POPULIST DISCOURSE ON POLITICAL REPRESENTATION: A CASE STUDY OF ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN LITHUANIA

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ABSTRACT

Today's party democracy crisis coincides with an increasing influence of populist political actors. This article— prompted by notions of populist understandings of politics as expressions of the people's will and of the populist idea of an antagonism between the people and the elite—explores whether populism and party democracies are compatible. Assertions, that populism contradicts party democracies, should rest on research of populist understandings of political representation. This case study, of the populist discourse of Lithuania's anti-establishment organizations, fills this research gap in the literature on populism's compatibility with party democracies. The qualitative analysis of this case study focuses on how political representation is perceived and presented. The study provides new insights for theoretical debate on the compatibility of populism and party democracy and also presents a nuanced picture of populist perceptions of political representation.

Keywords: *party democracy, political representation, populism, framing.*

INTRODUCTION

The crisis of representative democracy has been acknowledged many times (Diamond and Gunther, 2001; Rosanvallon, 2008). Trends cited as evidence of this crisis often include citizens' declining confidence in parliament (Levi and Stoker, 2000; Catterberg and Moreno, 2006) and decreases in voter turnout (Gray and Caul, 2000; Blais, Gidengil and Nevitte, 2004). However, in discussing the crisis of representative democracy, many scholars are most concerned with the diminishing position of political parties (Klingemann and Fuchs, 1995; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Dalton, 2004). Some observers note that political parties may no longer be serving as mediators between a nation's government and its citizens (Poguntke, 1996; Norris, 1999; Dalton, 2004), while others describe a shift in political parties' functions—from representing to governing (Mair, 2006; Katz and Mair, 1995). It has even been claimed that political parties no longer represent citizens, but act as representatives of the state (Mair, 2011, p. 8). Moreover, Bernard Manin, in his review of the condition of representative democracy, concludes that there is "a crisis of a particular form of representation, namely the one established in the

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wake of mass parties," (1997, p. 196). If party democracy is not in crisis, then it is undergoing a transformation.

These changes to the party democracy model go along with a growing number of populist political actors who are exerting greater influence (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2012). This rise in populism is especially evident in the prevalence of radical right-wing parties in Western Europe (Mudde, 2007, 2013; Norris, 2005). The results of the 2014 European Parliament election confirm a trend towards populism (Mudde, 2014). Although only three Eurosceptic parties achieved a "reasonable share of the vote" in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in the last European Parliament election (Savage, 2014), these countries are not necessarily resistant to this populist trend. Political party systems in CEE are often challenged by anti-establishment populist parties (Učeň, 2007), unorthodox, new, or centrist populist parties (Pop-Eleches, 2010), and anti-establishment reform parties (Hanley and Sikk, 2014). New or centrist populist actors mainly campaign against "under-performing and morally failing established parties" (Učeň, 2007, p. 54). They base their election campaigns on demands for more open and accountable policies and plan projects imbued with "newness" (Sikk, 2009) to counter voters' disappointment with the mainstream parties' governance (Pop-Eleches, 2010). Hence—whereas in Western Europe populist actors rise because political parties are not able to represent the citizens any longer—in CEE, populist challengers rise due to the poor institutionalization of the party system (Kriesi, 2014) and disappointment with mainstream political parties.

So far, many studies have researched populist parties' features (De Lange and Art, 2011) and common characteristics of populist actors (Pauwels, 2011, Rooduijn and Pauwels, 2011; Rooduijn, 2013). Because the implications of populist politics for the party democracy model should be researched more thoroughly, this article analyses how political representation is perceived and presented by activists by studying populist ideas and discourse.

This research is especially relevant for two additional reasons. Firstly, the theoretical question of whether (and if so, how) populist ideas are compatible with the principles of party democracy has not been resolved. One group of scholars considers populism and populist movements dangerous to democracy (Pasquino, 2007; Urbinati, 2014). Other researchers conceive populism as a part of representative democracy—possible only in representative democracies—and as a tool for improving democracy (Canovan, 1999; Taggart, 2000; 2004). Secondly, the ideas of populist actors in CEE are especially worth examining. The assumption that the populist actors (and anti-establishment actors in general) in CEE have the same ideas as their counterparts in Western Europe has not been justified.

This article introduces theoretical debate on the compatibility between populist ideas and the principles of party democracy before presenting empirical qualitative research on the discourse of Lithuanian populist organizations—research which provides new insights on the theoretical debate regarding the populism's compatibility with party democracies.

1. THEORY: POPULISM AND REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

In this article, representative democracy is regarded as party democracy[1]. A classic party democracy, as described by Bernard Manin (1997), has at least four distinct features. First, in a party democracy, society is seen as divided into different groups according to socio-economic features. These groups have different—and often contradicting—interests that provide the basis for political parties. Second, political parties mobilize voters during elections. Voting expresses a citizen's trust in a party; it is not necessarily an expression of trust in the particular policies promoted by a party. Third, political parties express public opinion by denouncing the political decisions of their opponents and by organizing protests. Finally, party position is first deliberated among the party members and then implemented during the decision-making process in accordance with party discipline. Consequently, the most important discussions take place prior to parliamentary debates. To sum up, political parties act as the main organizers of representation in a party democracy (Manin, 1997).

Populism seems to contradict this set of representative democracy features. Populism not only acquires different shapes in different contexts, but definitions of the very concept of populism vary. Populism has been defined as a style (Canovan, 1999; Moffitt and Tormey, 2014), as a strategy (Weyland, 2001; Jansen, 2011), and as a thin-centred ideology (Canovan, 2002; Mudde, 2004). In this article, populism is understood according to Cas Mudde's definition of populism as a set of ideas "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" (2004, p. 543). As far as populism in party democracies is concerned— according to populist actors—there is a tension between the general will of the people and the interests of different groups within a society (as in a party democracy). Respectively, the idea of a homogeneous elite, as seen by populists, contradicts having different political parties representing separate groups' interests in a party democracy.

According to Gianfranco Pasquino (2007), populism ignores the inner divisions of a homogeneous unit of the people while it simultaneously objects to political parties' political and institutional mediation. Instead, leaders are presented as inadequate in their ability to make decisions for the people. While representative democracy is based on compromise, populism expresses such strong opposition to *the other*—to the political elite—that compromise becomes impossible (Pasquino, 2007). Likewise, Nadia Urbinati (2014, pp. 128-170) claims that populism is dangerous for democracy because it attempts to centralize power and rejects democratic procedure. The procedure of holding an election and the procedure of engaging in discussion offered by political forums are necessary components of representative democracies as these procedures provide opportunities for voters to reflect on and choose among competing ideas. Populism opposes a pluralism of opinion in that it perceives the people as a whole as the only "part" that should be represented. Even more than it opposes a pluralism of opinion, populism

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[1]   " . . . the literary theory or the dominant ideal-type or myth of democratic government in Western Europe has been the model of party government," (Katz, 1986, p. 32); and " . . . modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties," (Schattschneider, 1941, p. 1).

rejects democratic procedures and the institutions that serve to separate as well as connect a government with its citizens. Instead, populism requires implementing a majority rule—the rule of the people—via the direct rule of the leader. As populism objects both to mediation and institutions, scholars argue, populism rejects representation (Urbinati, 2014, p. 128-170).

Others claim that populism is not simply a danger for representative democracy but has emerged *because* of democracy or at least because of how representative democracies function today. Margaret Canovan (1999) claims that democracy can be understood as having two sides or two styles of politics – redemptive (popular power) and pragmatic (rules and institutions). Ideally, these two sides should be in a balance. However, when pragmatic politics trump redemptive politics, populism appears. The appearance of populism is a turn towards a redemptive style of politics, a reaction to unsuccessful representation (Canovan, 1999). On one hand, populism has positive aspects, when it expresses a primary concern with the common people. On the other hand, populism harbours anti-institutional impulses, encourages a break with the pragmatic side of democracy, and seeks to position the people as the only legitimate source of power (Canovan, 1999). Populism's suggestions that a democracy give up on its institutions, rules, principles, and decision-making processes render populism a threat to democracy. Populism can, though, function as a self-regulatory mechanism of democracy when new institutions change or improve former institutions. Moreover, Paul A. Taggart (2000, p. 115) notes that "populism is a gauge by which we can measure the health of representative political systems." According to Taggart, populism can gain strength only in representative democracies (2004). The main object of populist critiques are political parties—the essence of representative politics. Thus, populist actors express anti-institutionalist positions and attempt to create organizations which are different from the democracy's political parties (Taggart, 2000). It follows that populism opposes dividing the people into groups, organizing on the basis of interests, and associational politics in general. However, populist actors must become institutionalized to participate in the political process and—as a result of this participation—transform into political parties (Taggart, 2000). Instead of forming a political party, populist actors often opt for strong leadership or use the tools of direct democracy—in addition to representative politics (Taggart, 2000).

To sum up, there is no simple way to determine the implications populism holds for party democracies. Populism can be seen as an attempt to unite the people into one body through a strong leader, or it can be understood as a demand for politics based on idealism. Academic debates on the subject assert that populism is seen as contradicting with party democracy not simply because populism rejects political parties, but because populism rejects a particular type of representation—party representation—and consequently, representation as such. This assertion, however, requires further research of populist understandings and perspectives of representation. Hence, the empirical analysis in this case study focuses on conceptions of political representation in the populist discourse of anti-establishment organizations in Lithuania.

2. ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT ACTIVISM IN LITHUANIA

Lithuanian society has been described as distrustful and passive; Lithuania's levels of political trust, civic engagement, and political participation are low (Imbrasaitė, 2004, Žiliukaitė,

2006). Political representation in Lithuania also faces some issues because of weak ideological congruence between voters and political parties (Ramonaitė, 2009). Since 2000, a fragmentation of Lithuania's political party system has been observed: new political parties successfully participated in every parliamentary election (Jastramskis, 2010). These emerging parties avoided declaring their ideological positions, and consequently, they were often regarded as populist (Ramonaitė, 2009). Lately, even though there are no strong radical right-wing parties in Lithuania (Zaremba, 2013), two parties with populist ideologies—the Order and Justice Party and the Way of Courage Party—have entered the national parliament since the 2012 elections (Pabiržis, 2013).

Since 2011, a new wave of anti-establishment activism appeared in Lithuania. Firstly, public protests took place due to two political scandals. The protests evolved into two non-traditional political parties (The List of Lithuania and The Way of Courage), and The Way of Courage Party was able to win seven seats in the parliamentary elections of 2012 (The Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Lithuania, 2012). Many of the protesters active in 2011 and 2012 later organized a citizen initiated mandatory referendum on three constitutional amendments.[2] The referendum had two primary goals: 1) to restrict the sale of agricultural land to foreigners; and 2) to make it easier for Lithuanian citizens to initiate referendums. The referendum, held in June 2014, failed due to low voter turnout (The Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014a). Afterwards, an anti-establishment candidate, supported by activists and former protesters, won 9.32 per cent of the vote in the 2014 presidential election (The Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Lithuania, 2014b). Finally, in the 2015 municipal council elections, non-partisan electoral committees (public election committees) garnered 10.71 per cent of the vote, 118 of Lithuania's municipal council seats, and mayoral positions in four of Lithuania's ten largest cities. It should be noted that the municipal elections of 2015 were the first direct mayoral elections in Lithuania. This institutional change stimulated debates on self-government and encouraged non-partisan candidates to run for office.

During the five-year period of 2011 to 2015, several anti-establishment organizations emerged and some existing organizations became involved in anti-establishment activism. These anti-establishment organizations varied from less formal groups like the For Justice movement to proper political parties such as The Way of Courage and The List of Lithuania. As it is often noted, anti-establishment actors are spontaneous, poorly institutionalized, and exist only for a short term, characteristics that usually complicate research on these actors (Schedler, 1996). While some of Lithuania's anti-establishment organizations withdrew from the political arena after the 2012 parliamentary elections, others persisted by supporting or participating in the referendum initiative, endorsing the anti-establishment candidate in the 2014 presidential elections, and participating in the 2015 municipal council elections.

For this case study, three organizations, that have existed for at least two years and have continued their activity until today, have been selected for research: the United Democratic

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[2]   At least 300,000 signatures—equivalent to ten per cent of Lithuania's eligible voters—must be collected within a three-month period in order to initiate a referendum (Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania). This referendum was only the second citizens' initiated referendum since the restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990.

Movement, Movement TOGETHER, and the List of Lithuania Party. Each of these three groups is formally registered and has a formal statute to set the organization's goals and regulate internal decision making processes. These three organizations also host communication portals such as websites[3] and Facebook profiles. The organizations are based in Lithuania's largest cities: the United Democratic Movement is based in Kaunas, the Movement TOGETHER in Panevėžys, and the List of Lithuania in Vilnius. Two of the researched organizations, the United Democratic Movement and the List of Lithuania, have branches in other regions as well[4]. All three organizations have expressed strong anti-establishment positions and supported an anti-establishment presidential candidate, while two, the United Democratic Movement and the List of Lithuania, were active initiators of the aforementioned referendum.

All three organizations participated in Lithuania's 2015 municipal council elections. The List of Lithuania won four seats in Vilnius's municipal council and is now part of the city's governing coalition. Movement TOGETHER won the majority of the votes and the mayoral office in Panevėžys. The United Democratic Movement did not win any seats in the 2015 municipal elections. It should be taken into consideration that participation in the municipal elections could have directed the focus of each organization.

According to the definition of populism presented earlier, populist discourse is based on the following set of ideas: 1) society is divided into two homogeneous groups—the people and the elite; 2) the relationship between people and the elite is antagonistic; and 3) politics should be based on the general will of the people (Mudde, 2004). The organizations examined in this study employ all three of these tenants of populist discourse. First, they demand for a wider inclusion of the people in decision-making processes.[5] Each of the three organizations identifies themselves as of the people and as representatives of the interests of the people as a whole.[6] Second, these three organizations take anti-establishment positions and reject the political elite. Third—and this characteristic separates these three organizations from those of previous waves of populism—they express strong anti-party sentiments and call for a return to morality and principles. They embrace principled politics over pragmatic politics.[7] Hence

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[3]   United Democratic Movement: <http://www.judejimas.eu> [Accessed on 15 January 2016]; "The List of Lithuania": <http://lietuvossarasas.lt/apie/> [Accessed on 15 January 2016]; Movement TOGETHER <http://www.judejimaskartu.lt/> [Accessed on 15 January 2016].

[4]   See <http://www.judejimas.eu/kontaktai.html>, <http://lietuvossarasas.lt/apie/> [Accessed on 14 January 2016].

[5]   "Since its founding the movement declared the importance of returning governing power to the people" (Račkauskas, Navickas, 2015); "The List of Lithuania Party offers, in these elections, a unique alternative to politics which is cynical and has lost moral sensitivity. Instead of rushing to govern, the [List of Lithuania] party is trying to restore the power of the citizens," (Kuolys, 2012).

[6]   " . . . real, bottom-up, self-government . . . the voice of the common people would always be heard, and government would serve the people, would be responsible and accountable for their promises to voters," (Zabielienė, 2015); " . . . ensure a real citizens' right of self-government—as the natural right of people to create and manage their daily lives, to unite positive people seeking to change society irrespective of their ideological, political, religious, or cultural beliefs," (Movement TOGETHER, 2014);

[7]   "Parties, which have trampled the principle of politics–justice–act like a gang of robbers plundering the city (state) budget," (Dzežulskis-Duonys, 2015a); "The first round results reflected the desire to get rid of the parties' dictate, the necessity of positive changes," (Račkauskas, 2015).

these organizations promise to address what they claim is a malfunctioning representative democracy, reject political parties, and present themselves as movements or non-party political organizations. (The List of Lithuania, for example, is formally registered as a political party but presents itself as a movement, not as a party.)

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In this case study, the goal of the empirical data analysis was twofold. The first aim of the study was to show how the analysed organizations understand and discuss representation. Second, the study aimed to apply framing theory to the collected data. Framing theory was deemed very suitable, because this theory provides tools for understanding how particular ideas are configured.

The first step of the case study was qualitative content analysis. To determine populist understandings of representation, articles from the three organizations' websites were analysed.[8] The underlying assumption in this approach is that the members of organizations treat their websites as important communication and information channels and that they regard their websites as alternatives to Lithuania's mainstream media. Therefore, the messages and articles posted online reflect the understandings and ideas of the organizations hosting the website (unless the organization has stated otherwise). After the first overview of the posts on each of the organizations' websites, articles with in-depth information about the ideas behind the organizations' activism were selected for deeper qualitative analysis. Authorship of these articles was taken into the consideration during the selection process. Some of the articles were written by supporters (not members) of the organizations. To ensure that only the ideas posted by the activists of the case study's three organizations were examined, articles on the organizations' websites authored by those who are not members of the organization were eliminated from the pool of articles selected for further analysis.

The selected articles were coded with a start list of codes using qualitative analysis software, MAXQDA. Fragments of text, from one sentence to a whole paragraph, were coded. For the purpose of this study, three general and broad coding categories related to representation were used: representation, representatives, and election. The goal was to identify the particular text fragments that addressed representation. Therefore, arguments concerning who or what should be represented, who the representatives should be, and how representation should be implemented were coded. Then, the text fragments were coded again to identify each fragment's specific theme. The secondary coding revealed descriptions of: the government (and political parties), of the ideas and actors that should be represented, of legitimate representatives, of what the procedure for choosing representatives should look like, and of how representation should be implemented.

"Yes, The List of Lithuania has correctly criticized and criticizes all political parties, which in recent years have been in power, for the party nomenclature's behavior, their moral insensitivity, indifference to civil rights violations, authoritarian tendencies, [and for] their conformism and dependency," (Bingelienė, 2015).

[8]   See Annex.

In the second step of the analysis, the tools of framing theory were applied. Framing theory provides a means for understanding the selected organizations' ideas and the configurations of these ideas underlying the text. Oliver and Johnston (2000, p. 45), define framing as "the cognitive process wherein people bring to bear background knowledge to interpret an event or circumstance and to locate it in a larger system of meaning." Framing is understood as a purposeful—and intentional rather than manipulative—way to structure ideas according to a particular intention or task. The core tasks of framing Snow and Benford (1988) identify are: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing refers to the identification of a problem and the actors responsible for it. Prognostic framing, on the other hand, articulates a solution to a problem. Finally, motivational framing outlines why a particular group of people should engage in collective action. In this case, motivational framing is understood as an explanation as to why the case study organizations, or members of these organizations, believe they are better representatives than other political actors.

4. RESULTS

In this section of the article, framing of the selected organizations' discourse and ideas is presented. The data and analysis are presented by framing task—diagnostic, prognostic, or motivational. Insights into the organizations discourse regarding representation are substantiated by the organizations' published website text.

4.1. Diagnostic framing

The task of diagnostic framing is to identify the main problems with political representation in Lithuania. This involves framing general and specific problems as well as identifying the primary actors responsible for these problems.

To begin with, the researched organizations' website publications express disappointment with the government. Movement TOGETHER asserts that "The wall of impunity isolates the government from the citizens who elected it," (2013a). The United Democratic Movement website declares, "Kaunas residents are once again frustrated with the government's actions," (Zabielienė and Žiliukas, 2012). The organizations' complaints about the national or municipal government are rather general and abstract: the government either has not kept election promises or has made poor decisions. Though dissatisfaction with specific government institutions is expressed, this was not within the scope of this analysis.

On the other hand, the organizations in this study frame Lithuania's political parties as the most prominent source of Lithuania's problems. The organizations present Lithuania's political parties as embodiments of power and as the main source of their grievances. This could be because political parties are less abstract and easier to imagine and conceive than the government, thus the organizations associate political parties with a place of power. The organizations expressions of abstract disappointment with the government differ from the more tangible grievances the organizations direct at Lithuania's political parties. When the organizations studied frame political parties as embodiments of political power, they present Lithuania's political parties in two main ways. First, they describe the political party structure

as a stagnated bureaucracy. The List of Lithuania Party writes: "Yes, The List of Lithuania has correctly criticized and criticizes all political parties, which in recent years have been in power, for party nomenclature behaviour, for their moral insensitivity, for their indifference to civil rights violations, for their authoritarian tendencies, and for their conformism and dependency," (Bingelienė, 2015). In a similar vein, according to Movement TOGETHER, "Nothing will ever change as long as politics is perceived as an exclusive space of political parties' power, and self-government—as the area of business actors only," (Urbšys, 2015).

When political parties are framed as closed bureaucratic organizations, they acquire an almost material form as a defined, structured system. Framed as such, the parties are presented as a stagnated system of power, which acts and makes decisions as a united body. The selected organizations present political parties as controllers of decision making processes who converged with the government and consequently become a part of the system of power. This presentation is related to political parties being rather closed organizations in the party democracy. Without being a member of a political party, grasping the internal decision making processes and logic of party discipline is difficult (Manin, 1997). Therefore, political parties appear to be well organized structures that are not recognizably related to the people or to the electorate.

A second way of framing political parties noted in the study was anthropomorphizing them, giving political parties human form. When the selected organizations frame political parties in this manner, political parties are presented as having undesirable human characteristics; they are arrogant, sarcastic, and hypocritical. Moreover, the organizations argue that Lithuania's political parties lack clear political and moral principles and are bereft of political ideologies. In the website discourse published by the organizations, these undesirable characteristics and immorality make all the political parties appear to be the same. The power political parties are capable of wielding, as depicted on the organizations' websites, seems unlimited; the organizations even used *authoritarian* or *dictatorial* to describe political parties. The organizations argue that instead of following moral and ideational grounds, political parties pursue their own interests—money and power. The organizations' website publications contend that even though political parties are expected to defend the interest of all, they use their power to act against the general interest, and, therefore against the people. Examples of such discourse include the United Democratic Movement's claim that: "Their [the Conservatives'] arrogance, sarcasm, and primitive intimidation by external enemies often transcend (sane) limits," (Dzežulskis-Duonys, 2015a). The United Democratic Movement also holds that, "Greed for money is common to all of the 'traditional' parties . . . because they are primarily money parties, rather than the representatives and defenders of the general interest. (As they are supposed to be.) Such parties have one goal—to take the city's economy, its businesses and finances, and all [of] the [city's] inhabitants into their own hands, to ensure themselves a saturated life and to convert the city's residents into hostages of their aspirations for years," (Dzežulskis-Duonys, 2015b). And, on their own website, Movement TOGETHER writes of the political parties, "For a long time the ideological differences [between the parties] have not been followed, after every election [the parties] gather and share 'warm seats [of power]'" (Maskoliūnienė, 2015a).

To sum up, the selected organizations applied two frames to present the political parties as embodiments of political power as a closed system of power or as poorly behaved individuals who wield power immorally. The organizations in this study perceive political parties as a homogeneous unit lacking the differences between them that a party democracy requires to function. Moreover, these organizations write that the political parties use their power to pursue their own selfish interests, not the common interest of the people. It follows that the organizations conclude that the people have common interests that need to be defended and that as the political parties are not pursuing the interests of the people as a whole, the parties are in opposition with the people. As a result, political representation is framed as dysfunctional because the current representatives (the political parties) have failed to act as proper intermediaries and have monopolized decision making.

4.2. Prognostic framing

The researched organizations express disappointment with the governing elite in general and the political parties in particular. According to the discourse of the organizations, the current model of representation is not functioning properly because unsatisfactory representatives have seized decision-making power. Therefore, the roles of both the representatives and the people are framed as problematic; prognostic framing offers solutions.

To begin with, the organizations in this study frame the role of the government clearly: to serve the people. They explain that the government, as a representative of the people, should serve and act in the interests of the people. Furthermore, they believe that governmental discretion should be limited and guided by decisions made by the people. For example, the United Democratic Movement provides a framing of the role of government in asserting that in a "One of the fundamental principles of the Constitution—the government must serve the people—has been betrayed this way," (2010).

In addition, the organizations in this case study framed successful representation as a restored relationship between the government and the people. The government should be closer to the people and should know and understand the issues in a particular place. In their websites, the organizations relay a shared belief: that the link between the government and the people should be grounded in partnership and trust and developed through frequent contact. This prognostic framing advocating restoring relations between the government and the people is evident in Movement TOGETHER's claim that ". . . to pursue effective communication between citizens and institutions of local and central government that would help to identify, to coordinate, and to respond to different citizens' interests, needs and development visions," (Movement TOGETHER, 2013b). This framing is seen again in their assertion that the relationship between the people and their representatives would be restored if "the elected municipal council members would get closer, [and attend] directly to the problems of particular residential area," (Urbšys, 2014). These sentiments are also echoed in the prognostic framing the List of Lithuania Party offers: "Let's get the democratic state back, let's restore the moral contract between the citizens and the government . . . We understand that this idea requires different political behaviour— not a brutal struggle for power, but building confidence and certainly a shared concern for the destiny of the nation," (Molytė, 2013).

Given that the organizations frame the purpose of the government as serving the people, and assuring this service though frequent contact, adequate representation—as framed by the organizations—cannot be achieved through elections alone as the government should, throughout the governing term, constantly refer to the preferences of the people. This framing of representation resembles the classic conception of representation, which Hanna F. Pitkin (1967) calls substantive. According to Pitkin, substantive representation occurs when representatives act on behalf of, in the interest of, as an agent of, and as a substitute for the represented. This conception implies that representatives are obliged to act according to the preferences of the citizens. In addition, the representatives also have a duty to explain their decisions when the constituency is dissatisfied. The representatives have to persuade the people that the representatives' decisions were based on the interests of the represented (Pitkin, 1967). However, this requirement to explain decisions and the obligation to act according to the interests of the citizens should not be equated with acting according to the decisions made by the people. In the party democracy model, presented by Bernard Manin (1997), political parties maintain independence from the represented. Party democracies are not based on a congruence between the preferences of the voters and the policies implemented. Instead, voters express their trust in political parties, which—after an election—have full discretion to implement policies. Thus, once in power, the parties are independent from the voters and the decisions of the elected are only constrained by party discipline (Manin, 1997).

Moreover, according to the conception of substantive representation, voters hold their representatives accountable by either re-electing them or by punishing them by voting for other candidates. Therefore, voting decisions are based on the previous behaviours of the representatives, on whether the people feel the elected representatives have represented them successfully or not (Pitkin, 1967). In the discourse of the organizations in this case study, it seems that accountability can only be assured through a constant relationship between the elected and the voters in the interim between elections. Given this, the time between elections is a very important time for voters to get to know representatives, to choose appropriate representatives, and to develop trust in their representatives. Nadia Urbinati (2006) states that election does not guarantee fair representation. Representation in its different forms during the governing term is much more related to deliberation than to the simple act of voting (Urbinati, 2006). Deliberative representation—representation undertaken in constant communication with the electorate—ensures that a link will develop between the people and the government; it also builds trust and allows the electorate to get to know the appropriate representatives. This deliberative side of representation acquires a specific form in the party democracy model, where most discussions take place within political parties (Manin, 1997); it seems that an additional place for communication, deliberation, and trust building is required for successful representation.

Furthermore, not only do the organizations studied suggest the need for a very communicative government, they also frame a better organized self-government as a necessary attribute of a highly-functioning democratic government. Self-government is a sphere of daily life which is close to the people. Movement TOGETHER even calls self-government "the natural right

of [the] people to create and manage their daily lives," (2013b). In this self-government sphere, decisions relevant to the people are made. In their analysed website text, the organizations framed a model self-government as one in which people can and should be consulted on relevant issues. This framing implies that the decision-making power should to be returned to the people. Self-government is presented as a means for providing the people with the power to make their own decisions on matters that are their own affairs. Even though governance by the political parties is highly resisted in the analysed populist discourse, the organizations in this case study do not object to representation in general. In fact, their websites reveal that they prefer representatives to the direct rule of the people, even in the sphere of self-governing. On their page, the United Democratic Movement writes, "The next step in strengthening real self-government is electing elders and local community councils directly from people living nearby" (Dzežulskis-Duonys, 2015b). Similar sentiments can be found on the List of Lithuania's page, " . . . to restore the first commercially autonomous self-government level in Lithuania as it is in Europe . . . the municipal council should be elected not according to party lists, but directly, in single-member constituencies," (The List of Lithuania, 2015).

The organizations' websites framed fair representation as representation offered by familiar, trustworthy representatives elected on the basis of their personal qualities. In this framing, trust in the government can be developed through voters getting to know their representatives as individuals. Moreover, according to the organizations' websites, representatives should identify with the people, not with a political party. In the organizations' discourse, it seems a person can be either from the people or be a member of a political party; belonging to both groups appears to be impossible. According to Bernard Manin (1997), the relationship between political parties and the electorate is based on trust and loyalty in party democracy. The principle of trust is maintained in the case study organizations' discourse, but trust is developed with familiar individuals instead of with political parties as collective organizations. While the government sphere is framed as being controlled by the political parties, the sphere of the self-government belongs to the people. Therefore, respected people should be elected as representatives not from party lists, but from single-member constituencies. As long as good representatives are framed as being from the people, democratic representation is more about seeing the people's own representatives in power than it is about opposing representation in general (Kaltwasser, 2013).

The demand to expand self-government is not unusual, especially regarding the context these organizations are emerging from. Each of the three researched organizations participated in municipal elections, which partially explains their common focus on self-governance; the debate on the character of local government has been stimulated by the introduction of direct mayoral elections in Lithuania. It is interesting, though, that these organizations frame self-government as something more substantial than simply expanding institutionalized participation in municipal government. Self-government is framed as a decision-making process that increases the people's responsibility not only for a particular district or a city, but for the whole country. For example, the United Democratic Movement writes, " . . . real, bottom-up, self-government . . . [the] voice of the common people would always be heard, and government would serve

the people, would be responsible and accountable for their promises to voters," (Zabielienė, 2015). This framing of self-government as a promotion of the people's responsibility for their country can also be read in Movement TOGETHERS words: "Only a citizens' self-government can create the political leaders who represent the interests of the people," (Urbšys, 2014). Finally, the List of Lithuania Party is even more explicit in this framing, stating, " . . . Lithuanian citizens would become the owners of their locality and their Homeland," (The List of Lithuania, 2012).

All three organizations share a belief that the people should not only be responsible for decision making, but should also be encouraged, supported, and nurtured. Self-government is framed as a sphere in which future national leaders should be nurtured and the power of the nation should be strengthened.

Given this, how do these organizations envision the role of representatives? The deliberative aspect of representation and of responding to the wishes of the constituency leads to a question, if representatives do not start manipulating their supporters and the people. Jane Mansbridge (2003) assesses democratic representation by the representatives' interactions with those they represent. Representatives, she argues, can either manipulate or educate their constituency. When representatives intend to deceive the constituency, they resort to manipulation. Representatives who opt to educate voters seek to make constituents' interests more understandable and visible (Mansbridge, 2003). Education, in this case, is framed not only as a means of revealing the true interests of the people, but also as a way to encourage constituents to take responsibility for their own governance; it also implies that representatives are responsible for making decisions in the peoples' interests as well. Even though the representatives make their decisions based on the preferences of the people, the constituency is also responsible for representatives' decisions.

To summarize, in the discourse of the organizations examined, self-government does not mean rejecting representation in general. The three organizations' websites frame self-government as a sphere that provides the people with the power to make decisions about their own affairs. Furthermore, the people in this self-government sphere can be educated to be responsible for themselves and for the whole country. While the organizations reject party representation, they frame successful representation as a trusting relationship between the people and the government. This relationship is supposed to be developed through constant communication and through the election of familiar individuals. These prognostic frames, indicating how representation should be organized, contradict several aspects of party democracy Bernard Manin presents (1997). The preferred organization of representation that the analysed websites frame is based on a trust between the people and known representatives who have emerged from the people. In the populist framework, as long as political parties are perceived as not of the people, they cannot be successful representatives and a relationship of trust cannot be developed between political parties and the people; in fact, it does not seem that trust can be established with any collective organization. In addition, when representation is framed as based on a representative engaging in constant communication and continually referencing the peoples' decisions, the independence of political parties in the party democracy cannot be maintained. Finally, the organizations, in their discourse, have required constant

communication and deliberation to ensure representatives' accountability to the people. This requirement, however, implies introducing additional places for deliberation (probably at the local self-government level) in addition to the political parties.

4.3. Motivational framing

Finally, the motivational framing in the three organizations' discourse evident on their respective websites was also analysed. All three framing tasks—diagnostic, prognostic and motivational—interconnect. Framing problems often goes hand-in-hand with framing solutions. Therefore, on their websites, the activists frame themselves as good representatives because they have diagnosed problems, suggested solutions, and are willing to take up the task of solving the indicated problems. In doing this, Movement TOGETHER announces, "Since its founding the movement declared the importance of returning governing power to the people," (Račkauskas, Navickas, 2015) Likewise, the List of Lithuania Party states, "In these elections the List of Lithuania Party offers a unique alternative to politics that are cynical and have lost moral sensitivity. Instead of rushing to govern, the party is trying to restore the power of the citizens," (Kuolys, 2012). Finally, the United Democratic Movement writes, "It is gratifying to still have civic-minded and unselfish people in Lithuania, who work for the benefit of society; it is a delight to interact and to share information with them," (Zabielienė, 2014).

The activists propose a twofold alternative: political and moral and their suggested reforms make them similar to anti-establishment reform parties (Hanley and Sikk, 2014), which ground their political platforms on newness and reforms. However, the researched organizations in Lithuania frame newness as a moral renewal—it does not imply that the entire political elite should be replaced by new and unknown actors. On the contrary, the activists express trust in the people they personally know, people with known personal characteristics and former activities are their proposed representatives. In the populist discourse analysed, being part of the people is what makes a particular actor a good representative; thus, to ensure adequate representation the activists intend to be a voice for the people and to maintain constant communication with the people.

In addition to these qualities, the organizations' websites revealed that being a former member of Lithuania's independence movement, *Sąjūdis,* is a very desirable, if not necessary, trait for a representative to have. Each organization touted a connection to *Sąjūdis*. The United Democratic Movement does so: " . . . is known as a very sensitive and responsible fighter of *Sąjūdis*," (Zabielienė, 2015) A reference to *Sąjūdis* can also be found on Movement TOGETHER's website: "I was [a member] of the initiative group [of Sąjūdis], a city council member of Sąjūdis, a chairman of organizational committee from the beginning," (Maskoliūnienė, 2015b). Finally, the List of Lithuania party also mentions *Sąjūdis* in endorsing a representative as, ". . . the son of a deportee, a man of the *Sąjūdis*, an underground *Sietynas* publisher, a Šėpa theatre creator, Citizens Charter unifier, an honest citizen, and an ironic analyst of the Lithuanian political spectacle," (Kuolys, 2012).

The moral alternative the three organizations suggest includes a turning back to the moral values of the Lithuanian independence movement *Sąjūdis.* This suggestion of a moral renewal

in the form of returning to the values of the *Sąjūdis* movement resembles what Paul Taggart termed "heartland," an idealized community populist actors refer to when they discuss the people and the morals they serve (2002). *Sąjūdis* was a time of moral politics in Lithuania's history, a time that represents a strong link between the people and their representatives. It is a time, when representation was implemented successfully. The organization's references to *Sąjūdis* are a call to return to idealism. By moving away from the pragmatic and cynical, these organizations suggest politics should be conducted by moral representatives with good characteristics, proven intentions, and positions grounded in the *Sąjūdis*. The organizations in this study interconnect the previous independence movement's idealistic and moral politics with an idea of the people as a unit. The rise of political parties since Lithuania's independence was restored seems to have brought pragmatism to politics and separated politicians from the people as a whole. The political parties, instead of being connected to the main principles of a party democracy, a plurality of interests, and political actors (Manin, 1997), are presented by the organizations in the case study as symbols of political decline in Lithuania. Therefore, these organizations suggest that the only trustworthy path is a return to the heartland.

CONCLUSIONS

Today's party democracy crisis coincides with the growth of populist democracy in the form of an emerging radical right in Western Europe and populist challengers of another kind in CEE. Since 2011, a wave of anti-establishment activism has appeared in Lithuania. Even though populist parties are not new to Lithuania's political arena, this recent swell of anti-establishment activism is much more focused on anti-party politics and the moral renewal of politics than Lithuania's previous populist actors. The ideas of populism—such as politics as an expression of the will of *the people* and of an antagonism between *the people* and the elite—leads to the question of whether populism and the party democracy model are compatible. On one hand, populism can be considered a pathology, or a dark side of democracy. On the other hand, populism can be perceived as a tool for improving democracy. This case study was conducted to shed new light on this sort of theoretical debate and to obtain needed empirical research on the perspectives of populist political actors. The study reveals how anti-establishment organizations in Lithuania understand representation. The study also identifies both the actors' populist discourse on problems with the party democracy model and the solutions they offer. The study applies framing analysis to focus on how the case study's selected organizations perceive and present political representation and whether their conceptions of representation actually contradict the principles of party democracy.

As far as the results are concerned, diagnostic framing expresses a populist perception of political parties as the embodiment of political power. The first frame defined political parties as a closed system of power. In the second frame, the case study organizations regard political parties as immoral and poorly behaved persons. In both frames, the organizations perceive political parties as a homogeneous unit, lacking differences between them. Analysis of the organizations websites has revealed a belief that, as long as the political parties do not pursue the general interest of the people as a whole, they are in opposition to the people.

The organizations frame political representation as dysfunctional because the political parties have seized decision-making power. The research reveals that the organizations analysed do not consider the logic of party discipline or internal decision-making processes democratic strengths. After analysing the organizations' discourse and applying the first two frames, it is clear that: 1) the organizations perceive political parties as a homogeneous unit lacking the internal differences necessary for the functioning of party democracy (Manin, 1997); and 2) the organizations believe political parties stand in a strict opposition to the people.

Prognostic framing revealed that the organizations believe the relationship between political actors and the people should be restored by changing the role of representatives. The decision-making power, these organizations argue, should belong to the people and representatives should serve the interests of the people. The organizations suggest that a link between the people and their representatives should be established through constant communication in order to allow the people to know and build trust in their representatives-to-be. Furthermore, the organizations suggest that this arrangement could be created through self-government—as long as political actors do not assume full responsibility as the people should be given the responsibility to make decisions regarding their own matters. The organizations studied write that the sphere of self-government is where political communication and deliberation should take place. As long as a democracy's main deliberations take place within political parties in a party democracy (Manin, 1997), additional deliberation forums at the local level would only supplement the party democracy model. The analysis of organizations' prognostic framing reveals that this deliberative aspect of representation might improve party democracy. Deliberation also involves educating the people to take up political responsibility. However, strong opposition to political parties suggests replacing them with individual representatives. When the representatives are from the people, mediation through ideas or other collective organizations becomes unnecessary. According to the organizations in this case study, only knowing and trusting—as well as controlling—a particular representative can guarantee fair representation and proper decision making. Such a perspective *does* contradict with the party democracy model and could only lead to local level governance when nation-wide ideas and ideologies (as well as national political parties) become unnecessary. It should be noted that this kind of discourse could be at least partially related to the debate surrounding the recent introduction of direct mayoral elections in Lithuania. Therefore, an analysis of populist discourse, regarding national elections in particular, requires further research.

Finally, motivational framing interrelates with the previous framing tasks: the activists present themselves as the ones to take up the responsibility of representation for the benefit of all. In addition, the organizations studied base the ability to be good representatives on positive individual characteristics and on participating in Lithuania's independence movement. Therefore, in the discourse of these organizations, *Sąjūdis* is cast in the role of a heartland (Taggart, 2002) and represents the ideal community that Lithuania should return to. This return to idealistic politics signalled by the groups' adoption of the values of Lithuania's former independence movement *Sąjūdis* implies a turning back to the redemptive side of democracy (Canovan, 1999). The role that the collective memory of a national independence movement plays in

anti-establishment activities in post-communist countries should be explored in future research.

The discourse of the researched organizations provides a complicated picture of populist ideas. While political parties are framed as closed and inaccessible, the activists suggest turning from pragmatic and well-institutionalized politics back to politics based on idealism—a redemptive side of the democracy. In addition, the political tools the organizations propose wielding, such as local level deliberation, could supplement party democracy. However, if political representation is understood as implemented by familiar individuals, and if mediation through ideas or other collective organizations is rejected, this could lead to setting aside party democracy and concentrating only on local level issues—the issues that really matter.

ANNEX

Source of data

Name of the organization	Website of organization	Time period covered by the articles	Last accessed on
Movement TOGETHER	www.judejimaskartu.lt/	11/2013 - 03/2015	15-01-2016
The List of Lithuania	http://lietuvossarasas.lt/	02/2012 - 03/2015	15-01-2016
United Democratic Movement	http://www.judejimas.eu/	02/2011 - 03/2015	15-01-2016

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