboration), contributes to the networks of checks and balances needed for the resising of authoirtitain style rule in the same way as opposition partes, free press or independent judiciary do (Collins & Evens, 2019; Collins et al, 2023).

A second facet of institutional erosion is the strategic weakening of the judiciary, observed in Hungary, where Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has—through well-studied and comprehensive steps—hollowed out democratic safeguards via constitutional reforms that expanded executive control over the judiciary. A similar pattern is evident in Turkey, where a "legally defective" constitutional referendum centralized power into the hands of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the current president (Al Waro'i, 2024; Kozlowski, 2019:93). The weakening of the judiciary has also occurred under Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, although it has been far less systematic than in Hungary

and Turkey (Al Waro'i, 2024). The judiciary holds special importance in democratic systems beyond its day-to-day role of applying laws to factual situations—it serves as a fundamental check on executive authority and a safeguard for constitutional governance and resolutions for parties and societies and protection of individuals from arbitrary abuses of power (Piersol, 2007; Adamidis, 2021; Denning, 1963) although this function cannot be underestimated in its vitality for the upholding of civil liberties and protections of rights. Law—in their existence as being past a collective system of political decisions actively governing the present despite the possible disagreements of contemporary popular will—helps to facilitate the operation of democracy by providing rules by which the people rule themselves (Prendergast, 2019). Even though "law dulls democracy, democracy is only realized through law" (Prendergast, 2019: 248). Most important, the judiciary's role in democracy is seated in its ability and willingness to be a democratic counterweight, constraining the executive by declaring acts of the executive invalid (Prendergast, 2019; Tiefer, 1983; Sinani, 2019; Kobina Ofori, 2025) especially when these acts have little to no constitutional standing or are in direct contradiction to constitutional principles or legal precedent in countries with common law legal systems. This is not to say the judiciary is antithetical to populism as a whole; it is only in opposition to populist forms that attempt to centralize power or act in contradiction to judicial decisions, but not all kinds of populism do this. Judicial populism is a style of discourse and legal theory that posits that quarrels about the law are illegitimate and needless, as the basis of legal legitimacy is the people—meaning that legal questions can only have one legitimate answer: the people. In this populism, items like legal texts are presented as "the authoritative embodiment of the people's will, and purports to provide the only legitimate interpretive methods to do the people's bidding" (Bernstein & Staszewski, 2021:309).

Necessary additions here are the suppression of political opposition or dissent and the limitation of civil liberties, human rights and free media (Calléja, 2020; Burgogue-Larsen, 2021; Raffo, 2017; Webb, 2017).

Populism has been studied to affect democracy's electoral dimensions as scholars have conceived polarization as congenital to populism, arguing it to be essential to populism's very DNA by virtue of its inherent view of society, but have also acknowledged its differentiation in both form and content. While populism is inherently antagonistic, it is the kinds of rhetoric used

by populist parties and actors that determine the extent of polarization, and along what lines of narrative. Parties of the radical right are drivers of polarization on topics like race, immigration, sexual orientation and culturally based social differences (Schulze et al., 2020), that when combined with the sharp polarization of the electorate (Zarkov, 2017) threatens the depth of electoral integrity. As populism already generates a narrative of all social groups not of the people being against the people, its affective polarization boosts favour towards one's own political group and builds hatred or distrust towards others, producing heightened partisan gridlock (Davis et al., 2025) when met with the growing prevalence of partisan identity (Ross, 2024) that plays out at the ballot when votes are guided by emotive narrative and not detailed policy issues, voting mainly on party identities. For populists, elections too present themselves as opportunities for the good majority to validate itself, and by extension the leader, as a polity's true voice in a ritualistic way that sees elections become stages of political confirmation (Fichelstein & Urbinati, 2018). Meaning that while elections may remain free and fair, the drivers for complexity in electoral participation are hampered and reduced to sentimentality and populist grouping.

Populism's aversion to liberal democracy notwithstanding, populism is simultaneously supportive of democracy, accepting democracy's main features like majoritarianism, representation or elections, as these assist in the validation and sanctioning of populists' proposals through an electoral consensus that populism confuses with being the will of the people—validating its endorsement of popular power and popular decision (Fabbrizi, 2023). On representation and elections, populism when applied electorally holds the potential to enhance democratic engagement through the re-mobilization of disengaged voters and restoration of political representation for societies marginalized or excluded (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017; Jansen, 2011; Weyland, 2021; Mavrozacharakis, 2018). On this point, it is prudent to mention that not only is populism a democratic enabler, it stands as a catalyst of democratic formation, principally in settings either devoid of democracy or where democracy's central tenet—allowing the majority to rule through a government legitimated by popular support and deemed as the most accepted executor of the people sovereign will in line of their interest- is misused or not adequately applied. This has been seen in populisms featuring in historical social transformation

to the benefit of the common majority either in the form of revolutions, system overthrow or electoral upheaval.

Democratic renewal has also been theorised as one of populisms roles in democracy, one way it does this is through its functional logic. Populism, demands for unmediated expression of the people's general will, believing that nothing should constrain it and in doing so looks to revive a more direct democracy (Mudde & Roriva Kalwasser, 2017 ; Canovan, 1999). Through its endorsing of the notions of popular power, popular decision and reassertion of popular sovereignty as the key to true democratic practice, populism exposes liberal democracy's blind spots and paradoxes large of which are that despite being the most inclusive and accessible form of politics achieved, liebral democracy is the most opague and unable to make sense to a majoirty of the people it seeks to empower, and that is it operates on the restriction of popular sovereignty (Panizza, 2005; Canovan, 2002).   By virtue of its emphasis on direct representation and direct democracy, as well as its fervent abhorrence of the elite and monopolistic practices of governance (who are painted as corrupt), populism attempts to magnify democratic responsiveness and actively sufficient policy delivery while challenging exploitative state pratice, Academics argues this as being a virtue of more more liberal, inclusive, left-wing populist movements and cite Germany's the Left party, Podemos in Spain, Syriza in Greece, the United State of America's Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren and like the justifiable economic populism that Dani Rodrik posts places the interests of the people before those of autonomous regulatory agencies, independent central banks, and global trade rules (Bugaric, 2019 ; Norris & Englehart, 2019; Rodrik, 2018). Lawrence Goodwyn (1978) in his book *The Populist Moment* highlights that populism of the U.S People's Party that Goodwyn articulates to have represented this as it was "a vision of democratic participation that was more advanced than what we settle for today. Far from being a thrat to democracy.. Populism was democracy's zenith" (in Bugaric, 2019:394) .The challenges by populist parties towards established parties occupying government is promotive of democratic stability due to the formidable challenges made to established parties and incuding of party competition that disrupts dominant party systems and expands the political arena era for alenrtaive politucal patforms while forcing the elite to broaden their political agenda- even if this is to the gain of exclusionary parties (Ackerman, 2003; Roberts, ; Vachudova, 2021).

Any featuring of populisms' purpose in democracy is often underpinned by a normative set of assumptions of what democracy should be (Kaltwasser, 2012 in Kurt 2019). In fact, populisms connection to democracy for some authors directly impacts what stands at the core of populism itself. Kriesi (2014), for one, argues that a set of beliefs about how democracy ought to work and how it works now sits at the core of populism as a concept, or if simplified that populism has a very specific vision of what democracy is/should be.

Both democracy and populism consist of the central reference to 'sovereign rule of the people' (Abts & Rumens, 2007) and thus populists featuring in democratic societies should not irk the controversy it does, ask so then why does it or if populism is democratic at all (Canovan, 1999). Daniel Bensaïd suggests that genuine liberal, representative and supporting democracy in which people run their own affairs remains a 'permanent scandal' for the bourgeoisie (in Kipfer, 2016). An alternative answer is that of a deeper fear held by the bourgeois in their distortion of democracy rooted in the fear the unsophisticated, irrational and irresponsible mass commonly understood as being 'the people'.

1.11. Thesis operationalization of Populism: Political communications Approach.

Populism, despite being extensively explored and grounded in relatively firm conceptual foundations (see section of thesis), remains a contested notion lacking a consistent definition or methodology (Diehl & Bargetz, 2023). Leading populist scholars such as Mudde (2004) and Heinisch & Mazzoleni (2016) have emphasized that populism evolves over time, manifesting across a wide range of ideological spectrums and adopting various organizational forms through its figures. Consequently, theoretical and methodological approaches to populism have been constructed around specific lenses—including ideological, discursive, socio-cultural, mobilizational, organizational, or stylistic communication frameworks (Diehl & Bargetz, 2023). While this plurality of approaches equips emerging scholars with a flexible conceptual toolkit tailored to their disciplinary backgrounds, it simultaneously contributes to increased conceptual fragmentation and discontinuity in populism research. In response to this, scholars such as Diehl and Bargetz (2023: 4–5) have advocated for a more complex, integrative approach to populism able to capture the complexities of populism in a non-simplistic way and capable of idenitfying major characteristics and mechanims of populisms without reducing the concept to a narrow prototype.

For this thesis, the proposed the conception of populism that will be used remains a larger overarching scope of a blended conception that takes what is argued by Sorensen as included in (political) communication thus implying "a shift in focus from *what populism is*, towards what it does and how it does it" (2017: 138). Through this praradigm populism is a communication frame of political actors that refer to the people and is a conspicuous exhibition of closeness to ordinary citizens (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). While not a concrete definition, in some ways, the communications approach presupposes a blended approach to populism through which the ideational, political, stylist, mobilizational strategic, and socio-cultural are included, effectively avoiding the bottomless chasm of needing definitional accuracy. This is affirmed by Engesser et al (2017) who state that the communication perspective can be argued as the confluence of ideology, political style, and strategy as seen in the below except:

"the approach of populism as ideology defines populism as a set of ideas and focuses...on the content of populist communication (What?). The approach of populism as style conceives populism as a mode of presentation and is interested in the form of populist communication (How?). The approach of populism as strategy refers to populism as a means to an end and focuses on the motives and aims of populist communication (Why?)". (Engesser et al., 2017, p. 1280 in Kurt, 2019 original emphasis)

For one, the ideology of populists manifests itself in the kinds of political communicative strategies used by populists (Kriesi, 2014). From this communication centred perspective populism, in both its content and style, focuses "on the unique contribution of the communication process to 'construct'/communicate popular ideas as well as the communicative styles that systematically co-occur with it in to achieve the communicators intended effects and goals in the target audience (de Vreese, et al, 2018). The communicative approach, in part encapsulating what the political style approach does which Moffitt & Tormey state as positioning populism within the contemporary stylised political landscape, brining to the forefront discussions on what is being represented (2014) in addition to reviewing populism in context of the discursive forms and relevant socio-cultural realities.

The focus shift places emphasis on discursive forms of populism or populism as discourse giving the additional advantage of pushing past most limitations that current literature experiences that are the result of the contestation of conceptual disagreement. Referring to Ekstrom et al, (2018)

is a breakdown of what is meant by 'style' along with the framework needing to be used for the analysis on populist performances discursively;

1. Style refers to signifying and semiosis. Styles are adopted and performed in the use of discursive, interactional and visual semiotic resources and anchored in (socio-cultural) sign systems. 2. Style refers to contextualised repertoires of speaking and behaving through which identities and sociocultural affiliations are claimed and communicated. In populism, embodied styles may be invoked to signify closeness to the people and represent socio-cultural identities. 3. Style is relational and dynamic. The meaning and values of particular styles are dependent on context and in contrast to other conventional styles (e.g., the populist style in contrast to the technocratic style; unpolished or blunt talk in contrast to polished talk). 4. The power of style is related to the way in which value hierarchies and/or moral assessments are invoked; how a particular style can be claimed to.

A clarification is needed regarding populist styles being confused with a non-populist political tactics used for achieving political popularity or attempts to appeal to a wide range of people which are not necessarily populist (Taggart, 2000 in Raadt et al, 2004). This clarification can be found in populisms' defining characteristics (see above). This will also be expanded upon in (chap) which reviews African populist political parties.

Initially, the thesis did not agree with Mudde's articulation of populism as being a "thin-centred" ideology in the ways that it has limited ambition and scope (2017:1-2), being a loose complex of attitudes as opposed to a coherent combination of ideas that comprise a complete (thick) worldview (Sorensen, 2017: 139, Sorensen 2022). The issue with Mudde's 'thin' classification of populism was rooted in articulated in an article titled "The Dangerous Myth of Populism as a Thin Ideology" by Schroeder (2020). Summed up, Schroeder argues that although populism lacks much historical force, in comparison to ideologies like socialism, does not make it a transient or weak phenomenon and that limiting it to this excludes the possibility for populism/populists to hold policies and capacities to go beyond being 'thin' and mere electoral strategy.

Upon further research, this view has been altered. While 'thin' approaches have massive utility in being able to easily earmark possible populist movement through the three core components, 'thin' populism has little fixed aims beyond mobilizing support to remove elitist leaders through what is often viewed as the undermining of deliberative & inclusionary principles of representative democracies (Dzur & Hendriks, 2018; Singh, 2021). Not to mention that most instances of populism see it being used in combination with one or more other ideologies (left or right-leaning), like nationalism, socialism, and conservatism which doesn't assist any possible cases made for 'thick' populism. However, most studies of populism seem to follow the same rubric as mentioned previously that frames populism in a destructive sense. Leaving little room for taking into consideration the ways in which populism holds the potential for successful, citizen-led, democratic innovation (Dzur & Hendriks, 2018). When functioning as an actual political point and not just a political theory populism is frequently & arbitrarily used to identify any kind of political actor that is 'non-compliant'. These being anti-elitism, pandering to the general will, romanticization exaltation of the people.

Still the thesis grapples with needing to evaluate populism and populist expression through a lens which is concerned almost primarily heavily with locating *what* populism is and *what* people mean when they use. What's more, when looking at populism in Africa, most available studies and reviews have shown that populism, contemporarily, is most visible electorally and in prominent political personalities (Cheeseman 2019; Makulilo, 2013; Huber et al, 2017).

Unlike the mainly ideological breakdowns of populism that have dominated a bulk of populist studies, blended approaches that include discursive articulations provide some of the greatest utility in their being used to understand the underlying factors behind/influence populism or populist articulates. Discursive approaches 'describe something innately cultural' rooted in a shared ability to assign meaning to the society/world around us (Hawkins, 2009: 1043). The utilization of the culminative approach taken when studying populism through the lens of political communication is that it is a holistic yet diverse approach as it looks more closely at the various faces of populism "What substantive assertion is being made? Who is making it? Why they are making it or how are they making it?" (Chatterje-Doody & Crilley, 2019: 78) their ideology to the people (2017: 139). Resnick (2017) gives additional reason for the approaching

of populism from a cumulative conceptual approach, as it provides more analytical leverage in better discerning African cases of populism than any one case by itself.

Away from its development in the field of political science, the impacts of populism on political communication are a vital dimension to include due to the major constitutive role played by communication in the political field (Heinisch et al, 2017). Past this, there has been a widening of scholarship on the linkages between advances in global communication. In the submitted book chapter these ties were reviewed, with the overall findings being that the sheer number of modern media platforms and the proliferation of communication technologies have fundamentally altered political communication. With impetus given to flashy, eye-catching headlines and simplified stories in order to rapidly public attention as multimedia platforms compete for relatively limited public attention has had an instrumental impact on both the reach of populist actors and also the propagation of populist attitudes and ideas. From this populist expression finds a landscape as with expression through contemporary media as most populism/populists make use of the linguistic or stylistic expression that is almost tailor-made to the needs of the communication landscape. In addition to the alteration of communication, they have a special means of styling that is used to shape how meanings are made and interpreted (Eskrom et al, 2018). Crucially, what should be mentioned is that readings done on populist communication post submission of the chapter have shed light that while populist communication does find favour in sensationalized due to its 'black and white' Manichean nature, the presupposed simplicity of populist communication has only relative influence (although this was not the main focus of the submission). It was found that while some actors Georgia Meloni of Italy like spoke more simplistically, others like Victor Orbán spoke less simply but made frequent use of metaphors or phrases, tied to Hungarian history, culture or folklore to better evoke familiarity with his audience. In a study dedicated to the evaluation of the simplicity of populist leaders, McDonnel & Ondelli (2020) found that simplicity in speech is relative & dependent on context and to an extent informed by the socio-cultural context.

This critique has been found to be increasingly more relevant in more recent populist studies. One such study is a refutation of populism as an ideology offered by Paris Aslanidis (2015) where the central argument is that the ideological conception of populism does not take into acknowledgement the staggered/degreed nature of populist expression, along with creating a sort

of scholarly pipeline where scholars (especially in Western contexts) approach populism either as allies or enemies based on that writers own ideological leanings instead of through an objective lens. A second study supports where it is suggested that ultimately ideational approaches identify 'the people or 'the elites' as constructions and are occupied with "what populists actually mean" when they use these constructions (Kim, 2022: 494).

While this denotes what may be a focus on electoral expressions of populism as these are easiest/largest to identify more so in more established democracies that have some degree of multi-party electoral system.

Chapter 2: African Populism – Conceptual Considerations and Chronological Differences

"We enter here upon treacherous and uncharted waters"- John Saul (1969:122)

2.1. Introduction

A pivotal consideration pursued by this thesis rests on the idea that, although contemporary forms of populism often mimic Western expressions, there are traceable ideological and behavioural roots embedded within the historical experiences of African societies. In line with this, the chapter unpacks foundational conceptual considerations theorized in relation to nineteenth-century populism. Through a review of key—albeit limited—texts, the chapter identifies major ideological currents underpinning African populist thought, most notably the rejection of capitalist modes of social organization. It also outlines critical attributes that defined nineteenth-century African populism as a distinct political phenomenon. Later in the chapter, attention is given to indigenous African political forms and their role in shaping manifestations of populism, particularly in relation to African democratic traditions.

2.2. Conceptual Frameworks of African Populism

Beginning the exploration of the limited number of texts and sources charting the theoretical foundation of African populism starts is Peter Worsely's *The Third World* (1964) that outlines the emergence, foundations and growth of populism within the global south and connected them to the prevailing socio economic, intellectual and political realities and landscape of the region at that time. The second contribution to this chapter is found in the recording from a conference held in London titled *To Define Populism (1967)* that critically aided in providing insight to that substantiate the conceptual substructure of African populism by Sir Isiah Berlin. Another contribution comes from Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner's (1969) *Populism: its Meanings and National Characteristics* which comprehensively delves into the populisms of different regions of importance in this text is the submission made by John Saul in attempts to lay out distinctions and guidelines for the use of early populist evaluation.

Worsely, noting of populism's shaky identification, stated "populism (in Africa and the rest of the third world) has been quite inadequately recognized as the very important genus of political philosophies it is" (1964:165) and thus needing for its general characterise to be spelled out. Saul (1969) & Berlin (1968) in their respectively articulate the shared view around the term populism being used in in reference to African manifestations; there was rare effort to ascribe to it definitional framework. This definitional lack had been suggested to be the consequence of the general tendency to oversimply movements, incorrectly presenting them as more monolithic, particularly when reviewing nationalist popular movements these were prone to being confused as populist when in fact what was being referred to were the "ideas of a relatively small group of people within the leadership of a specific political movements" (Saul, 1967:150)- through this continuous conflation, populism had effectively becoming a homonym for these (Berlin, 1968). Categorically, Saul was sceptical of the employment of the populism when looking at mass political movement, believing that the term prematurely stands in the way of more comprehensive data collection and theory building by its explained away 'too much' and encouraged the overestimation of the spread of popular involvement; by exaggerating how much of a population has been "aroused to (populist) action" (1969:126, parenthesis added) and overestimating the level of consciousness within the mass of the population which blinds one to perceiving variations in social situation among the mass which can determine the differing degrees of involvement in popular action and consciousness.

Any weighted introduction to the examination of African populism must be anchored by acknowledging the schisms concerning the ideological foundations of early African populist thinking initiated by the "an ideological reflex of the opposed classes at moments of hegemonic who, upon confrontation of the major world views of (the) time, endeavoured to develop a coherent theoretical system of his own" (Lodge, 1984:3; Worsely, 1964:118). The worldview spoken of here is that of capitalistic extractive colonialism that in which Africa, along with India, Asia and South America, the cites of intensive labour exploitation and economic transfers and where native modes of societal development had been stunted by colonial encroachment (Rodney, 1972; Amin, 1976).This encroachment formed part of the capitalist modernization process that Kilson then articulated as "(referring) to those social relationships and economic and technological activities that move a social system away from the traditional state of affairs in

60

which there is little or no 'social mobilization' among its members. More specifically, the term 'modernization' refers essentially to those peculiar socio-economic institutions and political processes necessary to establish a cash-nexus, in the place of a feudal or socially obligatory system, as the primary link relating people to each other, and to the social system, in the production of goods and services and in their exchange" (Kilson, in Saul, 1969:133-134). By the nature of this encroachment, it can be suggested that, in the African setting, the overriding logic of the colonial system and expedition of the colonial process hinged on replacing tradition ties with more capitalist ones as seen in other regions under colonialism like Latin-America or Asia. It is within this context of societal encroachment that initial thinkings of populism in Africa seem to have been discerned, and subsequently comprehended as periphery-centred protest emerging in resistance to a specific kind of 'uneven development, economic disjunctures, and socio-geographical inequality' generated by capitalism for Africans, and by virtue, a critique of capitalist modernization and capitalism's way of life. Capitalist modes of production encroach upon society's more traditional methods of living and social organization in a fashion similar to Eastern European (Lodge, 1984:5; Saul, 1969; Worsley, 1964) and Russian populism. As such, inceptional populism within this frame was schematized as a communalistic defence targeted at warding off capitalism's desire to establish unwelcome forms of interpersonal relationships, which attempted to break down the traditional unit of solidarity that sees society as an integrated community (Lodge, 1984). This defence stood in contrast to market-oriented defences that resist capitalist expansion on individualistic grounds and was the standard approach of the African bourgeoisie (Lodge, 1984). Notably, what makes market-oriented forms of defence distinct is their formation on urban, industry-based economy characteristics that, when compared to African indigenous societies—presented as "a natural Gemeinschaft" (Saul, 1969:165)—are *Gesellschaft*: based on unnatural false values including individualism, inability to recognize other community members as equal and interdependent, and lacking a sense of communal responsibility. The distinction between these two modes of societal relationships provides a useful interpretation for the unravelling of traditional communal life under colonialist capitalism, besides providing the basis of proto-populist collectivization when combined with a secondary ideological component: Marxism. [12]

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[12] Are taken from the work of Ferdinand Tönnies Ferdinand Tönnies differentiated two fundamental models of human social organization: Gemeinschaft (Community) and Gesellschaft (Society).

These are abstract "normal types" that are mutually exclusive in theory but co-exist and interact in the real historical world. Gemeinschaft represents an "organic" structure, based on "real organic life". It is characterized as a familiar, exclusive, and enduring life together, bound by kinship, custom, and communal ownership. The corresponding psychological will is Natural Will (Wesenwille), which is spontaneous and unreflecting, fostering intuitive conscience. Conversely, Gesellschaft is a "mechanical aggregate and artifact", representing transient life in the public sphere. Individuals in Society are detached, acting through self-interest and commercial contracts. This system is rooted in Rational Will (Kürwille), which is artificial, deliberate, and based on rational calculation and self-consciousness. This dichotomy organizes Tönnies's analysis across political, economic, legal, and social spheres).

Marxism's interaction with African proto-populism is reasoned to have been consequences of Africa being forced to engage politically and economically on European ideological terms before being able to engage on her own, and the key European ideological system Africa considered, chiefly for its tools of analysis of was Marxism (Mazrui & Enghold, 1968), like for Marxism tools of analysis and strong rejection capitalism's modes of societal structuring. African leaders relied on primarily Marxism as a lens of analysis creating interpretations of African politics that used class as the main unit for analysis of the relationships in colonial society, and developing political approaches in reading social ills spurred on by capitalist intervention in traditionally non-capitalist contexts (Cabral). The class component of Marxist thought held special utility because it managed to more neatly breakdown economic social divisions while also articulating the linkages between different economic groups. This is show in the following quote by Worsley, "class basically, is a relationship, not a thing. No class can exist in isolation. Its existence implies the existence of other classes over and against which the class defines itself as a separate entity. There can be no proletariat without a capitalist class; no petty bourgeoisie except in contract to an haute bourgeoisie; no middle strata' without higher and lower strata between which they locate themselves" (1964:163).

Colonial African social structures possessed limited development in regard to economical materialist development with the African peasantry as the only 'formed' social class as most colonized states had their institutional and ideological identity development impeded by a host of factors, hampering the natural development of others that were in the process of formation, such

62

as as the petty bourgeoisie, haute bourgeois, or indigenous capitalist class. One of beahviours cited as an obstacle to economic and thsuc lass developmentt peasant's unwillingness to change traditional behaviours and practices and thus not able to grasp economic opportunities with both hands was, in terms modes of production (Green & Hymer, 1966). Although devoid of class based divisions, prevalent class divisions, if they are to be understood as such, as pointed out by Worsley, existed between the indigenous population and the foreign capitalist/trading class (1964). Divisions amongst the indigenous population, colonially introduced as tribalism and feudalism (source), stood almost entirely as a façade and were superseded by the common solidarity against the alien exploiter. While it may feel redundant, it is important to note that the mass was normally not modernized and thus possessed a different relationship to the colonial modernizers than the African bourgeoisie. Rejection of capitalist modernization was not the outright rejection of the modernization process. It was rather to situate the people at the centre of modernization, as the rural masses did indeed desire modernization, or at a minimum to "rationalize and clarify the complicated and disturbing situation of partial or peripheral modernization in the midst of traditional life and ways" (Saul, 1969:134). More than two-thirds of the African population that were economically active lived in rural regions and had livelihoods from rural activities (Kofi, 1977).

Congruent with the continent's insufficiency pertaining to socio-economic class prior to the 20th century is the assertion that mass, when speaking of the multitudes of people tended to "immediately to take on a predominantly rural referent as it is in the countryside that the people are to be found in their hundreds and thousands" (Saul, 1969:124) which is an assessment critical when taking into account the identification of populism as mass political participation that is best understood in a broader sense inclusive of political involvement from voting, rioting, nepotism or even revolution (Kasfir, 1979). This mass political participation operated as the people asserting themselves against traditional and colonial elites, citing studies examples of anti-elite mass agitation in Buganda . It is at this juncture where the second ideological characteristic of proto-populism, anti-elitism in favour of the people, is identified. Populism here is situated "merely as one element of broader movements and the process of decolonial change, not as a global characterise of relatively more complex phenomena, describing the political pressures representing the lower reaches of (provincial society) that closest reflecting the feelings of the

little people in society, frequently called the masses (Saul, 1969:135). (add how the rejection of traditional elites fed into wider calls for decolonization)

A second way the general will took form was the denial of the validity of pluralistic interests, which at that time took the form of an opposition to tribalism, and the individualistic interests of tribes as well as the formation of competing social classes- in doing so specific social characteristics associated with a pre-colonial age such as communalism, co-operation along with the myth of innocence associated with that time (Source). When considering the object of violence seen with earlier populism, aimed at the chiefly groups, gives a glimpse into the goals of the populist groups, which is the demand for some kind of reform of the structure of authority, even if only limited to the local level

A final dimension of populism in the postulated of proto-typical African populism is its being rooted in solidarity, informed by the emphasis populism places on solidarity for unity across the vast sections of the African populace, whether in regard to the defence against capitalism or the will of the people (Saul, 1969:143). To be accurate, Saul (1969) articulated this solidarity as deceptive, neither representing the real situation of the people or their individuals views about the situations but is rather the 'aspiration to make a particular view regarding the characteristics that unite people prevail over any possible continuous awareness of divisive elements and as such needs the continuous looking at of the tensions between the multiple elements and perspectives as the defining dynamic of any populist movement, very rarely representing the situation faced by the masses (Saul, 1969:143-144). This possible representation of a unified reality capable of subsuming the diversity of elements within these movements was what donated to the attractiveness of populism for political leaders, visible in the the sorts of anti-colonial and nationalistic rhetorics used in harmonizing of the masses. Arguably, it is in this solidarity's intentional suppression of multiple realities and divisive elements that can be viewed as proto-populism's main feature in African nationalism, and liberation efforts in general, as it is this 'radical reductionism' that is 'white heat populism thrives off of', acting as (populist) emancipations major engine, and is also the (Comaroff ,2011:104))-(footnote: emancipation from the text looks to refer to emancipation from the established socio-economic order). There are ample examples of populist reductionism, that falls short of accounting the nuances and complexities in the actuals terms of the relationship between the people themselves and the

people and the elite (Comaroff, 2011), in the rhetoric of pre-liberation leaders and African nationalist figures. Amilcar Cabral, who Guy (2012) identified as a socialist populist theorist, who in making concrete the sense of the Guinea Bissua's nationalist movement, classified 'the people' as "those who want to chase the…colonialists out" (1979:89), and thus casting parts of the population interested in prolonging the colonial stay on the continent as 'the other'[19]. Another is Patrice Lumumba, leader of the Congo's independence struggle and first prime minister who stated "The fundamental aim of our movement is to free the Congolese people from the colonialist regime and earn them their independence . . . We wish to see a modern democratic state established in our country, which will grant its citizen freedom, justice, social peace, tolerance, well-being, and equality, with no discrimination whatsoever ... we are against no one, *but rather are simply against domination, injustices, and abuses, and merely want to free ourselves of the shackles of colonialism and all its consequences"* (Lumumba in Van Lierde, 1972; page).

An addendum to populism as an ideology of solidarity is its aspiration for a specific kind of solidarity and work to attain it. This lies in 'betting on the many', building a narrative that rallies the people around organization and intensive education towards efficiency and self-reliance, presenting a 'lowest common denominator' for differing people with a large variety of views (Saul, 1969). In this dimension, populist solidarity is presented as a kind of development strategy designed to maximize the changes of economic break through and thus meant to work for the benefit and well-being of the masses directly.

2.3. African Democracy

In supplementing the umbrella aim of this chapter, this subsection is purposed with the intention of articulating the rationalities of African transitional democracies that facilitated the varieties of anti-colonial and nationalistic proto-populisms that would go on to contribute to the wider conceptual framework of contemporary populism. The justification for this lies in the need to avoid making the assuming that democracy in Africa has, from inception, been characterised by the traits and behaviours particular to Western liberal democracy. The matter of African democracies or democracy in Africa has for decades been an area of widespread scholarly and political interests. A common notion on democracy's introduction to the African continent came

on the eve of independence in the 1990s as political parties were engaged over the method of acceding to national sovereignty following the wave of protest reflecting the global desires for democratic, accountable and representative political systems (Dong'Aroga, 1999; Ozioko & Akalonu, 2019). While this is partially true, if considering democracy in its more familiar liberal variation it would be a distortion of democracy presence in Africa. Mohiddin poses the question that when talking of African democracy is what is being referring to a set thing or "*an African approach to democracy*?" and by this approach what is meant is a theory government or an idea of a particular kind of society (1970:289-290) whereas Ezeanyika (2011) poses the popular question *can western democracy models be institutionalized in Africa?*

In actuality the quest for Sub-Saharan African democracy has a lengthy history, going as far back as the precolonial era (Davidson, 1992 in Domatob, 1997). As far back as 1967 scholars like Emerson (1967) contended that although non-democratic forms of governance had surely existed, or else fast growing societies would have no way to effectively manage their affairs, that these forms of governance were by no means democracy- a mistake that has lingered for generations of democratic scholarship which is defining of democracy strictly in Western liberal forms. Ake (1993) highlighted that African democracies have an economic and cultural components to them as well, the latter being that they needed to reflect the continents socio-cultural realities, with partial emphasis on community politics, while the former gave impetus to the need to stress economic rights alongside abstract political rights as democracy for much of the continent was linked to the prevailing economic conditions, while Bradley (2005) in his own dictates the consensus building and populist input as the basic proponents of African-style democracy.

There have been over the years efforts to structure the differences between the standard forms of democracy theorized or observed within the manufactured borders of post-colonial African states. Of these forms two main umbrella categorizations are centralized and decentralized, and under these are communal, universal, chieftaincies, kingdoms, villages, non party, one party and two party (Bradley, 2005; Bates, 2010; Jalata, 2012; Fayemi, 2009). Both terms make more or less reference to a state of affairs where the socio-political conditions are directly determined by the people (Good, 1997) as this direct participation had been theorized as the only way for the people's empowerment, whereas liberal democracy was believed would do the reverse (Obi,

2008) . This also does not mention that like popular democracies are at odd with party based representative democracies (Leib & Elmendorf, 2012)

2.3.1 Popular Democracy

Unsurprisingly, as with many ideologies around governance and the role of the masses in the African state, the term 'populist democracy' originates from Soviet communism and was to identify a transitional state that would "substitute for the dictator of the proletariat" (Rieber, 2009:103). Decolonial theorists articulate popular democracy to be a democracy as an economic, political and social ideology of resistance and struggle that articulates anti-imperialism and anti-comprador state positions while simultaneously possessing top-down orientation that place emphasis on popular struggles and mass movements from below within a nationalist and African framework that is "as old as Africa herself" (Shivji, 1991a; 1991b in Saul, 1997; Mukandala, 2001:2-4). Pivotally, this articulation flows from the understanding of democracy referring not only to a means of governance but as a material question concerned with the relations of production and property, that is to say it is concerned with people's daily struggles for material existence (Tandon, 1979:1 in Mukandala, 2001:4; Shivji, 2001). As such, popular democracy entails a focus on the relations around the ownership and control of the forces of production and global divisions of labour of production- mainly the nexus between the state its power and institutions and modes of societal organization (Mukandala, 2001). The centrality of popular movement and popular democratic struggles from the bottom to popular democracy is affirmed by Beckman, who adds that the 'goals and demands that form the content of popular democracies springs from the popular masses', a stark difference from bourgeois democracy where effective popular participation and control over the positions of government are restricted' (1989:86-94). In extrapolating a finding applicable on popular democracy in Latin America (Motta, 2011) African popular democracy actualizes as popular self-governance in the shape of communal councils, as (new) state institutions stationed as the localization or regionalization of executive legislative, juridical or financial power exercises through a blend of deliberative, direct and representative procedures would become the standard manifestation of popular democracies. The argument for decentralization made by popular democracy is twofold, with one being its enhancing of democracy and development while reinforcing accountability and government

legitimacy and another premise being that local government be granted the power to tax, spend and regulaate finances at a level they are directly involved in and accordingly understand the comprehensive needs of the community (Muhumuza, 2008; Steiner, 2008).

2.3.2. Direct Participatory Democracy (Communalism)

The second consideration on non-liberal African democratic models is one advanced as a as a democratic form more authentic than Western representative ones and based on Arican traditions that were "similar to that of the ancient Greeks, from whose language the word 'democracy' originated as to them democracy meant simply 'government by discussions among equals' (Nyerere, 1997 in Masabo, 2023:39). Direct democracy, also understood as 'communalism' was formed on a precolonial political decision making system in which consensus-building type governance was fundamental and exercised through almost universal- "talking until you agree"- consensus (not competition) arrived at by direct, open conversations by members of the community (typically elders) predicated on the belief that "ultimately the interest of all members of society are the same, although their immediate perceptions of those interests may be different" (Masabo, 2023: 40; Uwizeyimana, 2012; Bradly, 2005). Although this panders towards more traditionalist views of African democracy it is more than just idolization of traditional Africa. In decentralization is widely seen as the antibiotic for concentration and corruption of power and at the time of independent most of sub-saharan Africa still lived in predominantly rural like settings with very low rates of formal education, as such democracy and democractic institutions had to be adapted to local traditions (Owusu, 1992; Bradley, 2005). Not only that but the authority of a village with communal roots held more significant than a distant national or region government (Owusu, 1992).

There is no shortage of example of decentralized, direct and participatory democracies indigenous to Africa. Igbo (Nigeria), Kikuyu (Kenya) political organization was based on these principles, although it should be noted that in these traditional democracies often women was separated from men and had their own political consultative process identical to the men's (Nwauwa, 2005). It is equally important to highlight that although participation was open, decision making in some instances, was limited to leaders from each lineage, who were selected on their basis of their wisdom, wit and social standing. A noteworthy addition is that musings on

participatory democracy often make strong inferences to African communalism, where the society is viewed through the metaphor of being a large inclusive family (Odour, 2019), which may heighten the feelings of obligation of participation and ownership.

Masabo (2023) correctly points out that a flawed common misunderstanding is the notion that maintains African democracy as a manner of indigenous democracy that, in the African continents returning to, equated to a strong rejection of Western democracy.

An interesting viewpoint of democracy in early democratic Africa is offered by Bratton & Mattes in a 2001 study on support for democracy in Africa. The study that compared suvey data from Ghana, Zambia and South Africa found that in West Africa (Ghana and Zambia) democracy was to voter freedom, multi-party elections, civil liberties, personal freedoms and government by the people, in South Africa understandings of democracy exuded more materialistic and economic connotations, with respondents equating the term to equal access to housing, employment and decent income, pointing to the socio-economic considerations South African respondents had towards it.

2.4. Conclusion

As demonstrated in the above delineation of the unique theoretical considerations that fueled African foundational populist expression—which would then go on to inform the kind of historical context in which contemporary populist expression on the African continent emerges—it is evident that the continent's populism developed as a chimera of political consciousness in response to capitalist colonial interference. It functioned as a defence of traditional society and social organization and can be better understood as resistance to the restructuring of traditional life and the basic units of social interaction and human relationships around the cash nexus. Ideologically, African populism existed as a more complex ideological project concerned with regaining socio-political agency from various forms of elites (both colonial and indigenous), expressed mainly through collective solidarity and rejection of capitalist modernization models that sought to overwrite native social relation structures with transactional, market-based logics.

Beyond this, the chapter introduced foundational articulations of what could be considered alternative forms of African democracy that prominently underpin pre-contemporary forms of populism highlighted in the following chapter. These include two main strands: one grounded in traditional democratic beliefs emphasizing consensus-based democratic communalism made operational through direct participation; and a second, popular democracy, more deeply informed by the dialectics of materialism and justified by an understanding of democracy not only as a means of governance but as a system concerned with the material conditions of the citizenry.

Chapter 3 : African Populism: Foundational Instances

"elementary rant to acknowledge that a certain populist radicalism- an opposition to the dictatorship and doxa of elites, whether they be the ancient regime, tzarist autocracy, the capitalist classes, colonial rulers, the established church of intellectual vanguard- is necessary, if not sufficient condition for mass movement in all times and places" (Comaroff, 2011: 104, italics added).

3.1 Introduction

Empirical cases of populism in Africa have taken a multiplicity of forms that range from messianic popular movements or separatist popular churches in South Africa and Zambia to general rural discontent in places like Congo or Kenya (Mazuri & Engholm, 1968). As noted previously, in the evaluations of African populist scholars (Hermet, 2012; add other scholars of African populism) populism's contemporary expression is typically linked to the continents late colonial period (1950s to 1960s), marked by the intensification of anti-colonialism and proliferation of nationalist movements and the methods of which popular support were generated then set the foundation for populisms introduction as a staple in African politics (Sishuwa, 2024). There seems to be an accord amongst the majority of authoritative scholars on African populism that pinpoint the genesis of African populism to be nationalist liberation movements (sources), and while this indeed may be the foundation of contemporary populist it echoes the behaviour Wood (2015) diagnoses in the culture of contemporary populist academy of forgetting the radical heritage of primordial agrarian populism. This tendency effectively robs analysis of contemporary populism intellectual and contextual fullness, contributing on perceptions of African populism being relatively recent. However, as covered in chap before this one the primordial forms of agrarian populisms, referred to then as proto-populism' were present and contributed in part to the foundations teleology by virtue of their guiding rational and the political agitation of peasant agrarian communities against their feudal lords for some amount of increased socio-political autonomy, particularly with regards to their labour and livelihoods-examples. This chapter contributes to outlining of the historically robust foundations of modern African populism through the reviewal of pre-decolonial occurrences. The first half of this chapter gives substance to the forms of agrarian proto-populism by reviewing examples

That here rural and agrarian are used interchangeably, as in context both allude to the peasantry (agricultural workers, artisans, labourers, the urban poor, low skilled workers) in both non-urban and urban areas. That said, in uniformity with populism in Russia or the United States, the

precursor to African nationalist populism were rural forms of agrarian populism, then affectionately referred to as 'rural radicalism' or 'peasant movements', that took place during the peak of the colonial period.

3.1. Agrarian Populism:

The question of what makes rural radical movements populist, or even radical (Jeffries, 1978), is not one that has been overlooked, as the thesis is well aware that by misdiagnosing cases of rural radicalism as populism risks contributing to the conceptual stretching plaguing populist studies. On one end, rural radicalism exhibits populist aspects, chiefly the amalgamation of various social class and interests' groups under the reduced banner of a 'people' and an interest in returning (economic) power to the people. On the other hand, as mentioned in chapter 4 displaying some characteristics constitutive of populism is not enough to qualify an experience as populism, even adjacently. In spite of this, there is a healthy case for considering nineteenth-century African 'rural' mass protests as populist, more so when approaching them through the type of contextual interpretation granted to the U.S. People's Party. The genesis of this approach is drawn from an examination of African agrarian populisms that Although downplayed by through the rhetoric of colonial administrations many of these were by fact, cooperative crusades that, similar to agrarian populism in North America that "emerged from the experience of the farmers co-ops…grew the ideology of a cooperative commonwealth opposed to the coercive potential of the emerging corporate state" (Goodwyn in Turner, 1980:356) and pushed for the revitalisation of democratic political representation in favour of the general labourer and common man.

Arguing African rural radicalism/agrarian radicalism as elementary forms of populist expression is defensible on two fronts; the first is that of its manifestation basis, and the second emanates from the comparison of African expressions of rural radicalism to the U.S. People's Party. For the first, the logic is direct; various exhibitions of rural radicalism have borne limited substantive resemblances to populist movements. Still, these commonalities may not be immediately apparent, especially when applying antiquated explanations that view it as short lived, violent and geographically limited mass uprisings resisting the commercialization of agriculture, unlike political populist movements were capable of peaceful, systematic and long term articulation of particular interests, organized on party lines with broader objectives (Hildermeier & Catt, 1979;

Lichback, 1994). However, rural radicalism has generally been witnessed to have relatively concrete and defined goals that would entail either the restoration of ancient rights, attempts to maintain traditional norms, cultural and/or religious life, along with its legal structure or in protest of tax increases of increases of demanded services (Hildermeier & Catt, 1979). Agrarian revolts have also been shown to have fluctuating geographical involvement, take place without violence (unless instigated), capable of being sustained over prolonged periods and with sufficient political organization, albeit minimally. They are, functionally, political movements and this is ironically validated by citations of the problem with rural political movements being that "they must function within participial political cultures, and...had to operate within very different political environments" (Sharp, 1997:xiv) firmly identifying rural movements in connection to being fundamentally political. [13]

Of the second front of defence, the correlations between African rural radicalism and the People's Party, a key point of opposition is the extensive intentional articulation by the majority of literature on American farmer movements, including the U.S. People's Party, as representations of populism and not radicalism because no major change to the agrarian structure was advocated for and that "this movement when examined in detail…demanded, at most, specific links on which the farmer depended- banks, railroads, processors, suppliers, and buyers- be prevented from exploiting the farmer's weakness" (Landsberger, 1977: 107). However it is contended that this is more a misconstrual of radicalism with revolutionary, something clarified by Douglas Deal in a review of agrarian revolts highlights that in their seeking redress for specific injustices within the existing social orders framework and not the transformation of society, agrarian revolts are best described as rebellions and not revolutions (2008:414).[14]

African history holds numerous examples of collective opposition throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century with conflicts revolving land rights, workers' rights, taxation, trade policies, and mechanisation with narratives often 'espousing a radical left-wing position' (Isaacman,

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[13] Sharp's (1997) statement was orginally with regards to presenting the parallls in agrarian revolts between Western Candada and North America.

[14] This is not to say they rural radicalism does not have revolutionary potential. In cases when peasants have been a major force in revoltuonary political action the transition point has been the intervention of 'outsiders', normally members of the intelligensia and from urban centeres, through political parties or other revolutionary bodes that organizes the peasant and supply it with a transcendent social ideology needed to bring about societal change (Ferguson, 1976; Deal, 2008).

1990; Woods, 2015).   As a refresher, agrarian populism can be divided into three classes, 'farmers radicalism' (the U.S People's Party), 'peasant movements' (East European Green Rising) and 'intellectual agrarian socialism' (Russia's *narodniki*) (Canovan, 1981) and has been argued as a type of rural protest involving a population already well "absorbed into the social relations of exploitation" in these cases the targets were the colonial administration and trading companies (Post, 1972:243).   For Africa, history relays agrarian populist movements starting in the twentieth century, in response to capitalist colonialism, as exemplified in cases of rural discontent in Southern African, concerned with the issues of land restriction of livestock limitations, the 'Cocoa Hold Ups' that erupted across West Africa (particularly Ghana) that sought to empower cocoa farmers or the kind of cultural populism in the Kingdom Buganda aimed at decentralizing political power and allowing the peasantry some say in their traditional governance structures. [15]

3.1.1. South African Agrarian Revolts

It is essential to address the obvious clash in differentiating agrarian and peasant movements from what can be considered *legitimate* cases of African agrarian populism. Again, agrarian populism is an apolitcal third way of discourse that to flares up ultimately as a reaction to a capitalist crisis attempting to "mobilize and obtain support among peasants and farmers (the people) opposed to the effects of industrializing, urbanization and capitalist crisis (Brass, 2000) or their exploitation of as a result of structural economic or political weaknesses (caused by the elites).[16] One such example is peasant organized mass action against the organs of the apartheid state in the Wiztieshoek region of South Africa by the Bakwena ba Mokgalong, a sub-group of the Basotho tribe and the rebels collectively named a and the *Lingagele* translated to "Those who stand firm", that was the result of prolonged socio-economic crisis and political disruption that peaked between 1949 and 1950, that was the result of conflicting crises (Beerstercher, 1994). A common practice of colonial regimes of Southern Africa was the forcing of thousands of

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[15]. This is not to say agrarian populism was not in existence prior to the 20th century. It is well within reason to assume that agrarian populations in pre-colonial states protested

[16] Although Brass associated agrarian populism with the political right in relations to its standard conservatism vis-a-vis its advocacy for the maintenance of a particular socio-economic labour system within the African context it is more commonly associated with the political left due to its frequent coupling with progressive stances in terms of socio-political rights and the assertion of political participation for the general mass.

peasants who were previously forced to be sharecroppers and tenant farmers on appropriated land turned European farms to relocate to arid, rocky and desolate 'reserves' that were overcrowded (Hirson, 1977, Isaacman, 1989). The core of the conflict was the 'betterment programme' implemented by the state's Native Trust in 1939, without sufficiently community consultation that looked to address the declining agricultural productivity flowing from environmental issues brough on by the over-population, drop in soil fertility, increases in livestock dieses and malnutrition and protracted drought that meant Africans were producing under their standard grain requirements (Beerstercher, 1994). The program was centred around the limitation of cattle allowed on the reserve, which was central to customary practices and was viewed by a majority as the main economic source for the African farmers, with the state ordering the culling of 2000 cattle in an attempt by the apartheid government to curb overgrazing without alternative grazing land given, in addition to being told to stop using the watersheds to graze their livestock due to the effect this had on 'White' farming area situated nearby (Mbeki, 1973; Beerstercher, 1994).

Coherent with other colonial schemes, the Betterment Programme's social impacts were just as severe. The chieftaincy was effectively abolished due to the actions of the local colonial magistrate and Assistant Native Commissioner, who stripped the chieftainship of its former authority, rendering it unable to claim control over regional affairs. This included vital functions such as the distribution of land, oversight of local courts, and sanctioning of cattle movement—reducing the role of traditional leaders to a merely ceremonial one (Beerstecher, 1994). Concurrently, in seeking more substantive means of livelihood for themselves and their families, many able-bodied men migrated to urban areas, leaving communities to be run largely by women. These women began assuming roles traditionally held by men, such as attending *pitsos* (traditionally all-male community meetings) and *khotlas* (traditional male councils), thereby indirectly challenging longstanding customs and male authority (Beerstecher, 1994). Consequently, the rebellion that ensued drew broad class support, as people voiced grievances over the erosion of traditional organizational and authority structures—particularly relating to gender power dynamics and the hollowing out of the chieftainship. Visible in the following please supposedly made by the community in a form of a mythisised call for aid ;

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"Lingangele, come to help us- The Trust government has taken away the chieftainship. Our land as been eaten up; the have burned our cattle and we and our children starve. Lingagele, come to help is- The Land of Mopeli is gone" (Mopeli-Paulus & Gordon in Beetstercher, 1994)

This discontent was compounded by the rejection of livestock limitations, the coerced slaughter of cattle imposed by the state, and acts of defiance such as cutting fences to allow the remaining livestock to roam freely (Beerstecher, 1994; Mbeki, 1973; Hirson, 1977)

Still, the result of forced relocations and intense state suppression a number of Southern African agrarian revolts and spurs of proto-populism were subsequently disconnected from broader social movements, peasants here could only engage in sporadic boycotts and insurgent acts (Isaacman, 1989), which needless to say were extremely limited in scale. [17] Others were individuals, localized forms of insurgency that were either clandestine or minimal in ways are not afforded privileged by typically scholarly tradition in their presumably not being rebellions, revolutions or broad-based social movements. There are lists of that to the perpetrators embodied a notion of collective identity and inherent structure, even if vague and not immediately or easily discernible for scholars (Isaacman, 1990).

3.1.2. Agrarian Populism in West-Africa

West Africa's Cocoa Boycotts of 1930-1948 are a long standing history of cocoa related protests stemming as far back as 1921 (Austin, 2010; Southall, 1975) with resistance being short-lived due to poor organizational factors like lacking solidarity, limited financial reserves to assist members with immediate needs or support from the chiefs (Southall, 1975). Compared to earlier interactions, the hold up of 1930-1931 fared much better as it "intense and well-organized", lasting longer and with a wider areas of effectiveness (Rhodie, 1968:105; Southall,) although its intensity and organization lasted for only two months and saw the price of cocoa drop even lower than what it had begun (Rhodie, 1968). All boycotts had in way or another been made in attempts to alter the trading system that took advantage of African cocoa producers via a complex web of brokerage, sub-brokerage, hedging and advanced prices encouraged by Cocoa Exchange in London and New York that earned much profit for corporations but little earnings

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[17] These forced relocations did have the adverse effect of heightening anti-state peasant consciousness (Isaacman, 1989).

for the African famers (Howard, 1976; Kuusaana et al, 2021). The boycotts of 1937-1939 in particular were sparked by an agreement between the thirteen big European firms, together controlling 98% of cocoa produced in Ghana, that had pooled their purchasing power to fix the cocoa price to a 'world price' and thereby controlling the "prices paid to cocoa producers" (Howard, 1976:470; Milburn, 1970; Moujama, 2016). A small group from the 'African capitalist class' consisting of Ghanaian businessmen and 'better off' farmers who, both being subordinate to Western capitalism while wanting to advance their own interests, had ambitions of taking part in the kind of commerce that was European dominated, were the boycotts primary organizers (Austin, 1988; Howard, 1976). Of these businessmen and 'better off' farmers were chiefs were a number of wealthy chiefs who took part in the purchase of cocoa stock but were "robbed ...of any change of immediate profit" by the 1930 price pool, then resolved to use their influence to promote the hold up, albeit in hopes of forcing the pool to offer an increased price (Southall, 1975:107; Rhodie, 1968).Apart from the elites, cocoa brokers and middlemen took part, as did the group on which success hinged on the most- poor peasants and migrant labourers- who were paid directly in cocoa that they would sell independently sell (Howard, 1976). Notably the boycotts success was through "efficient organization and propaganda" that enabled the leaders to inspire the third group not to break even when their funds had finished (Howard, 1976:472). There are a number of familiarities that can be seen between the agrarian populism found in nineteenth century North America and West African populism, that solidify West African agrarian populism as populist. One being that, in the case of the 1937-1939, protests were much more organized than earlier cocoa protests, with an even wider range of effectiveness, broader support and with a more concentrated political dimension. This is made visible by a poster in the Central Region of the Gold Coast, complete with a 'slogan', although this slogan was more a list of demands and related hymns (Howard, 1976:469;). The poster read;

1. 1.Down with Pool firms
2. Down with Pool Firms in their Pool Waters
3. Dry Pool waters with Cocoa Conflagration
4. Doom Coca buying Agreements
5. Drag away plutocrats
6. Drill the unscrupulous capitalist

7. Disband cocoa trade monopolies

8. Do hold up absolutely and persist

9. Dictate your price

Reflective of the significance that religion has had in African political affairs, ranging from the politization of religious forms being used for mobilization to legitimacy through sacralization which enforced the belief in the righteousness of the taken political action (Omenyo & Anum, 2014), Cocoa boycotts, too, had mobilizational hymns. One of them titled *The Gold Coast Farmers Hymn* (Gaisil, 1928 in Alence, 1990) sang;

"Onward then in battle move

If the crops are yours then prove

 Show your freedom to the foe

Onward Gold Coast farmers go.

 Father Gov'ment unto thee

With our complaints we do flee

Peace and justice is our cry

Towards us turn thy just"

Although the boycotts failed to completely change the system, they succeeded in forcing the colonial office to set up an inquiry commission that then released a report on the crisis recommending that the Agreement be withdrawn in October of 1938 (Moujama, 2016; Howard, 1976). that included 'hold-ups' and boycotts, lasted from October 1937 to April 1938, and practically brough the internal trade of Cocoa to a standstill both nationally and internationally (Moujama, 2016; Alence, 1990).

A critical factor when speaking of agrarian populism in West Africa (and the rest of the continent) and its relation to the success of nationalist populism is that the famers association (precursory labour movements) were the foundation for the anti-colonial mass movement (Danquah, 1994). As Ghana's only mass movement up till the second World War, it had originally only looked to secure its constituents economic benefits, however it had been forced to

demand political change to save cocoa plantations from colonial governments determination to raze down cocoa trees. In fact, the ....supported Ghana's first nationalist political party, the United Gold Coast Convention's (U.G.G.C), that took up the anti-cutting out campaign in return the famers association supported urban-based nationalists and demand for self-rule (Danquah, 1994).

3.1.3 Cultural Agrarian Populism in Uganda

Here the thesis reviews a different form of agrarian populism that is dissimilar to Southern African agrarian revolts that were relatively fractured and with a area of impact often limited to the immediate locality of said revolt or West African 'cocoa hold ups' directed at eliciting economic restitution. The following proto-populism in Buganda, described as "the most powerful and centralized state in the nineteenth century East African lake region" (Reid, 1999) kingdom consisted for a more cultural political dimension.

In a 1959 Constitutional Committee Report Uganda (Dinwiddy, 1981:501) was described as "an artificial country containing within its borders a very wide range of types of country, from arid plains to lush lakeside areas, and a variety of tribes with different languages and customs…". That very well could be used to describe any if not all African colonies. The is that the variety of language and customs to the history of populism and associated theories in Uganda. The events and political history that would fundamentally mould how colonial Uganda, and the populism that would emerge within it, would evolve and the sections of the population it would effect. Agrarian populism in Uganda more or less begins in 1900 with an agreement between the kingdom of Buganda and Britain. This agreement granted Buganda special full 'federal' status as a British protectorate exchange for Bugandan assistance Britian in colonising the rest of region through military conquest and indirect rule systems where indigenous authority was used to carry out the activities of the colonial government, in this case typically involved appointing Baganda or other local chiefs in order to ensure some level of acceptance, as colonial administrators in conquered areas (Mafeje, 1977; Kiwanuka, 1970 . The preference of Britian's indirect rule, which entailed maintain colonial administration through the establishment of a local government. Uganda's Legislative Assembly, introduced in 1921, stood largely as an institution for European and Asian interests to be articulated (Okoth, 1993).

Among other things, this agreement reshuffled land ownership of the region, transforming the Bugandan feudal lords and chiefs into landlords, albeit landlords with the colonial government controlling the land (Makubuya, 2018), creating a "political dyarchy of the colonial state and collaborative chiefs" (Jørgensen 1981: 77), while limiting politics in the early decades of Uganda's colonial rule to revolve around the Buganda, the dominant classes, and the control of land. A racial hierarchy was also erected that consists of a middle stratum of immigrants brought by the British from Indian sub-continent, then popularly referred to as Asians, as an intermediate bourgeoisie class that helped to build capitalist development while blocking African political aspirations (Sjögren, 2013). The substantial amount of political, administrative and infrastructural power in Buganda carved the region out as the engine of British Uganda. In studying the legitimacy of Ugandan government Mafeje (1977) noted that Uganda without the region of Buganda, which was more prosperous and advanced, resulted in very little in terms of the needed minimal infrastructure and rudiments of a modern nation state and such made Buganda the key the nationalist independence (Engholm, 1961). Uganda experienced nationalism's outside of the nationalism that served to inspire Ugandan self-determination, this Kiwanuka () theorises as being aimed at serving the interest of one of more ethnic groups within a territory. The Kingandan nationalism unpacked in the following paragraph is one.

With regard to Ugandan history Sathyamurthy (1975) & Hancock (1970) display that pre-independence -political proto populism came in two waves, or rather two different periods. The latter advanced by Bugandan neo-traditionalists who sought to protect Budanga's special federal status, the region's traditional authority believing that Buganda was a separate nation, going as far as to push for secession in a bid to ensure a barrier to protection of the Ganda identity from foreign constituents and Buganda's insulation from national politics (Hancock, 1970, A). This was response to the emergence of democratic, nationalist politics within Buganda that advocated for a greater Uganda in which Buganda existed not as a kingdom, but the great fear was if absorbed into the independent state of Uganda it would be starved of its privileges and traditional institutions (Hancock, 1970, B). As part of this response was the formation of a party that united all Baganda in the common cause of the fight for Kabakaship excluding the 'rebels' who had taken part in national elections that promoted disunity, exposing the throne to

danger.[18] Eventually forming the *Kebaka Yekka* that loosely translates to 'Support Only the King' movement a broad-based alliance of grouping and factions that the became a political party (Hancock, 1970 A&B). [22] This could be could classified as separatist populism, territorial populism or if stretched far enough even populist sovereignty by virtue of the focus on taking by taking back, of as was the case, preventing control of the nation by foreign forces and reasserting the primacy of nation, defined by De Spigeleire et al (2017). For Sathyamurthy (1975) it is important to note that this early form of political activity that would later form Baganda separatist nationalism, for a very long did had no interest in confronting Britian. The first waves of neo-traditionalism was a proto-populist movement whose primary enemies were "those chiefs who collaborated with the British authorities and were also large landowners" with the strengthening of the base of Baganda society (i.e. the peasantry) as the main purposes (Apter, 1961:195; Hancock, 1970; Sathyamurthy, 1975). [23] The breakdown in the relationship between the Chiefs and the Kiganda as the balance of authority had begun moving towards the Chiefs favour, as their collaboration had afforded them increased power, even successfully usurping a number of functions traditionally reserved for the Kabaka, as well as shirking on their duties in looking after their peasants (Low, 1964). In fact, took place as riots in which a number of chiefs had their houses and offices set alight. Five requests made by the rioters to the Kabaka a commission of during the riots cites the as;

I.   Your Highness should open the rule of democracy to start giving people power to choose their own chiefs

II.   We want the number of sixty officially representatives in the Lukiiko to the completed

III.   We demand the abolition of the present Buganda Government

IV.   We want to gin our cotton

V.   We want to sell our produce in outside countries, that is trade free

In addition to pushing for the removal of chiefs who were ex officio members of the Lukiko (parliament) and demanding direct elections to the Lukiko and the abolition of using official land

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[18] The executive structure of the Kingdom of Buganda even contemporarily is similar to other constitutional monarchies comprised of *Kabaka* (King/ruler) who held political and admirative power and was responsible for the levying of taxes, the distribution of land appointing of chiefs, judging legal cases, waging war, the K*atikkiro/Katikiro* (chief minister) , the *Lukiiko/Lukiko*, that was the a council of country and department chiefs (Wingley,1974; Reid, 1999; Ramadhan, 2015)

for private use and had respect for Kiganda culture as the moral force and freeholding peasant society upheld by the 'individualistic yeoman ethic as the two main themes underpinning it, there were also anti-European and anti-Asian.[24] This cultural aspect was perhaps a larger share of the puzzle…an agreed upon adherence to traditional values spurred a resurgence of shared values between groups (Apter, 1961) through an enhanced sense of identity and unity that maintained the common ground between the various associations, societal and economic groups.

3.2.2. White Minority Populism in Zimbabwe

At this juncture, and in the interests of generating a more complete image of the proto-populism history as present in the twentieth century, the subsection covers an interesting inclusion that is in contrast to the forms of agrarian populism concerned with the relative enfranchisement and securing of economic liberties of the black African majority that typified proto-populist expression in a number of African colonies. This particular populism is a minority populism that originating in commonly in a settler oligarchy in what was then Rhodesia (now the Republic of Zimbabwe).

Prior to Zimbabwe's revolutionary populism that facilitated the mass mobilization needed for liberation movements to displace colonial governments came a flash of white agrarian and labour-based populism in the 1920s. Although short lived and unsuccessful Southern Rhodesia's (modern day Zimbabwe) Rhodesia Labour Party (R.L.P), presents a case of the one of the continents earliest organized populist party. There Following consultations between colonial trade unions,, including what was at the time the strongest trade union in Rhodesia, the Rhodesia Railway Workers Union (RRWU), the R.L.P was formed in 1921 with an anti-elitist/capitalists' stance for the good of the less privileged of white society but in opposition of the advancement of African labour, promising the immediate redistribution of wealth to poor whites and the prevention of the dilution of entrenched white labour positions (Henderson, 1972; Hooker, 2008). The R.L.P planned to do so through advocating for the nationalization of the Rhodesia Railways, tax on undeveloped land (both aimed at harming the British South Africa Company that owned 80% of Rhodesia Railways and large amounts of underdeveloped land), as well as social services demanded by the British Labour Party (which the R.L.P looks to have been modelled after) like old age pensions, employment schemes and unemployment benefits, and free education, in as far as these were issues and any potential solutions were limited to the white

community (Henderson, 1972) an obvious result of the racial divide that constituted the make-up of any colonial state. From an analyses of Henderson's (1972) chronicling of the R.L.P it is noted that in its emphasis on increased democracy to help ensure fairer distribution of white only privileges, its distrust of international big business, and its "firm refusal to make analysis of society beyond that needed for immediate issues" (1972:398) that only affect the white/European community (which in this would be 'the people') are visibly populist. The R.L.P is by no means Southern Africa's only instance of populism by an oppressive elite. Just across the boarder was the South Africa's Pact Cabinet of 1924 was a movement of anti-capitalist populism by a cross-cultural combination of Boer farmers and English-speaking artisans in resistance to increase in farming and mining capitalism represented by the Smuts and other agricultural and mining enterprises (Henderson 1972; Higginson, 2014).

3.3. Populism, Nationalism and National Liberation:

Following the completion of this chapter's first half, the examination of the nineteenth and twentieth century instances of agrarian rebellion/ rural revolt that this thesis posits were foundational forms of populism under the label of 'proto-populism', attention can be shifted towards the second half; the ideological framework of twentieth-century nationalist populism that has come to be articulated as the genesis of contemporary African populism. Within this segment the conceptual framings , guiding rationales and theories supportive of the unique populism during the continent nationalist period, interchangeably called its anti-colonial or decolonial period, are analysed to comprehend their contributions to the foundational discourses and political behaviours more comprehensively attached to the development of African populism and its lingering effects on the African democratic and political landscape

As previous declared, populism for a number of scholars of African populism or populist cases (Sishuwa, 2024; Makulilo, 2013; Chachage, 2004; Dorman, 2005; Neuberger, 2006) is specified as an effective strategy for nationalist campaigns and political mobilization during the continents (de)colonial period of the 1950s and early 1960s. Although these nationalist popular movements were articulated as such by the higher leadership, when looking at the groups involved on the ground (at local level), there was a starkly different view of there being some kind of national popular movement which highlights the use of the label 'populism' and it being prone to obscuring the view of the full complexity of the interplay between the leadership of movements

and the mass. Examples of this are the South Africa's nationalist party the, the African National Congress (A.N.C) and the internal contradictions prevalent between party leadership and the 'rank and file' during its anti-apartheid efforts (Ellis & Sechaba, 1992) or the post-war period of Mozambique in which local practices of authority deviated separately of the top-down rhetorics of populist nationalism (Alexander, 1997). This obscuring was likewise expressed as the appropriation of local identities or priorities that were then instantiated as nationalist priorities (Fiereman, 1990).

There exists near boundless scholarly works on the relationship between nationalism and populism (De Cleen, 2017; Singh, 2021; De la Torre, 2017; Blokker, 2005; Martinelli, 2018; Ricci & Venturelli, 2023) as the interplay between the two is intensive with populism seeming to be inherent to nationalist expression, so much so that that populism has even been called "a kind of nationalism" (Stewart, 1969:183). Intensive relationship aside it should be noted that nationalism and populism are two analytically distinct categories (De Cleen & Stavrakaksi, 2017) but not analytically independent (Brubaker, 2020). The commonalities between the two concepts are typically identified by their shared claims of representing a collectivized and singular 'people' (Sheranova, 2018; De Cleen & Stavrakaksi, 2017) and their sharing of an operational philosophy that hinges on 'inclusion-exclusion' as the crux, or as phrased by Singh (2021) as 'the us-them/in-out boundary'. This connection is long-lived, as prior to the existence of the term 'nationalism' populism, or more accurately populism's functional narrative (a subjugated people against an oppressive elite), was a staple in the polemic of the struggles for national autonomy, particularly in instances of ethnic cultural nationalism that used populism to legitimate their claims for autonomy and sovereignty (Hermet, 2001 in De Cleen, 2017; Vaughan, 2006; Dorman et al, 2007).

In an article discussing the nationalism-populism matrix, it is articulated that when placed into historical context, nationalism and populism both emerge as twin logics associated with the modern state "that delineate and legitimate the modern political arena itself: nationalism is about identifying the sovereign people while populism is about re-presenting the people in the place of power" (Heisakanen, 2020:2).[19] These twin logics, political representation and popular

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[19] The hyphenation of 're-presentation' is intentional. In order for something to be 're-presented' it must be first be present (exist) but have its presence absent (italics in original) (Heiskanen, 2020).

sovereignty, are additionally the twin pillars supporting the workings of modern democracy . The resemblance between the two is found largely in their dichotomic structure. Where populism is about the construction of an antagonism between the people and the elite and the elimination of this antagonism through the embodiment of the people in the place of power nationalism is about the construction of antagonism between the nation and the state and the elimination of this antagonism through the building of the nation state. That increases in articulation of populism and nationalism this antagonistic frontier grows more explicit resulting in a more concrete articulation of 'others' to be singled out (Hesiskanen, 2020).

Nationalism holds as one of the original, and sole legitimating ideologies of political rule understood in the post-Westphalian state system but is simultaneously laden with the unique ability to craft a collective trans-generational sense of self that threads people to their history, culture, homeland, and descendants this defining their identities (Singh, 2021; Anderson, 1983; Breuilly, 2007; Tilly, 1994). Speaking of variances in where more inclusive forms of nationalist populism positively incorporate minorities whereas as more exclusive forms do the opposite, still both are focused on legitimacy, populism on the legitimacy of the regime and nationalism of the political legitimacy and emotional legitimacy (Anderson, 2006) of the state (Gellner, 1983).

When discussing populism's place in African nationalist liberation and democratization a momentary recollection of populism's functional logic is helpful. Populist movements involve some type of "revolt against the established structure of power in the name of the people" (Canovan, 1999:3). To the amount that populism is concerned with the masses it is equally interested in the individual in its 'tending to glorify the ordinary individual, romantizing the ordinary and attaching a special value to him' (Mazuri & Engholm, 1968).[20] Through the embrace of African nationalists, the idea of populism's 'general will', initially often in opposition to colonial interests but then to tribalism and the formation of competing social classes, had been "translated into a concept of popular sovereignty" that was embodied in the united anti-colonial movements (Mazuri & Engholm, 1968:26). This assertion by African populists that pre-colonial societies were homogenous and solidary in the lack of antagonistic class structure and this formed, in large, the foundation of the false consciousness of present in

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[20] The individual here should not be confused with individual in the liberal ethic as that values *individuality* in the sense of its *distinctiveness*, not ordinariness (Mazuri & Enholm, 1968).

populist nationalisms. [21] When translated to the workings on a state, populism underpins the belief that (true) governments should serve their (true) citizens instead of the citizens being government subjects and in line with this populist movements are claims to be working for and acting in the name and interests of the people (Stephens 2025) and that leading populist movements are the only legitimate representatives of the people (Urbinati, 2019; Moffitt, 2016). Numerous African states coming into existence strived "to achieve a guaranteed minimum through the dominant role played by the public sector and manifested in government subsidies on education, health, food, housing and other sectors, as the welfare state was already *modus operandi* of the international system (Conteh-Morgan, 2000:346;Seekinngs, 2008; Mkandawire, 2001; Adesina, 2007; Van de Walle, 2001). The matter of early nationalism in the African context and its reliance on populism for actualization, needs to be approached in a way that immediately divorces it from nationalisms seen elsewhere, like Europe. Nationalism is conceptualized as a type of "malleable and narrow ideology, which values membership in a nation greater than other groups (i.e based on gender, parties, or socio-economic group), seeks distinction from other nations, and strives to preserve the nation and give preference to political representation by the nation for the nation" (Bieber, 2018: 520).

Nationalism in Africa, much like in Latin America, Asia or even Europe came from primarily as a response to colonial rule with the goal of removing colonial governments and foreign control making it a 'classic example of self-determination' (Thomson, 2000; Allman, 2013; Lawrence, 2013) with nationalist movements present in the early 19th century (Asante, 2023; Mayall, 1999). [22] In face the history of popular sovereignty is conterminous with the history of both nationalism and populism, seen in the case of nationalist movements fighting against for territorial sovereignty against monarchies as in Europe or colonial rulers in Africa and Asia (Heiskanen, 2020; Singh, 2021). African states, as understood were in large conceived during infamous Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 that De Leon poignantly describes as being "diplomatic in form, economic in fact (De Leon, 1886:103), where imperial powers arbitrarily drew up artificial

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[21] False consciness in Worsley () as an illuiony ideology that puts forth the desire state of solidarity and not an objective representation of social relationships ()

[22] Nationalism in Africa predates colonialism through the existence of coherent, organized African communities of the same peoples (nations) who were prepared to fend protect their cultural and territorial integrity against foreign interference. Ghana's Ashanti kingdom, the Zulu's of South Africa or Tanzania's Hehe or Yao are examples of communities of a strong sense of national community in place that were also determined not to capitulate to external authorities.

borders during the bifurcation of the continent to be shared amongst the imperial powers (Nshimbi, 2020; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2010; Craven, 2015).[23] Multiple groups of diverse or even conflicting identities were forced together or separated into 'alien states', and these divisions were further inflamed by colonial governments by manufacturing tribal differences (Rwigema, 2025). However, unlike other nationalism's African nationalism did not immediately refer to affiliation to a particular state (Thomson, 2000). Rather, roots of African nationalism stretch deep into the continent' colonial history with the development of nationalist sentiments planted firmly in the ethnic and cultural resistance to colonial imposition (Ranger, 1986; Falola 2001; Kohn, 1967), but over time 'nationalism' was used in reference any form of anti-colonial resistant and/or any explicit assertion of African (human) rights (Miller, 1993; Southhall, 2012). Ugandan President H.E. Yoweri Museveni when explaining the 'two strategic goals' of African nationalism during a Nelson Mandela memorial lecture held at Makerere University articulated them as emancipation from foreign rule and gaining democratic rights (Museveni, 2017), the inclusion of democratic rights here others would argues as incorrect as many hold that outside of self-determination and anti-imperialism (often appearing as intertwined), the other trends of African nationalism was commitment to a national identity and Pan-Africanism (Macharia, 2023; Enoredia, 2017).

The start of African nationalism is difficult to pinpoint; however, it is generally agreed to have started with forced African participation in the first World War I. The forced participation of Africans ironically allowed African conscripts soldier a deepened political consciousness through exposure to other nationalists- as with Indian nationalists during the Mynmar campaign-encounters with non-Africans opposed to colonialism, and perhaps most importantly, witness firsthand the vincibility of white soldier, ultimately marking the "revolt against the white man's supremacy" (Rathbone, 1978:5; Okoth, 2006). This compounded with the fallout experienced at the end of the second World War and economic malaise that pressed shifts in colonial leadership and loosened the gripe of colonial control (Poe, 2012). All of this dismantled the myth of White/European superiority, tearing away the mask of Imperialism's invincibility, giving space

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[23] The use of artificial here can be understood in two ways. The first being artificial in the sense that the borders were decided by external intervention, with no input from Africans. The second way is because, as Nshimbi (2020) writes, African kingdoms, that had existed for centuries had 'traceable but fluid' border that were usually decided by natural features such as mountains, rivers, forests , the borders drawn during the Berlin ignored these natural borders. They also split divided closely related ethnic groupings into different colonial regions-

for the sporadic and fractured independence movements to rapidly evolved into large-scale nationalist movements, remarkably this coincided with the emergence of political parties, labour unions and access to media form like newspapers led by the new generation of Westernized and educated elites (Okoth, 2006; Garcia-Ponce & Wantchekon, 2023).[24]All of this combined had 'catalytic effect' for the African political landscape, stirring a number of changes, one of them being the emergence of more radical leadership, along with a large group follower those leaders could potentially arouse. (Okoth, 2006). Tordoff emphasises this when stating "African nationalism was therefore, composed of a number of different elements, representing sometimes interlocking, but often divergent, economic interests, which united temporally in an anti-colonial struggle" (1984:54).

There have been sub nationalisms throughout the continent that, instead relied on the desire by ethnic majority groups with political potentialities and fuelled by a myriad of factors, most commonly being the quest to access a (relatively) large amount of state resources accrued by the former colonial overlord, often at the expense of marginalizing other ethnic groups (Aro & Ani, 2017). Notable ones include Igbo nationalism in Nigeria (Onuoha 2014), pursuits by Ashanti ethnic elite to maintain control over Ghana's agricultural sector and local chieftaincies (Rathbone, 2000), or the mobilization of the Kikuyu identity in early post colonial Kenya to secure exclusive access to administrative control, land and education (Branch, 2011)

3.4. Conclusion

In reflection, this chapter is concerned with the foundational conceptualizations of populism in Africa, particularly in uncovering its historical presence on the continent and identifying the breadth of its manifestations. Structurally, the chapter is divided into two parts: the first examines populist expressions from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, while the second focuses exclusively on contemporary populism.

Through its analysis, the chapter argues that African populism has origins that precede the more widely recognized forms of anti-colonial populism associated with the nationalist movements of

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[24] Although radio has been established with a relatively far-reaching power, it was standardly under colonial control. Radio's employment in liberation efforts are seen much later in anti-colonial history, particularly in Southern Africa.

the 1950s and 1960s. It highlights the presence of what may be considered "proto-populism"—namely, rural rebellions grounded in resistance to capitalist-driven societal transformation. These early movements, while not always explicitly populist, displayed populist-adjacent features in their challenge to economic structures and their calls to return economic agency to the people. Even if their demands did not explicitly seek to overturn the colonial order in its entirety, these uprisings reflected a broader discontent with imposed economic models and a collective desire to reclaim control over local modes of social and economic life.

Chapter 4 :An Abridged history of African Populism: Actors, Movements and Generational Cleavages

4.1 Introduction

Like the previous chapter, the content of this chapter is organized into two sections. The first section explores the populism of Africa's flagship wave of populist leaders—those positioned at the forefront of the continent's anti-colonial struggles. These figures not only provided a foundational template for post-colonial leadership but also helped shape the ideological practices and norms that would come to define many post-independence African states. The second section examines a newer generation of populist leaders whose styles and strategies depart in important ways from those of their predecessors.

Although ideologically diverse, the leaders examined in this chapter can broadly be characterized as either socialist populists or populist socialists, following Guy's (2012) conceptualization. The former refers to the socialist-oriented regimes of the 1950s and 1960s, led by figures who embraced socialism without fully aligning themselves with orthodox Marxism. As discussed in the previous chapter, Marxism served as a key theoretical lens within the broader African intellectual tradition. Guy (2012:71) identifies five defining elements of African populism in this era: (1) radical nationalism, (2) a radical political mood, (3) anti-capitalism, (4) populism combined with an exaltation of the peasantry, and (5) a moderate socialism or social democracy that rejected Marxist orthodoxy. While these criteria are useful, the fifth element introduces limitations that may exclude significant populist experiences which, despite deviating from strict ideological definitions, have played a crucial role in shaping Africa's political and democratic development. A key distinction Guy notes is that socialist populism foregrounds the socialist orientation of these leaders, whereas populist socialism emphasizes their populist character

4.2 First Wave Populists

The first wave of African populism took place in the 1950s and 1960s, led by individuals believed to have won their countries independence virtually single-handedly (Paget, 2020).

These populists, dubbed "fathers of the nation" (a moniker that in some cases is limited to just Nkrumah) were party organizers, first and foremost, and include enigmatic figures like Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania or Sekou Toure in Guinea who stressed the need for national autonomy through party organization, broad political mobilization and equity (Bienen, 1985; Johnson, 2014). The populism of the post-independence ear was crafted as a method of anti-colonial national development through the adoption of African socialism blended with concepts like Marxist-Leninism, traditional communism or both (Hassan, 2025). Mohiddin (1986) points out new African states were concurrently faced with the dire task of rapid economic development creation of new values with the greatest challenge being how to achieve these being the focus of each leader. In rejecting colonialism there had to be a rejection of capitalism that colonial introduced, and with the rejection of capitalism was the rejection of capitalist methods, as explained by prominent independence figure Kwame Nkrumah (1997). In answering the pertinent questions of post-independence leaders turned to the commune as central to the solution, a trend that would exemplify populism African populism between the 1960's and 1980's. Communal Populism's included exaltation of social harmony and communitarianism of a non-existent, idyllic version of traditional Africa in found throughout various communcal ideologies such as Kwame Nkrumah's agenda for "social revolution", Leopold Sédhar Senghor's "negritude" and Kenneth Kaunda's "Zambian humanism (Ibhawoh & Dibua, 2003). It is additionally due to this that scholars (Boone 2003; Frankema & Buelens, 2013; Kiva & Schultz 1976)

4.2.1. Ghana's Founding Father & 'Messiah'': Francies Kwame Nkrumah

The first territory to achieve its independence from colonial rule in Africa, in 1957. Came through Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party (C.C.P) that came in existence in 1949 as a more radical, rural and workers based alterative of independence than elite controlled, urban based United Gold Coast Convention (Cohen, 1970). The C.C.P was a party of the people- of workers, farmers and Cooperative societies crafted "…in the name of the common man, the man in the street, in the name of our children and those yet unborn, in the name of the New Ghana" as articulated by Nkrumah (1955:387). The C.C.P by its ideology, scholars suggest, was only a diffuse populist nationalism, but nationalist populist all the same (Kraus, 1969; Haynes, 1995), relying on broad based party support base complete with petty bourgeois

leadership that filled its ranks with low occupation status workers, semi-industrial workers and a substantial number of agricultural workers (Kraus, 1969). By virtue of Ghana becoming the first African state but also the first state with a functional independent government it can be supposed that the C.C.P and Nkrumah are the continents first contemporary populist experience overall. When attempting to date the history of contemporary populist rhetoric in Ghana, it can be dated back Nkrumah's charismatic leadership and particular discourse (Birikorang & Aning,). Truthfully, Nkrumah's popularity and populism is the direct a result of his C.C.P being the first political party to 'lead' post-colonial Ghana. Prior to this there had been no party, or rather no democratically elected party on the basis of an independent, democratic state and in such a situation the first party that appeared responsible by its capturing (democratically) state power was be viewed as responsible for achieving independence and thus would accrued and retained the significant charismatic authority. As part of the spoils of being the "the first black sub-Saharan African country to gain independence" (Akyeampong & Aikins, 2008:26) the C.C.P became a potent symbol of the new democratic Ghana any real power was held by Nkrumah as leader of the C.C.Ps Central Committee.

As in veneration of his classifcation as a socialist-populist, Nkrumah's populist programs were anchored by the standard tenants of African socialism, underpinned by a logic of resources sharing at the community level, a development strategy based on state-led nationalization, industrialization, planning and land reforms, as well as the total rejection of U.S.-led capitalism (as the cause of extreme socio-economic and political inequalities) (Onyango, 2020). The main assest of Nkrumah's populist policies, despite its eventual failure doe to a lack of legitmacy, disruption of local land inhereitacne systems and corruption (Amanor, 2010; Valsecchi, 2020;) was its targeting of agricultural development through the establishment and development of state-controlled community farms called either farmers cooperatives or state farms, that would stand as sites of agricultural modernization and rural-nation building with the added benefit of boost agricultural output for domestic and external markets (Kunkel, 2022; Lambert, 2019; Sackeyfio-Lenoch, 2016). Complementarily, there were other populist policies believed to be inspired by 'popular will' but that, similarly to the communal farms, culminated in massive losses and a drop in political legitimacy for Nkrumah, even though some of these policies did enjoy popular support and widespread participation for a period. These policiies revoled around

largely around the expansion of state led services such as the rapid expansion of free and mandotry education, offering of universal healcare and housing, price stablitzation for cocoa in combination with invensemt in rururla farms, and the revival of Trade Union rights that had been withdrawn by the previous administration (Austin, 1970; Biney, 2011)

A Masterclass in Populist Mythization and Charisma

The key featuring of Nkrumah in this thesis is with regards to his display of charisma and not his policies. While majority of Nkrumah's populism stemmed from his genuine popularity and although there was a concerted effort by the C.C.P to further enshrine Nkrumah to the Ghanaian public however citing these as the sole reasons for Nkrumah's populist success would be to underplay the role Nkrumah's charisma played in his populist antics. Many scholars have theorised the dynamic relationship between charisma and populism, here a quickly revised will be provided as more extended is can be found in chapter ...

In relaying his charisma, Nkrumah is described as having had "a natural grace and elegance, a finely shaped head, and a certain delicacy of manner. He was direct rather than devious. His voice, both deep and melodious, had a practiced resonance that audiences found attractive. He radiated warmth and attentiveness. In conversation he appeared to give un divided attention, listening carefully as if seeking advice and maintain a solicitous manner" (Apter, 1968: 773). From this, Nkrumah's appeal to the general public can be seen through the lens of attractiveness and desirable behavioural traits. A critical skill that allowed him to more easily appeal to various even conflicting constituencies;

"He could give the appearance of sweet reason, and he radiated common sense, which seemed to render his more radical or ideological statements harmless, as if they were so much political window dressing. He could imply sincere devotion to radical ideas; but by shifting his emphasis, he was a radical to the radicals, a liberal to the conservatives, an Afro-American to the Americans, a British-African to the British, an African socialist to the nationalists, and an African socialist to the Marxist" (Apter, 1968: 773).

Nkrumah existed as a text-book charismatic, guided by "more than his share of delusions of grandeur", regarding himself as being a great thinker-politicians", defiantly seeing himself as an African Lenin quite consciously, wanting to be remembered as a major political theorist,

complete with a stream of though with his name (Apter,; Mazuri, 1997). Compared to other African socialists Nkrumah too can be argued as being 'more orthodox' because, in true Marxist-Leninist fashion, his analyses of history and the political economy was done based on historical materialism (Metz, 1982). Linked to Nkrumah's popularity was his development of a unique 'political religion' through his relationship with African independent Churches (A.I.C.s) which that formed a critical pillar of his charisma and popular support. As with many African states, a majority of Ghana's population was religious, in varying forms and to differing denominations, but collectively to high degrees- within this context A.I.Cs in occupied a vital space in the country's sociopolitical fabric, representing religion of the supressed and depraved in colonial regimes who were in need for "a new moral religious syncretism and a strong leadership" that was in the form of prophets (Iijima, 1998:174). These churches gained immense popularity throughout the 19th century providing alternative to Western Christian missions as they were more prepared to adopt Christianity to accommodate local cultural practices, within reason and as such acted as a sort of political safety valve, in many cases gaining more ground than more established and structured Christian denominations like Catholicism or Orthodox (Iijima, 1998). [25] Nkrumah's populist style bore direct resemblance of the A.I.C prophets, with Nkrumah himself widely viewed as a spiritual figure diviney ordained to liberate Africa from colonila clutches, particularly among the Musama Disco Christo Church and the Twelve Apostle Church (Quason, 2004; Gifford, 1998) heightened by his use of Christian derived symbols, slogans and political vision which unsurprisingly, bought him mass appeal (Iijima, 1998). An instance of this is Nkrumah's now immortalized dictum "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all else shall be added onto you" (Biney, 2011; Apter, 1972). In supporting the A.I.C Nkrumha would attend churhc events and engage in public cermonies that would validate their spiritial authority and support claims to land made by the churches all of which would grant him access to the A.I.C. networks taht spanned far beyond the reach of colonial mission churches, in both peri-urban and rural areas (Anderson, 2001). Nkrumha too made known references to the importance of socio-cultural symbols, which too as another vivid contributor to Nkrumah's 'overwhelming charm and charisma'-the most identifiable way Nkrumah would evoke his

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[25] An example of this is William Wade Harris, 'the most influential and successful prophet of the African Independent Churches in the Ghana' instructed his follows to adhere to a strict church discipline and burn all fetishes, idols, charms and other traditional taboos but still keep his creed open to polygamy, ceremonies and other symbolism that could be used to attract members and relate to church goers(Iijima, 1998).

alignment with prominent Ghanan culture and thus, someone who respects the important place culture holds in Ghanaian society was wearing Kente cloth, a textile emblematizing the Ashanti kingdom (also now commonly associated with Ghana itself) for many important public ceremonies (Reek, 1976; Mahoney, 1968; Tiger, 1964), even to diplomatic engagements. [26] In 1960 Nkrumah presented a 'kente cloth' called 'T*ikoro nko Agyina*', that translates to "one head does not constitute a council" measuring at 3.66 x 6.1 m to the United Nations, in representation of 'Ghana taking its legitimate place in the new world order being ushered in through decolonization' (Fening, 2006:64).

During his tenure his image was additionally being floated by the intentional portrayal of Nkrumah as "the one warrior who delivered them from the clutches of the evil British imperialist (Osagyefo) and as the one who could singly handedly lead the country into an endless future of prosperity and affluence (showboy)" (Birikorang & Aning). This image fed into fantasized slogans like 'Nkrumah never dies', 'Nkrumah is our messiah', 'Nkrumah Show Boy', or 'Osagyefo' (savior, messiah), as the one responsible for the liberation and capable of guiding the fletching state into prosperity (Birikorang & Aning). Propaganda methods were employed to broadcast specific messages that portrayed Nkrumah in a way that "deliberately exploited traditional and cultural images of boldness, strength and invincibility" (Birikorang & Aning, 69). Studies find that mythological heroism is an archetypical trait of Nkrumah's discourse that in short, "sculpted the image of a valiant leader and noble revolutionary...depict(ing) himself asn the African people as a force of good and the colonialist as an embodiment of evil. In doing so, he further characterized himself as a selfless leader with righteous intentions who (would) deliver Africa from their repressors" (Nartely & Bhatia, 2022:6, parenthesis added). When questioned about of his portrait being on the coinage for the Ghanaian Cedi, Nkrumah justified it as a necessity stating, "my cabinet and I have decided, with my agreement, to put my head on the coinage, because many of the people cannot read or write. They have got to be shown that they are now really independent. And they can only be shown by signs. When they buy stamps they will see my picture – an African like themselves – and they will say 'look, here is our leader on

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[26] Nkrumah used An image of Nkrumah wearing Kente cloth in the traditional way, draped over one shoulder, during an encounter with U.S President Eisenhower
https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-president-eisenhower-with-kwame-nkrumah-president-of-ghana-nkrumah-87527317.html

the stamps. We are truly a free people'… We are not doing this because I am a vain man. We are doing this for my people. Because they wish it." (Danquah, 1957:1 in Birikorang & Aning, 71).

In these ways Nkrumah was the continents' introduction to the mythization of a populist. Any reference to Ghana between the years of 1957 and 1966, and for many years after, were tied to the image of Nkrumah, the result of his blend charismatic leadership and Pan-Africanist outlook. Following what would become the Nkrumahist tradition after his populist policies and style would be replicated by Ghana's subsequent heads of state (Birikorang & Aning, 2016)

Through his very unique and in many ways foundation displays of charisma and grand mythization Nkrumah had set the trail for the type of populism that would typify early Ghanaian politics. However, the range of his ambition and lack of comprehensive planning caused a great number of his populist nationalist regime failed many of its constituencies, and following the ensuing socio-economic downturn, leading to a take over by the Ghana's security forces (Haynes, 1995). Notably to the what could be reasonably be interpreted as to Ghana's benefit, Nkrumah was not the last populist the West African state would have. In fact, following his ousting came two more populist regimes, that of Colonel I.K Acheampoing (1972-1978), and his Supreme Military Council (Kraus, 1988), who in some ways sought to continue on Nkrumah's populist mantle. This is apparent in Acheampong's fiscal policy of *Yentua*, an Akan term literally translating to "we wont pay" that in its adoption of Nkruahist poistions of African led state welfare was the rejection of austerity conditions imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions, and introduced a number of developmental programs -, "operation feed yourself and self –reliance" erected on Acheampong's rhetoric which gave primacy to self-sufficiency through agricultural development (Morrison, 2004:425;). The latter regime is of Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings (1979-1992) and his Provisional National Defence Council that is analysed in the second half of this chapter.

4.2.2. Tanzania's Teacher : Julius 'Mwalimu' Nyerere- (1961-1985)

The second populist figure under the socialist-populist class and first wave of contemporary African populists is the founder of the Tanganyika African National Union (T.A.N.U) and first

president of independent Tanzania (then Tanganyika) the charismatic, ardently militant, African nationalist and popular Julius Kambarage Nyerere who was a central figure in Tanzania's and Africa's struggle for decolonization and political autonomy (Schneider, 2019). Nyerere, like Nkrumah, through his being the first states head was exhalated seen through his monikers of "Mwalimu" (teacher) or "Baba wa Taifa" (father of the nation) and a man of the people (Che-Mponda, 1984; Makulilo, 2013). Although also similar to Nkrumah severe economic crisis and widespread public dissatisfaction associated with his populist policies forced him to step down his populism allowed him to remain the head of state from 1961 to 1985 even weathering the 1965 when Nyerere's government changed to a single party system despite at the time of its independence Tanzania having a functional multiparty system (Makulilo,2013). Matching his counterpart in Ghana, Nyerere's popularity far exceeded T.A.N.Us- it could even be argued that it was because of Nyerere that T.A.N.U remained in power as long as it did (Makulilo, 2013).

Ujamaa, Democracy & Self -Sufficiency by the People
In the case of Nyerere's populism, the commitment to socialism had the concern with the moral quality of life as its core concern and the regaining a 'former attitude of mind though re-education of African values' (Metz, 1982; Nyerere, 1971: 4), a concern that informed his socialist populism. The pinnacle or rather stand out feature of Nyerere's populism began in February 1967 in the would be famously be called the Arusha Declaration where Nyere adopted the policy of Socialism and Self-reliance (Shivji, 2012) that was announced as what would be the official socio-economic and develop policy of T.A.N.U's Tanzania. As an African socialist (Onyango, 2020) the defining political policy highlighting Nyerere's time as Tanzanian head of state, and what much of his populism orbited around, was his distinctive 'pro-people', approach to development and populist democratic governance through African socialism rooted in African tradition, better known as his policy of Ujamaa (Familyhood or Brother hood in Swahili) (Zalanga,; Makulilo, 2013; Shivji, 2010 ;Campbell, 2010; Schneider, 2004; Paget, 2020).[28] The extended African family as a traditional African institution, was the foundation of Nkrumah's African socialism (Ibhawoh & Dibua, 2003). for the Agrarian populism of Ujamaa was founded on Nyerere's beliefs that the modernization of Tanzania hinged on the pooling of communal resources and was an attempt of to increase agricultural output and slash inequality in order to promote a moral economy (Rich, 1976; Maghimbi et al, 2011; Fouéré, 2014). Shivji tells the Arusha Declaration to "of a different genre...written in Kiswahili, perhaps the best, yet

understandable, linguistic articulation. It inspired, it mobilised, it was a call for a revolution, yet not a call to arms. It went beyond the attitude of mind' to take concrete action. Major means of production- big plantations, banks, insurance, wholesale businesses-were nationalised. More importantly, it legally imposed 'leadership conditions' o top state and party leaders and civil servants, including executives in the public sector Those occupying leadership positions were prohibited from having shares or taking dictatorships in private companies. They could not own houses for renting out. They could have more than one income and so on. In short, they were legally barred from using t public positions to accumulate private wealth" (2012:107). As for its traditional aspects, Ujamaa was heavily inspired by an romanticised form of traditional African society where *everyone was equal* and *everybody was a worker* in the sense that they contributed to the community as there was no other way for them to earn a living (Nkrumah, 1997). The Arusha document also brought to light the contrasts between Nyerere and Nkrumah, the first laid the basis of an African (socialist) state in theory and practice whereas the latter did not (Shivji, 2012. Brackets added).

At its core Ujamaa was a strategy of people centred governance and self-reliance through villagization to develop the agrarian sector through pooling together rural communities to "create economic and social communities where people live together and work together for the good of all" (Nyerere, 1968:348 in Meyns, 2000). In carrying out the massive reshaping of Tanzania's rural regions the state guided by Ujamaa required every major means of life and development were nationalized, believing that privatization of any kind would be disastrous for the poor, dramatically limiting the ability of wealth accumulation by the elites (Schneider, 2019). In a text in which Nyerere outlines the basis of Ujamaa Nyerere squarely places Ujamaa's development or success on the people, writing that "it is therefore up to the people of Tanganyika- the peasants, wage-earners, the students, the leaders, all of us- to make sure that this socialist attitude of mind is not lost through the temptations of personal gain" (1962:5) . That the villages 'will be created and maintained by the people themselves, done by their own resources. The people's right to decide on issues cannot be usurped by leaders and experts just because they have expertise' (Raikes, 1975: 38) stressing the principle of self-planning and self-organization, and democratic self-development. The concept was simple, the villages were compact settlements in which inhabitants worked together in a productive-cooperative type created on the basis of

non-capitalist principles with everyone earing based on their work output irrespective of the property they may have owned at the time of the collective farms creation (Kiva & Schutz, 1976). While an additional rational for Ujamaa villages was the sharing agricultural development benefits, becoming Tanzania's agricultural policy five years after its launch, this was not the outcome, with output growing by 2.7% between 1967 and 1973 even though the population of those in villages was 13 million in villages in 1976, a tremendous boom from 2.5 million in 1974 (Makulio, 2017; Eckert, 2011).[27] Accurately, the matter of low agricultural production was caused by lacking reliable rainfall and extreme drought, that when combined with low yields but a rapidly growing population led to a food shortage that forced the Tanzanian government to spend close to 120 million USD by 1975 for 483,000 tons of grain, in 1973 alone 25,000 tons of mains was imported to fight off starvation (Keshin & Abdalla, 2019). In 1975 grain imports were stopped and Nyerere announced that the people either 'plant of die', going as far as to use force to ensure agricultural production on the forced villages (Resnick, 1981 in (Keshin & Abdalla, 2019).

It has been noted that the focus on Ujamaa as a socio-economic programme has caused the pro-democratic principles held by Nyerere's Ujamaa to be overlooked (Masabo, 2023; Scott, 1998). Democracy was cornerstone priority in building Tanzania's 'just and prosperous society where the people, analogous to any socialist country worth its salt, are considered equal and thus governing must be done by all citizens of majority age' (Knongolo, 2016). Like other socialist populists (and even populist-socialist) , Nyerere "had come to the firm belief that democracy did not require a competitive party system" (Prat, 1976:202) and as such, democracy under Ujamaa was along the lines of being a no-party national movement (other than the existence of TANU as the single, vanguard party). Power decentralization was the goal and the Ujamaa villages were the means as it is there Tanzanians were able to take part in the decision-making process, avoiding the corruption and dictatorships often accompanied with power being concentrated in the central government. Nyerere himself articulated this, saying:

"Government belongs to all the people as a natural and inalienable possession; it is not the private property of a minority, however elite or wealthy or educated and whether uni-racial. Government is properly instituted among men not to secure the material or cultural advantages of

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[27] Food had to be imported in order to avoid a food shortage (source)

the few, but to promote the rights and welfare of many. Therefore, the many must inevitably be genuinely consulted, and the just powers of government derived from them. Government by representatives in whose selection most of the governed have no part is not rule but repression" (Nkrumah in Pratt, 1976: 65). Not only was Ujamaa a sort of decentralized, direct democracy, it was envisioned to be an African sort of democracy, Nkrumah himself asserted that "We, in Africa have no more need of being "converted" to socialism that we have of being "taught' democracy. Both are rooted in our own past- in the traditional society which produced us" (Nkrumah, 1971:7).

An important highlight of Ujamaa as a form of democratic decision-making was its blending with Ujamaa's socio-economic function in agricultural and cultural production, perceptible through the planned agricultural co-operatives being democratically controlled, working as sites of community deliberation and political education that possessed the kind of social organization needed to unleash the creativity and productivity needed to fuel the Nyerere's socialist revolution (Raikes, 1975; Lal, 2015). Ujamaa gave ground for anyone to launch local projects as long as the requirement of there needing to be democratic discussions by village members and was met (Maghimbi et al, 2011). Reviewing dialogue done by Nyerere on the matter of Ujamaa and African democracy Masabo (2023) outlines how that for Nyerere democracy under Ujamaa was 'similar to that of Ancient Greeks from where and thus essentially becomes government by the people in which the people settle their affairs through free discussion' (Nyerere, 1963:1 in Masabo, 2023).

4.2.3. Apollo Miton Obote, Uganda's Policy Populist

Thus far this chapter has reviewed the populism of two that, lablled by Guy (2012) as socialist populist- a designation that spotlights their profuse socialist pronouncements that facilitated their populist regimes. In this section, however, the thesis introduces a populist configuration that falls outside of the ideological classes delineated in the chapter's introduction owing to its distinct lack of characteristics standard to forms of populist expression in Ghana and Tananiza. This populist configuration, novel in relation to other populist forms surrounding it, finds

manifestation devoid of charismatic or personalistic dimensions and instead is limited to its ideological dimensions components, s it will be later expounded.

The aforementioned novel populism is found in the setting of immediate post-colonial Uganda, that became independent in 1962 (Karugire, 1980; Southall, 1964). Uganda's transition to independence was relatively painless, as with most of British territories in Africa (with the exception of Southern Africa), and the British had system of legislative and parliamentary institutions, electoral procedures (Apter, 1995; Twaddle, 1973). Ugandan independence came through an uneasy coalition government between the Uganda People's Congress (U.P.C), a coalition of groups from the north and east of Uganda lead by Milton Obote, who would then become the country's first prime minister, as the head of the the locally based traditionalist party Kabaka Yekka, the counterpart to Sir Edward Muteesa II, the then Kabaka (king) of Buganda (Willetts, 1975; Glentworth & Hancock, 1973; Mutibwa, 1992). Like other newly independent states in Africa the objectives of newly independent Uganda were national unity, political stability, modernization and economic development, but also like other newly independent states lacked the institutional means to achieve these (Glentworth & Hancock, 1973). Obote's rise to power came through his participation in Uganda's Legislative Council and political manoeuvring, challenging the Protectorate Government in the Legislative Council, emerging as leader and successfully turning the internal divisions of the U.N.C to his favour (Gertzel, 1972) and not leading a movement or "languishing in a gaol" (Glentworth & Hancock, 1973:239). As this were activities common in prominent political leaders in Africa of that period like Jomo Kenyattta, Kwame Nkruhmah or Julius Nyerere, it rendered him short of traditional mass support voiced by the *Economic and Political Weekly* (1967). It was also clear, though he manner in which he picked apart the UPC left-wing in the early 1960's and him suffocating any chance for genuine working-class militancy made perfectly clear that Obote was no socialist (Saul, 1976; Mittelman, 1975).

Obote's 'Move to the Left': Early Ideological Populism & Ugandanization of Progressive Africanism

As affirmed above Obote did not travel one of the traditional avenues of legitimacy taken by other popular and populist leaders present in his time, meaning that the more routiney tried and tested means of attaining popular legitimacy including charisma, tradition or nationality were closed off to him. Unlike Nkrumah in Ghana, who on top of the messianic fever surrounding him

benefited from the idea of his Convention People's Party being successor to the medieval African empire of Ghana and thus a suitable guardian for "the best features of African tribalism" (Mittelman, 1975:137) Uganda was marked by the lack of any such potentialities of legitimacy. In stark contrast to other populists and African leaders of his era, Obote, to whom power was given through strategic alliances with regional elites, was a cautious tehnocrat that aroused no charismatic fervor, through no fault of his own; Uagnda's fragemntation barred the opportunitye for any unifying charismatics emerge and the the U.P.C could hardly claim to be the successor to a great medieval empire; and to recall tradition was to encourage deeply rooted ethnic animosity rather than to provide the foundation for national unity (Mittelman, 1975:137; Mazrui, 1970; Ingham, 1994).

As such, there remained one mode of possible popular legitimacy available to Obote- the establishing himself as a steward of new and popular ideopolitical and institutional norms; enter the 'Move to the Left', the zenith of Obote's populism. The 'Move to the Left' came as the second phase of ideological modernization and socialist construction through an attempt to 'Ugandanize' ideological themes that were popular elsewhere on the continent in order to make more sound "Uganda's contribution to the African Revolution" ((Mittelman, 1975: 120) and to introduce a "new political culture" (Mittelman, 1975:121) with new values, looking at 'other progressive' African leaders for inspiration. For Willetts, it was Obote trying to shift the base of politics to mass mobilization and away from the brokerage arrangements between local powerful leaders (1975) Obote is reported to have written in a memorandum to the delegates of a UPC conference in 1970 "a new ideology cannot be implemented through the intuitional structure of an old system" (Mittelman, 1975:121) which is believed to have been in reference to the matter around presidential elections but could have been extended to the period of 1969-1971 in general. Past this ideological rebirth the Move to the Left was professed as being motived by the desire to 'break the backs' of economic elites through state power thereby improving the material conditions of the masses (Rubongoya, 2007)

The 'Move to the Left' was underpinned by series of 'ideological documents' namely the (i) the Common Man's Charater of 1969, (ii) Proposal for National Service, which came to be known as Document No. 2, (iii) the Presidents Communication from the Chair of the National Assembly on 20th April 1970 (Document No. 3), (iv) the Labour Day Speech of 1970, also called the

Nakivuno Pronouncements (Document N0 4), and (v) an unnamed document about electoral proposals titled Document no. 5. The most unique and original, applauded as bold and imaginative effort to reduce conflict and build loyalty to national institutions and national unity" while combating the representation of parochial interests (Mittelman, 1975; 125; Obote, 1969). The proposals in Document no. 5 were that every parliamentary candidate would stands in four constituencies, one basic which would the candidates home region and three national constituencies which would be any three regions in Uganda, those able to secure the highest total of votes for their four constitutions would be the winning candidates (Mittelman, 1975). The pivotal document spearheading Uganda's Move to the Left was the Common Man's Charter of 1969 (Document No. 1, appendix A), the Uganda equivalent of Arusha Declaration (Thomas, 1985), which is identified as the keystone in setting Ugadan upon a path of (populist) socialism (Gereshenberg, 1972). [28] True to revolutionary socialist spirit it was drafted in, the Charter placed emphasis nationalism, socialism, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist as well-being democratic founded on the populist (and popular) premise that the hands of the majority should be vested with economic and political power with the people being "a source legitimacy as opposed to hereditary kings and feudal chiefs" (Common Mans Charter, 1969:16). It additionally focused the promotion of African Revolution, Culture and Aspirations as central values, mimicking Nyerere's approach to national building through the development of 'miniature Uganda" stopping short of making them hubs of direct democracy and political development. [29]

Failed, partly to the unwillingness of subsistence farmers responsible for the cash crops that were the most considerable source of funding of the Ugandan government to implement land reforms (Twaddle, 1973).

Ultimately the 'Move' amounted to no more than a populist ploy and mobilization agent (Mittelman, 1975:121) to "leapfrog the fragmentation inherent in petty-bourgeois political game in order to consolidate a more effective trans-tribal, popular, constituency" (Saul, 1976:30). As opposed to the socialist-populist projects in Tanzania and Ghana that demonstrated an element of

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[28] See Appendix A for Common Man's Charter
https://nai.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:276744/FULLTEXT01.pdf
[29] It was proposed that these Camps should collectively, and as far as possible individually, be a "miniature Uganda" in that all the agricultural, animal husbandry and related activities, together with cultural activities, which may be found in any part of Uganda, may also be found there. They will be centres in which basic training in increased production, national consciousness and the promotion and advancement of African culture will be undertaken (122)

mass political education or participatory governance, governance the socialist project under Obote lacked local level consultation or grassroot involvement, working as a policy taht celebrated the peasantry and labourers but was bereft of initiatives and structures that allowed them to participate in the decision making process (Mamdani, 1976). Moreover, its aims of economic redistribution through nationalization was evident to be "window dressing", as the far reaching nationalization without compensation for the affected companies or visible succession plans triggered capital flight, while contributing to the failure of state led corporations that had become overburdened by bureaucratic inefficiencies all the while the strengthening of executive power, entrenching the U.P.C at the helm of the one-party state and conflating the UPC with the state itself (Mittelman, 1975; Rubongoya, 2007: 44; Apter, 1971).

.4.3. Second Wave Populists

"Ordinary people of Africa are supporting democracy as a 'second independence'. This time they want independence not from the colonial masters, but from indigenous leaders. They want independence from leaders whose misrule has intensified their poverty and exploitation to the point of being threatening"- Claude Ake (1995:40)

From the 1980s, in response to post-colonial disappointments and the disillusionment of the people who felt shortchanged with what the decolonization leaders were able to deliver, the continent saw the emergence of a second generation of African populists who were revolutionary and as such advocated for the necessary revolution needed to break free from the clutches of neo-colonial and dependency- national revival for them meant eradicating its offspring, corruption and elitism (Haynes; Bienen, 1985;). These populists 'won' liberation violently (Paget, 2020), typically taking the mold of military regimes and armed insurgencies by members of the armed forces rebelling against senior members of the armed forces, or the Old Guard. The goal of this wave was, through the transformation of local governance with the aim of replacing top-down, centralized authority through the creation of new revolutionary forms of local government that centred on local grassroot committees that would be feed upwards particularly in rural areas (Dickovick, 2009;521). Here we have Jerry Rawlings (1981-1992) in Ghana,

Thomas Sankara (1983-1987) in Burkina Faso, Yoweri Museveni in Uganda (1985-present). Idi Amin of Uganda procedurally is situated in this group due to his being a member of the armed forces, his induction to power was not coup against security forces but against a totalitarian state. In the case of the Museveni and his NRA/M, it is a 'second liberation movement' which were movements that "waged struggle against the authoritarian rule that characterizes some independent African states" (Salih, 2007:671).[30] Contributing to the populist logic of these regimes was the rejection of politics via the banning of political parties or political contestation for state power. Hassan (2025: 7046) & Resnick (2017:104-105) outline the following prominent features in this of this breed of populists;

- A pattern of self-centred personal leadership
- For the most part, the new populist leader does not belong to the ruling political class, as he is coming from outside it, justifying their taking of power the interests of the general will and thus were 'people's revolutions' against the enemies of the people
- Adopting a political discourse hostile to politics and state institutions inherited from the previous era, it targets corruption and existing parties.
- Calling for restoring the people's authority through direct representation, as is the case in the experience of the revolutionary and popular committees implemented by Gaddafi in Libya and Sankara in Burkina Faso.
- Employed economic strategies that were heavily focused on state intervention, rural collectivization schemes and import substitution industrialization

A final characteristic articulated by Resnick (2017) is the incompatibility of their populism with 'genuine democracy' as they rejected party-plurality. Resnicks (2017) mentioning of genuine democracy in reference to party-plurality indicates their allusion to Western liberal multi-party democracy as 'genuine democracy', which is ironic considering that the belief in the existence of a true democracy and democracy is only valid if structured on Western Liberal is one of the main contentions African populists have with Western liberal democracy. Party-plurality side, Resnick (2017) is correct in their analysis of democratic incompatibility if considering the lack of space

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[30]The Revolutionay Democratic Front in Ethiopia, the Rwanda Patriotic Front in Rwanda are additional examples of second liberation movements, while Salih (2007) includes the African National Congress the thesis author disagrees with this classification- while technically speaking South Africa had been granted independence from Britain, the South African Apartheid government a DeFacto colonial government, and not a post-independence Africanized government that extended colonial principles.

105

for the real political participation of the people. For all the notion of popular movements that involved the self-engagement and political emancipation of the poor was lost as it was repeatedly the military, the political bureau and leading cadre who were small trusted with leading political transformation, not the people themselves (Zeilig, 2018). Although this observation by Zeilig was in the context of Bukina Faso it is true for all Revolutionary military regimes with the differences being that for Uganda and Ghana political participation through the introduction of multiparty democracy was eventually make a reality. The NRA/M holds a special place featuring here as one of the continents earlier second liberation movements, which were movements that struggled against the authoritarian rule in post-colonial Africna states.

4.3.1.General Idi Amin, He who is now Grandfather

At 15:45 over Radio Uganda it was announced that the government of Obote had been overthrown and that, this coup was achieved with 'surprising ease', succeeding only after a few hours of fighting (Ravenhill, 1974). Here begins the reign of General Idi Amin 'Dada'. [31]

Amin, upon taking power displayed his sensitivity to the role tribalism in Uganda politics fully identifying himself to be a Kakwa, a 'Sudanic' tribe known to reside in Uganda, Sudan and Zaire who were seen as being politically unsophisticated, physically powerful and having innate militaristic qualities and high stamina (Woodwards, 1978) . Amin the Kakwa' and 'Peasnt King' was a common man who had an immediate popularity compared to the educated Ugandan who dominated the government preceding that of 1971 (Woodwards, 1978; Gitelson). Amin too is one of the preliminary populists who ticks a number of boxes of the populist persona. Amin was dynamic, captivating and extroverted (Legum, 1997; Gitelson, 1997), relayed as being "the common man personified...obvious impatience with the customary formalities of his office, his jocular manner of addressing crowds, and his very willingness to meet the people enamoured him with the ordinary people of Uganda" (Ravenhill, 1974:230). Strikingly, Amin's jovial and

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[31] Picture of General Idi Amin Dada found in Legum
(1997:251)https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2935414.pdf?casa_token=9MW_yc-dxkIAAAAA:n3-fHfwEtLuioMRlmnL_-fyJBJbrZA7CPJGiYuwA40TW5ySwjjLVuHopG31UK2ucKWNgwRZYfDdbDyINAdsY-Verj8rIu9UPpWJ4ZlkIY3J3FtYWuw

jokeful nature is suggested to have been deliberately deployed as a populists strategy to make him appear as comically eccentric thus reducing his image as a tyrant, making it difficult for people to accept or believe his ability to commit the atrocities he was accused of by his critics (Legum, 1997; Leopold, 2020; Halpern, 2023), the continent's earliest examples of the populist clown repertoire (Chap). His peasant upbringing grated him a deep distrust of the modernizing elite and a crafty shrewdness, and , potently, instilled in him a strong belief in the supernatural, believing himself to be *machomingi,* which when traslated means omniscient (Legum, 1997: 254, italics original), claiming to receive messages in his dreams from God himself and constantly accompanied by a Ghanian soothsayer (Legum, 1997). [32]Interestingly, Amin seemingly yearned for the kind of mythicization given to other African populists, problem being he, like Obote, did not liberate Uganda from a colonial power, nor did he oversee Uganda's political transition into independence. These, however, would prove to be short hurdles for Amin, who granted himself the official title of 'Field Marshall Dr Idi Amin Dada MC DSO CBE (Conqueror of the British Empire)-Life President of Uganda' according to the British Broadcasting Commission (the BBC. 2015, online) with his a more sensationalized but harder to confirm with official sources being 'His Excellency, President for Life, Field Marshal Al Hadji Doctor Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC, Lord of All the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Seas and Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and Uganda in Particular[33] In reinforcing this personal Amina added the self-designation of 'Dada', meaning grandfather (Ravenhill,1974), himself with the conventional wisdom, respect and authority traditionally held by elders in African society, whether this was intentional is not known.

The general's ascension was accompanied by significant amount of goodwill and support from Ugandans that may have seemed like Amin had a healthy amount of political capital and legitimacy but was actually celebrated joy at being relieved of Obote's dictatorship and his 'socialist' program (Rubongoya, 2007). Even the British government then led by Edward Heath

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[32] Picture of Whites being sworn into the Ugandan Army, kneeling before Amin vowing to fight against apartheid South African in Legum (1997:225).
https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2935414.pdf?casa_token=9MW_yc-dxkIAAAAA:n3-fHfwEtLuioMRlmnL_-fyJBJ
brZA7CPJGiYuwA40TW5ySwjjLVuHopG31UK2ucKWNgwRZYfDdbDyINAdsY-Verj8rIu9UPpWJ4ZlkIY3J3FtY
Wuw

[33] Official accounts although it is widely verified https://x.com/KakwenzaRukira/status/1960037727107264620

and the Conversative Party, saw Amin as a hero and admired his government reporting positively about the coup (Eliwya & Mbega, 2023). Similarly to Obote, Amin required a means of hurriedly via the adoption of an economic nationalist philosophy tied to a myth of prosperity depending on his regimes ability to create some form of roughly organised top-down redistribution to generate pro-regime sentiment (Ossome, 2019). Between 1971-1972 Amin undertook policies "aimed at returning al the means and sectors of production to Ugandan citizens", the crux of his Economic War (Rubungoya, 2007:49).

Amin's War for an Africanized Economy

It is critical to recall the role nationalism serviced during this period of the continent's hitsoyr as the central local of political aspiration, as it would not be possible to credibly claim independence without genine contolr over national economic affairs. Central to Amins populism was the Africanization of the economy, that it was finally time for African to take full reign over their economic destinies and finally ending colonialism. Amin declared an economic war on non-citizens and foreign entities (Rothchild & Harberson, 1981) internationally owned firms (most of which British owned) were accused of making 'excessive profit' and were promptly nationalised in December 1972, and those that were not banned from trading *and then* nationalised by 1973 (Shaw, 1973). The classical colonial agriculturally based economy Uganda inherited witness very little in the way of attempts of economic re-structuring and the limited gains brought by international capitalism only encouraged the development of a national bourgeoisie, yet the peasantry did not feel economic benefit from Ugandan independence (Woodward, 1978). A pivotal narrative in Amin's economic war hinged on placing the limited success in economic growth not attributed to the limits of international capitalism or Uganda's subsistence-based agrarian economy but insteadAsian commercial community, who became the targeted 'other' of Amin's populist policy of economic Africanisation. Amin ordered not only the repossession and redistribution of Asian owned properties and business to Uganda, but also the expulsion of 40,000 to 50,000 Asians, some of which were Ugandan citizens, which was popular for Ugandans both at home and the diaspora (Twaddle, 1973; Gitelson, 1977)[34] According to Legum in both his dealings with the Asians and the British Amin claims to have been guided by God (1997). Amin's anti-Asian sentiment and agitation resonated with a historical grievance of Ugandans and a part of Ugandan (and East African) history, even coming

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[34] This would stand as a trend of anti-Asian populism that would continue well into contemporary Africa

up during Obote's Move to the Left, as many Asian-Ugandans, who made a substantive portion of the business elite, were implicated and alienated by Obote's sudden nationalism, all of which meant (Twaddle, 1973[35]Haberson, 1981; Ingham, 1994) In administering the policy Amin oversaw the creation of the Departed Asian Custodian Board, a state Agency, to ensure the appropriate reallocation of the reappropriated resources totalling around 5.655 firms, factories, ranches, agricultural estates, homes, cars and even household goods (Rubungoya, 2007:49). Sadly, the inheritors of these resources were inexperienced and under their mismanagement the Ugandan economy experienced further decline (Woodward, 1978),

Falling short of public expectation—but not of the anticipated behaviours of a pseudo-socialist—Uganda's high-ranking military officers and middle class, Idi Amin's economic populism exhibited numerous deficiencies characteristic of earlier populist iterations under Obote. These included its confinement to the educated middle class, with little to no impact on the working poor or peasantry (Ossome, 2019), the absence of political transformation, and significant economic mismanagement. The consequences of these failures were decreased productivity, soaring inflation, and widespread impoverishment for the majority of Ugandans (Wasswa-Kintu, 1995; Hansen & Twaddle, 1991).

Moreover, Amin was ultimately ousted from power through a military coup—referred to as the War of Liberation (1978–1979)—led by a coalition of exiled Ugandans under the Ugandan National Liberation Front (UNLF), with support from the Tanzanian military. This response was triggered by Amin's ill-fated invasion of Tanzania, aimed at claiming part of the Kagera region (Avirgan & Honey, 1982; Mutibwa, 1992; Gertzel, 1980).

Following Amin's fall, Uganda held a general election in December 1980, in which Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC) claimed victory, despite widespread allegations of electoral fraud from rival parties, including the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) (Mutibwa, 1992; Otunnu, 2016). Obote's return to power was marked by the heavy militarization of political life, with the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) used to suppress opposition, particularly in Buganda and the Luwero Triangle. This resulted in massacres, torture, and severe repression (Kasfir, 2005; Otunnu, 2016).

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[35] This refers to the anti-Asian boycotts of 1959/60 agitated for by Baganda intellectuals who called for the boycott of Asian stores and services by Bagandans

These developments ultimately triggered the launch of a guerrilla war in 1981 by the National Resistance Army (NRA), led by Yoweri Museveni—an event that would significantly alter the trajectory of Ugandan populism.

4.3.2. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Uganda's Lifelong Guerilla

Following five years of combat and Obote's second ejection from office, governmental power was taken by the National Resistance Army (N.R.A) on 29 January 1986, with its victory reportedly marking the first time an independently postcolonial state was overthrown by a guerrilla movement without external backing or widespread domestic support (Meert, 2020). Uganda' N.R.M forms part of a small group of countries with movements turned governing parties that became so through the ousting of an incumbent African regime, not a colonial power (Makara et al, 2009), these countries are Rwanda, Chad, Ethiopia, and Eritrea- depending on if one is to approach the South African Apartheid government as a colonial government or an African government seeing as it was for the most part an independent government.

Initially known as 'The Protracted People's War', that Museveni himself detailed as being "a strategy whereby popular forces- i.e. those forces supported by the masses- wage a protracted war against unpopular elements in power...the popular forces...start off with weak military units in terms of numbers, weaponry and organization. By using a protracted war strategy, they aim at turning their potential strength into actual strength, thus overcoming their weakness vis-a-vis the enemy forces (1985:11).

Following Museveni's political victory it was renamed The Ugandan Resistance War (Vincent, 1999), although it has and still is referred to as a guerrilla war (Dicklitch, 1995; Tripp, 2004) or the Luwero war (Mamdani, 1988; Schubert, 2006; Meert, 2020).

In a familiar picture to Uganda, the N.R.M enjoyed enormous goodwill that scholars founded engendered the modus operandi of state and government that played into the hands of a militaristic ideology (Khisa, 2013).

110

The extent of governance mismanagement and institutional dilapidation overseen by Obote and Amin had left Uganda, and Museveni who now occupied the centre of state power, with a vastly different socio-political composition than other populists in other regions on the continent.

In addition to these, the 'bush war' itself had left a vacuum in civil authority and a network of complex and cross-cutting divides, like the regional divide between the Nilotic North and Bantu south among other ethnic cleavages and religious divisions between the Catholics, Protestants and Muslims (Dickovick, 2009; Omach, 2008). As such the NRM found Uganda with discredited institutional apparatus lacking the capacity to contain the social forced eventually created by long-term socio-economic change and thus stood in a scenario that allowed radical change and transformation (Brett, 1994). Remarkably the authority structure of traditional rulers, who in the absence of state authority became the only effective means of local administration, in tribes that had survived including the Ankole, Bunyoro, Busoga and unsurprisingly the Buganda kingdom languishing in the aftermath remained intact enough to play a role in Museveni's new populist government (Dickovick, 2009). The NRMs liberation war stood at the core of its legitimacy, and this has endured till today (Reuss & Titeca, 2017) [36]

Resistance Council's, Museveni's Populist Governance
When coming into power the NRM immediately introduced an alternative form of popular, direct democracy that was new and revolutionary in it being no party, participatory grass roots enabling the vast majority of the rural residents to directly participate in politics compared to representative, elitist and parliamentary (Mamdani, 1988; Tidemand, 2013). The 'no-party' aspect stems from the belief that the due to Uganda and Africa at the time having low levels of socio-economic development and with society being classless political parties will not have the standard kind of class divisions they rely on to guide their formation and program, as such would degenerate into either ethnic or religious factions (Oloka-Onyago, 1995). Bradley (2005) supplements this rational for the Ugandan non-party system and framework of mass participatory democracy additionally aimed at minimizing sectarianism in the for of inherent ethnic volatile class linkages present in a multiparty democracy in its forcing voters to participates Individuals and not party members. This formed part of the Museveni's conception of the NRM as a broad

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[36] The NRM and Museveni are still actively in government, having ruled for nearly 40 years. In fact Museveni has been confirmed to stand for president in the 2026 election
https://www.independent.co.ug/museveni-nominated-for-2026-presidential-elections

111

based, popular movement founded on his notion of people's power that Gertzel recognized as "populist" and paternal (1990:231).

For Ugandan democracy to be meaningful Museveni believed it needed to contain three elements, it being parliamentary, popular and a decent level of living for each everyone (Omara-Otunnu, 1991). These elements guided the NRMs Ten Point Programme of the 1986 which were simultaneously guided how the country was to be governed but were promises to restore democracy, security and promote national unity (Omach, 2008; Isabirye & Mamoudi, 1992). Following in the footsteps of (insert political leader and movement) every village community in liberated areas was organised into a form of local government called Resistance Councils and Committees (RCs), later renamed Local Councils (LCs) in the 1995 constitution, the first hand at politically reconstructing the failed state from the bottom up and breaking the ruler-ruled relationship that was absolute under previous regimes - they also doubled as the base of Museveni's populist regime program of decentralization within a unitary government (Mamdani, 1988; Dickovick 2009; Makara et al, 2009; Isabirye & Mahmoudi, 1992; Omach, 2008).[37] RCs constituted the NRMs decentralized alterative to governance in their empowing of grassroots, extending democracy and political participation from the elite directly to the mass of the working people, was claimed to be more democratic while facilitating the equitable distribution of resources, accountability and service delivery (Mamdani, 1998; Muhumza, 2008; Steiner, 2008).[38] Retrospectively, it also fulfilled the populist requirement of handing political power back to the people. To do the NRM would remove chiefs from villages it liberated (Kasfir, 2005) encouraging the direct participation of village inhabitants in the decision-making process via democratic means by electing village councils. The LCs formed part of a five tier structure that begins at the village level , go to parish and then sub-county and finally district level, each level was headed by a RC of nine members who would elect which delegates to represent them in the interim parliament the National Resistance Council (Mabirizi, 1991; Makara et al, 2009; Isabirye & Mamoudi, 1992; Tidemand, 2013). LCs were constituted by the entirety of the village, which would convene monthly and has the power to recall any eleced members of the

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[37] RC were formed during the guerilla war as way of developing popular support and survival of its guerillas, as well as entrenching the presence of the NRA in 'liberated' zones (Tidemand, 2013). This same tactic was employed by the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau (enter year)
[38] by late 1987 the number of resistance councils sat at around 40,000 (Gertzenl, 1990).

executive committee (Brett, 1994). Past their role as local governments, they were crucial part of the overall governance system, include the entire legislative branch (Dickovick, 2009).

In another popular move 1993 when Museveni restored the legal status of the traditional kingdom of the Kakabaship and other   through the Traditional Rulers Status in a massively popular move (Oloka-Onyago, 1995; Dickovick, 2009) that for a majority of Ugandans recognized the salience of traditional rulers. At the same time, or later in that year, Museveni enacted the Local Governments Statue, essentially making them the most significant state organs, dramatically boosting the level of resource transfers to RCs (Dickovick, 2009). It helped that curbed the power of chieftaincies while consolidating the RC system and thus the Museveni's populist support

During the Obote regime the Ugandan army had factionalized and there was proliferation of armed gangs and organised military units, the NRM in a response to needing number to contain north-east rebel forces and safeguard national borders were politically volatile has absorbed a variety of the lumpen originating armed gangs (Mamdani, 1998).

4.3.3. Jerry Rawlings and the advent Ghana's of 'True Democracy' (1979-1981)

Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, and the utopian, anarchistic, adventurist and populist and democratizing if authoritarian characteristics of his popular revolution of just role of the common man (Owuso, 1996; Kraus, 1987). Rawlings took power in Ghana's fifth successful coup since 1966 with the proclamation of 'people's revolution' (Agyeman-Duah, 1982; Haynes, 2022) from 1979 to 1998 with Ghana's experience with Jerry Rawlings easily its arguably populist by means that go past the popular charismatics.[29] This section dissects the revolutionary populist phase of Rawling's rule, that went from his assumption in power and ended when Rawlings proclaimed his intention of developing a 'true democracy' sometime in 1983.

Nugent (2009) highlights similarities in the both Rawlings and Nkrumah, both relying on highly populist appeals, purporting to be for the 'common man', wanting to unluck avenues for the masses to express themselves against dominant power structures controlled by elites From known as 'Junior Jesus' who's speech was filled with embers of religious adjacent condemnations of what he believed was wrong with Ghana and who embarked on a 'holy war' to

rescue the nation from its economic downfall (Owusu, 1996). Unlike Nkrumah, or associated populists like Nyerere, Rawlings made consistent emphasis on the importance of eliminating corruption, whereas earlier populists gave primacy to needing national reassertion and the revival of traditional values as a means of responding and recovering from the traumas of colonialism (Haynes, year)

Rawlings' induction into government came through the preferred method by of the military revolutionary, by way of coup. However, in Rawl's case he took part in two. His first successful military take-over was in June of 1979 against previous military and somewhat populist Acheampong, when he became head of state with his Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) through a mutiny led by junior members of the Airforce and army against with the goal of wrestling power from the senior, corrupt officials and preventing "the already bankrupt Ghana from descending into utter chaos (Africa Confidential, 1979). but this was a short regime as Rawlings allowed elections to continue because he had wanted 'the people to choose freely, honestly and wisely for themselves, the people they want to rule them (). This to the Ghanaian people was clear indication of Rawlings' commitment to Ghanaian democracy and allowing the democratic will of the people be the order of the day. Twenty-one months later Rawlings, and his Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) would then also go on to overthrow the elected Dr. Hilla Limann's People's National Party on the 31st of December 1981, calling for a 'a holy war that would transform the socio-economic structure of Ghanaian society' (Ghana News Agency, 1982:1- in Birokang & Aning; Abulai, 1992; Gyimah-Boadi & Rothchild, 1982; Haynes, 2022), stating that his regime was the needed responses to Ghana's severe economic and political ails. [39]

For Rawlings the goal was the installation of a new democratic revolution that would pass power to the people (Haynes,) Slogans like 'power to the people', 'popular justice' and 'participatory democracy was used widely in relation to Rawlings. Stressing that the sovereignty of Ghana resides in the people, the whole people and not a selected few, not exploiters, foreign of local, or even philanthropist, not even our elected representatives, for are ultimate accountable to the people' as this was something fundamental to the June 4th Revolution (Owusu, 1996). (Insert sentence on him calling a one party state). Populist regime an explicit rejection of bourgeois

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[39] The PNDC comprised of seven members, three civilians, three from the armed forces and Rawlings as the chair

parliamentarism and its sham democracy that Rawlings reportedly declared that "In the search for a democratic system of government, much has been made of Western parliamentary institutions. Our experience in this country provides enough evidence to show that in their actual working, these institutions are dominated by the interest of the rich and influential members of society. The vast majority of the population of the ordinary citizens, on the other hand, have always been left without any control over their so-called representatives ... That is why the people, in their practical wisdom, have rejected this sham democracy" (Rawlings in Huchful, 1986:809). Rawlings, though authoritarian and much to the surprise of many, managed to provide Ghana was prolonged economic gains through his pursual of orthodox stabilization and structural adjustment programmes, going as far as having Ghana becomes the International Monetary Fund's 'star-pupil' in the mid 1980s, although for much of Ghanian population the East African states macro-economic success did not trickle down to comparative increases in living standards (Haynes, 1995; Oelbaum, 2002). Ghana's economic development would eventually lead to political reform in shape of largely free and fair elections in 1992 makes him Africa's first neo-liberal populist (Oelbaum, 2002).

People Defence Committees, the stepping stones to 'true democracy'
In a form that (as shown by other military populist leaders reviewed both in this chapter and others in the thesis) Rawlings often wore military fatigues to signal his militant role both the leader of the revolution, and a man of the military. As a militant Rawlings believed that the revolution started needed to be guarded directly by those it was informed by, the people. Under his Provisional National Defence Council (P.N.D.C), that came into power in December of 1981 Rawlings had the major goal of his regime as transferring power to the people within the context of transforming Ghana's economic and political context (Birikong &). An example of making the popular nature of Ghana under Rawlings apparent, the state begun adding 'the peoples' as a prefix to various institutions, as seen in the Renaming of the three branches of the army to the People's Army, the People's Navy and the People's Air force (Rothchild & Gyimah-Boadi, 1989). Between 1982-1983 in consonance with its overarching aims of direct, true, democracy and power redistribution Rawling's P.N.D.C moved to form 'grassroots committees' with the aim of 'allowing the oppressed and exploited to form a constituent assembly of the popular masses in order to draw up a people's constitution that would serve their interests' via decentralized national administration, encouraging participatory democracy from the ground up

(Agyman-Duah, 1987; Nugent, 2009; Hutchful, 1986), also serving as 'operating centres' for the revolution to ensure the P.N.D.C stayed aware and in touch of the people's needs and popular aspirations. These populist institutions were inspired by Thomas Sankara's Committees for the Défense of the Revolutions (C.D.Rs) that were responsible for mass mobilization, political education, and the organization of labour for collective work (Louw, 2020; Ayee, 1996) Rawlings' too planned for his grassroots committees to have the local decisions or opinions of these committees would feed upwards into regional bodies accountable a national representative body that was popularly elected by members of the committees (Haynes,). [40] These two kinds of committees were named People's Defence Committee (P.D.Cs), later reconstituted to Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (C.D.Rs) and Worker's Defence Committees (WDCs), that argued replicated Nkrumahist populist and statis conceptions based on the dispensation of immediate justice and redistribution (Morrison, 2004; Owuso, 1992), with C.D.Rs and WDCs launching spontaneous initiatives to control prices, rent and demand accountability from industrial managers and senior bureaucrats, often within any sanction by the PNDC (Kraus, 1958). Complimenting the political work done by P.D.Cs was the decentralized populist institution of District Assembly (DAs) that were formed to promote regional development, responsibly for mobilization of the district resources, composite budget, infrastures and provision of services (Ayee, 1996; Crawford, 2008) PDCs & DAs were seen as Ghana's highest from of democracy and were represented the desire of Rawlings to break away towards a new way of politics through the popular political organizations of all the people.

Justice too had a role to play in Rawling's populism, after all, how could justice be legitimate if it was not of the people? For Rawling justice under his populist regime was to be "the justice of the people" (Gyimah-Boadi & Rothchild, 1982:64) creating quasi-judicial institutions or 'peoples tribunals' that while only headed by members of the official judiciary (i.e. the entirety of the old, counter revolutionary legal system filled with legal technicalities that allowed criminals to return to freedom) operated without the normative judicial practices and relied on people to pass judgements on matters in their communities (Kraus, 1987).[30] Examples of there are the National Investigations Committee, the National Investigations Committe (NDC) Public Tribunals (PT) and the Citizens Vetting Committees (CVC) that then was changed into the Office of Revenue

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[40] Rawlings faced opposition from the June Four Movements and the New Democratic Movements which were manifestations of the Marxist left within the PNDC (Haynes,)

Collection (Birokang & Aning) tasked with 'inquiring into the affairs of people whose standards of living were inconsistent with their declared income, or whose banks accounts were in excess of such sums as the Council specified, normally a balance of 50,000 Ghanaian Cedi in addition to things like mismanagements (in both government and business) (Gyimah-Boadi & Rothchild, 1982; Aygeman-Duah, 1982; Kraus,).[41] Collectively these extra-legal institutions had a pronounced populist tone in their deliverance of justice that was direct, simple and straightforward instead of "the confusing 'I put it to you' rubbish"(Gyimah-Boadi & Rothchild, 1982; 223). Scholars (Kraus, 1985&1987; Haynes,) note that tied to these were PNDC popular measures like price control for essential commodities with the roll out of 'people's stores' to ensure the relative supply and distribution of cheap, state provided essentials, controls on rent and bus fares that aided in mobilizing the population for self-development.[42] In fact, in many instances these stores were supplied via the actions of populist vigilantes, who themselves confiscated them from a trader believed to either hoarding or selling them with at extreme markup (Rothchild & Gyimah-Boadi, 1989).

Academics (Kraus, 1985 & 1987) studying agree that the Workers' or Peoples' Defence Committees (W/PDCs) crafted with the mandate of defending the democratic rights of the people, nururing respect for the rule of law, and human rights (notably those of women and children) and expose corruption and any tendencies that undermine the revolution were the major institutions of radical change, with thousands having been established at virtually all levels of society, governmental and privates, rural and urban (Owusu, 1992).[31] 1983-84 saw a change in Rawlings from a decline in public support for the defence committees as they had become overly zealous, unaccountable and exhibited occasional corruption and coercive behaviour while becoming a powerbase for radicals (Kraus, 1987) anti-capitalist stance, excluding segments of the community or chiefs. In a move to prevent the PDCs from losing relevance, and to include a more progressive, inclusive stance on membership they liberalized in 1985 and re-labelled Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, a term used for similar grassroots organizations in Burkina Faso where the populist government of Captain Thomas Sankara, with whom Rawling's shared a 'strong friendship' had formed (Agyeman-Duah, 1987) Carried out

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[41] At the time this amounted to 16,000 United States Dollar

[42] Some of the essential included rice, soap, tinned milk, batteries

117

communal labour initiatives that bettered communities including the working of farms, building of schools, and cleaning veld on roadsides.

For all the rhetoric of wanting to establish a real democracy, Ghana's 'real democracy' spoken about by Rawlings, or any democracy for that matter, was only realized in Ghana with the 1992 Constitution, (Ayee, 1996) which Rawlings won, marking him as the man as who returned Ghanaian democracy, albeit after being part of the those who abruptly halting, but towards the end of his tenure as Ghanain state head was still a democratic leader. Propelled by the 'organs of revolution', already viewed as tools of keeping popular control through intimidation and Rawlings access to the national media, or faults in the Ghanaian voters' registry (Abdulai, 1992).

4.4 Populism in the Post-Colony

Post-colonialism is the victim of a constant conceptual slippage that either intend it to be a historical transaction, cultural location, discursive stance or epochal condition (Parry, 1997). The attempt conceptual clarification is unsuited for the term's role in the thesis, however a hasty aside on the central idea used when referring to post-colonialism is required.

Beginning with the central issues; the term 'postcolonial' or post in 'post-colonial' still views colonial as the marker of history, chronologically and epistemologically, conferring it to the privilege and prestige of 'history proper' in which societies share only a chronological, prepositional relation to colonialism either before it (pre) or after it (post), as the "master-key to reading the diverse histories and cultures of erstwhile imperialized societies" (McClintock,1992: 86; Olaniyan, 1993:745). In the 1980s when new, independent nation state began to proliferate in former colonized spaces the term postcolonial, or had began being introduced and used to replace the term "third world", seemingly justified by the fact that the third world or third world culture is non-existent as an internally coherent object of theoretical knowledge (Xie, 1997:10), or as a collective patter of state behaviour.

Post in postcolonial(ism) signified the end of colonial or imperial direct domination it does not imply that 'old-style' colonialism had been erased completely when the near entirety of colonialisms structural domination, in each of its economic, political, military, intellectual, and cultural manifestations, that represented the empire (Hutcheon, 2020; Hitchcock, 1997;

Abrahamsen, 2003) remained intact, even after the physical withdrawal of colonial presence.[43] Colonial rule's political structure shaped the social imagination of not only the colonizer, but the colonized and when ejected, left behind typologies of social types and political possibility that would continue to haunt the globe (Spencer, 1997:2). For scholars postcolonialism is thus an indicator of colonialism continuity in the face of persistent neo-colonialism which functions as a reassertion of the economic (Abrahamsen, 2003; Hitchcock, 1997) and additional interests of colonials. Scholars to consider postcolonialism as "code for the state of undecidability in which the culture of colonialism continues to resonate in what was supposed to be its negation (Gikandi, 1996 in Mishar & Hodge, 2005: 337). Post-colonialism exists as the continuing desire to end colonial conditions, continuing the anti-colonial struggle or as understanding the persistence of colonialism in relation to the effects of decolonization (Hitchcock, 1997). With regards to colonial institutions themselves and their continued use for the African interests they would now have to serve, post-colonialism can (perhaps incorrectly) be used to refer of their Africanization. Herea possibly outdated approach to this from Malinoswki can be borrowed, as he argued that Western institutions after the transplantation into African circumstances must be "interpreted as quite new phenomena", arguing that the very process of cultural contact changes their nature somewhat (Malinoswki, 1938 in Spencer, 1997:2)

In outlining the nature of populism in the African post colony some space need be given to delineating what Young (2004) calls the 'anatomy of the (African) post-colonial state'. In its passing, the colonial state bequeathed in wholeness some of its core elements to its successor, Nominally, colonial state apparatus were appropriated and replaced by African led regimes that although now indendent essenitally churned out political systems that were carbon copies of the ones they raged againts (Keller, 2007) including the culture of us vs them, with them refering to all colonial institutions that were both alien as well as tools of colonial exploitaton and opprosion and the us bein the majority of the people exploited by these institutins, enchrenched tribalism and politicization of ethnic groups, the privileging of urban over rural areas, and inheriting the deep-seated fear, mistrust and hate felt by the majority towards the colonial state as a foreign

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[43] Scholars (Xie 1997; Abrahamsen, 2003) explains that one of the major critics of the concept of postcolonialism is almost exclusively fermented around the terms implication of "after the demine of colonialism", and that it is too theoritical and esoteci to be useful to study the politicals in contemporary African socities
https://www.jstor.org/stable/20057397

imposed entity; and the destruction of traditional political and legal institutions (wa Muiu, 2010; Ongyango, 2015; Ani, 2023; Wilfahrt,).

Stemming from the importance of identity production to colonial rule, idenity poliics emerges as a key feature in the post-colonial state (Hill, 2005), as the post-colonial condition with rewriting of idenities (national/racial/ethnic) that either illustrate a deviation from the colonial past or look to continue to exploit whatever political capital accrued to that idenity by colonial regimes. Africanization would then feature as a segment in post-colonial identities, with post-colonial states going through various processes of appropriation, chief of these was the Africanization of administration, through the (re) implementation of traditional forms of governance, the economy and minds (Lopes, 1996).

On the international front, the end of the Cold War spelled a major change in the standing of most African states in the international power struggle between the collective capitalistic West and the Soviet East, to borrow classifications Goodman (1961) iterates stem from communist ideology. Africa presented both global powers with an off-site battleground with African states and the various political entities within them as proxies- liberation movements that had meta morphed into one-party states or military regimes as frontiers for Soviet expansion and colonial power or in their absense pro-Western political formations as runners for Capitalist interests, influencing subsequent policies and in instances adding kerosine to wars (). In a series of bids for preventing post-independence African countries from accepting Moscow's embrace the West would part with generous fiscal and institutional support (Ero & Mutiga, 2024). With the collapse of the Soviet Union, a number of African countries no longer had strategic importance and as major powers pulled support these countries would fall into economic, social and political insecurity manifesting as servely as civil wars and general unrest (Ani, 2013; Ero & Mutiga, 2024) The goal had shfited from independence to nation building and development with political power being mobilized to promote economic growth (Bates, 2010)

As such the politics of Post-colonial Africa can be characterized by Africanization (Decker, 2010), of traditional forms of governance, which in many instances are systems that have rather explicit norms of political accountability, responsibility and legitimacy indicative of patronage systems.[44] The resource redistribution under postcolonial states, charactered by the "scramble for

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[44] Highlights that patronage additionally operates as a system of informal governance,

120

the national cake among the petty-African bourgeoisies causing structural violence" has in addition to spawning widespread corruption follows a patronage-clientelist logic (Ani, 2013: 58; beckers & van Gool, 2012 . The vertical distribution of resources originating from teh state and flowing to the regional and local goverment is a recreation of colonial resource distribution where the colonial state dished out resources to local governors or chiefs (who then depended on colonial regimes to sustain their chiefdom as the colonial regime counted on them as an extension of the colonial administration) to distribute to their constituents (Beckers & van Gool, 2012). Would then become (neo)patrimonial with the distribution of resources would be handed out on a 'those that matter' basis, typically centring the poor around election cycles

Clients are dependent on their patrons for the provision of required resources and services and their patrons in a quid pro quo manner dely on their clients to secure their status and power in terms of being an electoral force in which power legitimacy has been observed in terms of whether those in power share their wealthy with the less resourceful in a way that meets a satisfactory minimum (Beckers & van Gool, 2012). Coincidently the continuation or extent of African patronage is directly linked to the persistence of economic insecurity and uncertainty in day to day lives, after all- increased access to opportunities would mean decreased reliance on patrons for subsistence (Beckers & van Gool, 2012). For the poor, partonage is the one wa to satisfy their needs, but this also alludes to the ability of the clients to 'shop around' and seek better patrons.

This is, in part, the consequence of the soaring political promises owned by the first wave of populims. This can be seen in Nkrumah's demand for "the political kingdom" bestowed with independence had promised as a glittering future in which Africans sat the helm of their own political and economic destiny (Young, 2004:). The attachment of the majority of the African intelligenia to socialism concluded the primacy of the developmental state and rapid state expansion as the standard default in the post-colonial set up. Focus on state development and modernization too has linkages to the colonial state, as the central task of the colonial state was to modernize the backward societies they oversaw ().

In the post colony the social set up has shifted and new realities in relation to post-colonial power set up, thus cut-and dry certainties that previously aided in pushing forward revolutionary

change can threated the more nuanced conversations needed to establish and maintain democracy in action'. However, this can only be in the case of actual democracies.

As seen in earlier subchapters, anticolonial sentiments have frequently served as a political unifier against the obstacle of colonial rule, however, nationalism by itself holds very little when answering the problems of national building and state building in the context of post-colonial

4.4.1 Urban populism in Nigeria's First and Second Republics

A country with a colonial history from other African nations. Due to its distinctive colonial history and ethnic composition Nigeria post-colonial Nigeria inherently a federal system that it would develop into a multi-party federal union, a stark contrast to political systems common in other British colonies characterised by "a single charismatic leader leading a sing national, mobilizing, all-encompassing political party" (Jackson, 1972:278). (extend)

A number of African states experienced a period of political breakdown (typically in the form of civil war) following independence where political participation was limited to those with high societal status and direct access to decision making power. Such was the case in Nigeria , that after its widely heralded independence in 1960 experiences a series of breakdowns in political and civic order from when a military takeover in 1966 marked the fall of its First Republic (1960-1966) and subsequent failed secessionist civil war in the Eastern Region (also the Biafran War) saw political parties and politicians that headed them withdraw from competing for power and the collapse of governmental institutions leading to widespread depoliticisation (Whitaker, 1981; Sklar, 1981). [45]

In the aftermath political power was clenched firmly in the hands of the military and allied bureaucrats mainly, as guarantors of governance (fill in section on Nigerian government at this period) and then intellectual, religious and traditional leaders to a lesser degree (Lawrence, 1979). Nationalism was employed as an ideological stand-in for to help maintain the structural unity and central government authority for Nigeria's federal system by extending a sense of involvements of the masses in the many issues of the aftermath of the civil war, as military rulers pushed for the relative unification of Nigeria (Joseph, 1984). [34] Although this was short lived as

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[45] Out of five heads of state between the period of 1960 and 1980, three had been assassinated and the fourth exiled.

122

political participation remained under the strict control of the military and bureaucratic elites as transitions to civilian rule were slowed.

Ethnicity featured as a central mobilization agent in the populism witnessed in early post-colonial Nigeria, here being approached as a means of self-identification based on ethnocentric feelings ascribed from birth or territoriality/ occupying a distinct geographical area by choice/ or self-protection and reinforced by unique cultural traits like language, clothing and religious practices (Lenshie, 2014; Adebanwi, 2007; Bauman, 2004). [46]

4.4.1.1 "Lagos for Lagosian": Urban Populism of the First Republic

The First Republic saw the mass expansion of political participation to low and middle class/status population that pervious had extremely limited to no access to politics during the bulk of the colonial period (Lawrence, 1979) in key cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt and others where political roles were held by commercial elites and privileged aristocrats (traditional and modern) (Baker,). It is here where ethnic ideologies and politics would be deployed (successfully) by counter-elites, popular movements and populist opposition parties against the dominant elites many of whom were Yoruba (Frank, 1979; Akinyele, 2016). As previously mentioned, this expansion correlated with the intensification of tribalism in this same period as ethnic ideologies stimulated and justified political action in urban areas.[35] Interestingly where ethnic identity had been melded with urban identities, like being an indigene of Lagos, resulting in the identity being Lagosian, saw the hatching of populist amalgamations of newer ethnic identities that included lower class populations, displaced big-men, and opposition political figures, both of the latter were fellow Yoruba but either were from Lagos or although part of the privileged class, rejected the Yoruba identity as basis for politics in favour of the Lagosian identity (Baker, 1974). [47] Forming these amalgamation emphasises how populist reductionism was again like key in supressing the internal divisions amongst Lagos dwellers considering (find the states of people in Lagos at this time period) against the Yoruba dominated political order found in the state, allowing them to "seize the reigns of powers until between 1959 and 1967"

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[46] On territoriality, the a

[47] The term Lagosian refers to indigenes of Lagos and those who may not have been for Lagos but have resided in the city for long enough to make the city theirs- although debates over if residency is enough for being Lagosian abounded at that period and previal to today (Peil, 1975; Akinyele,)

(Baker, 1974; Frank, 1979:443). The focus on being from Lagos shifted recruitment and participation criteria from wealth and education to ethnicity and origin, allowing direct political influence they had been deprived of from the first colonial contract. This effectively grew the political representation of the Lagosian common man with the typical councillor then being from the lower class, holding professions such as traders, contractors or clerks and long-time resident of Lagos, no longer coming from an upper middle profession (doctor, lawyers, academic, journalist). [36]

4.4.1.2. the People's Redemption Party: Urban Populism of the Second Republic

The preambles of its Second Republic (1979-1983) Nigeria witnessed a boom in political activity, with established, richer parties, like the of the People's Redemption Party, the Northern People's Congress, and its offshoot, the the National Party of Nigeria, the Nigerian People's Party, the Great Nigerian People's Party and the Northern Elements Progressive Union, Unity Party of Nigeria, Republic Party of Nigeria, among others able resume party activities and with formal recognition from Nigerians Federal Election Commission (Abdulraheem & Olukoshi, 1986; Whitaker, 1981; Jinadu, 1985; Oyediran & Agbaje, 1991) acquire eligibility to take part in the 1979 elections (which would mark the start of Nigeria's post-military democratic framework). Unfortunately, Nigeria's military rule while managing to hold the federal state together was unable to transcend political ethnicity, which would then become to Second Republics hallmark as ethnic consciences would drip into partisan politics (Badmus, 2009), a fate destined in post-colonial politics. That said, not all political Second Republic political parties ran campaigns on ethnicism, as the shifting dynamics of the state and gradual social reintegration inspired the new types of inclusionary, class-based populism from some parties on the Nigerian left, namely the People's Redemption Party (P.D.P). Scholars (Abdulraheem & Olukoshi, 1986; Joseph, 1978; Babalola, 2024) found that the PDP was the most advanced and progressive among the left, with a non-ethnic broad-based politics crafted to include various sectors of the peasantry, working class and upper class.[48] [49] Its founding principle were stated as

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[48] On the ethnic front the PDP is said to have teetered towards the advancement of Yoruba interests, or rather Yoruba leaders who were PDP members sought to get an explicit commitment for returning power to the South, although this was rejected by the party (Ogbedie, 2012)

[49] For the PDP its constituents included "worker, peasants, fishermen, craftsmen, youths, small businesmen, self-employed people...progressive professionals, academics, big businessmen and traditional rulers with a conscious"(Abudlarheem & Olukoshi, 1986:76).

124

Nigerian democratization, national reconciliation and building true political and fiscal federalism in line with its principles of power sharing and power shifting (Katsina, 2016) Existing as the direct embodiment of *talakawa* (peasantry) interests and those of the urban masses the PDP's clarion call revolved around the redemption of the masses from 'feudalism' and domination by the 'Nothern oligarchy', promoting 'democratic humanism' (as opposed to socialism, thee preferred ideology of the post-colonial Left) as its principle ideology, an ideology that perhaps stemmed from the years of battling against the Establishment by its founders (Joseph, 1978).[50] Joseph captures the standard populist logic apparent in the PDPs extracted from campaign materials, manifestos and public broadcasts and is captured as the belief of "Nigeria being in need of a new social order with the removal of the comprador and traditional ruling groups and the transfer of power to the representatives of the broad masses" (1978:86), describing the people as "the salt of the earth".

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[50] The limitations of socialism in Nigeria can be attributed to a number of things, but two can be felt as the most prominent, the is the very nature of Nigerian Labour at that time. Nigerian labour was ideologically weak, had primordial tribalism and severely peasantized, with fundamental conservatism that led them to hold values and ideologies which were supportive of the social structure and its exploitative strata (Sil, 1993)

Chapter 5: Populist Legal Systems in Post-Colonial Africa

5.1. Introduction

Democracy's success, much like any political project, is reliant not only on the ideological works undergirding it but also on practices and institutions. After all, for most, constitutional democracy lives as a synthesis between the rule of the majority and the rule of law, with the first pointing to ensuring the free and fair elections to create a government that represents a majority of the citizenry, and the latter speaking to the use of judicial bodies to safeguard against the coercion of the majority by a minority through the abuse of power (Fournier,2019). However, the full extent of the judiciary's role in democratic societies is a topic either overlooked or filled with many deviations, looking at the use of legal systems in defending individual rights, be they civil or political, or business rights, constitutional interpretation, or their role in development. Linked to democracy, there has been a steady stream of scholarly attention granted to the impacts of populism on the judiciary and its processes in contexts from across the globe (,Liebman, 2011; Dawson, 2020; Blokker * Mazzoleni, 2020) with the general areas of focus being the collective West.

Historically, African conceptions of democracy and legal systems have been definitely moulded by the multiple layers of colonialism, subsequent anti-colonial nationalist mobilization, and pushes for national unity, all of which have been underpinned by desires of attaining legitimacy. At the dawn of independence, African states were grappling with the coinciding needs of national development, repairing (or more accurately, plastering over) fractured social structures, germination of a singular national identity, and the construction of a legal system able to arbitrate between the old colonial legal frameworks and those believed possible by the citizenry. African legal systems have for decades been the centre of intense shifts in reform, institutional structural and legislative advances in an attempt to address systemic shortcomings against a backdrop of diverse legal traditions, specialised social challenges, and particular history (Akpuokwe et al., 2024). Despite being viewed as a contemporary phenomenon, populist leaders and their movements in foundational post-colonial Africa, whenever present, made invocation of the people', referred to as the primordial source of political legitimacy and democratic authority, in

their claims of standing as authentic representatives of the collective will against colonial powers and the new breed of imperial elites.

This chapter looks to display how legal systems in post-colonial Africa forced the democratization of the judiciary, realigning the rule of law and its access to the people that legal systems should primarily be concerned with. Taking a retrospective approach in its review of earlier populist expression on the African continent in relation to the local legal systems, this article looks to explore how African populists Thomas Sankara and Ahmed Sékou Touré and their interpretations of populist-social society contributed to the democratization of legal systems through the erection of populist legal institutions with the potential, or better to say, intention of reshaping the foundations of judicial legitimacy and, by extension, their populist democracies.

5.2. Conceptualization of Legal systems

A concept that shares populism's difficulty in definition ability is the conjunction of primary (obligatory rules that directly bear on individuals/entities demanding that they carry out or abstain from certain actions) and secondary rules (devoid of obligatory imposition but confer power to create, apply, alter or nullify primary rules) otherwise known as a legal system, which sits somewhere between jurisprudence and its practicality.

In his work titled *The Legal System: A Social Science Perspective,* Lawernce Friedman, in an attempt to find a working definition for the legal system, argues that the focus should be less on what a system is, here he outlines a legal system as an operating unit with definite boundaries – but on what is meant by the law (Fredman, 1975). In doing so, Friedman states that one definition can be linked to the law being referred to in relation to lawyers and institutions, the types of courts, a set of rules and regulations, a special kind of process or governance, or legal functions performed either by the state, organizations, or systems themselves. Law can additionally be conceived as a social system only if the fact that a legal system is a subsystem of a society, along with other subsystems, is taken into consideration (Luhmann, 1988).

For Raz (1971) when attempting to define or explain a legal system the detailed regulation of the every legal institution that constitutes it is unimportant, instead what is being searched for is are the all-pervasive principles, traditional structures and practices that permeate the system, lending

to its distinctive character, a character that depends on the content of its laws and the manner in which they are applied.

Back to the definition by Hart as legal systems being the union between primary rules of obligation and secondary rules that validate the first, an expansion is required. This expansion is in the second half of Hart's conceptualization. Here, secondary rules in their reinforcement of the first are explained as doing so through social pressure, recognizing the first group as legitimate through the affirmative indication that it is a rule of the group, being supported by the social pressure that the group is constantly exerting. Populism is argued to embolden this, but identifying this group recognition (presumably through its advocacy of the collectivized people and their general will) (Adamidis, 2021) as the founding rule of a legal system. Webber agrees that this sort of legitimization through popular support remains the more salient function of a legal system in democracy, as legal systems and the judicial institutions that animate them are not only dependent on popular support for their legitimation, but they also work best when paired with it (Webber, 2024).. If judiciaries are viewed as legal systems lacking in public trust or authenticity, all the results of being believed as compromised, elite-serving, unjust, or not cemented in being too beneficial to societies past the maintaining of public order, their potential as legitimizing the democracy dwindles, and with it the overall legitimacy of a democracy itself

A minor alteration of how one of populisms occupations, popular sovereignty, is juridified and justified in legal systems as an element of constitutional law interpreted and applied by courts (Moller, 2022). has three functions that can be distinguished within this context, being the externalisation of foundation problems from the political system to the legal system, the self-empowerment of existing institutions in the name of the popular will, and the a third oppositional dimension where the people serve as a starting point for popular contestation- for the purposes of this paper the second function has utility (Moller, 2022). The alteration comes in when imaging this same claim of popular

In 1954 it was that populism in its central focus of the popular will to permeates all institutions and for all institutions to responsive to it is prone towards the idea of a legislative branches designed as an 'identity' (Shils, 1954), that is to say legislators are expected to be identical with the popular will instead of interpreting it and relating it to other values in a representative fashion.

128

5.3.. Popular Justice, an Approximate of Populist Legal Systems

With populism having articulated and rough sketches of what this paper understands the legal system to be, effort can now be shifted towards crafting a thinking of populist legal systems. Nothing complex is required here, as even a rudimentary idea of a populist legal system will be sufficient in getting us to our destination. If populism, shorted, is concerned with the antagonism between the people and the elite, believing that there needs to be governance formed on the General Will in order to counteract the oppression by the elite, then populist legal systems can be assumed to have a similar functional logic. This logic, if unpacked, would hold populist legal systems as legal systems constituted by judicial bodies guided by the General will and propelled by the common people in a format that advantages them. Rugged as this conceptualization may be, there is a form of judicial practice that best matches the imagined rationale of the populist legal system, and this is popular justice.

Populist justice has taken place in a range of forms in highly varied location across the globe from revolutionary socialist states, fascist states, capitalist welfare states and post-colonial socialist states featuring either an attempt by the state to promote law and order through the extension of state authority to regions otherwise unregulated by state low or as a sort of judicial protest by a group of marginalized, disadvantaged people or dissident groups against the state and its legal system, as articulated by Merry & Milner (2010).

As a legal institution, popular justice is best conceived as an intermediary located on the boundary between state law and indigenous/local law, linked to both sides but equally distinct. It is defined as "a process for making decisions and compelling compliance to a set of rules that is relatively informal in ritual and decorum, nonprofessional in languages and personnel, local in scope and limited in jurisdiction, typically applying local standards, rules and commonsense forms of reasoning" (Merry & Milner, 2020:32). Sachs (1984) in Nina & Schwikkard provides an exemplary description of popular justice, articulating it as meaning "justice that was popular in form, in that its language was open and accessible; popular in its functioning, in that its proceedings were based essentially on active community participation; and popular in its substance, in that judges drawn directly from the people were to give judgement in the interests of the people" (Nina & Schwikkard, 1996). In their reviewal of popular justice and legal pluralism in South Africa, Nina & Schiwkkard (1996) assess popular justice is assessed to

include a vision of democracy where "citizens are directly involved in the ordering of their community through the formulation of both substantive and procedural justice (Merr, 2020). Scholars further argue there is distinctive ideology expressed in every manifestation of popular justice that forms part of the broader tradition of revolution that is based on the vision of what just relations between the individual, community and state would look like (Smith , 1974; Santos, 1982).

Examples of these include the Soviet Comrade's Courts or popular justice in Portugal of the 1974 revolution, which both were crucial in re-educating the public into a socialist social and legal order' and furthering social transformation, respectively.[19] Functionally popular justice institutions suffer from limited continuity and stability compared to pre-established and formal legal systems but have a preoccupation with attaining a level of autonomy from the state through the establishment of self-governance structures, in contrast to formal state justice institutions that seek to maintain peace and order.[20] They also tend to serve society's lower ranks; the less powerful, urban poor, rural peasants, working class, minorities, and women and are standardly occupied by the villages more titled individuals, leaders who are usually more educated, those with more wealth, those better connected politically and the elderly.

These features of popular justice- localised authority structures, socially marginalized orientation and aspirations of autonomy from state power- provide useful analytical frameworks for understanding the varieties of populist legal institutions in settings where formal legal institutions are seen as imposed, oppressive or incompatible with inherent social orders- much like in post-colonial contexts. In these contexts, the judiciary is not only a governance tool, it is also a site of struggle in political negotiation, historical redress, and identity formation, more in regions like Africa, where the notions of legality and justice have been shaped by colonial legacies and the unbalanced post-colonial power distributions.

5..4.. An Abridged History of African Post-Colonial Legal Systems

Africa's post-colonial legal systems and the sorts of judiciary institutions that comprise them have been, in several ways, informed and influenced by the continent's unique colonial experience, and the decolonial practices employed in search of a liberated Africa. These legal

systems have simultaneously been neglected- unsurprisingly, as a consequence of the continent's unique colonial experience.

Colonial governance in most of Africa functioned on a fusion of executive (that generally prevailed), judicial and legislative functions having political and social freedoms denied to Africa and legal practices worked on the basis of separation, with Africans, especially those in non-urban settings, being subject only to administrative law, typically without court access and normally relying on traditional courts cooped by the colonial powers to act as extensions of their authority and apparatuses of control (Alberdi Bidaguren & Nina a, 2002; Mingst, 1988). Ghana in the 1960's stands as an illustration of this, having gained its impendence in 1957 retained its pronged court system that split judicial power between courts that administered customary justice and staffed by chiefs and their counsellors with jurisdictions tracing ethnic lines to the bulk of the African population and those applying British law or more recently developed national law to the small population of Europeans of Urban Africans (Harvey, 1962; Opoki, 1974). While it is acknowledged that the traditional legal systems are extremely diverse, in some cases having no units of offices coinciding with Western judicial concepts, native/customary courts for the most part are similar in their resemblance to traditional patterns of delegation of authority (Kuper, 1965; Allott, 1965). The court being headed by the judge as the chief and his advisors sitting as his courts, various levels of court existed with matters going from village elders to the chief himself (in cases where the chief oversaw a collection of villages) with a strong emphasis on public welfare and distinctions of civic and criminal offenses, as well as special courts for more serious offenses (Vanisina, 1962).

Then, at independence, focus was placed on the creation of national governments with the overarching goal of national integration through a precise, detailed constitution to overcome the strong presence of racial, ethnic, and class divisions- centrally through the executive's brawn. Here, chances for the development of an independent, autonomous, and legitimate judiciary were squandered as strong judiciaries were not a point of concern, as legal safeguards could, and were, routinely usurped by the executive, also by-passing judicial remedies. Despite the existence of a formal judicial system, its exclusivity now meant that to the majority living in immediate post-colonial states, they were new and artificial, and lacked precedent, meaning they operated almost as a separate system alongside traditional legal systems, which did not work as

anticipated. This was worsened when factoring in that the post-colonial judicial systems were segments of a state apparatus that, in combination with their being inherited from their former colonial owners, were extricable dependent on the capitalist system for their laws.[27] Governance shifts too were related to the atrophying of Africa's judiciary- in a standard democratic government, the judiciary performs a vital role in the prevention of tyranny and power abuse, but in a state that had devolved into authoritarian regimes or that had adopted a centralised one-party system, judicial efficacy posed a challenge to non-liberal types of governance (Aguda, 1958).

Elucidating on the matter of traditional courts, who they served, and the form they took, an interesting example is the High Court of Buganda, a semi-autonomous region within colonial Uganda governed by the Kabaka, the King of the Bugandan Kingdom.[29] Established in 1902 with the Uganda colonial constitution, the High Court of Buganda operated as an extension of the Ugandan High Court, unable to administer customary law, which remained was then made the sole jurisdiction of native courts, but areas of jurisdictions it did have competencies over (the same as the Ugandan High Court) justice administered in the name of the Kabaka, a traditional figure (Cotran, 1962).

In a number of cases following independence, post-colonial African states retained a slew of flaws from colonial times, most frequent were high levels of racial, ethnic, or urban-rural separation that would eventually coagulate to form a society of first-class citizens, second-class citizens, and serfs despite attempted redistribution policies Scholars to be made of three concentric rings: (i) a central ring of intimate civil society tied to state power and this enjoying easy access to justice, (ii) an intermediate civil society consisting of social groups possessing access to formal justice to some capacity and (iii) an outside group comprising the groups and social classes left out from state power and its institution overall, thus not having access to the judicial system nor its services (Cotran, 1962). One consequence of failed redistribution was the lack of equality in access to justice.

African people have for generations regularly sought to maintain order and met out punishments through a host of methods, ranging from operating court-like institutions to policing the hills or streets (Lee, 2002). A common form of were 'people courts' that were very typically established as part of revolutionary political projects, like in the South African case were in addition to providing restitutive methods to crime, rather than punitive, was part of the popular resistance to

132

Apartheid's organizational backbone as integral components of 'peoples power' model of justice in areas 'liberated' from the authority of the apartheid state (Lee, 2002; Suttner, 1986; Scharf & Ncokoto, 1990). In some cases, community judicial operations were state-supported, in many other societies saw the adoption of extra-judicial 'popular justice' where citizens dish out violent 'justice' in the form of beatings, the destruction of their property, or even being killed, at one point occurring in higher amounts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to (Verweijen, 2016).

People courts, in line with their nature as revolutionary projects, are comprising aspects of post-liberation populist regimes in Burkina Faso and Guinea that desired the centring of the African people within political and judicial life in efforts to counteract the lingering effects of colonialism and its continuation in neo-colonialism.

5.5. Popular Justice and Populism in Burkina Faso and Guinea: Revolutionary Justice at the Hands of the People

Around the 1980s, Africa observed the origination of a second generation of revolutionary populist leaders who advocated for the necessary radical transformation needed to break from the clutches of neo-colonialism and neo-colonial dependency. For these populists, national liberation meant the eradication of colonial systems through the transformation of local governance via the formation of new revolutionary forms of local governance that would centre the people. Parcel to this was the revision of legal systems in line with the revolutionary, populist rhetoric espoused by these leaders and the endorsement of fresh grassroots judicial bodies, as well as the transition of the holders of legal legitimacy.

The populist experiences of Burkina Faso and Guinea Conakry were selected for their distinctness of their populist manifestations and the alterations to the respective judicial frameworks despite both being French colonial territories.

5.5.1. Thomas Sankara and the People's Revolutionary Power

The first examination of populism's interplay with post-colonial legal systems will be in the West African state of Burkina Faso under the *l'Conseil de Salut du Peuple* and its radical young leader Captain Thomas Isidore Noel Sankara, assuming power in 1983, who typified the new type of post-World War II military men in Africa that, in addition to not being associated with the ventures of the French colonial Empire, were fiercely nationalist and bore a particular sensitivity and sympathy to the needs and aspirations of the people (Guy, 1988).

A democrat in his own sense, Sankara's populism advanced a political program concerned with encouraging broad participation in the political process, not the abolition of private property and expansion of Socialism through the state as advocated for by first-generation populists (Rothchild & Gyimah-Boadi, 1989). In contributing to his modest image Sankara completely rejecting messianic politics or personality cultism, denouncing any that arose, often reminding his followers that his leadership was not about Sankara but the seven million people of Burkina Faso (Yesufu, 2022). Progressively, Sankara viewed the ruling group and himself as the people's servants and (ideally) simple enforcers of the people's dictates, a sentiment he echoed during an address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1984, "I am neither a messiah nor a prophet. My only ambition is a twofold aspiration: first, to be able to speak in a simple language, the language of facts, and clarity, on behalf of my people; and, second, to be able to express the feelings of that mass of people who are disinherited- those who belong to what the world maliciously dubbed 'the third world' - and to state the reasons that have led us to rise up...".(Prasha, 2019:34).

Sankara's political thought was planted in a 'forward, looking' progress far removed from strains of political thought like promulgated by earlier populist figures that drew inspiration from a nostalgic vision of precolonial Africa, exemplified by Julius Nyerere's Ujamaa but were focused on the restoration of the precolonial social systems, with the populism being an eclectic blend of Marxist-Leninism, Pan-Africanism and anti-imperialism (Louw, 2022) As a Marxist-socialist, Sankara took the same anti-imperial and anti-capitalist stances as earlier revolutionary militant or independence leaders. Sankara was a popular, passionate speaker, a skill that provided him with a reputation of being a revolutionary in the mould of Che Guevara. This, when combined with his Marxist ideologies, led to him being referred to as the "African Che Guevara" (Gutierrez, 2018).

However, in practice, Sankara used a mix of nationalist ideas that took aspects of socialism to craft a road to social change that promoted self-reliance and anti-imperialism.

While the second most popular leader since Maurice Yameogo what determined him as the first populist was his insistence that the "The primary objective of the revolution is to take power out of the hands of our national bourgeoisie and their imperialist allies and put it in the hands of the people" (Wilkins et al, 2021; Rothchild & Gyumah-Boadi, 1989:223). Changing the country's name from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, which translates roughly to 'land of the upright/dignified people', affirmed Sankara's government as one trying to find its legitimacy from the diverse people in it and not its holding of power structures erected by colonial powers.(Harsch, 2014). Whether changing the name of a previous colony to signify its independence and values idealised can be considered populist is a matter for a separate occasion. Martin stresses Sankara's emphasis on the need for popular participation in the revolution and that this was part of Sankara's strategy for gaining mass support from peasants, labourers, and members of the intelligentsia and the educated (Gutierrez, 2018). In order for the people to assume their responsibilities and destiny, and as the only legal and legitimate repository of political power, they should be invested with the power to do.

5.5.1.1 Reimaging Law in the Revolution: The Popular Courts of Sankara's Burkina Faso

Essential to Sankara's mission were the democratising bodies founded as means as authentic institutional instruments allowing the people to wield revolutionary power and demonstrate the determination of Sankara's government in displaying new practices as well as providing the masses with the opportunity and power to adjudicate matters affecting their lives. These institutions are the Comités de Defense de la Revolution (CDR's) and Revolutionary Popular Tribunals (Tribunaux populaires de la Révolution) (TPRs), the latter being the primary object of current inquiry.

Launched as the Conseil National de la Revolution, the central judicial mechanism, TRPS, was pivotal in their educational role, breaking the mystique of judicial power and democratizing the judiciary, allowing the people to possess an active role in the process of revolutionary justice as both witness and part of the prosecution (Harsch, 2014; Taye, 2024) They were also punitive, tackling crimes of embezzlement, corruption, and installing in public life a greater sense of morality. Their facilitatory rationale was the application of the People's Will to judicial ruling and meant to replace traditional courts while putting into practice the principle of genuine participation of the masses in the administration and management of state affairs in all spheres of society. They operated similarly to the People's Tribunals in Jerry Rawlings' Ghana, envisioned to 'act on the basis of scrupulously conducted investigations and with properly assembled evidence but without the technical rules that in the past perverted the course of justice, enabling criminals to go free' (Gocking, 1996). The application of the people will materialize in a way similar to juries in formal court, only far broader- allowing for the input of the general public and not limiting deliberations to those presiding over the processes as would a judge with lawyers. Broad participation was from Sankara's belief that "justice in a democratic state must also be different from the justice of the exploiters...allowing the people to speak without being swept aside". TPRs were chaired by a large magistrate and as many as eighteen members, a mix of civilians chosen from CDRs, professionals, lay judges, and one magistrate, and perhaps a member of the military or police (Martin, 1987). Judges, having been chosen from amongst the "toilers" were tasked only with applying the will of the people, having "no need to know the old laws", and guided by their "feel for popular justice" based "on revolutionary law, rejecting the laws of neocolonial society" (Sankara, 2007:56). In furthering their role as institutions defending the revolution and galvanising the people's role as the sole defenders of the revolution, Sankara's tribunals were responsible for trying persons accused of "counter-revolutionary activities" (Engler, 2018:77).

Nearly one thousand individuals were tried by the tribunals. The first session of the TPRs was held on the 18th anniversary of the 3 January Coup of 1966, in January 1984 with one of the cases heard being that of Former president Sangoulé Lamize, the first post-coup president who, ironically, was deposed in another coup (Kabwato, 2019). Other persons include General Lamizana, charged with diverting money from a special presidential fund, but was acquitted, and Colonel Saye Zerbo, who was given an eight-year sentence for embezzlement, illicit enrichment, and tax fraud (Harsch, 2014). Through the tribunals, hundreds of former high-ranking officials and civil servants were found guilty of offenses ranging from mismanagement, embezzlement, theft or the misappropriation of public funds however, the tribunals showed a lack of punitive force with most judgements being relatively lenient, only demanding fines, expropriation, repayment of stolen funds, and light prison terms.

However, T.P.R.s were cited as having been abused for personal vendettas or political retaliation, with a number of people being needless trailed by the tribunals and subject to summary judgements. (Yesusfu, 2022).

5.5.2. Law, Sovereignty, and the One-Party State: The Guinean Judiciary in the Toure Era

Just under 1000 kilometres northwest of Burkina Faso was another state under colonial French West Africa. The democratic, secular, and social Republic of Guinea gained its independence in 1958, being the only French territory that voted 'no' in a popular French referendum that affected colonies concerning increased local autonomy within the newly created Francophone colonies, choosing total independence and all the associated consequences. Unlike Sankara, the inauguration of charismatic Ahmed Sekou Toure's populist regime came through the narrow democratic avenue allowed to colonial regions by the French empire with Toure reportedly saying "we prefer poverty in liberty to riches in slavery". (Fogarty, 2010).

The overwhelming support for independence by then French Guinee stood as the culmination of the Parti Democratique de Guinee (P.D.G)'s political mobilization and national populist coalition, and the outcome was a result that set the example of independence that the rest of Francophone Africa would follow within a few years. Toure glided into power with an immensely popular and legitimate mantle with the goal of his nationalist democracy being social

justice and the development of Guinean socialism. Guinea nationalist democracy critically varied from a people's democracy in the way that, in spite of being a 'one party system, it did not presuppose the class struggle and called for a broader mass basis of political engagement and national unification (Kaba, 1977:32).

Toure was filled with ambition and charisma, "a man in perfect control of himself," (Marcum, 1959:5) able to have crowds respond to his expansive rhetoric and artful charm. Despite his large stature, known as the the "Big Elephant" for his broad shoulders and high stamina Toure was an intellectual, writer and poet- often gave speeches that lasted hours in subjects ranging from philosophy even though Toure himself was 'sceptical of intellectuals, consciously rejecting them, as they represented a Westernised urban elite that stood in opposition of the collective good of the masses' in his populist rhetoric (Dave, 2009; Jognson, 1970). Toure warned against believing that leadership ability resided only in "the so-called *"e'volve"*, urging people that literacy is not a requirement for exemplary leadership (Johnson, 1970).

Unsurprisingly, as one of the first black African leaders to openly ally his country with the Soviet Union, Toure was a socialist but stood too in other schools of thought to a lesser extent, concepts like class struggle was not used by his government until 1967 (Dave, 2009). Testament to his populist socialist outlook Toure "upheld the rural peasantry as representing the true Africa " (Dave, 2009:358) a similarity shared with fellow independent populists Nkrumah and Nyerere of his generation, as well as those would be come after but this is where the ideological similarities stop as Toure, chronicled by Dave, would differ in his rejection of rural life along with its symbols, vying for the embracement of more modernist ideas of progress and change. A quick interjection here is that Toure's rejection of rural life is not a complete rejection of tradition or Guinea's past, on the contrary the mythization of Guinea's past in both Toure's and the PDCs claim of following in the anti-colonial footsteps of Alimany Samori and Alpha Yayah, a Fula chief who too rebelled against the French administration as used to bolster the legitimacy of Toure and his regime (Hayward & Dumbuya, 1983). Dave, in an extensive analysis of Toure's ideology, relays that Toure's nationalism was to transcend socialism and gave significantly more weight to defining a national and African identity, as this was a critical requisite for the continent's progress (Davem 2009).

5.5.2.1. Toure's Revolutionary Courts in Guinea's Judicial Overhaul

Toure had come to the same conclusion as many revolutionaries and populists before him, that in pursuing an effective revolution, there had to be an empowerment dimension that went past addressing people's material conditions. Institutional reorganization and democratic decentralization in Toure's Guinea took on a familiar picture to governance and societal structure of revolutionary democracies in Ghana under Jerry Rawlings or Sankara's Burkina Faso, with the P.D.G placing immense emphasis on mass mobilization being facilitated by organizational structures consisting of a pyramid system of committees that served as 'points of articulation between the leadership and masses (Kaba, 1977).

On certain occasion, presidential decisions would see the conferring of judicial authority to bodies, especially concerning political matters, to specially formed bodies and out of the hands of regular courts, like in 1961 when Toure established a High Court of Justice, manned by three cabinet members, three from the National Assembly, all selected by Toure, but would. Like in 1969 when the National Revolutionary Council, the PDGs' central committee was transformed into the Revolutionary Tribunal that held, from the outset, to try those charged with plotting a coup. The failed coup by Guinean exiles and Portuguese troops in 1970 saw the transformation of the National Assembly in its entirety into the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal with the task of trying those involved and capturing, as well as the hundreds of other Guineans and foreign nationals within Guinea arrested in the ensuing months according to Amnesty International briefing from Jun, 1978

The formation of the SRT led to a notable instance of 'revolutionary justice' taken on by the wider public. Scholars chronicle how the Guinean citizenry played a direct role in the quashing of the 1970 coup. Toure is reported as having mobilized civilians to take part in the resistance and capture of the invaders, some of whom attempted to blend into the population, but also instructed the setting up of people's courts that would directly try those accused of attempting to depose Guinea's revolution (Thomas-Johnson, 2020) In addition to those being tried before the national assembly, popular tribunals were erected based on Toure's belief, quoted as saying, "In Guinea, we recognise only the people as law experts, and they can practice it when needed. In our regime, justice cannot be independent from the people. The people remain the unique foundation of justice, legitimacy, and legality" (Kaba, 1977:34). In finding supporting rationale

139

for Toure's popular tribunals Kaba cites Albert Soboul, who, in a review of the French revolutionary period, found that "the exercises of justice in an attribute of (the people's) sovereignty; the people take it, if needed. The people by being avenged [on the counterrevolutionaries] were practicing justice...this action was necessary means of public wellbeing. (Kaba, 1977:35).

The failed coup was not the impetus of the people courts; they were, in fact, launched soon after Guinea's independence in 1958 with the intention of dismantling traditional governance systems, as in Guinea, they too were assistive functionaries of colonial governments in addition to their "backward ways and customs of the past" that needed to be purged (Kaba, 1977; Dave, 2009). It should be acknowledged that the term people courts in were applied to different judicial tools with the general application being for judicial bodies either purposed for first call civic matters or inclined towards widespread public participation.

In developing Toure's vision of a modernized Guinea, the PDG abolished customary courts, previously responsible for civic disputes, erecting people's courts or *tribuiux populaires* in their stead. The new had expanded purviews, given control over matters concerning personal status, marriage, divorce, and land entitlement, functioning as mandatory tribunals of conciliation instead of petty courts of law (Nelson et al, 1975). Critical is that these courts ran alongside 'regular courts', which would take charge in case of matters failed by conciliatory efforts (Nelson et al, 1975).

These people's courts were granted a substantive upgrade in 1973 when Guinea underwent comprehensive judicial restructuring premised by the creation of a more accessible collegial court system that replaced single judge benched at all levels while placing them at lower levels throughout Guinea as promotion of wider access- at the three lowest levels (Regions, neighbourhood and villages) these new judicial institutions, named 'people's courts', had a three judge bench (Nelson et al, 1975). Supporting the politicization of the state, the people's courts were staffed by PDG members. Part of their upgrades included an enlarged jurisdiction, with PCs able to tackle civil matters involving sums less than a large one for village standards, but penal were limited to the first two classes of contraventions (Nelson et al, 1975) Regionally, PCs served as first instance courts for civil matters and penal offences pertaining to more serious contraventions or délit (Nelson et al, 1975)

140

5.6. Conclusion

As has been elucidated, post-colonial African legal systems were not merely inherited institutions but a sphere of the post-colonial state shaped by the legacies of colonialism, nationalist mobilization, and the foundational struggles for legitimacy. Pivotable here has been the role populists have played in the evolution of these legal systems, not only as a modernizing force but as agents of broadened participation in the judicial process – an aspect needed for the functioning and overall legitimacy of any standard democracy. This has been seen through the populist politics of early African leaders Thomas Sankara and Ahmed Sékou Touré whose forms of foundational populism and making material of populist appeals to "the people" introduced sweeping transformations of the state primary through the establishing of grassroots levels, popular judicial bodies. Their populist social visions positioned law not as a remote colonial imposition, but as a tool to embody collective will and promote popular access to justice. By centring the role of populist-led legal reform, this paper has argued that the democratization of African legal systems was, in part, driven by populist leaders seeking to realign judicial institutions with grassroots legitimacy. In doing so, they attempted to construct legal systems that could mediate between inherited colonial frameworks and emerging popular demands. While these efforts were often contradictory or short-lived, they reveal that legal populism in Africa was foundational, not derivative—and that populist approaches to law played a critical role in shaping the institutional trajectories of early African democracies.

Chapter 6: Populist Leadership Archetypes

6.1. Introduction

Populisms' contemporary flashiness in Africa should not give the impression that it is by any measure a recent development in African political life. Like other regions, populism is a historical feature in African politics, especially if looking at the decolonial period. Here populists and their rhetoric were the deciding factors in altering the political contract and continue to do so visible in countries like South Africa, where the 'concomitant rise' of populist parties led to the historic loss of the African National Congress (A.N.C) parliamentary majority (Morieson, 2024).

Mustvairo & Salgado (2021) express that to develop a comprehensive analysis of how populism functions in a specific context there needs to be the identification of key characteristics in populist strategies and how they mobilize support instead of simply labelling them as populists. Publications on populism in the African contexts have done this, covering discussions ranging from recounting the continent's populist history (Guy, 2012; Idahosa, 2004; Hadiz & Chryssogelos, 2017) electoral cases of populism, with locus given to the socio-economic conditions that have loaned themselves to the success of populism (Resnick, 2010; Resnick 2017; Cheeseman &), to populisms, impacts on local constitutions (Boone, 2009; Louise, 2011). In further expanding the understanding of African populism and the actors spearheading its development this chapter reviews the characteristics, behaviours and ideological fuel of central old age and new age leaders identified as overtly populist in the focus countries (South Africa, Uganda and Kenya). It does this by utilizing visual and critical discourse analysis as well as clarifying historical setting to reveal the kinds of narrative, behaviours and pre-existing populist leadership blueprint used in their populist performance. It should be said that populists can, obviously, be found at all levels of African society and in many forms. The focus here on African leaders is not to imply they are limited to political leadership, it is just that most populists are actively involved in politics at a high enough level they are or are widely considered to be political leaders.

The composite attributes of populism are extensively covered in chapter 3 and repeated in brevity in chapter 4 and so for this reason their revision here is redundant. However, from this

chapter forward, the thesis will more properly employ on its definition of populism as conceptualized in chapter 3. Thus it is useful to re-introduce it here, in order to adequately reframe the readers understanding of populism within the context of the thesis.

6.2. Populist Personalities and Leadership

While there is much debate about how to define populism, there is very little on its causes. Typically, scholars similarly articulate consensus on populism's 'ground zero' being the culmination of bifurcated but interlocking pieces. The first is the accumulation of a mixed molotov of economic, cultural, social, and political issues from an unsatisfied public which allows populists to swoop in and articulate the collective concerns of society through the discursive identification (or creation) of the reasons the concerns have not been addressed (Gorup (2021); Silva (2017); Aiginger (2020)). The second, and in a way focus node of this chapter, emergence or availability of a central figure able to adequately pool together these collective concerns along populist lines. A sidenote here is that while populist movements or instances may not always visibly rely on or have a prominent figure to act as conduit for societal frustrations however in these cases there are a number of populist actors who, although not the sole authority, share collective populist authority.

In an article expounding on the populist personality and 'who populists intrinsically are' Nai & Martinez i Coma (2019) highlight three narratives that aid in outlining the limits of the populist personality. The first narratives grows out of their noticeable enjoyment in their flaunting of the low, taking joy in displaying bad manners and being 'drunken dinner guests. Another is in their possessing a provocateur political style that emphasises agitation, exaggeration and calculated agitation all intending to breech socio-cultural and political taboos and finally their being 'particularly skilled in establishing a direct and effective connect with their followers, mobilizing and persuading them through their energic, emotional and bold political style', which can as their being charismatic (Nai & Martinez i Coma, 2019: 1343)

When discussing the characteristics of populist leaders, the most commonly communicated trait is charisma (Holcombe, 2021; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017; Pappas, 2016; Sahu & Jindal, 2024) in the Weberian sense. Charisma's relation to populism will be covered in the following section.

A second trait is tied to the mechanisms populists use to communicate their 'difference' which include simplification, using highly emotional, slogan-based types of language, or appeals to emotions like fear, enthusiasm or resentment (Bracciale & Matella, 2017). Dunia (2022) offers an answer to the question "why populist leaders succeed" explaining that populist leaders erase, or heavily blur, the divide between the private and public spheres. The latter is defined as the space "we feel free and express a wide array of emotions, indulge in personal pleasures, entertain ambiguities and illegitimate thoughts, profanities and the like" (Dunia, 2022). In contrast, the public sphere is where "our social, political, and economic lives unfold supposedly in line with principles such as objectivity, rationality and respects for concepts like human rights, transparency, professionalism and (perhaps most important) predictability (Dunia, 2022. Parenthesis added).

That being said, one of populism's 'primary features' is the presence of the 'strong' populist leader who claims to be a direct, unmediated connection with the people/citizenry of a state and plays a crucial role in mobilizing the people around these claims (Barber, 2019; Meny & Surel, 2002; Laclau, 2004). Viviani defines a populist leader as one who manages to activate politically a series of contrasting feelings, interests and questions formulated in a society undergoing profound changes in terms of democracy and political representation, by building a "discourse", a "narrative" that adheres perfectly to the disorientation of individuals, without necessarily offering a solution, but with a resounding echo (2017: 297).

The ability of the populist leader to collectively activate the feelings of social frustration and communicate it through a discourse that presents the feelings as a response to injustice is important for the emergence of populism (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016). Kissas (2019) argues that because of this populism is best approached as a political *performance* and thus is best conceived as a performative ideology. Additionally, this performance draws from its own historicity and ideological nature which allows for a subjectivity of what populism looks like to come into being in certain ways instead of others (Kissas, 2019).

The literature surrounding the composition of populist leaders and how charisma relates to the functionality and success of modern populism is dominated by the 'charisma hypothesis' (Mets & Plesz, 2023; Pappas, 2016) with populist scholars highlighting the centrality of charisma in the success of populists and understanding how charisma factors into how populists present

144

themselves and perform publicly (McDonnell, 2015; Weyland, 2017; Taggart 2000). This is echoed by Van der Brug & Mughan (2007) who state, 'that the appeal of charismatic leaders is a distinctive characteristic of (Right-wing) populist party support' and although this is about Right-wing, the need for charisma for populist leadership is universal.

Like populism, the concept of charism suffers high conceptual ambiguity and has over time ballooned to accommodate a 'bewildering variety' of social and cultural manifestations and traditions (Kravis, 2021; Vries, 1999). A slew of authors has come to revise its changes in history and its contemporary applicability in hopes of making it more suitable for contemporary usage, and to pinpoint the conditions that see the creation of populist leaders. A heavy task considering the worlds a vast array of charismatic people ranging from political leaders to drug lords, from religious figures to dictators and despots. A brief list naming examples of charismatic persons provided by Kravis (2021) includes Fidel Castro, Nkrumah, Hitler, El Chapo, Stalin, Jim Jones, Mao, Gandhi, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., Idi Amin, Robert Sobukwe, Samora Michel, Chris Hani, Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama that have had the term charisma used when describing them.

Charismas' connection to (populist) leadership is widely attributed to Max Weber's theory of Charismatic Leadership/Authority. The first step in understanding charisma about leadership is going over the importance of the concept, of *extraordinariness* (Papas, 2016; Pappas, 2020). Bendix (1967) & Derman (2011) explain that extraordinariness for Weber can be understood as a certain quality an individual seen as exceptional, supernatural or superhuman which by virtue sets them apart from ordinary men. The emphasis on supernatural exceptionality is a remnant of charisma's origins in religion where charisma is described as a divine gift from God, essentially in service of God and not from a local community (Schweitzer, 1974; Papas, 2011).

Crucially, Weber's writing on exceptional leadership is done within the context of bureaucratic authority and political legitimacy- within this context, a significant aspect of the charismatic appeal is having a plan of action that exists outside of the everyday routine, and thus, is a break from traditional authority (Adair-Toteff, 2005). This repudiation of the past ('past' being the routine of traditional authority) becomes a revolutionary force, that Dow (1978) describes to be the essence of charismatic. It is found in the relationship between himself and the forces of history and the belief that he can control these forces and achieve transcendent objectives-

145

through this belief they inspire in their followers the belief that they are masters of history, and that history would be with them in the long run.

Charismatic leaders emerge "in moments of distress- whether psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious or political" and "were neither appointed officeholders nor professionals in the present-day sense" (Milosevic & Bass, 2014:226). In reviewing the concept and theory of charismatic leadership (albeit in relation to fascism) Roger Eatwell (2007) argues that attention should be paid to reasons for the appeal of charismatic personalities, as these inform not only the specific leadership traits exhibited but also the bond between the leaders and their supporters. Eatwell (2007) outlines four synthesis approaches, which routinely overlap, used to try and explain this

a. (Socio-economic) Crisis- See charismatic leadership are the response to some kind of crisis, importantly charismatic leaders can forge the objective reality of what the crisis is, or heighten/minimize it

b. (cultural) legitimation- requires some form of historical cultural legitimation for the emergence of charismatic leaders, often raising questions on the extent to which charismatic authority and traditional authority can be separated

c. (political) facilitation- charismatic leaders emerge to facilitate party/organizational growth, weak political parties/organizations heighten the likeliness of charismatic leadership.

d. psychological personality- reviews the appeal of charisma psychologically offering that certain historical or socio-economic conditions, leave people 'charisma hungry', a form of distress where people year for a leader to act as a religious/social symbol or reinvigorate their belief in politics

Before going on, some energy should be spent on articulating the function that followers play in creating charismatic leadership. For Ito et al (2020) studies of charismatic leadership are centred more on the leader and less on how these charismatics are received by the audience, regardless of the sizable role followers play in populist charisma, not many studies employ follower-centric appetite for charisma among populist supporters.

146

Followers play a central part in creating charismatic leadership, as charismatic leadership relies almost completely on societal recognition, after all, there be no charisma if no one was around to recognize it (Budac, 2020). This points to followers being the ones who attribute or give charismatic leaders their elevated status.

A 2023 paper by Metz & Plesz contributes to understanding followers of charisma by exploring the social-psychological dynamics between the charisma hypothesis and followers and how followers are responsible for charismatic authority. Here they introduce using the romance of leadership thesis to introduce the concept of 'charisma hunger' defined as "a general ideation of leadership waiting for those leaders who can meet these expectations", highlighting the tendency of people to over-emphasise the leaders' role while de-emphasising additional social or economic factors "over-attribute collective positive and negative outcomes to leadership finding that populism grows the appetite for charismatic leaders while increasing sensitivity to recognizing charismatic behaviours (Mets & Plesz, 2023). Similarly, Budac (2020) states that even if accepting charismatic authority has proved beneficial in human evolution as a species, the followers (society) must account for what exactly makes them admire or trust charismatics.

This same reliance on social recognition is a limitation, in that the absence of societal recognition charisma nearly immediately voids any claim by a charismatic authority.

Summarized, charisma is not an attribute of the leader, rather it is a mix of extraordinary gifts, the relationship between the leader and their followers, having a presence in a crisis, and the ability to present radical solutions (van der Brug & Mughan, 2007; Levine et al, 2010).

It is prudent to explore the visible, but possibly overlooked, of charismatic leadership. Agrees is that charismatic leadership, at any point, is a rather unique relationship that requires power, or what call 'suggestive power', that being the ability to inspire feelings in their followers (Paschen & Dihsmaier, 2014:35 in Fragouli, 2018). These feelings can vary from trust and admiration, to fear and insecurity. That this relationship is only possible if "people are willing to surrender degrees of freedom giving themselves to the cause/common goal" (Fragouli, 2018: 305). Heck (2001) exhibits the risks to charisma through citing how the charismatic abilities of one of history's most notorious charismatics, Adolf Hitler, not only enabled him to whip people into a "frenzy of nationalistic pride that bordered on hysteria" but made his following believe they

belonged to Hitler with body and soul, and only becoming calm when reminded by Hitler of his need of their obedience and loyalty (Heck, 2001: 23-24).

Short on adjacent to charisma and, this being 'messianism'. Messianism can either refer to "one's self reflection and understanding of their own messianic role or the popular belief in someone's messianic role" as it stands for both the general belief in someone's messianic role and someone's belief in his own messianic role (Idel, 1998:15 in Stoica, 2023:7-8). A critical perspective in factors of what contributes to messianism emergence- the 'traumatic-historic' interpretation.

6.3 Populist Leadership Styles

A synthesised consensus on the populist leadership styles finds that they draw on being direct and decisive while relying on agitation, spectacular acts, exaggeration, calculated provocations, stereotypes, recourse to common sense arguments, and inducing fear by using extreme emotions.

Makulio (2013) describes 'exhaustive' indicators of typical populist leaders as:

(i)   Strong personalistic leadership; (ii) claims that the new leader is from 'outside' of the existing political class; (iii) a stance that is 'anti' current institutions/system/organizations frequently coupled with the targeting of political parties/corruption; (iv) vows to restore 'power to the people thus re-founding democracy; (v) mass mobilization strategy aimed at legitimation and implementation of the above points.

Before proceeding, it would be prudent to address the potential confusion between populist leadership styles and popular or charismatic leadership styles. A fair starting point is to highlight that charisma often plays a central role in populism. While it is significant for gaining popularity, it is not always a necessary component. For instance, Uganda's first president after the transition to independence, Milton Obote, lacked charisma and widespread appeal; yet, historians still classify him as a populist, primarily due to his government's programs (Mittelman, 1975; Saul, 1967). While populist leaders tend to be charismatic, not all charismatic leaders can be classified as populists. Charismatic leaders, as described by Weber (in Wang et al., 2005), possess qualities

that are often seen as mystical, personally magnetic, and potentially narcissistic. These leaders typically have extraordinary personality traits, a remarkable ability to inspire, and the capacity to connect with emotional and ideological values in their communication. Furthermore, they usually present a solution-oriented vision (Yukl, 2010; House & Howell, 1992). However, there is no direct correlation that guarantees all charismatic leaders are populist in nature. Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama are illustrative of this. Conversely, popular leadership, supported by the public, exhibits traits evident in analyses of popular leadership, according to Hangemann (2022). These traits include seeing opportunities instead of problems, effectiveness in implementation, and a people-oriented approach. Notably, while popular, charismatic, and populist leadership styles have been theorized as distinct from each other, they often share traits when manifested.

Taggart (2000:169) states that populism's propensity for charismatic leadership is proof of its preference for strong leadership. As for the specifics about when a populist can be considered populist, Pappas affirms that a leader is populist when (1) they participate in competitive elections (2) holds allegiance to the rules and procedures of parliamentary democracy; (3) posits that society is split along one, and only one line, ostensibly dividing "the people" from some elite "establishment;" (4) promotes political polarization at the expense of moderation, compromise, and consensus; and (5) exalts majoritarianism at the expense of the rule of law and the protection of minority rights (2020:231).

In an attempt to carve out specific kinds of leadership styles, Casullo (2019) suggests that 'charisma' could be the ability of leaders to read social repertoires and weave together their personal life with the collective social life. Repertoires here are socially shared discursive templates that inform or legitimate the accepted behaviours of populist actors, which inform aspects like how they dress, speak, or what kind of 'life-stories' are better suited for political usage.[1] Mudde and Kalwasser (2017) offer additional repertoires (although not called repertoires), these being the charismatic strongman, the economic entrepreneur, and ethnic leaders; however, for this paper, only those that Casullo offers are focused on.

To this effort, Casullo outlines four kinds of repertoires of populist leaders, these being the patriotic soldier, the social leader, the successful businessman, and the strong woman: [2]

149

The Patriotic Military Man:	The Social Leader:
- Making use of their past in the military to catapult into political life - Narrative of someone previously satisfied with political life as a member of the military, but after facing the moral deterioration of their country, entered politics from a sense of patriotic duty Examples: Gamal Nasser (Egypt), Hugo Chávez (Venezuela), Omar Torrijos (Panama)	- Someone elected/trying to be elected through being politically active in a social movement (especially if this movement includes protests of any kind) - The appeal comes from societies' favourable predisposition towards them as economic and/or social crises created by the state discredited centrist/mainstream parties.
The Successful Businessman:	The Strong Woman:
- Closely related to Heinisch & Saxonberg electoral populism, in which "political formations competing for public office that are led by charismatic business leaders, who claim that their ability to run businesses successfully means they will be able to run government well." - The country is seen as a company that needs to be taught how to compete within the global market of nations	- Embody the tough mother trope - Underscore their femininity/motherhood as a vital part of their strength and resilience, presenting themselves as mothers of the nations, predisposed to protect family and community; however, they must not be too tough at the risk of losing appeal. - Female populists combine traits traditionally masculine, like toughness or strength, with traditionally feminine attributes like empathy, maternalism, or caring

Casullo, M.E. (2019). Four Types of Populist Repertoires, pp 58-66

When discussing populist templates, it is important to note that, although they can be effective political strategies, they also carry "considerable risks," as highlighted by Weyland (2022: 17). Stemming from the inherent nature of the personalistic plebiscitary leadership style often employed by populists, some of these risks include:

(1) The pre-eminence of a supremely confident leader entails frequent mistakes and misdeeds, which undermine performance and erode mass backing, the populists' principal asset. (2) Overbearing personalistic leaders have difficulty building firm support among important political actors and provoke dangerous, if not lethal, counterattacks from establishment forces. (3) Hampered by these weaknesses, many populist chief executives run into institutional checks and balances and external constraints.

6.4. African Populism, Populist Leadership, and Contributing Political Landscape

Africa has a rich heritage of leadership and leadership profiles rooted in African culture. While this heritage is unique, it is not uniform, shifting in form from era to era and from location to location, as well as from African to African (Ngujiri, 2023). Many references are made to Indigenous philosophies, such as Ubuntu, to provide ideological substance to African leadership. This is often done to explain the relevance of traditional cultural beliefs in contemporary 'Westernized' leadership roles or to question their value as a foundation for African political leadership (Metz, 2018; Mthuli et al., 2023; Asiimwe, 2023). A chronological overview of African leaders includes pre-liberation leaders, those who led military regimes or coups outside the generation of liberation leaders, and leaders associated with the wave of democratization. The fourth wave addresses leadership crises that have contributed to state failure, state collapse, and political corruption or neo-patrimonialism, followed by the emergence of a 'new generation of leaders' (Swart et al., 2014).

In initiating the dialogue around populist templates in Africa, it may be healthy to highlight the ties between populism and African leadership. A start could be raising the question that African leadership studies face, a similar question posed in African populist studies: what makes African leadership 'African'? A fitting answer comes from Faith Wambura Ngunjiri who writes that

"African leadership is African in as much as it is enacted in Africa, by Africans, influenced by the conditions and concerns that prevail in their specific African contexts" (2023:3). Repurposing this to fit the geo-political concern of this paper, one could say that beyond it being displayed by Africans; African populism finds 'Africanness' in it drawing from specific contexts found in Africa.

Perhaps more so than other parts of the world, historical contexts can be seen at the core of some of the prevalent populist templates in Africa, with many populists finding unison in their 'unwavering anti-colonial rhetoric,' which is often presented as a message of hope (Mustvairo & Salgado, 2021) towards the masses populists aim to court. This rhetoric takes root with the first generation of African populists, who used populism to rally oppressed Africans against colonial regimes. William Friedland points to this when recounting populism's use in Tanganyika, "They called on the masses of the people and the people responded" (Friedland 1964, 21).

The decolonization and early independence period is one of the most well-known examples of political competition in the continent's anti-colonial struggle and efforts to resist African colonizers and overthrow autocratic regimes (van Wyk, 2007). During this time, participants in liberation movements or those who staged coups were able to gain what is referred to as "struggle credentials." This socio-political currency was based on an individual's recognition for their contributions to liberation or revolutionary efforts, which granted them significant legitimacy and access to power and resources.

When shifting focus to contemporary African populism, Melber (2018) draws attention to it being retrospectively applied as a legitimization tactic by former liberation movements appealing to the continued struggle against foreign domination by colonial proxies left behind but attempting to reclaim power and in doing so, presenting themselves as the only genuine alternative for a promised better future, using Southern Africa as an example. Moreover, the new anti-colonial rhetoric in their discourse promises a land of post-colonial glory, where natives have equal access to jobs and other opportunities, and issues like racial tensions are nonexistent (Mustvairo & Salgado, 2021). This message resonates with the masses, many of whom have directly experienced colonial governance or are affected by the long-standing consequences of colonial administrations, even in cases where rhetoric presents apparent contradictions. Such

152

cases include individuals who would have, or in actuality have, privately benefited from the same system they claim to staunchly oppose (Mustvairo & Salgado, 2021).

Policy-wise, African populists often sit on the Left, generally espousing socialist policy points; however, some hold conservative beliefs, with many espousing a mix of state-led capitalism, neo-liberalism, and socialism (Gumede, 2016, Democracy Works Foundation).

Contemporary African politics features several notable elements that likely contribute to the populist performances observed across the continent. These include personality-driven politics, leadership dynamics, and patriarchal systems, as well as the pervasive influence of "Big-Man" politics, often referred to as "Big-Man Syndrome." According to Bratton and van de Walle (1997, cited in Dulani & Tengatenga, 2019), "Big-Man Syndrome" occurs when an individual who dominates the state apparatus is ascribed power personally, rather than through the office they hold, even when a written constitution exists. Proponents of the "Big-Man" model frequently link high political positions to traditional African customs, highlighting the importance of prominent figures and the respect accorded to elders in society. An interesting finding explaining the levels of "Big Man" rule in contemporary politics from Dulani & Tengatenga (2019) is that the relationship between public acceptance of personalized leadership and levels of support for democracy corresponds, meaning countries with lower levels of democratic support conversely display higher levels of support towards "Big-Man" rule.

Having considered the numerous factors influencing the relationships between populist leadership, charisma, and the repertoires that populists can access, the paper is now able to address the crux of the concern, which is scrutinizing the kinds of leadership templates present in African politics between old-school and new-school populists. To do so, the political performance of select leaders from Uganda, South Africa, and Kenya is examined.

6.6. Old School Populists (1990s): Patriotic Military& Militant Template in Africa

The most well-known template observed in African populists is that of the patriotic military man. This template was once a staple of Latin American populism. However, military forces no longer hold the same symbolic privilege they did, likely due to the image of the armed forces being

stained by the human rights violations and other crimes committed by military dictatorships of the 1970s, causing them to fall out of favour.

This is not *particularly* so in Africa, despite the continent having a fair share of troubles dealt by the hands of military men in power, and in some cases, it remains a popular and easily received repertoire. Earlier examples of old-school populists who relied on this template, in combination with their 'struggle credentials' as a means of political legitimation, include Uganda's Idi Amin and Yoweri Museveni, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, or South Africa's Jacob Zuma. However, this section will focus on the Ugandan and South African cases.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni came to power in 1986 after a coup led by his National Resistance Army (NRA), which is now known as the National Resistance Movement (NRM). This followed a civil war that same year, making him one of Africa's longest-serving leaders and the longest-standing populist leader. Museveni is a notable example of a "Big Man" operating within a patrimonial state, as described by Harris et al. (2022) and Inam (2018). On his official website, yowerimusiveni.com, he characterizes himself as "a man of strong conviction and rare courage," a sentiment echoed in the NRM's manifesto for 2021-2026. Khadiagala (1998) highlights Museveni's messianic zeal in his review of Museveni's 1997 book, *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda*. In this book, the NRM is presented as a movement dedicated to planting the "seeds" for a new Uganda—one marked by national unity and free from the selfishness and corruption that plagued the country at that time. This book was authored by Yoweri Museveni himself.

Although the country's most recent (and longest serving) leader, Museveni, is not Uganda's first instance of a military man populist. General Idi Amin, also known as 'Dada', replaced Obote in power using the typical transition methods that characterized Uganda between the 1960s and 1980s. He is recognized as the country's first military populist leader, embodying several traits associated with the populist persona.[3] Amin was dynamic, captivating, extroverted, and jovial. Amin was relayed as being "the common man personified...obvious impatience with the customary formalities of his office, his jocular manner of addressing crowds, and his very willingness to meet the people enamoured him with the ordinary people of Uganda" (Ravenhill 1974, 230). Between 1971-1972 Amin undertook policies "aimed at returning al the means and sectors of production to Ugandan citizens", the crux of his populist Economic War aimed at

Africanizating of the economy (Rubungoya 2007, 49). One of the hallmarks of Amin's policies was the ordering not only of the repossession and redistribution of Asian owned properties and business to Uganda, but also the expulsion of 40,000 to 50,000 Asians, some of which were Ugandan citizens, a move that at the time was popular with Ugandans both at home and the diaspora (Twaddle, 1973; Gitelson, 1977). Museveni often emphasizes his connection to the local population by using local proverbs and short phrases in vernacular languages. His use of imagery and metaphors that resonate with people's everyday lives aims to appeal to them. However, this approach can lead to overly simplistic, unsustainable, or inapplicable solutions to the state's issues (Carbone, 2005). In several speeches, including the 2024 End of Year Address in Rwakitura, the 7th Presidential Address in Nakasero, and his 2021 Inaugural Speech, Museveni also references his experiences during the country's liberation.

Image 1: Yoweri Museveni in military attire at the 2017 national budget reading. (Source: All Africa News, June 2017, https://allafrica.com/stories/201706090622.html)

Image 2: Museveni alongside a regional Senior Army Official. (Source: Chime Reports News, 2018, https://chimpreports.com/museveni-meets-senior-east-african-army-officers)

As will be seen with other populists who use the patriotic military man template, Museveni's allusion to his identity as a militant revolutionary goes beyond speech; it is unmistakable in his wearing of military fatigues at civilian events like the commissioning of dams, addressing university students, funerals, or even weddings, regardless of his official retirement from the army in 1995. Displayed in Image 1, in 2017, Museveni attended Uganda's national budget meeting in his military attire. Commenting on it, a member of an opposition party, Padyere, said Museveni's wearing it 'reminds the country of the history, taking us back to 1986' (Kaaya, The Observer, 2017). Then, in 2018, during an engagement with senior military officers from East Africa, Museveni, who was known for his military background, was present, giving a lecture to the officers while fully dressed in his military attire (Image 2). On a separate occasion, Dr. Kizza Besigye, former president of the Forum for Democratic Change retorted that Museveni's use of military garb is to show citizens 'where the power lies' (The East Africa, 2013), suggesting that

Museveni's military persona is brought out whenever faced with a difficulty, like dissent or in order to appear more threatening or intimidating.

There are instances where Museveni's military mode is activated when he directly tied himself to the military (more accurately, his revolutionary militia) and the development of Uganda. While attending an induction ceremony at Kabamba Military Academy, Museveni said, "This country is where it is because of this uniform. It's a uniform of honour and that's why I don't [take it off even as] an old man. Even when they are going to bury me, they should bury me in my uniform" (The Monitor, 2011, brackets added). On this same occasion, he commended the NRA, now the Uganda People's Defence Force, for achieving peace and stability.

Image 3: Yoweri Museveni exhibiting his "expertise, tactics and skills" at a shooting range in Kyankwanzi, Uganda, in the attire worn during Uganda's Bush War. (Source: Official Website of the Yoweri Museveni)

As discernible from the above, it is not difficult to assert that, even with the highest civilian office in Uganda, Yoweri Museveni's use of the patriotic military persona is an obvious aspect of his populist image. If further illustration is needed, it can be found in images of him participating

157

in a shooting range exercise during a leadership retreat in 2016 (image 3). This is not typical for heads of state, although it is relatively common in the United States, where it has practically become a tradition for state leaders to engage in some form of recreational shooting activity. The major difference lies in their image; U.S. leaders often dress casually, opting for jeans or shooting range coats (Image 4). In contrast, Museveni participated in such activities while clad in his signature military regalia, complete with a customized hat to protect against mosquito bites. Conventional military forces no longer use this style, but bush guerrillas traditionally favor it. Being a man of the bush, Museveni is well aware of the dangers that come with it, including the need for appropriate attire to guard against insect bites, as he mentioned in a speech during the 2017 annual budget reading.

Image 4: Former United States President Barack Obama firing a shotgun at clay pigeons at Camp David.(Source: The New York Times, February, 2013. https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/03/us/politics/obamas-skeet-shooting-comments-draw-fire.html)

A second 'old school' populist whose rhetoric evokes characteristics of the patriotic military man is Jacob Zuma, one of South Africa's more prominent political figures, who has had a large hand in shaping the country's contemporary political environment.

A central theme in Zuma's rhetoric is his use of populist tropes, such as presenting himself as an ordinary man and emphasizing his humble background. He often highlights his lack of formal education to distinguish himself from other political elites who have enjoyed access to higher education. This connection resonates with many impoverished individuals who lack access to education, leading them to view him as one of their own (Makulilo, 2013). Zuma's populist image is further reinforced by his traditionalist approach; he often wears traditional clothing such as leopard skins at significant national events, performs traditional songs and dances, and embraces polygamy (Image 5). This approach helps him relate to his large support base among the Zulu people (Makulilo, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008; Tolsi, 2009). Consequently, he has also been labelled a tribalist (Masuku & Mlambo, 2023). Interestingly, Zuma's strong ethnic identity has not diminished his popularity, likely due to his ability to effectively connect personal and political aspects of his identity (Hunter, 2011).

Image 5: Former South African President Jacob Zuma wearing traditional Zulu Warrior attire, complete with shield and weaponry. (Source: The Telegraphy, September 2016, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/09/06/zulu-king-tells-zuma-to-stand-aside-and-let-him-rule-south-africa

Image 6: Official logo of the uMkhonto weSizwe political party (Source: Official party Website, 2025, https://mkparty.org.za).

Similar to Museveni, Zuma's populist template relies on the politics of memory, making good on the political capital and legitimacy of his pivotal role in the struggle against the Apartheid regime. In line with the patriotic militant, Zuma employs struggle songs as a means of identification. Ndlovu-Gatsheni writes that Zuma's most popular hit from the liberation period is *Lethu Mshini Wam'* (Bring Me My Machine Gun) to imply a second liberation and attract the poor and marginalized (2008).[9] Critically, he connected to the masses, who felt a sense of betrayal at the failures of the black bourgeoisie, which came into power in 1994, for not meeting the popular demand of the people. The irony that many will point out is that Zuma was one of the black bourgeoisie who entered government; he also held high positions in both the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African government, serving as deputy president of the Republic from 1999 to 2005, years before the debut of his populist tactics.

Zuma's identification with South Africa's liberation past continues to shape his political identity, even after leaving the ANC and launching the uMkhonto weSizwe Party (MKP), named after the long-disbanded armed wing of the ANC. The party's logo is often associated with traditional Zulu warriors (Image 6). The MKP manifesto is connected by a consistent theme of opposing

161

"neo-apartheid," frequently referencing the impacts of apartheid and emphasizing the need to eliminate all remnants of colonialism and apartheid from cultural and political life. In doing so, it creates the image of a post-liberation movement.

While Zuma's populist style acknowledges his credentials as a revolutionary, a significant difference between him and Museveni is the extent to which he openly embraces his identity as a guerrilla fighter.

6.7. New School Populists (2010s): Patriotic Militant, Social Leader, and Successful Businessman Templates in Africa

For many on the African continent, 2010 was a monumental year, as it was the first time the FIFA World Cup was hosted in an African state, South Africa. For this paper, however, it acts as a chronological marker separating the Old School from the New School populists. The populists outlined in the subsequent sections came to power in states that had successfully transitioned from colonial regimes or were crippled by civil war, to become stable and (relatively) functional democracies that faced new challenges.

Having seen how the patriotic military man is a relatively central ingredient in the 'old school' populists' stew, we can shift attention to reviewing cases of its use with the new school populists. A significant point is that the minimum requirement for post-liberation leaders to access the patriotic military man repertoire was (relatively) serious participation in liberation efforts. That said, participation in liberation efforts is not the defining feature of the military man template in Africa, nor is it a necessity to benefit from the potency of this template. This will be made apparent when looking at two new school populists who have modified the patriotic military man template to become that of the revolutionary.

Two examples of new school revolutionary populists are South Africa's firebrand politician Julius Malema and Uganda's musician-turned-political opponent Robert Kyagulanyi, more popularly known by the stage name Bobi Wine.

Julius Malema's ideology is rooted in economic socialism, advocating for nationalization and land redistribution through his party, the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). His

162

combative rhetoric resonates with his supporters, especially the youth (Mustvairo & Salgado, 2021). Malema often uses metaphors to portray himself as a combatant and a freedom fighter. His revolutionary persona is encapsulated in the slogan "economic freedom in our lifetime." He argues that while political freedom has been achieved in South Africa, there has been no significant change in economic ownership or the racial power dynamics established by British colonialism and perpetuated by the Apartheid regime.

After his expulsion from the ANC Youth League (ANCYL), Malema said, "I'm not a soldier who is prepared to fall in battle…" according to the BBC (2012), explaining his refusal to be pushed out of political life. Speaking at the third National People's Assembly Congress, Malema credited his late grandmother for 'making him a soldier and as a result him becoming a soldier for the people' (Africa Web TV, 2024).

Bobi Wine, leader of the National Unity Platform (Jennings, 2019), presents himself in a similar light. Friesinger (2021) shows that the main thrust of Wine's militance is the dismantling of the lawlessness, corruption, and dictatorship perceived under the Museveni government. In a video analysis of Wine's campaign events, music videos, and speeches, Osterlow (2022) lays out that the recurring elements in Wine's populist performance are those of the 'freedom fighter.'[10] Wine frequently relates the continent's anti-colonial struggle against Western or White oppression to his political activism, using images of Patrice Lumumba or citing Nelson Mandela.

Wine can be argued to be equally a product of the social leader repertoire. In contrast, Malema's support undoubtedly stems from his time in the A.N.C.Y.L and the E.F.F.s. Wine's popularity came through his career as an activist artist, producing protest music critical of Museveni's government, advocating for social justice amidst the broader call for a generation power transfer in a state where an estimated 80% of the population is under 30 years old (Africa Research Bulletin, 2019; Osiebe, 2020; Melchiorre, 2023) that struck a chord with youth in Uganda and the rest of East Africa. A general subject of repression under the Ugandan state, 120 of Wine's concerts, many of which doubled as rallies, were broken up by the security forces. A draft bill that would restrict the movements and content of Ugandan artists and filmmakers, also called the "anti-Bobi Wine law," stands as evidence of the extent to which Museveni's government would go in containing Wine (Jennings, 2019; Osiebe, 2020). Two years after his successful

introduction into politics, he had been granted the moniker of 'Ghetto President' (Osiebe, 2020), a testament of immense support mainly from among Uganda's youth and urban poor.

Both Wine and Malema symbolize revolutionary characters and freedom fighters by wearing red berets, which connect them to the symbolic legacy of traditional militants like Che Guevara and Thomas Sankara (Wilkins et al., 2021; Braun, 2024; Osterlow, 2022) (Images 7 and 8).[11] In addition to his military-style red uniform, the beret is particularly significant for Wine. Although official military attire, including the beret, is designated as off-limits to the public, Wine has made it a signature element of his militant identity, referring to it as a "symbol of resistance" (Al Jazeera News, 2019). Wine also has worn a bulletproof vest and helmet after experiencing violent attacks due to his political activism (People Power TV, 2020, in Osterlow, 2022). The emulation of militant forces has extended to the supporters of various populist leaders, with some factions of these parties adopting the characteristics of civilian militias. The foot soldiers of the National Unity Platform (N.U.P) mimic a military structure; they have members who hold ranks and wear military-style uniforms, as shown in Image 9. Additionally, they salute their leader, Bobi Wine, whenever he arrives at events and act as security personnel when he travels to venues with large crowds.

Image 7: Bobi Wine at a rally of his People Power Party in a Red Berret (Source: Al Jazeera News, September, 2019. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/9/30/uganda-bans-red-beret-bobi-wines-signature-headgear).

In campaign speeches, Wine urged his supporters to "join him in the mission for freedom" (People Power TV, 2020, in Osterlow, 2022). Wine's campaign song "Freedom" builds into the repertoire, with lyrics like "we are fighting for freedom." Malema, too, makes use of music when singing struggle songs during political rallies or gatherings, a common political practice in the region, even more so among Leftist parties directly formed from, or inspired by, liberation movements. One recent example occurred during the EFF's 10th anniversary political rally held in 2023. At the event, Julius Malema jogged on stage, mimicking the training jog performed by the military, and sang "Kill the Boer," a political chant that reflects the armed struggle against apartheid led by the Boers in South Africa. This chant is currently used not only to honour the country's militant history but also for political mobilization. Thousands of attendees joined in, pointing their fingers in the air to imitate guns (New York Times, 2023; South African Broadcasting Corporation, 2023).[13]

165

Image 8: Julius Malema in a beret at an Economic Freedom Fighters rally. (Source: ArabNews. May 2025. https://www.arabnews.com/node/2601763/world)

It is clear that, unlike the traditional patriotic military man, the repertoire of the revolutionary has little to no need for any liberation experience. Rather, its operationalization is made possible through identification with a freedom fighter's ideology, language, and symbolism. In this way, they take advantage of the fertile historical context that props up the political legitimacy of the patriotic military man.

Image 9: Members of Uganda's National Unity Platform, led by Wine, in their 'uniform'. (Source: The African Report. 2025. https://www.theafricareport.com/363788/uganda-bobi-wine-foot-soldiers-a-symbol-of-pride-defiance)

6.8. Businessman Template in Africa

Unlike those closely tied to their country's militant liberation efforts, or those inspired by the militant ideals, there are other notable populists like Tanzania's Jakaya Kikwete or Zambia's Frederick Chiluba whose entrance into politics came from more civil activities, like being a party member of Chama cha Mapinduzi (literally translated as Party of the Revolution), or, as a member of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, respectively. As such, there are other functional repertoires that do not rely on the persona of a militant but rather find their foundation in the legitimacy gained from excelling in civilian activities, such as business and commerce.

Here, we look at the persona exhibited by Kenya's President William Ruto, a successful rags-to-riches businessman, with a 'massive empire' across a number of sectors, key among these being hospitality, real estate, agriculture, and insurance (Business Today, 2022; NTV

Kenya, 2020). Ruto's 'hustler populism' is a twist on the successful businessman trope, where a populist is supported by the reasoning that their successful business acumen translates to their being able to run the government.

Ruto's populism aligns with a businessman populist typology that effectively employs an underdog narrative in two main ways. Firstly, he positions himself as an outsider challenging established political dynasties, particularly the Odinga and Kenyatta families, who have dominated Kenyan politics since the country gained independence in 1963. Secondly, he embraces the identity of a "Hustler," claiming to have worked his way up to two of the highest political offices in Kenya. He often refers to himself as the "Hustler in Chief," a title he explained during a 2023 interview with CNN correspondent Larry Madowo. Ruto describes his journey as one of resilience, stating that he has come "very far in life" from selling chickens on the roadside to achieving a prominent position in Kenyan socio-political life.

Ruto's economic populism shifts politics away from the ethnic-regional lines that have typified Kenyan politics and centers around 'Hustlers', represented by people who, similar to Ruto, did not come from wealthy or well-connected families (Peter, 2023). Instead, these are people who, in the context of Kenya, refer mainly to youth struggling to survive the harsh economic environment. According to the excerpt below from Lockwood (2023), it can be inferred that anyone eager to earn their rations by engaging in various income-generating activities (Karanja, 2022; Kamenuc & Josse-Durand, 2023; Dahir, 2022).

'It is going to be about the hustlers – the ordinary people! It is going to be about enterprise – the wheelbarrow conversation. It is going to be about jobs, for ordinary people'- then Deputy President William Ruto, during a campaign delivered in Dagoretti, Nairobi, Kenya (Lockwood, 2023).

In 2020, Ruto defended his humble beginnings while speaking in Nyamira County, Kenya, saying, "Some people are telling us sons of hustlers cannot be president. That your father must be known. That he must be rich for you to become the president. We are telling them that even a child of a boda boda (motorcycle taxi driver) or a kiosk operator or *mtoto wa anayevuta mkokoteni* (child of a cart pusher) can lead this country" (Kahura & Akech, 2020).

Critically, Ruto's usage of the businessman blueprint is noticeable in his localization of what the common Kenyan businessperson likes and highlighting the kind of business they do, fully

embracing the image of the small-time business owner beyond simple rhetoric. In 2018, Ruto launched a chicken auction exercise in Uasin Gishu, his home county, where he personally participated in chasing and catching live chickens, emphasizing his hustler roots (Nairobi News, 2018; Citizen TV Kenya, 2018).

Although Ruto's business success has been attributed to his earlier involvement in political office, the story of his journey from hawker to successful businessman resonated with many Kenyans. Like Ruto, they are part of the country's informal economy, often referred to as "Hustlers," who strive to stay fed and clothed.

Whilst the essentiality of the continent's history in enabling populist repertoires has been mentioned, it is also healthy to highlight why the differing regional histories influence the general sway of the alternative repertoires.

Almost all states within Sub-Saharan Africa share similar histories concerning their colonization, liberation, and eventual stumbling into independence without preparation for what a nation should look like (Opongo, 2022) or how to build one effectively. The point of divergence that seems responsible for the evolution of local political contexts and the kinds of political performances that exist within them is the type of parties that filled the post-colonial political vacuum.

Parties such as the Kenya African National Union (K.A.N.U) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (K.A.D.U) were established three years prior to Kenya's independence in 1963. These parties played a crucial role in providing a platform for political expression and in negotiating the country's political transition (Asingo, 2003; Anderson, 2003). They were instrumental in shaping Kenya's political landscape and the identities within it. It is important to note that K.A.D.U and K.A.N.U are classified as independence parties rather than liberation movements. Unlike liberation movements that transformed into political parties to emphasize their direct opposition to colonial or oppressive regimes—often through armed struggle—independence parties were focused on guiding the transitional process to independence. Moreover, the leaders of these independence parties sought to establish party identities that distanced themselves from militant actions, aiming to cultivate an image that was not associated with the perceived atrocities committed by freedom fighters.

In Kenya's foundational politics, the leading figures contrast sharply with those in South Africa and Uganda, where the A.N.C and N.R.A, now known as N.R.M, played significant roles. In South Africa and Uganda, the post-liberation leaders emerged from their opposition to existing regimes, which was expressed through various forms of resistance, including guerrilla warfare, along with their active political formations. The ideological and political identities of these individuals significantly shaped the post-independence identities of their respective parties, ultimately influencing the political cultures that these parties would develop in their respective countries.

6.9. Conclusion

Despite its conceptual ambiguity, there is widespread agreement on several key features of populism. These include the polarization of society into two opposing groups—the people and the elite—an opposition to the established political order, and an appeal to the collective will of the people as the foundation for any political action. Additionally, populist leaders often claim their legitimacy stems from representing this will and seek to galvanize it as a primary component of their political agenda. Studies on populist leadership illustrate this by highlighting qualities such as strong leadership, a willingness to oppose the existing political system, and a commitment to restoring political power to the people. These leaders often emerge as consolidators of the collective will, with certain traits, like charisma, playing a crucial role in their success, alongside attributes such as strength and effective communication.

Charisma, in the context of populism and leadership, is described as a social relationship between leaders and followers where the former is often approached in terms of extraordinariness, exceptionality, and being separate from traditional authority. The latter is responsible for recognizing the former's extraordinariness. However, as seen in Casullo (2019), charisma in populist leadership can also be conceived as the particular ability of a leader to read historically and context-informed discursive templates or 'repertoires,' and use them in their own populist manner. The four kinds of repertoires outlined are the patriotic soldier, the social leader, the successful businessman, and the strong woman.

This paper evaluates the use of populist repertoires in Africa through a blended approach that combines visual analysis and critical discourse analysis. It focuses on the prominent themes in the populist strategies employed by politicians across different political eras in South Africa, Uganda, and Kenya. One of the most recognizable populist repertoires is that of the patriotic military figure or militant, particularly evident in Uganda and South Africa. A key aspect of this repertoire is the individual's time spent in the military or, in the case of many African populists, their active participation in armed revolutionary movements, which serves to assert their political legitimacy. Typically, those who embody the military persona in their populist repertoire reinforce this image through songs or specific clothing styles. While the militant repertoire does incorporate elements of the military figure, such as songs and military attire, it primarily distinguishes itself through a deeper ideological connection to the ethos of a revolutionary soldier, despite the absence of direct involvement in armed struggles. This repertoire often calls for a new kind of liberation from the tyranny of current post-colonial governments. Supplementary to the military man template is that of a social leader, whose legitimacy stems from their activism and successful leading of social movements.

Differences in the political history of various regions in Africa have led to distinct interests concerning the kinds of political strategies that are effective. For example, in Kenya, the political repertoire is shaped by businessman figures rather than military-aligned leaders. This businessman archetype emphasizes legitimacy derived from genuine civilian activities. Notably, these businesspeople can be seen as hustlers, as their success is often built on years of hard work in the informal economy. This approach resonates strongly with a significant portion of the population who depend on the informal economy for their livelihoods.

Chapter 7: Populist Political Parties and Impact

7.1. Introduction

Political parties and the party systems they inhabit have long played a central role in political development and democratic consolidation, facilitating representation as one of the primary means of political expression and electoral engagement by various peoples and interest groups but as a means of pooling the collectivized demand and desires yearned for by the people with being avenues to shape socio-political reasoning. In Africa, political parties and party systems have varied considerably with their stability patterns rapidly shifted over time (Nwokora et al, 2024) with their activities welded to democracy's fractured evolution which has only recently found intentional consolidation. The history of African democracy has been rather checkered, as it was originally without the tradition of liberal democracy or liberal philosophy, it positively responding to the democratization's 'third wave' in the 1980and 1990s, as formal Western type democratization complete with election, written constitutions, human rights, strong public institutions and freely operating opposition parties had been promoted as the antidote to the continents political and economic ills, became more common across the continent (Makinda, 1996; Rakner et al, 2007; Schraeder, 1995; Ihonvbere, 1996; Cheru, 2012; Nwosu, 2012; Nwokora et al, 2024). Important here is that the paper takes a step away from approaches that review populism within (western liberal) democracies in any pejorative sense, yielding a glance at how populism performs in historically long liberal contexts.   Rather the paper by analyzing populist parties in their role as democratic corrective or enhancer (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012; Kaltwasser, 2012; Mueller, 2019) and creators of alternative democratic realities, suggested by Sithole (2023). It does this by examining populist instances in Uganda and South Africa, focusing on the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) respectively. The rationales between the use of these two populist parties stems their differing significance as these populist parties reflects their respective periods of prominence, each coinciding with distinct stages in the institutionalization of democratic politics in Africa. For the NRM, its populism is situated in the 1990s, a context of Uganda being a fledgling democracy with malleable party system whereas the EFF exemplifies populism in a contemporary setting of a political environment with pre-defined and rules of democratic engagement.

Africa too has witnessed a spike in populist presence, both in and outside of (liberal) democracies, in the forms of populist parties and junta leaders as the rest of the world grapples with the bourgeoning populist politics. The advent of populisms presence and its potential implications for democracy and party systems has been a long-standing concern for populist scholars and democratic defenders alike, with questions raised the impact of populism on democracy (Akkerman, 2003; Pasquino, 2008 Whitehead, 2020) and party system (Vachudova, 20201; Kitschelt, 2002; Wolinetz & Zaslove, 2018) behavior in a climate where African democratic recidivism has been a constant (Walker & Lust, 2018; Bermeo, 2016; Fomunyoh, 20202; Rakner, 2021).

Considering that the continents muti-ethnic makeup, historical development and presiding socio-economic conditions including neo-colonialism, late industrial take off, poverty, aid dependency, illiteracy, and ethno-religious cleavages, African political parties operate in an environment that is is particularly challenging (Elischer, 2008; Otele & Etyang, 2015). Despite the strides made in the maturing of African democracies, African party systems have remained fairly unchanged for dominant party systems being distinctive most state with a democracy that is not moribund (a dwindling number). Studies have found that less established or minority parties have endured difficulties in solidifying themselves into their country's polices as serious political players and issue owners (Blaxland, 2023; Bleck & van de Walle, 2011). All the same the salience of strong opposition parties that offer an alternative to the center of power through political contestation and electoral competition thus limiting the ruling party's power in determining the health of a democracy cannot be understated (Ottaway, 1997; Kotze & Garcia-Rivero, 2008).). In all of that, little attention given to the impact of populism, typically attributed as a fundamental component in the ideology of the radical right in Europe (Rooduijn et al, 2012), in African political parties and by extension, the democracies and party systems they are located in.

This chapter questions how populists interact with divergent party systems in Africa, probing into what this interplay may reveal about the relationship between populism and democratic development more generally. As will be seen subsequent sections, the theoritical puzzle sits in the context specific roles populist parties play within party systems as vehicles for the installation of democratic norms in early Uganda where democracy although constitutional was

not liberal and mobilizers of democratic re-inclusion and enhancement in contemporary South Africa where democracy is both constitutional and liberal.

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To reiterate, , literature on African populism is limited and underdeveloped, although robust contributions have been made by (Cheeseman, 2019; Carbone, 2005; Makulilo, 2013; Resnick, 2010/2017/2019), however disproportionate in continental distribution with immense focus on populism in South Africa (Saloojee, van der Westhuizen, 2023; Nyenhuis, 2020; Roux, 2022; Calvert, 2019; Batsani-Ncube, 2021) no doubt due to established preference of populist scholars to study populism within (liberal) democracies and South Africa still displaying the signs of a vibrant and (largely) functional multiparty democracy. On the EFF (Braun, 2024; Mbete, 2015; Fölscher et al, 2021; Nyenhuis 2020) In the same light, the genre of populism and populist political parties in the African context cannot be said to be as well populated.

7.2. Dynamics of Political Parties and Party Systems in Africa

Beginning with the basic definitional undertaking, political parties are nearly universally understood as the linchpin of the political activity and principal actors in spearheading the political development within any political system, key in democratic development or

authoritarian perpetuation. Giovanni Satori, whose writings on political parties and parties systems have been acknowledged as impactful, if not foundational (Wolinetz, 2006; Mair, 2006; Kitschelt, 2007 in Ignazi, 2017; Bardi, 2025), conceptualizes parties as intermediary structures or institutions between society and government, representing the people by expressing their demands (Sartori, 1976). while in a review of Sartori argues political parties as teams of potential decision makers offering themselves as prospective governors or the country between whom offer have an opportunity to choose at a general election, at least in pluralist settings (McKenzie, 1977). Other scholars articulate parties as political organizations linking the citizenry and political elites, coordinating itself and its candidates to vie for political power in a country's elections through the mobilizations of citizens/ constituents (Alier Riak & Dut Bol, 2022;) expected also to act as aggregators of preference, recruit leaders, and channel the demands of their constituencies on various social, economic, political, legal and governance issues while connecting the public with laws and governance. Within allowances of democracies most political parties have the sole goal; obtaining political office through election (Morrison, 2004).

The relation between a political party and the party system can be likened to that of an organism and their ecosystem that fosters its survival. Labuschagne explains that "If political parties fail to meet the essential obligation warranting their existence, the political system then naturally requires new structures and process in order to articulate the interests and demands that have been left unattended and unrepresented in society" (2020: 47). [1] Although it may seem that the process between old and new parties is straightforward, with new parties simply catering to the unattended interests of society, it is not as voters are not quick to abandon established parties when they feel their new choice has a limited scope for success (Labuschagne, 2020).

In answering the question "why are (new) political parties formed" Labuschagne (2020: 47) posits that parties coordinate and refine the demands made of a political system, allowing the system to respond more adequately respond to those demands while standing as aggregation and articulation instruments, communicating information upwards from the grassroots level and downwards from the party executive to the constituency. Parties normally consist of a party leader who is largely responsible for the parties' activities, party executives who in addition to selecting the leader carry out various organizational and administrative tasks and party members

that assist the party in its functions either voluntarily (Alier Riak & Dut Bot, 2022) or on the party's bill.

Any number of things can give rise to political partes, from ideological standpoints to existing social divisions, with sources having cited factors like ethnicity, region, or religions as with cases of African countries where any discernable divisions amongst ethnic or religious groups (which, frankly speaking is a great number) have proven to be critical factors in the formation and outlook of political parties (Aderinto, 2023 in Egwim, 2024).

Given some of the blame a the impact of neoliberalism (spearheaded by as the Washington Consensus) on the continents ideological trajectory political speaking in states that, in the sudden absence of Soviet aid, were reliant on Western assistance and thus were barred from significant deviations ideological deviations (Conrow-Krutz and Lewis, 2011). The decline of socialism not only as the ideological moving force of government but also feasible socio-economic policy resulted in a dilution of party ideology as the neo-liberalism was repositioned as the dominant and beneficials state ideology (Egwim, 2024).

Like a number of things in post-colonial Africa relating to governance, democracy, and socio-political life, examinations of African political parties are best when inclusive of their socio-historical roles as political formations shaped by the relations between various oppressed groups and the colonial state. Contributors to early literature on African political parties are McKown & Kauffman (1973), who described the role of political parties in the African context as conceptualized in two basic ways. First was in relation to their electoral function and whether or not they gave meaningful opposition to the ruling party and provided adequate alternatives to the electorate in terms of candidates and polices and second was regarding their mobilization and integration functions, mainly in response to the needs of mobilizing populations towards modernization, developmental, national building, and national integration simultaneously (1973:48-51). Manning (2005) and Hyden (2005) are both cited as having argued that African political parties present differently than political parties in other parts of the globe with established democracies, as in Africa, they present as either 'dominant movements or a multitude of personalized organizations with little root in society that were formed as elite enterprises and vehicles of competition and control of the masses' (Lindenberg, 2007:218). Upon engaging the original text, it is seen that Manning's musings on political parties are situated within

modernization theory that "rests on the assumption that parties will develop in response to similar stimuli in every country- primarily, socio-economic development" (2005: 718). By 'established democracies' Manning means Western democracies in which bottom-up, mass-based political parties came in response to the socio-economic conditions caused by the Industrial Revolution and the societal cleavages associated to the socio-political mobilization in relation to these conditions.   In contrast political parties in Africa, as well as Latin America and some of Eastern Europe, come about from vastly different contexts, namely political change and not socio-economic change and due to their mushrooming they lack any organic links to any one organized social groups, thus lacking solid definition, unlike Western political parties that defined by the central social conflicts of the specific social bases they are connected to. This is an identified characteristic in populist parties as well (Wolinetz & Zaslove, 2018).

A longstanding trait of African political parties are their based ethnically, even under the democratic African state the formation of political organizations according to ethnic affiliation is prohibited (Salih, 2001). Compared to regions like Latin America where political parties are far older, averaging between 112 and 114 years in Uruguay and Colombia respectively, a majority of African parties are new having emerged almost exclusive during or immediate prior political transitions to compete for political power (van de Walle, 200; Otele & Etyang, 3).

Gero Erdmann (2004) has recognized African political parties as having; Low ideological salience and lack of clear programmic identity visible through barely distinguishable and essentially meaningless programmes, weak bureaucratic organization, including unreliable membership data and poor funding base, dominance of informal relations such as patronage and clientelism as well as strong personalism, lack of internal democracy, high degree of factionalism, weak formal links to civil society, predominantly regional or ethnic-based membership and electorate. This diagnosis of African parties is validated by a range of scholars (Elischer, 2008; Carothers, 2006; Ishiyama, 2003; van de Walle, 2003; Manning, 2005).

With regard to party systems, there have been a number of ways in which they have been defined and analyzed. Two theoretical justifications pivotal to this paper are by who Satori (2005:39) describes a party system to be "the system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition" with the number of parties relevant to bargaining between them (in Aylott, 2015:152) and Mboya

(1963) who views party systems as instruments intended to increase the force and effectiveness of the people, they are not the end itself.

These theorizations correspond to the three models of party systems that form the basis of most party system typologies, and these models correspond to the three identified party system functions in relation to social cleavages; *aggregation, translation,* and *blocking* (Burnell, 2007: 169). The party system models and relevant functions as seen Table 2 in a recreated and expanded illustration pulled from Burnell (2007). The formation of models can be said to be concerned with the rely on the party system structure, that Caporaso (2007) can either be fragmented, cohesive or encompassing.

Scholars (Horowitz, 1985; Manning 2005: have since theorized African postcolonial party systems to be ethno-centric in nature, the result of ethnicity being the easiest basis for mobilization parties as parties emerge as electoral vehicles for the elites to compete "in the newly devised rules of the political game". The proliferation of ethnic parties and ethnic congress parties. [2] African party systems have also been identified as predominantly dominant/ single party with low levels of electoral and legislative competitiveness and low fragmentation and high volatility (Mozaffar & Scarritt, 2005; Ishiyama, 2014). Additionally they are typified by the proliferation of small, weak parties centered around well-known public figures with weak links to a civil society that is pluralistically organized in the sense that are linked to clientelist or kinship based networks and not social interest and finally comprised of parties that share a broadly similar ideological outlines regarding their economic and political policy, and not typically not easily ranged along the Left-Right spectrum (Manning, 2005). Sartori has made the argument for a special party system typology that compensates for the fluidity in the 'Africa labyrinth' (Erdmann & Basedau, 2007). This typology distinguished between dominant authoritarian, dominant non-authoritarian, and nondominant as visualized in Table 1

178

	Monopartism (authoritarian)	Polypartism (electoral / democratic)		
Initial stage (fluidity)	Dominant authoritarian	Dominant non-authoritarian	Non dominant	Pulverised
Structured stage (crystallisation)	One party / hegemonic	Predominant	Two-partism / multi-partism Limited / moderate pluralism Extreme / polarised pluralism	Atomised

Table 1: Sartori's Typology of Party Systems. (Erdmann & Basedau, 2007:7)

Type of Party System	Party System Function	Number of Relevant Parties
One Party System	**Block(ing)** the politization of social cleavages through political parties	One
Two Party System	**Aggregate** the diversity of interests across social cleavages	Two
Multi-Party System	**Translation** (and moderation) of deep, cross-cutting (unreconcilable) social cleavages allows their segmented accommodation (at the elite level)	More than two

Table 2: Burnell's Three Models of Party System (Burnell 2007: 170, Bold text not in original)

179

7.3. Unpacking the Postulations of Populist Parties in Party Systems

Classifying populist parties is an exercise often complicated by matters like populisms roving definition, the existence of populist parties across the Left/Right ideological spectrum and determining which parties appropriately fit the criteria expected of a populist party (Wolinetz & Zaslove, 2018; Ivaldi, 2021). Fortunately, the parties studied here have already had sufficient attention paid to their identification as populist (Fölscher et al, 2021; Mancebo, 2025; Aiseng, 2024; Henkeman, 2024; Folsher, 2020; Mbete, 2015). The working understanding of populist parties in this paper rests heavily on the definitional content sketched out by van Kessel (2015:13) in their work reviewing European populist parties where a minimal definition of 'populist party' is conceptualized 'classically', meaning the required presence of all aspects silhouetted in order for a party to be positively identified as populist. These aforementioned aspects are; the portrayal of 'the people' as virtuous and essentially homogeneous, advocacy of popular sovereignty, with the sole source of legitimate power and presence of a leader claiming themselves as the only legitimate mouthpiece of said sovereign will. Power here refers to the embodied resistance against the political establishment in defense of popular sovereignty.

Informed by populisms structural logical populist parties present a schematic and division socio-political discourse that aims for a clear symbolic border between the people, the other and political (Heinisch & Mazzoleni, 2016). Fennema (2004), in review of European populist parties argues that populist parties function as built-in early warning systems for popular discontent (Fennema, 2004) roots in the democratic deficit brough on by the concentration of the regions political, social and economic decision making at the European Union level suffered by EU countries. African populist parties share a commonly in that their genesis is the prevailing democratic deficit although in African contexts it pertains more to either the overall lack of democracy or the monopolization of socio-political and economic making at the hands of the dominant party. As much of the literature on populist parties is concerned on those in Europe, many of which are on the Right, populist parties are commonly (mis)understood as being anti-elites with a belief in the homogenous 'pure people' and being exclusionary and nativist (De Vries & Hobolt, 2020). While these kinds of parties can be found in Africa, most African populist parties, with mass appeal, fall on the left, utilizing an inclusionary populism that is especially potent given the continent's history of dispossession and widespread levels of poverty,

uneven development, and climbing unemployment (Cheeseman, 2019) even in parties espousing nativism. History's imprint of the ideological orientation of African leftist populist parties is evident in the socialist ideals held by these parties, an inheritance of the socialist ideology that formed the basis of their foundational policies of African (populist) liberation movements, and for newer populist parties, a continuation of socialist ideology associated with liberation ideologies. However, some populist parties in Africa have displayed exclusionary populism akin to that of Europe's radical right, complete with exhibitions of welfare chauvinism.

Two other qualities of populist parties pertain to their organization, placing enormous emphasis in their personalized, charismatic leadership and comprised of highly centralized organizational structures with decisions taking a top down approach, with the leader, and their circle, being the party's center (Hans-George, 1998 in Heinisch & Mazzoleni, 2015; Taggart, 1995). Generally, populist parties exploit their elusive characterization inherent to their use of empty signifiers as it enables their ability to appeal to a broad, disgruntled audience. In line with the transient nature of populism message- the pure people having been betrayed by a corrupt elite- and non-alignment with a set ideology or intellectual tradition (2009; Rooduijn, 2018), populist parties are 'chameleonic' in the sense that they take on an ideological 'color' and limit their focus to issues relevant in their specific contexts (Taggart, 2000; van Kessel, 2015: 3), seeing as the populist message can easily be combined with different ideologies. This aside, populist parties are far clearer about who is not a part of the people (van Kessel, 2015), through characterizations that are placed in antithesis to the characterization of the people (no matter how vague this is).

In as far as the normative task of political parties is to be engaged in politics populist parties, for van Kessel (2015), populist parties do not need their followers to be directly involved in politics *necessarily* but do agitate for their participation in the political process at some level, which logically feels oxymoronic. Largely because participation in the political process, even minimal (which from van Kessel can be assumed as simply voting in elections but having no concern of participation past that), requires direct involvement in politics. This made more considering that non-populist parties too only require the minimal political participation of their members.

Now, when looking past the theoretical casing of populism and its effects on party systems. Populist parties often having a disruptive nature in party systems through the introduction of or rather inflammation of societal cleavages, promoting polarization along party lines (Erdogan &

Uyan-Semerci, 2025). [4] Although the formation of new parties may strengthen party plurality this, electoral volatility has also been connected to populism through the weakening of traditional party loyalties, this extends towards the possibility of brittle coalitions in cases where majority governments are not possible. Italy illustrates this well when in 2022 the Left wing populist Five Star Movement withdrew from a popular coalition government over a an economic relief package it felt favored the elites, trigging a cascading withdrew from other populist parties, this time of the right, Lega and Forza Italia causing a collapse in government and calling of snap elections. A third studied impact is on the depth of the party system itself, populist parties through their emphasis on emotional appeals, simplified rhetoric and highlighting of charismatic leadership populist parties alter the nature of political competition, rerouting interactions between parties, especially electorally. Populist parties instigate the move away from systems with a diverse programmic networks and robust policy institutionalization mechanisms towards personalistic politics, simplified, vaguely coherent agendas and the circumventing of conventional institutionalized policy mechanisms (Müller et al, 2025; Bartha et al, 2021). [5]

7.4. Systems and Sentiments: Populist Parties in the Political Landscapes of Uganda and South Africa

Having elucidated on populisms conceptual components, provided the theoretical framing for African political parties and party systems both in general and in their African occurrences the paper now shifts its focus on postulations of the interplay of African political parties in African party systems and their adopted roles as populist parties and their impacts on party system structure and democratic quality

For this comparative study, a qualitative methodology is employed, relying on secondary sources regarding party ideologies and functional evolutions relative to their respective systems. The logic for the inclusion of Uganda and South Africa stems from both having pre-identified populist parties, the National Resistance Movement and the Economic Freedom Fighters, that due to the varied democratic realities have been allowed varied ability in shaping their respective political systems. Further justification comes from both states sharing a post-colonial context typified by the dominating presence of liberation movements-made governments, the legacies of

liberation politics. In addition to this they differ vastly in party system institutionalization. These differences provide opportunities for a sort of counter-study, where the formation of populist parties and their overall impacts are informed by the prevailing party system.

7.4.1. The National Resistance Movement: Populism as Democratic Founding in Uganda.

The first populist party reviewed for this chapter is Uganda's guerilla armed movement turned political movement, the National Resistance Army/Movement (N.R.A/M). It was formed in visibly populist through its pro-people, plebiscitarian discourse for anti-party and anti-institution political practices (Carbone, 2005).

The inclusion of the NRM in this paper serves to display the ramifications of a populist party in early Democratic Africa. In contrast to the West and Latin America where populist parties impacted a predefined and operation democracy and party system had inherited a Uganda with a hollowed-out democracy and party system vacuum after decades of government instability, coups and civil war, allowing it defining both of these. Uganda initially possessed a full democracy and multiparty system but at the hands of Milton Obote it was strangled into becoming a one party system in 1966, a coup ousting Obote by Idi Amin in 1971 who then was ousted in 1979 by coup that briefly saw elections return power to Obote although for a short time as Obote was again deposed by military action leading to a civil war (Makara & Svåsand, 2009). This history of governance instability ended in 1986 when the N.R.A, led by Yoweri Museveni, took Kampala (the capital) and brought about state stability.

To its credit, the N.R.M after assuming power had gone through lengths to re-establish democratic reforms to promote the articulation between the state and civil society through an inclusive coalition (Kansiime, 2019) mainly with the institutionalization of its 'no-party' participatory democracy facilitated by the Resistance Councils, later renamed Local Councils (King & Hickey, 2017). In legitimizing its authority, power consolidation and fulfillment of its populist democratization politics, which were both anti-regime and anti-state, the N.R.M quickly constructed new governance structures and bottom up political institutions (Local Councils) which were the very bed that the N.R.A rested its legitimacy as a guerrilla movement fighting for

the democratic rights, personal freedoms and human dignity of Ugandans (Omara-Otunnu, 1992; Furley & Katalikawe, 1997; Omach, 2008; Kiyaga-Nsubuga & Olum, 2009; NRM, 1986). Prior to 1995 constitution, the NRM was suggested by Mamdani (1986) to have affected a relatively high degree of democratization in the rural areas it had gained control over.[6] Karlström (1996) writes that although the concept of democracy played some role in Uganda's political discourse since the 1940s it was the N.R.Ms political rhetoric that had popularized it, so much so that by 1992 the term was familiar to most rural dwellers of Buganda.

Following an intensive consultative process with various interest groups, the N.R.M would then later oversee the reintroduction of a new consultative democratic configuration under the 1995 Constitution (Apter, 1995). Although this came after reneging on its earlier pledge to hold elections shortly after ousting the previous regime and sliding into repressiveness, notably threatening journalists with detention if they were critical of the N.R.A, and coordinating political repression (Omara-Otunnu, 1992/1991). Summarized, in addition to a strong protection of human rights and judicial independence Uganda's 1995 Constitution provided for the possible adoption of either a Movement, multi-party, or any other democratic political system of their choosing through free and fair elections (Bussey, 2005; Twinomuisha, 2009). [8]However, Article 271 stipulated that Uganda's first election under the 1995 constitution was to be under the Movement system which enshrined a democracy based on a specific electoral competition based on 'individual merit' and not party platforms, (no doubt influenced by Museveni's 'no-party' philosophy) and where the National Resistance Movement, was as Uganda political system, at least before 2005 referendum that instructed the return of multiparty politics through the Political Parties and Organizations Act (Bussey, 2005; Carbone, 2000; Oloka-Onyango, 1995; Makara, 2010; Makara et al, 2009).[9] One justification for Uganda's one-party state at that time was that party plurality was pointless if it occurred in a society that, following the trauma of ethnic politics and civil war, had little regard for the fundamental principles of party competition. Vital here is that although democracy was constitutional it was not liberal because while a representative consensus based system of government was in place Uganda was kept from political pluralism as Museveni believed this to be divisive, confrontational and ran the risk of inflaming tribal and religious line with Museveni articulating that that multi-partyism should not be equated with democracy (Makinda, 1996; Bussey, 2005). Museveni's advocacy for the

Movement had been linked to ambitions of remaining in power and at the helm of the transition process through the removal of the two term limit and the weakening of institutions that would check executive dominance, a correction required to safeguard the power of the people from legalistic restrictions (Makara et al, 2009; Omach, 2008; Carbone, 2005). Interestingly, in 2005, when multipartyism was revived, term limits were amended, allowing incumbents to run indefinitely (Kakumba, 2021).

With the adoption of the 1995 constitution, Uganda's N.R.M had effectively cracked open the door for the return of multi-party democracy by allowing a limited form of party competition as the basis Ugandan electoral democracy in practice, with its operating, at that time, more or less as hegemonic three party system with the N.R.M being the dominant political presence (Carbone, 2000; Kasfir, 1998 in Carbone, 2003). [10] The N.R.M's populist limited democracy is further validated when referring to Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with special reference to 21(3) that states "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedure". According to Museveni, Uganda's foundational democracy was planned to be parliamentary, popular, and provide a decent level of living for the citizenry (Museveni, 1989).

7.4.2. The Economic Freedom Fighters: Populism as Democratic Challenger in South Africa

Unlike early democratic Uganda, South African (liberal) democracy and party system has long been characterized by substantial institutionalization, stability and vibrant multiparty system as democratic activity has continued virtually uninterrupted since 1994. The Economic Freedom Fighters, South Africa's anti-establishment, revolutionary militant party (E.F.F) came into existence in 2013 by Julius Malema, Floyd Shivambu, as well as other members who broke away, or were expelled depending which stance on takes, from the African National Congress (A.N.C) (Stewart, 2022; Mbete, 2015; Singo, 2014) Vastly different from that of the NRM that operates freely in a system it designed, the E.F.F exists within a well-ingrained and institutionalized democratic party system. Here the E.F.F as a populist party takes on a different

role, not as party system rule maker but as a political alternative to the establishment, which in the South African context is neoliberal development model of the A.N.C that has been experiencing gradual decline based on failures in its quality of governance and material provisions although being the party of national liberation (a feat that the party has continued to use as its core source of support) (Paret, 2016), appealing to those left out by the social contract, largely the poor, unemployed, and disenfranchised (Adams, 2018; Bekker, 2023). A secondary role is its promotion of South Africa transition toward a true multi-party system (which it now is), and away from a dominant party one by fracturing the electoral dominance and legislative majority that could be used to alter the rules of political engagement to suffocate dissent and suppress information claimed to undermine democratic institutional independence and endangering party-political competition (Botha et al, 2015).

Despite having been launched in 2013, it immediately became the third largest party and biggest winner from newcomer parties in the 2014 national election, securing 6.35% of votes in its participation and later gathering 10.8% of the vote in 2019 (I.E.C, 2019),outdoing older and more established parties like the Inkatha Freedom Party or Freedom Front Plus, both ethno-populist parties. The party's instant success is partly the outcome of it being as a partially-rooted newcomer, defined as a 'new party formation supported by a societal group that antedates the party at its breakthrough election' (Baldini et al, 2025) had access to a degree of pre-existing symbolic elements already known to the electorate as well as resources in the form of activists and networks from recruited personnel from other parties or movements (Braun, 2024).[5] The growth in the E.F.F coincided with a drop of support for the ruling African National Congress from 65.9 % in 2009, 62.2% in 2014, and 57.50% in 2019, suggesting that a sizable portion of the EFFs support came from disgruntled A.N.C supporters (Obikili, 2018; Mbete, 2015). Still the growth of other parties, like the Democratic Alliance, the official opposition whose liberal, pro-capitalist politics presents an antithesis to that of the A.N.C and E.F.F, had leaped from 16.6% to 22.23% in 2009 and 2014 respectively and dipped slightly to 20.77% in 2019 makes it is reasonable to infer that the E.F.Fs growth is directly linked to the re-introduction of voters with feelings of being excluded or overlooked by preexisting parties, a classic function of populism in liberal democracies E.F.Fs messaging.

Being responsible for changes in the country's electoral politics is not the only imprint the EFF has had on South African democracy. Through its unique brand of populist militant stimulation, the EFF has been instrumental in agitating for the restoration, or rather the re-exploration of popular policies that are of distinct value to the people. Two examples of this are the amendment on Section 25 of South Africa's Constitution towards the expedition of land redistribution via expropriation without compensation, away from the 'willing buyer willing seller' model pursued in 1994 that has proven to show no real progress in achieving land reform, and the introduction of Fee Free tertiary education for 90% of students (Batsani-Ncube, 2021; Zukowski, 2017). [12] The matter of Land redistribution has been central in South African politics, dating back to the Natives Land Act that dispossessed the black majority of land and placed 90% of it into 'white hands' land reform has remained an extensively complex matter rooted in its history and connected to its contemporary politics, race relations, socio-economic conditions and notions of redistributive and restorative justice, as such land continues to be a galvanizing force in national and local politics (Bastani-Ncube, 2021:203; Zukowski, 2017; du Toit, 2019; Zenker & Walker, 2024). The ANC has promoted the prospect of land nationalization and redistribution under its Freedom Charter, which was later rejected due to the adoption of neoliberalism and the influence of Washington Consensus market-oriented land reform policies (Bastani-Ncube, 2021).

7.5. Conclusion

As populism continues to be a momentous force in politics around the world, more and more examples of its influence on political systems and democracies will emerge and with their emergence, fuller more nuanced discussions on the role populism can plays in the positive development of democracies will need to be had. The above paper aims at taking step in this direction through the assessment of populist parties, the National Resistance Army/M and the Economic Freedom Fighters within early democratic Uganda and contemporary South Africa respectively focusing on their relevant impacts on the democratic and party system environment.

A salient finding from the above discussion is that within the special history of Africa, populist parties can, and have, played a pivotal role in democratic and party system development, especially in scenarios where neither a functional democracy nor a robust party system is present. This is evident in the case of the National Resistance Movement/Army, which, through an intensive process, had constructed a system of participatory democracy with a limited party

system, canonized by the 1995 Constitution. In spite of it not being a liberal democracy insofar certain political liberties were initially unavailable and multi-party politics were disallowed, the constitution was ushered back into Uganda's political life, not only a functional democratic system, but it also fostered democratic understanding in Ugandans.

In a similar positive light South Africa's Economic Freedom Fighters have been at the center of South African political revival so to speak, offering a viable political alternative carrying popular policy position that had been abandoned by the African National Congress at the start of South Africa's democracy. In this role the party conjointly party facilitated the evolution of a party system denominated by a former liberation movement to a multi-party system verified by necessitated coalition politics, the hallmark of any authentic liberal multi-party democracy.

These appraised illustrations vouch for populism contributive corrective capacities, vindicating its applications in offering positive potentialities for democratization in settings without entrenched or respected democratic principles and democratic evolution in contexts stagnated by lame political participation caused by disillusionment in the political process or uninspired by the felt lack of parties they identify with.

In short, the above populist parties confirm the beneficial capabilities of populist expression in democratic development, capabilities that may be particularly needed in post-colonial democracies that, for a plethora of reasons, have been battling with either democratic development or have had the stunted growth of multi-party politics.

Conclusion and Findings

The above doctoral thesis focuses on the various manifestations of populism within the African continent, contributing to the expanding body of literature on African populism by critically examining populist manifestations in Sub-Saharan Africa. In regards to the scope it applies a reflexive approach across different time periods. It engages with the dual dimensions of populist expression—as embodied in both individual leadership and collective movements—highlighting the complexities of populism's role in African politics. Rather than treating populism solely as a threat to democratic norms, this study acknowledges its capacity to both undermine institutional stability and articulate a vision of pluralist, participatory democracy. In doing so, the research offers a nuanced account of how populist actors and their affiliated parties shape political institutions, influence party systems, and impact foreign policy across diverse African contexts.

As highlighted in the literature review of this, the visible finding is that, the collective scholarly field containing reviewal of populism within non-Western liberal contexts is, in a comparative state of lack with a substantive segment focused on two core areas, populist leaders and populism as an electoral strategy. Although scholarship on other facets of populist manifestation in Africa proliferate the field, these are sparse and largely localized to populism with the South African context, restricting broader understandings of populist expression continentally, more so those that apply a cross-country study. Supporting the filling in the bibliographical lacunae the thesis supports the application of conceptual definition of populism capable of capturing localized expressions of populism and reviewing them in relation to their highly specialized and unique socio-political and economic contextual histories. In doing so the thesis proposes the utilization of an operationalization based on the political communications approach that shifts emphasis away from definitions of populism and towards its various behaviours, impacts and the means used to achieve these. This focus on populism discursive formatting emanates from the assertion that the differentiated manifestations of populism globally are the direct result of particular and arguably selective historical identities and that reviews of populism disregarding of these specificities invalidate the accuracy of results.

189

In addressing the concern with outlining the emergence and development of populism in Sub-Saharan Africa, Chapters Three & Four in their respective books both form a cumulative glance into the theoretical considerations used for the examination of more primordial instances of populism, referred to as 'proto-populist' within the text. At the centre of their joint argument is the examination of more rural and foundational cases of populism to prove the existence of more organised forms of pre-decolonial agrarian populist manifestations similar to populist expression displayed in nineteenth-century Russia under the Narodniki movement, the People's Party in the United State's and Latin American classical populism. Through the examination of selected examples of rural radicalism, key findings validate these claims, with the most similar movements being the West African Cocoa Boycotts (1930-1948) and the Kebaka Yekka movement in Buganda, which, respectively, much like the U.S. People's Party, advocated for non-exploitation of agrarian workers (and labourers by extension) and broadened democratic participation. taking on an immediately political platform, the Boycotts showcased the collective broad –based mobilisation. (inclusive of a political dimension) of a discursively unified disgruntled people across multiple and clashing interest groups against a visible elitist group with objectives. This is visible as well, albeit to a lesser degree, in the prop-populism's of Southern Africa's Bakwena ba Mokgalong in the Wiztieshoek region that was facilitated by socio-cultural concerns and less socio-economic concerns as with West Africa.

Subsequently, Chapter (number) analyzes the various populist movements' leaders' saliency in twentieth-century populism, corroborating articulations by scholars of African populism's genesis being rooted in the continent's anti-colonial period. However, it finds novelty in its assertion that this is only valid when referring to contemporary forms of populism. In contrast to proto-populism, the examined cases are more predominantly populist, with far stronger ideological and mobilizational tenets. Through a chronological unpacking of twentieth-century populism, the chapter delineates the behavioural and programmatic differences between populists more prominent during the 1950s and 1960s, often attributed a form of populist mythization based on their role in facilitating their respective countries' liberation.

One of this chapter's central insights, stemming from studying the content of populist policies espoused, is the significance of socialist ideology in the implementation of communalist forms of democracy, predicated on the rejection of capitalist modes of societal relationship and the

reassertion of more traditional society formats, as introduced in Chapter Two, and the recentring of the African people in democratic affairs. A second noteworthy insight, found in the chapter's second half that studies populism after the 1980s but before the 2000s, contends the centrality of African military revolutionaries in the development of democracy and associated ideas—popular justice and participatory democracy—within their respective localities, exemplified by Uganda, which, prior to Yoweri Museveni, had been described as having a limited familiarity with the word "democracy."

A third finding relating to populist militants is the relevance of their constructed identities and discursive personas in legitimating populist leaders, evidenced by Chapter (number) in the cases of populist leaders like Jacob Zuma, Bobi Wine, or Julius Malema's display of relational militancy in a manner evocative of militant populism common in the 1980s. These party–military linkages, combined with the kinds of selective messaging employed by these leaders—as opposed to coherent ideologies—have proven to gather relatively significant electoral support. This chapter supplementally reinforces the benefits of populism as an agent able to either entrench democracy or implement more responsive democracies and widen party plurality, thus dispersing political power among parties in a more democratic fashion that, in turn, further develops African political systems and enhances democratic stability.

An additional outcome of the thesis is located in Chapter (number) through its demonstration of populist legal reforms in post-colonial Africa as being more substantive than symbolic or rhetorical, but in fact foundational instruments in the redefining of post-colonial state-building and revalidation of legal legitimacy through populist means. The core of these means, argued as communal-centred populist tribunals—namely the Revolutionary Popular Tribunals in Burkina Faso and People's Courts in Guinea (under Thomas Sankara and Ahmed Sékou Touré, respectively)—were institutions of legal populism that grounded justice in the notions of popular sovereignty, enhancing legal participation and rebuilding the credibility of community-centred judicial bodies. These legal innovations, by reimagining the role of the judiciary in post-colonial governance, comprised part of more far-reaching democratization processes aimed at expanding the participation of the public in democratic institutions.

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