POPULISM, DEMOCRACY, AND REPRESENTATION:
MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONCEPTS AND REGIME TYPES IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

by

PIERRE OSTIGUY

Visiting Fellow, Fall 2001
Kellogg Institute
216 Hesburgh Center
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, IN 46556

postiguy@nd.edu
(219) 631-0264

This paper addresses the analytically and normatively ambiguous relation between democracy and populism. Populism, as a political phenomenon and in its relationship to democracy is currently a source of lively debate, particularly in the U.S. comparative politics literature on Latin American politics and in the literature on Western Europe. The key “intervening concept” necessary for analytically understanding populism and its relationship to democracy is the slippery but nonetheless indispensable notion of representation. More concretely, analyzing this relation requires an understanding of the many forms taken by popular representation in the mass politics of societies that are highly unequal or status-stratified.

Taking populism instead of liberal democracy as a point of entry into the debate about regime definitions and their operationalization has great analytic payoffs in two areas: it points to a better way of measuring democracy and to a better typology of regimes. In other words, the question of populism’s relation to democracy cast a new light on the existing semantic field of types of regimes, a field which has been increasingly dominated by the (normative) dichotomy or unidimensional continuum between authoritarianism and democracy.

The first, basic question is: are populist “regimes” a regime type? And if they are not, should populist forms of rule and government be located on the autocratic side or the democratic side of a categorical divide? Using a graded, continuous approach to democraticness will not really solve this problem. In several important ways, populist “regimes” tend to be at the same time more and less democratic than standard, full-fledged liberal democracies such as those observed in the prototypical cases of the U.S., Canada, and contemporary Britain.

Clarifying the concept of populism thus involve answering a still more basic question: whether populist “regimes” should be understood --and classified-- as a distinct type of political regime or not. Perhaps the increasingly accepted view of a strictly procedural definition of democracy would lead us not to. Understood categorically, every regime that does not meet a procedural minimum does fall outside the category of democracy. Intuitively, however, it seems that this “forcing out” at the same time ignores a very “democratic” experiential aspect of populist forms of rule. In a trichotomous ordinal typology of regimes (e.g. Mainwaring and al. 2001), populist “regimes” can possibly be labeled, half-way, as “semi-democracies.” However, the averaging implicit in such a category is bound to flatten populism’s most distinguishing features or traits, which may receive very high scores on one dimension of democraticness and very low ones on another unrelated dimension of democraticness.

Independently of the recent debate on regime types and measures of “democraticness,” specialists of Latin American politics have tended to view populism as an important, distinctive form of political systems in the continent (O’Donnell 1973; Collier 1979; Conniff 1982 1999). It is also commonly accepted that populist regimes in Latin America stood at the antipodes of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes, but that they are also, at the same time, quite different from liberal

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1 See Collier and Adcock (1999) on the debate between dichotomous categories and gradations.

2 The list of authors who have written on Latin American populism, whether in it classical form or as “neo-populism is simply too long for a single footnote. The three authors cited are simply three among a much larger field.
democracies. This former aspect is often lost, which may constitute a danger if a preoccupation with scoring of democraticness a debate about competing modes of operationalization of categories which should play a powerful role in the analysis of regime dynamics and regime change. In brief, from a causal standpoint, in the case of Latin America it is not liberal democracy that led to authoritarianism but populism. This statement, of course, applies to a strictly political definition of populism and need not reopen the larger socioeconomic dimension.

Analytically, the problem is therefore not, I argue, one of categories versus continuum. Our problems do not stop here, moreover, as populism is also, at the same time, the object of intense normative ambivalence regarding its desirability as a form of rule or “regime.” Positions range from sympathy for populist forms of political rule, with their clear incorporation of labor and extension of suffrage—two major “democratic” advances—to severe condemnations of this form of rule as disrespectful of the rule of law and cracking down on public liberties and for its often deinstitutionalizing impacts on the polity. The weak scoring of populist forms of rule on public liberties is often enough to land it on the non-democratic side of the categorical divide between democratic and non-democratic regimes.

Is it possible to resolve these analytic and normative conundrums surrounding populism? In light of the difficulties involved, some scholars have simply suggested dropping the term entirely. However, decreeing populism away will not do. Populism is a major political, cultural, and some would argue socioeconomic phenomenon in the New World. It is a recognizable phenomenon that has attracted the attention of scholars for generations. How else but as “populist leaders” could we describe famous political leaders such as Perón, Vargas, Huey Long, or even lesser figures as Menem during the 1980s, Adhemar de Barros and Brizola in Brazil, Duplessis in Quebec? Calling them instead democratic, authoritarian, or semi-democratic would constitute a major impoverishment of our semantic field and a dulling of our analytical tools for studying forms of government.

The goal of this paper is located at the key level between what David Collier (2001) calls “background concept” and “systematized concepts.” It seems very important to me to develop operationalization criteria precisely for useful and analytically productive systematized concepts. Liberal democracy is unquestionably one such concept; furthermore, a certain “Dahlian” consensus, amended by Valenzuela, O’Donnell, and Mainwaring for Latin America, has emerged on systematized formulation of the concept of liberal democracy. I hope, on the other hand, that with regard to regime types, liberal democracy is not in practice becoming the only fleshed out systematized concept. I would therefore like, in this paper, to make three points.

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3 It seems to me that both major works by Ruth Collier (1991 and 1999) share this sympathy. The most explicitly strong form of sympathy for populist form of rule is found in the work of Daniel James, a pro-labor cultural historian.

4 All the European literature on populism share this normative negative perspective. In the U.S., it seems to me that the most recent works of O’Donnell on delegative democracy and the works of Kurt Weyland do not consider politically populist forms of rule as desirable. The same impression comes from the reading of McGuire (1997), especially with regard to the rule of law, procedures, and the question of institutionalization.
First, populism can, in terms of well-defined criteria, at times be considered a regime type in an of itself. An entailment of this first point, perhaps, is that regimes may, certainly, be productively understood as categories (when used as object-nouns in the analysis), but that regimes types are actually not entirely mutually exclusive.\(^5\) For example, while there are populist forms of government that are clearly not liberal democratic, other forms of populist government are. Inversely, while most liberal democratic forms of government are not populist, some of them are. Intersections, I will argue, are definitely not limited to these two forms of rule. The goal, here, is certainly not to produce fuzziness or confusion: cut-off points can be clearly established, if we so wish, through valid indicators. The indicators measuring populism --or “populistness”-- may not, and will not, be the same as those measuring liberal-democraticness. Unless we care only about liberal democracy and not about any other types of political regimes (in which case we are not engaging in a typological exercise), we will have to reckon with this fact.

Second, I would like to question linear unidimensionality in regime classification. Instead, I would like to propose some alternatives, the main one being an orthodox Dahlian two-dimensionality. It seems to me, in any case, that one the main challenge that the field of regime typology must address is to face the possibility that the various types of regimes, to borrow from the language of quantitative methods, may not lend themselves so “obviously” to parametric methods and assumptions, and moreover, that they may not clearly stand in a “linear” relation to one another. While a two-dimensional typology is still clearly limited, it may still however be much better, in terms of capturing relationships, than a unidimensional one. Finally, the paper will therefore question Bollen (1981)’s powerful assertion that while democracy may, indeed, be made up of two theoretically independent dimensions, as established in Dahl’s (1971) classic work, empirically those two dimensions show an extremely high level of correlation and may therefore be subsumed into a single, unilinear dimension in order to avoid a problem of multi-collinearity.

Third, I would like to contribute a new definition of populism. In doing so, I certainly pay special attention to the other forms of regime types, that is, to the semantic field as a whole, and I seek to capture what makes populism so specific, whether in the eyes of the analyst or in the political arena itself. I then suggest some possible indicators which, like those for liberal democracy, may be useful for either a categorical or a graded approach to populism or “populistness.”

Some notes of caution. I should state from the outset that my purpose is definitely not to reopen the consensus about the desirability of strictly political definitions of political regimes generally, and of populism in particular (see Weyland on this topic). The current interest in testing correlations such as those between types of political regimes and measures of social inequality, should not, however,

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\(^5\) While this point may be obvious from the standpoint of ordinary language speaker, it may raise highbrows among certain social scientists. While categories such as tall and small, cold and hot, are obviously analytic opposite, there may be some confusion, which can only be resolved somewhat arbitrarily (or through a convention) on where “tall” stops and “small” begins –thus the need, for some analysts, to use trichotomies instead of dichotomies. This is not, however, the main point being advanced here. What I will question, instead, is, first and mainly, unidimensionality in regime classification, and second, a scale used to classify regimes types based on the attributes on only one type in the field.
Institutionalism is, of course, a highly significant approach to the study of politics, and institutions do matter greatly. Institutions may be productively studied, however, in conjunction with other aspects of politics.

...make us forget the immense attractiveness of works like O'Donnell’s of the 1970s, whether retrospectively correct or not, which did promise to provide analytical tools for establishing causes of regime change. One aspect which did make O’Donnell’s work powerful and attractive was precisely his inclusion of the sociological dimension in his analysis of political change. More recently, the work of Collier and Collier (1991) on regime dynamic also included an important sociological dimension, with the relation between labor and the state and/or incorporating party being a key determinant of subsequent regime evolution. In brief, a model with a sociological dimension may be crucial in explaining outcomes specified in terms of political categorical variables.

A second, more important note of caution is that the strictly political definition of regimes, whether liberal democracy or populism, has been equated with a strictly institutionalist perspective, as if “political” and “institutional” had become synonymous. The argument is that democracy can be best measured or assessed through an examination of procedures, and that procedures are institutional. In reality, however, procedures and rules (formal or informal) can be studied from a variety of angles, including culturally or as part of strategic modes. It is therefore possible to adopt a procedural approach which is not a strictly “institutional.” Moreover, procedures are clearly not the same as objective, measurable criteria. Measurable criteria, for instance, can be gathered for the study of behavior (through observation), of beliefs (through surveys), of laws.

The paper is made up of three sections. The first section deals with regime types. As a product of examining types of typologies, including typologies that are not “residual,” I provide a mode of conceptualizing liberal democracy which does greater justice, it seems to me, to both the Dahlian formulation of liberal democracy and to the conundrum of populism. Unidimensional typologies may at time prove too restrictive, and I will suggest that a two-dimensional conceptualization of democracy, through the quadrant formulation, provides greater historical leverage for analyzing regime change as well. The relations between different regimes, in a non-residual model, may analytically prove to be a non-linear one, further undermining the unilinear model. This section also asks, to borrow from the terminology of quantitative methods, what a non-parametric perspective on regime types would like, without however providing solutions.

The second section deals with populism. It will first situate populism as a regime type, based on the previous section. The paper then provides a definition of populism, at the level of systematized concept. I will then suggest possible indicators for its operationalization. It is hoped that the novel definition of populism provided in this paper will contribute, at the same time, to the lively debate on populism.

The third section deals with representation, which I believe stands at the source of the analytic and normative tension regarding populism. Different perspectives on the most desirable forms of representation explain the opposing normative positions on populism. Populism, in an odd way, may constitute a remedy to various deficiencies of liberal democracies, but it does so at a high cost.

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6 Institutionalism is, of course, a highly significant approach to the study of politics, and institutions do matter greatly. Institutions may be productively studied, however, in conjunction with other aspects of politics.
Rather than championing one or the other, this last section emphasizes important and perhaps inevitable trade-offs between populism and liberal democracy.

I. Regime Types

Do populist rules of the game regulating access to, and the uses of, positions of public authority (Whitehead 1994) constitute a distinct political regime? Are there rules determining the number and type of actors allowed to gain access to the principal governmental position, methods of access to such position, and the making of publicly-binding decisions (Munck 2000) that are characteristics of populist forms of government?

It seems to me, to begin with, that it would be surprising that the many, complex definitions of regime types only give way, in practice, to two broad types of regime (democratic or not) or even to a unidimensional distribution of regime types. One argument I will develop in this section is that regime types are not distributed, to borrow from the language of quantitative method, in a linear fashion and that the unidimensional classificatory device may not be the most suited one.

A second, important question is how much do the dimension(s) that make up the definition of democracy as stated in a classic way in Dahl and which most methodologists have adopted in constructing their indicators, apply to the entire semantic field of regime types? A priori, nothing tells us that it should be so. A preference for a more complex two-dimensional framework over an unidimensional one on the basis that it is more refined and theoretical valid in the case of liberal democracy does not in itself warrant its extrapolation to the entire semantic field of types of regimes, more than the extrapolation of a unidimensional framework also based on “democracy” would. This paper’s preference for a strict, Dahlian perspective rests on two grounds: the two-dimensional Dahlian framework does a better job at describing regime change over the medium and long-term historical range; it accommodate the specificity of populist rules and forms of rule much better.

Are there regime types “out there,” independently of the analyst’s purpose? While it is tempting to say no, Laitin (2000) reminds us that most social science analytic categories are not purely constructed categories with no relationship to ordinary language usage and that can be made to mean or be sliced in whatever the researcher decides they should mean or be. With regard to regime types, ordinary language (which always refers to a speech community) is here located at an intermediate level between the entirely popular and the fully erudite. In ordinary language, one will often hear regarding regime types of communism, democracy, monarchy, military dictatorships, fascism, to name the most conspicuous candidates. So the real question, from a standpoint as least bias as possible, is what is the relation, and perhaps even the ordering, among those different “regime types.” The role of the analyst is precisely to discover the “pattern,” the “linearity in the data”, the mode of ordering. An easy way out is to care only about democracy and to lump all the other types of regime as “authoritarian” or, more coherently, “non democracy”, which is what I call the residual model. This procedure is entirely fine if we only care about democracy; but it is far from clear, for example, that communism and traditional monarchies are the same type of animal (the way parliamentary democracy and presidential democracy are) or that the form of government of the military junta in Argentina in 1976 belongs to the same category as that of Perón’s regime in 1948.
at the apex of populism, as Polity III has it.\(^7\)

Figure 1 is a rough, heuristic figure of what what I loosely call a “non-parametric” conceptualization of regime types could look like. Figure 1, in contrast to all other works, including this paper, makes very few assumptions, does not presume any type of linearity nor dimensionality,\(^8\) and is certainly not a semantic field composed of one category and its residuals.

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**Figure 1 about here**

Taking an inductive approach quite different admittedly from what Sartori advocates, it seems to me that, as illustrated in Figure 1, there can actually be overlap between different types of regime. The problem, here, is not one of clear delimitation of a single category’s borders but rather arises from logically possible –and empirically real– overlap. The most striking example is perhaps that of Perón’s regime, around 1944. Admittedly, it was not a liberal democracy. However, in terms of “ordinary language” regime types, what was it? A military dictatorship? A proto-fascist regime? A paradigmatic instance of populist regime? All three options are perfectly defendable and have, indeed, been forcefully argued. Perhaps this is only a problem that arises with “authoritarianism”? Let us take, again, Peronist populism in Argentina: how can we characterize Menem’s rule? It can certainly be considered as fully liberal democratic, despite the uneasiness which this form of delegative democracy with little horizontal accountability (among other things) has awoken in keen observers such as O’Donnell (1994). There were complete public liberties, elections were fair, suffrage was universal, and the elected government governed. But, or rather and, it can also be characterized as quite typical, in so many ways, of a populist form of rule, of populist rules of the game, as the literature on neopopulism—which does not address regime type– has repeatedly emphasized. These observations do not show, yet, that populism constitutes a regime type, but they do suggest, at least as far as a rich ordinary-language type of categories are concerned, that there can be overlap in types,\(^9\) at least previously to an analyst’s work.

How can we “order” –the purpose, afterall, of any analytic typology– the regimes roughly situated in Figure 1, including liberal democracy and populism? Figure 2 summarizes the main types of regime typologies currently used in the literature of comparative politics.

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\(^7\) In Polity III, those two forms of governments are given the exact same score, on democracy.

\(^8\) The “systemic-anti-systemic” axis noted in Figure 1, taken from the field of international relations, was found afterward, in an attempt to find some type of pattern to what is a very “intuitive” first approximation at regime mapping.

\(^9\) One may feel more comfortable with the mutually exclusive categories of Linz, where no category is residual of the other and where, one would assume, Perón in 1948 would stand somewhere on the borderline between totalitarianism and authoritarianism, and Menem in 1992 basically as democratic (with some authoritarian inclinations). It seems to me, however, that the categories of fascism, military dictatorship, and populism are much richer, in both their denotation and connotations, than the –somewhat more ideologically liberal– categories of totalitarianism, authoritarianism, and democracy.
The most common method is the simple, dichotomous categorical typology of regimes. There are democracies and there are non-democracies (a residual category). The methodological challenge, taken up for example by Alvarez and al (1996), is to operationalize in an analytically convincing way the systematized concept and therefore to come up with valid indicators. In an orthodox Sartorian way, categories of democracies and dictatorships can then be broken up in relevant sub-categories. This methodology has the advantage of (at least apparent) neatness and orderliness.

Many scholars, however, have expressed criticisms from a variety of angles, to this approach. Mainwaring and al (2001:38) argue that a trichotomous classification “achieves greater differentiation than dichotomous classifications and yet avoids the need for massive information that a fine-grained continuous measure would require.” Mainwaring and al’s approach is also categorical, but the categories are ordinally related to one another, in a unidimensional, linear fashion. The semantic field remains largely defined by one category, that of democracy, and different scoring on democraticness allows us to place different forms of government in one of the three categories. In this sense, the model is also residual, that is, democracy, non-democracy, and “somewhat” democracy.

Bollen, who has mistakenly been characterized as non-procedural, proceeds in a way much more shaped by the standard ways of quantitative method than the categorical frameworks of the two preceding approaches, grounded in mainly qualitative comparative politics. Strictly speaking, Bollen’s analysis is not about “regimeness” or regimes. His analysis is about attributes of democracy. His goal is therefore clearly not to establish, construct, or defend a typology of regime types. What he is interested in, as most researcher in quantitative social science, is in testing relationships between “democraticness” and various, theoretically interesting, continuous variables, such as income inequality. Can we establish, for example, a significant parametric regression model, with good fit, between level of democraticness and level of income inequality? His model was build to answer precisely these types of questions. Admittedly, in practice, the operationalization that he uses to construct a scale of democraticness is similar and comparable to that of, say, the Przeworski or the Mainwaring project. But that is to be expected because the former two influential studies basically build a regime typology on quantitative measurements of democraticness. Bollen’s claims, therefore, appear to be on much more unchallengeable methodological ground than that of the other two approaches. There is absolutely nothing, following Bollen, that would prevent us from building a similar type of continuous scale for the attributes defining (operationalizing) any other type of regimes. I will suggest that such type of continuous, ordinal-unidimensional scale can indeed be constructed for another type of regime, such as populism, or more accurately here, level of “populistness.”

Probably the most influential typology of regime types is Linz’ trichotomous categorical typology: democratic regimes; authoritarian regimes; totalitarian regimes. As any Sartorian typology, its original purpose, it seems to me, was to have mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. Of all the different typologies mentioned up to now, Linz’ is the first to be clearly a non-residual model. Each category has a clear logic of its own, which is fully explained, and which is not definitionally dependent on the scoring obtained in the other categories (which we would presume to be very low).
Although I have not yet encountered a full discussion of this crucial aspect of Linz’ typology, it appears that despite being nominal at face value, the three categories are in fact ordinal, aligned along a single, linear spectrum. The concept ordering the three categories is basically that of pluralism, itself derived from the broader philosophy of liberalism. Authoritarian regimes are less all-controlling, repressive, and more tolerant of civil society than are totalitarian regimes, which, as the name imply, attempt to totally control society. Democracy, in terms, is more pluralist and less repressive than authoritarian regimes. Linz discards that any population would rationally vote a “totalitarian” regime in (and if so, the anomaly would soon disappear, as that would be the last election).

Dahl, finally, has written more on liberal democracy (or polyarchies) and democratization rather than on regime types per se. His systematized concept of polyarchy, in any case, is explicitly and clearly two-dimensional. Most analysts of democracies and democratic measurements have adopted, and at times amended, his eight “requirements for a democracy among a large number of people” (1971:3). Despite Dahl’s repeated emphasis, however, most analysts have acted on the assumption that, in the end, the two dimensions were one in reality, or could be treated as so. To my knowledge, only Bollen and Grandjean (1981) have frontally addressed the issue, demonstrating that, although theoretically valid, the two dimensions show almost perfect covariance, as seen through both an internal test and an external one. They therefore concluded that, in practice, liberal democracy was best understood unidimensional.

It is not entirely clear is Dahl’s classic formulation constitute the basis of a regime typology or if it limits itself to a powerful definition of liberal democracy, or polyarchy. He writes: “the purpose of this book make an elaborate typology redundant” (1971:6), which is somewhat unfortunate considering how theoretically well-equipped and talented he would have been to do so. The key to this lack of interest in typologies is that Dahl’s interest is in the process of change (in and of itself), rather than in mutually exclusive categories (1971:7). Afterall, he repeatedly states to be interested in democratization. He acknowledged that he could have divided his two-dimensional spaces into cells, for example four quadrants, but that he preferred instead to leave most of it empty. His arrows and quarter-circles are about directions, not really categories.

Dahl’s framework thus stands in an ambiguous relation somewhere between Bollen’s measurement of a given set of properties, with no intention at regime classification or typologies, and the categorical frameworks mentioned before. He could well have been closer to the project of Mainwaring and al., that is, of transforming an ordinal, continuous scale into a categorical one, had he decided to do so. He did not. Had he, what is particularly powerful in his four-corners model is that no corner is a “residual category,” but each stands in a logical relation to the other. In this sense, the effort is not unlike that of Linz, except that the model is two-dimensional and clearly presents a set of indicators for quantitative scoring on each of the two dimensions. In brief, Dahl’s model is a graded one that admits to be transformed into a categorical one, that also admits to be transformed into a typology, that is two-dimensional, and that is not residual.

At the corners of the two-dimensional space he outlines, Dahl refers to closed hegemonies, competitive oligarchies, inclusive hegemonies, and polyarchies, which, if we follow the logic of the dimensions, are competitive inclusive political systems. To standardize the terminology, the four
quadrants are non-competitive exclusive; competitive exclusive; non-competitive inclusive; competitive inclusive.

Had Dahl decided to transform his framework into a typology, it seems that like in most other instances examined here (except perhaps Linz), the traits of liberal democracy would have been extended to the entire semantic field of regime types, in order to create the typology. Dahl, however, was cautious not to do so, preferring instead to talk about democratization which is, afterall, a movement along a unidimensional axis or, in his case, in a two-dimensional space.

Figure 3 summarizes the different efforts which have been made to create regime typologies, as part of a more specific attempt to develop valid indicators of the regime(s) category(ies), based largely on a common Dahlian, systematized conceptual field. As such, Figure 3 may provide a useful basis for future methodological discussion on that important topic.

_**Figure 3**_

I take the position that we should not reduce all possibilities of regime classification to a democracy vs non-democracy (or a trichotomy, for that matter). I also take the position that we should not equate regime typology with indexes of democraticness. By doing so, we are unfair to the residual category of “non-democracy” and are equating—as non-democracies—the following regime types: monarchies, fascism, bureaucratic-authoritarianisms, populism. In other words, Louis XIV, Mussolini, the Argentine juntas, and the Perón–Evita couple are belong to the same regime type, basically “non-democracy” or the residual category of non liberal-democracy. Of course, a powerful drive to do so is the normative attractiveness: only liberal democracy is desirable as a regime type, while all the others are not. But by adopting this simple unidimensional “regime” classification, or more accurately, this index of democraticness, we impair ourselves in our categorical tools to understand, say, the transition from populist regimes to bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes—a major component of 20th century Latin American history—or the abolition of monarchies and/or liberal democracies by fascism in the first third of the 20th century in European history, to mention only two major regime changes which occurred throughout world regions. We absolutely need those names, as regime types.

In brief, under the “disguise” of regime typology, we are in danger of effectively establishing only one type of regime: liberal democracy and “the rest.” While on the part of quantitativists there is an analytic gain in doing so, as we can then correlate various variables of interests to an interval ordering of “democraticness”, therefore obtaining level of correlations and plausible linear regressions, it is difficult to see the gain which qualitativists achieve by what could become a dangerous conceptual impoverishment of our semantic field.

Four quadrants. Analytically, even though it is obviously a simplification of “ordinary language” regime types, I suggest that a two-dimensional regime typology offers important, significant advantage. Afterall, the role of the analysts is to find order and patterns in the type of situation depicted in Figure 1. I suggest that a two-dimensional typology is the best tradeoff we can find between oversimplification and excessive assumptions of linearity, on the one hand, and sub-
The conclusions and recommendations of this section do not inevitably follow from the analysis of the previous section. Different recommendations could certainly be issued in that light. Therefore, this section can stand somewhat autonomously from the preceding one.

I suggest that our best bet, in this regard, is probably to complete the picture which Dahl decided to leave basically empty. Each two dimensions can of course be operationalized. I will suggest, however, a partial resignification of his two axes.\(^\text{10}\)

Two trends have marked the political systems around the world for the last two centuries. One is a very unequal and non-linear progress toward greater political and public liberties, increasingly enshrined in the notion of inalienable human rights. Dahl’s axis of liberalization is clearly a by-product of the larger, overall concept of liberalism. Political liberalism, which used to be an entirely “optional” feature of regimes, has in the last two decades make significant stride in being seen as a sine qua non for minimally acceptable political life. The second trend has been a basically linear, massive and somewhat unstoppable trend toward greater and greater incorporation of various subordinate social strata in the political arena. While only aristocratic, and later, only national, propertied, respectable, literate, middle-aged white males could vote and participate in legal political life, the franchise has been gradually (or suddenly) extended to non-properties people, female, the young, illiterates. While the bulk of the population can now vote, the trend has not exhausted itself, as there are current discussions to extend voting rights to alien residents, to prisoners, and to other people considered socially or legally on the fringes.

Many of the current indicators of democracy try to capture those two dimensions. I suggest that, especially for the dimension of participation, while they are highly adequate in terms of operational specificity, they are lacking in the breadth and conceptual specificity that would be necessary to capture regime differences, rather than simply level of liberal-democraticness. I strongly argue that we should partly come back to the type of work developed originally by O’Donnell in the 1970s and later develop with rigor by Collier and Collier (1977, 1979, 1991, 1999) with regard to question of inclusion and exclusion of the what Latin Americanists have aptly called the popular sectors. The 20\(^{th}\) century, in fact, has been the divergent history, in fact, of various modes of incorporating “the masses,” the national folks, the popular sectors in politics, from communism, to fascism, to social-democracy, to various forms of national-liberation and later religious and/or nationalist movements. Party politics in liberal democracies have also achieved that aim, during the 20th century. It is important to recognize, however, that liberal democracy has been only one system, albeit the one we prefer, which has accomplished this task. Not all “modern” political system, however, have been forms of incorporating the masses: as we know from the field of Latin American politics, many regimes have been clearly exclusionary.

We may therefore construct our typological space in different way. I will not follow what I think would be the best way of constructing such a space, as I fear it would marginalize the paper excessively from the mainstream of comparative politics. I will instead offer a more conventional

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construction. The conceptual debate regards the systematized definition of the horizontal axis, regarding popular participation. Huntington warns us that: “Popular participation in politics does not necessarily mean popular control of government. Constitutional democracies and communist dictatorships [to which he could have added fascism] are both participant polities” (1968:89). For this reasons, most analysts have focused, on that axis, on elections. Elections, indeed, should be fair and free. But to really capture what this participatory axis is about, a sine qua non indicator is most definitely the extension of suffrage, an aspect on which Ruth Berins Collier (1999) insists in her study of democratization. It is important to notice than an emphasis put upon the fairness and cleanliness of elections brings us into the important theoretical realm of the “rule of law”, while that of extension of suffrage is squarely within the realm of popular participation.

My inclination to construct a meaningful typological space about regime type would have been to focus, on the horizontal axis, on popular mobilization and popular inclusion, independently of the electoral process –running therefore the risk of isolating myself. To me, populism, fascism in its origins, revolutionary communism, laborism are all intensely mobilizing regimes, activating politically large segments of the population and therefore in their own ways incorporating them. To use a graphic metaphor, these are all political regime that increase the heat temperature. On the other hand, monarchical regimes, bureaucratic-authoritarianism, oligarchical liberalism (Dahl’s competitive oligarchies) are all regimes that do not incorporate or include politically the vast majority of the population. One of their main concerns, at least in the latter two cases, is to keep the political temperature cold, by force if necessary. Some Marxists have even argued that liberal democracies, whether in the first third of this century in its parliamentary form or currently, have had a demobilizing effect on the population. There are undoubtedly ways to measure political mobilizations and inclusion of the popular sectors in mass politics: participation at rallies, quantity and magnitudes of strikes, membership in political parties (where membership is non-coerced), etc.

Even though this path could perhaps provide a more meaningful classification of the regimes types roughly situated in Figure 1, I will not pursue this path, as one of my concerns is, like so many, to delineate liberal democracy as a regime type. The above model could prove more fruitful, however, if populism served as the yardstick in the construction of the graded typology, in place of liberal democracy.

In the more specified model that I propose below, level of popular participation and popular control of the government must include free and fair elections with “full” suffrage. Because of this additional specification, as an analyst I would therefore feel more comfortable in excluding both fascism and left-wing communist regimes from the typology, in order not to mis specifyingly classify those regimes together with more traditional and less participatory forms of illiberal rule.  

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11 Both would have to be classified as regimes with little participation of the popular sectors in the political structure of decision-making, a statement which may be true or untrue but which deserves more empirical study, particularly in contrast to actual liberal democracies.
Figure 4 is not only nor mainly a typical two-by-two table. Rather, it constitutes a typological space, or a two-dimensional typology, within which observations, or specific instances of regimes, can be located through scoring on the Y and the X axes. Although there are analytic limitations to what the typology can encompass, its limitations are nonetheless clearly less than that of unidimensional typologies.

The two-dimensional typology is clearly better fit for the analysis of medium and long-term regime change. For example, in Europe, it is very clear that there was a transition from patrimonial rule, as expressed in differing degrees of absolutist monarchies toward an hegemonic form of oligarchical liberalism at the end of the 19th century. The exact same evolution characterizes the political rules of the game in South America, from Bourbon absolutism to the oligarchical liberalism of late 19th century Argentina, Chile, and Brazil. The first half of the 20th century is characterized, in both of these regions –not subject to direct colonial rule– to the massive challenge of the political incorporation of the masses, of the popular sectors, in the political arena. This incorporation was achieved, with different degree of success, with widely differing political experiments. Initially, the liberalism of oligarchical liberalism and restricted parliamentary democracy seemed utterly ill-suited for this task. Communism, fascism, corporatist populism, and later social-democracy seemed much more promising avenue, to meet this challenge. The political history of Eastern and Western Europe in terms of regime types and competing political models is entirely dominated by the massive shift rightward along the horizontal axis. A few exceptions, like Britain, were able to accomplish this shift without going “down;” but most polities experienced extremely “raunchy” politics, with a brusque shift downward on the vertical dimension, or massive decrease in public liberties. It should be pointed out that the shift downward was generally not a product of the repression of the popular sectors nor a deactivation of popular participation, on the contrary. The most significant decrease, on the horizontal axis, occurred in the case of the polities that most drastically mobilized the non-elite, politically: revolutionary communism; the fascism of Mussolini and the National-Socialists; Peronist or Varguista populism. The mobilization, and arguably participation, of the non-elite in the political game was arguably lesser in well-established liberal democracy at the time, such as the U.S., Canada, and Britain. We have restricted movement along this axis where actual, comparatively fair elections were maintained, such as the case of Perón in 1945-46; and have excluded the participatory totalitarian regimes, where free and fair elections were abolished. Finally, in the second half of the 20th century, there was a non-linear but observable tendency, which has accelerated since the late 1980s, movement “upward” toward more political liberalism as a taken-for-granted element of the political system. The tendency is marked and consolidated in continental (Western) Europe and is perhaps starting to become institutionalized in South America, at least if we compare it to the previous decades (see below), marked by the failure of a regularized political participation of the popular sectors and their political representative in the political arena.

Figure 4 also allows us to adequately locate and analytically grasp populism as a regime type, in its relation to liberal democracy. Indeed, no one would characterize an absolutist monarchy or a bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes as a liberal democracy; and no one would deny that the rules of the game in the U.S. or in France belongs to that of a liberal democracy (or polyarchy). The diagnostic becomes a much heated source of debate when one thinks of Switzerland until a few
decades ago or of Britain at the turn of the century. Such an issue has even given rise to a debate as to whether the analyst should use the democratic standards of the time, at the risk of democratic polities that excludes more than half, or even two-thirds (if one includes, say, illiterates) or more of the population from suffrage, or whether one should use contemporary standards, at the risk of anachronism. Precisely because oligarchical liberalism scores high on one axis, and low on the other, does it give rise to a certain ambiguity, especially if the score on the horizontal axis is intermediate.

Precisely the same problem, but inverted, explains the ambivalence about populism. Populist regimes have a high score on political participation of the popular sectors and have electoral majorities; but they score low on public liberties, to the extent of endangering their classification in the upper-right quadrant of liberal democracy. If we look at Argentina, few governments in the decades preceding and succeeding 1946 can claim such a clear electoral legitimacy as that of the Perón government officially starting that year. Few government in the world can claim such a high level of popular sector support, popular sector political participation –including in decision-making institutions– and popular mobilization as that of Perón in 1946. The combined score on this axis is probably much superior to that of most existing liberal democracies. Polity III, however, gives a 0 on democraticness to the government of Perón. Without going to that extreme, many analysts are nervous to include the Peronist regime of 1946-1955 as a liberal democracy, and most analysts do not classify such a regime as a liberal democracy, precisely for the very low score the rules of the game receive on the axis of political liberties and political liberalism.

I would therefore define, within the semantic field of regime types, a populist regime as a regime that scores high on political participation of the popular sector and popular government but that scores low on political liberalism. A two-dimensional typology of regimes is essential to classify and categorize adequately populist regimes.

Mainwaring and al. (2001: 61) recognize the difficulties that –although they never mention the name– populist regimes represents for unidimensional typologies. They solve the problems with the averaging category of semi-democracy.

The idea of semi-democracy allows us to conceptualize historical regimes that do not fit neatly in a dichotomous classification, such as the first Perón administration in Argentina (1946-1951), the MNR government in Bolivia after the revolution (1952-64)...and the Arevalo and Arbenz administrations in Guatemala (1945-54).

All of these administrations precisely have in common being populist administrations. While the semi-democracy category captures the notion that populism is not located in quadrants I or III, it should be forced logically to included in the same “semi” category the rules of the game that belong to the second quadrant, with high scoring in political liberalism but very low scoring on suffrage and popular presence in politics. I would argue that populism and oligarchical liberalism belong to radically opposite categories.

Certainly, as in Mainwaring and al, I argue that indicators providing continuous scores can give us information allowing us categorical classifications. Such cut-off points are represented in Figure 4 by the dotted lines. Only forms of government and rules of the game that passes both thresholds can qualify as liberal democracy. However, the typological model, inspired by Dahl, is rich enough that in the case of failure to pass both thresholds, the regime can nonetheless be characterized.
in a very meaningful way among three possibilities, none of which, furthermore, are residual.

A Classification of Latin American Political Regime. Equipped with the two-dimensional typology, we are now in an excellent position to locate the different “political systems” which the rich literature in Latin American politics has productively named. For analytic reasons, we will at times have to classify some “political systems” in the same overall regime category, but as we will soon see, such an analytic classification do not do violence to social-scientific meaning of those labels.

The dimension of political freedoms, as it relates to liberalism, is self-explanatory and does not differ from that present in the literature. The dimension regarding popular-sector political participation and control of the government benefits from an additional complexification that is a product of the specific contribution of the field of Latin American politics. Our model is therefore able to recuperate and integrate the much-discussed and analytically extremely useful criteria of inclusionary and exclusionary forms of government. In contrast to restricted and inclusive, these former two terms describes a dynamic action, regarding access to political power. Bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes in Latin America characterized themselves by their exclusion of the previously activated (politically, socially, economically) popular sectors. The popular sectors and their political representatives were violently pushed outside the realm of decision making, governmental positions, and political power --the traits which are perhaps at the core of what a regime is about. Inversely, the populist regimes tended to characterize themselves by the massive extension of suffrage, the providing of access to governmental positions to people originating from the popular sectors and labor organizations, and overall by an increase in popular-sector participation in the political arena. In contrast to simply “inclusive” political regimes, such as liberal democracy, where “all” can participate in the control of the government, populist regimes actively included the subordinate social strata and actively promoted their political presence. Not surprisingly, those two sub-types of popular-sector participation, because of their active raison d’etre, are associated with regime sub-types that are not long-lasting. Restricted and inclusive sub-types of regimes are much more long-lasting.

Figure 5 fits nicely with Figure 4. If, for the sake of simplicity, we eliminate for now the sub-types regarding popular participation, we neatly find one type of regime per quadrant. Liberal democracy combines political freedoms with (inclusive) popular participation and control of the government (at least in terms of the political rules of the game). Populism regimes, strictly defined (i.e., in contrast to populist traits) combine popular participation and control of the government with little political freedoms. While they can be inclusive, the most typified forms of populist regimes has been markedly inclusionary. The oligarchical liberalism that characterized most of South America from the 1880s to the 1920s combined liberties with a very restricted suffrage and popular-sector participation and involvement in politics. Finally, Latin America provides with two very different sub-types of dictatorships, combining absence of political freedoms and lack of political participation of
the popular sectors: the more traditional and restricted neo-patrimonial dictatorships, particularly as observed in Central America and the Caribbean in the first half of the century and the more modern bureaucratic dictatorships, which actively sought to expel the previously included popular sectors from politics.

Such a typology, from which one can reasonably construct valid indicators, fully builds upon the knowledge accumulated in the rich field of Latin American politics. Furthermore, it is semantically very rich and analytically very productive.

This sections closes with a more narrow analysis, in terms of regime types, of the political dynamic that occurred in the Southern Cone of Latin America, from the 1960s to the 1990s. Political scientists have often managed to establish a comfortable dichotomy: the transition from authoritarianism to democracy. Still, one must be reminded that this military authoritarianism, undoubtedly the opposite of democracy, has often been installed either in a direct reaction to populism – and not to liberal democracy – as a source of instability, or in reaction to a leftist (qua leftist, and not qua democratic) and/or populist popular movement. What analytically and normatively complicates even more reality is that this populism, the direct and possibly even causal historical opposite of the military dictatorships, was itself often of a military origin. This was as much the case in the archetype of the 1940s in Argentina with Perón – little admired by the democratic circles (i.e., liberal-democratic circles) and overthrown by the military – as today in Venezuela with colonel Chavez.

While the bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes were neither politically liberal nor popular, they emerged much more out of a reaction to the popular aspect than, certainly, to an excess of political or cultural (mores, etc.) liberalization.12

Figure 6 about here

Later on, the transitions to democracy were the product of a change from (politically) anti-liberal and anti-popular regimes to liberal and popular political regimes, although the popular political aspect significantly decreased after the initial euphoria. In general, the new liberal-democratic regimes have emphasized the popular to a lesser extent than the previous populist regimes, while they have put strong emphasis –as was particularly the case in Argentina under Alfonsin and Chile under the Concertacion– on values of pluralism, tolerance, and liberties in general. The combined experience of both populist regimes (or popular-sectors political mobilization, in Chile) and repressive anti-popular governments probably had a strong influence in this question. The change in the mentality and in the political culture necessary to the establishment of a politically liberal mode of functioning

12 Note the sharp contrast, here, with Islamist regimes. These regimes has clearly emerged as a violent reaction to liberalism and cultural liberalization, but have not significantly affected popular political participation (some argue that they have in fact significantly increased it).
was the central point of the new post-authoritarian-repression discourse. In Argentina, notions of respect, pluralism, and even simply “life” took precedence over the “class-popular” question which was so strongly advanced in the 1970s, including among intellectuals.

While the most visible oscillations in Southern Cone politics had to do over the last decades with the participation, representation, and mobilization of the popular sectors in the political arena, therefore on the horizontal axis of Figure 6, it seems to me that Latin America, like most of the rest of the world, is also taken by the growing hegemony of politically (and culturally) liberal norms -- which here also includes procedural rules-- and the simultaneous, slowly growing detachment of “the people” from active political participation.

II. The Characterizing Traits of Populism

The current efforts in the field of Latin American politics to define populism in strictly political terms, in contrast to the previous and broader conceptualization that included and emphasized the socioeconomic dimension, do little to clarify populism’s political relationship to liberal democracy. The Western European, and particularly French, conceptualization of populism, which is also a strictly political one, contrasts populism with republicanism and its institutions. Therefore, while it is explicit in its negative normative assessment of populism’s relation to democracy, it seems largely driven by a normative political agenda that analytically clouds the specifically representational aspect of populism. My paper suggests, based on previous empirical research in Argentina, that in fact the anti-institutional nature of populist representation makes populism attractive and appealing for the less educated and less “mediation-skilled” sectors of society.

We have already situated populism as a regime type in the broader semantic field of regime types. We have defined it externally, so to speak, in its differentiating relation with other types of political regimes, such as liberal democracy. The goal of this section is to provide an “internal” definition of populism, which is accurate as possible in intension and extension, and which of course does not contradict the previously given “external” characterization of that form of government.

I define populism as a form of political mobilization and government where a strong personalistic leader, to establish and then maintain mass support, hails “the people” conceived as a non-elite category and for adversarial political purpose, and appeals to “the people” by ways of the concrete practices and forms of speech that culturally demarcate the local popular classes.

This definition captures the phenomenon well as well as in all instances: from pro-labor populism to right-wing pro-capitalist populism, from forms of government with dense organizational links to mass organizations such as unions (as in Collier and Collier 1991:165-167) to “unmediated, uninstitutionalized relationship between the leader and a large number of unorganized followers” (Weyland 2000:16; also 1999, 1996). The definition, however, does not say very much about political regime. And indeed, from a standard procedural, strictly institutional definition of liberal democracy,
populism can be democratic or not. Populism, a very real and distinct political phenomenon, as
distinct from populist regimes, can indeed stand on either side of the democratic categorical
dichotomy.

In terms of forms of government, rather than mode of appeal, there are however a few
additional distinguishing traits, which I did not include in the definition but which tends to be present
in most form of populist rule. Populist leaders tend in general to be oblivious of formal institutional
rules and procedures. This trait complicates the already difficult assessment of populism in terms of
the procedural institutional definition of democracy. The fact of being “oblivious” does not mean that
the leader is against the formal institutions of liberal democracy, as is clearly the case with military
dictatorships including, clearly so in the case of Latin America, bureaucratic-authoritarian rule.
Complicating the liberal-democratic categorical assessment, the populist leader does not really care
about those rules and procedures. What the populist leader intensely cares about, however, is popular
support, and usually particularly among the demos, the popular classes. As absurd as it may seem
from the impersonalism of legal-rationalism (whether in bureaucratic or legal forms), what the
populist leader cares about is to be loved and admired, as the leader, at all costs. The populist leader
always takes the mean for this –means which may break, or not, the rule of law.

To illustrate the point metaphorically, the populist leader and his form of government will
stand on one side or the other of the procedural liberal-democratic categorical divide
depending on “how the wind blows”: if it blows adversely, he will no doubt break the rule of law and
many political liberties; if the wind blows in favor, he may not find it necessary to do so. The populist
leader’s concern (or that of his routinized embodiment in the party form) is not to respect “fair play”
in electoral competition, in terms of resources, of state impartiality in the use of media, of pluralism,
etc.-- but to win the support of the majority of people, i.e. “the people”, at elections. This does not
mean, however, that the elections are rigged, at least with respect of the vote count of the popular
will. Rather, it means that, weak as always on questions pertaining to liberal thinking and the rule of
law, the populist leader does not distinguish well between the state and partisan-ness with regard to
the use of resources. In brief, in populist regimes, the leader does not want to rule against the
political preference of the majority of the people or in a way indifferent to it, like in military
dictatorships; but, on the other hand, is not bound by the rule of law and a sense of fair play in
achieving the support of the majority of the people –as then confirmed in vote counting. To
adjectivize this characterization as institutionally “splitting hair” would therefore be not to understand
the logic, psychology, and raison d’être of populist regimes, or, to use now old-fashion language, the
spirit of populism.

One problem with populist rule, in sharp contrast with liberal democratic rule and even
military dictatorships, is that it is extremely difficult to get rid of the populist leader. In fact,
historically, the main way of achieving alternation in power has been through military intervention or
death. A reason for this state of affair is that a call for elections, as is generally the case in transitions
from military dictatorship, will not do since populist leaders always take all possible means to make

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13 Perhaps, in may ways, populist forms of rule belong to what Collier and Levitsky have labeled
electoral democracies. {Verify this claim}. 
sure they receive majority support at electoral time. They therefore are not as isolated as dictatorships. Related to this, because of the efforts they make to be certain they are loved and admired by enough people, vast majorities usually do not form against them. Successful populist regimes are usually starkly opposed by intellectuals appalled by the political mores and the political culture created in the polity as a result of populist regimes, but they are often isolated voices, finding greater echoes in foreign capitals than among ordinary (and at times under-educated) supporters. A “bad” civic culture, more than electoral fraud at the polls, is usually the outcome of populist rule.¹⁴ Third, even the judiciary may become quite corrupted, in the literal or figurative sense, by populist regimes. The institutions that would stand to enforce the rule of law—usually closed down in military dictatorships— are often “bought off,” coopted, “friends of” the populist ruler or ruling political elite.

Some scholars will prefer to exclude such form of rule in all instances from a strict definition of liberal democracy. Others, such as O’Donnell (1994), himself very critical of this form of rule, will consider it an undesirable sub-type of liberal democracy. In the case of Latin America, scholars tend to exclude neo-populist Alberto Fujimori from the democratic category, because he closed Congress (even though he had the wide majority of Peruvians supporting him, as noticed by independent polling agencies) and excessively used state resources in insuring his reelections, while they will include (neo-) populist Carlos Menem’s in the category of liberal democracy. The latter, certainly, did not close Congress, although he almost doubled the size of the Supreme Court through political nominations and his party always had the largest amount of seats in Congress throughout his ten years in power, therefore achieving in a more “elegant” way a practical result not excessively distant from that of Fujimori. Gradations within the populist category—in a way not unlike that of gradations in liberal democracy— are reflected in this case in the relative greater ease by which a third re-election of Menem was prevented -and outcome by no mean certain until relatively close to the actual election date in 1999-- in comparison to that of Fujimori.

The struggle to overthrow populist regimes is usually carried out not so much under the banner of “democracy” (the electoral outcome is indeed far from guaranteed), but usually instead under the banner of “ethics” in recent decades, or decency and the modernization of mores, in previous ones. The safeguard of “institutions of the Republic,” that is, an institutionalist form of republican concerns, is also frequently invoked, whether in Europe or Latin America. Sociologically, this fight is usually led by middle-class people often from the world of education and ideas, while the populist leader or party often remains well-liked in socially-subordinate, older, and undereducated sectors of the population long after the regime change or transformation.

¹⁴ This is obviously not the case only in Latin America, as can be seen from the political history of Duplessisme, in Quebec. In more than one way, Progressivism in the U.S. was a reaction to a type of practices not very distant from those described for populism.

{Provide possible indicators of populism, for measurement}
III. Representation in politics

It has often been said, in progressive circles, that a major obstacle to the consolidation of democracy in Latin America is the persistence, if not the deepening, of strong social inequality.\textsuperscript{15} From the standpoint that free elections, or at least the right to vote for all adults, fair counting of votes, absence of political restrictions or fraud, are a fundamental criterion in the working definition of a democracy, nothing is, in fact, less certain. The critical analysts and observers of Latin American politics have recently adopted, in relation to this subject, two largely divergent points of view. On the one hand, leading scholars such as Guillermo O’Donnell have taken a progressive “liberal” turn, lamenting the absence of a true rule of law in the actual democracies of Latin America. Other observers on the left have continued a more clearly social tradition, deploiring the increase in exclusion, the decline of the social movements that were so active in the struggle against military regimes, and even at times social atomisation.\textsuperscript{16} Nevertheless, these two forms of criticism towards the actual democracies that emerged in the 1980s have two positive ideals in common: the figure of the citizen and the space of “civil society”. This is so both in the case of the liberal-democratic variant in the first case, or of the republican-“socialist” variant in the second.

The unpacking of the two dimensions of liberal democracy also has important consequences when examining the forms of representation that “the popular” may take in free elections at the practical and empirical level, \textit{i.e.}, in the particular context of Latin American history and marked social inequality.

A first weakness is perhaps the large absence of categories of discourse, and possibly of thought, such as “citizenship” or “rule of law” and perhaps even “civil society”, among the concerned popular sectors. The discourse on exclusion, it seems to me, has often been in practice, a discourse about \textit{the other}, a discourse always made \textit{in the third person} in Latin America or Western Europe. What are, therefore, the categories of discourse current among the popular sectors, which unquestionably suffer from the very strong inequality prevalent in the continent? The answer would require first and foremost an empirical study,\textsuperscript{17} but nevertheless I suggest some clues and examine their theoretical and political consequences. The collective category of \textit{pueblo}, neither democratic in a liberal sense of democracy, nor anti-democratic in a precisely “popular” sense of democracy (rule by the majority, popular democracy, etc.), remains despite everything – at the beginning of the XXI century as half a century earlier – a fundamental “view from the bottom” in Latin America. So, what can the category of \textit{pueblo} teach us in contrast to our own political and/or scientific categories?

The category of \textit{pueblo}, empirically widespread in popular settings, refers to the capacity –

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\textsuperscript{16}The Alain Touraine school, particularly the one found in the work of diverse researchers of the CADIS in the 1990s, is the best expression of this position. On Latin America more specifically, the writings of Marcus Kurtz as well as of Philip Oxhorn, which are independent of Touraine at the theoretical level, take a similar line of analysis, but concentrate more on “the popular” and civil society. See, for example, Kurtz (1999).

\textsuperscript{17} Some sources, here. Ostiguy 98; Auyero; Levitsky; Nancy Power; Phil Oxhorn.
and possibly also, conversely, to the incapacity – of thinking about politics in a collective rather than individual way, or even in national terms rather than in terms such as that of the interest for the international aspect of human rights.

Consequently, the possibility is open for a representation of the popular and/or of the majority of the population – two basic criteria of the history of democratic advancement – that is not particularly liberal (we will discuss below its relationship to the “democratic”), nor even participatory in the Rousseauian sense “of responsible, decisional autonomy.”

It is thus necessary to examine more closely the relation between representation – probably the central and crucial element in the theoretical relationship between democracy, populism and social inequality – and the categories of democracy, citizenship and the “people” in the sense of the popular.

From a practical standpoint, the answer to the oft-posed question on the chances for democracy and citizenship in Latin America passes by the examination of representation in politics in a politically free but socially unequal context.

**Representation in politics.** Representation in politics, in fact, refers to two aspects, to two very different dimensions. On the one hand, representation in politics evokes first and foremost the mandate emanating from the fact of being in the place of someone, of acting in his or her name. It is what Pitkin (1972: chapters 6 to 9) calls representation “as acting for others.” This axis, in active politics and in democratic theory, is impregnated with a strong polarity. The polarizing question, along this axis, is the desirable degree of participation for the ensemble of the collectivity in decision making and government. The contentious issue is that of the representation of interests and preferences, be it in the bias of professional politicians accountable to an electorate, in the Schumpeterian version, or alternatively at the other extreme, in the development of a site, an *agora*, where the individual is able to express directly that which he or she prefers and to deliberate in the decision making process. And in fact, from the standpoint of the degree of decisional participation of the represented in the political representation, there is a whole spectrum ranging from Rousseau to Schumpeter (1950).

Pitkin (1972: 210-211) reminds us that:

> The more [the writer] sees interests ...as objective,...the more possible it becomes to for a representative to further the interest of his constituents without consulting their wishes.  
> In contrast, the more a writer sees interest, wants, and the like as definable only by the person who feels or has them, the more likely he is to require that a representative consult his constituents and act in response to what they ask of him.  
> The extremes are outside the concept altogether: a true expert taking care of a helpless child is no representative, and a man who merely consults and reflects without acting is not representing in the sense of substantively acting for others.

Briefly, there is a wide gap between the level of participation deemed ideal for a good democratic government in the “Schumpeterian” version, and the level of participation associated with the praise – itself a product of the criticism of the Schumpeterian model – for a more participatory democracy (Pateman 1970; Plamenatz 1973; Macpherson 1962; etc.). Nevertheless, these two opposite poles have *in common* the conception of representation in politics as a problem of
participation in the decision making process, an inevitable problem from the moment one has a representative “representing” (in the sense of acting in the name of his or her constituents) the represented.

Yet there is also, on the other hand, the “representation” in politics (both theoretically and empirically) in a much more literal sense of the term. In fact, it involves the original meaning of the term representation: the action of putting before one’s eyes; the fact of making it perceptible by means of an image, or a figure. It is also that which Pitkin (1972: chapter 4) calls descriptive representation, or representation “as standing for”. It consists of making the represented present by representing it (in the sense of theatrical representation, of performance) on the public stage, in the place of power. To represent, in the sense of “to stand for”, means “being synonymous with” (since the representative makes present, visible), or even “to signify”. This conception takes us thus directly into the realm of the senses, of signification, and also simply of the image, in contrast to the arena of the interest, of negotiation, and also of debate. Numerous “post-modern” writers, for example, also talk in regards to this issue of re-presentation.

In relation to this descriptive representation, “in the image of”, Pitkin (1972: 61 and 144) writes that:

...representing [,here,] is not acting with authority, or acting before being held to account... Rather, it depends on the representative’s characteristics, on what he is or is like...
The representative does not act for others; he “stands for” them, by virtue of a correspondence or connection between them, a resemblance or reflection.

[What is represented are] the characteristics of the actor.

This basic, literal, interpretation of “representation” has an important potential for active politics and for political science. In a situation of free elections, one could examine the type of representation, of images, that best represents us. The question can become very intense in the presence of strong social inequalities in all spheres – the socioeconomic, the level of education, the cultural, etc. For example, the perceived reality, and therefore, among other things, the needs, but also “the universe”, of a university student and of a bus driver in Latin America are surely not the same. The question here is: which representations, not only in terms of choice among politicians, but more in terms of actual images of the political, are “freely” preferred? Does one prefer, to take an example, the “serious” and “sober”, or the friendly informal and popular?

Small paragraph on Mansbridge. And a few words on Iris Young.

In a context of strong social inequalities, this “graphic” mode of representation also gives rise empirically to a polarisation, or in other words, an axis, or a spectrum. It roughly involves a cultural axis of class, fruit of the social (and socio-educational) disparities on the preferred representation in the political arena. I have termed (Ostiguy 1998) these two sociocultural poles in politics the “high” and the “low”. So we arrive at not only the type of politician preferred politically, but also at the preferred mode or style of intermediation (representation?): for example, a liberal-democratic politician, self-defined as “civilized” and who encourages an exchange of ideas; or a populist, with a strong fist, who solves all the problems and gives the impression of being physically accessible?

We are now able to put together our two axes of “representation”, this key concept for understanding both democracy and populism. By putting them together, we arrive thus at the question
See particularly the numerous writings of Kurt Weyland (1995, 1996, 1999) on this subject. From this perspective, the background question remains that of the difficult, ambiguous and tormented relation between populism and democracy.

Therefore, let us return to our two axes of representation. These two axes are, in fact, analytically perpendicular. Together, and also normatively, they give rise to a Cartesian space (Figure 7). In other words, these axes are neutral in relation to each other; hence they allow for each and every possible logic combination. One of these axes is constituted by the degree or mode of participation: at one pole, direct participation in the decision making process, or the Rousseauian ideal; at the other pole, participation limited to the choice of rulers, or the Schumpeterian definition of democracy. But this participation, no matter which pole, is participation in terms of actors autonomous in their thoughts and/or preferences, in their choice.

The second axis refers to the literal sense of “representation”. Approached superficially, representation in this case is nothing but images and spectacle. Nevertheless, this axis perhaps actually touches that which is most profound in the self, even in a pre-discursive manner. But certainly this axis of graphic, “descriptive” representation (standing for), in its polarity between the “high” and the “low” in politics graphically associated to the social contrasts in society, is not socially neutral.

Figure 7 here

It is hard to deny that populism, from the point of view of the graphic, physical and symbolic representation of the “culturally popular” – and even in its antagonistic dimension (Laclau 1977) – re-presents, stages, “incarnates” the culturally popular, the popular, more so than the procedural and impersonal liberal democracy. Populism is for this reason partly spectacle; but it would amount to a partisan anti-populism to reduce populism to this aspect without trying to understand the reason for this success, among those sectors “that want it”. Yet it is just as difficult to deny that the practice of populism, in relation to the degree of participation as an autonomous actor in the decision making process, i.e., in terms of the “Rousseau-Schumpeter” axis, is located at the Schumpeterian pole of representation. It involves among other things the phenomenon of the “delegative democracy” criticized by O’Donnell (1994). Populism is therefore simultaneously, and possibly by definition, particularly representative and non-representative (from a Rousseau standpoint).

In this schema about representation (Figure 1), the ideal of liberal democracy, encompassing all the normatively positive elements associated with democracy, especially a high degree of republican-popular participation, is situated very far from populism, in the opposite quadrant. This is one of the reasons why populism is in fact generally seen by its progressive critics in such a negative light. But existing liberal democracies are often situated in the quadrant combining a low level of

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participatory decision-making process at the executive level (Rousseau-Schumpeter axis of political representation) and a political system functioning according to “respectable”, procedural, legalistic, and more abstract, impersonal criteria (graphic axis of political representation).

Conclusion

One of the main challenges for the “democratic consolidation” remains perhaps the flagrant social inequalities, but plausibly not for the reasons put forward in the progressive circles during the transition. These social disparities, in sum, typically have a clear effect on the preferred representation, both in its mode and its content. To put the issue in academic terms, the fundamental question is that of the relationship between the social disparity and representation, linked together by the type of intermediation: personalistic, bureaucratic, legalistic, spectacular, clientelistic.

Political representation, particularly in the Schumpeterian pole, in fact implies a politician who mobilizes, who “represents”. Populism, in the unequal Latin American societies, remains consequently a rather plausible and probable mode of political representation, since it combines these two forms, at times simple (in terms of easiness) and “quasi-evident”, of representation of the popular: the Schumpeterian pole and the graphic representation of a certain “popular”.

At a broader level, discussions of types of regime typology may provide rich intellectual debate, at the necessary level between background concept and systematized concepts, before we engage in the all absorbing tasks of operationalization, validity measurements and scoring. It is also important that knowledge in the social science be cumulative and that social scientific categories do not become theoretically poorer than those used the ordinary language of a speech community. Regime classification thus still stands at the formidable intersection of methodology and the theory of comparative politic
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