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# Vox Populi or Vox Masculini? Populism and Gender in Northern Europe and South America

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# *Vox populi* or *vox masculini*? Populism and gender in Northern Europe and South America

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**ABSTRACT** Conceptually, populism has no specific relationship to gender; in fact, gender differences, like all other differences within 'the people', are considered secondary, if not irrelevant, to populist politics. Yet populist actors do not operate in a cultural or ideological vacuum. So perhaps it is the national culture and broader ideology used by populists that determine their gender position. To explore this argument, we compare prototypical cases of contemporary populist forces in two regions: the Dutch Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV, Party for Freedom) and the Dansk Folkeparti (DF, Danish People's Party) in Northern Europe, and the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV, United Socialist Party of Venezuela) and the Bolivian Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS, Movement for Socialism) in South America. Populists in Northern Europe are predominantly right-wing, yet mobilize within highly emancipated societies, while populists in South America are mainly left-wing and mobilize in strongly patriarchal societies. Our analysis provides a somewhat muddled picture. Although populists do not necessarily have a clear view on gender issues, the latter are clearly influenced by ideology and region. While left-wing populists tend to be relatively progressive within their traditional South American context, right-wing populists mainly defend the status quo in their progressive Northern European context. However, in absolute terms, the relatively high level of gender equality already achieved in Northern Europe is at least as advanced as the one proposed by the populists in South America.

**KEYWORDS** gender, Northern Europe, populism, radical right, sexism, South America



As with so many political phenomena, populism is mostly associated with (powerful) men. This applies most notably to populist actors, from Latin American populist presidents like Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina or Hugo Chávez in Venezuela to European populist leaders like Silvio Berlusconi in Italy or Jörg Haider in Austria. But in some cases even the populist masses are predominantly male: for example, most parties of the populist radical right (PRR) in Europe have an electorate in which men clearly outnumber women. Moreover, particularly in Latin America, populists have often been seen as prime examples of machismo politics, the antithesis of feminism, promoting sexist ideas and policies, hindering rather than advancing women's political

and social rights and position. Nevertheless, conceptually, populism has no specific relationship to gender; in fact, gender differences, like all other differences within 'the people', are considered secondary, if not irrelevant, to populist politics. Yet populist actors do not operate in a cultural or ideological vacuum. So perhaps it is the national culture and broader ideology used by populists that determine their gender position.

To be able to explore this argument, we need to compare populist actors that are on different sides of the ideological spectrum and operate in different national cultures with respect to gender norms. We find these in the populists in Northern Europe, who are predominantly right-wing yet mobilize within highly emancipated societies, and the populists in South America, who are mainly left-wing but mobilize in strongly patriarchal societies. We selected four prototypical cases of the contemporary populist forces in these two regions: the Dutch Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV, Party for Freedom) and the Dansk Folkeparti (DF, Danish People's Party) in Northern Europe, and the Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV, United Socialist Party of Venezuela) and the Bolivian Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS, Movement for Socialism) in South America. Using a broad variety of primary and secondary sources, including official party documents (such as party platforms and leader speeches), we have analysed these four populist actors on the basis of their representation of women, their preferred gender equality policies, and their discourse on women.[1]

Our comparative analysis shows that the relationship between populism and gender politics is highly dependent on the cultural context in which populist actors operate. Given that they are normally interested in winning votes (like most political actors), it is not surprising that populists are inclined to take mainstream positions on aspects that are not central to their own agenda. However, populism never appears in a pure form, but rather in combination with other sets of ideas, which also influence the overall agenda that populist forces end up defending. In short, in practice the gender politics of populist actors are influenced by a combination of the national culture and accompanying ideology rather than by populist ideology itself.



## Theoretical framework

Populism is a bitterly contested concept that has been defined in a broad variety of ways in place and time. While this is not the place to go into this debate, it should be noted that particularly strong differences exist between the study of populism in Europe and in Latin America. In the latter,

1 Given the fact that this article is, first and foremost, meant as a theoretical contribution —and that it covers a broad spread of populist actors and still has to meet the usual word limit—the individual analyses of the four actors are presented in a fairly concise and, therefore, limited manner. Consequently, the gender politics of each individual populist actor deserves much further study.

definitions tend to stress either the economic or the organizational aspects of populism, whereas European definitions focus predominantly on the political aspects. In recent years some convergence has started to develop in the field, among both European scholars and between scholars of the two regions, but it would go much too far to claim an emerging consensus. That said, our definition reflects this growing convergence and has been successfully applied to both regions.[2]

In line with all contributions to this special issue, we define 'populism' as a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite', and that holds that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.[3] While this might appear an overly broad concept to some, the definition actually excludes most political actors in the world. The two main oppositions of populism are elitism and pluralism. Elitism is the mirror-image of populism, in that it shares the overall outlook on society but instead sees 'the elite' as pure and 'the people' as corrupt, and wants politics to represent elite opinions and values. Pluralism, in sharp contrast, believes that society consists of various heterogeneous and cross-cutting groups, and that politics should be based on compromises between these groups.

Our definition of populism says nothing about gender issues and roles. In fact, one would assume that 'the people' include both men and women and that the differences between them, as all other differences within the category of 'the people', are secondary to the primary battle between 'the people' and 'the elite'. As Ernesto Laclau has pointed out, populist constituencies and leaders are usually quite ambiguous about who precisely constitutes 'the people'.[4] They put much more emphasis on the idea that 'the elite' is interested in constructing artificial divisions within 'the people' in order to impede their unification. Accordingly, populists normally spare no effort in attacking their enemy, usually depicted as a corrupt group of powerful actors working against 'the general will'. In short, as populism is based first and foremost on a Manichaean distinction between 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite', it does not hold a specific position on gender issues and roles.

There is a possibility that a populist view on gender does exist, however, even if it is *secondary* to the primary anti-elite struggle. For example, populists could have a gendered perception of their primary struggle, in which 'the people' are described in traditional masculine terms, and 'the elite' in

2 See Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, 'Exclusionary vs. inclusionary populism: comparing contemporary Europe and Latin America', *Government and Opposition*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2013, 147–74; and Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (eds), *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 2012).

3 Cas Mudde, 'The populist zeitgeist', *Government and Opposition,* vol. 39, no. 4, 2004, 541–63 (543).

4 Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso 2005).

traditional feminine terms; in other words, the enemy could be feminized. However, to underpin this kind of distinction, populism needs the help of other factors. For instance, in previous research we have shown that the main differences between contemporary populist forces in Latin America and Europe stem from their employment of specific ideological features that are related to the grievances existing in each of these regional contexts.[5] In line with this finding, we believe that whether or not populist actors and followers have a gendered characterization of 'the people' and 'the elite' depends mainly on two factors: the cultural setting in which they operate and the other ideological features to which they adhere. For the sake of clarity, it is worth explaining each of these factors briefly.

By comparing prototypical cases of contemporary populism in Northern Europe and South America we are considering two world regions that differ in many aspects. Making broad generalizations about each of these regions is always complicated, as there are also many differences within them. Nevertheless, it is not far-fetched to suggest that the views on gender issues and roles in Northern Europe are much more emancipated than those in South America.[6] This means that we are comparing populist forces working in very different cultural settings, particularly when it comes to gender norms. Accordingly, we argue that, given that populist actors roughly express the 'popular' views on gender issues and roles—as expressed in their respective country—they adopt a masculine position in South America and a relatively gender-equal approach in Northern Europe.

Our comparative analysis is not only interesting due to the different cultural contexts in which populist forces operate, but also because we contrast very different manifestations of populism. As a thin-centred ideology, populism seldom exists alone; in most cases, populist actors combine their populism with other ideologies, such as other thin-centred ideologies like nationalism or thick ideologies like socialism.[7] The literature on populism generally distinguishes between right-wing populism in Europe and left-wing populism in Latin America. We here use 'left' and 'right' following the Italian philosopher Norberto Bobbio, who sees the distinction to be principally based on support for equality.[8] Assuming that the affiliated ideology of populists primarily drives their view on gender issues and roles, we expect that populist parties in Northern Europe would not give that much

5 Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, 'Populism', in Michael Freeden, Lyman Tower Sargent and Marc Stears (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013), 493–512 (499–500).

6 See, for example, Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003).

7 Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1996).

8 Norberto Bobbio, *Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction*, trans. from the Italian by Allan Cameron (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1996).

centrality to the issue of gender equality, while populist forces in South America would emphasize support for gender equality as it is a form of equality.

## Populism in Northern Europe and South America

Before we compare the relationship between populism and gender in the two regions, let us first briefly introduce the populist actors that we study in this paper and explain why we decided to focus the analysis on two particular cases for each region. Populism is a relatively new phenomenon in Western Europe. Although some populist movements emerged in Western Europe shortly after the Second World War (most notably Poujadism in France), populist forces have only come to the fore in Northern Europe in the 1970s, with the rise of the Progress parties in Denmark and Norway. Today, right-wing populist parties exist throughout Europe. The literature tends to distinguish between two subtypes of right-wing populism: neoliberal populism, which combines populism with neoliberalism, and national populism, which combines populism with nationalism.[9] We focus here specifically on the subtype of national populism, which is the more successful of the two in Europe, and in particular on the populist radical right. PRR parties share an ideology that combines at least the following three features: nativism, authoritarianism and populism. Whereas nativism is a combination of nationalism and xenophobia, and strives for a monocultural state hostile to 'alien' influences, authoritarianism is the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority are severely punished.[10]

While Northern Europe does not refer to a precisely drawn geographical territory, like Scandinavia or South America, it is a term often used to describe a group of countries that are all part of Germanic or Nordic culture: most notably, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. The most important PRR parties in Northern Europe are the DF in Denmark and the Dutch PVV. Both parties belong to the set of principal political parties in their respective countries in terms of electoral support and political influence. The DF has been the supporting party of three consecutive minority governments between 2001 and 2011, whereas the PVV performed the same function for a Dutch minority government between 2010 and 2012. In the last parliamentary elections, both the DF and the PVV came in third, with 12.3 and 10.1 per cent of the votes, respectively. One difference between these two parties, however, is that the DF was co-founded (in 1995) by a woman, Pia Kjærsgaard, who led the party until 2012, while the PVV leader (and only official member) is a man, Geert Wilders. This difference allows us also to

9 Hans-Georg Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 1994).

10 See Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007), ch. 1.

investigate whether the sex of the populist leader has an effect on the relationship between populism and gender issues and roles.

South America is a well-established geographical concept, referring to a region with a relatively similar history and culture. The continent has a long history of populism, dating back to the 1930s. In recent years, following the right-wing neo-populist period of the late 1980s to the early 1990s, a new 'wave' of populism that is (again) left-wing has swept through South America. The current examples of South American populism are attempting to implement a new model of development that is at odds with the 'Washington consensus'.[11] Leaders like (the late) Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador have developed a populist ideology that criticizes 'the elite' for their support of free-market policies, which have been allegedly implemented against the will of 'the people'. From this perspective, neoliberal reform programmes are seen as one of the main causes of political alienation, and growing state intervention is defined as a necessary measure to improve the integration of excluded sectors of society.

In this contribution we will analyse two of the main examples of this contemporary left-wing populist wave in more detail: Hugo Chávez and the PSUV in Venezuela, and Evo Morales and the MAS in Bolivia. A comparison of these two cases is particularly interesting, because there is at least one important difference between them. While the former has been organized from above, and has been highly dependent on the figure of the late Chávez, the latter has strong grassroots networks with an important level of political autonomy from the party leadership.[12] Hence, an analysis of these two cases can perhaps also help us identify whether the gender dynamic in populist leftist parties in contemporary Latin America is related to the type of link that they maintain to civil society.



## Gender representation in populist parties

If one thinks of populism, one tends to think of strong, male presidents like Rafael Correa in Ecuador and party leaders like Jean-Marie Le Pen in France. There are, however, also several examples of female populist leaders. While some have attained most of their power because of personal relations to a male leader, like Marine Le Pen in France or Keiko Fujimori in Peru (although both also clearly have their own qualities and power bases), others have made

11 See, among others, Kirk A. Hawkins, *Venezuela's Chavismo and Populism in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 2010); and Kenneth M. Roberts, 'Repoliticizing Latin America: the revival of populist and leftist alternatives', *Woodrow Wilson Center Update on the Americas*, November 2007.

12 Steven Levitsky and Kenneth M. Roberts, 'Latin America's "left turn": a framework for analysis', in Steven Levitsky and Kenneth M. Roberts (eds), *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 2011), 1–28 (13).

a career without the help of such a male 'patron': think of Pauline Hanson in Australia, Pia Kjærsgaard in Denmark and, of course, Sarah Palin in the United States. That said, in this section, we look at the role of women in contemporary populist movements and parties in Northern Europe and South America, in particular at their levels of representation in (supra-) national parliaments.

## *Northern Europe*

PRR parties in Europe are, for the most part, *Männerparteien* (men's parties), and the parties in Northern Europe are no exception.[13] They are predominantly led by men, represented by men and supported by men. Interestingly, this is almost equally the case for parties with female leaders, like the Danish DF. Even those parties led by strong female politicians are predominantly represented by men within the various party organs and parliaments, and their electorates reflect the usual 2:1 male dominance.[14]

The Folketing is among the most gender-equal parliaments in the world. The current parliamentary average is 39 per cent, that is, 70 out of 179 MPs are women. Somewhat surprisingly, like other Scandinavian countries, Denmark has seen its gender imbalance stabilize over the past decades.[15] The first parliamentary faction of the DF, which broke off from the larger faction of the neoliberal populist Progress Party in 1995, counted four members, including one woman, Pia Kjærsgaard. Since then it has increased its total number of MPs and the percentage of women MPs of its faction to a high of 25 and 40 per cent in 2007 (see Table 1). The representation of women in the DF parliamentary faction has been 31 per cent (1998), 41 per cent (2001), 38 per cent (2005), 40 per cent (2007), and 36 per cent (2011); only in 1998 and 2011 was it below the average of all other parliamentary parties (-7 per cent and -3 per cent, respectively), while in 2001 (+3 per cent) and 2007 (+1 per cent) it was slightly higher (in 2005 it was average).[16] In the current Folketing the female representation in the DF faction is 36 per cent, which is 3 per cent below the parliamentary average of 39 per cent. However, as has always been the case with regard to women representation in the Folketing, and other parliaments around the world, there are 'significant partisan

13 Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, ch. 4.

14 The sex gap of the DF electorate has actually closed significantly since the party became a supporting party of the minority government in 2001, which is in line with the thesis that women voters are more influenced by a party's 'acceptability'. See Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, ch. 4.

15 See Christina Fiig, 'Women in Danish politics: challenges to the notion of gender equality', in Joyce Gelb and Marian Lief Palley (eds), *Women and Politics around the World: A Comparative History and Survey*, 2 vols (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO 2009), II, 311–28.

16 See Anders Ravik Jupkås, 'Feminization of right-wing populist parties in Scandinavia: the *Männerparteien* thesis revisited', 2014, unpublished manuscript, 8.

**Table 1** Number of female and total MPs and MEPs of the DF and the PVV, 1995–2014

| | National parliament (lower house) | | | | | | European parliament | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Danish People's Party (DF) | *1995* 1/4 | *1998* 4/13 | *2001* 9/22 | *2005* 9/24 | *2007* 10/25 | *2011* 8/22 | *1999* 0/1 | *2004* 0/1 | *2009* 1/2 | *2014* 1/4 |
| Party for Freedom (PVV) | | | | *2006* 1/11 | *2010* 4/24 | *2012* 3/15 | *1999* | *2004* | *2009* 1/4 | *2014* 1/4 |

differences'.[17] For example, women's representation in the various parties in the current legislature ranges from 62 per cent in the Socialistisk Folkepart (Socialist People's Party) and 59 per cent in the Radikale Venstre (Social Liberal Party) to 32 per cent in Venstre (Liberal Party) and DF.[18] Interestingly, of the three parties with a female party leader, two had factions with women's representation below the parliamentary average: the DF and the Socialdemokraterne (Social Democratic Party) at 35 per cent.

Like the DF, the PVV emerged out of a split within the parliament, when Geert Wilders left the conservative Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD, People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) and founded his one-man Groep Wilders (Group Wilders) faction in 2004. Given that Wilders is the only official member of the PVV, the party is almost completely identified with him, and therefore has a strongly masculine image. This wasn't helped by the fact that the PVV had just 1 woman out of 11 MPs (9 per cent) in its first parliamentary period (2006–10). However, since then it has increased this percentage to 17 per cent in its second period (2010–12), and 20 per cent in the current parliament (see Table 1). Still, the PVV has always been well below the parliamentary average. In fact, in the period 2010–12, it had the second lowest percentage of women, after the notorious, orthodox Protestant, Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP, State Reformed Party), which had to be forced by the Dutch court in 2006 to accept female party members and which believes that the Bible forbids women from leading men. In the current parliament, the average is 39 per cent and there are only two factions with lower percentages of women than the PVV: the SGP and the pensioners' party 50PLUS.[19]

The situation in the European Parliament is even worse, which is in part a consequence of the much smaller size of the factions (see Table 1). For

17 Fiig, 'Women in Danish politics', 317.

18 This excludes the four one-person factions in the current Folketing, of which two are (all) women and two are (all) men. All data are from the official *Folketing* website at www.thedanishparliament.dk (viewed 8 November 2014).

19 'Onderzoek: Diversiteit in de Tweede Kamer 2012', available on the *Pro Demos* website at www.prodemos.nl/content/download/6098/29889/file/Onderzoek%20diversiteit%20TK2012%20definitief.pdf (viewed 8 November 2014).

example, the DF has been represented in the European Parliament since 1999, but was a one-member faction in the first two legislatures. In 2009 the second elected MEP for the DF was a woman who left the party and faction in 2011. In 2014 the DF became the biggest Danish party in the European elections, gaining 4 seats, of which only one went to a woman (25 per cent). The PVV gained its first entry in 2009 and its four-member faction included one woman (25 per cent). Interestingly, she was placed lowest on the list and only got a seat because Geert Wilders, who also had been elected, declined to take up his seat.[20] In 2014 the PVV again gained 4 seats of which one was taken up by a woman. The European Parliament has had on average about 30 per cent female members.[21] This represents generally low to very low figures, with the exception of the 50 per cent of the DF in 2009–14.

In conclusion, the descriptive representation of women in the PRR factions of the national and supranational parliaments in Northern Europe is low and (much) lower than the national averages. While the percentage is higher for the party with a female leader (DF), this is only the case in the national parliament. Moreover, this is consistent with the finding that more established and successful parties tend to achieve better gender representation.[22] Finally, while the PVV clearly stands out from all other Dutch parties with a medium- or large-sized parliamentary faction, the DF does not compare that badly with some other (right-wing) parties in the national parliament.

## South America

Although there have been several populist leaders, movements and parties in South America, little has been written about the relationship between populism and gender in this region. In this regard, one of the few cases that has received more attention is the neoliberal regime of Alberto Fujimori in Peru (1990–2000), because he could count on the support of poor women and fostered a process of elite change in favour of women.[23]

While it is true that Chávez and Morales have been prone to making masculine appeals to the electorate (see below), it is important to look at the

20 As a consequence of the Lisbon Treaty, the Netherlands was awarded an extra seat in the European Parliament in 2010, which went to the PVV. That seat was taken up by a man, which lowered the rate of female representation to 20 per cent.

21 Willy Beauvallet and Sébastien Michon, 'General patterns of women's representation at the European Parliament: did something change after 2004?', trans. from the French by Yves Bart, 1 May 2009, paper presented at the ECPR's Fourth Pan-European Conference on EU Politics, Riga, Latvia, 25 September 2008, available on the *PRISME University of Strasbourg* website at http://prisme.u-strasbg.fr/workingpapers/WPBeauvalletMichon2009.pdf (viewed 8 November 2014).

22 Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, ch. 4.

23 Stéphanie Rousseau, *Women's Citizenship in Peru: The Paradoxes of Neopopulism in Latin America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2009).

**Table 2** Female representation in the Senate of Bolivia and National Assembly of Venezuela, 2005–16

***Senate of Bolivia (Cámara de Senadores of the Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional de Bolivia)***

| Party | Parliamentary period | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2005–10 | | 2010–15 | |
| MAS | 1 | 8.4% | 12 | 46% |
| Others | 0 | 0% | 4 | 40% |

***National Assembly of Venezuela (Asamblea Nacional de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela)***

| Party | Parliamentary period | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2005–10 | | 2011–16 | |
| PSUV | 24 | 14.8% | 21 | 12.96% |
| Others | 3 | 1.85% | 6 | 3.7% |



political parties that have supported them. The representation of women in the parliaments of Bolivia and Venezuela actually increased after Morales and Chávez came to power. Moreover, their left-wing parties (MAS and PSUV, respectively) have more women MPs than the other parties in their respective parliaments. In Venezuela the PSUV had 15 per cent women in the 2005–10 legislature, and has 13 per cent in the current parliament, which compares very favourably to the pathetic 2 and 4 per cent of the other parties, respectively.[24] The increase in women representatives is particularly striking in Bolivia, in which the percentage of MAS female MPs went from 8 to a stunning 46 per cent, while that of the other parties went from a shameful 0 to a very respectable 40 per cent.[25] While this is undoubtedly related, at least in part, to the introduction of a gender quota, it is important to note that a quota had already been introduced at the end of the 1990s, but was set at only 33 per cent for the lower house and 25 per cent for the Senate.[26]

In short, in South America, the left-wing populist parties perform (much) better in terms of women's descriptive representation than other parties in the

24 Calculations based on information on the website of the *Asamblea Nacional de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela*, available at www.asambleanacional.gob.ve (viewed 11 November 2014).

25 Calculations based on information on the website of the *Vicepresidencia del Estado Plurinacional/ Presidencia de la Asamblea Legislativa Plurinacional*, available at www.vicepresidencia.gob.bo/spip.php?page=parlamentarios (viewed 11 November 2014).

26 Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer, *Political Power and Women´s Representation in Latin America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 2010), 50.

region. This is in contrast to Northern Europe, where the right-wing populist parties perform (well) below average, although not always much worse than other right-wing parties. At the same time, in absolute terms, the differences are not so great: on average, women's descriptive representation is 27 per cent within MAS and 14 per cent within PSUV, which is not much different from the roughly 30 per cent of the DF and the 15 per cent of the PVV.

## Policy positions on the role of women

Even if populist movements and parties are mostly led by men, mostly represented by male party members and mostly supported by male voters, this does not in itself mean that they hold traditional views on gender roles and relations. After all, most progressive legislation on gender equality was introduced by male politicians and supported by predominantly male legislatures (as a consequence of the lack of powerful women). So what is the position of populist parties on gender issues and what kind of policies are supported with regard to gender (in)equality? As the introduction to this special issue points out, this is not a trivial question, since it is unclear whether populist forces present a consistent picture of what should count as women's interests.

### *Northern Europe*

In one of the few studies on European 'extreme right' parties and gender, the editors make a distinction between a 'traditional' and a 'modernized traditional' image of women.

> The one corresponds to the traditional feminine clichés, that women have the responsibility for raising the kids and housework, and have more empathy and placidity (*Friedfertigkeit*), a greater instinct to protect etc. The second image of women, on the other hand, takes into account that women are economically independent (or want to be), (want to) have a professional career, and that family responsibility for children and the household are not a woman's only purposes in life.[27]

Importantly, both traditional and modernized traditional women believe in different gender roles, and that women are the ones mainly responsible for home and family, for which they are predestined because of their natural, reproductive ability.

27 Helga Amesberger and Brigitte Halbmayr, 'Einleitung', in Helga Amesberger and Brigitte Halbmayr (eds), *Rechtsextreme Parteien—eine mögliche Heimat für Frauen?* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich 2002), 17–26 (20). Translations, unless otherwise stated, are by the authors.

Like all PRR parties, the DF stresses the importance of the traditional family for society in its party programme: 'Denmark depends on the conditions families are offered. The ties of intimacy between husband and wife and children and parents are the pillars of Danish society and of great importance for the future of the country. Therefore, families must be guaranteed the best possible preconditions.'[28] Similarly, the PVV emphasizes the crucial importance of the family, that is, to raise and educate children and future citizens, but it does not emphasize the specific role of the mother in this process.[29] While both parties want the state to encourage families to have (many) more children, Islamophobia sometimes trumps national(ist) concerns. For example, the DF and PVV want to limit state child support (*kinderbijslag*) to only the first two children; the PVV also wants to stop child support to people living abroad, clearly targeting immigrants who have returned to their country of origin. Finally, the PVV opposes any further cuts to childcare.[30]

Abortion is not a major concern for the parties. The PVV does not mention abortion in its election programmes, and seems internally divided on the issue. While some of its MPs had suggested limiting the term for abortions, from the current 24 weeks to 18 and even 12 weeks, they later accepted the 24-week term for abortions that are medically indicated. For other abortions, however, PVV MPs still want to limit the term and they want people to pay for their own procedure.[31] The DF made no mention of abortion in its early programmes and only included it in 2009. Its position is summarized on its website: 'The Danish People's Party is in favour of the current abortion law. However, we feel it is worrying that so many people choose to have an abortion. Although people should have the right to choose an abortion.'[32]

In most cases the populist radical right seems to accept existing gender roles in their societies. According to the DF, Denmark is a country with 'real gender equality'. At the same time, the party admits that 'full gender equality' is not yet achieved.[33] While both parties support full gender equality, they don't consider it a high priority and, even more importantly, they don't want the state to 'force' society to become more equal. The PVV, in particular,

28 'The party program of the Danish People's Party', October 2002, available on the *Dansk Folkeparti* website at www.danskfolkeparti.dk/The_Party_Program_of_the_Danish_Peoples_Party (viewed 11 November 2014).

29 See Partij voor de Vrijheid, *Verkiezingsprogramma PVV 2010–2015: De agenda van hoop en optimisme: Een tijd om te kiezen: PVV 2010–2015* (The Hague: PVV 2010); and Geert Wilders, *Onafhankelijkheidsverklaring* (The Hague: Groep Wilders 2005).

30 Partij voor de Vrijheid, *Verkiezingsprogramma PVV 2012–2017:* Hún *Brussel*, óns *Nederland* (The Hague: PVV 2012), 25.

31 See, for example, Jaco van Lambalgen, 'Vrouw in het nieuws', *Opzij*, April 2008; and Gijs Herderscheê, 'PVV: abortus moet moeilijker', *Algemeen Dagblad*, 27 April 2011.

32 'Abort' (in Danish), on the *Dansk Folkeparti* website at www.danskfolkeparti.dk/Abort.asp (viewed 11 November 2014).

33 See Anders Ravid Jupkås, 'Preliminary research note on populist (radical) right in Scandinanvia and gender issues', 2014, unpublished manuscript, 4.

opposes all '"positive" discrimination, "affirmative action" or other diversity nonsense (*diversiteitsgeneuzel*)'.[34] In essence, neither party considers women to be a 'weak' group that needs state protection. Even if some acknowledge that 'full' gender equality is not yet achieved, not even within the 'native' population, they argue that women can take care of it themselves and don't need to be protected by the state.[35] This is radically different for the Muslim immigrant population, however.

Increasingly gender issues have become almost exclusively tied to the overarching issue of immigration or, better, integration. It is here that right-wing populist parties most strongly profess their defence of the equality of man and woman. The DF and PVV have both embraced gender equality most enthusiastically as a weapon against the alleged 'Islamization' of Europe. The PVV sees its defence of 'women's emancipation' primarily in light of the perceived 'mass immigration' into and 'Islamization' of the Netherlands.[36] This process, according to Wilders's prologue to the 2010 party programme, 'flushes decades of women emancipation through the toilet'.[37] The PVV 'thus' opposes 'Islamic gender apartheid' and wants female genital mutilation to be severely punished.[38] Despite all the rhetoric, this debate is more about national culture than about gender equality for the right-wing populist parties. This can be seen most clearly in Denmark: 'The Danish People's Party, which has only in a very few instances supported policies of gender equality for ethnic Danish women, often argues that gender equality is a "Danish value" which in its view contrasts with the perceived oppression of women in migrant families.'[39] Still, perhaps in an effort to give more legitimacy to its defence of gender equality within the immigration debate, the DF has included a whole new chapter on gender equality in its 2009 party programme, which also speaks to the issue outside of the context of immigration.[40]

In conclusion, gender equality and women's issues feature only rarely in the election manifestos of PRR parties in Northern Europe and, when they do, it

34 Partij voor de Vrijheid, *Verkiezingsprogramma PVV 2012–2017*, 25.

35 See also Susi Meret and Birte Siim, 'Gender, populism and politics of belonging: discourses of right-wing populist parties in Denmark, Norway and Austria', in Birte Siim and Monika Mokre (eds), *Negotiating Gender and Diversity in an Emergent European Public Sphere* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012), 78–96.

36 See also Sarah L. de Lange and Liza Mügge, 'Gender and right-wing populism in the Low Countries: ideological variations across parties and time', in these pages.

37 Partij voor de Vrijheid, *Verkiezingsprogramma PVV 2010–2015*, 6.

38 Ibid., 15.

39 Birte Siim and Anette Borchorst, 'The multicultural challenge to the Danish welfare state: tensions between gender equality and diversity', in Janet Fink and Åsa Lundqvist (eds), *Changing Relations of Welfare: Family, Gender and Migration in Britain and Scandinavia* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2010), 133–54 (145); see also Susi Meret, 'The Danish People's Party, the Italian Northern League and the Austrian Freedom Party in a Comparative Perspective: Party Ideology and Electoral Support', PhD dissertation, Aalborg University, 2009.

40 See Meret and Siim, 'Gender, populism and politics of belonging'.

is traditionally in the section on 'family politics' and increasingly under 'immigration'. On family policies, the image of women depicted by the parties is not typically traditional, but it does stress the importance of families and of the different roles of men and women. The women's issues that are discussed as part of the immigration debate are clearly neither traditional nor modernized traditional, but instead emphasize the (liberal) equality between men and women as a national value. At the same time, both the DF and PVV discuss family issues and the job market in gender-neutral terms and seem to be content with the policy status quo, which, in Denmark and the Netherlands, reflects a comparatively high degree of gender equality. Essentially, the parties consider gender equality as a defining feature of the national culture, which has to be defended against 'foreign' influences, most notably Islam.



### *South America*

South America has seen several populist leaders in power, who have tried to implement new policies in different areas. Regarding gender, it is difficult to determine whether populist presidents follow a specific pattern. While it is true that Perón extended the right of suffrage to women, he also promoted a traditional image of women as mothers and did not support a feminist agenda.[41] Contemporary populists like Morales and the recently deceased Chávez are also characterized by an ambivalent position on gender equality. While they have favoured the integration of women into politics, they tend to employ a masculine language (see below), in which there is not much space for feminist demands. Nevertheless, the policies that their governments have implemented aim to guarantee women autonomy and equality.

Chávez and the PSUV have supported the construction of a new Venezuela that would be a role model for other societies concerned with 'transcending capitalism' and moving towards the 'socialism of the 21st century'. The Chavista project seeks, in particular, to give voice to discriminated groups and empower excluded sectors, such as the poor and women. Indeed, in his famous talk show *Aló Presidente*, which was broadcast on Venezuelan state television and radio station every Sunday, Chávez said: 'Without the true liberation of women, a full liberation of people would be impossible. I am convinced that an authentic socialist also ought to be an authentic feminist.'[42] This idea is in line with the overall mission of Chávez's 'Bolivarian Revolution', that is, the development of a (true) participatory democracy in

41 Karen Kampwirth, 'Introduction', in Karen Kampwirth (ed.), *Gender and Populism in Latin America: Passionate Politics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press 2010), 1–24 (4).

42 Hugo Chávez, 8 March 2009, quoted in Hanna Katriina Rantala, 'What are the gender implications of the Bolivarian Revolution? Liberation, equality and gender in present-day Venezuela', *POLIS Journal*, vol. 2, 2009, 1–46 (1).

which the people play an active role on a regular basis and have the means to tackle existing forms of discrimination and foster socio-economic equality.

Not by coincidence, the so-called *libro rojo* (red booklet) of the PSUV states the following on the subject of women:

> The Bolivarian Revolution recognizes the historical role that women have exercised in our history in general and the revolutionary process in particular, and therefore it promotes public policies that guarantee gender equity. The party rejects any type of discrimination against women and does not allow her use as sexual object or merchandise.[43]

While it is true that Chávez and the PSUV frequently exalt the role of women and talk about the struggle for gender equality in Venezuela, the main topic is inevitably socialism and the defence of the Bolivarian Revolution. In other words, feminism is certainly on the agenda of Chavismo, but its relevance fluctuates over time.

Evo Morales and the MAS have also shown their support for the transformation of gender relations. A good example of this gender friendly approach can be found in the new constitution of the country, prepared by a constituent assembly, in which women rights' activists were keen participants. For instance, Article 48 declares that

> the state will promote the incorporation of women into the work force and guarantee the same remuneration as men for work of equal value, both in the public and the private sphere. Women cannot be discriminated against or dismissed from their jobs because of their marital status, pregnancy, age, physical traits or the number of their children.[44]

Moreover, Article 66 holds that 'sexual and reproductive rights are guaranteed for women and men', while Article 210 states that 'the internal election of candidates and leaders of citizens' organizations and political parties will be regulated and supervised by the Plurinational Electoral Organ, which will guarantee the equal participation of men and women'.[45]

Nevertheless, it would be an exaggeration to say that gender issues were at the centre of attention of Morales's government. His administration is above all focused on alleviating poverty, fostering the better inclusion of the indigenous population and advancing a new approach to foreign affairs to counteract the influence of the United States in Latin America. Moreover, while it is true that some policies on gender equality have been discussed and to a certain extent implemented by Evo Morales since his coming to power in

43 Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela, *Libro Rojo* (Caracas: PSUV 2010), 30.

44 *República del Bolivia, Constitución de 2009*, available on Georgetown University's *Political Database of the Americas* at http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Bolivia/bolivia09.html (viewed 12 November 2014).

45 Ibid.

2005, this has been a conflicted process because of a struggle between two groups.[46] On the one hand, there is a faction of indigenous, lower-class and rural women who campaign for the 'decolonization' of the country on the assumptions that the subordination of women is of colonial origin and that aboriginal culture is based on notions of gender complementarity. On the other hand, there is a faction of liberal, middle-class and urban women who oppose the legitimization of indigenous sociopolitical practices, institutions and norms because, in their view, aboriginal culture is characterized by male-dominated structures. Given that these two groups of female activists try to influence the government, any policy debate and reform on women's rights opens up an arena of contestation in which Morales does not want to interfere directly. As Stéphanie Rousseau found in her detailed analysis,[47] in the discussions on the content of the new constitution of Bolivia, which was approved by a referendum in 2009, the indigenous and feminist organizations presented different proposals on gender issues, and Morales did not take sides in this specific debate. Therefore, as already noted in the introduction to this special issue, the diversity of women as a collective, and the fact that there are different types of feminisms, means that women often hold conflicting views on gender issues.[48]

## A gendered discourse?

Surprisingly, particularly given the longstanding interest in populist discourse and style, little research has been done on the possible gendered aspects of populism. One of the few scholars to have explicitly dealt with the relationship between machismo and populism in South America is the anthropologist Xavier Andrade. In his fascinating ethnographic study of Guayaquil, the largest city in Ecuador, he notes: 'One of the most intriguing aspects of the populist tradition in Guayaquil is the extent to which populist leaders convert hegemonic notions of masculinity into a powerful, albeit imaginary, weapon for popular redemption against the oligarchy and/or the ruling elites.'[49] Similarly, Ov Cristian Norocel finds, in his innovative study of the PRR Sweden Democrats, that the party 'accommodates a centrally located heterosexual masculinity embodied by the "conservative son" conceptual

46 Anders Burman, '*Chachawarmi*: silence and rival voices on decolonisation and gender politics in Andean Bolivia', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2011, 65–91.

47 Stéphanie Rousseau, 'Indigenous and feminist movements at the Constituent Assembly in Bolivia: locating the representation of indigenous women', *Latin American Research Review,* vol. 46, no. 2, 2011, 5–28.

48 See Niels Spierings, Andrej Zaslove, Liza Mügge and Sarah de Lange, 'Gender and populist radical-right politics: an introduction', in these pages.

49 Xavier Andrade, 'Machismo and politics in Ecuador: the case of Pancho Jaime', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2001, 299–315 (307).

metaphor' in its attempts to (re)define Swedishness.[50] To what extent can we find gendered discourse in the cases under scrutiny?

## *Northern Europe*

Although right-wing populists are regularly portrayed as sexists in the media, almost all the strident examples in the literature and media are taken from Eastern and Southern Europe. Among the most machismo European populists are undoubtedly the Italians, most notably former three-time Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi—whose relentless sexism led tens of thousands of Italians to sign a petition entitled 'this man offends us—stop him'— and Lega Nord leader Umberto Bossi, (in)famous for his outrageous 'slogan', *La Lega Nord ce l'ha duro* ('The Northern League has a hard-on').

In Northern Europe populists do not have a particularly masculine, let alone machismo or sexist, discourse. That this is the case for the DF, which has been led by a woman for most of its existence, is perhaps not so surprising. Still, Pia Kjærsgaard has done little to challenge traditionally gendered discourse and language; for example, she used the male title 'formand' (chairman) throughout her period as party leader. She also explicitly expressed her distaste for feminism (or, in her terms, 'elite feminists' and 'gender communists') and often presented herself politically as an 'ordinary housewife'.[51] This was in line with the DF discourse on women, which often emphasized women as mothers, before a change was evident, at least since 2009, when the party discourse started to portray women more and more as workers.[52]

Despite the fact that the PVV is a very male-dominated party, often simply reduced to party leader Geert Wilders, the discourse is very similar to that of the DF. Most of it is remarkably gender-blind and the main populist distinction between 'the people' and 'the elite' is likewise not really explicitly gendered. This, of course, also means that it does not contest the current more masculine discourse. As far as 'the people' and 'the elite' are explicitly discussed, it is largely in gender-neutral and mostly moral terms. An interesting example is Geert Wilders's favourite rhetorical device, which is to refer to 'the Dutch people' as 'Henk and Ingrid', two common, if somewhat dated, Dutch first names for a man and a woman, respectively. In classic nativist fashion, he further contrasts the Dutch people with the immigrant

50 Ov Cristian Norocel, 'Constructing radical right populist resistance: metaphors of heterosexist masculinities and the family question in Sweden', *NORMA: Nordic Journal for Masculinity Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2010, 169–83 (181).

51 See Jupkås, 'Feminization of right-wing populist parties in Scandinavia', 7; and Susi Meret, 'Female charismatic leadership and gender: Pia Kjærsgaard and the Danish People's Party', in these pages.

52 See Jupkås, 'Feminization of right-wing populist parties in Scandinavia', 13.

population, by arguing that 'Henk and Ingrid pay for Ali and Fatima',[53] two common immigrant names in the Netherlands.

It is almost exclusively in the context of immigration or, as the parties prefer, 'Islamization' that the traditional image of the woman as vulnerable and a potential victim is expressed. While most stories about immigration and crime, intrinsically linked in the discourse of most right-wing populists, are not explicitly gendered, several do focus in particular on a threat to women. For example, in his 'Declaration of Independence', Geert Wilders referred to 'the freedom for your *mother* to walk safely on the street at night' (our emphasis).[54] Similarly, the 2011 DF propaganda video *I Am Denmark* shows images of a (white) woman and (white) children behind the slogan '*protect* my own culture' (our emphasis).[55]



### South America

Without a doubt, populism in South America is characterized by a machismo discourse. In fact, the discourse of Juan Perón was anything but feminist, since he tended to have an essentialist notion of women as mothers and even beauty queens.[56] As Michael Conniff has noted: 'Virtually all populists assumed roles as paternal figures to their followers: National leadership metaphorically mirrored familial relationships… . The president was father, the first lady mother, and the citizenry the children.'[57] More contemporary cases of populism in South America employ not only masculine images, but also vulgar language as a demonstration of the proximity between the populist leader and the masses.

In this regard, the recent case of Hugo Chávez is interesting, as he had developed a discourse in which women were depicted as active, rather than passive, and as essential actors in the revolutionary process that the country was and is experiencing. According to Gioconda Espina and Cathy Rakowski, Chávez's discourse reinforced women's traditional roles as self-sacrificing mothers and wives and, at the same time, looked to empower women as agents of change in the struggle against the establishment. This image of women is at the heart of Chavista rhetoric.[58] In fact, women have been depicted as crucial actors not only because of their contribution in terms of

53 Partij voor de Vrijheid, *Verkiezingsprogramma PVV 2010–2015*, 17.

54 Wilders, *Onafhankelijkheidsverklaring*, 1.

55 The video (in English) is available on the official *Danish People's Party* website at www.danskfolkeparti.dk/Principprogram_andre_sprog (viewed 9 December 2014).

56 Kampwirth, 'Introduction', 9.

57 Michael L. Conniff, 'Epilogue: new research directions', in Michael L. Conniff (ed.), *Populism in Latin America* (Tuscaloosa: Alabama University Press 1999), 191–204 (199).

58 Gioconda Espina and Cathy A. Rakowski, 'Waking women up? Hugo Chávez, populism, and Venezuela's "popular" women', in Kampwirth (ed.), *Gender and Populism in Latin America*, 180–201 (194).

popular mobilization in favour of Chávez, but also due to their participation in local projects, such as soup kitchens run by women, where needy children and single mothers from the shanty towns receive one free meal a day.[59] As Kate Paarlberg has pointed out: 'Chávez's statements about women … seem to rely on a certain interpretation of what revolutionary womanhood looks like. It is maternal, it is relational, and its bravery is altruistic and noble, in defense of others.'[60] In this sense, the Chavista rhetoric tends to politicize the traditional role of women, rather than condemn it, and promote new patterns of gender relations.

Moreover, there is little doubt that the Chávez discourse is distinguished by sexism and continuous references to masculinity. A good example of this can be found in one of his speeches in 2005, in which he suggested that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice suffered from 'sexual frustration', while, in another of his speeches, he blew Rice a kiss and said 'don't mess with me, girl'.[61] These kinds of allusions and 'jokes' were quite common in Chávez's public speeches. Paraphrasing the terminology of Pierre Ostiguy, the Chavista project continuously appeals to the population's 'low instincts', whereby a macho way of life is praised, sexual minorities are discriminated against and gender stereotypes are reproduced. Thus, much of Chávez's rhetoric was paternalistic, exalted his virility and was homophobic.[62]

Despite the influence of feminist movements on his government, Evo Morales has developed a populist discourse with very traditional images of women, who are depicted primarily as mothers. For instance, in a speech given on International Women's Day (8 March 2006), he said: 'To see a woman is always to see a symbol of affection and honesty … To talk about women is always to talk about family unity. Personally, when I see a woman I see my mother…'[63] At the same time, Morales is aware of the importance of women for his political project and, in consequence, he usually alludes to indigenous and poor women as key actors in and supporters of his government.

In short, Chávez and Morales have used a very similar discourse in which women are, on the one hand, heralded as important actors in their political projects and, on the other hand, reduced primarily to self-sacrificing mothers. In addition, Morales seems to base his model of the perfect revolutionary

59 Sujatha Fernandes, 'Barrio women and popular politics in Chávez's Venezuela', *Latin American Politics and Society*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2007, 97–127 (108–12).

60 Kate Paarlberg, 'Sold out? Venezuela's Boliviarianas and the struggle for women's emancipation', paper presented at the conference 'Social Movement Governance, the Poor, and the New Politics of the Americas', University of South Florida, Tampa, 2–4 February 2011, 15.

61 José Pedro Zúquete, 'The missionary politics of Hugo Chávez', *Latin American Politics and Society*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2008, 91–121 (100).

62 Pierre Ostiguy, 'Argentina's double political spectrum: party system, political identities, and strategies, 1944–2007', *Kellogg Institute Working Paper*, no. 361, October 2009.

63 Evo Morales, quoted in Stéphanie Rousseau, 'Populism from above, populism from below: gender politics under Alberto Fujimori and Evo Morales', in Kampwirth (ed.), *Gender and Populism in Latin America*, 140–61 (154).

woman on (his interpretation of) 'the' indigenous woman, which is less the case with Chávez. However, the latter used a much more cruel and dominant sexist discourse with regard to women (and sexual minorities) than Morales.

## Populism and gender: a (first) assessment

The relationship between populism and gender has so far received very little scholarly attention, both in Europe and Latin America. We have provided a first comparative analysis of the situation in Northern Europe and South America, with the aim of highlighting the factors that determine the views on gender issues and the roles of populist actors. This has led to a somewhat muddled picture. Regarding the various expectations, only the one that gender issues and roles will not prove to be very important to populism finds strong support. Both in theory and practice, populists do not hold a strong position on gender issues. Gender issues feature explicitly relatively seldom in populist programmes and propaganda, irrespective of accompanying ideology and geographical region. We also found no evidence of an explicitly gendered interpretation of 'the people' and 'the elite', although further analysis of the discourse is certainly warranted.

The influence of ideology and region is less straightforward to determine. In terms of female representation in the national parliaments, the left-wing populists of South America do better than the right-wing populists of Northern Europe, at least in relative terms, that is, compared to non-populist actors within their country. Whereas Northern European populists almost always fall below the national averages, South American populists are (well) above it. This would support the claim that ideology rather than culture (region) is more important for the position on gender issues of populists. In other words, whether populists adopt a left or right ideology seems to be a key element for understanding the degree to which they promote the reduction of gender gaps in their own parties. Nevertheless, national culture is probably relevant for the implementation of sex-specific quotas and, consequently, populist actors operating in more emancipated societies have to show a relatively open approach towards women's descriptive representation. Seen in this light, it is worth noting the intersectionality of these views: namely, gender interacts with other categories, such as class and race, that have different meanings and relevance across societies. Therefore, the views of populist forces on gender issues and roles must be analysed in conjunction with their views on other identities. In effect, Ernesto Laclau rightly points out that the rise of populism involves the articulation of a chain of equivalence between various groups that normally have different and even sometimes antagonistic identities.[64]

Finally, it is worth pointing out that South American populists tend to advance gender equality in their country, while Northern European populists

64 Laclau, *On Populist Reason*.

merely support the status quo, but also stress the importance of families. In fact, PRR parties in Europe usually employ gender arguments to defend traditional values, while radical leftist actors in Latin America normally employ the concept of gender to advance a more progressive agenda. That said, the status quo in Northern Europe is at least equal to the proposed positions in South America. In terms of discourse, culture seems to clearly trump ideology, as the left-wing populists in patriarchal South America are much more sexist and traditional than the right-wing populists in emancipated Northern Europe.

In short, the relationship between populism and gender is relatively weak, but highly complex. Given the growing number of prominent female populist leaders (such as Siv Jensen, Keiko Fujimori, Marine Le Pen, Roxana Miranda and Sarah Palin, among others) and the almost universal gender gap in the electorate of populist parties, the relationship between gender and populism has probably become the most relevant of the many understudied issues related to populism. In addition to comparative and national studies of specific groups within one geographical area, such as the other contributions to this special issue, we will need more comparative studies that cross ideological and regional boundaries, to further parse out the relative influence of cultural and ideological factors. We hope this article has provided a useful example of such a study.



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