

Populism in South African Politics? An Analysis of  
the EFF Election Manifestos in 2014 and 2019

By

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## Declaration

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## Abstract

Following the end of apartheid and the establishment of democracy in the Republic of South Africa following the first democratic election in 1994, South Africa has been seen as “the miracle” of Africa (Booyesen, 2018). The effects of apartheid continue to be felt, with those who were previously marginalized during apartheid, seeing little to no improvement in their lives (Bhorat & Kanbur, 2015:4). The political landscape has been dominated since 1994, by the two main political parties, the African National Congress (ANC) and their opposition the Democratic Alliance (DA), with each party presenting their own policies for the betterment of the country and lives of the citizens (Southall, 2020). The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) were established as a result of a split within the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) and the expulsion of the ANCYL leader, Julius Malema, in 2013 (Feketha, 2020). The EFF has seen success, with an increase in their support from the first national election they competed in, in 2014, and the most recent national election in 2019 (IEC, 2019). The EFF have presented more radical policies and ideas, and are self-described as “...Marxist-Leninist...” and brands the party as “a radical and militant economic emancipation movement” (EFF, 2020). Their left-wing policies and ideology has seen them being labelled as populist, and it is this which forms the focal point of the study.

The study undertook to answer whether the EFF can be considered populist, and secondly, whether it has become more or less populist based on the rhetoric employed in their 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos. The study provided a review of the literature of populism in order to arrive at the definition of populism, but also various approaches to populism, the causes of populism and the threat of populism. Hawkins (2009) provided a framework which was used, alongside Thematic Analysis (TA), to provide the data which formed the basis of the analysis. The findings were analysed and interpreted in order to determine that the EFF can be considered populist, based on the rhetoric used in their 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos. In terms of whether the EFF have become more or less populist based on the rhetoric employed in their 2014 and 2019 manifesto, the conclusion which was reached was that the party had become more populist. The study had added to the literature regarding populism and given a different perspective to analysing populism in the context of South Africa.

## Opsomming

Na die val van apartheid en na die eerste ware demokratiese verkiesing in 1994 wat die era van demokrasie in Suid-Afrika ingelei het, is Suid-Afrika gesien as die “Wonderwerk” van Afrika (Booyesen, 2018). Die nagevolge van apartheid het egter voortgeduur en is nog steeds gevoel deur diegene wat onder apartheid gemarginaliseer was. Hierdie gemarginaliseerdes het geen of min verbetering in hulle lewenstyl en – wyses ervaar (Bhorat & Kanbur, 2015:4). Sedert 1994 is die politieke landskap oorheers deur twee groot politieke partye, naamlik die African National Congress (ANC) en die opposisie, die Demokratiese Alliansie (DA). Elkeen van hierdie partye het sy eie beleide voorgedou wat volgens hulle sou lei tot ’n meer welvarende land en ’n verhoging in die welvaart van Suid-Afrika en sy inwoners. (Southall, 2020). Die Ekonomiese Vryheidsvegters, beter bekend onder sy Engelse naam van die “Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)”, het ontstaan na ’n skeuring in die ANC Jeugliga en die uitsetting van die Jeugliga se leier op daardie tydstip, Julius Malema, in 2013. (Feketha, 2020). Die EFF het stewige vordering getoon met ’n toename in ondersteuning onder kiesers sedert hulle eerste deelname in die 1994 Nasionale Verkiesings tot en met die jongste Nasionale Verkiesings in 2019. (IEC, 2019). Die EFF se voorgestelde beleide en idees was meer radikaal van aard en is deur hulself beskryf as Marksisties-Leninisties en is die party voorgedou as ’n “radikale en militante ekonomiese bevrydings beweging”. Die EFF se linksgesinde beleide en ideologieë het die party gebrandmerk as populisties en hierdie aspek vorm die kern van hierdie studie.

Die doel van hierdie studie was primêr om te bepaal of die EFF wel as populisties beskou kan word en tweedens, of die EFF meer of minder populisties geword het, gebaseer op die retoriek verkondig in die EFF se 2014 en 2019 verkiesingsmanifeste. Die studie verskaf ’n hersiening oor literatuur met betrekking tot populisme, nie net ten einde ’n definisie van populisme daar te stel nie, maar ook om verskillende benaderings tot populisme uit te lig, die oorsake van populisme asook die gevare wat populisme inhou. Hawkins (2009) het ’n raamwerk daargestel wat, tesame met Tematiese Analise, gebruik was om die data te verskaf wat die basis van die analise gevorm het. Die bevindinge is geanaliseer en ge-interpreteer ten einde te bepaal of die EFF as populisties beskou kan word, gebaseer op die retoriek verkondig in die EFF se 2014 en 2019 verkiesingsmanifeste. In terme van die vraag of die EFF meer of minder populisties geword het, gebaseer op die retoriek verkondig in die EFF se 2014 en 2019 verkiesingsmanifeste, was die gevolgtrekking dat die party inderdaad meer populisties van aard geword het. Hierdie studie het bygedra tot ’n uitbreiding en verbreding van die beskikbare

literatuur oor populisme en verskaf ook 'n alternatiewe perspektief op die wyse waarop populisme geanaliseer kan word in 'n Suid-Afrikaanse konteks.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The 2019 national elections took place on May 8 across South Africa, making it the sixth national election since the end of apartheid and the start of the new democratic dispensation. The election results saw the African National Congress (ANC) winning 10,026,475 out of the 17,437,379 votes (IEC, 2019). Due to the number of votes cast, voting continues to be the single largest mass form of political participation in South Africa (Tracey, 2019:1).

Following pressure from the ANC, then president Jacob Zuma was forced to resign as president of South Africa on February 14th, 2018 (Burke, 2018), and was replaced by deputy president Cyril Ramaphosa, who would take up the mantle as president until the 2019 national elections. On May 25th, 2019, newly elected president of the ANC, Cyril Ramaphosa, was inaugurated as president of South Africa to much fanfare and spectacle (Retief & Mthethwa, 2019). The cabinet selected by President Ramaphosa reflected the ANC's power, as every position was filled by an ANC member, except for the role of minister of public works and infrastructure. This position was filled by Patricia De Lille, a former Democratic Alliance (DA) member, the former mayor of the City of Cape Town, and leader of the newly established GOOD Party (Nkanjeni, 2019).

South Africa has often been seen as “the miracle” of Africa due to the peaceful transition from the previous apartheid regime to the current democratic system and has continued to maintain free and fair democratic elections during its tenure (Booyesen, 2018). While history and most citizens applaud the ANC and Nelson Mandela for bringing about political freedom through the dismantling of the apartheid regime, it is those at the margins of society who have seen little to no improvement in their lives (Bhorat & Kanbur, 2015:4; StatsSA, 2017). These individuals are still poor, they are still unemployed, and they are still excluded. It is said that the more deprived an individual is, or perceives themselves to be, the greater their feelings of injustice and unfairness become (Langer & Smedts, 2013).

While there is a struggle to survive by millions of citizens, there continues to be a battle for seats in parliament and control over the various provinces continues, marred by the lack of growth and development in the socio-economic landscape (The World Bank, 2018). According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), the South African economy in 2018 experienced negative

growth of 2.7% in the first quarter and 0.5% in the second quarter. However, the second half of the year saw growth of 2.6% in the third quarter and 1.4% in the last quarter (StatsSA, 2019a). The year saw an overall growth of 0.4% growth. However, compared to 2017, this was a decline from the 1.4% GDP growth experienced (StatsSA, 2019a).

In 2019 South Africa had several periods of economic decline, with the first quarter showing a sharp 3.2% decline in GDP, and the third and fourth quarter also showing negative growth. Only the second quarter saw an increase in GDP, of 3.3%, however this was not enough for an overall economic decline (StatsSA, 2020). This negative economic growth has led to opposition parties highlighting the shortcomings of the ANC government's ability to manage economic policies and stimulate the economy. This negative growth was part of the background to the 2019 national elections, and while it did not result in the ANC losing overall, the governing party did lose votes compared to previous election results (IEC, 2019), pointing to citizens' discontent with the current situation. The 2019 elections were also characterized by the low voter turnout, which has been a continuing trend from its peak of 89% of all registered voters in 1999, down to 77% in 2004 and 2009, and then 73% in 2014 and at an all-time low of 66% in 2019 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2020:5).

The youth of South Africa are the future of the country, and while they have the freedoms of democracy that their parents and grandparents fought for, they are burdened with unemployment and inadequate education, the same conditions their parents and grandparents were burdened with (Booyesen, 2018). The current generation recognise their struggles and see the shortcomings and faults of the current government, seeing that their circumstances often mirror those of the previous generations, even though they live in a democracy (Booyesen, 2018). Furthermore, unemployment continued to be a stumbling block for the economy, with youth unemployment at 55.2% in the first quarter of 2019, a statistic which has continued to accentuate the fact that the youth are the most vulnerable in the South African labour market (StatsSA, 2019). The most shocking statistic of all is that approximately half (49.2%) of the adult population in South Africa are living below the upper-bound poverty line (UBPL), according to the data gathered for the 2014/2015 report, *Men, Women and Children: Findings of the Living Conditions Survey* (StatsSA, 2019).

Political parties in South Africa seem to convey the same message about non-racialism, economic growth, jobs and creating a better South Africa for all those that live in it. However,

in doing so, the ANC and DA have begun to offer similar solutions to the same issues such as poverty, unemployment, economic development, and transformation (Sarakinsky & Fakir, 2018). This has created a situation in which there is truly little to differentiate these two parties, besides the candidates that are seen on in the media (Sarakinsky & Fakir, 2018).

The DA is seen as the official opposition to the ANC (Southall, 2020), and the ANC has been able to maintain its majority largely due to the strength of its apartheid struggle credentials (Silke, 2006). While there are other political parties that contest national and local elections, such as the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), Freedom Front Plus (FFP) and Congress of the People (COPE), none of them can be seen as a viable competitor to the DA or the ANC due to the number of votes garnered (IEC, 2019). This, however, changed in 2013 with the expulsion of former ANC Youth League (ANCYL) president Julius Malema, who employed the lessons learnt from the ANCYL and formed his own party (Bernardo, 2021). The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is seen as a party which would represent the people and reel in the corruption that exists within the current system of governance (Feketha, 2020). The founding manifesto of the EFF outlines its ideological foundations as being Marxist-Leninist Fanonism, which guides their policy making, goals and aspirations of the party (EFF, 20). The founding manifesto also highlights the seven cardinal pillars of the party, which are: 1) land expropriation without compensation; 2) nationalisation of mines, banks and other strategic sectors of the economy, without compensation; 3) building state and government capacity in terms of the state's ability to provide more services without the need to rely on tenders; 4) governments provision of free quality education, healthcare, houses and sanitation; 5) reindustrialisation; the development of an African economy and a move away from reconciliation and towards justice for the continent; and lastly, 6) the establishment of a government which is open, accountable and free of corruption, and a society which does not fear being victimised by state agencies (EFF, 2013:8 EFF, 2014:5). These cardinal pillars are the main goals which are needed to be reached for the party to realise their ultimate goal of economic freedom and to address the long-lasting impact of apartheid.

## **1.2 Conceptual overview of populism**

Populism is the main concept which forms the basis of the study and will be discussed at length in the literature review. Democracy is intricately linked to populism in this instance, as the study seeks to not only discuss populism but also highlight the potential risk it poses to democracy, and in this case, the risk the EFF poses to democratic consolidation. In most cases,

populism seeks to replace the foundations or principles within the existing democratic system with the populist system which seeks a more direct form of governance. Thus it can be argued that a conflict exists between the pre-existing democratic system and the shortcomings of the system which have manifested and taken the form of a populist party that seeks to not only change but replace the existing system. The linkage of these two concepts is not only key to understanding what populism is but also how populism operates.

Despite the vast wealth of literature on populism there is still a lack of clear consensus on a widely accepted definition of populism, and thus it has instead become a catch-all term which dismisses the forms of politics which some scholars or members of society do not accept or fully understand (Mbeti, 2014:37). Obikili (2018:2) argues that the concept of populism is broad in nature, often entailing economic, social and political aspects, while also being defined from varying perspectives. Many political scholars who study populism agree that the basic definition of populism should include some mention of conflict, be it between good and evil, or the left and right, or between “the people” and “the elite” (Müller, 2016; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013; Moffitt & Tormey, 2014). The conflict which is most applicable to the study at hand would be a combination of economic conflict, since the EFF seeks to bring about economic change, and political conflict, given the nature of the EFF as being a Marxist-Leninist socialist party that seeks to replace the existing democratic system. Beyond conflict there needs to be a mention of a cohort, usually labelled as “the people” who are being overlooked or marginalised by the existing system of governance or ruling party, and then an identification of “the enemy” or rather those who are responsible for the issues that “the people” are currently facing (Müller, 2016; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013; Moffitt & Tormey, 2014).

The linkage between populism and democracy exists due to the manner in which democracy itself operates. Democracy is defined as being a “... system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives.” (Schmitter & Karl, 1991:4). Larry Diamond (2004) expanded this definition by identifying four key features which must be present: 1) A system of free and fair elections which allows for the choosing and replacing of government; 2) active participation of citizens in politics and in civic life; 3) the protection of rights of all citizens; and lastly, 4) the rule of law which applies the laws and procedures equally to all citizen. Democracy’s focus on representation means that the agenda of the

majority is usually pursued, and the minority would therefore fall by the wayside; however, that does not mean they are ignored entirely (Nwogu, 2015:133).

There are three types of democracy which can be discussed. Jean Jacques Rousseau introduced the concept of a direct democracy in which the citizens are the focus. He stated: “As soon as public services cease to be the main business of the citizens, and they prefer to serve with their pocketbooks [their wallet/purse], the state is already close to ruin” (Rousseau, 1762). Rousseau highlighted that when representatives are elected to make decisions for others, if those with large amounts of resources can influence proceedings, the state has been captured by the elite (Knutsen, 1994). Unless the citizens are actively and constantly engaged in the business of government, they will begin to be enslaved by the very same government they helped form (Ascher, 2015:68).

John Locke, John Mill and James Madison formed the representative/liberal form democracy, in which the citizens would elect leaders who would best represent their ideals, values and virtues (Ascher, 2015). This system of governance promotes the rights of the citizenry which were established and protected, and the rules of law established and obeyed, and leaders would be accountable to the citizens who elected them (Ascher, 2015). Representative/liberal democracy also allows the citizens to decide how much or how little government should be involved in the society, which would operate relatively autonomously, as their elected representatives were meant to act in the best interests of the public (Ascher, 2015).

The third major form of democracy was a pluralist democracy, which was established by Robert Dahl and Joseph Schumpeter, noting that within a democracy, elections are used to elect representatives, and these representatives are meant to represent the interests of the people, as with representative democracy. However, where pluralism diverges is that it recognises the cooperation that needs to occur between big business, the elites and government, in that big business and elites have the resources to influence political decisions and law-making in a bid to make sure the “system” is “working” for them, and that big business and the elites and big business have the “real” power within a political system, in terms of the decision-making process (Krouse, 1983).

If one looks at the South African context, while the ANC controls parliament because it occupies most of the seats, it does not mean that other parties do not have any power as they

also hold several seats which is proportional to the votes they have garnered. Populism, in the case of the EFF, sees the shortcomings of this system in that while most citizens have voted for the ANC, they have not seen a dramatic change in their lives.

### **1.3 Problem statement and research questions**

By looking at studies such as those conducted by Afrobarometer (Dryding, 2020) there has been a shift by citizens only requiring that their immediate demands be met and less focus on the system of governance in place. With the growing popularity and votes garnered by the EFF (IEC, 2019), one could view this increased support as a move away from the traditional democratic parties and towards parties which speak directly to the needs of “the people” rather than society.

Its growth in popularity emphasises the need to understand what type of political party the EFF is. Further, should the EFF be found to be a truly populist party, it should be investigated whether there is a threat to democratic consolidation, and the nature of that threat should be anticipated.

The study will be guided by the following overarching research questions:

- *Can the EFF be regarded as a populist political party based on the rhetoric employed in its electoral manifestos?*
- *Has the EFF become more populist based on the rhetoric employed in its 2014 and 2019 election manifestos?*

### **1.4 Research design and methodology**

This study will employ a case study design and qualitative desktop methodology in order to answer the research questions. First, the study will aim to determine whether the EFF is indeed a populist party, which will be determined based on the literature review of populism, as well as the framework provided by Hawkins (2009) which highlights the key areas that are identified in populist speech. This investigation into the determination of the party being populist or not will lead into the second part of the question, which seeks to determine whether the party has become populist based on its rhetoric employed in its 2014 and 2019 election manifestos. This will be conducted by using Hawkins (2009) framework and Thematic Analysis (TA) to compare and contrast the frequency of specific terms that will be highlighted in chapter three.

Hawkins 2009 framework was initially used to determine which kinds of language can be deemed populist in speeches, however for the purpose of this study, the framework will be adapted to apply it to the election manifestos of the EFF, and to categorise specific terms into the various themes which coincide with the criterion outlined by Hawkins. The analysis conducted on the results of the TA will indicate whether there has been an increase in these populist terms, as this would therefore translate directly into the party becoming populist. The research design and methodology shall be explained at greater depth in chapter three.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study seeks to look at populism and specifically the EFF in this context, and the risk it poses to democracies which are still being consolidated, such as that of South Africa which has had a democratic system of governance in place only since 1994. With this potential risk posed by the EFF, the significance of the study is that it is pivotal to understand what a populist party is, the risk it poses to democracy and how to identify it based on the Hawkins (2009) framework. Furthermore, with the success that the EFF has enjoyed, it is plausible that other populist parties could begin to be established, which could further divide the citizens due to the conflict that is often associated with it (Westheuser, 2020).

The rationale for this study is rooted in the current political events unfolding in South Africa in terms of the growing support for the EFF and the establishment of more extreme parties such as Black First Land First (BFLF). The BFLF only allows for black individuals to join it. (Grobler & Madia, 2019). The importance of the study hinges on the notion that if one can identify whether a party is populist or not, it allows one to understand the motives and policies of the party. By being able to understand populist rhetoric and being able to identify populist rhetoric, it also allows one to not only identify populist rhetoric in populist parties, but also populist rhetoric in more mainstream parties. The danger populist parties and leaders pose to democracy can be highlighted in their view of formal democratic institutions as being the creation of the corrupt ruling elites, and thus populist parties and leaders seek to effectively infiltrate and dismantle the system from within (De Witte, 2020). These parties and leaders can replace those key members within democratic institutions who the populists have painted as being corrupt in a bid to discredit them, with individuals who the party portray as serving “the people” (De Witte, 2020). Populist parties are also more likely to hold onto power once they have won an election, with studies indicating that these parties not only win one or two re-elections but can often be in power for over a decade (Mounk & Kyle, 2018). Holding onto

power, however, is not as damaging as the abuse of this power. Populist parties are prone to changing laws and implementing new ones which change the political landscape and could lead to democratic deconsolidation. This is because those in power remain in power through changes to the constitution which previously limited their terms and the extent of their power (Mounk & Kyle, 2018). Whilst populists often campaign on the ticket of rooting out corruption, the reality is that in most cases, populist parties have deepened the rot of corruption and kickstart the deconsolidation of some democracies (Mounk & Kyle, 2018).

This study would be important to not only academia, but also members of society such as political analysts, and foreign investors, as understanding the context of the EFF reduces the risk of the unknown. This is based on the logic that by understanding what type of party the EFF is, one can understand its rationale and motives. This also applies to other political parties, as they can understand the EFF and its support base and attempt to capture its cohort by employing similar policies without the combative rhetoric associated with populism.

The benefits derived from this study will, first, add to the existing body of literature regarding populism and the EFF, and second, will provide a unique viewpoint and application of TA in the case of populism. The potential effects of not conducting this study could be that, due to the potential risk of populism, the lack of identification and understanding of populism could lead to a failure to identify populist parties and populist rhetoric. The risk of not understanding populism could lead to a situation in which a populist party is overlooked and the potential risk the party poses to the existing system of governance goes unchecked.

## **1.6 Outline of the study**

Chapter two will take the form of a literature review. The chapter will delve into the literature surrounding populism to understand what populism is, the way it operates and how it can be viewed. The literature review will include the definition of populism which will be used throughout this study.

Chapter three seeks to provide an overview of the research design and methodology. This chapter will include an overview of the case study design, qualitative thematic analysis methodology with the use of Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS).

Chapter four will include the presentation of the data and subsequent analysis to answer the two parts of the research question of the study. This chapter will provide an in-depth overview of the election manifestos of the EFF and then apply the criteria for determining whether political parties can be deemed populist or not.

Chapter five will be the final chapter that will bring the study to its conclusion. This chapter will provide a summary of the main findings, the implications of these findings and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON POPULISM**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In recent events that have unfolded around the world there has been growing support for more right-wing parties and individuals. Right-wing individuals have pitched themselves as being representative of “the people”, being unhappy with the current state of affairs and problems that have been a result of ineffective leadership (Kyle & Gultchin, 2018). Between 1990 and 2018, the number of populist leaders has increased significantly, from four to 20, and populism is gaining traction in more established Western democracies (Kyle & Gultchin, 2018:4). The most prominent of these populist leaders to emerge was Donald J Trump who won the US election in 2016. This election was marred by controversy as a candidate who was described as a misogynist, a racist and having no political experience won against a far more experienced politician and former secretary of state, Hillary Clinton (Ladkin, 2017:3).

The primary focus of this study is on understanding populism. The analysis will include an overview of the features of populism, populist ideology, and populist rhetoric by means of a review of these concepts in academic literature, as well as an application of these concepts to the election manifestos of a political party to determine the extent to which the political party can be considered “populist”.

This chapter will provide a review of the literature on populism, which includes the development and definition of the concept, the various approaches to populism, and the possible causes of populism. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the threat that populism poses to democracy.

### **2.2 Defining populism**

Populism is often used as a convenient catch-all concept to dismiss the forms of politics which some scholars or members of society do not accept or fully understand (Mbete, 2014:37). This is partly the reason why the concept of populism has such a negative connotation associated with it. This is due to the various forms which populism can take, be it an individual or party claiming to be representative of the people. However, it can also be utterances or statements made by existing political parties surrounding an issue, and even be a policy which a lobby group aims to present to government. This lack of clear understanding results in individuals casting these misunderstood or unconventional politics as being populist (Mbete, 2014:37).

Despite the vast wealth of literature on the concept, there is no clear consensus on a widely accepted definition of populism. Many of the prolific scholars that study populism agree that the basic definition of populism should include some mention of conflict (be it between good and evil, Left and Right, or “the people” and “the elites”) and a notion of cohort (“the people”) who are being represented by the party (Müller, 2016; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013; Moffitt & Tormey, 2014). Obikili (2018:2) argues that the concept of populism is broad in nature, often entailing economic, social and political aspects, while also being defined from varying perspectives. Furthermore, the nature of populism itself is dependent upon the context in which it manifests and the issues on which it is centred. This definition highlights the multifaceted reality of how populism operates. Most definitions of populism have either attempted to include all these facets, or some facets deemed more important than others.

Ionescu and Gellner (1969) point out that populist parties operate in a manner which sees “the people” worship the populist party, or the leaders of these parties, and thus populism carries a social aspect which manifests itself in a quasi-personality cult that relies on charismatic leadership to garner support. This notion sheds light on the most intrinsic aspect of populism, in that there is a clear conflict between two sides, and that there is a clear focus on a cohort whose views are being expressed or grievances raised, and this cohort is seen as “the people”. Canovan (1999:3) acknowledges that populism can be understood as an appeal to “the people” against the established structures of power in the system, as well as the dominant values and values which have also been established in society. This understanding again highlights the notion of “the people” in conflict with the pre-existing system and those who hold power, as well as the norms that have been established because of those in power. Conflict and populism can be seen to go hand in hand, as there is an aim to rebel against the “establishment” and for the dismantling of the existing power structures, the rejection of their ideas and values, and for a path towards more direct political discourse between “the people” and their representatives (De Raadt, Hollanders & Krouwel. 2004:1).

Cas Mudde, one of the most prolific contributors in the field of populism, defines populism as: “A thin centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous 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, 2004:543). This definition makes clear reference to the notion of “the people” which is in opposition to the “corrupt elite”, which frames populism as being a conflict between the elite

and those who are excluded from this group. Furthermore, Mudde puts forward in his definition of populism that “politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* of the people” (2004:543), pointing out the disconnect between the representatives and “the people”, and the need for more direct discourse. According to Mudde (2004:542), most definitions of populism include some notion of “the people” and “the elite”, and therefore these two points are the most important points when defining populism.

Laclau, another prolific contributor to the field of populism, views populism as being a framework, which he presented in his seminal work, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*. Laclau’s (1977:24) theory of populism views articulation as a generalised process of interpellation, meaning that the process of putting ideas and feelings into words and that the ideas and identity are presented to the individual or rather the collective group.

Weyland (2001:14) defines populism as “a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalised support from large numbers of mostly unorganised followers.” This definition equates populism with a strategy or a form of organisation. In addition, Collier (2001:11814) identifies various traits that are often identified with populism, including:

The mobilisation of people, usually with strong ties to the local community; a support base constructed through rhetoric that promotes the identity as of the “people”. This group is juxtaposed against a vague, and adversarial “other” group. This “other” group usually pertains to elite, foreign, and minority groups which are framed as conspiratorial and corrupt; a particular leadership style that is characterised as strong, charismatic, and personalised rhetoric that is anti-intellectual in contrast to analytical and explanatory oration; and lastly, an economic model that emphasises growth-and-demand side stimulation while deriding fiscal and market constraints, usually in the form of state intervention.

Taggart (2004:1) suggested that populism suffers from “conceptual slipperiness”, in that there is a degree of ambiguity when defining the concept due to not only the different ways in which populism manifests itself, but also the various contextual variations which are present, an observation which is supported by Priester (2007) and Wirth *et al.* (2016:7). Canovan (1999:3) argued that certain types of political actions and occurrences can be easily categorised as populism, however there is much less understanding and consensus as to what makes a political

party populist. The reality is that there is a general notion of who to call a populist, but there is less clarity regarding what deems them to be a populist, creating a paradox. Another issue which occurs in the political arena, is that while political parties may define themselves as being liberalists, socialist or communists, there are no parties which explicitly refer to themselves as being populist. Thus, there is a lack of self-identification, which could be attributed to the negative connotation attributed to the term populist.

Wirth *et al.* (2016) provided a model through which populism can be understood and defined. They viewed populism as being a relational concept, meaning that the understanding of the concept is based on the relations it has with the other concepts involved, and with the case of populism, the concepts involved are 1) sovereignty of the people; 2) the people; 3) the elite; 4) the populist actor, and lastly, 5) the dangerous others (Wirth *et al.*, 2016:8-14). Wirth *et al.* (2016:8) describe the relational network of populism as follows: *“Sovereignty of the people is located at the centre of the network, as it is understood as the major motive of all other elements involved in the network. Accordingly, the remaining elements, the people, the elite, the populist and the others are arranged in a loose triangle around sovereignty, with each having a unique position toward the centre and special relations with one another.”*

This understanding of populism viewed “the people” as those who possess the right to sovereignty, and that “the elite” and/or “the others” are those who deny them this right, and that the populist party or leader is the one who is there to become the vanguard of “the people” and restore this right (Abts & Rummens, 2007:408). This conflict between “the people” and “the elite” is evident and that there is a clear negative and distant relationship with “the elite” and inversely, a positive and close relationship with “the people” (Wirth *et al.*, 2016:8).

Wirth *et al.* (2016:9) placed emphasis on the definition of populism by Mudde (2004) of populism being a thin centred ideology and pays greater attention to the details of what differentiates various populist movements. This preference for using the thin ideology approach is shared by Kaltwischer (2012) as she denoted that by defining populism as a thin ideology, this becomes a common denominator shared by all the other various manifestations of populism, being left-wing or right-wing, and as such, populism is therefore able to be combined with other ideologies such as socialism. In saying this, populism can also be seen as a “thick” ideology, in that it defines who is included or excluded from the relational groups (Wirth *et al.*, 2016:9). Left-wing populism, for example, would define “the people” as an

economic class who are in opposition to the economic elite, while right-wing populism would define “the people” as a shared culture or ethnicity and them being in opposition to a cultural and political elite (Wirth *et al.*, 2016:9).

Based on the definitions provided of populism, one can see several key concepts are integral to understanding populism, and these concepts will be discussed further. These concepts are: 1) sovereignty of the people; 2) the people; 3) the elite; 4) the populist actor; and lastly 5) the others. Each of these five traits and the various authors who have mentioned and discussed the concepts in relation to populism will be discussed in depth below.

### **2.2.1 Sovereignty of the people**

Sovereignty has a key role in any conceptualisation of democracy, and populism is at the core of sovereignty. The rule of the people is the central motivator of populism, which regards representative democracies as limiting the ability of “the people” to rule (Wirth *et al.*, 2016:9). Abts and Rummens (2007:406) highlighted the demand for power of “the people” to be unrestricted in their ability to wield and use their power to rule, as being the key differentiator of populism’s notion of democracy. Populism thus sees the locus of power residing in the people themselves. The constitutional notion of democracy sees the locus as an “empty place”, and liberal notions of democracy view the locus of power as being “replaced by a totally anonymous rule of law” (Abts & Rummens, 2007:406). Populists are of the opinion that “the people” have an indisputable right to constitute power and that all politics should “be based on the immediate expression of the general will of the people” (Abts & Rummens, 2007:408). Populist leaders view themselves as being the only individuals capable of restoring the sovereignty of the people and must do so by replacing the elite and all other forms of representation and intermediary institutions (Abts & Rummens, 2007:408). Populists thus favour direct forms of democracy as it is in this form that “the people” are able to have their sovereignty restored, extended and exerted in the most uninhibited manner (Wirth *et al.*, 2016:9).

### **2.2.2 The people**

The people have been identified by various scholars, including Mudde (2004), as being the most central and key concept when defining populism, and it is “the people” who are the ones who hold the right to sovereignty (Wirth *et al.*, 2016:10). Jagers and Walgrave (2007:322) emphasise this point by stating that “populism always refers to the people and justifies its

actions by appealing to and identifying with the people. As stated previously, sovereignty is located at the core of the relational network and thus “the people” are seen to always hold the power of sovereignty, and as such, populism seeks to appeal to “the people” as being the democratic sovereign (Canovan, 1999:4).

“The people” are often referred to as being a homogenous group or monolithic group which share a specific set of values, are inherently good and share a social unity or belong to a community (Wirth *et al.*, 2016:10). Taggart (2009:93) put forth the notion that “the people” are seen to act along the lines of a shared common sense and can be viewed as a silent majority. Mudde (2004:546), however, contrasts this and stated that “[the people are] neither real nor all-inclusive but are in fact a mythical and constructed subset of the whole population”. This argument of the conceptualisation of “the people” is based on Taggart’s introduction of the concept of the “heartland”. Taggart (2000:95) described “the heartland” as being imagined by individuals of a territory that “is different from ideal societies or utopias because it sees populists casting their imaginative glances backwards in an attempt to construct what has been lost by the present”. This imaginative “heartland” allows populists to use it as a tool to invoke a false sense of commonality, a communal feeling and a sense of belonging with their subset, thus establishing “the people”.

It is evident that there is a need for a thin ideology when it comes to populism as this allows populists to adapt to their specific environment and the context that best suits their aims and agenda. Similarly, the notion of “the people” can vary in meaning depending on the circumstances. There are three different conceptualisations of “the people” which can be identified. The first is based on viewing “the people” through a political lens and describing “the people as sovereign” (Kriesi, 2013:3), or as a “united people” (Canovan, 1999:5). Kriesi (2013:3) acknowledged that “[the] distinguishing feature of the people as a sovereign is the people as the demos”, which includes all “the people” in the nation and goes against fragmentation.

The second conceptualisation of “the people” is by looking at them through a cultural lens, whereby “the people” are viewed as “a nation” (Kriesi, 2013:3) or as “our people” (Canovan, 1999:5) which seeks to distinguish between those who are part of “the people” based on ethnic or culture. “The people” in this conceptualisation are viewed as those who are belonging to “the ethnos” (Kriesi, 2013:3). Populism thus has a more exclusionary agenda in that it seeks to

marginalise those who do not belong to the national community, who can include immigrants, foreigners and even other minorities from the same country or region (Wirth *et al.*, 2016:11).

The third conceptualisation views “the people” from an economic perspective. This perspective views “the people” as being a “class” and differentiates between “the ‘big shots’...and the ‘little guys’” (Kriesi, 2013:4), or between the “ordinary people” and the privileged, educated elite (Canovan, 1999:5). This perspective casts “the people” as being oppressed and exploited by the elite who “fill their pockets with undeserved bonuses” (Kriesi, 2013:4). It is this last conceptualisation of “the people” which most correlates with the focus of this study, as within the context of South Africa, the EFF employs a left-wing Marxist-Leninist agenda which directly views society, and “the people”, as a struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and it is the populists who are there to act as a vanguard of “the people” and restore their dignity and free them from the chains of capitalism.

### **2.2.3 The elite**

The relational network puts “the people” in direct opposition to the “elite” (Mudde, 2004:543), indicating an antagonistic relationship between these two concepts but also groups of citizens. Some authors, such as Panizza (2004) and Stanley (2008), denoted that this antagonistic relationship is the core component of populism. Mudde (2004:544) viewed this antagonistic relationship as being so enduring and robust that it can be described as Manichean, whereby everything is viewed as being either good or evil. This outlook therefore casts “the people” and the “elite” as coming from two opposites, with “the elite” viewed as evil and “the people” as good, and this conflict can lead toward the notion that the “elite” are viewed as “the enemies of the people” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008:5). The types of “elite” being identified and targeted by populists change depending on the context, and thus the “elite” are not a homogenous group, unlike “the people”, since they can be singled out but also be cast as part of the group (Wirth *et al.* 2016:11; Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008:5).

The types of “elite” can include the political (those who form part of the government or the general political establishment), economic, cultural (the media mainly), intellectuals, or those who are part of the legislature (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007:324). All these targets have a negative connotation associated with them, without exception, and they are viewed as being corrupt; exploitative; anti-popular; immoral; selfish; evil; conspiring; arrogant; unaccountable; and incompetent (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Jansen, 2011; Hawkins, 2009; Rooduijn, 2013:6;

Mény & Surel, 2002:9). The objective is to disassociate “the elite” from “the people”, with the “elite” being appointed as the “nemesis” of the people because the “elite” are portrayed as being iniquitous and non-sensible, with their identity being just as homogenous as “the people” (Mudde, 2004:543-544; March, 2012:84; Stanley, 2008:102). This duality of the “elite” being both homogenous and non-homogenous adds to the ever-changing and thin centred ideology of populism. The lack of continuity allows for the identification of “the elite” to be more dynamic, allowing it to adapt to the situation in that, where it is more beneficial for “the elite” to be cast as a homogenous group, it can be done accordingly, and vice-versa.

With “the elite” being vilified, being accused of betraying “the people”, of wielding unwarranted control over the rights, wellbeing and progress of “the people”, it clear that populism holds this conflict as being the key to their success (Jansen, 2011:84). Albertazzi and McDonnell (2008:4) highlighted that populists place the blame on “the elite” for the current situation that “the people” are faced with, and that this is further evidence that they [the elite] are “unable to deliver on the promises they have given” (Mény & Surel, 2002:9).

March (2012) indicates that, according to populist logic and agenda, “the elite” only understand and represent themselves and have no understanding or comprehension of the interests of “the people”. This presents both a conflict between the two, but also a disconnect and feelings of marginalisation of “the people” by “the elite”. “The elite” are seen to have abused their power that was bestowed upon them by “the people”, and now the corrupt “elite” have corrupted democracy and exploited it, leading to it being hollowed out (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008:4; Betz & Johnson, 2004:313). This has led to, from the viewpoint of the populists, “the people” losing their control over their sovereignty as a result of the “evil machinations” (Rensmann, 2006:64).

The relationship between “the people” and “the elite” is the good “people” finding themselves in a helpless situation, with the evil “elites” ruling and looking after their own interests, all at the expense of the helpless “people” (Wirth *et al.* 2016:12). “The elite” can be seen to be the evil, the Manicheans, those who are exploiting, ones who are at fault and have created the current situation that faces “the people”, who are good, virtuous and helpless to change the current status quo as they have had their “power” stolen from them by the ruling “elite”, and their sovereignty has become nothing more than a fleeting light in the darkness.

#### 2.2.4 The populist actor

The populist actor can take the form of a populist leader or party that seeks to act as the vanguard of “the people”, is critical of “the elite” for obstructing the centrality of “the people” (Rooduijn, 2013:102), and endeavours to restore their power and voice (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008:4). The populist actor can be described as a movement, a party, or as a single person, being the charismatic leader (Kriesi, 2013; Mudde, 2004) at the centre of the existence and success of a populist movement (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Canovan, 1999; Decker, 2006). Other scholars view the populist leader as being one facet of populism, however not necessarily or inherently the most key component (Hartleb, 2014; March, 2012; Mudde, 2004). The charismatic or “personalistic” (Barr, 2009:40; Weyland, 2001:5) leaders are seen to be outspoken individuals who are often outsiders to the political system (Kriesi, 2013:7). These leaders are seen as the embodiment of the “people’s will” (Barr, 2009:40) and act as the advocate of “the people” (Hartleb, 2014:52). Canovan (1999:6) argues that charismatic leaders aim to disseminate a “populist mood”, which is seen to be an “extra emotional ingredient” that separates populist politics from the traditional politics and transforms the populist campaign into a campaign to restore the voice and power of the people and ultimately, save the country (Wirth *et al.* 2016:13).

Canovan (1999:6) argues that the populist actor dismisses the non-transparency and complexity of backroom deals, complicated established procedures, coalition-building or certain technicalities that only so-called “experts” understand. They prefer unmediated, transparent, simple and direct links between “the people” and their government, and thus lean towards direct democracy in which leaders are directly elected and the powers of parliament and other democratically established institutions are reduced (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008:5; March, 2012:11). The notions of constitutionalism and representation are rejected by populists (March, 2012:11), as well as all other democratic institutions or procedures which may “impede the direct and full expression of the people’s voice” (Mény & Surel, 2002:9). The very notion of the traditional established parties is rejected by populists, as they view them as being the “corrupt link between leaders and supporters, [which] create artificial divisions within the homogenous people and put their own interests above the those of the people” (Mudde, 2004:546). Populists view themselves as being one with “the people” and instinctively know the struggles and needs of “the people” (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008:6), that they are the embodiment of the needs of “the people” (Kriesi, 2013:7), and that they are guided by common sense, the shared common sense of “the people” (March, 2012:8). Populists regard themselves

are being the mouthpiece of “the people” and fight for the ideal of popular sovereignty (Mény & Surel, 2002; Rooduijn, 2013).

### **2.2.5 The others**

The “dangerous others” as coined by Rooduijn (2013:7) are also seen to be excluded from “the [good] people”, and are cast as being in opposition to them. Whereas the danger is traditionally seen as coming from above in the hierarchy, the “dangerous others” are seen as a threat that originates from within “the people” (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007:324). “The elites” are seen to be *above* “the people”, while the “dangerous others” are *below* “the people”, which implies that the “dangerous others” are rejected by “the people” (Wirth *et al.* 2016:13). Populists can target various segments of society, and as such immigrants, people of other races, criminals, profiteers, perverts, religious and other minorities can be viewed as a threat to the purity of “the people” (Betz & Johnson, 2004:313; Rooduijn, 2013:7; Abts & Rumments, 2007:418). With these groups of society excluded and side-lined for being the bad segment, populists preserve the innocence and purity of “the good people” (Abts & Rummens, 2007:418). While the “dangerous others” are not seen as being part of “the people”, they are also not viewed as being part of “the elite”. Rather, they are given preferential treatment by “the elite” and are seen to possibly even conspire with “the elite” against “the people” (Wirth *et al.* 2016, 13). The “dangerous others” are viewed as being both a threat to “the people” while also being a burden to society (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007:324). This exclusionary tactic is more prevalent in right-wing populism as left-wing populism tends to adopt a more inclusionary approach to portray themselves the true vanguards of the marginalised and forgotten people.

## **2.3 Approaches to the study of populism**

Now that a definition has been defined and established, it is useful to understand the way in which populism operates and functions. There are various approaches to understanding the functions of populism, which will be discussed below.

### **2.3.1 Populism as a political style**

Moffitt and Tormey (2014:386) provide the perspective of populism as a “political style”, in which the focus is on the performance of politics and the way it shapes political relations. The current political landscape is highly mediated and stylised, and as such the aesthetic and performative features of politics have become particularly, and increasingly, important and can dictate the performance of the party in election but also general support (Moffitt and Tormey,

2014:388). Max Weber (1978) placed great emphasis on the charismatic leader, and Resnick (2014) aligns this notion with populism and argues that a charismatic leader is of great importance to the core of the party, becoming a sort of coherent force that holds the party together. The party is, however, likely to represent the agenda of the leadership rather than basing its agenda on a particular ideology or mandate (Resnick, 2014:39).

Taggart (2000) argues that populist style can often be misconstrued as a style which simply aims to be popular and to appeal to a wide range of people. This can result in confusion arising with a populist party being associated with another party which is more moderate in its approach as it also aims to appeal to most people to garner the greatest number of votes, rather than representing a specific group and their view and grievances as being the main focus of the party which is thus populist (Taggart, 2000).

Mudde (2004:542) suggests that populism emphasises political opportunism in that the policies which the party or person aim to implement are designed in such a manner that they produce an outcome which can quickly please voters or “the people”, while forgoing any sort of regard for the long-term effects of those policies. Populist parties or populist leaders therefore seek short-term policies that allow for immediate gratification for their constituency as the policies are based on the immediate and surface-level issues, rather than tackling deep-rooted issues and policies which have long-term ambitions. Favouring short term over long term is indicative of the somewhat reactionary style of populism.

Moffitt and Tormey (2014) developed a model of populism which is comprised of three main elements: 1) appeal to “the people”; 2) crisis, breakdown, and threat; and 3) bad manners.

### **2.3.1.1 Appeal to ‘the people’**

First, populism and populist parties separate themselves from other mainstream forms of politics and political parties by focusing on declaring “the people” as the “true holders of sovereignty” and cast “the elite” as being exploitative and/or corrupt (Mbete, 2014:38). “The elite” are framed as being a reason behind some of the crisis and breakdown which has occurred in society, the exploitation and marginalisation of “the people”, or the poor start of governance which has left those at the fringes to lack basic government services (Mbete, 2014:38). Moffitt and Tormey (2014) emphasise the importance that populist parties place on separating themselves from “the elites” and those in power, using popular or non-intellectual language, as

well as gestures and fashion which immediately creates a distinction between the populist party and the rest of the established political parties (Mbete, 2014:38). Hugo Chavez, for example, was the leader of Venezuela from 1998 until his death in 2013 and a populist figure who used his charismatic rhetoric to frame himself as being one of “the people” (Hawkins, 2003). Chavez blamed the “elite” for the economic woes that “the people” faced, thereby capitalizing on the growing inequality to mobilize support for his presidential campaign (Hawkins, 2003). Chavez based his campaign on ending corruption and poverty and bringing an end to the existing two-party system. In other words, he aimed to dismantle the existing political system and implement one which would benefit “the people”, even if it meant changing the laws so he could hold onto power for longer (Hawkins, 2003).

### **2.3.1.2 Crisis, breakdown and threat**

Second, one of the core driving forces of populism often stems from the perception of a crisis coming to fruition, a breakdown in government, or a threat to “the people” (Mbete, 2014:38). These concepts can also attribute themselves to the deconsolidation of relations between citizens and their representatives, as well as economic hardships or social developments, all of which can reinforce the perceptions presented by the populist parties (Mbete, 2014:38). Moffitt and Tormey (2014:392) argue that “the effect of the evocation of emergency in this fashion is to simplify radically the terms and the terrain of political debate which is reflected in the tendency towards simple and direct language”. By framing certain incidents as emergencies or crises allows for the plea to be made that immediate and decisive action should be taken to tackle the problem, rather than the technical and sluggish process of action taken by the government in place (Mbete, 2014:38). Populists thrive on this sense of emergency and crisis and can capitalise on these incidents in that they highlight the crisis and action that should be taking place, and thus give their party greater legitimacy in that they are looking after “the people”. An example of this can be the EFF’s protests against H&M clothing stores’ advertisement which was viewed as racist by some South Africans (Makhoba, 2018). More recently, there were protests in response to a Clicks shampoo advertisement which was also viewed as racist (Planting, 2020). In both instances, dramatic and violent protest action had taken place against these companies, which resulted in the advertisements being removed and apologies being issued.

### **2.3.1.3 Bad manners**

Third, much of the appeal of populist parties stems from their lack of regard for the “appropriate” ways of acting in the political realm. Coupled with their lack of regard for the establishment, they can promote themselves as the practitioners of low politics of “the people” in contrast to the high politics of “the elite” (Moffit & Tormey, 2014:392). By rebelling against the rules and conventions of traditional politics and the established institutions through which politics can be conducted and mediated, populists are able to separate themselves from the political elite as they are unwilling to operate according to the same set of rules and abide by the same set of norms (Mbeti, 2014:39). This dissociation with traditional politics provides the populist party with a sense of legitimacy as it can clearly convey the message that it is unwilling to partake in the current dogmatic political arena as it deems the current system to have failed “the people” and the populist doctrine and style of politics will be able to rectify the current situation. A contemporary example of this would be with the EFF’s conduct in the South African parliamentary proceedings ever since they have held seats in parliament. This includes the party’s signature red overalls and domestic worker outfits to their outbursts demanding that Jacob Zuma must “...pay back the money...” (Makinana, 2016; Shamase, 2015).

### **2.3.2 Populism as an ideology**

Ideology is defined as being “a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organised political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power” (Heywood, 2017:10). Heywood (2017:10) further states that ideologies contain three specific features: “a) [they] offer an account of the existing order, usually in the form of a “worldview”; b) [they] advance a model of a desired future, a vision of the “good society”; c) [they] explain how political change can and should be brought about – how to get from (a) to (b).”. This definition presents ideology as a concept about the present order, the ideal-typical situation, and the ways and approach which can be taken to move from the current situation towards ideal/desired situation (Vollgraaff, 2018:23).

The ideology approach to populism was developed in the seminal work by Mudde (2004). This approach focused on the consideration of society to be separated in two groups, “the people” and “the elite”. Mudde (2004) and Canovan (2002) have, however, highlighted that due to its limited complexity, scope and ambitions, populism can be considered a thin-centred ideology. This lack of clearly defined ideology is shared by Aslanidis (2016:89) who argues that understanding populism as an ideology is problematic when taking a closer look at what

constitutes an ideology, and it is apparent that populism lacks one of the most crucial features of a political ideology: coherence. This lack of substance and foundation has been highlighted by other scholars as being one of its strengths, in that populism is able to adapt to the context or rather environment which it is operating in, therefore being able to shape itself in accordance with what will best suit the given problems or crisis being faced in society at that point in time (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2013; Taggart, 2004).

The reality is that populism has always been associated with an ideology in an almost reactionary manner, and that this approach should be contested (Aslanidis, 2016:90). The concern is that conceptualising populism as an ideology would lead to a sense of legitimacy and normalcy being granted to the operation of populism within the political system, and in doing so, would detract from the uniqueness of this type of politics in the political system.

### **2.3.3 Populism as policy**

Acemoglu *et al.* (2013: 77) agree that populism requires a charismatic mode of linkage between voters and politicians, and the populist version of democratic discourse places great significance on the “struggle between those seen as ‘the pure people’ and ‘the corrupt elite’”. There also exists a popular will, while also undertaking the implementation of policies which are supported by key groups or factions of society, who support the populist party, and result in the economic degradation of the economic interests of the rest of society (Acemoglu *et al.* 2013:77). Dornbusch and Edwards (1991) view populism along the lines of having distinct economic aspirations and goals, which are often realised as redistributive programmes, as well as policies which aim to restore balance to the pre-existing unequal distribution of wealth, all which targets “the elite” and aiming to help “the people”, while the reality is that those at the bottom are also negatively affected (Acemoglu *et al.*, 2013:82).

Scholars such as Hawkins (2009) and Mudde & Kaltwasser (2013) acknowledge, however, that not all populist parties aim to implement leftist policies and programmes, as there are populist parties which sit on the right of the political spectrum and aim to implement policies and programmes which aim to reduce taxes, for instance, or to make changes to immigration policy which might place limitations, which is not only not an economic policy but also falls under nationalist and right-wing agendas. An example of this right-wing populist policy would include many policies introduced by former US President Donald J Trump, such as the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act aimed at reducing corporate and personal tax, but which was widely

criticised for only benefitting big business and the wealthy rather than the middle- and lower-income groups (Krein, 2020).

### **2.3.4 Populism as political strategy**

Weyland (2001:14) argues that populism is a political strategy which makes use of a personalistic leader who can garner support directly from a large enough subset of unorganised followers that allows the party to transform that unmediated and non-institutionalised power into “real” government power and enables them to exercise this power accordingly. Betz (2002:198) notes that populism as a political strategy, utilises rhetoric that captures the disgruntled nature of “the people” and is also able to appeal to their emotions, rather than being based on an ideology with a fixed set of goals and beliefs. The main issue with this approach, according to Aslanidis (2016:96), is that the very nature of politics is strategic, and therefore viewing populism through the lens of political strategy becomes problematic to determine what can constitute strategy as opposed to action. Populism, according to Taggart (2000:5), has become a tool of progressives, reactionaries, democrats, autocrats, the left and the right. In this regard, populism has become a political tool rather than a political party with its own unique strategy of using the pre-existing social and economic issues as a base to garner support and power. A good example is former US president, Donald J Trump, who used his bravado and charisma to garner the votes of those Americans who wanted a leader who appealed to them and did not alienate them or their political views (Spoelstra, 2020).

### **2.4 Causes of populism**

Contemporary contributors to the literature of populism, such as Mudde & Kaltwasser (2013), Weyland (2001), Hawkins (2009) and Canovan (2002), conclude that there is a crisis with the current representative democracy which has been the result of “elites” failing to be representative nor responsive to the plight of “the people”. As such, the need for institutional changes has come to the fore in a bid to reduce the power of political intermediaries, with particular focus on the traditional established political parties in the system, which are standing in the way of “the people” expressing their will through their leadership (De Raadt, Hollanders and Krouwel, 2004:1). Moffitt and Tormey (2014:27) argue that one of the main driving forces of populism is most frequently a perceived crisis, which is related to economic downturns or social developments, and when these occurrences are presented as “crisis situations” by populist leaders, the emergency narrative helps to streamline the language used, as well as the terrain of the political arena.

Globalism is often cited as a prominent reason behind the resurgence in populism (Obikili, 2018:3). Rodrick (2018) has argued that due to the advanced stages of globalisation, political backlash was inevitable in one form or another, and that the shift towards redistributive policies has been responsible for this to a degree. Autor *et al* (2016) suggest that the China trade shock, which occurred after China joined the World Trade Organisation in 2001 and led to an increase in Chinese exports to the US and negatively affected US exports, aggravated political polarisation in the US with certain districts moving further towards either the left or right.

Inglehart and Norris (2016:29) argue that populism is primarily the result of progressive social values which has resulted in a cultural backlash from those members of society, especially less educated and older white males, which were previously privileged in Western culture. Pappas (2015) suggests that the rise of populism can be attributed to the financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent recession which rippled across the globe and resulted in austerity measures to save failing economies throughout Europe, especially Greece and Spain. This does not necessarily mean that populism is only present in post-industrial societies as populists take advantage of growing discontent of “the people” who feel that they are being marginalised or being exploited by “the elite”. “The elite” in post-industrial capitalist societies tend to be those who are the economic elites, or the political elites who are growing wealthier, while “the people” do not enjoy the same level of prosperity.

Populism often centres on the dissatisfaction with the direction of the economy and the direction of social and cultural value changes that can occur within a society. This broad conceptualisation can be supported by the theory of relative deprivation, which highlights the point that individuals in society will rebel as a result of a sense of relative deprivation, defined in terms of the perceived entitlement or expectation which is felt by members of the society (Gurr, 1970). Accordingly, feelings of unfulfilled expectations result in anger, frustration and resent which then begin to manifest in protests, violence and other forms of political action (Bedasso and Obikili, 2016; Hendrix, Haggard and Magaloni, 2009).

## **2.5 The threat of populism to democracy**

Populism is, as previously stated, a critique of democracy, in that it highlights the shortcomings and failures of the current system of governance and offers short-term solutions to problems which the establishment has failed to address. These solutions can be changes to legislature, and/or calling for the removal or modification of pre-existing democratic institutions and

intermediaries in an effort to create more direct participation and immediate results. Mouzelis (1985:342) indicates that the danger posed by populist parties becomes evident when an organisation or institutional approach is taken, which would allow for populism to be defined as an attempt to side-step the formal established political institutions which the populists have deemed to be disconnected from the will of “the people”.

Certain populist parties, on both the left and right, and their associated policies aim to implement changes that would diminish the powers or even the dissolution of some established political institutions of the states, which begins the process of democratic deconsolidation (Hadiz & Chryssogelos, 2017). This poses a serious risk to liberal democracy, especially those liberal democracies which have not been consolidated, such as those in Africa, South America, Eastern Europe and Asia. Acemoglu *et al.* (2013:802) argue that the weakening of democratic institutions allows for “the elite” to have a greater influence on politics, which the populist claims is a corruption of politicians, and thus the only way to distance one’s self from the economic “elite” is by utilising populist strategy to convince “the people” of their (the politician’s) independence and commitment to “the people”. Overall, populist leaders and parties evolve out of necessity for a new form of politics as the current dispensation has failed to produce adequate results, and thus populism serves not as an alternative to normal or traditional political parties, but rather as a substitute for the lack thereof (Resnick, 2014:24).

According to Wirth *et al.* (2016:15), while populists are anti-establishment, they are not always anti-system in that they may support the democratic system and often present themselves as being true proponents of democracy as they are willing to fight for the rights granted to “the people” by democracy, as well as their sovereignty. In saying this, populists reject three of the basic principles of liberal democracy, according to Kriesi (2014) and Pappas (2014). First, while populists support the notion that governance “of the people by the people and for the people”, they take this notion to the extreme and do not believe in having oversight for the popular will of “the people”. The will of “the people” is all that matters in this sense, and that there is no need for deliberation as this only impedes implementing the changes that “the people” wish to have realised. Second, within the scope of populist democracy, there is a clear disdain for representative democracy. Pappas (2014) points out that representatives can only be permitted to exist and operate in the political arena for as long as they are seen to be enacting the will of “the people”. Those politicians who cannot be removed from power except during

election or because of misconduct, cannot be trusted to be acting in the best interest of “the people”.

Wirth *et al.* (2016) also highlight the fact that populists find the media and other established intermediaries who are not directly controlled by “the people” to be untrustworthy and an obstacle in enacting the unhindered and unfiltered propagation of the will of “the people”. Populists aim to cast a shadow of doubt over the specific organs and institutions of the democratic system, and as such hamper the process of democratic consolidation in states in which democracy has not yet become the unopposed form of governance (Schmitter, 1994:58). The populist vision of democracy opposes the pluralistic interpretation of “the people”, which creates a policy of political exclusion (Folscher, 2019:43). Liberal democracy champions the existence of a diverse political community and political equality within the political system, however populists refuse to accept the existence of more than one “people” and therefore they reject liberal democracy (Folscher, 2019:43).

Inglehart and Norris (2016) provide two theories which aim to provide an explanation for the rise in popularity for populism and populist parties. The first theory, which was previously mentioned, explains the increase in populism due to economic inequality, which addresses the growing changes in the labour force and society in the post-industrial era (Inglehart and Norris, 2016:2). This theory plays into the classic class struggle of Marxism, whereby the proletariat is being exploited and further marginalised as society progresses, while the bourgeoisie continue to flourish and grow ever more wealthy and powerful. Furthermore, a closer look at many Western democracies, such as the United States for instance, shows there is a growing disparity between those who occupy the lower to middle class, and those in the upper classes, therefore providing fuel for the condemnation of the political elite who are seen to benefit the most (Vollgraaff, 2018:29). Inglehart and Norris (2016:3) also note there is the potential for the growth of nationalist, anti-establishment and anti-foreign sentiment because of a declining economic trajectory and growing inequality, which populists can capitalise on to garner support. This economic inequality theory is both an explanation as to what can cause the increase of populism, and the threat that populism can provide to a democratic society, as it can begin to alienate and target foreigners, seek to dismantle democratic establishments which are seen by populists as an obstacle to economic growth, and the ousting of the bourgeoisie and political elite to remove power from those at the top.

The second theory that Inglehart and Norris (2016:3) posit revolves around a backlash against the shift in societal and cultural values because of globalism and spread of more progressive values. Inglehart and Norris's theory appeals to those parties which seek to return to the more traditional and conservative society and culture, and therefore view progressive and liberal values as a threat. This theory does not directly address the main agenda points of the EFF, however it can be linked to the progressive values that the EFF highlight and seek to promote in their manifestos in a bid to capture more votes. The EFF seeks to push back against the growing capitalist economic policies, however they also wish to embrace the growing liberal social and cultural values, such as LGBTQ rights and protection of women and children, especially those of colour (EFF, 2010). The theory can be considered relevant if one looks at the current political issues, such as the BLM (Black Lives Matter) movement which sparked not only mass protests across the world, but also highlighted the need to re-examine the treatment of people of colour by the police across the world (Dave *et al.* 2020).

Abts and Rummens (2007:420) provide an observation with regard to the manner in which populist parties come into power. The assumption is that democracy can nullify the threat of populism. However, populists need to manifest themselves in the same representative democracy that they perceive as being undemocratic. The establishment of populism seems to hinge on the very notion that there needs to be a democratic system in place to capitalise on any of the shortcomings of the system and garner support and ultimately power. However, populist parties can also act in a manner which holds the system accountable for its shortcomings. In saying this, the threat posed to democracy by populism is real, and cannot be understated. Abts and Rummens (2007:421) state that there are two paths which populists can take to gain power. The first path involves attaining power and abandoning their strong populist rhetoric and thus becoming more moderate, while the second (and more likely) path views the constitution, parliament and opponents as being nothing more than obstacles that need to be removed for the "will of the people" to be realised.

This points to the assertion that populism can be used as a tool to differentiate the party from the current status quo to garner both attention and support. Once this wave of support is over, the party returns to more moderate policies, and continues to operate within the confines of liberal democracy. On the other hand, populism can also be used as a means of gaining power and dismantling the current liberal democracy, purging "the elites" from their ivory towers and restoring the sovereignty of and power to "the people". The potential for more populist parties

being established could pose a risk to democratic consolidation as there would be a decline in support of the democratic parties and a favouring of non-democratic parties. Müller (2015:85) concurs with the notion that populists are not only anti-elitist, but are also anti-pluralist, in that they wish to move away from representative democracy and towards more “direct” forms of democracy.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a concise review of the literature regarding populism, in an effort to identify a working definition that can be used throughout this study. As previously mentioned, there is little to no agreement about an exact shared definition of populism; however, there are common features which exist among the definitions provided. The concept of populism includes three key features: 1) a mentioning of “the people” or a cohort which is being represented by a party or individual; 2) a mention of conflict or crisis that “the people” are facing which is not their fault; and 3) a mention of those who are responsible or at fault for the current situation being faced by “the people” (Müller, 2016; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013; Moffitt & Tormey, 2014). The features culminate in the definition presented by Wirth *et al* (2016:15) which shall be used throughout this study: “a thin ideology which considers – in a Manichean outlook – a society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, the positively connoted ‘pure people’ versus the negatively connoted ‘corrupt elite’, and it postulates unrestricted sovereignty of the people.”

The definition of populism is key as it creates a solid foundation for the thematic analysis to take place to identify whether the EFF is populist, based on the definition provided, and to what extent it is populist. The following chapter will describe the design and methodology which will be followed to allow for the thematic analysis to be conducted.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This thesis aims to undertake a thematic analysis of the EFF's 2014 and 2019 election manifestos to, first, establish the extent to which the party's rhetoric can be considered "populist", and second, to determine whether its rhetoric has become more populist between the 2014 and 2019 elections. The design of the research will follow a case study design and a qualitative desktop methodology. The data will be analysed by means of Thematic Analysis (TA) to establish the extent to which the rhetoric of the EFF can be considered "populist", and then determine whether the party has become more "populist" or not between the 2014 and 2019 elections. CAQDAS (Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software) will be used to perform the TA as it allows for systematic analysis of the electoral manifestos and presents the data in an easily digestible format that allows us to analyse the rhetoric used by the EFF in its 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos. The findings of this CAQDAS will be discussed in the following chapter.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study aims to uncover the reasons of occurrence surrounding a particular process or phenomenon and is thus categorised as a form of basic research (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, 2009:7). Although basic research may not be used to solve a practical problem, it is original in its own design in that it seeks to gain deeper insight into a problem and allows for logical explanation and conclusions which seek to explain the phenomenon (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, 2009:7).

As stated, the design that the research will follow, will be that of a case study. According to Easton (2010), a case is, "a phenomenon which is a single instance; a sample of one", meaning that it be a phenomenon which is spatially defined, and that the unit is investigated at either a specific point or over a specified period (Gerring, 2004; Sandelowski, 2011). A case is not limited in size and thus varies based upon the focus of the study ranging from a region to a city to even a subset of the population, or a specific individual (Gerring & McDermott, 2007). Gerring (2004:342) defines case study research as "an in-depth study of a single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar's aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena". Similarly, Beverland and Lindgreen (2010:57) define a case study as "an exploration of a 'bounded' system of a case (or multiple cases) over time through

detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context”. Crowe *et al.* (2011) highlight that there are multiple ways in which one can define a case study, however what is evident is that this is an in-depth investigation of a specific phenomenon in a real-life context, therefore the case itself allows for a deeper study of the occurrence and thus enables the study to gain a more complete view of the phenomenon in relation to its context. A case study thus allows one to understand and explain both why and how a phenomenon occurred (Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2003). Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) denote that using a single case in a study can aid in describing an existing phenomenon, while using multiple cases can establish the groundwork for building a theory, because if the phenomenon occurs in several cases it can be more generalizable. For this study, the units of analysis will include the 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos of the EFF. Whilst reference to the EFF Founding Manifesto will be made, the Founding Manifesto is not included in the analysis as it sets out the ideological foundations and aspirations of the party, rather than the policy goals and political alternative the party seeks to present voters during elections.

Within the realm of case studies there are various approaches to case studies. Ketokivi and Choi (2014) identify three separate approaches to theorising from case-study research; 1) theory generation, which can be seen to be equivalent to inductive theory-building, whereby a phenomenon is studied for which there is no pre-existing theory; 2) theory testing, whereby hypotheses are tested which derived from existing theory; and 3) theory elaboration, in which a theory is unfolded and detail is added to the logic of the specific theory.

Levy (2008) recognises four different types of case studies: 1) idiographic case studies, whereby a single case is studied to describe, explain, interpret and understand the case and thus is not fit for generalisations; 2) hypothesis-generation case studies, which are studies that generate a hypothesis that can be theoretically evaluated; 3) hypothesis testing case studies, in which the study aims to test established hypotheses; and 4) plausibility probes, where the aim is for the study to be used to either illustrate or refine a pre-existing theory.

Yin (2003) distinguishes between three different types of case studies: 1) exploratory case studies, where the aim of the study is to understand how a phenomenon takes place; 2) descriptive case studies, where the study illustrates and describes a phenomenon in the context in which it occurred; and 3) explanatory case studies, where the study seeks to explain the causal linkages between the case and the context in the real-life situation. Yin's (2003)

approach to case studies will be most appropriate to the study at hand, as the descriptive case study will be appropriate as the study aims to answer the question of, first, whether the EFF can be considered populist, and second, whether it has become more or less populist between the 2014 and 2019 elections. This study will undertake an explanatory case study as it seeks to explore populist rhetoric in the EFF's electoral manifestos to determine whether the EFF can be regarded as a populist party and whether have they become more (or less) populist.

The most common advantage of case-study research is that the case being investigated is causally related to the context, thus the cases that are used either explicitly or implicitly display the specific phenomena being studied, to prove a specific theory or hypothesis, or provide instances in which there is a lack of generalisation, to disprove a theory or hypothesis (Zainal, 2007:4). Second, case studies provide flexibility due to the various approaches that can be taken to conduct a case study, and that these approaches can work with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies of analysis. Third, case studies allow for much greater depth that not only provides data to be analysed, but also provides scope and clarity to understand the complexities of the real-life situations in which these phenomena occur, which can often be overlooked in quantitative research but play a greater role in qualitative research (Zainal, 2007:4). In terms of disadvantages, critics note that case studies lack rigour in that “too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy, and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions” (Yin, 1984:21).

Additionally, the small number of cases or even single cases being investigated will not translate into a generalisation to support a theory or hypothesis (Zainal, 2007:5). Case studies also often require a great deal of time to collect sufficient information, collate the information, interpret it and arrive at a conclusion, and thus there is a risk that poorly managed and organised data could create more trouble the further down the line (Zainal, 2007:5). Tellis (1997) emphasises that if single-case exploration is used to arrive at a generalisation to support a theory or hypothesis, there are limitations that using single cases can present in that it is somewhat onerous to base a generalisation on a single case, as a single case does not provide enough credence on which to base an entire theory. In order to measure populism in the EFF, the units of analysis for the study are the election manifesto of the EFF (2014 and 2019). The two-time points allow us to determine whether the EFF has become more or less populist.

### **3.3 Research Methodology**

To conduct an analysis of the case study this study will employ a qualitative desktop research method. Qualitative research seeks to create an understanding of theories or areas of investigation, and often look at the processes and meanings that are not scientific in nature in that they cannot be replicated or scientifically measured (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:10). Qualitative research is aimed at providing the researcher with better understanding and insight into the human condition, as observations may differ based on the observer and thus the observer, or rather the researcher, becomes the instrument of data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2006:74). Qualitative research methodology is also highly subjective; time-consuming as the text sources require more time to analyse; data tends to be in text, pictures, and video; the design for the research unfolds as the research is undertaken; and lastly, the result of the research and study is not a mathematical theory which is replicable but rather a theory which seeks to explain a set of occurrences (Weinreich, 1996; O'Neill, 2009). However, qualitative research involves the development of concepts which can assist in understanding social phenomena in the natural settings, allowing for the emphasis to be on meanings, experiences and views of the participants or subjects of the research (BMJ, 1995, 311:42-45).

### **3.4 Thematic Analysis (TA)**

Thematic Analysis (TA) will be employed for this study. TA is a method which looks to identify, analyse and report the patterns, or rather themes, within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). The result is data which has been organised and described in a way which adds value to the research and allows for the interpretation of the various aspects within the research topic by grouping the data into the themes being explored while still leaving the original data intact to allow for the explanation of the context (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). In other words, thematic analysis extracts themes from the text, rather than categorising text according to themes. TA is a bottom-up analysis and merges phrases that are similar into themes and organises them in a way that is easy for individuals to review and use in a meaningful manner. The notion of pattern finding in data is, however, not exclusive to TA, as with other methodological approaches to qualitative data analysis. However, TA is unique in that it focuses on grouping key terms into themes. The relevance for this grouping to the study at hand is that the populist terms which will be discussed will work in conjunction with the criterion presented by Hawkins (2009) and will allow for the identification of the populist rhetoric of the EFF according to the criterion and thus the identification of the EFF as a populist party. Second, the grouping will allow for these populist terms to be grouped according to the criterion and compared in terms of the

themes relating to the definition of populism and the criterion and the changes mapped to see if the EFF is becoming more or less populist.

The main focus of TA is what is of importance within the data in relation to the research question and is a representation of a degree of pattern or mining within the data itself (Brown & Clarke, 2006:82). The identification of themes comes about because of coding the data, whereby various codes allow for the organisation, structuring and retrieving of the data, as well as aiding in identifying the themes, however the codes are rarely themes themselves (Friese, Soratto & Pires, 2018:8).

The level of analysis occurs at two differing levels: the semantic or explicit level, and the latent or interpretative level (Friese, Soratto & Pires, 2018:9). The semantic analysis occurs mainly on the surface level of the data, whereby there is little interpretation of what is being said or meant, and is taken on face value (Friese, Soratto & Pires, 2018:9). Latent analysis takes a more in-depth approach to understanding the meanings, assumptions and conceptualisation, whereby coding but also analytical notes are made during the reading of the data (Friese, Soratto & Pires, 2018:9). The development of the themes requires a more in-depth and interpretive approach to not only see what is being said in the data but also understand what forms part of the themes based on a theoretical understanding rather than just a simple description of the data (Friese, Soratto & Pires, 2018:9).

The data can be analysed either inductively or deductively. The inductive analysis is data focused, whereby the data does not fit into pre-existing coding framework but rather the coding is created in a manner which identifies the themes based on the responses (Friese, Soratto & Pires, 2018:9). Deductive, or theoretical thematic analysis, is based on the theoretical or analytical interest in a specific area, and the coding is based on the research interest and the entire data set does not have to be coded, only those parts which are deemed to be part of the area of interest (Friese, Soratto & Pires, 2018:10). This deductive analysis would be the most appropriate form of analysis for the research question as the focus is not on what the electoral manifestos are saying, but rather whether or not the manifestos have populist traits and the coding is able to extract this information accordingly. Furthermore, the level of analysis will be latent because the investigation is not simply an exercise in determining which words occur most frequently, but rather an insight into the words and phrases that are present and the context surrounding these, and ultimately looking at the degree of populist rhetoric which exists. The

main thematic areas which will be analysed will include *good; evil; minority/enemy of the people; the people; genetic populism; and case-specific populism*.

### **3.5 Description of data sources**

The electoral manifestos of the EFF in 2014 and 2019 will serve as the two sets of texts under analysis. An electoral manifesto is a document which seeks to lay down the policy priorities and positions of the party. Ray (2007) acknowledges that these documents can either be abstract statements which create an understanding of the identity of the party and philosophy, or advertising the party, or being a simple contract between the voters and party. Laver & Garry (2000:620) denote that electoral manifestos are documents which are created in a strategic manner by highly politically experienced party members (usually those who have either founded or occupy the upper hierarchy) who seek to express and incorporate their varying views and objectives into the manifesto itself. These positions therefore create an understanding that the party manifesto is not simply a manifesto which only represents the views and goals of the party, but also those of the party elites. Party manifestos also operate in a manner which not only express the goals and position of the party, but also its ideological position. If one relates this to the electoral manifestos of the EFF, one can see that an analysis is required to ascertain the importance placed on the ideological position, as this relates to the language used.

### **3.6 Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS)**

Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) software will be used for the qualitative data analysis (Friese, Soratto & Pires, 2018:7). This software allows for the thematic analysis of qualitative data. By searching for specific words or phrases one can sort them into themes and explore them accordingly. The software utilised is QDA Miner Lite, a free-to-use CAQDAS program which operates on Microsoft Windows. This software is simple in its operation as the data being analysed is not an excessive amount and could even possibly be done manually. However, due to time constraints, using the software will be much more time effective. Furthermore, as the software is free it means that a similar study could be replicated by a peer to either challenge the findings, or to conduct similar research with relative ease.

In applying QDA Miner Lite, the first logical step would be to identify the keywords which are related to populist rhetoric. The first area of enquiry is to determine the extent to which the EFF can be classified as populist based on the rhetoric in its 2014 and 2019 electoral

manifestos. While the meaning of populism varies in terms of what constitutes a populist party, in the case of the EFF one can argue that its rhetoric tends to focus on the struggle between “the elite” and “the people” who are disenfranchised and exploited, which is consistent with its Marxist-Leninist ideology. Furthermore, in line with the conflict that exists between these two groups, the EFF plays into the existing issues of race in South Africa, and refers to colonialism and apartheid, as well as the disparity between “white capitalists” and “black people” who are subjugated. This reference to race is in line with the EFF’s Fanonian ideology, which is centred on the role of colonialism and its lasting impact on society.

The coding which will be applied will see two distinct categories, or rather “themes”: *generic populism* and *case-specific populism*. For *generic populism*, phrases and words such as *majority*, *minority*, *the/our people*, *globalism*, *nationalisation*, *capitalism*, *inequality*, *imperialism*, *radical* and *transform[ation]* will be used as the units of measurement in terms of the generic indicators of populism. The specific phrases and words which are related to *case-specific* populist rhetoric of the EFF are: *black*, *white*, *youth*, *west*, *post-1994* and *apartheid*. These terms were selected based on the notion that they are associated with populism but also based on the frequency of these terms across both the 2014 and 2019 manifestos. The decision to divide these terms according to two categories is based on the realisation that populism has specific terms which can be found throughout the various definitions presented (see Mudde (2004); Müller, 2016; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013; Moffitt & Tormey, 2014), and these terms are *generic* due to their presence in other cases outside of the EFF. The *case-specific* terms are unique to the case of the EFF’s electoral manifestos and the context of South Africa. While that does mean they could be found in other political parties’ manifestos, for this study they are specific to the cases being studied.

While it is evident that, based on the definition of populism as having a thin-centred ideology, the ideology of the EFF is implicit rather than explicit, as the party does not make mention of its Marxist-Leninist Fanonian ideology. However, based on its views and values, it is reflected in its manifesto. In saying this, its ideology is not the focus of this study.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter set out to discuss and establish the research design and methodology for the study. As stated by Yin (1984: 23), the case study research methodology is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries

between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used”. Yin’s (2003) approach to case studies will be most appropriate to the study at hand, as the descriptive case study aims to answer the question of, first, whether or not the EFF can be considered populist, and second, whether or not it has become more or less populist between the 2014 and 2019 elections. Supporting this, qualitative research will be the methodology followed, using TA as the method to investigate and analyse the party’s 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos. The following chapter will present the data from the qualitative thematic analysis and discuss the findings, by first understanding the EFF, based on its theoretical foundations, cardinal pillars and founding manifesto, before delving into an overview of the 2014 and 2019 manifestos. The analysis of these two manifestos will subsequently be presented and discussed.

## CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

While the advent of democracy ushered in political freedom and individual civil liberties for all South Africans, the reality is that democracy has not substantially improved the quality of life for all South Africans. South Africa is the most unequal country in the world (Pettersson, 2019). The Gini coefficient, which measures inequality on a scale from 0 (equality) to 1 (inequality), has steadily increased from 0.61 in 1996 to 0.65 in 2015, as per the data provided in 2019 (Stats SA, 2020; Kamer, 2020). This growing inequality is problematic because those who feel marginalised may foster feelings of injustice and unfairness due to the unequal distribution of resources and power within society, and the more deprived an individual is or perceives themselves to be, the greater these feelings become (Langer & Smedts, 2013).

In addition, those who are marginalised tend to feel disenfranchised and disconnected from the political system as they believe that they are excluded from decision-making and forgotten by politicians. These feelings can lead towards a withdrawal from traditional politics to more unconventional political participation, and support for political parties which challenge the status quo and claim to represent those most marginalised in society, like the EFF.

Within a relatively short period of time, the EFF has managed to challenge the status quo in South African politics not only with its theatrics (red overalls, boisterous and bombastic behaviour in parliament), but also with its ideology, which “draws inspiration from the broad Marxist-Leninist tradition school of thought” and brands the party as “a radical and militant economic emancipation movement” (EFF, 2020).

In 2014, the EFF secured 25 seats in parliament with 1,169,259 votes or 6.35% of the votes cast (IEC, 2019), a notable performance considering it was the party’s first election. The 2019 elections proved to be a pivotal moment in the EFF’s short history, as it was able to almost double its support in terms of votes, as it received 10.8% of the votes, which translated into 44 seats in parliament (IEC, 2019). These votes not only allowed the party to participate in the formal and established political arena, but also legitimised its opinions and beliefs, as it resonates with “the people”.

This chapter aims to provide an understanding of the EFF as a party by presenting its seven cardinal pillars, its founding manifesto and by looking at its 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos. An investigation into the populist rhetoric employed by the party will focus on its 2014 and 2019 manifestos and, using the framework presented by Hawkins (2009), a TA will be conducted that will with the terms selected fall into two categories of populist rhetoric that will be discussed. The outcome of this analysis will be the presentation of the data, which will be discussed, and the findings explained. The findings will first present the frequency of the terms, but also the changes that have occurred between the 2014 and 2019 manifestos, as well as a potential explanation as to why this has occurred. Second, these findings will seek to answer the research question of whether the EFF can be labelled as a populist party, and whether it has become increasingly populist, based on the rhetoric employed in its 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos.

#### **4.2 Understanding the EFF**

The EFF was established by Julius Malema following his expulsion from the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) in 2013. One of the aspects that the Freedom Charter details is the importance of a nationalisation agenda. The EFF sees itself as the inheritor of the outcome of the Freedom Charter and that it is the party's responsibility to ensure there is a transfer of wealth and ownership from the minority to the majority, or as the party sees it, from the white minority to the black majority (Nicolson, 2015). The EFF sees itself as being a "radical and militant economic emancipation movement" which brings together all those who share its ideals (EFF, 2019). The EFF casts itself as being "the vanguard of the community and workers' struggles and will always be on the side of the people" (EFF, 2019). This creates association with Karl Marx and his *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Marx & Engels, 1848).

There are inherent similarities between the EFF and the Communist Party of Russia, and Marx's ideal of the state becoming the vanguard of the people, which the EFF states as being the inspiration for the party (EFF, 2019). The EFF speaks of revolution and emancipation as it aims to achieve an equitable distribution of wealth, as well as looking to eradicate imperialism, colonialism, racism and all other forms of discrimination on a global scale. The EFF states that it will be involved in mass movement and community protests to improve the lives of the community, as well as occupying land to put forward the point that the people need land (EFF, 2019).

### **4.2.1 Theoretical foundation**

The EFF is, by its own definition, Marxist-Leninist Fanonian and it seeks a socialist programme to realise its aspiration for “economic freedom” (EFF, 2014:4). Frantz Fanon was an influential thinker who contributed to the Marxist school of thought and is renowned for his most influential work, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon’s seminal work delves into the psychology of being a black person in a world of white people, and how black people are forced to wear “white masks” and adopt the “white-ness” to navigate a white world in which they are regarded as subservient. The works of Fanon have directly shaped the thoughts, aims, goals and principles of the EFF (Ndlozi, 2016). The EFF refers to “white capitalists” and attributes the workings, language and culture of capitalism to all be part of a “white” culture and a “white” world that the EFF and black people in South Africa are subject to.

In addition, the EFF blames capitalism for the failures that have been experienced in democratic South Africa, highlighting a clear lack of separation between the system of governance, a neo-liberal democracy which has a capitalist economy as a result, and the government, which are the elected representatives. This is supported by the statement made by Malema that “it is evident that capitalism has failed to deliver to our people” (EFF, 2014:3). The problem with the line of thought is that it equates democracy with equality in all aspects of life, which is in fact the goal of socialism. Democracy, at its very core, does not promise equality of outcome but instead promises equality of opportunity as it sees all citizens as being equal and that citizens cannot be denied enshrined rights and liberties (Verba, 2006:508).

### **4.2.2 Cardinal pillars**

The EFF has developed seven cardinal pillars to realise its main goal, namely economic freedom (EFF, 2013:8; EFF, 2014:5; EFF, 2019:9). These pillars are reinforced from its founding manifesto to its election manifestos in both 2014 and 2019.

The first pillar is that the expropriation of land without compensation needs to be undertaken to equal distribution of resources and wealth (EFF, 2019:9). This pillar is rooted in the notion that ownership of land is equated with wealth. The issue of land reform has been an issue in South Africa since the end of apartheid, and hinges on the effects of the Group Areas Act which was implemented by the apartheid government to segregate South Africans based on their race and ultimately restrict black South Africans’ access to land and the associated opportunity (Clark, 2019). The land reform issue is based on the 2017 Land Audit undertaken by the South

African government, showing that 72% of arable land in the country is owned by white South Africans, who only make up less than 10% of the total population (Clark, 2019). The main issue with land reform is that, in its the current format, the government seeks to expropriate land without compensation, and therefore poses not only a risk to those who own land, but the constitution which enshrines the rights of land ownership (Clark, 2019). Furthermore, while there is merit in returning land to those who previously occupied and even owned it, ownership of land does not necessarily improve the lives of people in the short term, unless the land is used for productive purposes, such as building decent housing, or establishing businesses or pursuing agricultural endeavours.

The second pillar refers to the nationalisation of mines, banks and other strategic sectors of with economy without compensation (EFF, 2014:5). This pillar perpetuates the intent of the EFF to establish a socialist system of governance in which the government takes ownership of key national assets with complete disregard for those who may own the assets. This is problematic because dispossessing businesses and individuals of their assets is illegal and ignores the constitutional right for private individuals to establish and create their own wealth (South Africa, 1996).

The third pillar refers to building state and government capacity to provide more public services without having to rely on tenders (EFF, 2014:5). There have been instances where tenders have been awarded illegitimately, such as the case of the City of Johannesburg recording R3.9-billion for contracts awarded in an irregular manner (M&G desk, 2019), and the recent case of a senior military general being awarded defence contracts to the value of R210-million (Zuzile, 2020). The benefits of the tender system are two-fold: first, it allows local businesses to benefit directly from government projects; and second, it means that the government can outsource work to businesses which already have the expertise and capacity to undertake certain projects such as constructing roads or buildings. The problem with this pillar is that expanding state capacity not only requires significant resources, time and expertise, but, most importantly, threatens existing business or private enterprise. Pursuing such an endeavour would most likely lead to existing businesses having to downsize or close, leading to increases in unemployment and a decline in gross domestic product (GDP).

The fourth pillar focuses on the government's provision of free and quality education, healthcare, houses and sanitation (EFF, 2014:5). This pillar aims to improve the lives of the

disadvantaged and most marginalised citizens in South Africa. The motivation behind this pillar is rooted in the apartheid government which left a large amount of inequality in terms of access to resources, infrastructure and basic services, and while there has been a slight improvement in the lives of those who are most disadvantaged (Nnadozie, 2013). The current government has attempted to make provision to assist the most vulnerable within society, providing grants, free healthcare, schooling, housing and some sanitation, however there is still a way to go (Tshazi, 2020).

The fifth pillar addresses the idea of reindustrialisation. The EFF aims to create a protected industrial development which would generate sustainable jobs and introduce a minimum wage to close the income inequality gap and promote rapid career paths for all people in the workplace (EFF, 2014:5). This pillar could be seen to highlight the notion that South Africa can capitalise on its human capital to develop industries which can absorb workers and boost GDP. The introduction of a minimum wage is also a positive change, as this will boost buying power, improve the lives of workers and potentially stimulate the economy. On the other hand, someone ultimately must pay for this increase in wages, and this would most likely translate into an increase in the cost of goods, which could reduce the buying power and cancel out any positive effect created by the new minimum wage.

This pillar also highlights the EFF's focus on the rapid promotion for all people in the workplace, with specific reference to black South Africans and ensuring that at least 50% of these employment opportunities are reserved for women and the youth. The issue with this is that the rapid promotion of black employees, with a special focus on women and the youth, is that it mimics the BBBEE (Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment) programme introduced by the ANC in 2003 (DTI, 2020). The results of the BBBEE programme have been a mixed bag, however the intentions were well thought out, aiming to balance the scales in the post-apartheid era (Steyn, 2015). Criticisms of BBBEE include enterprise incompetency and corruption as the tender process has created an environment where BBBEE status becomes the main qualifying factor instead of quality of workmanship or cost (Pike, Puchert & Chinyamurindi, 2018:9). This has also resulted in slowing economic growth of the South African economy, but also a decline in black-owned businesses, which is directly contradictory to the aim of the policy (Saba, 2018). Another major criticism of BBBEE is brought by opposition parties such as the DA who have stated that the policy is overtly racist as it places greater emphasis on race rather than competency and has created an environment where only

a minority of black wealthy and politically connected individuals benefit (Madisa, 2020). In saying this, BBBEE has the potential to realise growth in the middle class and thus can still be effective, but there needs to be greater oversight (Juggernath, 2010). The DA has stated that the existing model is unsustainable and proposes that the needs and disadvantages of the people be considered rather than race, as the party looks at race as something which is fixed and does not change regardless of how advantaged or empowered that person is (Madisa, 2020).

The sixth pillar focuses on the development of an African economy and calls for a move from reconciliation towards justice for the entire continent (EFF, 2014:5). This pillar lacks any clarity on what is meant by “justice on the entire continent”, as this could mean judicial justice, justice in the form of reparations, justice in the form of structural changes, or even justice in the form of acknowledgement by former colonial powers of their past actions. Furthermore, the call for the development of an African economy is somewhat ambitious, given the reoccurring instances of xenophobia by South Africans in South Africa against other Africans (Sosibo, 2014; Heleta, 2019).

The final pillar conveys the will of the EFF to establish an “open, accountable, corrupt-free government and society without fear of victimisation by state agencies” (EFF, 2014:5). The irony of this pillar is that the EFF is describing an idealistic view of a liberal democracy rather than a socialist system of governance, which shows a potential lack of understanding or a broad brushstroke which aims to capture more support by highlighting a more moderate view and showing that the EFF is not only concerned with socialist transformation but also with the current lack of accountability and corruption (Mubangizi, 2020). If one considers the former to be the case, then it is evident that the EFF is facing an identity crisis in that it aims to produce an outcome which more closely resembles a democratic society, rather than a socialist one. If the latter is true, however, then the EFF is playing the same game as the other political parties in South Africa, attempting to appeal to a wider audience rather than more staunch supporters of socialism.

#### **4.2.3 Founding manifesto**

The commander-in-chief of the EFF, Julius Malema, released a press statement which outlined the seven cardinal pillars of the EFF, but also outlined the founding principles of the movement (Malema, 2013). The main message is that the EFF is a Leftist, radical, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movement which seeks to realise the economic emancipation of the black majority

of South Africans and seeks to act as the vanguard of the people (Malema, 2013). Malema states that the EFF embraces the radical, but not the neo-liberal, interpretation of the Freedom Charter, which states that South Africa belongs to all those who live in it and the wealth of the country should be equally distributed among its populace (Malema, 2013).

The EFF founding manifesto was adopted in July 2013 and represents the guiding principles of the party. The founding manifesto begins with the quote from one of the party's ideological leaders, Frantz Fanon: "Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it" (EFF, 2013). This quote stands not only as a statement of how the EFF should conduct itself as a party, but also as an inspiration to its members to discover their own purpose. The manifesto outlines what the EFF is: a party that seeks to fight for the economic emancipation of not only the people of South Africa, but also of the people of the world, a statement that highlights the party's desire to be altruistic.

The main theme throughout the manifesto is the struggle against colonialism, imperialism and racial discrimination by colonists, starting from the original landing of Jan Van Riebeeck in 1652 in the Cape (2013:1). This combative rhetoric, coupled with the clash of classes, which the EFF highlights throughout the founding manifesto (and in the electoral manifesto), speaks directly to its Marxist-Leninist roots, which, as previously mentioned, focuses on the clash between those who are the means of production (the proletariat) and those who own the means of production (the bourgeoisie). This is evident in the voter cohort that the EFF is targeting, which it states as being: "To emancipate the black people of South Africa, the working class in particular, from economic bondage" (2013:1).

The EFF identifies the main culprit of South Africa's problems as the "alliance between British and Afrikaner capital" (2013:2). While it is true that these two groups were responsible for the racial segregation which occurred, as well as the exploitation of the local populace and the scourge of slavery, the other main culprit in the current crop of problems is not a group or nation, but rather a system, mainly capitalism. Capitalism is the enemy of socialism (Schumpeter, 1942) and given that the EFF seeks to realise the socialist agenda it would make sense that it concentrates its efforts on dismantling a system which it feels only benefits a select few while the majority remain bonded. This clash of ideologies can also be viewed through the lens that racial segregation extended itself into the political and economic spheres of life (*The origins of racialism and the rise of racial discrimination*, 1996). This clash can be seen to

reinforce the conflict of class which the EFF uses as its main motivation for wanting to dismantle the capitalist system, but also to readjust and balance the scales of power as the black majority were excluded from participating in large sections of the economy under the apartheid regime (Anwar, 2017). Furthermore, the black majority were also limited in their ownership of sectors of the economy, and thus the majority of wealth was concentrated in the hands of the white minority (Anwar, 2017).

The EFF directs the class conflict to the political elite as well as those in large private enterprises because the EFF regards them as being corrupt, immunised from prosecution and often beyond the grasp of the law, being allowed to flaunt the law even if there might be evidence that there has been wrongdoing (EFF, 2013:3). This view moves beyond a “simple” class conflict and highlights the chasm which exists between the poor and the elite who are politically connected or are themselves senior politicians, and the amount of power that they are afforded due to their social class and economic class. Black capitalists are also targeted by the EFF, who maintain that programmes such as Black Economic Empowerment have allowed for a few select black capitalists to capitalise on the reforms and enrich themselves (2013:3). The EFF delves into this further by stating that these select black capitalists hold senior government or corporate positions, receive tenders from government, become shareholders in established corporations, or funnel state funds into their own pockets through corrupt practices. According to the EFF, this new black bourgeoisie has not reinvested in the South African economy and has failed to create jobs for other black South Africans (2013:4). This again points to the notion that the EFF is willing to take on not only white capitalists, but also select black capitalists and all those corrupt individuals who have put their own enrichment above the need for the betterment of the lives of their fellow black South African.

Another main issue which the EFF identifies in not only its founding manifesto but also in its 2014 and 2019 election manifestos, is that of jobs and land. It describes landlessness as a major obstacle in the farming community who it sees as being “slaves denied basic human rights that most people take for granted...[living] in fear and insecurity because of the paternalistic relationships with landowners, who are often racist and violent” (EFF, 2013:4). While a gross generalisation, the fact remains that many farm workers are landless and are often only permitted to live on the farm provided they are working for the farm owner (Visser & Ferrer, 2015:85). The EFF also, in its constant calls for more jobs to be created, points to the failure of the government to industrialise the South African economy and foster new industries which

could create economic development in a similar fashion to Brazil, India and China. By developing these new industries, it could also allow for greater exports that would aid in the creation of sustainable jobs (EFF, 2013:4). The failure of the government to act on this reindustrialisation policy has been noted by the EFF, which has also critiqued these policies for its neo-liberal capitalist agenda of lowering tariffs and allowing for imports to hinder the development of local industries (Fogel, 2013).

Another overarching theme of the founding manifesto is that the EFF is a party which seeks to implement a socialist agenda and will fight for the economic emancipation of those who were previously marginalised and deprived of their basic human rights (Liebenberg, 2000). The party's focus is the redistribution of land to combat the issue of landlessness and unemployment. The EFF argues that unemployment can be addressed through the programme of reindustrialisation if the government takes greater control of the economy through the nationalisation of key sectors, and the promotion and protection of infant industries which can create sustainable jobs (EFF, 2013). The EFF points to racial and class divisions in society to carve out support and votes. The party uses these divisions not only to allow for the general population to recognise the problems being faced, but also to highlight the failures of the current government to improve the lives of all, not only a select few. To this end, the EFF makes special mention of all those who will benefit if the party is elected and able to implement its socialist programme, namely the African working class, the coloured working class, the Indian/Asian working class, and even the white working class. The EFF states that its struggle for economic freedom is not a struggle against white people but rather a struggle against the system which has only enriched a few select individuals and continues to maintain the economic inequalities (EFF, 2013:23-24). From the EFF's perspective, it is the state that should be the main driving force behind the establishment of new business to create greater quality in society. In saying this, the reality of the situation is that by creating new state-owned and established business there would still be those who benefit more than other, as they occupy more senior positions and thus earn more. What the EFF is trying to achieve is equality of outcome by controlling the access point into the economy, as it views equality of opportunity in a capitalist system having failed to create equality for all.

This disconnect occurs throughout political discussions with regards to the notion of equality of opportunity and equality of outcome, in both the conversations regarding democracy and socialism (Phillips, 2004). Equality of opportunity is, in the most basic terms, the creation of a

level playing field that allows all those participating in the system, regardless of their starting position, to be given the same opportunities to participate (Kodelja, 2016:19). The issue with this is that to create a level playing field the disadvantaged will be favoured over the advantaged, and thus the advantaged will be at a disadvantage. By artificially establishing differences and discrimination in a space in which one did not previously exist, inequality becomes a means of creating equality of opportunity (Kodelja, 2016:19; Bobbio, 2005:26). Equality of outcome, on the other hand, looks to ensure that everyone benefits from the same outcome, be it education, occupation, or material goods (Kodelja, 2016:19). This notion is highly problematic due to the fact that social goods, such as occupation and material goods, are limited within any given society. The outcomes of a particular situation are explicitly dependent on individuals and their different abilities, and cannot be externally influenced, or else the outcome itself is artificial and the need to seek employment, education or purchasing of goods, becomes meaningless, as the external influence removes any sort of individual agency.

### **4.3 Thematic analysis of the 2014 and 2019 election manifestos of the EFF**

The thematic analysis has been conducted by first discussing the criteria by which populist parties can be identified and measured, which will form the basis of the analytical framework for the study. Following this, the results of the analysis will be presented, and analysed and interpreted to explain the findings.

#### **4.3.1 Criteria for populist parties and presentation of data**

Hawkins set out to implement a grading method for populist speeches and this gave birth to his original 2009 coding rubric. Hawkins (2009:1063-1064) provided a set of criteria to identify a populist party based on their public speeches: (1) the use of Manichean discourse: politics as a struggle of good versus evil; (2) mentions a conspiring minority who acts in their own self-interests; (3) the use of romanticised notions of the common man; and (4) advocacy that systemic political change is necessary. The motivation for this framework created by Hawkins (2009) was that he wished to measure many speeches and needed a standardised framework which he could apply that would produce a numerical result which he could then compare, contrast and gain an overview of the populist speech landscape. The motivation for applying his rubric to this study is that it provides a basic framework which has been cited by other authors (Akkerman, Mudde & Zaslove, 2014; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013; Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011) and thus has been accepted and utilised in other studies. This framework was

applied once again by Hawkins *et al.* (2019) and stated that four speeches were enough per term to determine whether or not a leader was populist. While this criterion was formulated to be used with speeches, it has been adapted for this study by modifying the criteria and using the associated terms and identifying the frequency of these terms. The motivation for adapting Hawkins's 2009 framework is two-fold. Firstly, the framework well-established and cited by many other studies (Moffit & Tormey, 2014; Jansen, 2011; Akkerman, Mudde & Zaslove, 2013; Rooduijn, de Lange & van der Brug, 2012). Secondly, he has identified four clear criteria to identify populist parties based on public speeches, and the presence and frequency of these terms can be extended and utilized as a measurement of how populist a party is.

First is the language used by the EFF regards the ANC and DA, as well as white people, as those who are part of the evil opposition, while the EFF and marginalised black population would represent the good, who must triumph to defeat the evil. This dichotomy falls directly in line with the definition of populism, which the focus of conflict between the two groups, with the "good people" being more broadly defined and inclusive, while the "evil" and corrupt elite are viewed as being portrayed as the opposition who must be defeated. Accordingly, terms such as *majority*, *the people*, *our people*, *minority* and *inequality* will be included in the analysis. This criterion will highlight the conflict between "the people" and "the elite", and thus measure the conflict between "the good" and "the evil".

**Table 1.1 Good versus evil terms in 2014 and 2019 manifesto**

Term (good/evil)	2014 Manifesto	2019 Manifesto	Total	Change
Majority (good)	9	13	22	+4
The/our people (good)	31	20	51	-11
Minority (evil)	0	5	5	+5
Inequality (evil)	6	5	11	-1

As seen in Table 1.1, the mentioning of "good terms" has declined from the 2014 manifesto from a total of 40 mentions, to the 2019 manifesto with 33 mentions. Terms such as *the/our people* have seen a decline from 31 mentions in 2014 to 20 mentions in 2019, *majority* has seen an increase from 9 mentions to 13 mentions. Contrasting this, "evil" terms have seen an overall increase, from 6 to 11 mentions. The frequency of the term *minority* has increased substantially from 0 to 5, in comparison to *inequality* which saw a slight decline from 6 to 5 mentions. This

could point to an increase in the focus placed on the “enemy of the people” rather than “the people” themselves.

The second criteria are the vilification of the minority, which in the case of this study would be the white population who are often referred to as being capitalists and maintaining control over the economy, who are conspiring to keep the economy in their hands and to keep those on the fringes marginalised. Terms such as *white*, *capitalist*, *minority* and *apartheid* are part of this criteria (Table 1.1). There is an overall increase of these terms from a total of 14 mentions in 2014, to 36 mentions in 2019, which highlights the increased focus on the “enemy of the people” (Table 1.1). This could point to a greater emphasis on the vilification of the minority and by looking at the date in Table 1.2, there is an overall increase in the frequency of terms associated with the “enemy” who are the minority. There has been an increase in *white* (from 6 to 9), *minority* (from 0 to 5) and *apartheid* (from 5 to 20), however only *capitalist* has seen a decrease (from 3 to 2) as indicated in Table 1.2. This increased focus on “the enemy” could be explained by the need for the EFF to highlight who is to blame for the current problems that “the people” are facing.

**Table 1.2 Terms which identify the minority/ enemy of the people**

Term	2014 Manifesto	2019 Manifesto	Total	Change
White	6	9	15	+3
Capitalist	3	2	5	-1
Minority	0	5	5	+5
Apartheid	5	20	25	+15

Third, the romanticised notion of the common man, or references to “the people”, is a prominent trait of a populist party in that the definition directly mentions the framing of “the people” and constant reference to this group as a motivation for the party’s direction. For the EFF, the focus is on the reference to “our people” rather than “the people”. While this is more prominent in the foreword, the EFF focuses on some of the demographic attributes of those who the party consider as “our people” throughout the manifestos, in other words, *black*, *youth*, and *majority*. This criterion seeks to measure the frequency of the identification of “the people” within both manifestos.

**Table 1.3 The terms which identify *the people***

Term	2014 Manifesto	2019 Manifesto	Total	Change
Black	21	50	71	+29
Youth	4	49	53	+45
Majority	9	13	22	+4

The identification of *the people* is central to the EFF identifying its target audience, and if one looks at the data from the 2014 and 2019 manifesto (Table 1.3), the party has identified its cohort correctly and reinforced this. If one looks at the term *black*, in 2014 the EFF only used the term 21 times, however this more than doubled to 50 instances in the 2019 manifesto (Table 1.3). This increase in mentioning the term *black* could be attributed to the increased focus on the cohort the EFF has determined to be part of *the people* and by increasing the focus on this cohort, it could increase the strength of the linkage between the party and the cohort. This increase in frequency also increases the degree to which the party is populist.

The term *youth* has seen an even greater increase in frequency, increasing in use ten-fold from 2014 to 2019 (Table 1.3). In saying this, the term *majority* has seen an increase in frequency, however it has not increased at the same rate as the other two terms (Table 1.3). These changes could be explained as the party realising that its identified “people” are resonating with the values and ambitions of the party, and by increasing the frequency of these terms, it hopes to appeal to a greater portion of the cohort and thus gain more votes. Furthermore, the substantial increase in the frequency of *black* and *youth*, which are both case-specific terms versus the much smaller increase in the term *majority*, which is classified as a generic term (Table 1.1), indicates that the party is finding its feet and moving away from the broad generic terms and focusing on the terms which resonate more with its cohort as the party matures. This trend would most likely continue as the party attempts to broaden its appeal by increasing the number of identified “people” included in its cohort.

Fourth, another key feature of populism is the push for systemic political change to “transform” the system and restore the sovereignty and power back to “the people”. The advocacy of these changes is a result of the linkages drawn between the current status quo and political system, and the current problems the people are facing. In the context of the EFF and South Africa, the EFF is likening its aim for economic freedom as a sort of emancipation from the current economic hardship and thus bondage that the people are being faced with. If one applies this

to the case of its 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos, keywords such as *transformation*, *transform* and *radical* will be analysed. A key policy direction that the EFF strongly advocates for is nationalisation of specific private assets to enable transformation as it views these assets as being key to job creation and thus addresses inequality. This criterion will therefore seek to measure the changes which need to be realised, according to the EFF, for “real” change to be made and seen in the lives of “the people”.

**Table 1.4 Transformation and radical in 2014 and 2019 manifestos**

Term	2014 Manifesto	2019 Manifesto	Total	Change
Transformation	24	15	39	-9
Radical	7	5	12	-2

As stated, this criterion seeks to measure the change which the EFF presented by looking at the associated terms. If one looks at the data, *transformation* is mentioned throughout both the 2014 and 2019 manifestos, however it decreased from 24 to 15 mentions respectively, while the term *radical* also decreased from 7 to 5 mentions. This decline could indicate that the party tried to “soften” its approach towards change to shift away from broad general statements of *radical transformation* and towards more concrete policies to *transform* the economy, for example, in a more clearly defined manner. The decline in these terms, which form part of the generic populist terms (Table 1.1) could also indicate that the party is moving away from more generic populist terms to appeal to a wider audience of voters from other parties, and thus garner more votes.

#### **4.3.2 Two themes of populist rhetoric**

In addition to the criteria presented by Hawkins, it is valuable for the study to differentiate between two themes of populist rhetoric. The first theme can be termed *generic populism*, as it includes all those terms which can be grouped as being in line with the definition of populism, including the central concepts of “the people” and “the elite”, but also including terms which could be interchangeable with these key concepts but can still be applied across a variety of cases. In this regard, *majority* and *minority* will also be included in the analysis. Additionally, *transform[ation]* will also be included, as it is seen as one of the key points that populist parties push in an effort to change the current system. The terms *capitalism*, *globalism* and *imperialism* will also form part of the generic populism, due to the fact that many, but not all, populist

parties garner attention referring to *capitalism*, or *globalism* or *imperialism* as being the cause of the current predicament that the country is facing.

The second theme will be labelled as *case-specific populism*, as it will focus on terms which are unique to the case of the EFF. Race will be one of the most dominant forces within the motivation of the EFF given the unique history of South Africa. The previous apartheid regime undertook a programme of racial segregation and promotion of only the white population. The effects of this programme are still felt today, and the reality is that many South Africans are still living in abject poverty (Goodman, 2017). In saying this, terms such as *black*, *white*, *apartheid*, *post-1994*, *radical*, and *youth* will be included under this theme. The EFF has identified *the people* as being those who are *black* and part of the *youth*, while *the elite* are those who are *white* and part of the *post-1994* government, who are painted as being responsible for creating the current situation which *the people* are faced with, and the only correct the current course is to pursue *radical transformation*.

#### **4.4 Analysis and interpretation of the data**

The analysis and interpretation of the data cannot begin without reminding ourselves of the definition of populism which is being used in this study, with Wirth *et al* (2016:15) defining populism as:

“A thin ideology which considers – in a Manichean outlook – a society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, the positively connoted ‘pure people’ versus the negatively connoted ‘corrupt elite’, and it postulates unrestricted sovereignty of the people.”

##### **4.4.1 The terms on their own**

If one looks at the data, one can see an increase in the use of terms such as *black*, *youth*, *majority* and *apartheid*. However, inversely there has been a decrease in the use of *transformation*, *our people*, *radical*, *imperialism*, *capitalism*. If the measure of populist rhetoric is based upon the number of times generic populist terms are mentioned, then it would seem there has been a decline and thus the EFF has become less populist between its 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos. However, one can argue that the EFF has become more populist because the terms which have increased in frequency are the terms which are used to describe “the people” and the main contributing factor to why “the people” are burdened with the *inequality* that they face. The EFF draws more attention to who it is aiming to help, who the beneficiaries are of

its policies, but also who are “the people” that are supposed to be represented and hold the power in South Africa. This tactic is exactly what populism is based on, highlighting who *the people* are, creating some sort of shared or communal feeling, indicating to them that they are currently facing a crisis or hardship, and that the *elite* (be it political or economic) are responsible for this. If we put this in the context of South Africa and the EFF, the following becomes true: “The people” are *black*, the *youth* and are the *majority*, and the current *inequality* and economic hardship and unemployment they are facing is because of the policies put in place during *apartheid* which favoured the *white minority* and even in the *post-1994* period, there is still a need for greater *transformation*.

Based on the analysis conducted and the findings presented, the EFF is a populist political party based on the rhetoric employed in its 2014 and 2019 manifestos, in accordance with the criterion provided by Hawkins (2009). While it has strayed from employing the more generic populist terms, such as making constant reference to “the people” and “the elite”, the EFF has substituted this with more relevant terms, such as *minority* and *majority*, with *black* and *youth* forming its support base, and the *white, capitalists* and *minority* being cast as *the elite* in South Africa. The only way to bring about “real” change, as imagined by the EFF, is to *transform* South Africa, with *radical transformation* leading the way to dismantle the remnants of the *apartheid* system which created the inequality faced today in the *post-1994* era.

#### **4.4.2 Generic versus case-specific terms**

If one looks at the generic populist terms, one can see that there has been a decline in the 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos in the frequency of the terms under this theme. This could be explained by the fact that the EFF has tried to begin the process of creating a more unique and less “generic” populous identity in the political realm, seeking to create an identity as a populist party but also one which has identified its cohort. Furthermore, this decline can indicate that the party has begun to understand its cohort and no longer needs to use such broad generic populist terms to gain support. In saying this, the party still uses these terms, where there was a total lack of absence of the term *minority* in the 2014 manifesto, it has been used 5 times in the 2019 manifesto, and the term *majority* has increased to 22 mentions in 2019 in comparison to only 9 times in 2014. The largest decline can be seen in the term “the/our people”, which has seen a 35% decline, which supports the notion that the party has begun to clearly define its support base. This will be discussed in the following section. The term transformation has also

seen a significant decline, and this could be linked to the party presenting more concrete plans and policies in its 2019 in comparison to its 2014 manifesto.

The case-specific populist terms have seen a considerable increase in frequency. The two terms which have seen the greatest increase are *black* and *youth*, which happen to be identified by the party as members of the collective “people” which populism hinges upon. There was also an increase in the terms of *white* and *west* which could indicate that the party still maintains that these two groups form part of the “enemy” of the “people”, and thus are in indirect conflict with them. The increase in terms of *apartheid* and *post-1994* further reinforce the party’s belief that these are the two factors are responsible for creating the current difficult situation that “the people” are faced with. The data show that while there has been a decline in the generic populist terms, the case-specific populist terms have seen a significant increase of over three-fold.

This indicates that overall, the EFF is indeed populist based on its rhetoric, and while the generic populist rhetoric has declined, it has focused its efforts on creating a more focused and strategic manifesto which appeals directly to its voters, while still maintaining elements that would appeal to the broader voting cohort.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The analysis conducted on the 2014 and 2019 manifestos has resulted in an understanding of not only the classification of the EFF as a populist party based on the rhetoric it has employed, but also gaining an understanding of whether the rhetoric has changed between these two periods of time. By looking at the first part of the research question, as to whether the EFF is a populist party based on the rhetoric employed in its 2014 and 2019 election manifesto, one must reflect on the definition of populism provided. As stated by Wirth *et al* (2016:15), populism relies on three central ideas; 1) *The people*; 2) *The enemy*; and 3) *conflict*. The results have highlighted a clear identification of the people, a clear identification of who the party views as being *the enemy*, and conflict between *the people* and *the enemy* who are responsible for the current situation that *the people* are facing. As stated, there has been a decline in the generic populist terms while there has been an increase in the case-specific terms, which can indicate that the party has focused its efforts on creating a more focused and strategic manifesto which appeals directly to its voters, while still maintaining elements that would appeal to the broader voting cohort. The cohort that the EFF has identified as “the people” are those who are *black*, the *majority* and part of the *youth*, while the “enemy” are those who are *white*, part of

the *minority*, benefited from *apartheid*, and support the *capitalist* regime. It is the fault of *the enemy* who have created the problems *the people* are facing, all of which revolve on the *inequality* they face, with unemployment and poverty being the reality faced by millions.

To address the main question on whether the EFF is a populist party based on the rhetoric it employed in its 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos, the conclusion which can be drawn is that the EFF is indeed a populist party based on the rhetoric used in its 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos. There is a clear identification of *the people*, *the enemy* and a source of *conflict* which the revolves on inequality, unemployment and poverty. These identifiers correspond to the definition of populism presented by Wirth *et al*, (2016:15) and thus the EFF can be deemed to be a populist party.

Regarding the second part of the question, if the EFF has become more or less populist based on the rhetoric employed in the 2014 and 2019 manifestos, the answer is not a simple yes or no. The *generic* populist terms have seen a decline; thus, it would upon first glance indicate that the party has become less populist. When looking at the *case-specific* populist terms, however, there has been a substantial increase, which would point to the party becoming more populist. There has been an increase in the total frequency of these terms, and thus the party has become more populist, but in this regard, it has not become more populist in a *generic* sense, but in a more context/case-specific sense. This means that the party has used terms which are more relevant to its support base, and this resonates on a deeper level, indicating that the party has realised that by sharpening its focus it is able to deepen its support base. By using terms which are more relevant to the South African context, the party has the potential to garner even more support and thus more power, which translates to greater influence in policymaking which is used to further its Marxist-Leninist agenda.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Introduction

According to the World Bank's current economic outlook, growth for the South African economy has been reduced due to the tough economic climate, policy uncertainty by the government, and the issue of continued bailouts of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) due to the pressure it puts on the fiscus and increase of debt (Khumalo, 2019). Statistics released by the Reserve Bank reflect the struggling South African economy entering its 70th month of a downward cycle in September, with economic growth and business confidence declining and the outlook for growth revised to 0.6% (Naidoo, 2019). The Reserve Bank noted an increase in direct investment into the economy, however it has still maintained that the economy will not see growth rates of even 2% by 2021 (Naidoo, 2019). All of this translates into what could possibly be the lowest point in the country's economic history, even worse than during the time of international sanctions against the apartheid regime (Cotterill, 2020). The citizens are the ones who will be most directly affected, as not only would unemployment rates increase, but if the economy is downgraded the cost of credit would subsequently increase, fuel prices would also most likely increase, and the cost of living would follow this trend, leading into a tougher time for the average consumer and businesses.

The literature regarding populism not only provides a series of definitions, but also the approaches to understanding populism, the causes of populism and the threat of populism. The definition selected for the study was presented by Wirth *et al* (2016:15) is "a thin ideology which considers – in a Manichean outlook – a society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, the positively connoted 'pure people' versus the negatively connoted 'corrupt elite', and it postulates unrestricted sovereignty of the people". The threat of populism has been discussed and the potential threat that populism poses to representative democracy as populism seeks more direct forms of democracy (Müller, 2015:85)

The EFF has made its position clear in South African politics: it is the political party which goes against the grain, it is the party which aims to realise "real" change in the lives of ordinary citizens and has a plan to realise economic freedom. The reality is, however, that no party will truly be able to balance the scales of inequality that have been tipped due to the policies and undertakings of the apartheid regime, and the effects of that era will be felt beyond the next decade (Goodman, 2017). The situation at present is that while freedom and equality have been

realised through the constitution and various other legislative measures, creating economic equality is much more problematic than simply crafting laws and policies which seek to directly influence business practices and nationalisation of key assets to increase employment rates. The EFF has clearly realised that economic freedom is the key to its success as a political party, as no other party has been savvy enough to directly concentrate efforts on capturing the votes of the millions of black South Africans who are still living in poverty. While these individuals have equal rights to political participation, it is their economic and social class which has not seen much improvement since the end of apartheid. The EFF continually raises this point in its manifestos as it states that “2019 marks 25 years since the attainment of political freedom in South Africa ... [however] political freedom ... has hardly translated into observable economic emancipation” (EFF, 2019:5).

Despite the expectations at the end of apartheid and the promise of a new democratic era, where equality and non-racialism allow for the betterment of the lives of all, the freedoms attained however only allowed for the attainment of political freedom, while economic freedom has been more elusive. It is this economic freedom that the EFF has maintained as its focus and has been the main subject matter that it claims its policies are based upon. The party has realised that by offering a different political agenda, a socialist one, it is able to differentiate itself from the political parties it competes with. However, the reality is that many of its ideas are based on previous implementations and core ideas. By utilising the knowledge and political prowess that Julius Malema and other ex-ANCYL members were able to develop prior to the establishment of their own party, they were able to gain not only his first-hand experience, but also able to see the political process from the ground up, and were able to craft their own approach to gain greater support from the people, by directly addressing many other issues directly, rather than being part of a wider holistic approach like that of other parties. The EFF also states that it has a concrete and clear plan of action, with goals that it deems as being achievable, rather than being lofty. However, some of its aspirations can be delusions of grandeur, such as the notion of amending the legislation regarding loans to limit the terms and not allowing for houses to be repossessed or used as collateral.

This study aimed to achieve two things: first, can the EFF be labelled as a populist party based on the rhetoric it employs in its 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos; and second, is the EFF becoming more or less populist based on a comparison of the rhetoric used in its electoral manifestos?

## 5.2 Summary of main findings

This study has arrived at findings which not only include a classification of the EFF as a populist party but also the degree to which its populist rhetoric has changed. To answer the first part is that the EFF is indeed a populist party based on the rhetoric used in its 2014 and 2019 electoral manifestos. There is a clear identification of “the people”, “the enemy” and a source of conflict which the revolves on inequality, unemployment and poverty. The cohort that the EFF has identified as “the people” are those who are *black*, the *majority* and part of the *youth*, while “the enemy” are those who are *white*, part of the *minority*, benefited from *apartheid*, and support the *capitalist* regime. It is the fault of “the enemy” who have created the problems “the people” are facing, all of which revolve on the *inequality* they face, with unemployment and poverty being the reality faced by millions. These terms relate directly back to the definition of populism whereby “[populism is] a thin ideology which considers – in a Manichean outlook – a society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, the positively connoted ‘pure people’ versus the negatively connoted ‘corrupt elite’, and it postulates unrestricted sovereignty of the people.” (Wirth *et al*, 2016:15).

Regarding the second part of the question, which looked at whether the EFF has become more populist based on the rhetoric employed in the 2014 and 2019 manifestos, the answer is not simply a yes. The *generic* populist terms have seen a decline; thus, it would indicate that the party has become less populist. When looking at the *case-specific* populist terms, however, there has been a major increase, which would point to the party becoming more populist. There has been an increase in the total frequency of these terms, and thus the party has become more populist, but in this regard, the EFF has not become more populist in a *generic* sense, but rather in a more context/case-specific sense. This means that the party has used terms which are more relevant to its support base and this resonates with the support base on a deeper level, indicating that it has realised that by sharpening its focus, it is able to deepen its support base. By using terms which are more relevant to the South African context, the EFF has the potential to garner even more support and thus more power, which translates to greater influence in policymaking which is used to further its Marxist-Leninist agenda.

## 5.3 Implications of findings

The findings presented in this study have made it evident that the EFF is indeed a populist party and has become more populist in terms of the case-specific terms it has used. Moving forward, it is difficult to determine what the future of the party will be. However, there is the potential

for it to become a more “professional” party. This professionalism could manifest as the party begins to realise that it needs to not only participate in the theatre of the political arena, but also contribute in a meaningful way. This meaningful contribution is bolstered by taking greater care in the language used and the statements made, to reduce the controversy its members can sometimes be embroiled in. An example of this controversy are the comments and actions of EFF members during an incident regarding a retail store and the advertisement of a specific brand’s haircare products, which was viewed as racist towards black women (Dayamani, 2020). The action taken by the party resulted in not only protests but also utterances of violence and the threat to burn down a hospital by certain party members who claimed to be following the instructions of the party leader, Julius Malema (Dayamani, 2020). Another EFF member harassed a journalist attempting to report on the protest outside the retail store in the Western Cape, and a senior EFF member, Mbuyiseni Ndlozi, tweeted that the EFF member had not harassed her but merely touched her, a tweet which was viewed by the media as tone deaf and irresponsible by Ndlozi himself (Sefularo, 2020).

As the party grows, it is conceivable that its message and radical ideas will begin to become more diluted as it must appease more members and supporters, and in doing so, might lose its individualism, which might result in similarities to the very type of party that it was initially critical of. There is also the possibility that the party could begin to crack, with in-fighting occurring as members fight for the party to maintain its relevance, not only within the party’s upper echelons, but also within the political arena (Burnett, 2016). The main problem with the EFF is that, even though it is a socialist party, there is still an air of personality cult about the way in which Julius Malema is not only the face of the party but also its main mouthpiece. Additionally, Malema is on the front lines, often seems to hold all the cards and it is as if he sits at the top of the hierarchy.

The risk that the party, and populism, poses to the democratic system of governance can be realised in the favouring of direct democracy and policies which go against the liberal free-market norms. The potential for more populist parties being established could be what poses a greater risk to democratic consolidation, as there would be a decline in support of the democratic parties and a favouring of non-democratic parties. This rise of non-democratic parties could disrupt the democratic norms and functions of the government, and this could cause greater instability in society as political fracturing could create factions within the greater society. This could be the greater threat, not just to democratic consolidation but also to creating

conflict within society between factions that could be based on economic class. Archetti, Cammack and Roberts (1987) discussed how populism in industrialised Europe was based on a class struggle between the working class and the elite who were seen to be exploiting the workers, and thus the conflict between the classes began to shift politics away from liberal democratic principles and towards left-wing socialist rhetoric. Westheuser (2020) looks at Brexit, which is the United Kingdom's break away from the European Union, and how Nigel Farage, leader of the Brexit Party, was able to capture the support of "the people" by creating a sense of attachment through the shared practices, culture and points of view. All those that were part of this shared culture were part of the working class, while those who did not were viewed as "the others", while "the elite" did not wish to associate themselves with the working-class culture (Westheuser, 2020). This class conflict points to an alienation of "the people" by "the elite", which can thus result in resentment and ultimately class conflict.

As stated previously by Mouzelis (1985:342), the danger that populism poses becomes evident when an organisation or institutional approach is taken in that populism is viewed as an attempt to subvert the formal established political institutions which have been framed as being disconnected from "the people". Populist parties, on either the left or right, can have policies which aim to implement specific changes that would reduce or result in the redundancy of some existing and established democratic institutions, all to fulfil their agenda, however this results in the democratic deconsolidation (Hadiz & Chrysosgelos, 2017). This highlights the potential for the EFF to weaken or even dismantle democratic institutions to realise the policies set out in its electoral manifesto. This potential risk for democratic deconsolidation, coupled with the Marxist-Leninist agenda can be reflected in the sentiment shared by Müller (2018:85) whereby populists are not only anti-elitist but also anti-pluralists, favouring more direct forms of democracy and a shift away from the current system of governance.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for future research**

Given the relevance of populism in the global political arena, it would be a fruitful endeavour to explore in greater depth the populist movement in Africa, given the decline of democratic states in the continent (Olewe, 2019). Much of the literature on populism is focused on the West, Europe and South America and thus it would be relevant to look at Africa (Mudde (2004); Müller, 2016; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013; Moffitt & Tormey, 2014). Additionally, studies into the lifespan of a populist party could be conducted, as this could provide further insight into the longevity of a populist party and how it changes and evolves. It would be

intriguing to see if the populist party continues with either left-wing or right-wing ideology, or if, in its ambition to garner more votes, it abandons its more extreme views and shifts towards centrist ideals in a bid to appeal to a wider voter base.

Another area of research could focus on whether or not populism, as a political strategy and rhetoric, is more akin to being an astute politician and their strategy, or if it is truly a unique phenomenon or movement. This research would utilise a framework and criteria to identify populist strategy and rhetoric, and then compare it with the characteristics that associated with prominent politicians within a specific context. The overlap of characteristics would provide a base of comparison, and other characteristics would provide a series of contrasts.

Another area of research could be delving into political change with specific focus on the linkage between populism and revolutions, and whether there is causality, in that the increase in populism deconsolidates the existing system of governance and results in revolution. The rationale for this research would be to first understand the potential risk that populism poses, and second, the role of populism in political change. If one looks at apartheid, the ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP) promoted ideals and saw themselves as representing “the people”, who were the black majority who were oppressed by the government (Anwar, 2017). The result of this was the eventual demise of the oppressive apartheid regime and the establishment of a democratic system of governance and equality. However, if one looks at the current political arena, it would seem there continues to be a majority who are still poor, unemployed and marginalised.

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