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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
IRVINE

They Are Not Like Us Citizens: Reconsidering the Racism and Populism Relationship

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In Sociology

by

Brent Clark Jr

Dissertation Committee:  
Professor Stanley Bailey, Co-Chair  
Professor Sabrina Strings, Co-Chair  
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Associate Professor Davin Phoenix

**DEDICATION**

To

Latisha and Brooklyn

the lights of my life

and my parents and family

for unending support and nurturing

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## **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

**They Are Not Like Us Citizens: Reconsidering the Racism and Populism Relationship**

by

Brent Clark Jr

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Irvine, 2024

Professor Stanley Bailey, Co-Chair

Professor Sabrina Strings, Co-Chair

The ideological conception of populism defines populism as a conception of politics that consists of a belief in the existence of a homogenous and “true people, a Manichean perception of political conflict, and anti-elite viewpoints. From a populist lens any and all political and social conflicts within a society can be understood as a clash between the virtuous, “true” citizens and the corrupt elite. Beginning from the premise that attitudes concerning racial and ethnic difference play key roles in the establishment of a litany of political viewpoints and stances, this project looks to investigate the potential relationship between populist ideology and racism. Survey work within populism studies has typically only investigated the relationship between populist attitudes and race/racism within the context of the relationship between right-wing populism and xenophobia/ethnocentrism. This project looks to expand the scope of these investigations by investigating the relationship between populist attitudes and several conceptions of anti-Blackness within the American setting. By moving interrogations of the populism-racism relationship beyond the strict scope of xenophobia there is potential to understand the degree that successful populist appeals, with their logic rooted in conceptions of citizenship, are at least partially impacted by the degree that individuals have or have not

internalized hegemonic perceptions of racial hierarchies. Through an online survey of 980 adults this project investigates the relationship between a five-dimension populism scale and measures of implicit racism and anti-Blackness, in addition to several other potentially correlated features and attitudes. Findings suggest that anti-democratic beliefs and anti outgroup sentiments function as core sub-dimensions of populist thought, while also indicating a significant relationship between populism and several manifestations of anti-Black attitudes.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The growing success of populist movements (mainly right-wing populist movements in western democracies and left-wing movements in Central and South America) has made populism a frequently considered subject over the last decade. While topics such as the nature/definition of populism, the demand for populism amongst citizens, and the effects of populists in power have been frequently confronted, there is still a need for more thorough and nuanced analysis of the relationship between racism and populism. Discussions of the relationship between populism and racism has typically been considered in very narrow contexts, namely through interrogations of the relationship between right-wing populism and ethnocentrism/xenophobia (Mughan and Paxton 2006; Aichholzer and Zandonella 2016). While this is undoubtedly an important relationship, it is possible that the relationship between right-wing populism and xenophobia is but one slice of a wider dynamic. Present analysis falls short for several reasons, for one xenophobia is often analyzed in a way that ignores the cultural, and quite frankly racist, elements of anti-immigrant sentiment in modern western democracies. This project looks to begin to approach the populism-racism in a more nuanced fashion through an interrogation of the relationship within a few different contexts.

### Theoretical Background

One of the most commonly identified threats posed by populism is the tendency for populists in power to attack and erode democratic norms and institutions (Abts and Rummens 2007; Mouffe 2016; Bermeo 2016; Mueller 2019). While phenomena such as democratic backsliding and the disregarding of minority rights have been frequently cited as commonly occurring results of populists seizing political power in societies, the role that racial and ethnic identities play in how these illiberal policies are advocated for and enacted are still often ignored.

While existing literature has considered factors such as increasing globalization (Spruyt, Keppens, and Droogenbroeck 2016; Roodujin 2018) and the perception of threat caused by immigrants (Mughan and Paxton 2006; Aichholzer and Zandonella 2016) as explanations for increased success for populist, mainly right-wing populist movements, there is room for further consideration. Towards this end this project will investigate a potential relationship between populism and anti-Blackness in the American context. To focus on this relationship we remove the factor of immigration. While Black Americans are not generally understood as immigrants, they are a minority group which has been treated as the “other” throughout the country’s history. By investigating the potential relationship between populism and measures of racism and anti-Blackness we can explore the degree that high levels of populist thought may be correlated with perceptions of cultural threat and changing societal hierarchies. Using variables meant to capture prejudice against non-immigrant minority groups forces us to consider possible explanations for racism within populist ideology in a more nuanced and informative manner.

Far too often populism studies has treated the threat of illiberal policies, enacted by populists in power and specifically targeting perceived political enemies, as unprecedented. However a situation where the rights of certain groups of citizens are not equally respected or recognized is only unprecedented when ignoring the experiences of the traditionally marginalized in societies. To understand how political ideology built on the perceived invalidity of certain groups within a society can be successful we must understand the utility of political rhetorical built on the targeting and scapegoating of the historically marginalized. This project is built on the notion that racism, fear and disdain fueled by racial and ethnic difference or threat, operates as a powerful and significant factor in determining political opinions and outlooks. It is one thing to advocate for policies such as universal basic income and a robust social safety

network as antidotes for the illiberal threat posed by populism. However it is another thing to begin to strategize once the utility of racist arguments and stereotypes is acknowledged.

This project goes beyond arguing that people who are populists may have higher levels of racist beliefs than non-populists. While this may prove to be the case, this project looks to dig deeper in an interrogation of the degree that populist ideology, with the foundations of its worldview rooted in conceptions of citizenship and a Manichean view of society, is inherently related to how people understand and perceive racial and ethnic difference. One of the foundational aspects of populist ideology is adopting a Manichean view of society (Müller 2016; Panizza 2017). This means that populism is built on seeing political opposition as not just opponents but as morally evil. Populist framings where perceptions of good and evil run up against pre-established racial hierarchies within a society inherently have more work to do than framings which more easily align with traditional hierarchies. In other words, in anti-Black societies, be it the United States or Australia, the darker your political opposition is perceived to be, the easier the job of establishing your world view with the masses becomes.

It makes sense that the degree that one is susceptible to political rhetoric which looks to paint the “other” as evil is directly related to how an individual already feels about society’s “others”. Analysis which does not at least acknowledge the relationship between “anti-other” beliefs in a society and the degree that populist appeals resonate runs the risk of ignoring a key factor in determining the success or failure of populist movements within a society. While this is obviously true in the case of triadic conceptions of populism, where populist positionality combines anti-elitism with a disdain for society’s superfluous populations (Judis 2016; Snow and Bernatzky 2019), this may also be true in the case of dyadic conceptions of populism built primarily on anti-elitism. The success of populist argument built on anti-elite arguments are

largely dependent on the degree that the masses in a society view its elites as immoral and the enemy. Similarly, the success of triadic populist appeals depends on the degree that members of society hold disdain or distrust for both elites from the political opposition as well as the “undeserving others” which triadic populist appeals are attempting to tie opposing elites to. Subsequently it is the undeserving others, and not the opposing elites, who will have their political rights and legitimacy attacked most consistently and viciously. Thus, any consideration of the illiberal threat posed by populists in power is simultaneously a consideration of a threat that will initially be felt by those understood as already holding identities that make them different/lesser/illegitimate. Subsequently any attempts to curb the threat of illiberal policies enacted by populists must grapple with the task of convincing the citizenry that the political rights of society’s most marginalized are worth protecting and preserving.

## Study Design

This project investigates the racism-populism relationship in three distinct but related ways. First, chapter two offers a theoretical exploration of the racism-populism relationship. By putting the mainstream populism canon into conversation with understandings of race and politics originating in sociology Black studies this chapter will explore the degree that populist understandings are inherently racialized. By deconstructing the relationship between race/racism and concepts of citizenship and morality this chapter will attempt to illustrate the degree that the racism-populism relationship is central to modern politics in traditional western democracies. Next, chapter three will analyze the results of an online opinion survey of American adults to explore the validity and cohesion of a five sub-dimensional conception of populism. This conception of populism includes one sub-dimension meant to capture a hostility toward



pluralistic and democratic norms and another sub-dimension meant to capture anti-outgroup prejudice. Evidence of cohesion between these two sub-dimensions, with their implications for the treatment of traditionally stigmatized and marginalized groups, and the three sub-dimensions more commonly understood as parts of populism (Manichean thought, a homogenous view of the citizenry, anti-elitism) would support the notion that matters of group difference and threat reside at the core of populist ideology. Finally, chapter four will utilize data from the same survey to explore the relationship between populist ideology and two separate measures of anti-Blackness. By exploring the relationship between populism and racism against a non-immigrant minority group this chapter represents an opportunity to explore the populism-racism relationship while somewhat removing the immigration variable, revealing the degree that populism is related to racism somewhat separate from concerns surrounding economic competition and resource scarcity.

## Innovation

This project offers several potentially innovative approaches to analysis of populism. For one the 19-item, five sub-dimension populism scale represents a potentially valuable innovation in the realm of identifying and measuring populist ideologies. Past attempts to measure populist ideology have struggled to accurately capture the opinions of respondents whose opinions reside on the poles, meaning there has been difficulty to capture the feelings of the most and least populist respondents. Through attempts to account for issues such as agreement bias and survey fatigue the hope here is that this populism scale will be more successful in terms of accurately capturing the full spectrum of populist and non-populist viewpoints.

Another potential innovation presented in this project relates to the interrogation of the relationship between populism and anti-Blackness in the American setting. Most previous

attempts to interrogate the populism-racism head on have conceptualized racism primarily within the contexts of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment. While there is no doubt potential value in exploring these dynamics, this project is informed by the premise that the racism is both central to populism and underlies attitudes toward immigration. By acknowledging the degree that populism relies on conceptions of citizenship and homogeneity to construct a coherent image of a citizen this project looks to explore the degree that race and racism are inherently related to these conceptions. Exploring the populism-racism relationship divorced from direct questions of immigration allows us to confront the degree that citizenship and morality are inherently racialized, and subsequently challenges us to dig deeper in analyzing the degree that a litany of political attitudes and opinions are informed by varying levels of racism throughout the Populus.

## Dissertation Overview

### Chapter Two: Racism, Populism, and an Underexplored Relationship

Chapter two will review the relevant theories and concepts for thoroughly understanding the populism-racism relationship. After deconstructing populism as a concept this chapter will illustrate the degree that putting the populism cannon into conversation with more race-consciousness canons necessitates a reconsideration of the primacy which race and racism play in the content and reception of populist messages. Other lines of scholarship have argued and produced evidence supporting the notion that perceptions of racial difference and structural inequality play a prominent role in a litany of political attitudes and positions (Loewen 1988; Jacobson 1999; Hutchings 2009; Wilson and Brewer 2013; Tesler 2016; Riley and Peterson 2020; Graber, Figueroa, and Vasudevan 2020 ). This chapter will provide the theoretical foundation for understanding why the populism-racism relationship begs for closer examination

while detailing the degree that a litany of political attitudes are directly related to views on racism and racial redress.

### Chapter Three: Racism and the Five Sub-Dimension Populism Scale

Next, chapter three will utilize survey data to consider the viability of a five-dimension conception of populism. This five-dimension populism scale consists of three dimensions commonly identified with an ideological conception of populism (a Manichean view of society, a belief in the existence of a homogenous and “true” citizenry, and anti-elitism) along with two additional dimensions (anti-democratic beliefs and anti-outgroup sentiments). By analyzing the coherence and relevance of anti-democratic and anti-outgroup dimensions of populist thoughts this chapter considers the possibility that prejudice and a preference for illiberal political ideology are foundational dimensions of populism as a wider and coherent ideology. This chapter will have implications not just for how we define and understand populism, but also for the development of strategies meant to curb the illiberal threat of populists in power.

### Chapter Four: Populism and Anti-Blackness

Chapter four will then analyze the relationship between the five sub-dimensional populism scale and two separate measures of racism/anti-Blackness. The interrogation of this relationship through the use of two different scales intended to identify different manifestations of anti-Blackness in a U.S. context allows us to interrogate the racism-populism relationship with a specific focus on racism against a non-immigrant minority group. Additionally, this specific design study will allow us to consider the racism-populism scale in terms of sub-dimensions of populism (I.e. anti-democratic sentiments or a Manichean view of society) where a potential relationship with racism may not be as obvious, and the sub-dimensions (i.e. anti-outgroup sentiments or a belief in the existence of a homogenous “true people) of populism where a

potential relationship would potentially be more obvious. By examining the relationship between propensity for populist ideology and levels of racism toward a non-immigrant minority group this chapter will contribute to attempts to examine the trajectory of modern populist movements in a more nuanced way that takes factors of identity and culture into consideration.

#### Chapter Five: Conclusion

In the final chapter of this dissertation I will integrate the findings of the previous three chapters and discuss the implications of my findings.

## **CHAPTER TWO: RACISM, POPULISM, AND AN UNDEREXPLORED RELATIONSHIP**

A key contribution of this project is offering a theoretical reinterpretation of how populism is understood. The goal here is to come to a more nuanced and accurate understanding of how populism functions in societies by applying an analysis which places primacy in the roles that race and racism play in wider political understandings and actions. There are a multitude of definitions and understandings of populism that exist throughout several strands of academic inquiry which makes it especially important to clearly communicate how populism is being understood and defined throughout the course of this project. This project is based on a three-legged premise which states that A) The ideological definition of populism is the best/most accurate for academic inquiry B) A great bulk of empirical investigations into populist attitudes on the demand-side have been built on ideological definition of populism and thus C) There is a need to integrate additional understandings and premises related to race, racism, and politics from within and outside of the populism cannon with an ideological understanding of populism in order to accurately interrogate the populism-racism relationship amongst citizens.

### **Ideological Populism**

This project builds on the highly influential ideological understanding of populism offered by Mudde and Kaltwasser (2007; 2017), who in turn built on the initial definition offered by Caonvan (1981). From this perspective populism is best understood as a thin ideology that revolves around the essential political conflict between a pure, “good” people and an evil, corrupt elite. The people are understood to be essentially homogenous, with common aspirations, and a singular popular will. From a Manichean point of view all political conflicts should be viewed through the lens of this primary conflict between good and evil, but the focus in the work

has primarily been on the idea of the good people vs. the bad elite. Populism is best understood as a thin-ideology, meaning that while populist movements do have core tenets and principles in common, there can be a great deal of variety in terms of the actual content of populist ideology/appeals. This malleability is part of what makes populism an especially difficult concept to define and analyze. Despite arising within the context of liberal democracies, populist movements advance a Manichean conception of politics where political opponents, a representation of the bad elite, should be stripped of their ability to wield political power, or not even be seen as legitimate political actors at all (Müller 2016; Panizza 2017). As Müller writes “In addition to being anti-elitist, populists are always anti-pluralist. Populists claim that they, and they alone, represent the people.” (2016:3). An honest analysis of a political ideology which is positioned in opposition to pluralism should also attempt to disentangle how this affects the relationship between said ideology and minority rights. While the populism-racism relationship has traditionally been explored within the context of right-wing populism, it is worth exploring whether racism plays a role in all populist ideology based on populism being built on a Manichean worldview and limited conception of citizenship. There is a need to disentangle the degree that populism’s natural opposition to pluralism effects groups for whom the most basic of rights associated with citizenship have been subject to legislation and debate.

### Other Populism and Racism Theories and Concepts

While this project utilizes the ideological definition of populism there are still theories and arguments derived from alternative analyses of populism which offer valuable insights into the populism-racism relationship. Laclau (2005) argues that the goal of any democratic political movement, including populist movements, is to portray itself as a representative of all of the people, until these two conceptions are viewed as homogenous, thus establishing a coherent

vision of “the people” amongst supporters. Panizza (2017) builds on this premise writing “populism is a mode of political identification that constructs and gives meaning to “the people” as a political actor” (2017:406). Thus, establishing a coherent “us” becomes a core goal of populist ideology and communication. Conversely through the construction of this “us” an oppositional “other” is also constructed through populist rhetoric. This is especially important for understanding the populism-racism relationship, as racial hierarchy and stereotypes inevitably will play a role in both the content and effectiveness of populist ideology and rhetoric. In contrast with liberalism, where there is a great need for abstract ideals like pluralism and equality, the objects of populist thought are usually concrete and immediate. This premise is built on the foundation of previous work (Rosenberg 2003; Rosenberg 2017; Rosenberg 2020) which theorizes that the principles and mechanisms of liberalism are too abstract for most people to truly grasp. This is often a benefit for populism in contexts where an over fixation on abstract ideas and principles runs the risk of alienating or confusing large swaths of the public. Rather than focusing on values such as pluralism or equality, populism focuses on more concrete topics, usually the opposition. Just as populism relies on the construction of a vision of a homogenous and good citizenry, it also relies on the construction of an oppositional “other”. Some manifestations of populism are dyadic (rooted in the belief that it is “the people” writ large vs. the elite), while others are triadic, conceiving of a third negative other, separate from elites, that populists can define themselves in opposition to (Judis 2016; Snow and Bernatzky 2019). The exact identity or identities of the members of that third group will vary based on societal context, but the negative other conception will always consist of individuals holding identities that are already stigmatized within a given society.

One way that the construction of the oppositional “other” often plays out is through what Wodak (2015) calls the “politics of fear”. Wodak’s argument, focusing primarily on the Australian context, clearly details the ways that right-wing populism leverages increasing anxieties around globalization and immigration to win political support. Sengul (2020) builds on this notion in their analysis of the Australian populist politician Pauline Hanson. Sengul details how Hanson has leveraged fear and threat through the portrayal of immigrants (specifically Muslim immigrants) as “dangerous others”. Sengul argues that in cases such as this right-wing populist discourse serves to further marginalize stigmatized groups in society while also shaping the societal conditions necessary for the implementation of severe and regressive policies. This argument importantly emphasizes that the politics of fear does not operate through exclusively economic/material arguments. Sengul writes “...Specifically, it looks at how Pauline Hanson strategically constructs fear through presenting Muslims and refugees as ‘dangerous Others’ who pose both a material security and an existential threat to Australian ‘culture’ and ‘values’.” (2020:22). To truly understand the racism-populism relationship one must understand the degree that anti-immigrant sentiments manifested within populism are so often rooted in these ideas of cultural threat. This is again directly relevant to earlier discussion regarding the relationship between increasing diversity in societies and the increasing perception that the historically privileged are now under new threat. Arato and Cohen sum this dynamic up well writing “Not only economic hardship, but the salience of efforts to promote gender and racial equality and non-discrimination against minority groups and some religions (e.g., Muslims) through social movements and public policy, drawing on “postindustrial values,” is what undergirds the perception that white men and Christians are more discriminated against than the latter.<sup>51</sup>” (2021:33). There is mounting evidence that White Americans, when presented with the idea that



America will eventually become a majority-minority country, respond with increased conservatism, prejudice, and preference for regressive policy preferences (Bai and Federico 2021; Craig and Richeson 2014). White Americans have been found to view racism and racial inequality as zero-sum games that White Americans now find themselves on the losing end of (Norton & Sommers 2011; Jardina 2019). All of these trends and patterns are essential in understanding modern political realities related to varying perceptions of systemic inequality and the need for systemic methods of redress. When institutions undertake concerted efforts to address the effects of historical systemic inequality this can often serve as white meat for populists to leverage and further paint their supporters as the presently disadvantaged and neglected.

To understand the way that this third group in triadic conception of populism are leveraged and portrayed we can turn to the work of Snow and Bernatzky. Here, building on Judis' (2016) conception of triadic populism Snow and Bernatzky (2019) explain that right-wing populists rhetorically pit the "neglected people" against some other underserving "negative other". These "negative others", scapegoats if you will, are also known as superfluous populations. In essence any group that can function as an effective scapegoat in a given society will serve as an effective superfluous other. Since populism is a thin ideology, and each society will have its own specific cultural history, the exact people that function as effective superfluous populations in populist rhetoric will vary from country to country. The key here is that vertical antagonism manifests under triadic populism toward not just the elite, but also toward individuals and groups who are perceived as being at the bottom rungs of society (Abts and Rummens 2007; Bonikowski 2017). The strength of populist appeals is that they offer people a relatively simple view of society and its ills, one where most of the problems and complications

within society can be tied back to and blamed on superfluous populations (Snow and Bernatzky 2019; Rosenberg 2019). This project allows us to explore whether individuals who are already skeptical of the merits of arguments rooted in this sort of scapegoating are also less prone, overall, to populist beliefs. While this project focuses specifically on the roles of race and ethnicity in determining someone's place in the "us" vs. them" dynamic, there is evidence that this dichotomy is easily leveraged by populists within other contexts, such as in reference to gender and sexuality-based identities, as well (Meret and Siim 2013; Abi-Hassan 2017; Eksi and Wood 2019; Winer and Bolzendahl 2021). This work holds theoretical value both within the context of the United States and globally, as the tension between the theoretical rights of non-immigrant minority citizens and the cultural realities of *Herrenvolk* Republicanism and segmented assimilation are leveraged through RWP rhetoric in countries such as Australia and France in addition to the United States.

### Populism and Anti-Outgroup Sentiment

While it can be tempting to identify the racism-populism relationship as a phenomenon to be exclusively examined in regards to right-wing populism, it should be noted that the racism-populism relationship is potentially significant even amongst individuals who might subscribe to a more left-wing conception of populism. All populism, whether dyadic or triadic, is Manichean and built based on conceptions of citizenship. It is essential to understand that conceptions of citizenship are inherently racialized (Loewen 1988; Jacobson 1999; Lopez 2006), and even left-wing Americans are socialized in a wider society that is fundamentally anti-Black in structure and culture. This is why Black Americans remain among the most likely citizens to have their democratic rights attacked officially and unofficially. Even dyadic conceptions of populism which point to elites as the issue will have to overcome racial prejudice and hierarchies in the

process of establishing a vision of a “true citizenry”. Additionally dyadic populism is still anti-pluralist, left-wing populists reject the political legitimacy and thus right to exist of their political opponents. If left-wing populist movements want to be successful then they need to interrogate how a natural opposition towards democratic norms and institutions, those which in reality often do shield and aid political figures who position themselves in opposition to inclusion and equal representation, can still be leveraged to further ostracize the historically marginalized. If for no other reason, any left-wing populist movement in countries like the United States or Great Britain would need to figure out how to effectively mobilize and protect the rights of voters whose histories are littered with examples of structural, state-sanctioned disenfranchisement. On top of that it is a historical fact that the democratic rights of Black and brown Americans have always existed contingently and been up for litigation. Any analysis of populism which looks to understand how populism functions in the real-world will need to be prepared to interrogate the race-populism relationship regardless of whether one is analyzing left or right wing movements. While this project is focused on the U.S. context there are whole other potential lines of inquiry worth exploring regarding a potential relationship between populism and anti-white/anti-colonial feelings globally, specifically in places where the levers of government have rarely been controlled by the statistical racial/ethnic majority.

The reality is that there is not a great deal of research which has investigated disdain, threat, or animosity toward the traditionally marginalized as a primary variable in studies meant to understand, predict, or measure populism. One of the primary lines of inquiry which has explored the populism-race relationship is focused on the theoretical relationship between populism, globalization, and neoliberalism (Spruyt, Keppens, and Droogenbroeck 2016; Rodrik 2018). These considerations have primarily focused on the increasing relevance of globalization

and the perceived lack of responsiveness to inequality spurred by globalization as primary demand-side accelerants for populist politics within traditional democracies. The idea that core supporters of populism are more likely to be the “losers of modernization” has been present in academic discourses for over twenty-five years (Betz and Immerfall 1998). It is theorized that populists, especially right-wing populists, are able to succeed when citizens perceive that existing major political parties are not adequately addressing problems caused by increased globalization (Laclau 2005; Mudde 2007; Hogan and Haltinner 2015; Bugaric 2019). The perception of unresponsiveness from major parties creates opportunities for populists to paint themselves as the only political entities willing to act on issues such as immigration on the behalf of the “true citizens”. Consequently, several empirical investigations of political attitudes have focused on the potential relationship between populist attitudes and perceptions of globalization and other economic issues. Spruyt et. Al (2016) explored the effects of globalization as a contributing factor to the rise of populism in western Europe, ultimately finding relevant links between populism, material position, education, and feelings of vulnerability and deprivation. In a similar vein Rooduijn (2018) analyzed 15 populist parties from 11 Western European countries to determine if the “populist voter” really existed, based on the conception of the populist voter as individuals more likely to be on the losing end of globalization. In this study Rooduijn ultimately concludes that the electorates of different types of populist parties don’t have very much in common, and ultimately complicates the theoretical connection between economic marginalization and support for populist parties.

As Berman (2021) points out, a great deal of analysis of populism has been performed by economists and political scientists with economics-focused backgrounds, and subsequently many of the explanations of populism have privileged economic-based explanations for both the

success of populism and the relationship between radical right-wing parties and xenophobia. Analysis such as that offered by Wolf (2019) accurately points to the rapidly declining stability of capitalist societies as a point of opportunity for populist parties. The precarity and resentment caused by widening economic inequality and irresponsible governments does in fact jeopardize the continued existence of liberal democratic government systems. Wolf accurately points out that immigrants and foreign countries serve as easy scapegoats for populists to redirect the ire of potential voters towards. What Wolf somewhat ignores is that underlying racism and ethnocentrism makes this a much easier task. We know that economic downturns have the largest impacts on the already disadvantaged, and it is often theorized that the economically vulnerable make the most ripe targets for populist rhetoric (Stephens 2018; Berman 2021), but it should be pointed out that this is only true for people who still possess other types of privileges. There is a bit of a grey area in all of these arguments that we need to explore in order to truly understand the racism-populism relationship. It is often argued that economic precariousness makes people vulnerable to populist rhetoric, but really this is only true for people who enjoy privilege based on the other identities (racial, religious, gender, etc.). It seems to me that increased globalization and increased economic inequality would only serve to help populism resonate with individuals who do not otherwise hold identities that might subject them to marginalization or systemic inequality, but too often this nuance isn't really considered in arguments that propose that economic position and reception to populism interact independent of other social identities or dynamics.

When the racism-populism relationship is analyzed empirically it is usually within the context of right-wing populism and anti-immigrant sentiment. In Grindheim's (2019) analysis of eight European countries it is argued that consistent rule by centre-right, centre-left, or broad

coalition parties have created an opportunity for right-wing populist parties to find success based on anti-immigrant platforms. Grindheim points out that the trend of right-wing populist parties finding success in some of the most economically well-positioned European countries challenges the premise of a direct relationship between economic depravity and affinity for populism. Aichholzer and Zandonella (2016) investigate the potential relationship between social psychological/personality characteristics and support for radical right-wing parties within an Austrian sample. While this study does narrow the potential relationship between discriminatory views and support for radical parties as a phenomenon exclusive to the right, it benefits from hypothesizing that personality attributes such as an affinity for authoritarianism or the perception of social threat might increase the likelihood that radical arguments resonate. Aichholzer and Zandonella ultimately found that the perception of immigrant threat was directly related to support for radical right-wing parties. Jylhä, Rydgren, and Strimling (2022) attempted to disentangle and distinguish between the concept of xenophobia and other negative views on immigration. This represents a good example of attempting to deconstruct the relationship between different manifestations of ethnic antagonisms and political ideology/behaviors.

There is still a need for inquiries which approach the racism-populism question based on the premise that xenophobia and other negative views on immigration may all originate from cultural understandings centered around White identity, White supremacy, and group competition. Where economic-essentialist arguments still fall short regarding populism is in explaining why, if economic depravity and/or a negative perception of the country's economic state are factors that make populist arguments more appealing, do traditionally marginalized minority groups in countries such as the U.S. and Great Britain often show less of an affinity for populist movements, despite their relatively worse economic prospects. One of the key

weaknesses of explanations that over-fixate on economics as an explanation for populism or for racism is that these premises usually only work if one is only considering the viewpoints of citizens who are racially white. Subsequently if citizens holding a majoritarian racial identity is necessary for economic-based explanations of populism to hold up under scrutiny, then this further begs for nuanced consideration of the racism-populism relationship.

If we venture just outside of the populism canon, we can begin to consider a viewpoint which understands the concept of threat posed by immigrants as a phenomenon that may best be explained by sociocultural factors. Phenomena such as cultural threat and social identity have been tied to the concept of immigrant threat (Mughan and Paxton 2006), and this line of thought requires us to directly acknowledge that the perceived identities held by immigrants plays a factor in the degree that immigration as a concept is or isn't viewed as threatening. While some immigrant groups often find themselves treated as superfluous populations, this treatment is at least partially tied to the specific racial, ethnic, and cultural identities of the immigrant groups in question. Despite their relative size, you do not often hear people object to the presence of undocumented Canadian immigrants in the U.S.

Simply existing as an immigrant group does not necessarily guarantee superfluous treatment, as factors such as race, language, and economic well-being create a reality where there can be vastly different immigrant experiences for different groups within the same country (Bean and Bell-Rose 1999; Jacobson 1999; Lopez 2006; Wimmer 2008). The immigrant groups who serve as the most effective targets for populist rhetoric are those who can most easily fit into rhetorical arguments built on notions of fear and threat. Additionally, there are various examples, such as Black Americans and aboriginal Australians, of non-immigrant minority groups who, while technically existing as legal citizens, are treated as superfluous populations within liberal

democratic societies. A more nuanced and intricate understanding of the relationship between racism in general, and racism against non-immigrant minority groups specifically, has implications for politics globally. If we take the concept of status hierarchies seriously then this can help us to understand the degree that shifts in cultural norms towards goals such as inclusion and equity may spur feelings of status loss in traditionally privileged members of society (Arato and Cohen 2021). From this perspective we can begin to understand that it may not be immigration in and of itself that can help to buoy support for populist ideology in a society, but rather the degree that people perceive an increase in immigration (actual or otherwise) as an indicator of wider changes in societal hierarchies.

Bonikowski (2017) theorizes that it is the increased resonance of claims made by radical right-wing parties (right-wing populists) that explain the increased success of right-wing populist parties in western democratic countries over the last decade or so, rather than drastic changes on the supply or demand-sides of populism. The argument here is that cultural and demographic shifts, coupled with increasing economic inequality, within countries such as the United States, Great Britain, and Australia have created conditions that help populist messages resonate more effectively with potential supporters. The most relevant point here within the context of this study is that increased support for right-wing populists in this case is not necessarily spurred by actual economic or political conditions, as much as support for right-wing populism seems to be related to increased levels of ethnocentrism and the degree that individuals within societies are responsive to messages regarding the cultural threat posed by increasingly powerful “others”. Put more simply, right-wing populists benefit when members of a country’s racial/ethnic majority long for a past with less representation and power for traditionally marginalized groups. While this project is focused specifically on the relationship between populism and racism there are



already similar lines of inquiry being investigated concerning relationships such as those between radical right-wing politics and sexism (Eksi and Wood 2019), and radical right-wing ideologies and heteronormativity (Meret and Siim 2013). Any drastic cultural changes, be they related to aspects of racial hierarchy, gender identity, etc., are likely to spur feelings of threat and uneasiness among certain segments of a society. Arato and Cohen (2021) build on Weber's foundational analysis of status hierarchies to argue that in societies where cultural norms are shifting towards goals such as inclusion and equity, members of mainstream society, the traditionally privileged, may experience status loss. This feeling of status loss, coupled with the perception that major political parties are not providing adequate representation, can make individuals especially susceptible to populist appeals.

It should also be noted that populist parties can have drastic effects on political discourse even if they are ultimately unsuccessful in a given political election. A commonly identified effect of increased visibility and success for populist parties is the degree that the presences of these figures and ideologies shift the Overton window in regards to certain political debates in a society (Hogan and Haltinner 2015; Sengul 2020; Krzyżanowski et al. 2021). This expansion of the arguments that can even be presented or debated is an especially notable outcome of prominent right-wing populist parties gaining more notability and credibility within a society. This dynamic is what leads Arato and Cohen to state that "... populist rhetoric and mobilization not only depends on crises, but also help to produce them" (2021:34). The degree that the rhetoric and possibilities presented by political figures influences the preferences and appetites of political constituents is why it is a fallacy to suggest that the "supply" and "demand" sides of populism (or any specific political ideology/movements for that matter) exist independently from one another. Additionally, it should be recognized that it is much easier, both in theory and in

practice, for populist politicians to build ideological claims based on the premise of politically marginalizing groups who are already viewed as lesser than by potential populist constituents. In this way the calls for political actions centered on the scuttling of democratic rights for individuals viewed as the “other” aren’t usually as novel or new as they are sometimes made out to be within the populist canon. The important point here is that while the idea of a democracy where whole swaths of individuals who may technically be citizens are still denied a litany of legal and democratic rights is quite alarming; this structure also accurately describes the actual lives of groups such as Black Americans, Palestinians, aboriginal Australians, and Europeans of Romanian heritage to various degrees.

### The Anti-Democratic Nature Of Populism

It is generally accepted that populism, in both its affinity for delegating disproportionate power to political leaders and its ideological blending of “the people’s will” and that of a charismatic leader, holds many characteristics which could be defined as authoritarian (Mudde 2007; Müller 2016; Rosenberg 2019, 2020). Interestingly enough there is however a lack of evidence connecting populist attitudes and what would be defined as authoritarian attitudes as understood within the context of the “Big 5” personality traits. Dunn (2015) analyzed survey data from five Western European countries with active and viable radical right-wing populist parties, looking to examine the potential relationships between support for these parties and both authoritarian and ethno-national attitudes. Her findings refute the assumption that RWP parties can rely on support from authoritarian individuals regardless of circumstance. Using data from the 2008 European Values Survey Dunn found exclusive-nationalism to be a consistent predictor of preference for RWP parties but did not find the same for authoritarianism. This project argues that the relationship between populism and authoritarianism shouldn’t be understood based on

conceptions of authoritarianism as a personality type, but instead there is a need to investigate the role that anti-democratic/anti-pluralist views play in wider populist ideology.

The most frequently cited threats associated with populist governance are the weakening of political institutions, the consolidation of political power, and the disregarding of minority rights, the combination of which ultimately result in democratic backsliding (Abts and Rummens 2007; Mouffe 2016; Bermeo 2016; Mueller 2019; Rosenberg 2020). Arato and Cohen (2021) concisely argue that populism is ideologically rooted in the inherent tension between popular sovereignty and constitutionalism, a tension that inevitably exists within any constitutional democracy. Populism becomes a direct threat when populists seeking power perpetuate the degradation and disregard for the tenets of constitutionalism which necessitate the preservation of minority rights and the right for one's political adversary to continue to exist. Populists in power tend to act on their supporters' thirst for meaningful political intervention on "our" behalf through the enactment of policies which result in democratic backsliding and the erosion of democratic institutions and processes. Bermeo (2016) defines democratic backsliding as "The state-led debilitation or elimination of any of the political institutions that sustain an existing democracy." Populists in power, and especially right-wing populists in power, tend to take actions which weaken democratic institutions, and these actions are often enacted "in the name of the people". Mueller states "Few populist governments do not disassemble core institutions of the democratic states that helped them into power, and in particular those institutions most closely associated with mechanisms of popular control and accountability, like the independent judiciary capable of checking illicit government activities, the free press, scientific and academic institutions." (2019:1031). One of the most thorough descriptions of these tendencies is offered by Urbinati (2019) who deconstructs the myriad of ways which populists in power utilize the

levers and mechanisms of representative democracies to enact a political reality where the populist majority can more easily and freely enact their preferred preferences. This manifestation of government, majoritarian democracy, is in opposition to liberal democracy because a defining characteristic of liberal democracy is the need to cultivate a belief in the right of one's political opposition to exist. Populism classifies the political opposition as evil and thus rejects the notion that the opposition should not be destroyed entirely. Ultimately an open antagonism towards pluralistic norms, coupled with the uncritical support of prominent leaders, creates conditions where an open disregard and disdain for democratic institutions becomes a key characteristic of populist platforms.

In many ways the rise and political success of Donald Trump over the last decade or so exemplifies the populism-racism dynamic in the U.S. On one hand Trump's somewhat unique brand of politics can be tied directly to the "thin" nature of populist ideology (Canovan 1981; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). The somewhat scattershot nature of Donald Trump's politics and sensibilities have been a key characteristic during his time on the political stage, but his willingness to adapt and adopt political stances and ideologies based on the whims of his potential supporters has proven to be one of his political strengths. Additionally, a closer analysis of Trump's political career and evolution can help shine a light on the relationship between different manifestations of racism and prejudice which are often only considered in isolation. Some may point to his initial presidential candidacy launch press conference, where he infamously referred to Mexican immigrants as rapists, as the beginning of Trump's political career (Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2019). While these comments without a doubt set the tone for the type of rhetoric which Trump has often deployed and leveraged, we must go back a little further in time to identify the point where Trump begins to establish a passionate and overly

political base of support. It should be noted that Trump was one of the earliest, and perhaps most famous, adopter of birtherism (the idea that former President Barack Obama is not a legitimate U.S. citizen, and therefore was an illegitimate President). More critical examinations of Trump and his rhetoric can help to illustrate the connection between political appeals rooted in Anti-Blackness and those rooted in xenophobia. Snow and Bernatzky (2019) argue that right-wing politicians in the U.S. have been adopting right-wing populist ideals and appeals dating as far back as Nixon. For the last six plus decades a great deal of political strategy deployed by the Republican party has centered on leveraging existing hostility and disdain for a wide variety of superfluous populations within the U.S. Political and communication strategies such as The War on Drugs, the leveraging of the “silent majority”, the War on Terrorism, and MAGA have all been built on the dynamic of positioning stigmatized groups (poor Black Americans, members of the LGBTQ community, non-Christian Americans, etc.) as standing directly in the way of the goals and wants of the “average American”. While all of these examples of racism as politics are not necessarily populist in nature, they point to the wider utility and effectiveness of racial appeals and messages throughout the history of American politics. The argument here is that it would be foolish to think that racism can not be leveraged by populists in similar ways to how racism has been leveraged by numerous political factions and figures throughout the history of liberal democracies. While some may argue that Trump and his ilk are in fact not “truly” populous, I believe that this argument over-fixates on attempting to measure the true intentions and beliefs of politicians, while under-considering the effects that this type of rhetoric plays on the mindsets and psyches of supporters. I would argue that the heart of Trumpism and the MAGA movement is informed by a populist worldview, one characterized by a Manichean

conception of the world, a belief in the existence of a homogenous and “true” citizenry, and open hostility toward stigmatized groups and elites who hold oppositional viewpoints.

If we accept that Trumpism is in fact a manifestation of right-wing populism, then it becomes informative to attempt to understand the factors and characteristics most strongly associated with political support for Donald Trump. Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck (2019) argue that support for Trump in the 2016 United States Presidential election was best explained by attitudes related to identity rather than economic concerns. They argue that “...the dividing line between Clinton and Trump voters was not the widespread belief that average Americans are being left behind. Rather, the divide was whether a racial minority deserved help.” (176). In a similar vein Lajevardi and Abrajano (2019) found anti-Muslim sentiment to be a strong and consistent predictor for support for Trump in the 2016 election. These findings align with the arguments presented in the quickly growing body of literature which focuses on the role of White identity in modern electoral politics. Jardina (2019) argues that the history of American political organizing can in many ways be reduced to the history of the construction and dissemination of various white identity archetypes. Taking Jardina’s arguments regarding the increasing salience of White identity seriously means understanding the political project embodied by Trump and other modern political figures as natural extensions of specific political legacies and not unexpected sociological anomalies. Of course, there is always potential for interpretation when treating support for a political candidate as analogous for support for populism, but one strength of the design of this specific project is that it will allow for us to directly interrogate the potential relationship between racism/anti-Blackness and a multi-dimensional construction of populism.

While the idea of societies that are democratic in name but not in function is alarming, this would not exactly be a new mode of existence for millions of people from marginalized

minority groups throughout countries that are typically understood to be “liberal democracies”. As previously mentioned, the reality of citizenship without rights defines the historical existence of groups such as Black Americans (Harris 1993; Berman 2016; Glaude 2017). Du Bois’ idea of double consciousness is over a century old, and yet the vast differences in the experiences and outlooks of white and non-white Americans remains a key factor in understanding modern political dynamics. Taking the racism-populism relationship seriously means acknowledging and considering the reality that for groups such as Black Americans there is actually a history of systems and mechanisms of government being leveraged to reduce political efficacy and autonomy. So from this perspective the threat of populists in power, illiberal actions through liberal democratic means, is neither new nor unprecedented. The idea that putting the legal and political rights of whole swaths of citizens up for debate or referendum as unprecedented or novel only holds up when one’s conception of citizenship is developed in the narrowest and most privileged terms. In fact there may be more value in understanding much right-wing populist messaging as a call to return, to return to previous points in a country’s history where the traditionally marginalized held much less political and social influence and power. Conversely there may be room to understand much left-wing populist rhetoric as a call for reorganization, a reorganization of society where the numerical majority has the mechanisms of government leveraged to their advantage for the first time in a long time, if not ever. It is this relationship between populist movements and the potential for radical societal reorganization that Laclauian analysis of populism is often able to tap into better than most other considerations. It should be acknowledged that any attempt to curb the threat posed by illiberal populists in power must subsequently acknowledge the active history of structural inequality in a given society. Using the United States for example, any left-wing populist movement would need to balance the strategic

importance of creating conditions of empowerment for millions of Black and brown Americans with the inherent Manichean aspects of a populist worldview. Political movements who identify policies and cultural changes meant to provide universal benefit to American citizens as their goal will need to effectively combat and overcome Herrenvolk practices and centuries of limited democracy. The tension between the practical need to recognize and act on the universal rights of all citizens and a worldview which subscribes to a tiered understanding of legitimate citizenship is a dynamic that needs to be teased out much further. The addition of the anti-democratic dimension of the populism scale will allow for an interrogation of the relationship between racism and this specific aspect of populist ideology, and thus serve as a good starting point for this potentially arduous but necessary task.

### Understanding, Conceptualizing, and Measuring Anti-Blackness

This project looks to bring the populism canon into direct conversation with theories of anti-Blackness as a global phenomenon. This project treats anti-Blackness as a concept that is related to, but distinct from racism. The genesis of modern day anti-Blackness can be traced back to the transatlantic slave trade (Hartman 2007; Sharpe 2016; Winnubst 2020). Hartman summarizes this dynamic powerfully writing “Unlike the concentration camp, the gulag, and the killing field, which had as their intended end the extermination of a population, the Atlantic trade created millions of corpses, but as a corollary to the making of commodities” (2007:31). This quote is key in that it helps to both trace the root of modern-day anti-Black attitudes while also shining a light on the implicit relationship between anti-Blackness and capitalist logic. Capitalism in the modern context relies on the continued marginalization and exploitation of workers in general, but especially of Black bodies (Robinson 2000; Melamed 2015; Bledsoe 2020). We can tie capitalism’s perpetual need for superfluous bodies directly to the exponential



expansion of the American carceral system and its strategic targeting of Black communities (Gilmore 2007; Alexander 2020; Bledsoe 2020). An analytical lens that places primacy in the role of Anti-Blackness must acknowledge that societal arrangements where Black people are disproportionately disadvantaged are in fact the status quo. The strength and persistence of structural anti-Blackness helps to explain a litany of social problems be it the racialized gender-wage gap (Lewis et al. 2004), the history of anti-Blackness' role in undermining labor movements (Roediger 1991; Katznelson 2005; Gilens 2009), or rampant observable inequality within modern medicine (Gamble 1997; Bradby 2012; Nuriddin, Mooney, and White 2020; Strings 2023). The persistent reality is that within capitalist societies and capitalist systems Blackness is almost synonymous with disadvantage, and thus relational conditions where Black people are exploited must be treated and accepted as the norm.

Subsequently pro-Black movements very often evolve into explicitly anti-capitalist movements, which partially helps to explain the unique brand of suppression and sabotage that pro-Black movements in the U.S. have been subjected to. In many ways it is the presupposed supremacy of capitalist systems in countries such as the United States which inherently puts pro-Black, anti-capitalist movements on the back-foot. On one hand understandings of capitalism and inequality offered by the likes of Robinson necessitate that truly effective pro-Black movements need to in fact be anti-capitalist. But a combination of the degree that capitalism is insulated from reproach in the U.S. and other western democracies, and the degree that Blackness is policed and monitored makes this an incredibly difficult position from which to operate. Ture and Hamilton speak to this phenomena presciently writing “Yet outright reactionary and confused forces continue to speak of the need for Africans to organize themselves first economically and then politically. That this incorrect axiom is still imposed on our People shows

the determination of capitalism to keep us oppressed." (1992:191). It is true that a great deal of modern Black disadvantage, both in the U.S. and globally, can be traced to Black people being economically marginalized at disproportionate rates. But at the same time understanding the power of anti-Blackness as a global phenomenon means grappling with the degree that class position intersects with anti-Black racism to subject Black people to overlapping inequalities. In their analysis of Black geography and the displacement of the Black middle-class Bledsoe (2020) argues that anti-Blackness in fact cuts across class. In other words, improved economic position does not insulate economically privileged Black people from the ills of anti-Black racism. This speaks to the power of anti-Blackness as a structural force in society separate from but in addition to classism. Consequently, due to the pervasive strength of capitalist notions and ideology throughout society, pro-Black movements inevitably incur attack not just on the basis of anti-Blackness, but also due to the strength of pro-capitalist ideas. Capitalism is American and thus being anti-capitalist can be understood as essentially un-American. It is this unique positionality that has opened up pro-Black movements and figures to unprecedented attacks at the micro, meso, and macro levels.

To critically grapple with the concept of anti-Blackness as an academic and societal force means to grapple with the relationship between Blackness and the concept of fungibility. Winnubst writes "To be fungible, in both its economic and legal meanings, is to have all distinctive characteristics and content hollowed-out. It is a relationship of equity that requires a purely formal semblance" (2020: 104). This line of Black thought argues that the Atlantic slave trade and all of its associated logics and justifications necessitated a metacognitive and ontological process within the minds of non-Black people, the process of viewing Black bodies as commodities and thus inherently, not human (Wynter 2003; Wilderson 2010; Winnubst 2020).

This project is informed by the notion that this sort of anti-Blackness, the systemic dehumanization and marginalization of Black people, is widespread, ubiquitous, and telling. In approaching questions of populism with the role of anti-Blackness at the forefront of inquiry there is potential to better understand anti-Blackness and its relationship to conceptions of citizenship, morality, and legitimacy.

Racism in general and anti-Blackness more specifically are in many ways the Trojan keys to understanding modern political dynamics both globally and in the U.S. specifically. Throughout the country's history Black Americans have served as the prototypical other against whom American principles have been defined. In many ways Blackness or a perceived proximity to Blackness has been more consistently disqualifying for political figures and movements than any other characteristic or identity throughout the history of the United States. Populist logic relies on a narrow defining of "true citizenship", and thus the racialization of legal and common understandings of American citizenship begs an exploration of the relationship between populist thought and feelings of anti-Blackness. The famed "American Dilemma" (Myrdal, Rose, and Sterner 1944) refers precisely to this tension. As Eddie S. Glaude writes "Over and over again, the American Idea-that ours was a nation committed to liberty, freedom and the unfettered pursuit of individual dreams-ran up against the stark reality that black people were valued less than others and that our society was organized to reflect that." (2017:33). Yet at the same time that Black thinkers such as Glaude have earnestly tried to develop strategies to address this glaring blemish on the face of American democracy, many Black thinkers have argued that this apparent inconsistency between the American creed and the country's treatment of Black people is a feature, rather than a bug, of American society. T and Hamilton of the Black Panther Party elaborate "Some believe that there is a conflict between the so-called American Creed and

American practices. The Creed is supposed to contain considerations of equality and liberty, at least certainly equal opportunity, and justice. the fact is, of course, that these are simply words which were not even originally intended to have applicability to black people" (Ture and Hamilton 1992:77). So, if the American Creed was not and has not been applicable to Black Americans, it is because Black Americans have never actually been viewed or treated as true Americans. And if one accepts the historical "othering" of Black Americans as fact, it is only logical to assume that there is value in leveraging anti-Blackness within efforts to define the populist "other".

Put simply, if Americans are likely to accept simple populist arguments which paint specific groups as the root of all of society's problems, then they have probably already been exposed to and convinced by these types of arguments concerning Black folks. Taking Black American history seriously means acknowledging that the Black existence is in many ways defined by the practice of Herrenvolk Republicanism. Herrenvolk Republicanism is defined as a form of democracy where legal rights are not bestowed universally, but instead only upon the worthy/suitable (Harris 1993; Jacobson 1999; Wimmer 2008). Herrenvolk practices ensure that rights, be they legal or political, are allotted and executed at the discretion of the powerful and the majority, thus creating a dichotomy between legitimate citizens who can exercise their rights without question, and "others". We must honestly and unflinchingly acknowledge the impact of anti-Blackness on culture and norms in order to understand how Black Americans can be structurally and systemically marginalized in a country whose entire creed is built on principles of equality and fairness. This systemic marginalization happens daily at every level of society, and the only way that these instances of inequality can be perpetuated so consistently and intensely is through the dominance of a culture where anti-Blackness is innate and normalized.

This project attempts to strike a very delicate balance; on one hand I hope that there is value in the description/explanation offered here of anti-Blackness, especially for those who may be more unfamiliar or skeptical towards the theoretical value or necessity of anti-Blackness as a key sociocultural force. At the same time thinking and writing on these issues as a Black scholar often means simultaneously acknowledging that no description offered here can take the place of lessons and perceptions gleaned through the lived Black experience. One challenge of trying to interrogate the importance of anti-Blackness in understanding the modern American political landscape is trying to conceptualize and identify a specific method of measurement for beliefs which inform the entirety of American life and society. To attempt to account for the ubiquity and variety with which anti-Blackness manifest in American society this project utilizes two separate scales meant to detect feelings of anti-Blackness. Now on one hand there is evidence suggesting that there may not be a terribly strong relationship between implicit attitudes and political actions (Kalmoe & Piston 2013; Kinder & Ryan 2017). But at the same time research on racial cues and racial priming do suggest that racism is best leveraged subtly within the political realm (Mendelberg 2008; Gilens 2009; Jackson 2019). The utility of implicit racism is built on the idea that, with outright expressions of bigotry and intolerance widely frowned upon throughout society, racist signals and appeals made based on race are most frequently and effectively made implicitly (Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002; Suthammanont et al. 2010). With all of this in mind this project will utilize a two-item conception of the implicit racism scale in order to interrogate the potential relationship between implicit racism and populism.

While there is clear value in investigating a potential relationship between populism and implicit racism, we must also acknowledge that anti-Blackness in the United States often operates very explicitly. Anti-Black stereotypes and misconceptions reside at the center of

American notions of citizenship (Loewen 1988; Jacobson 1999), law (Harris 1993; Hinton and Cook 2021) and protest (Riley and Peterson 2020; Graber, Figueroa, and Vasudevan 2020) and remain powerful and significant predictors of a litany of political opinions and behavior (Hutchings 2009; Wilson and Brewer 2013; Tesler 2016). Also, directly related to analysis of RWP, anti-Black attitudes have been found to be strongly associated with anti-immigrant attitudes (Mora and Paschel 2020). These multiple lines of research speak to the reality of anti-Blackness as a central organizing force in modern life. This project looks to expand understandings of populist ideology by working from the premise that there may be a relationship between anti-Blackness and populist logic, where notions of citizenship and legitimacy are central to political understandings. The aforementioned studies actualize anti-Blackness through measures meant to capture phenomena such as anti-Black resentment, belief in anti-Black stereotypes, and perceptions of Black intellect, and yet there is always room for further consideration and actualization of the role of anti-Blackness in American society. As a compliment to the implicit racism scale this study also includes a scale meant to capture more explicit and direct hostility towards minorities in general, but especially Black Americans. This Resistance to Racial Redress (RRR) scale will attempt to measure prevalence of anti-Black attitudes in addition to hostility toward the perception that structural solutions are needed to address historical inequality. This scale utilizes questions that directly invoke social issues commonly associated with Black Americans, and questions which directly question whether the effects of historical inequality still need to be addressed. This two-pronged approach to actualizing and measuring anti-Blackness offers the benefit of being able to explore the relationship between populism and more beneath the surface manifestations of racism (implicit

racism), as well as the potential relationship between populism and more overt expressions of racial antagonism (racial redress resistance scale).

## **CHAPTER THREE: RACISM AND THE FIVE SUB-DIMENSION POPULISM SCALE**

### Introduction

Amidst the increasing prevalence of populist political parties across North America and Europe over the last twenty or so years one of the most pressing concerns regarding populism remains settling on a coherent and logical definition of populism in and of itself. This chapter builds on previous ideological conceptions of populism (Canovan 1981; Mudde 2007; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017) while expanding the theoretical understanding of populist thought. Rather than treating anti-democratic and anti-outgroup beliefs as periphery to populist ideology, this piece investigates the premise that these are core sub-dimensions to a wider and coherent conception of populism. This chapter explores the degree that anti-democratic beliefs and anti-outgroup sentiments should be understood as foundational sub-dimensions of populist along with the more commonly identified sub-dimensions of Manichean thought, a homogeneous view of citizenship, and anti-elitism. Additionally, this chapter will analyze the prevalence of populist thought, on the whole, and for each dimension within this diverse American sample. In essence this chapter looks to provide a more robust and nuanced answer to the questions “What is populism?” and “How prevalent are populist attitudes amongst everyday people in the United States?”.

### The Nature of Populist Thought

Of course, we are not the first scholars to attempt to better understand the nature and dimensions of populist thought. Akkerman, Mudde, and Zaslove (2014) analyzed a 600 respondent Dutch sample to attempt to distinguish populist attitudes from pluralist and elitist attitudes. They were able to identify populism as a statistically confirmed separate type of political attitude in comparison to pluralism and anti-elitism. Roodujin (2018) utilized a



conception of a populist voter based on the idea that these are individuals more likely to be on the losing end of globalization to analyze support of 15 populist parties from across 11 Western European countries before ultimately being unable to identify a coherent profile of “populist voters”. Schulz et. Al (2018) utilized a 12-item scale built on the notion of populism as a three-dimensional (anti-elitism, a preference for popular sovereignty, and a belief in the existence of a homogenous and virtuous citizenship) entity. Through a series of analysis, they were able to identify three distinct, correlated dimensions of populism.

This project builds on the highly influential ideological understanding of populism offered by Mudde and Kaltwasser (2007; 2017), who in turn built on the initial definition offered by Caonvan (1981). From this perspective populism is best understood as a thin ideology that revolves around the essential political conflict between a pure, “good” people and an evil, corrupt elite. The people are understood to be essentially homogenous, with common aspirations, and a singular popular will. From a Manichean point of view the only real conflict is between the good people and the bad elite.

Subsequent scholars have expanded and elaborated on populism using this ideological definition as an origin point. One specific and pertinent characteristic of populist ideology which this piece looks to further deconstruct is the authoritarian/anti-pluralist aspects of populism. Müller (2016) speaks specifically to the anti-pluralist elements of populism writing “In addition to being anti-elitist, populists are always anti-pluralist. Populists claim that they, and they alone, represent the people.” (2016:3). This viewpoint evolves from the Manichean view of politics and society that populism necessitates, in which one’s political opponents are viewed as not just wrong, but as inherently evil and immoral. Through their characterization of the populist view of the people Arato and Cohen (2021) can help us to understand the relationship between the

dimension of populism which conceives of the existence of a homogenous true citizenry, and the dimension of populism built on disdain for and indifference to “others” within a society. Like Lacalau, Arato and Cohen (2021) argue that populism entails taking a part (the populist party/movement) as the whole (all of society). This relates back to the anti-pluralist aspect of populism because if your political opposition is not just wrong, but also inherently evil, then the notion of compromise or even political debate becomes not just illogical, but also preposterous. At the same time political systems built on liberal democratic principles inherently require political actors to respect the political wills and right to exist of their opposition. This can help to explain the degree that populist in power utilize every level and mechanism within representative democratic systems to enact their political will. The reformulation of populism offered in this chapter looks to pay proper attention to the degree that anti-pluralist/authoritarian feelings and a categorical negative view of traditionally stigmatized are core sub-dimensions of populist ideology.

#### Implications of This Chapter

Building on Dr. Rosenberg’s previous ideas regarding the nature of populist thought (Rosenberg 2019, 2020), this project deploys a five sub-dimensional populism scale consisting of three sub-dimensions (a Manichean view of society, a belief in a categorically good and homogenous “true” citizenry, anti-elitism) which have commonly been presented as dimensions of populist thought, and two sub-dimensions (anti-pluralist/authoritarian beliefs, and anti-outgroup sentiments) that we are proposing as essential additions for properly understanding and analyzing populism theoretically. In terms of anti-democratic/authoritarian beliefs the weakening of political institutions, consolidation of political power, and democratic backsliding are frequently cited as potential threats related to populists gaining political power (Abts and

Rummens 2007; Mouffe 2016; Bermeo 2016; Mueller 2019; Rosenberg 2019). Arato and Cohen (2021) concisely argue that populism is ideologically rooted in the inherent tension between popular sovereignty and constitutionalism, a tension that inevitably exists within any constitutional democracy. Populism becomes a direct threat to democracy when populists seeking power perpetuate the degradation and disregard for the tenets of constitutionalism which necessitate the preservation of minority rights and the right for one's political adversary to continue to exist. Populists in power take this notion a step further by actively and intentionally enacting policies which result in the erosion of democratic institutions and processes associated with democratic backsliding.

From the populist point of view, us true citizens are inherently correct and perpetually in agreement, so norms and principles related to notions of debate and compromise are at best wastes of time. Despite the frequently observed relationship between populists in power and attacks on democratic norms and institutions, a receptivity or acceptance of anti-democratic rhetoric and actions has not been conceptualized within studies of populist attitudes. Just because you view yourself as inherently on the side of "good" doesn't necessarily guarantee that you will be receptive to the flaunting or marginalizing of democratic institutions and norms. Being able to distinguish between a Manichean view of society and authoritarian/anti-democratic beliefs will help us to develop a more nuanced understanding of populism.

The necessity for a sub-dimension of populism focused on the role of anti-outgroup attitudes is informed by the categorical mode of populist construction. A central goal of populism is the establishment of a coherent vision of an "us", and thus a coherent vision and understanding of "them" becomes almost equally important. Populist construction is linear and thus stigmatized minority groups serve as efficient and effective starting points in populist

arguments. It is important to consider this sub-dimension of populism separate from anti-elitism both because of the triadic nature of right-wing populism, and because of the potential mediating effect of opinions on the traditionally marginalized on the reception of populist arguments on individuals from across the political spectrum.

Much as the inclusion of the anti-democratic dimension of populist thought in the scale allows for a further investigation of the relationship between populism and hierarchal conceptions of citizenship, the inclusion of the anti-outgroup dimension in the populism measure allows for the empirical investigation of the role that hostility toward “othered” groups in society plays in populist logic and attitudes. The Manichean nature of populist understandings does not operate in a vacuum, meaning that groups in society that are already viewed as deviant or immoral are especially useful subjects for populists to define themselves in opposition to. Whether or not it is left-wing populists attacking the ultra-wealthy, or right-wing populists attacking unpopular immigrant groups, the key here is to pick rhetorical opponents for whom there are already negative perceptions for populists to leverage. The belief in the existence of a homogenous and “true” citizenry doesn’t automatically necessitate anti-outgroup beliefs, and thus the separate anti-outgroup dimension within the populism scale will allow us to disentangle this dynamic more thoroughly. It is possible that anti-outgroup beliefs are just as if not better than a belief in a homogenous and true citizenry in accounting for populism’s appeal/success overall. The anti-outgroup dimension within the scale allows for the investigation of the potential relationship between anti-outgroup sentiments and each of other sub-dimensions of populism.

Evidence supporting a five sub-dimension conception of populism would subsequently support the notion that a willingness to marginalize political opponents systemically and

structurally are key components of populist ideology. As previously mentioned, while this obviously has implications for all members of societies, it must be acknowledged that efforts to curb illiberalism and promote universal political efficacy will inevitably run headfirst against phenomena such as anti-Blackness in the United States, anti-aboriginal prejudice in Australia, and anti-Romanian sentiments throughout Western Europe. While the specific groups which make the most effective targets will vary from country to country, what remains true is the reality that populist messages about good and evil and the existence of a true citizenry are received within societal contexts where certain racial and ethnic identities already paint certain citizens as less legitimate or familiar than others. When populists propose that certain groups of citizens are illegitimate they are not doing so solely out of a fear of economic competition. Taking the Anti-Outgroup dimension of populist thought seriously means adequately recognizing the degree that populism can be animated by fear related to shifting demographics and cultural threat.

## Methodology

### Data Collection

This online survey was conducted using the Amazon Turk platform in March 2022. While there is literature in defense of MTurk as a method for recruiting participants (Horton, Rand, and Zeckhauser 2011; Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012; Goodman, Cryder, and Cheema 2013) it should be pointed out that this sample is not representative. In order to address known imbalances in the sample we solicited an additional 300 participants after the initial population of 1042, with the specific aim of recruiting more conservative and Republican respondents as well as more respondents who had a high school education or less.

## Scales and Measures

Populist attitudes were assessed using the previously detailed 19-item scale where all items presented a positive statement of populist attitude. For all 19 items respondents were given a 7-point response option from (1) strongly disagree through (4) not sure to (7) strongly agree. To account for the role of agreement bias we reverse-coded several items throughout the survey. In addition to constituting an overall measure of populist attitudes, the 19 items were grouped creating five subscales. One is labeled “Anti-Democratic Views”. It includes items on unhindered executive power, disregard for the rule of law and devaluation of public sphere. For example: (a) *The courts should not stand in the way of a President who is acting on behalf of the people.* (b) *The 2024 Presidential election is very important for America’s future. If it becomes necessary, violence is justified to make sure the best candidate wins.* This sub-scale consists of 9 items and has a Cronbach’s Alpha value of .931. The second subscale is labeled ‘Manichean Views’. It includes items on how there is clear, non-negotiable determination of right and wrong in politics and an intolerance of differing views. For example: (a) *In most political debates, it is clear that one is morally right and the other is not.* (b) *In politics, tolerance of different moral and political views is really just selling out one’s own principles.* This three-item subscale produced a Cronbach’s Alpha of .805. The third subscale is labeled ‘ideal homogeneity of the people.’ Here are items suggesting the country would be better off if the people shared a common background, religion or race and that citizens should conform to shared social conventions. For example: *A country is better off when all its citizens share the same race.* This four-item subscale produced a Cronbach’s Alpha of .891. The fourth subscale is labeled ‘anti-outgroup.’ It includes items that focus on negative attitudes to Jews, Black people, and immigrants. For example: (a) *Jews have too much political power. This is a problem because*

they put their interests ahead of the interests of the American people. (b) It is really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if black people would only try harder they could be just as well off as white people. This three item-subscale produced a Cronbach's Alpha of .785. The fifth subscale is 'anti-elitism'. It includes items on the dissimilarity and selfishness of the economic and cultural elite. For example: *The Ivy League cultural elite have very different values than most Americans.* This four item sub-scale produced a Cronbach's Alpha of .832. See Appendix D for full descriptives of each item.

### Findings

Table 3.1: Sample Demographics					
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Political Party Identification	Frequency	Percent
Female	607	47.20%	Strongly Democrat	199	15.40%
Male	675	52.50%	Democrat	76	5.90%
			Independent, Democrat Leaning	428	32.30%
Age			Independent	166	12.80%
18-28	280	21.50%	Independent, Republican Leaning	83	6.40%
29-38	438	33.60%	Republican	246	19%
39-48	257	19.70%	Strongly Republican	107	8.30%
49-58	222	17.00%			
59-68	93	7.10%			
69+	13	1.00%			
Education			Political Ideology		

No H.S. Diploma	7	0.60%	Very Liberal	168	13.00%
H.S. Grad	87	6.80%	Liberal	296	22.90%
Some College	143	11.30%	Somewhat Liberal	178	13.80%
2-year Degree	107	8.40%	Not Sure	108	8.40%
4-Year Degree	676	53.20%	Somewhat Conservative	154	11.90%
Masters	231	18.20%	Conservative	258	20.00%
Ph. D	20	1.60%	Very Conservative	128	9.90%
Race					
White	1084	82.00%			
Asian	63	4.70%			
Latino	48	3.60%			
Black	89	6.70%			
Two or More Races	29	2.10%			

*Table 3.1 Sample Demographics*

Notes: Age is coded 1-6 with 1 representing the 18-28 age range and 6 representing the 69+ age range; Gender is coded with “Woman” as 0, “Man” as 1; Education is coded 1-7 based on highest level of schooling completed; Political Party is coded 1-7 with 1 representing “Strongly Democratic” and 7 representing “Strongly Republican”

Table 3.1 provides a full demographic breakdown of our sample but it should be noted that the sample was 47% female (U.S. – 50%) while 53.2% of the sample has a BA/BS degree (U.S. – 34%). It’s estimated that about 45% of U.S. adults identify as Republican or Republican-leaning while 44% of adults identify as Democrat or Democratic-leaning. Within this sample 54% of respondents identified as a democrat or a democrat leaning independent while 33% of the sample identified as Republican or independent Republican leaning. Within the sample 82% of respondents identified as White, 4.7% identified as Asian (compared with 6.3% of the U.S. population), 3.6% identified a Latino (compared with 19% of the U.S. population), 6.7% of the



sample identified as Black (compared with 13.6% of the U.S. population) and 2.1% of the sample identified as two or more races (compared with 3% of the U.S. population). While not representative, the sample was diverse enough towards the purpose of examining the coherence and prevalence of populist views.

	<b>Anti-Democratic Beliefs</b>	<b>Manichean Thought</b>	<b>Belief in an Ideal Homogenous Citizenry</b>	<b>Anti-Outgroup Prejudice</b>	<b>Anti-Elite Feelings</b>
<b>Anti-Democratic Beliefs</b>	X	.780**	.764**	.749**	.333**
<b>Manichean Thought</b>	.780**	X	.676**	.634**	.390**
<b>Belief in an Ideal Homogenous Citizenry</b>	.764**	.676**	X	.806**	.362**
<b>Anti-Outgroup Prejudice</b>	.749**	0.634**	.806**	X	.316**
<b>Anti-Elite Feelings</b>	.333**	0.390**	.362**	.316**	X

Table 3.2 : Bivariate Correlations of the Five Populism Scale Sub-dimensions  
 Note: \*\*indicates significance at the .01 level

Turning to the question of the nature of populism, we conducted both correlational and factor analyses to assess the validity of our theoretical claims regarding the substance and coherence of the populist vision of politics. Table 3.2 provides the results of correlation analysis between the five sub-dimensions of the populism scale. We can see that four of the subscales, Authoritarian/Anti-Democratic Beliefs, Manichean and Absolutist Morality, Ideal Homogeneity

of the People, and Anti-Outgroup Feelings correlated with one another at very high levels (.63 to .80). The fifth subscale, Anti-Elitism, also correlated significantly with the others, but at lower levels (.32 to .39). It should be noted that the two additional sub-dimensions of the populism scale, Anti-Outgroup Prejudice and Anti-Democratic Beliefs, correlated at levels suggesting a significant and coherent relationship with the other three dimensions of the scale.

Table 3.3: Primary Component Factor Analysis for the Five Sub-Dimensions of the Populism Scale		
Component	Initial Eigenvalues % of variance	Cumulative %
1	68.23	68.23
2	16.1	84.33
3	8.09	94.42
4	3.87	96.295
5	3.71	100
Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>		
	Component 1	
Anti-Democratic Beliefs	0.908	
Manichean Thought	0.861	
Belief in an Ideal Homogenous Citizenry	0.9	
Anti-Outgroup Prejudice	0.877	
Anti-Elite Feelings	0.517	

Notes: This was done utilizing principal component analysis

a. 1 components extracted

Table 3.3 Primary Component Factor Analysis for the Five Sub-Dimensions of the Populism Scale

Table 3.3 presents the results of factor analysis on the five sub-dimensions of the populism scale. These results are consistent with the previous correlational analysis. A single component explained 68% of the variance, with the four most strongly interrelated sub-dimensions of populism loading on that single component at the .80 level or higher. Doing the analysis without the Anti-Elitism measure, a single factor accounted for 80% of the variance. In sum, the data confirms our first hypothesis, that populism does constitute a coherent vision of politics with five sub-dimensions, authoritarian/anti-liberal governance, dualistic and absolutistic morality, ideal homogeneity of the people, anti-group attitudes and anti-elitism. These results lend credence to the notion that the Anti-Democratic Beliefs and Anti-Outgroup Sentiments dimensions of the scale function as significant parts of a coherent understanding of populism.

Table 3.4: Mean and Quartile Responses to the Populism Scale				
Variable	Mean	25th percentile	50th percentile	75th percentile
Whole Scale	4.3	3.3	4.3	5.3
Anti-Democratic Beliefs	4	2.8	4.1	5.3
Ideal Homogeneity	4.1	2.8	4.3	5.5
Manichean Beliefs	4.3	3.3	4.3	5.3
Anti-Elitism	4.9	4	5	5.8

Anti- Outgroup Beliefs	4.2	3	4.3	5.3
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*Table 3.4 Mean and Quartile Responses to the Populism Scale*

It should again be noted that the sample population is not representative. It is somewhat younger and more educated than the population at large and ethnic minorities are underrepresented. With that being said, there is still value in considering the level of populist attitudes held in this otherwise diverse, large sample. While the anti-elitism sub-dimension performed as somewhat of an outlier in much of the analysis throughout this project, it should still be noted that levels of anti-elitism were incredibly high across the entire sample. Table 3.4 presents the mean responses on the overall populism scale and each of the 5 subscales for the 75<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentiles. For the overall populism scale, on scale where 7 is very strongly populist to 1 which is very anti-populist, the median response was 4.4 or neutral or slightly leaning populist while 75<sup>th</sup> percentile score is 5.3 or clearly populist and the lower 25<sup>th</sup> percentile response being 3.7. There is a similar distribution of support for each of the individual dimensions of populism except for anti-elitism. In this case, with a median response of 4.9 and even the lower 25<sup>th</sup> percentile responding at 4 or neutral, the entire population shows high levels of support for this sub-dimension of populist thinking..

For some these results may be surprising for a country like the United States, with its international reputation as a bastion of liberal democratic governance. Despite the ubiquity of liberal democratic culture, our diverse sample was on average neutral on attitudes which stand in direct opposition to the liberal democratic vision of governance. It should be noted that these were the results despite our sample being more educated and younger than the American population on average. This would seem to suggest that debates over which politicians should or should not be classified as populists may be missing the degree that populist attitudes, including

those that devalue democracy and minority rights are held by a wide segment of the wider citizenry.

## Conclusions

The findings related to the Anti-Democratic Beliefs dimension of the scale hold ramifications on both the theoretical and practical levels. On one hand these findings emphasize the need to interrogate the degree that arguments and understandings which are ultimately hostile to democracy as a form of government are core features of populist ideologies and movements. Anti-democratic arguments and actions employed by populists have traditionally been explained through the Manichean Thought, Homogenous View of the People, and Anti-Elitism dimensions of populism, that is populists do not care about the political rights or will of the opposition because the opposition is inherently evil and wrong. But the evidence related to the Anti-Democratic Beliefs dimension of populism would seem to suggest that individuals holding populist views may be hostile to traditional tenets of democratic rule at a more fundamental level. These findings cannot be divorced from the reality that in the real-world individuals and groups most likely to have their democratic rights questioned and attacked are those holding already marginalized identities. This means that a key factor in the degree that populist arguments resonate with individual citizens may be the degree that they are already receptive to arguments which question the value or necessity public deliberation, limits on executive power, etc. Another potential ramification is that curtailing populist attacks on democratic systems will entail intentional and multi-dimensional efforts to protect and preserve the democratic rights of groups that have traditionally been marginalized and disenfranchised, groups such as Black Americans.

Similarly, the findings related to the Anti-Outgroup dimension of the scale would seem to suggest that opposition to traditionally marginalized members of society may function as a key building block of populism. The Anti-Outgroup dimension was highly correlated with the other dimensions of the scale and, as will be detailed in the next chapter, other variables such as political ideology did not seem to play significant roles in the degree that the Anti-Outgroup dimension proved significant. These findings suggest a need to reconsider the degree that one's propensity to find populist arguments convincing is directly tied to the degree that people are receptive to negative ideas and stereotypes regarding the opposition against whom populists are attempting to define themselves. In many ways this is perfectly logical, if populists are building arguments which place blame on immigrants or racial minorities then the degree that people already hold ill will towards these groups will play a large role in how these arguments are received. There is potential for all political movements, populist or otherwise, to find success through trafficking arguments or logic which rely on racist, anti-immigrant, and anti-Black understandings, as these hierarchal understandings of society and competition reside at the heart of all western democratic societies. The key here is that populism already presents a mode of thought that privileges swift and concrete action, concerns of the minority be damned, and this is an especially dangerous proposition for the historically marginalized.

These findings indicate that populism exists as a coherent and detectable set of ideas and beliefs amongst a substantial portion of respondents. These findings would seem to support the idea of the anti-outgroup and anti-democratic sub-dimensions of the populism scale functioning as substantial and foundational aspects of populism as a wider coherent ideology. These findings necessitate several next steps. It would be very interesting to see if similar patterns are observed in a representative sample. Additionally taking the roles of the anti-democratic and anti-outgroup

dimensions of populism would necessitate a reconsideration of topics ranging from the genesis of support for individual populist parties to the content and reception of specific populist messaging. This five sub-dimensional conception of populism has potential to help us better understand what attracts some people to populist messaging while also holding the potential to develop more effective strategies for curbing the illiberal effects of populists in power. By treating hostility to pluralism and outgroups as core to populism there is potential to recontextualize a wide range of analysis regarding the role of populist ideology in modern society.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: POPULISM AND ANTI-BLACKNESS**

### Introduction

In this chapter examines the relationship between racism and populism. First, I offer a theoretical analysis of the relationship between racism and the adoption of populist beliefs. This is followed by the presentation of empirical research from a large sample of American adults. By exploring the relationship between measures of implicit and explicit anti-Blackness and the whole populism scale in addition to each sub-dimension of populism, we can begin to understand the racism-populism relationship with more nuance and in a way that offers utility in the real world. Evidence indicating significant and multi-faceted relationships between different sub-dimensions of populism and racism against non-immigrant minority groups would lend credence to the premise that the relationship between populism and aspects of group hierarchy need to be further explored.

### Five Sub-Dimensional Ideological Populism

This chapter adopts the five sub-dimensional construction of populism analyzed in the previous chapter. It should be reiterated that from this viewpoint populism is best understood as a thin ideology that revolves around the essential political conflict between a pure, “good” people and an evil, corrupt elite (Canovan 1981; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2007; 2017). From this perspective populism is best understood as a thin ideology that revolves around the essential political conflict between a pure, “good” people and an evil, corrupt elite. The people are understood to be essentially homogenous, with common aspirations, and a singular popular will. From a Manichean point of view all political conflicts should be viewed through the lens of this primary conflict between good and evil.

This project works from the premise that populism best understood as a mode of thinking which encourages categorical and linear modes of constructing meaning. For populists many



political event and actors can be understood through linear casual relationships, you start by focusing on a single action and then connect said action to prior subsequent events which are then defined as either causes or effects of the initial point of focus. Ultimately this allows for a mode of construction where other actors or objects can best be understood in relation to the initial point of focus. Populism also entails the development of concrete categorical political understandings. Here a person is primarily understood in relation to a specific category of things that they do, say, or are. Similarly, groups are conceived in terms of the set of signature acts, beliefs, or characteristics that its members are understood as sharing. The linear casual and concrete categorical qualities of the populist way of constructing understanding dictates the development of a populist construction of a people, as well as on a populist view of society and government.

This project builds on previous conceptions of ideological populism by proposing that populism is best understood as consisting of five subdimensions: 1) a Manichean view of society, 2) a categorical view of a homogenous “true citizenry”, 3) a categorical and negative view of elites, 4) a categorical and negative view of stigmatized outgroups, and 5) a hierarchical, authoritarian, and anti-liberal democratic view of governance. While these first three sub-dimensions have commonly been identified as core sub-dimensions of populist ideology, this project advances the argument that anti-liberal ideology and a categorical view of traditionally marginalized outgroups are also core sub-dimensions of populism. This chapter specifically looks to explore the relationship between racism and populism as a whole ideology, as well as the relationship between racism and each sub-dimension of populism.

## Theories of Race and Populism

In many ways the populism-racism relationship is just begging for further empirical study. A key aspect of populism is the process of the construction of a coherent vision and understanding of “the people” as a political actor (Laclau 2005; Panizza 2017). Conversely a large part of populism discourse becomes the construction of the “other” who stand in the way of populists and their goals. This is where there is potential for the specific racial and ethnic stereotypes and histories of any given country to populate the framework of populist discourse. Whether it is leveraging anti-Black feelings in the U.S., anti-aboriginal feelings in Australia, or Islamophobia in western Europe, widely stereotyped and marginalized minority groups make great targets for populists to define themselves in opposition to. The direct targeting of ethnic and racial minorities most often happens within triadic models of populism. Both left and right-wing populisms are characterized as conflicts between “the citizens” and the “elite”, but under triadic right-wing framings there is also a third, negative other besides elites, that right-wing populists can use to define themselves in opposition to (Judis 2016; Snow and Bernatzky 2019). The exact identity or identities of the members of that third group will vary based on societal context, but the negative other conception will always consist of individuals holding identities that are already stigmatized within a given society. These stigmatized populations are often categorized as “superfluous populations” within the populism canon (Snow and Bernatzky 2019).

Bonikowski (2017) points to ethnocentrism as a key factor in understanding the increased success of radical right-wing parties over the last decade and a half. Bonikowski points to a combination of cultural and demographic shifts in conjunction with increasing economic inequality in countries such as the U.S., Great Britain, and Australia as creating the conditions

that have helped radical ideologies such as populism resonate more effectively with potential voters. The most relevant point here within the context of this study is that increased support for right-wing populists in this case is not necessarily spurred exclusively by actual economic or political conditions, as much as support for right-wing populism seems to be related to the degree that individuals within societies are responsive to messages regarding the cultural threat posed by increasingly powerful “others”. Put more simply, right-wing populists benefit when members of a country’s racial/ethnic majority long for a past with less representation and power for traditionally marginalized groups. While this project is focused specifically on the relationship between populism and racism there are already similar lines of inquiry being investigated concerning relationships such as those between radical right-wing politics and sexism (Eksi and Wood 2019), and radical right-wing ideologies and heteronormativity (Meret and Siim 2013). Any drastic cultural changes, be they related to aspects of racial hierarchy, gender identity, etc., are likely to spur feelings of threat and uneasiness among certain segments of a society. Arato and Cohen (2021) build on Weber’s foundational analysis of status hierarchies to argue that in societies where cultural norms are shifting towards goals such as inclusion and equity, members of mainstream society, the traditionally privileged, may experience status loss. This feeling of status loss, coupled with the perception that major political parties are not providing adequate representation, can make individuals especially susceptible to populist appeals.

It should also be noted that populist parties can have drastic effects on political discourse even if they are ultimately unsuccessful in a given political election. A commonly identified effect of increased visibility and success for populist parties is the degree that the presence of these figures and ideologies shift the discursive window in regards to certain political topics in a society (Hogan and Haltinner 2015; Sengul 2020; Krzyżanowski et al. 2021). This expansion of

the arguments that can even be presented or debated is an especially notable outcome of prominent right-wing populist parties gaining more notability and credibility within a society. This dynamic is what leads Arato and Cohen to state that "... populist rhetoric and mobilization not only depends on crises, but also help to produce them" (2021:34). The degree that the rhetoric and possibilities presented by political figures influences the preferences and appetites of political constituents is why it is a fallacy to suggest that the "supply" and "demand" sides of populism (or any specific political ideology/movements for that matter) exist independently from one another. Additionally, it should be recognized that it is much easier, both in theory and in practice, for populist politicians to build ideological claims based on the premise of politically marginalizing groups who are already viewed as lesser than by potential populist constituents. In this way the calls for political actions centered on the scuttling of democratic rights for individuals viewed as the "other" aren't usually as novel or even as new as they are sometimes made out to be within the populist canon. The important point here is that while the idea of a liberal democracy where whole swaths of individuals who may technically be citizens are systemically denied a litany of legal and democratic rights is quite alarming, but this also describes the actual lives of groups such as Black Americans, Palestinians, aboriginal Australians, and Europeans of Romani heritage to various degrees.

The decision to directly investigate the relationship between racism and populism is also informed by the litany of theoretical work which has addressed different aspects of the populism-racism relationship. The racism-populism relationship has been considered extensively within investigations of the difference between dyadic and triadic populisms. It has been argued that the key difference between left and right-wing populisms is that while left-wing populism is dyadic (rooted in the belief that it is "the people" writ large vs. the elite), right-wing populism is most

often triadic (Judis 2016; Snow and Bernatzky 2019). From this perspective right-wing populism requires a negative other that right-wing populists can use to define themselves in opposition to, besides society's elites (Snow and Bernatzky 2019). The exact identity or identities of the members of that third group will vary based on societal context, but the negative other conception will always consist of individuals holding identities that are already stigmatized within a given society. Snow and Bernatzky (2019) dub these stigmatized groups superfluous populations. Again, the advantage of populism is its linear and categorical method of construction, so in triadic populism it becomes incredibly easy and effective to tie a wide litany of social ills or problems back to superfluous populations. This project is partially informed by the hypothesis that those who display high levels of disdain toward a wide variety of superfluous populations in a society are already primed to be more easily persuaded by triadic populist appeals. If you are an American who already has a negative view of immigrants or Black Americans, then a political ideology which places the blame for unemployment or inflation squarely on the shoulders of these groups will naturally be quite appealing. Individuals who view the world through more systemic and complex frameworks would potentially be less convinced by these linear categorical constructions of society.

Bonikowski (2017) argues that it is increased levels of ethnocentrism, and subsequently the increased resonance of claims made by radical right-wing parties (including right-wing populists) that explain the increased success of radical right-wing parties in western democratic countries over the last decade or so. This is directly related to the argument presented by Arato and Cohen (2021), that in societies where cultural norms are shifting towards goals such as inclusion and equity, members of mainstream society, the traditionally privileged, may experience status loss. This specific premise may explain why it is somewhat difficult to observe

a significant link between economic marginalization or pessimism and populism throughout liberal democratic societies. The most relevant point here to the context of this study is that increased support for right-wing populists may not be spurred by actual economic or political conditions, as much as support for right-wing populism may be related to increased levels of ethnocentrism and the degree that individuals within societies are responsive to messages regarding the cultural threat posed by increasingly powerful “others”. Put more simply, right-wing populists may be benefiting when members of a country’s racial/ethnic majority begin to long for a past with less representation and power for traditionally marginalized groups. Analysis which ignores this line of thought risks treating racism within populist ideology as a side-effect rather than as a primary animating force. It should be noted that the above theories almost exclusively approach the populism-racism relationship as a phenomenon exclusive to right-wing populism. But by addressing the degree that even left-wing populism is Manichean and anti-pluralist, another potential contribution of this chapter is the exploration of whether political identification even plays a significant mediating role in the populism-racism relationship, at least within the U.S.

In terms of research which looks to directly assess opinions on the demand-side, the populism-racism relationship has generally only been addressed tangentially. One line of inquiry which has explored the populism-race relationship is that focused on the theoretical relationship between populism, globalization, and neoliberalism (Spruyt, Keppens, and Droogenbroeck 2016; Rodrik 2018). These considerations have primarily focused on the increasing relevance of globalization and the perceived lack of responsiveness to inequality spurred by globalization from elected officials as primary demand-side accelerants for populist politics within traditional democracies. The idea that core supporters of populism are more likely to be the “losers of

modernization” has been present in academic discourses for over twenty-five years (Betz and Immerfall 1998). It is theorized that populists, especially right-wing populists, are able to capitalize when citizens perceive that existing major political parties are not adequately addressing problems caused by increased globalization (Laclau 2005; Hogan and Haltinner 2015; Mudde 2007; Bugaric 2019). The perception of unresponsiveness from major parties creates opportunities for populists to paint themselves as the only political entities willing to act on issues such as immigration on the behalf of the “true citizens”. Consequently, several empirical investigations of political attitudes have focused on the potential relationship between populist attitudes and perceptions of globalization and other economic issues. Spruyt et. Al (2016) explored the effects of globalization as a contributing factor to the rise of populism in western Europe, ultimately finding relevant links between populism, material position, education, and feelings of vulnerability and deprivation. In a similar vein Rooduijn (2018) analyzed 15 populist parties from 11 Western European countries to determine if the “populist voter” really existed, based on the conception of the populist voter as individuals more likely to be on the losing end of globalization. In this study Rooduijn ultimately concludes that the electorates of different types of populist parties don’t have very much in common, and ultimately complicates the theoretical connection between economic marginalization and support for populist parties. These findings do actually lend credence to the idea of populism as a thin ideology. From this perspective it would make sense that populist parties from various countries don’t have a lot in common when one analyzes the different electorates, the existing cultures and contexts that the populist ideology is forming constructions within is going to be different from country to country. Understanding this premise is also key to understanding the value of analyzing the populism-racism relationship. The most effective minority groups to center populist ideology around will

vary depending on the country, what should be consistent is the idea that those who are the most prejudiced toward a society's superfluous populations may also be the individuals most likely to be persuaded by populist claims.

### The Impact of Anti-Blackness

This chapter investigates the racism-populism relationship by investigating the potential connection between a five sub-dimensional construction of populism and manifestations of anti-Black attitudes. This project conceives anti-Blackness as a very specific and powerful manifestation of racism, one which affects essentially aspects of societies globally. At the core of this understanding of anti-Blackness is the concept of fungibility. Many scholars of Black thought and Black life understand the Black experience as being fungible. Here the idea is that the dehumanization of Black people perpetuated through and because of the Atlantic slave trade created a social reality where Black bodies were essentially divorced from understandings of humanity (Wynter 2003; Hartman 2007; Wilderson 2010; Winnubst 2020). For chattel slavery and systems of racial capitalism to persist and flourish enslaved Black people couldn't be perceived of as people at all, and the ramifications of this process are still being felt globally to this day.

Once one understands the Black experience as marked by fungibility it then becomes easier to understand how and why Black citizenship so often manifests in a Herrenvolk manner. Herrenvolk Republicanism is defined as a form of democracy where legal rights are not bestowed universally, but instead only upon the worthy/suitable (Harris 1993; Jacobson 1999; Wimmer 2008). After accepting and understanding the degree that Blackness has been tied to fungibility it becomes easy to understand how and why in countries as diverse as the United States, Australia, Brazil, and the Philippines Blackness has functioned as a key marker for



marginalization. Not only does being Black make one more likely to have their rights violated but being Black also means embodying an existence where many non-Black people do not perceive you as a human/citizen/peer. The degree that anti-Blackness operates structurally, culturally, and implicitly all at the same time is a key reason why there is so much potential analytic value in interrogating potential relationships between anti-Blackness and concepts that have typically been left to the devices of scholars who do not adopt a race-central conception of politics and life.

This project specifically focuses on the opinions and attitudes of an American sample, and anti-Blackness has a distinct and significant role in American culture and society. But at the same time it should also be noted that anti-Blackness is best understood as a global phenomenon. Fanon was not adopting an American-centered view as he detailed the degree that Blackness disqualifies people from empathetic treatment in many White psyches, and even in the modern moment Anti-Black ideas and systems affect the lives of people all over the globe (Rodney 2012). Anti-Black ideas are prevalent globally and thus interrogations of anti-Blackness in the American setting have potentially global implications. Anti-Blackness has implicit ties to phenomena such as xenophobia, but can also manifest separate and distinct from anti-immigrant attitudes. Examining the degree that anti-Blackness marks individuals as others even in cases where they hold legitimate legal citizenship claims can help illuminate the degree that notions of similarity and commonality are affected by more than national origin or legal classification.

#### Racism and Five Sub-Dimensional Populism

Populism advances a Manichean view of society where any and all political conflicts are contests between good vs. evil groups (Müller 2016; Panizza 2017). Despite arising within the context of liberal democracies, populist movements reject the political legitimacy and right to

exist of their political opposition, “In addition to being anti-elitist, populists are always anti-pluralist. Populists claim that they, and they alone, represent the people.” (Müller 2016:3). We argue that the Manichean nature of populist ideology is one aspect which reinforces the importance of the racism-populism relationship. We know that there is a strong relationship between perceptions of morality and racism, in the U.S. anti-Black attitudes have led to Black Americans being associated with various forms of deviancy and dysfunction whether it be crime (Gilens 1996; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002; Mendelberg 2001), anger (Banks, White, and McKenzie 2019; Phoenix 2019), or laziness (Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman 1997; Hampton-Garland, Sechrest-Ehrhardt, and Cooke 2018). There are literally hundreds of years of American history which ties Black Americans to evil/dysfunction/deviance, so the idea that individuals holding higher levels of anti-Black beliefs may also be more likely to subscribe to a Manichean conception of society is worth exploring at the very least. While this project is specifically focusing on the relationship between populism and anti-Blackness in the American context, we suspect that this may be an observable dynamic in other countries in relation to other racial and ethnic outgroups. It would be very interesting to explore the relationship between Manichean beliefs and anti-aboriginal opinions in Australia or anti-Palestinian opinions in Israel.

Another sub-dimension of populist thought is the belief in the existence of a homogenous “true” citizenry amongst whom there is universal agreement on the most pressing political questions. First, we must recognize that the conception of American citizenship has always been built simultaneously around whiteness and in opposition to Blackness (Lowen 1988; Harris 1993; Jacobson 1999; Olson 2001; Glaude 2017). This reality is why the analysis of the racism-populism relationship holds drastic implications for both right and left-wing populisms in the U.S. Even in left-wing constructions of populism populist ideology relies on the perceived

existence of a true, homogenous citizenry amongst whom there is widespread agreement regarding the most pressing political questions of the day. A race conscious analysis of politics in the real world can quickly identify the ways in which a disregard for dissenting viewpoints and opinions can quickly spiral into concerted efforts to tamp down Black dissent. In fact, we know that there is an association between anti-Black ideas and hostility to the concept of protest (Riley and Peterson 2020; Graber, Figueroa, and Vasudevan 2020). So any widespread perception of a homogenous citizenry would eventually run head-first against the demands of Black people requesting to have their humanity recognized.

The idea that Black Americans are not fully incorporated into the American idea of citizenship is not in any way new, after all Du Bois identified the problem of the color line as the problem of the twentieth century almost two lifetimes ago. Myrdal constructed the idea of the American Dilemma, the ultimate manifestation of cognitive dissonance, as the distance between the American creed on paper and the country's treatment of Black bodies throughout its history, in 1954. Thus, it is worth wondering the degree that cultural anti-Blackness factors into the reception of any political ideology or appeals which are built on the logic of citizenship.

Populism is a problem for liberal democracies specifically to the degree that people act on the notion that their political will usurps democratic norms and principles. When populists feel that democratic norms or institutions are standing in the way of what is "right" as "true" citizens, we can expect to see attacks on norms and institutions. Taking the role of anti-Blackness seriously in this equation means considering the degree that the wants of Black citizens do not hold the same type and amount of weight as the desires of others. If people can easily be convinced that there are whole swaths of the population who are citizens on paper but whose rights and wants hold no inherent legitimacy, then there is a good chance that these people may already look at Black

citizens through a similar lens. The premise that there might be a connection between anti-Black attitudes and a disregard for the importance of minority rights is actually quite logical once one becomes familiar with the degree that anti-Blackness is foundational and ubiquitous throughout American history and culture. While this is obviously a question that is especially important in the U.S. setting, anti-Blackness is a global phenomenon and thus there is potential to observe tension between conceptions of citizenship and anti-Black ideas globally as well.

After acknowledging the extent that American citizenship has been defined in opposition to the Black American experience you can begin to understand why the relationship between anti-Blackness and the anti-democratic sub-dimension of populism should be considered in any analysis of populism within the U.S. context. American history is ripe with widespread and systemic efforts to disenfranchise and marginalize non-white voters widely, and specifically and most intensely Black voters (Du Bois 1903; Alexander 2010; Berman 2016). Part of the appeal of populism is that it offers subscribers a simplistic and tangible explanation for ever-increasingly complicated political questions. From this point of view political strategies and actions which look to leverage existing systems to consolidate political power not only become an option, but in many ways present themselves as the only logical course of action to pursue. This can create very dangerous situations where the majority is legislating the rights and legitimacy of the minority. Urbinati (2019) has described this aspect of populism as ‘extreme majoritarianism’ while Müller (2016) has focused on the anti-pluralist implications of the populist conception of the people. Any political system where the majority is set on “voting” on the legitimacy of minority rights is a tenuous system, at best, for said minorities. The inclusion of the anti-democratic sub-dimension of the populism scale will allow for an interrogation of the potential relationship between racist attitudes and this illiberal aspect of populism. Taking the

racism-populism relationship seriously in the American setting means considering the theoretical and tangible links between the threat of modern democratic backsliding represented by populism and the still-felt legacies of Jim Crow, racial gerrymandering, and systemic disenfranchisement which define the American political system. Any populist discourse which argues that the political opposition is illegitimate is doing so within the context of a country where large segments of the populous already view Black citizens as illegitimate. There is perhaps no point of view more American than the perception that Black citizenship doesn't really count, so how does this reality interact with a political ideology which looks to draw bright borders around "legitimate" and "illegitimate" citizens?

If there is any sub-dimension of populism where the potential relationship with anti-Blackness is probably somewhat obvious it is the anti-outgroup dimension. Still, it should be noted that the anti-outgroup measure utilized within our populism scale consists of three items, one measuring anti-Black attitudes, one measuring anti-immigrant attitudes, and one measuring antisemitism. A significant relationship between this sub-dimension of populism and anti-Blackness would lend strength to the idea that a hostility towards certain traditionally marginalized segments of a society increases the likelihood of discrimination towards additional stigmatized groups. This would also challenge the notion of bigotry and ethnocentrism exhibited by populists as primarily side-effects of increased economic and political marginalization.

The premise that anti-Black attitudes might be associated with populist attitudes in the United States is partially informed by the wide range of research which links anti-Black attitudes to a litany of political views and opinions. Anti-Black stereotypes and misconceptions reside at the center of American notions of citizenship (Loewen 1988; Jacobson 1999), law (Harris 1993; Hinton and Cook 2021) and protest (Riley and Peterson 2020; Graber, Figueroa, and Vasudevan

2020) and remain powerful and significant predictors of a litany of political opinions and behavior (Hutchings 2009; Wilson and Brewer 2013; Tesler 2016). Also, directly related to analysis of RWP, anti-Black attitudes have been found to be strongly associated with anti-immigrant attitudes (Mora and Paschel 2020). One challenge of attempting to investigate anti-Blackness in the context of empirical investigation is picking exactly how anti-Blackness is best measured and assessed. On one hand there is evidence that suggests that modern day racism most frequently operates on the implicit level (Mendelberg 2001, 2008; Gilens 2009; Dixon 2017). For this reason, this chapter will utilize a two-item implicit racism scale in its analysis. At the same time there is another line of argument that suggests that due to the combination of ubiquity and depth of anti-Blackness in cultures such as the United States, and rapidly evolving political and social norms throughout society, explicit anti-Blackness is both prevalent and powerful, making the implicit racism scale less useful or necessary (Valentino, Neuner, and Vandenbroek 2018; Stephens-Dougan 2020; Wang and Klar 2022). To account for this possibility this chapter also utilizes a five-item anti-Blackness scale consisting of questions that more directly attempt to capture hostility and animus toward Black Americans and towards the idea of redressing historical racial inequality.

There are several potential benefits to structuring this study in a way that focuses on the potential relationship between populism and anti-Blackness in the American setting. For one by focusing on racism against a non-immigrant minority group we are removing economics-based hostility toward immigrants as a potential explainer for an observable racism-populism relationship. Black Americans, while technically citizens, have their rights violated and bantered about regularly, and this status quo is tolerated and endorsed by populists and non-populists alike. This project represents an opportunity to test for an observable relationship between level

of populist ideology and disdain for superfluous populations, and it prevents a potentially observable racism-populism relationship from being explained away as the natural result of economic vulnerability.

## Methodology

### Data Collection

This online survey was conducted using the Amazon Turk platform in March 2022. While there is literature in defense of MTurk as a method for recruiting participants (Horton, Rand, and Zeckhauser 2011; Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012; Goodman, Cryder, and Cheema 2013) it should be pointed out that this sample is not representative. In order to address known imbalances in the sample we solicited an additional 300 participants after the initial population of 1042, with the specific aim of recruiting more conservative and Republican respondents as well as more respondents who had a high school education or less. Table 4.1 provides a full demographic breakdown of our sample. It should be reiterated that this chapter is not making a representative argument, but rather an argument of observable phenomena in a diverse sample. This sample is more white than the American population (82% vs. 74%), but this is somewhat offset by the sample being more educated, slightly more left-leaning, slightly more male, and slightly younger than the general American population. While not representative, the sample was diverse enough towards the purpose of examining the coherence of populist views and the relationship between racism and populism.

### Scales and Measures

Populist attitudes were assessed using the previously detailed 19-item scale where all items presented a positive statement of populist attitude. For all 19 items respondents were given a 7-point response option from (1) strongly disagree through (4) not sure to (7) strongly agree. To

account for the role of agreement bias we reverse-coded several items throughout the survey. In addition to constituting an overall measure of populist attitudes, the 19 items were grouped creating five subscales. One is labeled “Anti-Democratic Views”. It includes items on unhindered executive power, disregard for the rule of law and devaluation of public sphere. For example: (a) *The courts should not stand in the way of a President who is acting on behalf of the people.* (b) *The 2024 Presidential election is very important for America’s future. If it becomes necessary, violence is justified to make sure the best candidate wins.* This sub-scale consists of 9 items and has a Cronbach’s Alpha value of .931. The second subscale is labeled ‘Manichean Views’. It includes items on how there is clear, non-negotiable determination of right and wrong in politics and an intolerance of differing views. For example: (a) *In most political debates, it is clear that one is morally right and the other is not.* (b) *In politics, tolerance of different moral and political views is really just selling out one’s own principles.* This three-item subscale produced a Cronbach’s Alpha of .805. The third subscale is labeled ‘ideal homogeneity of the people.’ Here are items suggesting the country would be better off if the people shared a common background, religion or race and that citizens should conform to shared social conventions. For example: *A country is better off when all its citizens share the same race.* This four-item subscale produced a Cronbach’s Alpha of .891. The fourth subscale is labeled ‘anti-outgroup.’ It includes items that focus on negative attitudes to Jews, Black people, and immigrants. For example: (a) *Jews have too much political power. This is a problem because they put their interests ahead of the interests of the American people.* (b) *It is really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if black people would only try harder they could be just as well off as white people.* This three item-subscale produced a Cronbach’s Alpha of .785. The fifth subscale is ‘anti-elitism’. It includes items on the dissimilarity and selfishness of the economic



and cultural elite. For example: *The Ivy League cultural elite have very different values than most Americans*. This four item sub-scale produced a Cronbach's Alpha of .832. See the appendix for full descriptives of each item.

As previously mentioned, anti-Blackness was assessed using two different variables. The first anti-Blackness measure is a variation of an implicit racism scale consisting of the questions *"Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for black people to work their way out of the lower class"* and *"The people who first discovered America and have been our leaders originally came from Europe. In our schools, history classes should focus on them and not on the small minorities who contributed relatively little to our country's development"*. While these two items were adapted in an attempt to build on previous strains of research focused on the role of implicit racism in modern political attitudes and opinions (Mendelberg 2001, 2008; Gilens 2009; Dixon 2017), it should be acknowledged that this two item scale only produced a Cronbach's Alpha of .019. The second anti-Blackness measure, Racial Redress Resistance (RRR), is meant to capture more explicit and extreme feelings of anti-Blackness as well as a hostility toward the existence of systemic inequality as a premise. In comparison to the implicit racism scale the Racial Redress Resistance scale looks to capture the degree that respondents are hostile to the notion that certain groups in society may be victims of structural and historical inequality. This measure consists of a combination of questions related to social issues commonly associated with Black Americans and items from the Social Dominance Orientation scale: *"Some people believe that the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement raises important issues and is good for America. Other people believe that the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is misguided and has a destructive effect on American life. What*

*do you think about it?”*, *“Some groups are simply inferior to other groups”*, *“It is unjust to try to make groups equal.”*, *“We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.”*, and *“Some people believe that the most important concern in an election is to prevent voter fraud and illegal voting, even if it makes voting harder. Other people believe it is more important that everyone can vote easily, even if that means there will be some voter fraud. What do you think?”*. All of these items are coded 1-7, strongly disagree to strongly agree, with the exception of the last item which is coded 1-3 with 1 coding for “Making Voting Easier” 2 for “Equally Important” and 3 for “Preventing Voter Fraud”. This five-item scale produced a Cronbach’s Alpha of .597.

This analysis will first present the relevant socio-demographic information for the sample of respondents. Next, we will consider the degree that our two anti-Blackness measures are correlated with the five sub-dimension populism scale before moving on to compare the means of the racism measures between those who scored the highest and the lowest on the populism scale. Finally, we will analyze the value of the two anti-Blackness measures in comparison to other variables within the context of regression analysis.

The hypotheses for the following analysis are as follows:

- 1) We hypothesize that higher levels of populism will be associated with higher levels of racism.
- 2) We hypothesize a significant correlation between racism and each sub-dimension of the populism scale.
- 3) We hypothesize that both racism measures will be significant in most if not all regression models while increasing the overall predictive strength of the initial models using only sociodemographic variables

## Findings

Table 4.1: Sample Demographics					
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Political Party Identification	Frequency	Percent
Female	607	47.20%	Strongly Democrat	199	15.40%
Male	675	52.50%	Democrat	76	5.90%
			Independent, Democrat Leaning	428	32.30%
Age			Independent	166	12.80%
18-28	280	21.50%	Independent, Republican Leaning	83	6.40%
29-38	438	33.60%	Republican	246	19%
39-48	257	19.70%	Strongly Republican	107	8.30%
49-58	222	17.00%			
59-68	93	7.10%			
69+	13	1.00%			
Education			Political Ideology		
No H.S. Diploma	7	0.60%	Very Liberal	168	13.00%
H.S. Grad	87	6.80%	Liberal	296	22.90%
Some College	143	11.30%	Somewhat Liberal	178	13.80%
2-year Degree	107	8.40%	Not Sure	108	8.40%
4-Year Degree	676	53.20%	Somewhat Conservative	154	11.90%

Masters	231	18.20%	Conservative	258	20.00%
Ph. D	20	1.60%	Very Conservative	128	9.90%
Race					
White	1084	82.00%			
Asian	63	4.70%			
Latino	48	3.60%			
Black	89	6.70%			
Two or More Races	29	2.10%			

Table 4.1 Sample Demographics

Notes: Age is coded 1-6 with 1 representing the 18-28 age range and 6 representing the 69+ age range; Gender is coded with “Woman” as 0, “Man” as 1; Education is coded 1-7 based on highest level of schooling completed; Political Party is coded 1-7 with 1 representing “Strongly Democratic” and 7 representing “Strongly Republican”

	All Dimensions	AntiDem9	Manichean3	Ideal Homogeneity	Anti-Outgroup	Anti-Elite
Implicit Racism	.491*	.420*	.353*	.512*	.609*	0.012
Racial Redress Resistance	.528*	.485*	.375*	.533*	.635*	0.042

Table 4.2: Bivariate Correlations Between The Populism Scale and Anti-Blackness Measures

Notes: \* Indicates significance at the .01 level

Table 4.2 presents the correlations between the two anti-Blackness measures and the whole populism scale, as well as each sub-dimension. Both anti-Blackness measures were significantly (.49 and .53) correlated with the entire populism scale. Additionally, with the exception of the anti-elitism sub-dimension, both anti-Blackness measures were correlated with each sub-dimension of populism at significant levels. We suspect that anti-elitism is functioning

as an outlier within this analysis due largely to the ubiquity of anti-elite views across modern American society. Put another way, it seems that populists and non-populists alike possess strong negative feelings towards elites as we have constructed them within this project. While we would logically expect strong correlation between the racism measures and a sub-dimension such as Anti-Outgroup Attitudes, it is notable that there is such strong correlation between racism and the dimensions of populism that may not seem as obviously connected with racism, such as Anti-Democratic Beliefs. This would seem to support the premise of a significant relationship between indifference toward the universal application of democratic rights and hostility toward Black Americans. Additionally, these correlations results tend to point toward a significant relationship between anti-Black beliefs and a categorical hierarchal view of citizenship.

Next, we consider the differences in means of our measures of racism using the *HiVLoPop* variable as our dependent variable. This allows us to compare the average responses for our implicit racism and anti-Blackness scales of the respondents falling in the bottom quartile of the populism scale to the average responses on our two anti-Blackness scales of the respondents falling in the top quartile of the populism scale. In other words, this will allow us to compare the levels of racist attitudes between the least and most populist respondents from the sample.

Figure 4.1: Comparison of Anti-Blackness Levels for Top and Bottom Populism Quartiles

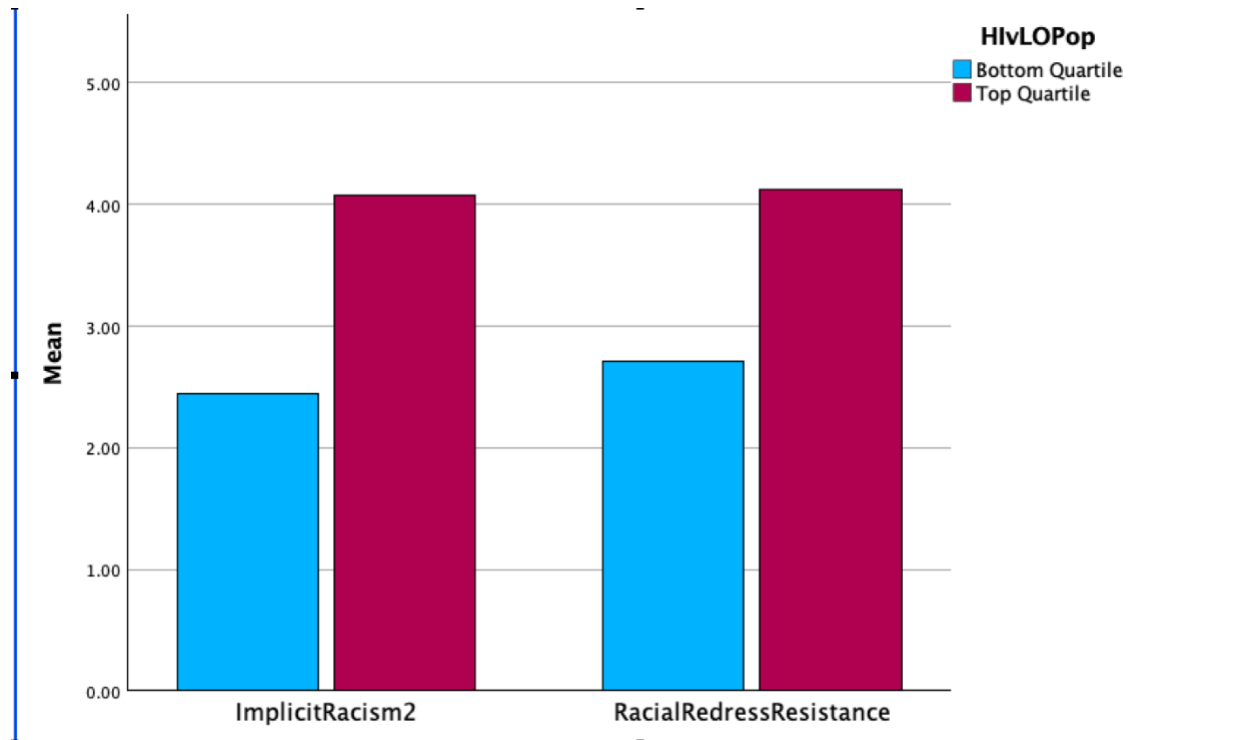


Figure 4.1: Comparison of Anti-Blackness Levels for Top and Bottom Populism Quartiles

As illustrated in Figure 4.1, the high populist quartile had higher average responses for both the implicit racism and racial redress resistance when compared to the lowest quartile on the populism scale. This would seem to suggest that there are tangible differences in opinions and perspectives related to issues of racial difference and structural inequality between those with the lowest and highest levels of populist beliefs in the sample. At the very least this lends credence to the idea of the populism-racism relationship as important, and not periphery.

Finally, we utilize multiple regression models to consider the predictive strength of each of our racism/anti-Blackness measures as well as their effect on the overall predictive power of each regression equation. Utilizing the entire populism scale as well as each sub-dimension of the scale as dependent variables we first perform regression analyses using Model A which includes only basic socio-demographic variables before utilizing models B and C which include

the implicit racism scale and the Racism Redress Resistance scale respectively.

Table 4.3: Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Level of Populism (Whole Scale)			
	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Independent Variables			
Age	-0.25*** (.027)	-0.221*** (.024)	-0.219*** (.025)
Sex	0.068** (.066)	0.043 (.059)	0.051* (.061)
Education	0.134*** (.029)	0.133*** (.025)	0.082* (.026)
Political Party	0.219*** (.018)	0.102*** (.016)	0.108***
Implicit Racism		0.450*** (.023)	
RRR			0.487*** (0.030)
R-Square	.149	.337	.368
N	1217	1216	1084
Notes: p < .05 * p < .01 ** p < .001 *** ( ) indicates standard errors For these models the dependent variable is the complete populism scale			

Table 4.3: Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Level of Populism (Whole Scale)

Models A, B, and C in Table 4.3 all utilize the entire populism scale as the dependent variable. The initial regression model A produced a significant but weak relationship, with an r-square of .149. Model B utilized the implicit racism scale in addition to the sociodemographic variables produced an r-square of .337 while Model C, utilizing the Racial Redress Resistance scale rather than the Implicit Racism scale, produced a very similar outcome, with an r-square of .368. Across all three models age was negatively associated with populism while having more

years of completed education and identifying more conservatively were positively associated with populist attitudes. Age, education, and political party were significant across all three models while sex was not significant in Model B. In both models B and C the racism measures produced the strongest Beta coefficients by far. In totality this evidence strongly supports the premise of a significant relationship between anti-Blackness and a five sub-dimension construction of populism. Even though Black Americans are technically citizens, they are commonly understood to be “others”. The observable relationship here between anti-Blackness and populism suggests that, at the very least, people who hold higher levels of anti-Black attitudes may also be more prone to displaying populist viewpoints. Of course, in utilizing this five sub-dimension construction of populism there is potential that one or two sub-dimensions may be accounting for the total association between anti-Blackness and populism. To take this possibility into account and to further deconstruct the racism-populism relationship we will now turn to additional models which investigate the relationship between our two anti-Blackness variables and each sub-dimension of populism.

Table 4.4 Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Level of Anti-Democratic Views			
Independent Variables	A	B	C
Age	-0.261*** (.034)	-0.237*** (.031)	-0.236*** (.032)
Sex	0.029 (.083)	.008 (.077)	0.010 (.079)
Education	0.148*** (.036)	0.147*** (.033)	0.101*** (.034)
Political Party	0.184*** (.022)	0.084** (.021)	0.082** (.022)
Implicit Racism		0.384*** (.030)	



RRR			0.450*** (.039)
R-Square	.140	.277	.328
N	1217	1216	1089
Notes: p < .05 * p < .01 ** p < .001 *** ( ) indicates standard errors For these models the dependent variable is the Anti-Democrat Beliefs sub-dimension of the populism scale			

Table 4.4 Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Level of Anti-Democratic Views

We will first turn to the models using the Anti-Democratic Beliefs sub-dimension as the dependent variable. Model A in Table 4.4 using just sociodemographic produced an r square of .140. Within this model age, education, and political party were all significant. Models B and C utilizing Implicit Racism and RRR produced r-squares of .277 and .328 respectively. First, the strength of models B and C should be noted. While the sociodemographic variables remain significant in models B and C, it should be noted that the two anti-Blackness measures are clearly the most powerful variables in each model. While the coefficient values for age, sex, and education remained pretty consistent across the three models, the coefficient value for political party did noticeably decrease in Models B and C once anti-Black attitudes were taken into consideration.

Anti-Democratic Beliefs is the sub-dimension of the populism scale where the analytical connection with racism is perhaps the least obvious on a theoretical level. To understand the theoretical relationship between anti-Blackness and anti-democratic ideals in the United States one must be at least somewhat familiar with the degree that anti-Blackness informs and animates the entire American political system. Additionally, the difference in predictive strength of the model utilizing the Racial Redress Resistance scale compared to the model using the Implicit

Racism scale would seem to suggest that anti-democratic views may be more strongly associated with an unwillingness to address historical inequality through action in the present day, than with implicit bigoted feelings. These findings challenge the premise that the populism-racism relationship should only be interrogated within the context of the relationship between xenophobia and discontent with present economic conditions. These findings suggest that the perception that there are in fact citizens whose rights should be litigated or curtailed may be a key factor in overall receptivity to populist messaging.

Table 4.5: Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Level of Belief in A Homogenous View of The People			
	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Independent Variables			
Age	-0.231*** (.036)	-0.201*** (.031)	-0.198*** (.033)
Sex	0.075** (.087)	0.048* (.076)	0.054* (.081)
Education	0.184*** (.038)	0.182*** (.033)	0.139*** (.035)
Political Party	0.204*** (.023)	0.084*** (.021)	0.079** (.022)
Implicit Racism		0.471*** (.030)	
RRR			0.491**** (.040)
R-Square	.157	.363	.374
N	1238	1237	1084
Notes: p < .05 * p < .01 ** p < .001 *** ( ) indicates standard errors Note: For these models the dependent variable is A Homogenous View of The People			

Table 4.5: Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Level of Belief in A Homogenous View of The People

If we acknowledge the degree that Black Americans have been positioned as the ultimate other throughout American history, then it makes sense that the two anti-Blackness variables

would be significantly related with the belief in the existence of a homogenous categorical citizenry. Model A in Table 4.5 utilizing Ideal Homogeneity as a dependent variable and only sociodemographic variables as dependents produced an r-square of .157. Models B and C adding implicit racism and RRR respectively produced r-squares of .363 and .374. Like in the previous models being younger, more conservative, and identifying as male were both associated with higher levels of populism. In both models B and C the racism measure is once again easily the most powerful variable.

These findings support the idea that academics need to put more energy into deconstructing the role of racism in how people understand political reality, as here both anti-Blackness measures are clearly associated with the belief in the existence of a monolithic “true” citizenry. Again, if we accept the notion of Black people as fungible then these findings become much less surprising. Black people often are not viewed as people, let alone as legitimate citizens, so from this perspective it makes sense that respondents who are more prone to believe in the existence of a homogenous “true” citizenry would also be more prone to display implicit racism, a belief in anti-Black stereotypes, and a hostility toward the idea of redressing inequality caused by racism. The key to reenforcing democratic norms and principles within a society may be convincing citizens that the rights of people who one perceives as most different from themselves are just as important/valid as their own.

Table 4.6: Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Belief in A Manichean View of Society			
Independent Variables	A	B	C
Age	-0.262*** (.033)	-0.243*** (.031)	-0.244*** (.033)
Sex	0.071** (.081)	0.055 (.077)	0.059* (.082)

Education	0.058*	0.057*	0.016
	(.035)	(.033)	(.035)
Political Party	0.231***	0.152***	0.153***
	(.022)	(.021)	(.023)
Implicit Racism		0.302***	
		(.030)	
RRR			0.323***
			(.041)
R-Square	.136	.220	.231
N	1217	1216	1084
Notes: p < .05 * p < .01 ** p < .001 *** ( ) indicates standard errors For these models the dependent variable is A Manichean View of Society			

Table 4.6: Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Belief in A Manichean View of Society

Next, we will turn to our models which use a Manichean view of society as the dependent variable. The initial model A in Table 4.13 produced an r-square of .136. Models B and C then produced r-squares of .220 and .231 respectively. The anti-Blackness measures were once again the most powerful variables in Models B and C. While these are notable results, these models are not as fruitful as some presented above. While it is hard to pinpoint an exact explanation for these findings as of now, I do hypothesize that Manichean perceptions of reality may be becoming somewhat ubiquitous across society as hyper-polarization and radicalization increases. In totality the r-square and beta values observed here supports the notion that there is a significant relationship between racism and each sub-dimension of populism, even if the strength of that relationship may vary. In many ways it makes analytical sense that the degree that people's sense of morality and good vs. evil would be influenced by anti-Black ideals in a more subtle and subdued way than in other sub-dimensions of populism. Anti-Blackness is so foundational to American culture that many Americans have absorbed messages about the association of Black people with crime (Dixon 2017; Hinton and Cook 2021), laziness (Gilens

1999), and even anti-immigrant attitudes (Mora and Paschel 2020) without necessarily realizing it. At the same time in the modern moment more and more individuals are coming to accept the notion that historical and systemic inequality are core aspects of American culture, these findings support the notion that the ability to view the world in a systematic manner and intensity of racist attitudes are two key factors in predicting levels of Manichean views.

Table 4.7: Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Anti-Elite Beliefs			
Independent Variables	A	B	C
Age	-0.11*** (.027)	-0.110*** (.028)	-0.111*** (.030)
Sex	0.028 (.068)	0.028 (.068)	0.042 (.073)
Education	-0.16 (.029)	-0.016 (.029)	-0.026 (.031)
Political Party	0.03 (.018)	0.028 (.019)	0.011 (.020)
Implicit Racism		0.007 (.027)	
RRR			0.046 (.036)
R-Square	.014	.014	.017
N	1238	1237	1084
Notes: p < .05 * p < .01 ** p < .001 *** ( ) indicates standard errors For these models the dependent variable is Anti-Elite Beliefs			

Table 4.7: Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Anti-Elite Beliefs

First, we must acknowledge that, as with previous analysis in this chapter, the anti-elite sub-dimension of the populism scale operates as an outlier in comparison to the other four. This was the only sub-dimension where neither of the racism measures displayed a significant

association. This may potentially be explained by a need to reconceptualize the anti-elite dimension of the scale, and/or by the general ubiquity of anti-elite views across American society. The overall level of anti-elitism found in the sample (see Appendix D) suggests that anti-elitism was the one sub-dimension of the populism scale where it was almost impossible to tell the views of respondents who measured high on the populism scale from the views of those with low levels of populist beliefs. It seems that populists and non-populists alike hold negative feelings towards the most privileged members of American society.

Table 4.8: Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Anti-Outgroup Beliefs			
Independent Variables	A	B	C
Age	-0.155*** (.035)	-0.118*** (.028)	-0.099*** (.030)
Sex	0.069* (.086)	0.036 (.070)	0.047* (.074)
Education	0.132*** (.037)	0.129*** (.030)	0.078*** (.032)
Political Party	0.251*** (.023)	0.104*** (.019)	0.104*** (.020)
Implicit Racism		0.574*** (.027)	
RRR			0.598*** (.037)
R-Square	.121	.427	.444
N	1238	1237	1084
Notes: p < .05 * p < .01 ** p < .001 *** ( ) indicates standard errors			
For these models the dependent variable is Anti-Outgroup Beliefs			

Table 4.8: Multivariate Linear Regression Analysis For Factors Affecting Anti-Outgroup Beliefs

Finally, we will consider the anti-outgroup sentiment sub-dimension of the populism scale. In contrast and somewhat expectedly the two racism measures showed some of the strongest association with the anti-outgroup sub-dimension. The initial sociodemographic model A produced an r-square of .121. Model B produced an r-square of .427 while Model C produced a r-square of .444. Somewhat surprisingly age was still negatively associated with this sub-dimension of populism. Education and conservative political identity were once again positively associated with the dependent variable while education was positively associated with higher levels of anti-outgroup beliefs in Models A and C. On one level you would expect a strong association between anti-Blackness and this dimension more than others, after all the anti-outgroup sub-dimension is meant to capture prejudice and hostility toward the marginalized. But at the same time this lends credence to viewpoints which emphasize the interrelated nature of various types of prejudice and bigotry, since the anti-outgroup scale consists of one question measuring anti-Blackness, one question measuring anti-immigrant sentiment, and one measuring antisemitism. These findings, when considered in conjunction with the findings related to the belief in a homogenous citizenship, suggest that addressing levels of bigotry and ignorance within societies head on may be a key strategy in protecting democratic institutions and norms from democratic backsliding.

## Conclusions

There are a litany of potential implications associated with these findings. For one there may be a need for a reconsideration of factors most important in predicting potential support for populism. Traditionally empirical work on citizen attitudes has focused on characteristics of how populist voters perceive and construct a vision of the “us”. For this reason, studies have focused on the role of personality factors and economic characteristics. Even analysis that has begun to

touch on elements of the racism-populism relationship has done so within the context of understandings which understand racism within populism as the result of economic inequality, globalization, and threat posed by immigrants. By conceptualizing the racism measures used in this project around anti-Blackness in the American setting we can analyze the relationship between populism and racism removed from the factor of immigration. These findings support the notion that receptivity to populist messaging may be tied to negative perceptions of outgroups as much as, if not more than other factors such as economic position.

Additionally, these findings complicate considerations of how previous studies have addressed the racism-populism question. While previous considerations have focused on the narrow relationship between right-wing populism and anti-immigrant/xenophobic views, this chapter would seem to suggest that these attitudes might be but one manifestation of the wider populism-racism relationship. The relative performance of both anti-Blackness variables in comparison to the other sociodemographic variables reinforces the idea that racial attitudes function as key variables for the reception of political attitudes. There is a strong possibility that these findings have global implications. On one hand it may be difficult to find another country where anti-Blackness is as foundational to the culture and structure as it is in the United States. But on the other anti-Blackness is a global phenomenon and thus there is potential for a similar relationship between anti-Blackness and populism to be observed in countries such as Australia, Brazil, Mexico, and Canada. Additionally, there is a great deal of potential to explore other theoretical relationships between populism and other manifestations of racism against non-immigrant minority groups. Studies which interrogate the potential relationship between populism and anti-Romanian attitudes throughout Europe, or populism and anti-White attitudes in countries where the racial majority is non-White. These findings also do not necessarily mean



that the populism-identity relationship only holds a significant relationship with racial or ethnic types of identity. As other forms of identity such as transgender existence are polarized, it may be worth investigating the potential relationship between populism and a litany of exclusionary belief systems such as anti-trans attitudes.

Lastly these findings have pertinent ramifications for the development of strategies and programs intended to curb the threat of illiberal populism. If we only focus on the characteristics of people who view themselves as part of the populist “us”, then we may focus our efforts exclusively on implementing programs meant to ease economic anxiety and feelings of political alienation among members of the majority. In many ways this makes sense as populists are often able to leverage instances when citizens perceive members of the political establishment as indifferent or unresponsive. But the findings in this project suggest that perceptions of society’s “others” may also play a key role in potential receptivity to populist appeals. This frame of mind would suggest that lowering levels of animosity towards members of superfluous populations in a society may also be a key aspect of eliminating the illiberal threat posed by populist parties in power. Additionally, the observed relationship between racism and populism here begs the need to acknowledge that in countries such as the United States it is often cultural and systemic racism which prevent the implementation of universal economic policies in the first place. Even analysis that chooses to focus on the relationship between populism and anti-immigrant sentiments should pay attention to the degree that racial and ethnic prejudices animate the content of xenophobic populist appeals.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

### Summary of Findings

When considered in totality the data included in Chapter 3 seems to support our initial hypotheses. Correlation and factor analysis supported the inclusion of the Anti-Democratic and Anti-Outgroup sub-dimension of populism. Additionally, the average level of responses for those two sub-dimensions fell in-line with findings related to the other three sub-dimensions. In totality there is strong evidence supporting the premise of anti-democratic thought and anti-outgroup animus existing as core elements of populism. This challenges previous understandings of populism, moving some aspects of populism typically treated as peripheral to populism closer to the center of understandings. The inclusion of anti-outgroup sentiments and anti-democratic beliefs as sub-dimensions within a coherent understanding of populism encourages us to reconsider several issues, including the difference/distinction between left and right-wing populism and the characteristics most likely to make individuals likely to support populist movements. Overall the observable levels of populist ideology found in this sample should challenge us to reconsider the degree that current democratic political systems are stable and unthreatened. The observable levels of populist ideology in this sample, which was only slightly more educated and more liberal than the general American population could create some questions regarding just how prevalent populist attitudes are in the wider American population, but at the same time the substantial findings in this large and diverse sample support the notion of the populism-racism relationship as likely observable and significant in wider society.

The findings in Chapter 4 also seem to support the notion of the racism-populism relationship holding previously under-considered value. Respondents who scored higher on the

populism scale displayed significantly higher levels of anti-Black attitudes than those who scored lower on the scale. Both the implicit racism scale and the measure meant to capture resistance to racism redress were highly correlated with each sub-dimension of populism and subsequent regression analysis seems to support the notion of a significant populism-racism relationship, the two anti-Blackness measures were consistently the most powerful variable in the different regression models. These findings support the initial hypotheses of racism against non-immigrant minorities serving as a powerful predictor for propensity for populist thought.

### Implications of the Research

The performance of the two additional dimensions on the populism scale suggests that hostility toward stigmatized minorities and ambivalence toward democratic norms are core features of populism. While the threat which populists in power serve to democratic norms and institutions has been frequently explored, these explorations have typically examined the tangible effects of democratic rollbacks from a wider societal level. The tendency to treat eroding democratic rights and unequal application of the law as unprecedented is based on an over-fixation on members of the ethnic and racial majorities in western democracies. Taking the histories of the structurally marginalized in societies such as the United States seriously means recognizing that depending on the identities held, there are groups who have never had their rights as citizens universally recognized or respected.

One benefit of the utilization of the five-dimension populism scale is that it allows for an interrogation of not just the racism-populism relationship at large, but it also allows for examination of the relationship between racism and each individual sub-dimension of populist thought. There is a detectable relationship between not just the whole scale but between each dimension and the racism measures. While it is perhaps unsurprising that scales meant to

measure implicit racism and resistance to the acknowledgement of structural racism would be highly correlated with the anti-outgroup and ideal homogeneity sub-dimensions of the populism scale, it should also be noted the degree that the anti-Blackness measures were correlated with the Manichean view of society and anti-democratic sub-dimensions of the populism scale.

Populism is built on both the construction of a categorical “other” and an exclusionary conception of citizenship, thus it would seem that individual perceptions of difference, privilege, and threat play key roles in understandings and perceptions of each individual dimension of populist thought, as well as populism as a whole ideology.

These findings also have potential implications related to solutions for curbing the illiberal and anti-pluralist threat of populist in power. Solutions which call for the implementation of universal programs such as basic income guarantees or expanded voter access often miss the role of racism in political society. These findings suggest that individuals who are more populist are also more racist, and it is the zero-sum view of privilege and resources that prevent the implementation of widespread social programs in societies such as the U.S. Effectively addressing the realities of increasing economic inequality and political alienation amongst citizens will mean overcoming the effects of an exclusionary conception of citizenship. Any solution that looks to ease some of the modern pressure related to expanding globalization and the consolidation of political power must develop said solution with an acute awareness of the role that racism will play in animating opposition to these types of solutions.

#### Future Inquiries

This project suggests several potential next steps for future inquiry. For one it would be interesting to replicate this study within an even larger sample. These findings clearly support the notion that the effectiveness of populist appeals is directly tied to an individual’s feelings toward

the already marginalized in society. These findings could be interpreted as evidence toward the need for increased urgency towards the project of drastic cultural realignment and transformation away from historical arrangements of systemic and cultural inequality within the United States.

In addition to further exploration in the American context there is ripe opportunity for further investigation in other countries. The five sub-dimension populism scale is designed to be transportable to other countries. While the specific history of racial hierarchy is going to vary from culture to culture, racial and ethnic identity will certainly always play a role in understandings of citizenship and belonging. It would also be interesting to swap out the measures of racism used within different societies. We would expect similar results for studies which test for a potential relationship between populist views and anti-aboriginal sentiment in Australia for example. There is also potential value in exploring whether there is an observable relationship between populism and anti-white feelings in non-European countries where left-wing populism has had some electoral success. We would expect that people with higher levels of populist attitudes amongst the racial majority in these countries would also display detectably higher levels of animosity or disdain for people of various European (White) backgrounds. Testing for an association between populist thought and high levels of anti-white/anti-colonial attitudes amongst citizens in different countries throughout Africa, Asia, and Central and South America could generate a whole new array of insights and information relevant to discussions of racism and populism. It would be incredibly interesting to compare levels of populism on this five sub-dimension scale in countries with an intense history of colonization to countries with little colonial history. It could also be fruitful to compare levels of populism in countries that are generally homogenous to levels of populism in countries that are relatively diverse. The use of a five sub-dimensional construction of populism would allow us to make comparisons of overall

populist thought as well as comparisons focused on individual sub-dimensions of populism. In totality there is ample evidence that racism-populism relationship is important, detectable, and ripe to be explored further.

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## APPENDIX A

### Survey Items Measuring the Five Dimension of Populism

#### **Anti-democratic/authoritarian politics**

*(Authoritarian governance)*

Q1 America would be better off with a strong President who did not have to bother with the Congress.

Q2 The courts should not stand in the way of a President who is acting on behalf of the country.

Q3 Because of all the fake news and biased reporting, the President needs to control the press to protect the people.

Q4 When we have a strong, good leader who understands what the people want, it is important to support the leader's decisions even if you sometimes don't agree.

*(Rule of law)*

Q5 Sometimes a good leader must violate bad laws in order to better serve the interests of the people.

Q6 When making laws or policies, the will of the majority of Americans is more important than the rights of a minority.

Q7 The outcome of the 2024 Presidential election will be very important for America's future. If it becomes necessary, the use of violence is justified to make sure the best candidate wins.

*(Public sphere/deliberation)*

Q8 Leaders who understand what America needs are just wasting their time trying to convince people who see things differently.

Q9 When people disagree about important political issues, talking to one another will not accomplish anything.

#### **Categorical, dualistic morality**

Q10 In the most important political debates, it is clear that one side is morally right and the other side is not.

Q11 Like in 2020, the 2024 election will be a battle between people who know what is good and right for America and those people who are deeply wrong.

Q12 In politics, tolerance of different moral and political views is really just selling out one's own principles.

#### **Ideal homogeneity of the people**

Q13 In general, a country is better off when all its citizens share a common cultural or ethnic background.

Q14 A country is better off when all its citizens share the same religion.

Q15 A country is better off when all its citizens are of the same race.

Q16 A good citizen should embrace the values and beliefs held by most Americans.

#### **Anti-elitism**

Q17 Wall Street rich people have very different values than most Americans

Q18 Wall Street rich people are just interested in themselves, not the American people.

Q19 The Ivy League educated cultural elite have very different values than most Americans.

Q20 The Ivy League educated cultural elite are just interested in themselves, not the American people.

#### **Anti-Outgroup**

Q21 Some immigration is okay, but now we are letting too many immigrants into the US.

Q22 It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if black people would only try harder they could be just as well off as white people.

Q23 Jews have too much political power. This is a problem because they tend to put their own interests ahead of the interests of the American people.

## APPENDIX B

### Survey Items Making Up Two Anti-Blackness Scales

#### **Implicit Racism**

Q58 Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for black people to work their way out of the lower class

Q61 The people who first discovered America and have been our leaders originally came from Europe. In our schools, history classes should focus on them and not on the small minorities who contributed relatively little to our country's development

#### **Racial Redress Resistance**

Q56 Some people believe that the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement raises important issues and is good for America. Other people believe that the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is misguided and has a destructive effect on American life. What do you think about it?

Q155 Some groups are simply inferior to other groups.

Q151 It is unjust to try to make groups equal.

Q156 We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.

Q82 Some people believe that the most important concern in an election is to prevent voter fraud and illegal voting, even if it makes voting harder. Other people believe it is more important that everyone can vote easily, even if that means there will be some voter fraud. What do you think?

## APPENDIX C

### Descriptive Statistics For Populism and Racism Survey Items

#### *Five Sub-Dimension Populism Scale*

Descriptive Statistics For Items In The Populism Scale		
Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Anti-Democratic Beliefs</b>		
Q1 America would be better off with a strong President who did not have to bother with the Congress.	3.91	1.989
Q2 The courts should not stand in the way of a President who is acting on behalf of the country.	4.01	1.895
Q3 Because of all the fake news and biased reporting, the President needs to control the press to protect the people.	3.87	2.115
Q4 When we have a strong, good leader who understands what the people want, it is important to support the leader's decisions even if you sometimes don't agree.	4.51	1.667
Q5 Sometimes a good leader must violate bad laws in order to better serve the interests of the people.	3.97	1.95
Q6 When making laws or policies, the will of the majority of Americans is more important than the rights of a minority.	4.39	1.824
Q7 The outcome of the 2024 Presidential election will be very important for America's future. If it becomes necessary, the use of violence is justified to make sure the best candidate wins.	3.68	2.222

Q8 Leaders who understand what America needs are just wasting their time trying to convince people who see things differently.	4.14	1.793
Q9 When people disagree about important political issues, talking to one another will not accomplish anything.	3.75	1.842
Homogenous View of The People		
Q13 In general, a country is better off when all its citizens share a common cultural or ethnic background.	4.21	1.899
Q14 A country is better off when all its citizens share the same religion.	3.94	1.998
Q15 A country is better off when all its citizens are of the same race.	3.77	2.043
Q16 A good citizen should embrace the values and beliefs held by most Americans.	4.57	1.645
Manichean View of Society		
Q10 In the most important political debates, it is clear that one side is morally right and the other side is not.	4.22	1.768
Q11 Like in 2020, the 2024 election will be a battle between people who know what is good and right for America and those people who are deeply wrong.	4.6	1.725
Q12 In politics, tolerance of different moral and political views is really just selling out one's own principles.	4.01	1.822
Anti-Elitism		

Q17 Wall Street rich people have very different values than most Americans	5.04	1.423
Q18 Wall Street rich people are just interested in themselves, not the American people.	5.05	1.469
Q19 The Ivy League educated cultural elite have very different values than most Americans.	4.91	1.415
Q20 The Ivy League educated cultural elite are just interested in themselves, not the American people.	4.76	1.5
<i>Anti-Outgroup Sentiments</i>		
Q21 Some immigration is okay, but now we are letting too many immigrants into the US.	4.47	1.811
Q22 It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if black people would only try harder they could be just as well off as white people.	4.19	1.963
Q23 Jews have too much political power. This is a problem because they tend to put their own interests ahead of the interests of the American people.	3.84	1.951

Descriptive Statistics For Items in the Anti-Blackness Measures		
Variable	M	SD
Implicit Racism		

Q58 Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for black people to work their way out of the lower class 3.11 1.747

Q61 The people who first discovered America and have been our leaders originally came from Europe. In our schools, history classes should focus on them and not on the small minorities who contributed relatively little to our country's development 4.09 1.898

Resistance to Racial Redress (RRR)

Q56 Some people believe that the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement raises important issues and is good for America. Other people believe that the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is misguided and has a destructive effect on American life. What do you think about it? 3.83 1.955

Q155 Some groups are simply inferior to other groups.	3.47	2.072
Q151 It is unjust to try to make groups equal.	3.74	2.065
Q156 We should work to give all groups an equal chance to succeed.	4.72	1.378
Q82 Some people believe that the most important concern in an election is to prevent voter fraud and illegal voting, even if it makes voting harder. Other people believe it is more important that everyone can vote easily, even if that means there will be some voter fraud. What do you think?*	2.1	0.691
*Note: This item is coded 1-3 (1 Making Voting Easier, - 2) Equally Important, 3 Preventing Voter Fraud)		