Green Populism

A new phenomenon.
Abstract

This study aims at exploring a new phenomenon labelled here as green populism. Building on modern theories of populism and green ideology, this case-study is focused on finding which elements of green populism are present, if any, in Greta Thunberg’s discourse. Using a Qualitative Content Analysis methodology and what is known as a coding process, it was possible to determine that all six subcategories of green populism, defined by this study as a) ecological crisis of cosmic proportion, b) victimisation of "the people", c) blame attribution to "the elite", d) green radicalisation, e) trust in science, and finally, f) intergenerational justice, can be identified in Greta Thunberg’s speeches. The analysis leads to the conclusion that Greta Thunberg is a populist actor which combines both populism thin-centred ideology and green ideology into a new phenomenon: green populism.

Keywords

Green populism, Populism, Green Ideology, Qualitative Content Analysis, Greta Thunberg, Climate activism, Green Populist Discourse.

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1 Introduction

In the last two decades, the study of populism became popular in Europe due to the rise of right-wing and left-wing populist actors (Mudde, 2004; Stavrakakis, Kioupkiolis, Katsambekis, Nikisianis, & Siomos, 2016). Populism itself is not a recent phenomenon, as it dates back to the 19th century (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017) and it was vastly studied by prominent scholars such as Ernest Laclau, Margaret Canovan and Paul Taggart (Canovan, 2004; Laclau, 2005, 2007; Taggart, 2000). Most studies of populism have focused on conceptualising this phenomenon due to the lack of agreement regarding what populism is. This long-time debated disagreement has resulted in the emergence of various case studies about populist actors such as, Hugo Chávez, Donald Trump, Le Pens, the Tea Party movement, Occupy Wall Street, to mention a few (Barr et al., 2019). Despite a large number of studies, there has never been one which focuses on a green populist actor such as Greta Thunberg, the Swedish climate activist.

Cas Mudde's ideational approach to populism (2004) is perhaps the most used by scholars of political science nowadays, because of the simplicity of its definition and capacity to adapt to a different set of case studies. It entails that populism is a thin-centred ideology based on a Manichean antagonism between “the people” and “the elite” and that it always emerges attached to a host ideology, considering that on its own it offers no concrete set of ideas of how society should look like (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017; Mudde, 2004, 2017). This succinct way of defining populism has caused much controversy amongst some scholars in the past. Nevertheless, others, such as Kirk Hawkins and Paris Aslanidis, have borrowed Mudde's definition and developed it into something of their own - sometimes referring to populism as a discourse, a style, a language, a framework or rhetoric (Aslanidis, 2017; K. A. Hawkins et al., 2019). Despite the use of different labels to refer to populist phenomena, all these scholars agree that populism is a set of ideas which can be employed
by a diverse range of actors when they address the public and which can be measured through textual analysis. A group of scholars under the name of "Team Populism"- an international network of political scientists who have contributed vastly to the discipline now referred to as "the new populism", have pioneered the use of textual analysis as a tool to measure populist discourse from leaders across the world (Barr et al., 2019). Under the leadership of Kirk Hawkins, this group of scholars have based their research on Cas Mudde's approach to populism, to track the evolution of populist rhetoric in different regions of the globe (K. A. Hawkins et al., 2019).

1.1 A new type of populism

Even though there are many studies about populism, in connection to radical left-wing or right-wing political parties and populist grassroots movements (Mudde, 2004), there is not a study which focuses mainly on leaders of green movements, despite its relevance nowadays.

Most people have heard about Greta Thunberg, “the Swedish teenager who skipped school and inspired an international movement to fight climate change” (BBC, 2020). Greta Thunberg is a 17-year-old who began protesting for climate change mitigation back in May 2018, holding a sign saying, "school strike for climate". Thunberg argues that governments and corporations are not doing enough to reduce carbon emissions. Initially, her protest was directed at the Swedish government, but quickly thousands of teenagers around the world began to join her in this fight (BBC, 2020). She has spoken at many institutions and organisations across the globe, including international conferences about the climate and the United Nations (Milman, 2019).
Greta Thunberg is commonly known for her open criticism towards the political establishment. Some might have quickly jumped to the conclusion of calling her a populist because of how often she employs Manichean rhetoric in her speeches, or how she claims to be speaking collectively, for all young people, in her public statements.

"We have not come here to beg world leaders to care. You have ignored us in the past, and you will ignore us again. You've run out of excuses, and we're running out of time. We've come here to let you know that change is coming whether you like it or not. The real power belongs to the people."  (Thunberg, 2019g, p. 18) – Excerpt from Greta Thunberg’s speech at the UN Climate Change Conference in Katowice, Poland, 15 December 2018.
These were the words of Greta Thunberg at the UN Climate Change Conference in Katowice, Poland, in 2018. But what is it about these words that make them sound populist? Isn’t populism an exclusive phenomenon of the far-left or far-right political spectrum? These are questions that can only be answered by exploring the presence of populism in Greta Thunberg’s discourse.

One of the advantages of using Cas Mudde’s ideational approach to populism is that it allows us to employ his definition to a variety of actors and political contexts, which can result in the emergence of new types of populism by exploring the relationship between populism and other ideologies. This combination has been done in a few cases where populism is associated with socialism or nationalism, but never with green thinking. The purpose of this study is to explore the emergence of a green populism phenomenon embodied in Greta Thunberg’s language. Departing from Cas Mudde’s ideational approach to populism, this study is going to craft a theory of green populism and determine the presence of its core elements in Greta Thunberg speeches. By doing so, this study will contribute to the clarification of Mudde’s definition of populism and open up research about a new type of populism.

1.2 Research Question
The following research question will guide this study: **What elements of green populism are present, if any, in Greta Thunberg’s discourse?**

1.3 Thesis Outline
This study will begin with Chapter 2, a brief note on the methodology, which includes an explanation of the research design and the Qualitative Content Analysis method. It is followed by Chapter 3, the theory section which starts with a literature review of populism and green ideology studies and ends with a discussion of the theories adopted in this research and from which the analytical framework for green populism was based on. Finally, Chapter 4 is dedicated to the presentation and discussion of findings, followed by a conclusion in Chapter 5.
2 Methodology

The following chapter explains the research design and method that are going to be used in the analysis of Greta Thunberg’s speeches.

2.1 Research design

This study will adopt a single-case study research design to examine, in detail, a set of historical events within the same case, and develop a generalisation that best explains the phenomenon that is labelled as green populism (Bennet & George, 2005, p. 5). Bennet and George define a case study as “an instance of a class of events” (2005, p. 7). In this case study, there is an interest in Greta Thunberg's discourse because it suggests the emergence of a new type of populist discourse. The study aims to build on Cas Mudde's ideological approach to populism by testing his theory and developing a new subclass of populism (p. 17). In Bennet & George's words, "studies involving only a single observation are at great risk of indeterminacy” (2005, p. 32). Therefore, to avoid this problem, this study will include many observations – each of Greta Thunberg's speeches, within the same case-study – Greta Thunberg herself.

2.2 Method

2.2.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

This study will adopt the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) method. German psychologist Philipp Mayring popularised this method in 1983. It is defined as "an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification" (Mayring, 2000, p. 2). In other words, QCA is a qualitative approach to data analysis compromised by a set of tools which are applied systematically to textual data to describe and summarise meaning (Schreier, 2012, p. 3). As Schreier suggests, the main difference between QCA from other qualitative methods is that it focuses only on selected aspects of the material. Hence more, this focus is determined by the aim of the study and the research question (p. 4). Generally speaking, this
method is applied in two steps: first, one must translate the definition of green populism into categories and subcategories through a process of open coding, second, one must find and classify the units in the text that best illustrate those categories (p. 5).

2.2.2 Reliability & Validity

Reliability and validity are languages most commonly used in quantitative methods, whereas credibility, authenticity and trustworthiness are more often used in qualitative methods. Nevertheless, QCA literature (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Mayring, 2000; Schreier, 2012) uses reliability and validity to refer to the quality of the study. The criteria for reliability require that the data and the results are free from error. Even though there is disagreement on whether to accept or reject the notion of reliability amongst researchers, we will adopt Schreier’s claim that reliability in QCA is assessed in the form of consistency between coders (Schreier, 2012, p. 26). In other words, reliability is expressed by having two or more observers consistently following the same steps that guide the analysis. However, this was not possible, so instead, the material will be analysed and classified twice across different points in time by the same coder to ensure reliability (Schreier, 2012, p. 19). Concerning validity, the methods for data collection and sometimes, analysis, are considered to be valid if the researcher can measure what the study is meant to measure. Even though the term "measure" is more commonly used in quantitative methods, in qualitative methods, it takes a more comprehensive approach. Therefore, in QCA to assure validity, one must go about the research in a way that reflects the research purpose (Schreier, 2012, pp. 26-27).

2.2.3 Motivation for selection of Method

As for other types of qualitative methods, the distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches to content analysis has been long discussed in academia (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Schreier, 2012). Kracauer (1952), for instance, claims that quantitative content analysis is often limited for the following reasons: meaning is not always explicit, meaning can be
complicated, and sometimes it is best to use a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods, and finally, some aspects may appear only once in a text and still be relevant to the study (Kracauer, 1952, pp. 634-635). On that note, Drisko & Maschi (2015) suggest that even though coding is a defining feature of qualitative content analysis, in contrast with quantitative content analysis the coding system aims to provide a description rather than frequency (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 102).

The following three attributes can be interpreted as the main advantages of using QCA: it is a systematic method, flexible, and reduces data (Schreier, 2012, pp. 5-7). Systematic because it entails the consistent use of the same steps to analyse all data and deciding where it fits in the coding system. At the same time, consistency translates to more reliability (Schreier, 2012, p. 6). Flexible because one can mould the coding frame to the literature and material. As mentioned above, a study must be reliable and valid. The coding frame will be considered valid if the categories represent the research question effectively. One way of doing this is by moulding the coding frame accordingly. Finally, in contrast to other qualitative methods, QCA works on reducing rather than opening up data by focusing the analysis on selected sections or units in the material. It does this in two ways: first, it does not take into consideration all information provided by the texts and the categories of the coding frame is taken at a high level of abstraction. This way, the categories are sufficiently abstract to allow comparison (Schreier, 2012, p. 7).

2.2.4 Limitations

There are some limitations to the method adopted. First, the process of coding text may become challenging when the meaning is not explicit. Second, it is common for researchers to have differences in interpretation since meaning varies according to the context (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 84). Finally, because there is only one researcher working on the coding process, there are some limitations in terms of validity and reliability which will be avoided by coding the same speeches twice in two different points in time.
2.3 Material
The material selection presented below is composed of Greta Thunberg’s public speeches to a variety of audiences (Thunberg, 2019c).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our Lives are in Your Hands</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>8 September 2018</td>
<td>Climate March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost Everything is Black and White</td>
<td>Parliament Square, London</td>
<td>31 October 2018</td>
<td>Extinction Rebellion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpopular</td>
<td>Katowice</td>
<td>15 December 2018</td>
<td>UN Climate Change Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our House is On Fire</td>
<td>Davos</td>
<td>25 January 2019</td>
<td>World Economic Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathedral Thinking</td>
<td>Strasbourg</td>
<td>16 April 2019</td>
<td>European Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World Is Waking Up</td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>23 September 2019</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 - List of Speeches
To avoid the risk of indeterminacy, this study will compare many observations within the same case-study, in other words, this study will analyse six different speeches given by Greta Thunberg over the course of a year. Hence more, purpose sampling was employed under the argument that the selected material accurately represents the sample from which it was drawn (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, pp. 98-99). As it will be discussed later in more detail, a fundamental aspect of populist discourse is the separation of society into two homogenous and antagonistic groups based on morality, "the good" vs "the bad" (Mudde, 2004).

Therefore, the material selection must represent a variety of audiences, some which are considered to be representative of "the people" (Greta Thunberg's supporters), and others of "the elite" (the political establishment and other conventional institutions). Overall, this selection portrays diversity not only in
terms of audience but also of length, in other words, some speeches are longer than others, and finally, timeframe, because they were given at different points of time within one full year.
3 Theory

The following chapter presents the main trends in the literature about populism and green ideology. After the literature review, the theory section will clarify the definitions of populism and green ideology adopted in this study, and which combined, will result in a brand-new phenomenon labelled as green populism.

3.1 Literature Review

3.1.1 Populism

3.1.1.1 Origins of populist phenomena

Populism is a modern phenomenon said to have emerged in the 19th century in Russia and the USA linked to the spread of democracy (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, pp. 21-27). Nowadays, it is commonly used as a reference to the radical left and the extreme right (Mudde, 2017, p. 549). In the media, it is vastly framed with a negative connotation, sometimes as a problem of today's liberal democracy and even as an existential threat (Baker, 2019). The nature and scope of populism raise much confusion, and the truth is, despite growing research in the field, populism is still very much a contested theory (Baker, 2019; Canovan, 2004, pp. 242-244; Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, pp. 1-8; Mudde, 2004, pp. 541-548, 2017, pp. 27-29). Some scholars characterise it as the essence of politics (Laclau, 2005, 2007), the “heartland” of society (Taggart, 2000), an ideology (Mudde, 2004, 2017) or a discourse (Aslanidis, 2017). Paul Taggart believes that "a search for the perfect fit for populism is both illusory and unsatisfying" (Taggart, 2000, p. 2). Nevertheless, Cas Mudde's ideational approach is still by far, the most popular definition of populism in modern studies (Baker, 2019).

Studies about populism usually focus on a particular movement, leader, regime, style or idea (Taggart, 2000, p. 5). In North America, populism occurred during the Cold War period with the anti-communism movement.
More recently, Occupy Wall Street, a left-wing populist movement, opposed the bailouts of the bank sector and promoted a progressive agenda based on social justice. In a similar tone, the Tea Party movement that also opposed the bailouts is an example of populism which has managed to mobilise both libertarian and conservatives. In Latin America, socioeconomic inequalities are very often at the root of populism. Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia, as well as Rafael Correa in Ecuador, and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, are examples of radical leftist populist leaders which have gained popularity in the last decades. They often use Americanism and anti-imperialist rhetoric to mobilise supporters, embodied with socialist ideas such as the fight against the free market and proposals for an economic model that will benefit the poorest. In Europe, populism emerged with the frustration over immigration and strong Euroscepticism, embodied by the right-wing parties such as the National Front in France in connection to chauvinism and the UK Independent Party in connection with neoliberalism, with few left-wing examples fuelled by the Great Recession in Greece with Syriza and Spain with the Podemos Party (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, pp. 21-41).

3.1.1.2 Modern Approaches

Despite the extensive number of case-studies and research focused on populism in the last decades, there is still some disagreement on what this phenomenon is. In previous decades, the study of populism in political science has focused on movements that emerged in established liberal democracies intending to challenge existing parties and policies (Canovan, 2004, p. 242). Some scholars have developed classes and subclasses of populism, while others have attempted to create a clear and concrete definition of populism (Mudde, 2004, p. 562, 2017). As Margaret Canovan argues, the problem is not in finding similarities among the already existing movements. It is "in trying to decide what is 'populist' about them and what, if anything, they have in common with other past and present political phenomena known by the same label" (Canovan, 2004, p. 243). Still, the following approaches highlight different aspects of populism that are somehow connected to ideas, values and
morals. Some have labelled it an ideology, while others will completely refute this term, and some will refrain from using this term but still use similar labels. We shall refer to the following definitions as "modern approaches" to populism because they were developed over the last two decades and are all rooted in the same antagonism between two homogenous groups of society, "the good" and "the evil", and emerged in the context of established liberal democracies.

In Ernest Laclau’s approach (2005, 2007), populism is the essence of politics, a critique of modern liberal democracy which puts forward the premise that radical democracy is the solution. In this way, populism is perceived as a way of challenging the status quo by reintroducing conflict into politics and mobilising the excluded sectors of society (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, p. 3). Laclau states that populism is not a type of movement or an ideology, but instead a “political logic” (Laclau, 2007, p. 117). Based on this logic, is "the construction of internal frontiers and the identification of an institutionalised 'other'" (Laclau, 2007, p. 117). Laclau argues for a populism in which the ideas of the “dominant” class, will absorb different ideas by allowing them to co-exist instead of antagonising them in an attempt to establish hegemony in society. In other words, the real antagonism is the one between "the people" and the "dominant" class (Taggart, 2000, p. 19). For Laclau, “populism presents itself (…) as the starting point for a more or less radical reconstruction of a new world order wherever the previous one has been shaken” (Laclau, 2005, p. 117). Therefore, for populism to emerge there needs to be, to some degree, a crisis within the “old” democratic structure so that a “new” radical order may be established (Laclau, 2007, pp. 176-178).

In Paul Taggart’s approach (2000), populism is the “politics of the heartland”. He argues that even though populism has many of the characteristics of an ideology, it is not enough to classify it as such (Taggart, 2000, pp. 1-6). He describes populism instead as an adverse reaction to a crisis which was caused by what populists describe as a "messy" and "corrupting" state of representative politics (Taggart, 2000, p. 3). In that way, populists represent
the "idealised chosen people" which locate themselves within the heartland landscape (Taggart, 2000, p. 96). This commitment to the "heartland" is what characterises populism, an imaginary territory which represents all the positive aspects of life. In contrast with an ideology, which promotes specific values about the world, the "heartland", is an attempt to bring back an idealised past that was once destroyed by the present (Taggart, 2000, p. 95). In Taggart's approach, the association of populism with "the people", which he perceives as a mobilisation tool, is embodied by the inhabitants of territory with clear borders which excludes the "demonised" other (Taggart, 2000, p. 94). Overall, populism has many features from nationalism. Therefore, it is against internationalism and cosmopolitanism (Taggart, 2000, p. 96). Nationalism and isolationism are fundamental aspects of the wave of "new populism" studies (Taggart, 1996).

3.1.1.3 Cas Mudde’s Ideational Approach

Cas Mudde’s ideational approach (2004, 2017) is based on the principle that populism is a “thin-centred” ideology articulated in the antagonism between two homogenous groups in society, “the pure people” and “the corrupt elite” and which proclames the general will of the people (Mudde, 2004, p. 562). Hence more, "populism inevitably employs concepts from other ideologies, which are not only more complex and stable but also enable the formation of 'subtypes' of populism" (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, p. 19). In other words, being a thin-centred ideology, populism is usually ascribed or embodied by different ideologies and cannot be studied on its own (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, pp. 6-7). Mudde's concept recognises populism as a feature of liberal democracy rather than a threat, by giving a voice to the "silent groups" of society which feel the establishment no longer represents their interests (Mudde, 2004, pp. 557-558). The most significant populist actors today combine populism with other thin or thick-centred ideologies as it is the case of nationalism in populist radical right parties in Europe or socialism in left-wing populism in Latin America. Nevertheless, it is vital to note that populist
ideology is different from socialism because its antagonism is based on morality, whereas the latter is based on class (Mudde, 2017, p. 29).

Mudde argues that many scholars refrain from using the term ideology because they claim populists simply use it as a discourse because they rarely believe in it, or they only use it to gain political power (Mudde, 2017, p. 31). Paris Aslanidis (2017, 2018), and Kirk Hawkins (2009; Kirk A. Hawkins & Kaltwasser, 2017), have developed variants of the ideational approach by focusing their research on populism as a discourse. Paris Aslanidis refers to populism as a “strategic frame” (Aslanidis, 2018, p. 459) or a “political discourse” (Aslanidis, 2017), a variant of Mudde's ideational approach with an emphasis on scope rather than classification. By describing populism as a specific anti-elite discourse expressed by "the people", and applying it to the study of grassroots mobilisation, Aslanidis can expand the scope of populism studies, which has been mostly focused on political parties and its leaders (Aslanidis, 2017). Another variant of the ideational approach is the one expressed by Kirk Hawkins (2009; 2017), that he labels as the “discursive” definition of populism (Kirk A. Hawkins, 2009). This approach is based on the same antagonism between "the people" and "the elite", but it lacks the features of classic ideologies such as liberalism or socialism. For Hawkins populism is the expression of a set of ideas shaped by the surrounding "culture", therefore, classifying it as a discourse allows us to combine aspects of both ideology and rhetoric (Kirk A. Hawkins, 2009).

3.1.2 Green Ideology

3.1.2.1 The Origins of Green Political Thought

The term "green" was first employed in connection with conservation and preservation movements in the late 19th century, and it was made famous by organisations such as Greenpeace which labelled themselves as "green" (Heywood, 2017, p. 245). Some of the ideas that serve as a foundation for green ideology were developed more than a hundred years ago. Nonetheless, ecologism itself is a concept that appeared in the 1970s in connection with the
publication of The Limits To Growth Report. Many of the features of modern green political thought are based on its sequel Beyond the Limits (Dobson, 2000, p. 15). The limits to growth thesis is based on the idea that there are "natural limits" to economic growth. Hence more, it acknowledges that Earth has limited capacity to carry population, produce resources, and absorb pollution. This concern for the limitations of Earth is a factor present in many modern ideologies, but it has remained unnoticed until ecologism emerged (Dobson, 2000, p. 15). In Andrew Dobson’s words:

"Ecologism makes the Earth as physical object the very foundation-stone of its intellectual edifice, arguing that its finitude is the basic reason why infinite population and economic growth are impossible and why, consequently, profound changes in our social and political behaviour need to take place." (2000, p. 15)

Hence more, the limit to Growth thesis suggests that, contrary to the environmentalist way of thinking, we cannot expect technological solutions, recycling or renewable energies to fix the environment crisis (Dobson, 2000, p. 17). Dobson argues that the reason why ecologism is a full ideology is that it proposes radical changes in our habits and practices. It also can identify aspects of a "green society" which are different from other societal models as presented by other modern ideologies (Dobson, 2000, p. 16).

3.1.2.2 Philosophical foundations
Connelly & Smith (1999, pp. 10-40) present two main approaches for looking at today's debate regarding the foundations of green political thought: traditions that illustrate humanity's responsibility towards the environment, or the non-human world, such as stewardship, utilitarianism, and respect for life; and those that represent our moral responsibility towards humanity as a whole, such as distributive justice and the rights of future generations (p. 10). Both approaches are based on an anthropocentric way of thinking; therefore, it would be unlikely for radical green theorists to support them. Nevertheless,
they were, in many ways, a starting point for the birth of a more progressive form of green thinking based on the "intrinsic value" of nature, that will be discussed later in more detail.

Stewardship is a philosophy emerged from the Christian tradition which highlights the instrumental value of nature to human beings and stresses our "duties of stewardship" towards the natural world (Connelly & Smith, 1999, pp. 11-12). Another way of looking at the world around us is through a utilitarian lens. Utilitarianism upholds that our noble goal is to maximise the welfare of society by estimating what will bring the utmost combined benefit for the majority of people (p. 13). Peter Singer criticises the utilitarian principle as it is, by arguing that since animals can feel as much pain and suffer as much as we do, they should also be included in this collective benefit embodied in the utilitarian principle (Singer, 1983, p. 9). In contrast, the principle of the significance of life, developed in part by deep-ecologist Arne Naess highlights the respect for life in general, independently of sentience (Connelly & Smith, 1999, p. 17). Naess encourages us to adopt a holistic "sense of life" that entails all parts of the non-world, the biological and geological as a whole while emphasising the principles of diversity and symbiosis (Naess, 1973, pp. 95-100). Arne Naess is known for developing a more radical approach to green thought labelled "deep ecology" which rejects the idea of a man embedded in the environment, but rather as in relation to it (Connelly & Smith, 1999, p. 17). The principles highlighted above demonstrate the need to expand our sense of “self” by thinking about the environment as the interrelation of all living and non-living things. On this note, Warwick Fox (1990) argues for a "transpersonal ecology" or the "ecological whole", which entails the interconnection of human and non-human life, in contrast with the view of humanity in a state of isolation from the rest of the natural world (Connelly & Smith, 1999, p. 17).

Connelly & Smith also highlight two major philosophical foundations that express our responsibility towards humanity itself because, after all, humanity is a collective identity. Radical greens appear to suggest that only our duties
towards the natural world are genuinely significant to green political thought. Connelly and Smith disagree by claiming that the real challenge of modern environmental concern is to find a balance between these two ways of valuing the world – human and non-human (Connelly & Smith, 1999, p. 22). These authors argue that it would be morally flawed to overlook the principles of distributive and intergenerational justice (pp. 22-36). On that note, John Rawls claims that justice can only be understood from behind a "veil of ignorance" where no one knows their role in society, their class or social status, their fortune, intelligence or natural assets (Rawls, 2005). Rawls states that the natural distribution of justice is neither just nor unjust; it is merely natural. And if we do not know in which circumstances we might be born in, we will immediately reject utilitarianism as our moral principle (Connelly & Smith, 1999, pp. 24-25). The latter, known as the principle of intergenerational equity, is based on the premise that “the actions of those living in the present will affect those living in the future” (Connelly & Smith, 1999, p. 26). Not only we must allocate resources fairly, but it is our moral duty to ensure the conservation of options, quality and access to future generations (Weiss, 1987).

Finally, Connelly & Smith conclude that when discussing issues of resource distribution, one must always consider the difference between "needs" and "wants". As the concept of sustainable development coined by the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), we must be able to fulfil the needs of the present generations without ultimately compromising the environment nor the needs of future generations. However, humanity needs to recognise that to assure the needs of future generations; one must be ready to sacrifice "our superfluous desires" (Connelly & Smith, 1999, p. 32).

3.1.2.3 Is there a Green Ideology?

Now we have come to the question of whether green political thought should be considered an ideology on its own. Connelly & Smith argue that the
intrinsic value of nature does not tell us much about a democratic society or its institutions. Therefore, one must consider green political thought to be more of critical thinking towards already existing political traditions (Connelly & Smith, 1999, pp. 40-55). In contrast to the idea put forward in the Limits to Growth report, where environmental degradation is a result of economic growth, Connelly & Smith adopt an approach labelled "ecological modernisation". Based on the concept of sustainable development adopted in the Brundtland Report, it emphasises that economic growth is needed to assure social development, but also environmental protection (Connelly & Smith, 1999, p. 57).

On the other side, and as already highlighted above, Andrew Dobson (2000) argues that there is a green political ideology. But to understand his reasoning, one must look at the difference between what he considers "the maximalists" - those greens who define ecologism according to a strict set of principles, and on the other side, "the minimalists", which are less severe or “shallower”. He argues that to comprehend the complexities of green ideology, one must take a maximalist approach because ecologists and environmentalists are significantly different (Dobson, 2000, p. 13). Even if both act as a result of environmental degradation, they utilise various strategies to galvanise action. The main distinction amongst both approaches is their degree of radicalisation; ecologists support the limits to growth thesis mentioned above, while environmentalists will unlikely argue for the intrinsic value of the non-human world. They will say that technology can fix the problems it generates, while ecologists believe that only a fundamental reduction in production will help us transition into a sustainable society (pp. 34-35).

In line with Dobson’s approach, Andrew Heywood (2017) emphasises that initially green ideology was an extension of environmentalism but has now become an ideology of its own (Heywood, 2017, p. 247). He defines green ideology as the belief that “nature is an interconnected whole, embracing humans and non-humans, as well as the inanimate world” (p. 245). Green ideology is, therefore, the attempt to restructure the relationship of human
beings with other non-human beings based on ecology, a branch of biology which is concerned with ecosystems. Heywood highlights two main branches of ecology: shallow ecology and deep ecology. Shallow ecology is, as many deep ecologists criticise, an extension of environmentalism where "humanity accepts the lessons of ecology but uses them to further human ends" (Heywood, 2017, p. 250). Shallow ecologists are not against production but put forward the premise that growth should do the least damage to ecosystems because human beings are also part of it (p. 255). Deep ecology, takes the concern about ecology even further, by rejecting that human beings are superior to other species, it states “the purpose of life is to help sustain nature, and not the other way around” (Heywood, 2017, p. 251).

Finally, Matthew Humphrey (2018) has developed a more modern notion of green ideology that goes in line with both Dobson and Heywood's approaches. It builds on ethical aspects already mentioned above, and it is based on four core duties: ecological restructuring, a holistic and ethical approach to ecology; radical democratisation, in the form of decentralisation; ecological law, a higher way of law; and the principle of non-violence (Humphrey, 2018, pp. 423-429).

3.2 Analytical framework

3.2.1 Defining populism

There are strengths and weaknesses in all approaches to populism explored in previous research. Kaltwasser & Mudde argue that employing his thin-centred ideology approach enables us to understand why populism is so adaptable in the real world and to recognise a wide range of populist actors. Also, this approach takes into account both supply and demand side of populism, as the studies which emphasise on style or strategy only look at the supply side (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, pp. 19-20).

This study will take Cas Mudde’s approach to populism as the base for the theoretical framework because, among the proposals discussed earlier, the
latter offers a more concise and broad set of elements which can be applied to
a diverse group of case-studies.

For instance, Laclau’s approach (2007) implies the politicisation of the object
of study, whether it be the movement or its leader, who is seeking to gain the
most supporters or votes. While we could argue that Greta Thunberg, as an
environmental activist and the leader of a climate movement, could be using
populism as a way of recruiting support she is still an outsider when it comes
to the conventional political spectrum. Therefore, Laclau’s approach doesn’t
seem fit for Greta Thunberg as a case study.

On the other side, Taggart’s approach (2000), which claims that on the
contrary, populism is, indeed, anti-political, as it seeks to create the absence of
dissent among people in favour of a homogeneous identity "the heartland"
(Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, p. 18), could have been adopted. However, this
approach is too selective and imposes too many constraints on who and what
can be considered populist phenomena.

In conclusion, Cas Mudde’s approach to populism is the only approach that
fully recognises populism as an ideology which can be combined with other
thin-centred or full ideologies, and that is one of the most relevant aspects for
the development of a new theory for green populism.

Mudde (2004) defines populism as the following:

“an ideology that considers society to be ultimately
separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups,
‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues
that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale
(general will) of the people” (Mudde, 2004, p. 562).

As stated above, the three main elements of Mudde's populism are a thin-
centred ideology; divided into two homogeneous antagonistic groups, "the
people" and "the elite"; expressing the general will.
The first core aspect of populism is that it is a thin-centred ideology, and it embodies elements of other ideologies which allow us to form "subtypes of populism" (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, p. 7). In other words, for it to be a thin-centred ideology, it must have other thin-centred or full ideologies as a host, for instance, socialism, liberalism, nationalism, or green ideology, as we are trying to determine. Despite its similarities, in socialism, the antagonism between "the people" and "the elite" is based on class. In nationalism is based on the concept of nation and finally, in populism, this distinction is based on morality. It is thin-centred because populism is more limited in scope and while it offers a view of how "the people" envision society to look like, it provides no concrete policies nor views on broader socioeconomic issues (pp. 29-30).

The second aspect is the antagonism between “the people” and “the elite”. As mentioned before, this division is based on morality, meaning that the people are good and the elite is corrupt (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, p. 11). This antagonism is most often used in the following context - the people as sovereign, the common people, and the nation (pp. 10-11). In populism, the main difference between "the people" and "the elite" is economic power, socioeconomic status, and nationality (p.9). Therefore, "the elite" can refer to the establishment, the economic and cultural elite, or even the media while excluding the populists themselves. Some scholars argue that the reason why populists are not able to sustain themselves is that populists are against the establishment, and therefore, being in power would make them part of "the elite" (p.11-12).

The meaning of "the people" varies when populism is employed with other ideologies, which in many cases, adds another aspect to its purpose (Mudde, 2017, p. 32). Hence more, "the people" is defined by the construction of an idealised community, and Mudde argues that to become successful, populists should define their group according to key self-identification characteristics of the targeted group (Mudde, 2004, p. 274). Finally, "the people" is pure because in many ways, they are authentic and "the elite" is corrupt because they are
working against the interests of "the people". The goal is about doing what is best for the people while antagonising the elite for placing their interests over those of "the good people" (Mudde, 2017, pp. 29-30). On the other side, "the corrupt elite" is working against the interests of the people. For instance, some populist parties accuse the elite of putting the European Union above the interests of their citizens (Mudde, 2017). In conclusion, based on populist discourse, there is a language which points towards the victimisation of “the people” and blame attribution to “the elite”.

The third and last core aspect of populism is the expression of the general will. The notion of “general will” is based on common sense, a concept put forward by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) who originated this distinction between the general will (in French volonté générale) and the will of all (volonté de tous). Furthermore, the main task of the populist leader is to be able to understand what the general will is and use its personal qualities to unite people around based on that (Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017, pp. 16-18). Mudde argues that anyone who opposes common sense is “devious” and therefore, part of the elite (Mudde, 2017, p. 33).

### 3.2.2 Defining green ideology

Previous research of green ideology has determined four significant and recent studies by the following authors: Connelly & Smith (1999) Andrew Dobson (2000), Andrew Heywood (2017), and Matthew Humphrey (2018). Their approach to green political thought is similar in the way it illustrates the evolution of ecologism as a philosophical concept from the late 1970s to a modern political ideology, adapted to our current age and scope. Hence more, all three authors make a clear distinction between environmentalism and ecologism; some consider the latter to be an extension the former, while others will argue for a complete separation as we will discuss further below.

Thus, the following question remains: is green ideology based on the instrumental, inherent or intrinsic value of nature? As Connelly & Smith explain, this will all depend on what is valued and who is valuing.
Instrumental, if human beings regard nature as valuable in terms of self-interest. Inherent, because from an aesthetics purpose, it is still possible to appreciate nature without exploiting it or interfering with it. And finally, intrinsic, if human beings wish to preserve nature for nature’s own sake (Connelly & Smith, 1999, pp. 18-19). The definition of green ideology adopted in this study will be based on Dobson’s approach and the recognition of the value of nature as a whole.

So far, Dobson’s approach (2000) to green ideology, is the fittest for our study. First, if we wish to craft a new type of populism that is genuinely green, we must adopt the most ecocentric approach available. One that value's nature in an intrinsic way and recognises that human beings are not a superior species. And second, Dobson's approach is the one that best distinguishes environmentalism from ecologism. Thus, if we wish to discuss green political thought as an actual ideology, we should choose ecologism as it is the approach that proposes a new model for society – one with different values and morals.

As illustrated above, Dobson’s definition of radical green political thought is based on the Limits to Growth thesis (Meadows, 1972) – “the belief that our finite Earth places limits on industrial growth” (Dobson, 2000, p. 62). The guiding principle for a green sustainable society is the recognition that technological solutions or strategies proposed by environmentalists or what Dobson labels as “light greens”, will not generate the fundamental social and moral changes required to counter Earth’s finitude and scarcity (Dobson, 2000, pp. 64-65). He argues that the current approach to sustainability as promoted by the concept of sustainable development ignores the idea of exponential growth concluded in the Limits to Growth report (Meadows, 1972). Greens believe that the current rate of extraction and consumption of resources is unsustainable, and at the same time, it produces a false feeling of security (Dobson, 2000, p. 66). For example, some environmentalists will introduce strategies that rely on the power of technology to recycle the things we consume. However, radical greens suggest that focusing on recycling is taking
away the attention from more fundamental changes such as the actual reduction of consumption (p. 85).

So how does green society look like according to the Limits to Growth thesis? To build a sustainable community first, we must recognise that some ways of living are more sustainable than others and second, that certain political institutions will be more effective in dealing with environmental degradation. (Dobson, 2000, p. 73). Many greens argue that human beings’ aspirations are motivated by wealth, and therefore, our lives become "greedy" and "materialistic". In that regard, the essence of a green society is reducing consumption and living in a less materialistic way where we consume enough of what we need to survive instead of what we merely want (pp. 77-78). Another aspect of this society has to do with the fair distribution of resources. This egalitarian way of thinking goes hand in hand with John Rawls's definition of justice and the principles of intergenerational equity highlighted above. Not only we must ensure a fair distribution of material wealth among current generations but also in a way that does not compromise the survival of future generations (p. 80).

Finally, what does green ideology have to say about the political framework and institutions within which this sustainable society would operate? On this note, Dobson adds that the main difference between green ideology and others is that the non-human world should always be the starting point for deciding issues of the institutional framework (Dobson, 2000, p. 72). Overall, there are several possibilities for the political arrangements of such society, ranging from more radical decentralised views to global governments (p. 111). Most greens argue that essential goods could be supplied more cheaply for those living within proximity and that decentralised governance can deal more effectively with environmental problems. On the other side, critics debate that not everything can be produced locally and centralised institutions are needed to co-ordinate the fair distribution of material wealth (pp. 105-106). On this, Dobson claims that many greens can consider these aspects, as long as no decision is taken at a higher level that can be made at a lower level of
governance (p. 106). Hence more, he adds that many problems today are international in nature and sometimes they are better dealt nationally, between states, regionally, through the European Union, or globally, through international organisations such as the United Nations. Overall, Dobson reasons that ecology is a transformative political ideology:

“Taking ‘men' (and the societies that have spawned them) as they are, decentralised politics seems ineffective and naive. Taking ‘men’ (and their modes of production and consumption) as they might be, though, decentralised politics is the preferred radical green form” (2000, p. 111).

In other words, finding a consistent political framework for the sustainable society will always depend on the transformative relationship between how people relate to, value and act towards the non-human world (Dobson, 2000, p. 111).

3.2.3 A theory for Green Populism

The last two sections of this chapter presented the theories of populism and green ideology adopted in this study from which the following analytical framework for green populism was based on.

The core premise of Cas Mudde’s definition of populism is that populism is a thin-centred ideology that can be combined with other thin-centred or full ideologies. He argues that populist ideology is limited in scope and does not offer concrete policies related to socioeconomic issues. On the other side, Andrew Dobson states that green political thought is a full ideology on its own. In conclusion, when these two ideologies are combined, we are in the presence of a new phenomenon named green populism. But to find out what are the key elements of green populism, we must first look at the dynamics between populism and green ideology.
Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between populism and green ideology. Hence more, the area where both ideologies interconnect highlights the research gap our model aims at bridging.

Figure 2 – Relationship between Populism and Green Ideology

Taking the two approaches to populism and green ideology discussed above, the analytical framework for green populism should consider the following conclusions:

- Green populism is a class of populism where the content of populism is determined by green ideology.
- The two core aspects of populism (discussed in more detail in earlier sections of this chapter) are the following: separation of society in two homogenous and antagonistic groups and the expression of the general will.
- The main aspect of green ideology is its maximalist approach to ecologism, that nature is an interconnected whole where no species is more superior than other.
- We will assume that the division of society is based not only on morality but on the principles of green ideology highlighted above.
After considering these premises, it is possible to determine that green populism is a phenomenon that results from the combination of populism with green ideology, and as Figure 3 demonstrates, it has six defining elements: Ecological Crisis of Cosmic Proportion, Victimisation of “The People”, Blame Attribution to “The Elite”, Green Radicalisation, Trust in Science, and finally, Intergenerational Justice.

Figure 3 - Analytical Model for Green Populism

The first element of green populism is an **Ecological Crisis of Cosmic Proportion**. Even though Cas Mudde refrains from using the term “crisis” in his definition of populism and rather “a serious challenge” to the people’s way of living (Mudde, 2004, p. 547), in this analytical model, it will be assumed that at the heart of the green populist movement is the ecological crisis. This ecological crisis poses a real challenge not only to the biosphere but generally speaking, to all human life, therefore, taking a cosmic proportion. In other
words, claiming that the crisis affects all people, of all social classes, across the world.

The second and third elements of green populism are: the Victimisation of “The People” and Blame Attribution to “The Elite”. Once the populist actor raises the awareness of a crisis, society will quickly become divided into two homogenous and antagonistic groups – those who are suffering from the consequences of the ecological crisis, “the people”, and those who are working against their interests, “the elite”. Accusations against “the elite” are based on the assumption that the political establishment fails to acknowledge that there are limits to growth and continues to exploit Earth’s natural resources as if they are infinite, with a single goal: to maximise wealth and consumption, and sustain a materialistic way of living. This Manichean vision of society is based on morality and common sense. Therefore, either one stands with “the people”, and does what is best for everybody, or against them, by joining “the elite”. Finally, since people are unaware of the severity of the crisis or how it will affect their livelihood, the role of the green populist actor is to green ideology as a way of unifying “the people” against “the elite”. And here is where we will find the Expression of the General Will.

The fourth element of green populism is Green Radicalisation. At the centre of green ideology is the realisation that Earth and its resources are finite, and that humanity is consuming more than it needs for its survival. As it was discussed earlier, The Limits to Growth thesis states that if society continues to grow and exploit natural resources at its current rates, the world is soon likely to collapse (Meadows, 1972). So, the only solution is to radically change society as we know it and stop consumption altogether. This green radicalisation is an incentive to break with the status quo. So the green populist actor will use it as a way of encouraging radical action and in a more extreme scenario, to incite civil disobedience.

The fifth and sixth elements of green populism are Trust in Science and Intergenerational Justice, two other traits of green ideology which
consolidate the expression of the general will. The principles of green thought are grounded on scientific facts, making it harder for others to refute. In other words, this trust in science gives legitimacy not only to the will of the people but to the green populist leader, whose aim is to unify people under a common goal. This legitimacy can be expressed through reference to scientific articles and its conclusions. Finally, intergenerational justice entails the principle of equity among current and future generations. Future generations are not born yet. Therefore, they cannot vote or defend their interests. It is one of the most pressing issues raised by climate experts and activists who believe that no generation should exhaust resources to the point of depriving future generations of their right to survival. Therefore, it is the responsibility of humanity to assure a fair distribution of resources so that no one is left behind.

As already mentioned, the rights of future generations are at the base of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) and it is mentioned in almost all international agreements related to sustainable development.

3.1 Operationalisation

To answer the research question - **What elements of green populism are present, if any, in Greta Thunberg’s discourse?** This study is going to operate in five stages: building a coding frame, segmentation of the material, trial coding, main analysis, and finally, presentation and interpretation of findings.

First, a coding frame was built in a way which reflects both the concepts expressed in the theoretical framework and the materials selected (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 106). As it is seen in the section below, the coding frame is structured in categories and subcategories which reflect the six elements of green populism presented in the theory section: subcategory a) Ecological Crisis of Cosmic Proportion, subcategory b) Victimisation of "The People", subcategory c) Blame Attribution to "The Elite", subcategory d) Green Radicalisation, subcategory e) Trust in Science, and finally, subcategory
Intergenerational Justice. These six subcategories are divided into two categories: Manichean vision of the world, and Expression of the General Will, the core aspects of Cas Mudde's approach to populism. The main categories are the aspects of the material of which this study seeks to find more about, and the subcategories represent what is said in the material about those main categories (Schreier, 2013, pp. 174-175). In other words, the categories correspond to the broader phenomenon of populism per se, and the subcategories to the content of that populism, divided in themes. The subcategories are accompanied by a definition and indicators to aid the analysis process which consists in finding the most relevant subcategory to the unit in question (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 109).

Second, the materials must be segmented into coding units. In this case, the transcripts of Greta Thunberg’s speeches were divided into formal units, where one unit corresponds to one sentence, as the example in Appendix 1 illustrates. This will assure consistency in coding. Third, there will be a trial coding of at least three of the speeches to evaluate and if necessary, modify, the coding frame. The evaluation is a test to the validity and reliability of the framework. Therefore, the higher the consistency among the results of the trial coding and the main analysis, the higher the quality of the research (Schreier, 2013, pp. 174-175).

The fourth step is the main analysis of the materials, the stage where all the speeches are coded. As Appendix 2 demonstrates, all coded units were entered into a coding sheet. In this sheet, the units correspond to the rows and the categories and subcategories to the columns. Finally, the fifth stage is the presentation and interpretation of findings, where the results of the coding process are showcased in a way which is suitable for answering the research question (Schreier, 2013, pp. 174-175). The findings will be presented in text matrices, where instead of numbers, those tables will contain quotes from the coded speeches, and the interpretation will follow in a narrative format.
### 3.1.1 Coding frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUBCATEGORY</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. MANICHÉAN VISION OF THE WORLD</td>
<td>a) Ecological crisis of Cosmic Proportion</td>
<td>An ecological crisis is threatening humanity. Earth's resources are finite, and the human species is at risk. The crisis takes a cosmic proportion: it affects all people and results in the division of society in two homogenous and antagonistic groups.</td>
<td>• References to the ecological crisis. • Claims that the crisis has a cosmic proportion, it affects all people, everywhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Victimisation of “The People”</td>
<td>People are suffering from the consequences of the crisis, and they're not aware of its severity and proportion. The division of society into two groups is based on morality. Therefore &quot;the people&quot; are morally right, and &quot;the elite&quot; is morally wrong.</td>
<td>• Self-identification characteristics such as “good”, “authentic”, “pure”, “innocent”. • References to people's suffering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Blame Attribution to “The Elite”</td>
<td>There is an attribution of blame to &quot;the elite&quot;, for exploiting Earth's resources and failing to acknowledge the limits to growth thesis. The elite thinks of themselves as some superior species. They are not listening to the people, and therefore, they're to blame for the ecological crisis.</td>
<td>• Use of derogatory language to describe “the elite” such as “bad”, “guilty”, “corrupt”, “dishonest”. • References to &quot;the elite's&quot; consumerism and materialistic way of living. • Signs that “the elite” is working against the interests of the people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Green Radicalisation</td>
<td>People demand a radical transformation in society. Because &quot;the elite&quot; is not listening, people must take power into their own hands. Radical action and some non-democratic means of emancipation are encouraged to bring about fundamental changes in social and political life.</td>
<td>• References to the collective will of &quot;the people&quot;, and their sovereignty. • Signs of radical green thought. • References to the encouragement of radical action and non-democratic means of emancipation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Trust in Science</td>
<td>The will of the people is grounded on scientific facts. Science has concluded that there are limits to growth, and Earth's resources are finite. The experts have proven that the only way to solve this crisis is to reduce consumption drastically.</td>
<td>• References to scientific facts and documents. • Claims that &quot;The People&quot; is united behind the science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f) Intergenerational Justice</td>
<td>All generations are of equal importance, and therefore society must assure a fair distribution of resources among current and future generations.</td>
<td>• References to the rights and justice for future generations. • References to the fair distribution of resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Coding frame for Green Populism
4 Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

Figure 4 presents a variation of the green populist discourse in Greta Thunberg’s speeches. As the figure shows, there are two elements of green populism which appear with more frequency in Thunberg’s discourse: Green Radicalisation and Attribution of Blame to “The Elite”. It is also possible to notice that Green Radicalisation decreases over time, and on the other side, Attribution of Blame to “The Elite” increases.

It is possible to establish that as expected, Greta Thunberg’s green populist language is highly influenced by its audience, and perhaps, that she abstains from being too radical when speaking at more formal environments such as international institutions. Furthermore, it is interesting to see that in all six speeches there are more coded units which correspond to Attribution of Blame to “The Elite”, then to Victimisation of “The People”. This means that Greta Thunberg focuses a lot more of her language towards criticising the political establishment and the system she radically wants to change.
As mentioned before, this study is motivated on the quality aspects of the use of green populist discourse, rather than its frequency. The following chapter consists of a presentation and interpretation of the results for a better comprehension of green populism phenomena. The analysis is structured in six parts, corresponding to each category/subcategory of our coding frame.

4.1 Category 1: Manichean vision of the world

According to our coding sheet, the six subcategories of Green Populism are grouped into two main categories, Manichean vision of the world and expression of the general will. The latter expresses the core aspects of Cas Mudde’s definition of populism. The first section of the analysis concerns the results for subcategories a) Ecological crisis of cosmic proportion, b) Victimisation of “the people”, and c) Blame attribution to “the elite”. These three elements of green populism help construct the narrative of the antagonism between two opposing groups in society.

4.1.1 Subcategory a) Ecological crisis of cosmic proportion

Throughout the analysis, it was important to find units that refer to the two main aspects of this subcategory: the recognition that humanity is facing an ecological crisis and that this crisis has taken cosmic proportion, in other words, that affects all people, everywhere.

As Table 3 presents, it was possible to determine that all six speeches have units which correspond to subcategory a) of the coding sheet, the first element of green populism: ecological crisis of cosmic proportion.

Firstly, Greta Thunberg is quick to declare the existence of a severe and urgent crisis through claims such as “Our house is on fire.” (Thunberg, 2019d, p. 21). In her speeches that are several suggestions pointing to, in Thunberg’s words, “the symptoms” of the crisis, such as, the collapse of entire ecosystems, the extinction of hundreds of species, natural catastrophes and climate breakdown, but also the suffering and sacrifice of the people. Greta Thunberg states that “We [humanity] are in the beginning of a mass extinction.” (Thunberg, 2019f,
p. 86), a disaster that “will most likely lead to the end of our civilization as we know it.” (Thunberg, 2019b, p. 43).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech</th>
<th>Examples of coded units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our Lives Are in Your Hands (Thunberg, 2019e)</td>
<td>“Because if everyone knew how serious the situation is and how little is actually being done, everyone would come and sit down beside us.” (p. 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost Everything is Black and White (2019a)</td>
<td>“Nor does hardly anyone ever mention that we are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction, with about 200 species going extinct every single day.” (p. 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpopular (2019g)</td>
<td>&quot;We are about to sacrifice our civilization for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue to make enormous amounts of money.” (p. 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We are about to sacrifice the biosphere so that rich people in countries like mine can live in luxury” (p. 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our House is On Fire (2019d)</td>
<td>“Our house is on fire.” (p. 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I am here to say, our house is on fire.” (p. 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We are facing a disaster of unspoken suffering for enormous amounts of people.” (p. 22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathedral Thinking (2019b)</td>
<td>“Around the year 2030, 10 years, 259 days and 10 hours away from now, we will be in a position where we will set off an irreversible chain reaction beyond human control that will most likely lead to the end of our civilization as we know it.” (p. 43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“But hardly anyone knows about these catastrophes or understands that they are just the first few symptoms of climate ecological breakdown.” (p. 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World is Waking Up (2019f)</td>
<td>“Entire ecosystems are collapsing.” (p. 86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We are in the beginning of a mass extinction.” (p. 86)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 – Table of results for subcategory a) Ecological crisis of cosmic proportion

Secondly, there are also units which refer to the cosmic proportion of the crisis, such as, “We are facing a disaster of unspoken suffering for enormous amounts of people.” (Thunberg, 2019d, p. 22). There is also a suggestion of a lack of awareness towards the severity of the crisis. Nevertheless, Greta Thunberg
believes that despite the unawareness, the issue of the ecological breakdown concerns all people and demands everyone’s attention and action. In Thunberg’s words, “if everyone knew how serious the situation is and how little is actually being done, everyone would come and sit down beside us.” (Thunberg, 2019e, p. 7).

Finally, hints towards a division of society into two antagonistic groups can already be observed, as a result of the severity and dimension of the crisis. In fact, it is possible to determine that Greta Thunberg’s green populism emerges as a result of a crisis of cosmic proportion. This division of society, as it will be discussed in more detail below, is based on the claim that the economic exploitation of a particular group of society comes at great sacrifice for the biosphere and civilization.

4.1.2 Subcategory b) Victimisation of “the people”

In order to grasp if there is indeed a Manichean vision of the world expressed in Greta Thunberg’s speeches, or in other words, if society is divided into two antagonistic and homogenous groups, one must look for references to these two groups in society: “the people”, which is morally right, and “the elite”, morally wrong and corrupt. On one side, there is one group of people usually portrayed as the majority of the population, and on the other, the establishment that for specific reasons is to blame for the issue at hand.

As Table 4 shows, it was possible to determine that all six speeches have units which correspond to subcategory b) of the coding sheet, the second element of green populism: the victimisation of “the people”.

To begin with, there are many instances where the pronoun “we” points towards the fact that Greta Thunberg is speaking on behalf of the majority and that she herself is part of “the people”. Henceforth, Greta Thunberg claims that “Many people say that Sweden is just a small country and it doesn’t matter what we do.” (Thunberg, 2019g, p. 16). In other words, those who are not part of the majority lack common sense, explaining why they do not take “the people” and their power seriously. But how does one characterise the people?
The analysis of the six speeches made possible to determine that “the people” Thunberg speaks for are mostly young people who are not part of the establishment nor “the elite”, who cannot vote, but that have joined a movement which claims to have “nothing to do with party politics.” (Thunberg, 2019e, p. 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech</th>
<th>Examples of coded units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Lives Are in Your Hands</strong></td>
<td>“Our school strike has nothing to do with party politics.” (p. 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Thunberg, 2019e)</em></td>
<td>“This is a cry for help.” (p. 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Our lives are in your hands.” (p. 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Almost Everything is Black and White</strong></td>
<td>“Are we knowingly causing a mass extinction?” (p. 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(2019a)</em></td>
<td>“Are we evil?” (p. 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“No, of course not.” (p. 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People keep doing what they do because the vast majority doesn’t have a clue about the consequences of our everyday life.” (p. 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unpopular</strong> <em>(2019g)</em></td>
<td>“Many people say that Sweden is just a small country and it doesn't matter what we do.” (p. 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“But it is the suffering of the many which pay for the luxuries of the few” (p. 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our House is On Fire</strong> <em>(2019d)</em></td>
<td>“And since the climate crisis is a crisis that never once has been treated as a crisis, people are simply not aware of the full consequences from our everyday life.” (p. 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cathedral Thinking</strong> <em>(2019b)</em></td>
<td>“And they are right, of course, since most people are not even aware of why those changes are required.” (p. 47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You need to listen to us, we who cannot vote.” (p. 48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The World is Waking Up</strong> <em>(2019f)</em></td>
<td>“People are suffering.” (p. 86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“People are dying.” (p. 86)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 - Table of results for subcategory b) Victimisation of "the people"

There are also other traits expressed in the examples presented in the table above which contribute to this characterisation of “the people” as victims of a crisis primarily caused by “the elite”: ignorance, innocence, suffering and vulnerability. The first is ignorance, since “people are simply not aware of the full consequences from our everyday life.” (Thunberg, 2019d, p. 21). The
second trait is innocence because as Greta Thunberg asserts, people are not knowingly causing a mass extinction, they are not evil. She justifies that “People [only] keep doing what they do because the vast majority doesn’t have a clue about the consequences of our everyday life.” (Thunberg, 2019a, p. 13). The third is vulnerability, “You need to listen to us, we who cannot vote.” (Thunberg, 2019b, p. 48). In other words, young people alone do not have the social status nor the economic power necessary to bring about the changes needed to solve the crisis. And finally, the fourth trait is suffering, “People are suffering. People are dying.” (Thunberg, 2019f, p. 86), as Thunberg states numerous times in her speeches, young people are the ones suffering the most with the consequences of the ecological crisis.

4.1.3 Subcategory c) Blame attribution to “the elite”

As it can be seen in Table 5, it was possible to determine that all six speeches have units which correspond to subcategory c) of the coding sheet, the third element of green populism: blame attribution to “the elite”.

The examples below illustrate many of the traits of “the elite” group, as expressed in Greta Thunberg’s speeches. It was already mentioned in the theory section that when populist actors refer to “the elite”, they usually mean the political establishment in power which on the other hand, corresponds to a minority of the population. Since these two antagonistic groups are mutually exclusive and having said that on one side we have “the people”, the morally good, on the other side is “the elite”, the group in society which is perceived as the evil and corrupt. Who is the elite and what are they blamed for?

To start with, in her speeches, Thunberg names many sectors of society which she accuses as being part of the elite such as, newspapers, influencers, political parties, its leaders, even those who portray themselves to be green leaders and activists, who “go on flying around the world, eating meat and dairy.” (Thunberg, 2019a, p. 13).
### Speech Examples of coded units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Lives Are in Your Hands</strong></td>
<td>“To all the newspapers who still don’t write about and report on climate change (…)” (p. 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Thunberg, 2019e)</td>
<td>“To all of you who have never treated this crisis as a crisis.” (p. 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“To all the political parties that pretend to take the climate question seriously.” (p. 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“To all the politicians that ridicule us on social media, and have named and shamed me (…)” (p. 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Almost Everything is Black and White</strong></td>
<td>“They keep saying that climate change is an existential threat and the most important issue of all.” (p. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2019a)</td>
<td>“And yet they just carry on like before.” (p. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Even most green politicians and climate scientists go on flying around the world, eating meat and dairy.” (p. 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unpopular</strong> (2019g)</td>
<td>“You only talk about moving forward with the same bad ideas that got us into this mess.” (p. 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You have ignored us in the past and you will ignore us again.” (p. 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our House is On Fire</strong> (2019d)</td>
<td>“You say that nothing in life is black or white.” (p. 22)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“But that is a lie.” (p. 22)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“A very dangerous lie.” (p. 22)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Here in Davos – just like everywhere else - everyone is talking about money.” (p. 23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It seems that money and growth are our only main concerns.” (pp. 23-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cathedral Thinking</strong> (2019b)</td>
<td>“Our leaders need to start acting accordingly.” (p. 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Because at the moment they are not.” (p. 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“If our house was falling apart you wouldn’t fly around the world in business class, chatting about how the market will solve everything with clever, smart solutions to specific, isolated problems.” (p. 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The World is Waking Up</strong> (2019f)</td>
<td>“And all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth.” (p. 86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“How dare you continue to look away, and come here saying that you are doing enough.” (p. 86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“When the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight.” (p. 86)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 - Table of results for subcategory c) Blame attribution to "the elite"
What they all have in common is that they are all adults and part of the establishment. No matter who they are, if they do not stand on the side of the common people, they are against Greta Thunberg and those she speaks for. In Thunberg’s view, “You [the elite] only talk about moving forward with the same bad ideas that got us into this mess.” (Thunberg, 2019g, p. 16), in other words, “the elite” is to blame for the severity of the crisis and the suffering of the people.

Moreover, Greta Thunberg accuses “the elite” of ignoring young people’s cry for help “You have ignored us in the past and you will ignore us again.” (Thunberg, 2019g, p. 18), and for not acting accordingly. She also accuses the establishment of lying, and condemns their consumerist and materialistic way of living, “all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth.” (Thunberg, 2019f, p. 86). Overall, Thunberg blames “the elite” for the catastrophic consequences that come hand in hand with exploiting natural resources for the economic profit of the few. She claims they are profiting at the expense of the survival of present and future generations. Finally, Thunberg also criticises the lack of political will and policies to tackle the climate breakdown, “How dare you continue to look away, and come here saying that you are doing enough. When the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight.” (p. 86).

4.2 Category 2: Expression of the general will
As it was stated in the theory section, the expression of the general will is based on common sense. Those who oppose common sense will be considered as part of “the elite”. The green populist leader has the aim of recognizing what is the common will and use that goal to unite “the people”. The second section of the analysis concerns the results for subcategories d) Green radicalisation, e) Trust in science, and finally, f) Intergenerational justice.

4.2.1 Subcategory d) Green radicalisation
It is known from previous discussions that green radicalisation is what determines the content of green populism. Because the changes needed to live
in a green society, whose politics and costumes respect the Limits to Growth thesis, are in many ways, radical, and require a break from the “status quo”, it was essential to find units in Greta Thunberg’s speeches which express that radicalisation: an awareness for radical change and the encouragement of radical action as a mean for emancipation.

As Table 6 presents, it was determined that all speeches have units which correspond to subcategory d) of the coding sheet, the fourth element of green populism: Green Radicalisation.

First, one can find references to the sovereignty of the will of the people; in other words, expressions which refer to the power of “the people”. For instance, Greta Thunberg shows confidence on the power that young people can have if they unite, stating that “if a few girls can get headlines all over the world just by not going to school for a few weeks, imagine what we could do together if we wanted to.” (Thunberg, 2019e, p. 8). Then, despite the lack of socio-economic power concerning “the elite”, Thunberg still affirms that “The real power belongs to the people.” (Thunberg, 2019g, p. 18).

Second, there are instances which express Greta Thunberg’s certainty that the ecological crisis cannot be solved with “business as usual”, in other words, with the same solutions offered by the political establishment. In her view, firmly founded in green ideology and the Limits to Growth thesis, “If the emissions have to stop, then we must stop the emissions.” (Thunberg, 2019a, p. 11). So, the only way to stop climate breakdown is to stop living as if the resources of the planet are infinite. Moreover, to Greta Thunberg and her supporters, that is “black or white.” (Thunberg, 2019a, p. 11), meaning, it is based on common sense, and either one supports the will of “the people”, or one is against them.
### Speech Examples of coded units

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our Lives Are in Your Hands (Thunberg, 2019e)</td>
<td>“But I think that if a few girls can get headlines all over the world just by not going to school for a few weeks, imagine what we could do together if we wanted to.” (p. 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost Everything is Black and White (2019a)</td>
<td>“If the emissions have to stop, then we must stop the emissions.” (p. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“To me that is black or white.” (p. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“So we can't save the world by playing by the rules.” (p. 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“So everyone out there: it is now time for civil disobedience.” (p. 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It is time to rebel.” (p. 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpopular (2019g)</td>
<td>“And if solutions within this system are so impossible to find then maybe we should change the system itself?” (pp. 17-18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We've come here to let you know that change is coming whether you like it or not.” (p. 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The real power belongs to the people.” (p. 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our House is On Fire (2019d)</td>
<td>“And now is not the time for speaking politely or focusing on what we can or cannot say.” (p. 22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“No matter how uncomfortable and unprofitable that may be.” (p. 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We must change almost everything in our current societies.” (p. 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathedral Thinking (2019b)</td>
<td>“And I want you to panic.” (p. 42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I want you to act as if your house was on fire.” (p. 42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“To do your best is no longer good enough.” (p. 48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We must all do the seemingly impossible.” (p. 48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World is Waking Up (2019f)</td>
<td>“How dare you pretend this can be solved with business as usual and some technical solutions!” (p. 87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We will not let you get away with this.” (p. 88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Right here, right now is where we draw the line.” (p. 88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“And change is coming, whether you like it or not.” (p. 88)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 - Table of results for subcategory d) Green radicalisation

Third, we begin to see more clear traces of radicalism when upon the recognition that “the elite” does not have the solutions, Thunberg states that “if solutions within this system are so impossible to find then maybe we should change the system itself?” (Thunberg, 2019g, pp. 17-18), in a way, proposing to change the current system in which society lives radically. Furthermore, that will also require some sort of radical action.
Finally, the way Greta Thunberg proposes to change the system is perhaps the most radical of her actions and language. She believes that this is not the time for politeness or playing by the rules. It is time to march, to rebel. It is time to do the unthinkable, in Thunberg’s words, “it is now time for civil disobedience.” (Thunberg, 2019a, p. 15). Overall, green radicalisation is a common element in Greta Thunberg’s populist discourse, and perhaps one of the strongest unifiers of “the people” as it speaks to their sovereignty and power.

4.2.2 Subcategory e) Trust in Science

As the theoretical framework proposes, science is a trait of green populism which gives legitimacy to the expression of the general will. The will of the people is based on common sense, and the latter goes hand in hand with scientific facts.

As Table 7 demonstrates, it was possible to determine that all six speeches have units which correspond to subcategory e) of the coding sheet, the fifth element of green populism: Trust in Science.

Overall, in Greta Thunberg’s speeches, there are many references to scientific facts, as well as scientific reports and things scientists wrote or said. For instance, there are numerous references to one of the most important international agreements about climate change mitigation, the Paris Agreement, as well as many facts concluded by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports. Most of these scientific facts are expressed in the form of warnings and solutions to avoid complete climate breakdown, for instance, in Thunberg’s words, “Last summer, a number of leading climate scientists wrote that we have at most three years to reverse growth in greenhouse-gas emissions if we’re going to reach the goals set in the Paris agreement.” (Thunberg, 2019e, p. 6).
<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Lives Are in Your Hands</strong> (Thunberg, 2019e)</td>
<td>“Last summer, a number of leading climate scientists wrote that we have at most three years to reverse growth in greenhouse-gas emissions if we’re going to reach the goals set in the Paris agreement.” (p. 6) “So maybe we have even less time than the one year and ten months those scientists said we have left.” (p. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Almost Everything is Black and White</strong> (2019a)</td>
<td>“Countries like Sweden and the UK need to start reducing emissions by at least 15 per cent every year, to stay below a 2°C warming target.” (p. 11) “But, as the IPCC has recently stated, aiming instead for a 1.5°C target would significantly reduce the climate impact.” (p. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unpopular</strong> (2019g)</td>
<td>“We need to keep the fossil fuels in the ground and we need to focus on equity” (p. 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our House is On Fire</strong> (2019d)</td>
<td>“In that time, unprecedented changes in all aspects of society need to have taken place, including a reduction of our CO2 emissions by at least 50 per cent.” (p. 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cathedral Thinking</strong> (2019b)</td>
<td>“These predictions are backed up by scientific facts, concluded by all nations through the IPCC.” (p. 44) “That is why I keep telling you to unite behind the science.” (p. 47) “Make the best available science in the heart of politics and democracy.” (p. 47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The World is Waking Up</strong> (2019f)</td>
<td>“To have a 67 per cent chance of staying below a 1.5°C global temperature rise, the best odds given by the IPCC, the world had 420 gigatonnes of CO2 left to emit back on 1 January 2018.” (p. 87) “Today, as you can see, that figure is already down to less than 350 gigatonnes.” (p. 87)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 - Table of results for subcategory e) Trust in science

The IPCC reports are in many ways a follow up to The Limits To Growth thesis (Meadows, 1972), the first time a group of scientists came to the conclusion that Earth’s resources are finite and the only to avoid a mass extinction is by stopping our consumerist and materialistic way of living entirely. As Greta Thunberg urges, “We need to keep the fossil fuels in the ground and we need to focus on equity” (Thunberg, 2019g, p. 17). Hence more, Thunberg calls for the importance of uniting behind science, and urges
leaders everywhere to “Make the best available science in the heart of politics and democracy.” (Thunberg, 2019b, p. 47), demonstrating a strong trust in science.

This trust in science strengthens the legitimacy and power of “the people” but at the same time validates Greta Thunberg’s claims of an ecological crisis with catastrophic consequences to humanity, “These predictions are backed up by scientific facts, concluded by all nations through the IPCC.” (Thunberg, 2019b, p. 44). Finally, it is possible to affirm that despite the untrustworthiness Thunberg has in “the elite”, some experts, in this case, the scientists that work for the establishment she so much criticises and urges to bring down, can be trusted.

4.2.2.1 Subcategory f) Intergenerational Justice

Intergenerational justice concerns the rights of current and future generations of enjoying the same conditions and resources necessary to their survival and prosperity as human beings. It is based on philosophical principles of equity and justice, one of the most important premises of green ideology and perhaps one of the most unifying features of Greta Thunberg’s movement, since she speaks for all children and young people whose future is in the hands of adults. In Thunberg’s words “The future of all the coming generations rests on your [the elite’s] shoulders.” (Thunberg, 2019e, p. 8)

As Table 8 shows, it was possible to determine that all six speeches have units which correspond to subcategory f) of the coding sheet, the sixth element of green populism: Intergenerational Justice. Greta Thunberg demonstrates her awareness that future generations have the same rights as current generations, “What we do or don't do, right now, will affect my entire life, and the lives of my children and grandchildren.” (Thunberg, 2019a, p. 14), moreover, it is the responsibility of humankind to ensure a fair distribution of natural resources.
Speech | Examples of coded units
--- | ---
Our Lives Are in Your Hands (Thunberg, 2019e) | “This means that Sweden steals 3.2 years of natural resources from future generations every year.” (p. 7)
| “Those of us who are part of these future generations would like Sweden to stop doing that.” (p. 7)
| “The future of all the coming generations rests on your shoulders.” (p. 8)
Almost Everything is Black and White (2019a) | “What we do or don't do, right now, will affect my entire life, and the lives of my children and grandchildren.” (p. 14)
Unpopular (2019g) | “You say that you love your children above everything else.” (p. 17)
| “And yet you are stealing their future.” (p. 17)
Our House is On Fire (2019d) | “We can create transformational action that will safeguard the living conditions for future generations.” (p. 23)
| “Or we can continue with business as usual and fail.” (p. 23)
Cathedral Thinking (2019b) | “In this election, you vote for the future living conditions of humankind.” (p. 48)
| “The future as well as what we have achieved in the past is literally in your hands now.” (p. 48)
The World is Waking Up (2019f) | “The eyes of all future generations are upon you.” (p. 88)

Table 8 - Table of results for subcategory f) Intergenerational justice

For instance, Thunberg claims that “Sweden [her own country] steals 3.2 years of natural resources from future generations every year.” (Thunberg, 2019e, p. 7), leaving a burden to those who are not yet born and therefore cannot vote or demand justice. Hence more, the expression “stealing” refers to the unjust distribution of resources among current generations. Despite “the elite’s” failures, Greta Thunberg seems to be hopeful about the future, “We can create transformational action that will safeguard the living conditions for future generations.” (Thunberg, 2019d, p. 23). These words can be interpreted as a reaffirmation of the power of the people to assure those future living conditions.
5 Conclusions

This study aims at exploring a new phenomenon in political science named Green Populism. Previous studies on populism have focused on right-wing and left-wing populist parties, a combination of populism with other ideologies such as nationalism and socialism (K. A. Hawkins et al., 2019; Kaltwasser & Mudde, 2017; Mudde, 2004; Stavrakakis et al., 2016). Despite the existence of research on a variety of populist actors, not only leaders or political parties but also on populist movements, a research gap was found in the study of populism and green movements. Because of Greta Thunberg’s emerging popularity and frequent use of Manichean language, it was decided to focus this case-study on her discourse.

The analytical framework for this study was based on two significant theoretical contributions: Cas Mudde's modern approach to populism (Mudde, 2004, 2017) and Andrew Dobson's conceptualisation of Green Ideology (Dobson, 2000). Mudde's definition of populism is based on the premises that it is a thin-centred ideology based on the antagonism between two groups in society and the expression of a general will. Moreover, being a thin-centred ideology, it almost always manifests together with another thin-centred or full ideology. Populism does little to offer a concrete vision on how society should look like, as its dualistic language is based merely on morality (Mudde, 2004).

This study has explored different concepts of green ideology in order to develop a theory for green populism. Overall, Andrew Dobson argues the radical or "maximalist" position of ecologism. He affirms that green political thought should be acknowledged as a full ideology. Overall, green ideology is the belief that nature is an interconnected whole where no species is more valuable than others. A green society recognises the Limits to Growth thesis, the premise that Earth is finite. Therefore, humankind cannot continue exploiting its natural resources at the same rate it has for the past centuries. The literature review demonstrates that initially, green ideology was seen as an extension of environmentalism. However, as it was concluded early on, not
all environmentalists acknowledge the intrinsic value of nature. Instead, they aim for a more sustainable way of living, a more functional relationship with natural resources (Dobson, 2000).

The definition of green populism adopted in this study is a result of the combination of the former two approaches. Now it is possible to define this phenomenon as the combination of populism and green ideology. As demonstrated throughout this research, green populism is characterised by six elements, which were also referred to as subcategories of the coding frame: a) ecological crisis of cosmic proportion, b) victimisation of "the people", c) blame attribution to “the elite”, d) green radicalisation, e) trust in science and finally, f) intergenerational justice.

This study adopted a method known as Qualitative Content Analysis (Schreier, 2012), a qualitative approach to data analysis which is carried out by the open coding of the materials. This method is compromised by a set of tools which are applied systematically to textual data to describe and summarise meaning. The analysis was operationalised in five steps: building a coding frame, segmentation of the material, trial coding, main analysis, and finally, presentation and discussion of findings. The process followed both a deductive and inductive logic. In other words, the analytical framework is based on previous knowledge and the material. The analysis was carried out by coding all six speeches twice in different points in time, to increase the quality of the study. Furthermore, the results of the analysis were presented and interpreted with references to the materials (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Mayring, 2000; Schreier, 2012).

Finally, it is possible to answer the research question: What elements of green populism are present, if any, in Greta Thunberg’s discourse? Overall, the analysis demonstrates that all elements of green populism, ecological crisis of cosmic proportion, victimisation of “the people”, blame attribution to “the elite”, green radicalisation, trust in science, and intergenerational justice, are present at least once in Greta Thunberg's six speeches. Some elements had
more coded units than others. However, since this study is focused on the qualitative aspects rather than the frequency, it is still possible to affirm that Greta Thunberg is a green populist.

Thunberg begins by raising awareness to the signs of ecological crisis such as the climate break down, the collapse of ecosystems and even death. She also acknowledges that this crisis has a cosmic proportion. In other words, it affects everyone since a total collapse of the biosphere could result in a mass extinction for humanity. This first element of green populism, the ecological crisis of cosmic proportion, is the departure point for a division of society into two antagonistic groups, where one is morally right and the other wrong. This division of "the people" vs "the elite", or in Greta Thunberg's words, "the children" vs "the adults", is also based on the relationship of humankind with nature. Overall, there are many references to the second and third element of populism, the victimisation of "the people" and blame attribution to "the elite", in Thunberg's discourse. The victimisation aspect is expressed through "the people's" suffering and ignorance about the consequences of humanity's actions. Young people have soon realised the intrinsic value of nature and that there are limits to growth. The blame attribution concerns the unrestrained exploitation of the Earth's natural resources by the adults for their economic profit. Their materialistic way of living is causing death and collapse of entire ecosystems.

Hence more, it was also determined that the main distinctive feature between these two groups of society is that young people do not have the social status nor the economic power that the political establishment has, to bring about the change needed. Nevertheless, as the fourth element of green populism, green radicalisation entails, the collective will is to break with the status quo. Greta Thunberg claims that the ecological crisis cannot be solved with "business as usual", and therefore demands radical changes to the current system. Thunberg justifies radical action by accusing politicians of not doing enough or not having the solutions. There are also references to green radicalisation in the way she proposes to change the current system, at times encouraging breaking
the rules or engage in civil disobedience. Finally, the last two elements of green populism, trust in science and intergenerational justice, were also actively present in Greta Thunberg's speeches. Thunberg uses science as a way of giving legitimacy to the general will of people. Because facts are difficult to refute, by employing scientific language, she is connecting the people's will with common sense. Concerning intergenerational justice, Greta Thunberg recognises the rights of future generations in her discourse. She accuses "the elite" of stealing their future due to their unfair distribution of resources, implying social injustice. Thunberg demands justice for her future children and grandchildren who are not born yet. Therefore, they cannot vote or demand structural change.

In conclusion, this study has determined that Greta Thunberg is a populist actor who combines two ideologies, populism and green ideology, therefore introducing us to a new phenomenon, which this study labels as green populism.

5.1 Theory Contribution

This case study concerns both theory testing and theory development. Cas Mudde’s definition of populism has been thoroughly studied by other scholars in the past. It has provided this research the fundamental foundations to develop it further. The choice to use Mudde’s theory was motivated by the literature review and strengthened by our analysis of this case-study. Previous research has demonstrated that despite the existence of numerous studies about populism, there is a research gap when it comes to the combination of populism with green ideology. This research gap was the motivation for developing an analytical framework to this new phenomenon in populist discourse which is now labelled as green populism. Overall, this study was able to establish the applicability of this new type of populism and therefore contributed, in many ways, to the expansion of contemporary research on populism phenomena.
5.2 Future Research

Due to the lack of research on green populism, this study was first and foremost concerned with testing the proposed analytical framework for this new phenomenon. The conclusion that green populism is an applicable theory has opened many doors to future research on this field. For instance, it would be vital to extend this study to other types of verbal or written communication such as Greta Thunberg’s tweets or Facebook posts. Once there is more material available and perhaps other green populist actors to have as a case-study, a quantitative methodology approach might be applicable too. Furthermore, it would be interesting to dwell into the perception of Greta Thunberg’s populism, and determine whether her supporters believe she is indeed a green populist. As stated in the problem formulation, populism tends to be perceived as a negative phenomenon. Could Greta Thunberg’s green populism be a positive trait? And how does green populism affect liberal democracy? These are some of the research questions that could be interesting to explore in the future.
References


Appendix 1- Example of speech divided into coding units

“Our Lives Are in Your Hands”

1[Last summer, a number of leading climate scientists wrote that we have at most three years to reverse growth in greenhouse-gas emissions if we’re going to reach the goals set in the Paris agreement.]

2[Over a year and two months have now passed, and in that time many other scientists have said the same thing and a lot of things have got worse and greenhouse-gas emissions continue to increase.] 3[So maybe we have even less time than the one year and ten months those scientists said we have left.]

4[If people knew this they wouldn’t need to ask me why I’m so ‘passionate about climate change.’]

5[If people knew that the scientists say that we have a five per cent chance of meeting the Paris target, and if people knew what a nightmare scenario we will face if we don’t keep global warming below 2°C, they wouldn’t need to ask me why I’m on school strike outside parliament.]

6[Because if everyone knew how serious the situation is and how little is actually being done, everyone would come and sit down beside us.]

7[In Sweden, we live our lives as if we had the resources of 4.2 planets.] 8[Our individual carbon footprint is one of the worst in the world.] 9[This means that Sweden steals 3.2 years of natural resources from future generations every year.] 10[Those of us who are part of these future generations would like Sweden to stop doing that.]

11[Right now.]

12[This is not a political text.] 13[Our school strike has nothing to do with party politics.]

14[Because the climate and the biosphere don’t care about our politics and our empty words for a single second.]

15[They only care about what we actually do.]

16[This is a cry for help.] 17[To all the newspapers who still don’t write about and report on climate change, even though they said that the climate was ‘the critical question of our time’ when the Swedish forests were burning this summer.]

18[To all of you who have never treated this crisis as a crisis.]
[To all the influencers who stand up for everything except the climate and the environment.]

[To all the political parties that pretend to take the climate question seriously.]

[To all the politicians that ridicule us on social media, and have named and shamed me so that people tell me that I’m retarded, a bitch and a terrorist, and many other things.]

[To all of you who choose to look the other way every day because you seem more frightened of the changes that can prevent catastrophic climate change than the catastrophic climate change itself.]

[Your silence is almost worst of all.]

[The future of all the coming generations rests on your shoulders.]

[Those of us who are still children can’t change what you do now once we’re old enough to do something about it.]

[A lot of people say that Sweden is a small country, that it doesn’t matter what we do.]

[But I think that if a few girls can get headlines all over the world just by not going to school for a few weeks, imagine what we could do together if we wanted to.]

[Every single person counts.]

[Just like every single emission counts.]

[Every single kilo.]

[Everything counts.]

[So please, treat the climate crisis like the acute crisis it is and give us a future.]

[Our lives are in your hands.]
Appendix 2 - Example of Coding Sheet

Speech: “Our Lives Are in Your Hands”

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Description

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<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>victimisation of &quot;the people&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>blame attribution to &quot;the elite&quot;</td>
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<td>d</td>
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<td>e</td>
<td>trust in science</td>
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<td>f</td>
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