In Search of a New Zealand Populism

Heresthetics, Character and Populist Political Leadership

By

Ben Thomas McLachlan

A thesis
submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Political Science

Victoria University of Wellington

2013

Contents

Abstract

Populism, an academically contested political theory, has been subject to few thorough studies in the New Zealand context. With a history of strong, successful leaders, and fervent political rebels, New Zealand provides a useful political context in which the theoretical platform for what constitutes populism can be explored. While the current pre-eminent model of New Zealand-centric populist leadership is Barry Gustafson's six point framework, this thesis will posit that adopting a multi-methodological approach is able to explain the nuances of New Zealand populism more effectively. Traditional international approaches to populist theory, such as those of Panizza and Laclau, are introduced to provide context on the wider literature on populism. In a challenge to Gustafson's model, which closely matches the definitions of Panizza and Laclau, the social choice theorems of Riker's heresthetics are introduced to provide a counter-explanation for populist leadership. The study applies the theories of traditional populism and heresthetics to three case studies of New Zealand leaders; John A. Lee, Winston Peters, and Richard Seddon. Through application of Gustafson's model to these leaders, we see that his criteria are only significantly met in the cases of Lee and Peters, while the criteria are only partially met in the case of Seddon. In regards to Seddon, Riker's heresthetics and the theorems of Panizza and Laclau equally explain his populism. After classifying the populism of each case study, an attempt is made to explain why each selected leader was drawn to a particular style of populism, and it is posited that Renshon's construct of relatedness, a dimension of his over-arching theory of character, can provide a qualitative answer to this question. These case studies demonstrate that populist leadership in New Zealand needs to be seen as a continuum, in which populist leaders vary in the degree to which they fit within particular theoretical classifications, and that a multi-methodological approach is necessary to explain the nuances of each case. The study posits that this approach will aid further study, particularly when analysing modern leaders that employ a milder variant of populism.

Abbreviations

ACT   Association of Consumers and Taxpayers

BA   Bachelor of Arts

BHP   Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited

BNZ   Bank of New Zealand

DLP   Democratic Labour Party

DSLP   Democratic Soldier Labour Party

IRD   Inland Revenue Department

MC   Master of Ceremonies

MMP   Mixed Member Proportional

MP   Member of Parliament

NZEF   New Zealand Expeditionary Force

NZF   New Zealand First

NZ First New Zealand First

PR   Public Relations

RSA   Returned Servicemen's Association

TVNZ   Television New Zealand

US   United States of America

List of Figures and Tables

Chapter One - Introduction

Any attempt to explore populist leadership in New Zealand should address relevant theoretical elements, and analyse appropriately specific case studies. This examination of populism in the New Zealand context will firstly introduce and review theories relevant to populist leadership, before embarking on a detailed analysis of three selected New Zealand case studies, in which theoretical frameworks are applied to test their validity, producing findings that represent a more nuanced understanding of populism in New Zealand than the extant literature. The study will therefore offer new theoretical tools for use in future studies of populism phenomena.

Theoretical description and analysis is contained in chapter 2, where the relevant literature on populism is discussed. Four separate theoretical schools will be introduced: those of European political theorists Laclau and Panizza; followed by Barry Gustafson's dominant domestic model of populism; and the game-theory driven approach of William Riker. The internationally orthodox conceptions of populism are presented first, ostensibly to give the study a broad definition and understanding of populism, while also providing the first theoretical instrument to be later applied to the case studies. Following this, the pre-eminent model of populist leadership in New Zealand, Barry Gustafson's six-point framework, is presented, and its centrality to this study is explained. Due to the limitations of the Gustafson model the strategic approach of Riker's heresthetics is introduced as a different prism for analysing aspects of populist leadership. While the three theoretical frameworks introduced at this stage attempt to categorise the style of populism employed by a leader, one crucial dimension of Renshon's character formulation is brought into the study to help explain why each leader is drawn, consciously or unconsciously, to either traditional populism or the heresthetic approach. This qualitative explanation adds a unique dimension to this study. Whereas previous studies of populist leadership in New Zealand have sought to categorise populists, this study also attempts to explain why each populist leader analysed made the political decisions that defined their particular style of

populism. Following the literature review, the preceding theories are applied in the following three chapters to three non-controversial selections of populist New Zealand politicians - Labour rebel John A. Lee (chapter 3), New Zealand First leader Winston Peters (chapter 4), and New Zealand's most acclaimed Premier, Richard Seddon (chapter 5). Following the case studies, in chapter 6, further analytical insights drawn from one dimension of Renshon's character-focused theory help qualitatively explain each of the populist variants in this study. Finally, in the concluding chapter 7 the major findings of this study will be discussed in terms of both their theoretical contribution to the understanding of populism in the New Zealand context and their utility for future research directions into populism.

What follows below is an introduction of the crucial concepts used in this study, incorporating both populism and Renshon's depiction of character, as well as methodological issues associated with case study selection and this study's set of driving hypotheses.

Traditional Definition of Populism

The study uses the traditional populism theories of Ernesto Laclau and Francisco Panizza to provide a theoretical tool for the analysis of leaders, particularly those who are consistently anti-establishment in their politics. The theorems were selected due to their clear views on populism as a concept. Much of the literature surrounding populism focused on particular populist leaders, selected regions (mostly South America), political parties, or institutional milieus. Laclau and Panizza offer similar, but subtly different approaches to defining populism as both a theory and a concept. Their theories are particularly useful because they are removed from contexts, whether individual or situational, and therefore are not weighed down by the ideological and methodological baggage of other specific international approaches. In the literature review a detailed analysis will show that Panizza sees populism as an 'anti-status quo' discourse, established through a process of a populist leader naming a 'people' and an 'other'. Laclau, however, views populism as a political category, although similarly

formed by dividing society into in- and out- groups, with the rise of a populist leader crucial in defining the 'political logic' that constitutes populism. Each case study in this study will be analysed through the lens of Panizza and Laclau's traditional populism, in order to test the hypothesis that we need to view populist leadership in New Zealand as a continuum, and that we should, accordingly, expect leaders to vary from a purely populist approach to a milder form of strategic populism. This analysis will demonstrate that Peters and Lee match these traditional approaches to pure populism, while Seddon can be viewed more as a hybrid populist leader: a strategic leader who was willing to compromise, but one also grounded in the language and heritage of populism.

Gustafson's Model

The current pre-eminent model of New Zealand populist leadership is Barry Gustafson's six-point framework, as found in Raymond Miller and Michael Mintrom's *Political Leadership in New Zealand.* As such, this model is the logical starting point for a study related to populist leaders in New Zealand. The model establishes six defining points that Gustafson claims need to be met for a leader to be labelled populist. Gustafson's views of the three case study leaders are canvassed fully in the literature review. Particular application of Gustafson's model to each leader occurs in each individual case study chapter, and will empirically demonstrate the strength of the model in explaining variants of populism. This study hypothesizes that while Gustafson's model is useful and accurate, particularly for defining leaders who more closely embody the traditional populist ideal, it has limitations in that it does not effectively encapsulate populist leaders who employ a milder, more subtle variant of populism. The rigidity of the model when faced with this variant of populist leader is the crucial limitation of Gustafson's theory, and the empirical evidence found in the case study chapters demonstrates that a more nuanced model is necessary to be able to explain variations in the form that populist leadership adopts. This is clearest after the application of the model to Richard Seddon. Political leaders such as Seddon are

more willing to compromise, and are more electorally and legislatively successful than traditional populists, particularly once in government. These leaders embrace a strategic approach to political positioning, and the study hypothesizes that a new theoretical framework, outside of traditional populist approaches, needs to be applied to the case studies to better understand the role of strategy in populist leadership.

Additional Insights – Heresthetics

In chapter 2, the study identifies a political theory that can be effectively used to analyze the strategy of populist leaders. Through a reading of Seddon's political career, it is evident that this populist leader was also adept at political positioning, deft strategy, and successful compromise and horse trading. William Riker's theory of heresthetics, identified initially in research for this study in the excellent work done by Jack Nagel on Richard Seddon, was selected due to its clear theoretical structure, and the wide applicability of its framework to successful, popular leaders. Heresthetics, at its core, is concerned with the strategy-value of sentences, and theorises that a leader can manipulate their political environment. It also states that leaders can destabilise their political opponents, while restricting their opponent's policy choices; and argues that heresthetic leaders can achieve legislative successes without having to change the previously-held political positions of the electorate. In the literature review Riker's theorems are explained in detail, a conceptual model for heresthetical action provided by Kenneth Shepsle is also discussed, and various scholarly critiques of the theory are canvassed. The study hypothesises that Seddon, due to his strategic mastery of political institutions and electoral alliances throughout his time in power, will most strongly resemble Riker's heresthetician, while Peters and Lee will more closely resemble more traditional populist theory, as well as Gustafson's model. Heresthetic theory will be applied to empirical evidence from each case study to test these hypotheses, and will be contrasted with historical examples of the leader making decisions that signal a traditional populist approach.

Qualitative Explanation – Renshon and Character

The final theorem introduced in the literature review is to focus on one aspect of Stanley A. Renshon's three foundations of character: namely, the domain of relatedness, or how an individual relates to others. This was introduced because of a need in this study to provide an explanation that attempts to qualitatively depict each leader's particular expression of populism, rather than categorising or describing the career of a leader, which is the main function of the previous theories. This means that the study has a theoretical tool that can provide a 'why' answer in relation to differing types of populist leaders, rather than just 'what' type of populist they are. Through the application of this theory to the case studies, qualitative explanations can then be posited, rather than just quantitative descriptions. Renshon's theory was chosen because his model is broad in scope, and can be separated into sections that are of varying use, enabling the study to focus on the most relevant theoretical tool to provide reasons that explain differences in populist styles. Renshon's model was designed to be applied to U.S presidential candidates - leaders who are seeking high office, and looking for broad popular support. It was deemed that this was a good fit, also, in the New Zealand setting, as domestic leaders also are driven by the same psychological processes irrespective of institutional or cultural differences between the United States and New Zealand-styled democracy. Renshon applied his model effectively to his case studies in *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates,* the source book for his theory, by analysing the leader's careers and decisions through the scope of their career. This study's focus on political careers and the decisions made by leaders further reinforces the validity of selecting Renshon's domain of relatedness for this study.

While Renshon's theory is centred on his three 'foundations of character' - ambition, character integrity and relatedness - only relatedness will be applied in the subsequent case studies. This is because it is considered that differences in relatedness – how each subject's patterns of 'relatedness' facilitated or hampered their populist causes and

leadership of them – are a crucial explanatory variable. A leader's capacity to relate to others and their stance in relationships is found to be crucial for predicting populist style. The more a leader is able to move towards people naturally, the more likely it is that the leader will be able to employ successful heresthetics, compromise, and cajole. Anti-establishment stances are fed by a political character defined by moving away or against people. The theorised milder variant of populism is only possible if the leader is effective at maintaining and entering into strategically useful close relationships. Further study, with a wider group of case studies, may demonstrate that relatedness is also a predetermination for the success of a populist leader: legislatively, electorally, and particularly in terms of the ability to reach their political system's highest elected office. The ability to be flexible and willing to compromise, and to sacrifice some rigid character integrity stances, also appears to be a crucial variable for successful heresthetics.

Case Study Chapters – Subject, Selection and Justification

Following the literature review, the aforementioned case studies are analysed in detail. These are comprised of an abbreviated political biography on each leader, and sections that apply the two competing theoretical schools, populism and heresthetics, testing their validity and usefulness in explaining each leader. This is done by identifying practical examples of decisions made by the leader that indicates either a populist or a heresthetic disposition. The theoretical hypothesis regarding where each leader fits on the populist continuum is rigorously tested by the identification of counter-examples that seek to disprove these assumptions. Following the presentation of this empirical evidence, as mentioned previously, the Gustafson model is applied to each case study, to test its validity, and to determine how it is linked to the relative strength of traditional populism or heresthetics found in each leader's career. Concluding remarks are then presented, summarising the historical information and making the theoretical analysis.

Selection of the leaders to analyse in this study was done through a deliberate method, in which options were narrowed down to a small group of leaders of which something important regarding populism in New Zealand could be gleaned. An initial list was compiled from the leaders deemed to be populists by Barry Gustafson, as part of his study into populist leadership in New Zealand. The first leader to be chosen for the study, and the one who was the closest to being self-selecting, was Winston Peters. Peters was chosen for three reasons. Firstly, his name is often the first which comes to mind for many when positing a question about populism in New Zealand, and his role in the public consciousness has spanned decades, leaving his style of politics clear in the minds of followers of politics. Secondly, as both a rebel MP in a major party, and the leader of a political vehicle that embodied his populism, two differing political spheres are available in his career in which to test theoretical assumptions. Thirdly, Peters has served as both a popular Opposition MP, and as a Minister in both Labour and National governments, providing the study with further historical insights into his natural dispositions.

John A. Lee was selected as an ideological counter-weight to Peters, similarly a strong orator, a rebel within his own party, and unwilling to compromise, but from the left, as a long-time socialist and member of the labour movement. Lee also fell out with party leadership, and eventually formed his own party, moulded in his image, in a similar fashion to Peters. Lee, however, was more strongly associated with political ideology, namely socialism, than Peters, whose brand of independence and nationalism was not as clear and thoroughly defined. This point makes Lee a useful contrast to Peters, when examining subtle differences in traditional populist leaders.

The decision to select Richard Seddon for this study stemmed from three factors. Firstly, Seddon was a highly successful political leader, arguably the most successful leader identified as a populist by Gustafson. Therefore, an analysis that would attempt to explain the reasons for the success of his populism was desirable. Secondly, as Premier, Seddon wielded more power than individuals selected in the other case

studies, and an examination of the behaviour of a populist Prime Minister was deemed to be useful to add a further layer of depth to the study. Thirdly, the flexibility and willingness to compromise that is evident in Seddon's career was in stark contrast to the conduct of Peters and Lee. This factor, allied with the decision to employ Riker's theorems and Renshon's foundations of character in the study in an attempt to explain this phenomenon, meant that this case study could be used as an empirical counter-point to traditional populism.

Summary of Hypotheses

Before the application of theories to the case studies, the study is grounded in a hypothesis, based on a brief reading of the careers of each leader. This hypothesis is multi-faceted, and attempts to predict the results of the application of all four theoretical frameworks; Laclau and Panizza, Gustafson, Riker and Renshon. Firstly, it is hypothesised that the study will find notable differences between the case studies, in how each subject's populism can be categorised. This divergence is expected to be clearest when comparing Seddon to Peters and Lee. Peters and Lee appear to more closely fit the six criteria in Gustafson's model, and also employ a brand of populism that, more actively than Seddon, is anti-establishment in the style of Panizza and Laclau. Peters and Lee are predicted to be close examples of 'pure' populism. Differences between the two are expected to be notable, due to their ideological placement. Seddon, however, as a product of his early life and career, is still grounded in the populism of his time, and examples of active defining of a 'people' and an 'other' are also evident in his case. It is hypothesised that what will separate Seddon is the strategic mastery he held over the political and institutional milieu; his ability and willingness to employ heresthetics, his focus on the strategy-value of decisions, and his readiness to compromise and make deals, ultimately lead to his political success and maintenance of power. It is expected that examples of Lee and Peters employing successful heresthetics will be limited. It is also hypothesised that Renshon's character

domain of relatedness can provide a qualitative explanation about why each leader is drawn towards their style of populism, consciously or unconsciously.

The concluding chapter of this study will draw together the major findings drawn from the case studies to provide a more nuanced understanding of populist behaviour in the New Zealand context as well as point to future research directions which can further enhance understanding of populism and populist leadership phenomena.

Chapter Two - Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

In order to better explain the nature of New Zealand populism, this study is grounded in theoretical frameworks that will be used to analyze the leadership case studies. In this chapter, the four key frameworks of populism, Barry Gustafson's model of populist leadership, heresthetics and Renshon's character theorems, and the literature associated with them, will be presented and reviewed.

The first theoretical framework consists of two differing approaches that seek to explain popular leadership using orthodox populist theory, which are drawn from leading internationalist theorists. Following that, the current preeminent model of New Zealand populism, Barry Gustafson's six point model of populist leadership, will be discussed. This model will be applied to each case study; but it is posited that, because of flaws in the model, a revised and enhanced model can better explain New Zealand populism. In its current form, Gustafson's model does not encapsulate some of the leaders it deems to be populist, and a more flexible approach is necessary in order to provide a more inclusive approach to future study of the field.

The third concept introduced is the social choice-based paradigm of William Riker's heresthetics, to provide an alternative explanation. Finally, the psychological approach of Stanley Renshon's three foundations of character is identified as a method to assess a leader's personal qualities and explain qualitative differences in their leadership posture.

<div align="center">

Populism

</div>

In *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy,* Francisco Panizza presents a symptomatic reading of populism that acknowledges that the analytical core of populism is the constitution of the *people* as a political actor. Panizza's approach draws both from empirical definitions of populism that consist of a series of characteristics, and

historical definitions that focus on periods of history where populism has been politically salient.[1]

Populism, under this paradigm, is what Panizza terms an 'anti-status quo discourse' between the 'people' and the 'other'. This discourse, as its name suggests, has at its heart a reaction against authority and predetermined structure. Here, populism is a mode of identification, in which the 'people' and the 'other' are established through a process of naming by populist forces, a period of antagonism in which sides attempt to define each other as the 'other'. Until this process occurs, often provoked by a charismatic leader, who exactly the 'people' and the 'other' are is unclear.[2]

Panizza describes the process of naming the 'people' as being based on perception and labelling, stating that differing actors view the people as an entity as "both lewd and virtuous, both irrational and an embodiment of the nation's true values, both a threat to democracy and the holders of sovereignty".[3] The concept of the 'people' depends both on a sense of internal homogeneity and on a sense of external homogeneity, against which an identity can be formed. This reactive process produces the identity that runs counter to the people, the 'other'. Panizza states that this identity is as diverse as the identity of the people, and can range from plutocrats, oligarchs and landed elites to welfare recipients, ethnic minorities and immigrants. The 'other' is constantly redefined through populist language and the moves of a populist leader, and Panizza notes that this is most starkly noticeable when a populist campaigner becomes part of the governing structure themselves.[4]

Peter Worsley identifies the concept of populism as a syndrome, rather than as an ideology. Ernesto Laclau elaborates on this in *On Populist Reason*, stating that Worsley sees populism as a 'dimension of politics', which can appear in different political

---

[1] Francisco Panizza*, Populism and the Mirror of Democracy,* in Francisco Panizza (ed.), *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, London, 2005, p. 3
[2] Panizza, pp. 3-4
[3] Panizza*,* p. 16
[4] Panizza, pp. 16-18

movements.[5] Laclau agrees with Worsley's general direction, stating that it is impossible to define populism in a universal, normative fashion, and therefore it is difficult to identify the effects of populism on political movements.[6]

Ernesto Laclau presents a similar view of populism to that of Panizza, stating that "populism requires the dichotomist division of society into two camps - one presenting itself as a part which claims to be the whole; and that this dichotomy involves the antagonistic division of the social field".[7] This concept also involves an active division, a process of naming in the language of Panizza, producing the in and out groups necessary for a populist movement to flourish.

Laclau identifies two important aspects of populism, the populist symbol and the populist leader. Laclau writes that while populist symbols are often dismissed as 'imprecise' or 'vague', it is not because of ideological or political underdevelopment of these symbols; rather it is due to the fact that their creation takes place on what he terms 'radically heterogeneous social terrain'.[8] Laclau explains that the heterogeneity of a populist camp means that a symbol produced by such a movement, such as a flag or song, cannot be reduced to just what it expresses, rather that the process of its creation is as important.[9] Laclau refers to the populist leader as a form of popular symbol or identity who actively, rather than passively, constitutes an expression of populism, and claims that the rise and clear identification of such a leader is often the decisive moment in establishing the unity of a populist logic. The leader is not neutral or transparent; rather, they are actively part of the populism and the 'people' themselves.[10]

There are two important factors that make up Laclau's theory of populism: logic and naming. His first assertion is that populism is not a movement in the mould of Panizza's

---

[5] Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, New York, 2005, p. 13
[6] Ibid.
[7] Laclau, p. 83
[8] Laclau, pp. 98-99
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

populism; it is what he terms a 'political logic'.[11] Political logic derives from the theory of social logic, which Laclau describes as a "rarefied system of statements – that is to say, a system of rules drawing a horizon within which some objects are represented while others are excluded".[12] Laclau states that political logic differs from social logic in that it does not merely follow rules, but occurs out of social demands and is inherent to any process of social change. Crucially, marking populism as a constructed phenomenon, it involves the formation of internal frontiers and the identification of an institutionalized 'other'.[13]

Further reinforcing the concept of populist constructivism, Laclau states that establishing populist in and out groups involves an active form of conscious naming by either the leader or the leadership of a populist vehicle, in a process which does not express a previously given unity of the group.[14] The effect of this is that the populist logic is only named in a nominal fashion, and is not grounded in any one sector of society, unlike the traditional movements of left and right.[15] Laclau explains that this means that "the limits between the demands it is going to embrace and those it is going to exclude will be blurred, and subjected to permanent challenge. Social reality is to a large extent heterogeneous and fluctuating. This means that the language of populist discourse is always going to be imprecise and fluctuating".[16]

According to Laclau, there are obstacles and limits to the construction of the concept of the 'people', and the complex process can fail to achieve its aims.[17] Laclau states that "political identities are the result of the articulation of the opposed logics of equivalence and difference, and the mere fact that the balance between these logics is broken by one of the two poles prevailing beyond a certain point over the other, is enough to cause the 'people' as a political actor to disintegrate. If social heterogeneity

---

[11] Laclau, p. 117
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Laclau, p. 200

(difference) prevails, there is no possibility for establishing an equivalential chain in the first place. Total equivalence, on the other hand, would collapse into mere identity, a homogenous mass, making the emergence of the 'people' as a collective actor impossible".[18]

Laclau concludes by claiming that the 'people' is a political category; it is neither a group, nor part of the traditional social structure.[19] The 'people' is a construction, formed from a plurality of heterogeneous single parts, a social demand that becomes whole through what Laclau describes as an asymmetry with the community as a whole and the plebs, who view themselves as the community's true voice.[20]

Gustafson's Model of New Zealand Populism

Gustafson writes that 'Vox Populi', the voice of the people, is crucial in all democratic and non-democratic societies. Governments look to form support based on defining group identity and shared interest that contrasts with those appealed to by 'others'.[21] This can be seen as a populist approach, but can also be seen in traditional political approaches.

A crucial aspect of populism is the vagaries of the concept. In his *Populist Roots of Political Leadership in New Zealand*, Gustafson identifies two methods of defining populism and the populist. The first definition describes a political leader or movement that can mobilise broad popular support. Gustafson considers this to be a loose definition, while his second definition is 'stricter' and delves deeper into the crux of the prism posited in this thesis,[22] providing a method to filter through the psychological and character-based traits of the analysed New Zealand leaders. The definition is as follows: populist movements are 'movements of protest against governments or

---

[18] Ibid.
[19] Laclau, p. 224
[20] Ibid.
[21] Barry Gustafson*, Populist roots of political leadership in New Zealand*, in Raymond Miller and Michael Mintrom (eds.), *Political Leadership in New Zealand*, Auckland University Press, 2006, p. 51
[22] Ibid.

parties seen as entrenched defenders of the existing political, economic and social order'.[23]

Gustafson breaks down the core values of these movements, stating that the 'essence' of populism is a belief in the collective judgement of the 'ordinary' or 'mainstream' citizen, in contrast to the elites that make up powerful institutions, and minority interests that threaten the homogeneity and status of the majority or plurality 'common man'.[24] A populist politician must communicate the 'people's interests' against those of the political, academic and business elite, and often come to embody the movement itself, as the quintessential ordinary person made good, a first among equals.[25]

Gustafson and the 'Populist Leader' – The Theoretical Model

Gustafson's definition of a populist leader in a democratic system encompasses those leaders who demonstrate a set of characteristics first sighted in modern times in the People's Party in late 19th century rural America. The model is as follows:

1. The leader claims to know what 'ordinary' people desire and believe, in contrast to corrupted and ignorant political parties and leaders of the established elite.

2. The leader draws their support from the marginalised and out-of-power, particularly during periods of recession and rapid change.

3. The leader is anti-elitist, and sees hidden agendas behind decisions that affect business and government, that are detrimental to the 'silent majority'.

4. The leader is nationalistic, inward looking and opposed to foreign 'meddling' or investment. This can sometimes be ethnocentric and racist. Immigration is a common issue in which a 'them-us' divide is forged.

---

[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

5. The leader uses a simplified nostalgia to hark back to a 'Golden Age' of prosperity and security.

6. The leader is the operational leader of the movement, section or party but comes to embody it publically.[26]

These characteristics are summed up by Gustafson as involving a 'deep sense of injustice',[27] and being grounded in a romantic rather than rational reaction to the decay of society through social and cultural change, and the influence of organised 'elite' special interests.[28]

Gustafson's Views on Populist Leaders in New Zealand

Gustafson directly considers the three leaders that provide the case studies for this thesis.

Richard Seddon is described by Gustafson as claiming to understand and represent the relative have-nots in a society devastated by depressions, and as the foe of urban bankers, businessmen and large landowners. He offered strong leadership towards a 'fair society'.[29]

According to Gustafson, John A. Lee practised the 'politics of victimhood', through sparkling oratory, novels and essays. A decorated wounded veteran and avowed socialist, Lee criticised bankers and trade union officials alike, and became a rebel within the party caucus. Gustafson states that Lee viciously attacked his colleagues, particularly his enemy Labour Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage, for not living up to their socialist principles through policy that would help the working man. Lee was also socially liberal for his time, unafraid to talk of sex and moral issues, and a supporter of aspects of women's rights. He formed the Democratic Soldier Labour

---

[26] Gustafson, p. 54
[27] Ibid.
[28] Gustafson, p. 53-54
[29] Gustafson, pp. 56-66

Party, which, despite a flurry of initial activity, became a one man band after unsuccessful nationwide campaigns.[30]

Gustafson describes Winston Peters as a 'charming and courageous, if egocentric, politician who over a long period built his personal reputation, against the political, bureaucratic, business, financial and intellectual elite'.[31] He claims that Peters viewed the sale of NZ assets to foreign interests as a threat to national sovereignty, and launched his New Zealand First party with populist rhetoric such as 'the relegated, denigrated and forgotten people will hold politicians to account and will restore honest government in the interests of all to New Zealand'.[32] Peters launched into personal crusades against what he saw as corruption, most notably the Winebox inquiry, which left Peters personally out of pocket. Peters has spoken on immigration, law and order, and race relations as prominent populist issues, and often ran successful election campaigns, to large success for a minor party leader, on these issues.[33] Peters has often been ahead of the curve with populist issues, with major parties co- opting them in an attempt to tap into Peters' constituency and rob him of support. Gustafson writes of Peters' excellent platform speaking and television performance as useful tools in communicating his clear populist message to the public. Peters has retained popularity with certain groups for the last 20 years, particularly the elderly, in his role as 'voice for the voiceless'.[34]

Heresthetics

Renowned theorist and political scientist William H. Riker termed the concept of heresthetics through his work on social choice theory and equilibrium, creating an important new tool in the discourses of leadership and electoral analysis. The word itself comes from the root of an Ancient Greek word, *haresis*, meaning 'the act of choosing'.

---

[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

Riker writes in *The Art of Political Manipulation* that his concept is related to rhetoric, the art of verbal persuasion, but differs on three key points. First there is more 'eloquence and elegance' involved in heresthetics, whereas rhetoric is more of a blunt tool used to convey a constant view.[35] Second, Riker argues that political victors can succeed using heresthetics without needing the persuasive quality of rhetoric; rather, they win because they have constructed a situation for themselves so that other people will want to join them, either without realising, or feeling forced to do so through circumstance.[36] Finally, unlike rhetoric, heresthetics must be done from some point of political influence or strategic placement, making practice more difficult for the novice than rhetoric, as a leadership position of some sort must be attained first.[37]

Riker places heresthetic amongst the traditional liberal arts of language, which men use to control their surroundings, and states that if his discovery had been identified in the Greek age, it would have been as common and as teachable as the other arts. According to Riker, the arts of language are as follows: logic, which is concerned with the truth-value of sentences; grammar, which is concerned with the communication-value of sentences; rhetoric, which is concerned with the persuasion-value of sentences; and finally, as a new addition to the traditional arts, heresthetic, which is concerned with the *strategy-value* of sentences.[38] This focus on strategy indicates why heresthetics is a valid tool for the analysis of politics, where strategy is of paramount importance for the acquisition and maintenance of power.

Riker came to this realisation of a new art of language through social choice theory, which explains how the preferences of individual members of a group are amalgamated into a decision for the group as a whole. The theory came before the art, unlike the original three arts of language, and strategic manipulation played a large part in this process, in what is termed *game theory*.[39] Riker explains that theorists

---

[35] William H. Riker, *The Art of Political Manipulation*, Yale University Press, 1986, p. IX
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Riker, p. X
[39] Ibid.

began to group together empirical applications of the strategic theory, and that he could see that these events and decisions could be compiled in the same way that the traditional arts of language could be compiled.[40] A new tool for understanding this intersection of theory was necessary, and this process led to the labelling of heresthetics as a theoretical tool.[41]

Kenneth Shepsle writes in *Losers in Politics* that pre-heresthetics, politics was viewed as an equilibrium, in which events were the equilibria of a process, and the result, a winning candidate or policy, was the equilibrium. Shepsle states that Riker's work on social choice theory, which gave way to heresthetics, changed this; he claims that his results showed that in most situations equilibrium did not exist, and therefore equilibrium theory was fundamentally flawed.[42]

Shepsle elaborates that in a political process, such as an election or the attempted passage of legislation, a winner can be named, but the winner was not the equilibrium (the middle point) of a constant underlying process. Rather, a given winner was a provisional choice that could be amended at the next possible opportunity.[43] Shepsle's point that disequilibrium is the human condition of politics is crucial in understanding the concept of heresthetics.[44] In an interview with William Riker, Shepsle uncovers insights into the rationalisation of heresthetic theory. Riker states that the natural harmony present in classical economics is absent in politics, explaining the lack of equilibrium.[45] Riker critiques the attempts by theorists to explain outcomes through rigid models, contrasting these attempts with the strategic flexibility of heresthetic analysis. Riker states that "theoretical models are insufficiently attentive to the process by which outcomes result, whether with an equilibrium or not. Models often have fixed and given points and statements – who fixes the models? Who gives the points? The

---

[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Kenneth A. Shepsle, *Losers in Politics (And How They Sometimes Become Winners): William Riker's Heresthetic,* in *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 2, June 2003, p. 308
[43] Shepsle, pp. 309-310
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

manoeuvring of political entrepreneurs with respect to models cannot always be taken as fixed and part of the background. Models cannot always explain this. Points of the theoretical chain aren't fixed in politics".[46]

Shepsle presents a common theoretical model used to explain outcomes, and explains why it is flawed when viewing it through the context of heresthetic manoeuvring. The model used is mapped out as: N (agents) + A (actions) + U (utility functions) + G (mapping) = Final Outcomes.[47] The comfortable equilibrium and re-equilibrium of winners and losers is severely tested and shown to be false when the strategy-value of actors implementing heresthetics is apparent.[48]

Shepsle presents the following points to demonstrate this:

- **Politicians seek to influence who the relevant set of agents is – changing the set (N)**

Example: A city manager who arranged a gerrymander of the city council districts to ensure that the set N of city councillors would possess a partisan majority favourable to keeping her in her job.[49]

- **Politicians invent new actions – the set (A) is not fixed**

Example: US Speaker of the House of Representatives, Thomas Reed, redefined the manner in which quorums were counted – changing it so the minority tactic of not voting could not stop a bill – declaring it within the Speaker's power to count members as "present and counting toward a quorum".[50]

- **Politicians frame the evaluation of outcomes by others in order to improve the chances of the ones they most desire – they seek to change agent preferences – utility functions - (U)**

---

[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

Example: US Senator Warren G. Magnuson (D-Washington) made the issue of moving nerve gas from Guam across his state into an instance of the executive failing to consult the Senate on a matter of foreign policy, and gained the few decision votes needed to pass his bill that banned such a move.[51]

- **Politicians invent political processes to give favour to their outcomes – (G)**

Example: Caltech professors revising agendas of voting and voting procedures in order to produce the result of approving their purchase of a fleet of planes for their flying club.[52]

Shepsle concludes his overview section on heresthetics by summarising the concept with an important distinction: that heresthetics is the art politicians use when they change political outcomes without changing people's underlying preferences.[53] He explains that "clever politicians do not take the political world as they find it. If that world possesses no conventional equilibrium, they engage in search behaviour to find a preferred outcome that can defeat the status quo. If that world does possess equilibrium, then by definition there is nothing within the conventional framework to be done. But this does not prevent a politician from finding some new way to accomplish what is blocked by existing ways of doing things".[54]

Shepsle states that Riker's theory is utilised by both the winners and losers of politics, most notably incumbents and opposition. Political winners or incumbents engage in what Shepsle terms heresthetical defence, engaging in acts of 'creative destruction' which are moves that deny their opponents the ability to be able to turn their fortunes around.[55] Riker himself gives credence to this concept, stating that even after winning, politicians want to continue to win, and therefore they "may be found continually

---

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Shepsle, p. 310
[55] Shepsle, pp. 310-312

poking and pushing the world to get the result they want".[56] In order to display a working example of this, Shepsle presents the case study of the early nineteenth century Jefferson-Jackson coalition in the United States playing heresthetical defence from a winning position.[57] The coalition won six straight presidential elections, secured the winning side of the agrarian expansion/commercial development issue, and focussed on profitable party-building pursuits. The Opposition only regained momentum under the unified Whig banner and by naming popular military generals as candidates.[58]

This case study demonstrated that incumbents may need only to govern competently, as the opposition is often fractured, looking for new salient issues and undergoing leadership ructions. The one winning heresthetical issue that could have been used by the opposition, slavery, was not effectively used by the opposition until half a century later, which had the effect of splitting the Democratic Party in half.[59] Shepsle writes that incumbents may be protected by electoral arrangements, and that it is difficult for the opposition to introduce new issues if they are not salient in the public mind. Shepsle states that opposition parties can add new issues to their platform in order to be successful, or engage in further splintering of the political party system to achieve proportionate support from a section of the community.[60]

Shepsle's political losers engage in what he defines as 'heresthetical offense' when reacting to heresthetic disequilibrium; this involves always being proactive, either by grinding out political ground by taking a stance issue by issue, or by choosing to go for a large gain that changes the political dimensions, in what Shepsle terms a 'Hail Mary pass'.[61] In reaction to these classifications of winners and losers inside his theory, Riker states that, "for a person who expects to lose on some decision, the fundamental

---

[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Shepsle, p. 312

heresthetical device is to divide the majority with a *new alternative*, one that he prefers to the alternative previously expected to win. If successful, this manoeuvre produces a new majority composed of the old majority and the portion of the old majority that likes the new alternative better. Of course, it takes *artistic creativity* of the highest order to invent precisely the right kind of new alternative".[62]

Riker further elaborates that "defeat is the mother of all invention. In this sense it is losers who provide a *political dynamic* in public life; innovating and strategising to become winners on the one hand, and *energizing* the incumbent winners to anticipate and try to deflect the losers' manoeuvres on the other".[63] Three aspects are crucial in understanding the role and options available to political losers; they must repackage the issues, break up coalitions by making the issue multidimensional, and invent new dimensions for political conflict to take place. These are most effective when the loser engages in areas in which the incumbent is unprepared, or surprised by a new stance that runs counter to the loser's previous position.[64]

In his concluding remarks, Shepsle addresses the importance of two factors outside the standard winner/loser paradigm of invention and reaction to the art of heresthetics. Shepsle claims that institutions and institutional arrangements provide opportunities for a master heresthetician to exploit, or block, other avenues of invention from being taken by his opponents.[65] An electoral system may provide easier or more difficult access for issue based movements to gain traction, and an executive structure may give a decisive incumbent the room to further disarm their opponents through unilateral action. Shepsle's second important factor is vision, which refers to Riker's claim that "politics is not only a game in which shrewdness, cunning, and resourcefulness are rewarded; it also rewards *vision*. This is the gift to see farther down

---

[62] Ibid.
[63] Shepsle, p. 310
[64] Shepsle, pp. 310-312
[65] Ibid.

the game tree than anyone else, but also to imagine how the game itself might be transformed".[66]

Jack H. Nagel confirms the nature of politics as one of disequilibrium in *Richard Seddon and the Art of Majority Rule,* pointing to the prominence of chaos theorems in heresthetic practice and in political reality. Nagel states that "former losers can defeat any outcome with some other outcome that will attract the support of a different majority coalition"; therefore any result of a majority rule process, such as a legislative vote or election, can be reversed.[67] This process of chronic instability and change is, according to Nagel, the norm in politics, particularly in majoritarian systems.[68]

Nagel reinforces Riker and Shepsle's views on heresthetics, particularly in relation to the art of rhetoric. Nagel states that the heresthetician "takes others' preference as fixed, in contrast to rhetoric, which enables one to prevail by persuading others to change their preferences in the direction of one's own".[69] Nagel interprets Riker's heresthetics as the defining source of political change and innovation, with previous losers strategically inventing new policies that exploit underlying disequilibria in order to upset the status quo and turn themselves into winners.[70] This is either through an issue-by-issue process, or the 'Hail Mary' approaches identified by Shepsle. Nagel cites Shepsle's theory on structure and institutions, which attempts to explain the pauses in chaos in political systems that heresthetics do not seem to easily explain.

Shepsle's view, following from his position in *Losers in Politics,* is that a lack of constant flux can be explained by the role of institutions, and particularly a phenomenon known as SIE, or structure-induced-equilibria.[71] The pause in disequilibrium occurring under an SIE occurs when institutions and procedures that protect against instability restrict

---

[66] Ibid.

[67] Jack H. Nagel, *Populism, Heresthetics and Political Stability: Richard Seddon and the Art of Majority Rule,* in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 2, April 1993, p. 140

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.

majority rule.[72] A cogent example of this is the United States Senate, with its arcane rules governing the filibuster, cloture and majority decisions, in what can be described as extreme structure-induced-equilibrium.

Nagel explains that 'heresthetic-institutional' theory departs from the traditional image of democracy, one that Riker would call 'populism'. Nagel's populism means that major policies in a democracy reflect the 'will of the people'.[73] According to Nagel, populism therefore implies that stability comes from the regular preferences of a majority of the people, while rapid change is a result of a change in the preferences of this group, in a process that is 'satisfyingly democratic'.[74] Government and democracy under a heresthetic leader only lends itself to stability when 'disruptive issues are suppressed', through agenda control or structural constraints, and rapid change only happens when the heresthetical offense of Shepsle's political losers occurs.[75]

William Riker's views on majoritarianism, democracy and populism are particularly cogent in this case, and are canvassed in Nagel's work. Riker's theory states that all majorities are fundamentally arbitrary, and there can be no substantive content or moral force to the notions of majority rule and popular will. Riker advocates institutions that can restrain majorities, and encourage the natural process of disequilibrium and heresthetic invention, such as bicameral legislatures, constitutions and the power of judicial review.[76] Riker particularly condemned single party majority rule in the British Westminster system, stating that it is 'the closest approximation to the populist ideal'.[77] Riker's view on the validity of a populist approach compared to a heresthetic approach is encapsulated in the following quote; "Populism fails, therefore, not because it is morally wrong, but merely because it is empty".[78]

---

[72] Ibid.
[73] Nagel, p. 141
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

Criticism of Riker

In Kellie Maske and Garey Durden's *The contributions and impact of Professor William H. Riker,* the views of other theorists regarding Riker's work is presented. Amadae and Bueno de Mesquita's view that Riker's assumption of the grounding of politics in the rational interest model may not always be cogent is a common thread throughout this discourse.[79] Maske and Durden defend Riker's theory, stating that "he seems to have viewed 'rational actor' behavioural analysis as an element that could be completely understood only within an existing (but dynamic) set of institutions. He came, 'not to destroy Caesar but to praise him', to provide missing pieces to an incomplete puzzle".[80]

Iain McLean canvasses the academic critiques of Riker's theories in his *Review Article* of *Riker and the Invention of Heresthetic(s),* summarising the criticisms into three main groups: normative implications, the frequency of cycles, and the truth of the examples Riker uses.[81] McLean addresses Riker's dislike of the potential in systems for the tyranny of the majority, and majoritarianism in its many forms. Riker and his early theoretical lodestar, Joseph Schumpeter,[82] insist, according to McLean, that the concept of a general popular will is incoherent, and that any political theories that claim to represent the popular will, such as the populism of the Laclau and Panizza schools, are intellectually redundant.[83] This is because in a rational choice world, one in which Riker believes we operate, chaos theory tells us that all or at least many different possible platforms are in a cycle, with exchanging winning majorities, so, therefore, a consistent 'will of the people' cannot exist. Riker thought that non-heresthetic and non-disequilibrium based analyses of political leadership and

---

[79] Kellie Maske and Garey Durden, *The Contributions and Impact of Professor William H. Riker,* in *Public Choice*, Vol. 117, No. 1/2, October 2003, p. 211
[80] Ibid.
[81] Iain McLean, *Review Article: Riker and the Invention of Heresthetic(s),* in *British Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 32, No. 3, July 2002, p. 545
[82] Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*, Second Edition, New York, 1942
[83] McLean, p. 546

outcomes were not only intellectually vacuous, but morally and practically undesirable if followed in practice in a society.[84]

McLean asks why, in contrast to Riker's theories of disequilibrium and creative invention from politicians, we see so much stability in political systems.[85] McLean posits three replies to this question, which all partially run against Rikerian theory. The first is that equilibrium is structure induced, by institutions, as argued by Shepsle and Weingast,[86] and accepted by Riker in his later work.[87] The second reply is that Riker cherry-picked aspects of the original chaos theory results evident in early public choice theory. Some of the examples, such as the US Congress, were, in Schofield's[88] opinion, not relevant. McLean points to work in the academic field that has demonstrated different forms of stability occurring within multi-dimensional systems, running counter to Riker's notion of disequilibrium.[89]

McLean's third reply is that in legislatures a roll call analysis of votes shows that the cycling of preferences is rare, and single-dimensionality on issues is actually far more common than Riker's multidimensionality, a point supported by Poole and Rosenthal.[90][91] McLean introduces the argument of Gerry Mackie, who undertook an historical analysis of the major examples Riker uses for his theory, and finds that there are some notable errors in his method.[92] For instance, Riker suggests that some politicians are smarter than others, and does this on an ad hoc basis to explain differences between seemingly similar outcomes; Riker also praises politicians he approves of when they manipulate their environment, but denigrates those he does

---

[84] Ibid.
[85] McLean, p. 547
[86] Barry R. Weingast and Kenneth A. Shepsle (eds.), *Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions,* University of Michigan Press, 1995
[87] McLean, p. 547
[88] Norman Schofield, *Rational Choice and Political Economy*, in *Critical Review*, Vol. 9, 1995
[89] McLean, p. 548
[90] Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal, *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting,* Oxford University Press, 1997
[91] McLean, p. 548
[92] McLean, p. 549

not agree with when they do the same.[93] McLean, however, disagrees, and states that Riker admired all leaders who were proven herestheticians.[94]

McLean argues that while much academic focus has been on what Riker got wrong, he also got many things right, particularly by identifying and attacking big and surprising questions and attempting to find answers to these issues, despite some flaws in his analysis.[95] McLean points to notable difficulties in Riker's focus on voting cycles, as it is often difficult to prove that a voting cycle had occurred, while it is also difficult to prove that a multidimensional issue choice resulted out of a heresthetic move.

When multidimensionality is created from a previously static or binary issue dimension, McLean points to a conundrum which makes Riker's theories very difficult to quantify; the question of whether issues arise from the clever move of a heresthetician as defined by Riker, or, as per Mackie, Green and Shapiro,[96] the voting preferences of the electorate have already identified a new issue, and the pragmatic politician is merely responding to it.[97] McLean accepts, however, that all Rikerian theory needs to show is that multidimensional issue space offers only the potential to construct a new winning majority, and herestheticians have an incentive to increase or decrease dimensionality according to their advantage, and most of Riker's examples and historical application apply the tests his theory sets for itself.[98]

McLean's major disagreement with Riker emerges over the issue of relative intelligence; McLean posits that when using rational choice theory, information equilibria needs to be assumed in order for a fair analysis to take place, and Riker's at times ad hoc attribution of relative intelligence and mental capability reduces the validity of his claims.[99] Regarding the key theoretical tool this study derives from Riker,

---

[93] Ibid.
[94] McLean, p. 550
[95] Ibid.
[96] Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*, Yale University Press, 1994
[97] McLean, p. 555
[98] McLean, p. 556
[99] Ibid.

heresthetic manoeuvring, McLean argues that while 'structuring the world so you can win' may not happen as frequently as claimed by Riker, when it does happen it matters.[100] Riker's legacy in McLean's eyes is this concept, along with a form of historical analysis in which the analyst identifies a surprising political outcome, and then seeks to identify whether it was caused by heresthetic, rhetoric, or both. McLean admits that this technique is difficult, with Riker deserving scholarly praise for completing such a hard task.[101]

Character Theory and Renshon

The final theoretical framework discussed in this thesis is Stanley A. Renshon's foundations of character. Renshon writes that the character of a political leader is made up of three psychological foundations. These foundations are ambition, character integrity and relatedness. Renshon writes that the capacity for a leader to satisfy their aspirations and political needs are defined by these foundations, and the outcome of their career is defined by them.[102]

The Domain of Ambition

Renshon identifies the contribution of Kohut,[103] whose view is that "ambition, along with healthy narcissism, ideals and talent, is a foundation of a well-realized life".[104] Renshon states that the "desire and ability to invest one's self into accomplishing your life's purposes"[105] is a crucial tenet of ambition. Ambition is seen as crucial not just for political leaders, but for any person's life and career. More specific to leadership analysis, Renshon explains that ambition is necessary for a candidate to reach higher office, and must be present in abundance to overcome the many challenges of politics. Renshon's framework dictates that the seeds of adult ambition begin in childhood, and

---

[100] Ibid.
[101] McLean, p. 557
[102] Stanley A. Renshon, *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*, New York, 1998, pp. 186-204
[103] Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, New York, 1971
[104] Renshon, pp. 186-204
[105] Ibid.

that "too little and too much ambition, which can hold back aspiring leaders, can be attributed to parental failure, through ignoring a child's 'budding grandiosity', causing a lack of healthy narcissism, to over stimulating this aspect, gives a child unrealistic expectations of themselves and their abilities".[106]

The Domain of Character Integrity

Renshon frames the domain of character integrity, the second foundation of a political leader's character, as their 'ideals and the capacity to realise them'.[107] Renshon's character integrity is made up of ideas and values which are formed early in life that form a 'coherent personal identity'. These ideals, often unrealistic, become values as the leader gains the tools to attempt to use them to affect change. Renshon identifies the analysis of Erikson[108] as useful for understanding this concept. Erikson writes that the ego identity represents ideals realised but constantly revised, and the ego ideal refers to ideals never reached but constantly aspired to. A leader's character integrity can only be secure and able to withstand conflict if the leader lives by these ideals, and is believed by the public when their political platform appears merged with their ideals. The first foundation, ambition, is necessary in order to fulfil this process to its completion, and Renshon identifies Kohut's theory that high ambition is not always destructive to this, and can be helpful, but not if ideals are ultimately self-serving.

The Domain of Relatedness

Renshon's third foundation of character, relatedness, is summarised as 'one's basic stance towards relationships with others'.[109] Renshon writes that relatedness is whether someone moves towards others, such as by reaching out to them; moves away from others, such as leaving relationships that are disappointing or no longer useful; or moves against others, such as when someone wants contact but cannot obtain it in a friendly or intimate fashion. Relatedness is connected to the previously

---

[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Erik H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, New York, 1980
[109] Renshon, pp. 186-204

discussed foundation of character integrity; "ideals develop out of relationships, and our sense of self and ability to live within these ideals is informed by relationships with significant others".[110] Harry Stack Sullivan writes that the self is the 'sum of reflected appraisals',[111] and Renshon uses this point to reinforce the importance of relatedness. Crucially, Renshon states that "measuring one's accomplishments, or succeeding with the help of others, help validate ambition and ideals, linking all three foundations through the paradigm of interpersonal relationships".[112] In this way, the three foundations are linked to form a basis for character, but it should be noted that personality is also informed by character style – the product of the three foundations of character merged with personal skills and resources.

While Renshon looks at how these three different characterological elements interact dynamically within individual leaders, and then manifests in the political realm, this study will focus on the third characterological dimension, relatedness. A full psychological analysis and its relationship with populism awaits future study. However, given an unusual (and frequently defining) aspect of populist politicians is their inability to operate within small groups, as elaborated upon in Chapter Six, this study's focus on how each subject relates to other political actors, as well as with the voting public, is considered to add a further qualitative layer of explanation to the overall analysis of respective case study subjects.

---

[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.

Chapter Three – Case Study: John A. Lee

Introduction

Labour Party rebel John A. Lee's career has yet to be critiqued through the prism of populist leadership theory. Lee's personal contribution to New Zealand politics and scholarship is significant, as the author of many novels, biographies, journals and pamphlets.[113] Lee forged a legacy through his oratory, his large personal following, and his fearlessness. This study will attempt to analyse Lee in a new way, examining the foundations for his popular support and the reasons for his political demise, in order to reach a conclusion regarding his personal brand of populism. The chapter owes much to the excellent biographical work undertaken by historian Erik Olssen and political scientist John T. Henderson.[114]

This study hypothesises that Lee's leadership will be close to the style identified by Panizza and Laclau's populism theories. This hypothesis will be tested by a study of key events and decisions in Lee's political career. These examples will be contrasted with events and decisions that indicate heresthetics and heresthetical positioning. Finally, the application of Gustafson's six point framework of New Zealand populist leadership will show that Lee meets five of the criteria.

This application of theory will show that Lee's populism is closely linked to the theoretical models of Panizza and Laclau. The low number and success of heresthetic examples will help to explain Lee's lack of long term political success, and why he was unlikely to ever reach the height of the Prime Ministership.

---

[113] A small sample includes John A. Lee, *Children of the Poor*, Auckland, 1934, Lee, *Delinquent Days*, Auckland, 1967, Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, Auckland, 1964, Lee, *The Hunted*, Surrey, United Kingdom, 1936, Lee, *The Lee Way to Public Speaking,* Auckland, 1965

[114] Erik Olssen, *John A. Lee*, Dunedin, 1977, John T. Henderson, *The Childhood Origins of Political Struggle: An Interpretation of the Personality and Politics of a New Zealand Radical*, in *Political Science*, Vol. 26: 2, 1974

Early Life

John Albert Alexander Lee was born on the 31st of October 1891 in Dunedin to Mary Lee, a seamstress, and Alfredo Lee, a gambler and entertainer.[115] Lee experienced a childhood of repressive and visceral poverty, which shaped his worldview and provided a basis for the political career that lay ahead of him. Lee's part gypsy father, who was originally from the Hawkes Bay, travelled throughout the South Island in the late 1800s, finding work as a labourer and entertainer, before meeting Mary Taylor in a South Otago mining town in 1889.[116] Mary was raised by a family described by Erik Olssen as "poised between the gutter and the respectability of the lower middle class".[117] Forced to work in domestic service at the age of twelve, Mary and her father were subjected to the alcoholism of her mother, who would drink her and her father's wages, creating a dangerous home environment in which Mary was beaten to the point of deafness by her mother.[118]

Alfredo moved to the country to continue his vagabond lifestyle and search for work in 1896, but never returned. By that point Mary Lee was supporting her parents, her two brothers and her children. The family moved to Riversdale, on the Waimea Plains, following work Mary's father had found. Young Lee embraced this rural lifestyle, playing in the paddocks and learning to read before he went to school, interrupted only by the terrifying spells of his drunken grandmother, experiences that taught Lee the life-draining damage of alcoholism.[119]

The Lees returned to a small house in Dunedin and a life of poverty, reliant on the goodwill and charity of others when times became too tough. Lee tells of living in a

---

[115] Erik Olssen, *John A. Lee*, Dunedin, 1977, p. 1
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Olssen, p. 2
[119] Mary Lee, *Unpublished Autobiography*, pp. 73-74, in Olssen, p. 2

"New World slum, a two-roomed shack down a narrow lane".[120] By this time his mother's meagre income was supplemented by prostitution, a fact that brought shame on his family in the eyes of others, but one which Lee defended as necessary to clothe and feed the family: the action of a desperate mother searching for a last resort.[121] Lee had held down a job selling newspapers, but left to roam the countryside in search of work after his workmates asked him to procure his sister, Rose, who was also working as a prostitute, for sex. Lee did not blame his mother or sister for their predicament, as he knew that he only avoided their fate due to his gender.[122]

Burnham

Lee, desperate and without direction, dodged school and began a life of crime. He lost a job for stealing some of the proceeds of sales, and increased his involvement in petty theft in order to maintain the wage that he was sending to his mother to keep the family afloat. Lee was caught stealing from a metal foundry at age fourteen, and was sent to Burnham Industrial School, a reform school for delinquent children run in military style. Lee dedicated himself to excellence, in both work and rebellion. He became a hard worker at a printing factory and on a local farm when not at school, whilst also rising to the top of the school class in academic performance. After attaining these successes, however, Lee quickly became bored, and noted that his drive only came when he was under emotional stress, that he was "never made for routine work where the pace is set by the average", and that he constantly needed to redefine the measures of success he set himself.[123] Lee ran away after rebelling against the repressive authority of Burnham, only to be brought back again multiple times and flogged mercilessly. Lee vowed to continue to rebel to prove that "he was of the stuff that endures unto the end".[124] This is encapsulated in the following reflection of John

---

[120] John A. Lee, *Children of the Poor*, Auckland, 1934, p. 88, in John T. Henderson, *The Childhood Origins of Political Struggle: An Interpretation of the Personality and Politics of a New Zealand Radical*, in *Political Science*, Vol. 26: 2, 1974, p. 4
[121] Lee, *Children of the Poor*, p. 97, in Henderson, p. 4
[122] Lee, *Children of the Poor*, p. 211-215, in Henderson, p. 5
[123] Lee, *Children of the Poor*, p. 78-79, in Henderson, p. 7
[124] John A. Lee, *The Hunted*, Surrey, United Kingdom, 1936, p. 82, in Henderson, p. 7

A. Lee as a teenager: "Out of battered flesh that refused to yell in agony would come the will to further rebellion, the will to sneer in authority's very teeth".[125]

Lee continued a life of crime on his escapes from Burnham, and was finally sentenced to a year in Mt Eden prison after being charged with theft. Lee grew weary and unfulfilled with this life, and decided that he must move on to something new. He felt a great need to engage his sharp and able mind, but was restricted by his situation and poverty, describing his predicament as a "tug of war between the flesh and the mind".[126]

Political Awakening and 'The Jungle'

Following his release from prison, Lee was directionless, at times suicidal, and unsure of his place in an unfair and punitive world. Lee could relate to few adults in his life. This changed after reading American journalist and novelist Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle,* a story of working class struggle in oppressive working conditions and poverty in the meatpacking district of early 1900s Chicago.[127] The book's central character, outcast immigrant worker Jurgis Rudkis, provided Lee with his first relatable adult character, and a working class hero. Without fully realising what the term meant at the time, Lee stated that the political agitation and calls for organised labour action in the novel 'made him a socialist on the spot', and opened his eyes to the choices that had allowed for poverty.[128] Politics came to him as an "amazing revelation…. someone stood for the working man".[129] Lee began debating at the workplace, and was found to be an exceptional debater and soapbox preacher. He became radicalised in the labour movement, and vowed to become a crucial cog of the movement through the pen and on the soapbox.[130]

---

[125] Lee, *The Hunted*, p. 61, in Henderson, p. 7
[126] John A. Lee, *Delinquent Days*, Auckland, 1967, p. 31, in Henderson, p. 8
[127] Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, Chicago, 1906
[128] Olssen, p. 9
[129] John A. Lee, *Delinquent Days*, p. 37, in Henderson, p. 8
[130] John A. Lee, *The Lee Way to Public Speaking,* Collins, Auckland, N.Z., 1965, p. 11, in Henderson, p. 9

War

With an eager sense of adventure, and a desire to have new direction in his life, Lee enlisted for service in Europe with the New Zealand Division.[131] Lee engaged in political debates, wrote for the newspaper of the division (the *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F*) and enjoyed serving with like-minded men. He received the Distinguished Combat Medal for single-handedly capturing and defending a machine-gun post,[132] and delved into further reading between combat. His dedication to his new passion was evident; his field kit was heavy with books on social subjects, and his comrades noted that they had seen him studying his works while under heavy fire in the trenches.[133] On 21 March 1918 the German Army launched an offensive designed to end the war, and 5 days later the New Zealand Division, Lee included, held the line at Mailly Maillet. By May, it was noted in the *Chronicles* that Lee was alive, but a casualty in a hospital in England, having had his arm amputated.[134] Before leaving the hospital to return to New Zealand, Lee helped edit the *Chronicles,* enjoyed his time with his fellow New Zealanders in his recovery period, and engaged in political debates in London.[135] In August 1918, Lee travelled back to New Zealand, and within two days of arrival had married the farmer's daughter, Marie Guy, whom he had left at home, and joined the New Zealand Labour Party.[136]

Labour

As a new and exciting soapbox speaker, Lee drew large crowds and started to attain influence in the party, partly because of his unique appeal as a wounded war hero.[137] Labour won eight seats in the 1919 election, including the seats of West, Central and

---

131 Olssen, p. 12
132 Colonel H. Stewart, *The New Zealand Division, 1916-1919: A Popular History Based on Official Records*, Auckland, 1921, p. 199, in Olssen, p. 13
133 John A. Lee, *'The Road to Utopia'*, in *John A. Lee's Fortnightly*, 25 June 1952, p. 14, in Olssen , p. 15
134 Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F, *'Working Parties and Parcels'*, IV, 10 May 1918, p. 161, in Olssen, p. 17
135 Lee, *'The Road to Utopia'*, p. 14
136 Olssen, pp. 17-18
137 John A. Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, Auckland, 1964, p. 26, in Henderson, p. 10

Grey Lynn in Auckland.[138] Lee successfully ran for the Presidency of the Auckland Labour Party, and, once elected, strengthened the organisation, making it more active on the ground in local elections. Lee won a seat on the executive of the Auckland Returned Servicemen's Association, bringing himself closer to the problems of their membership, including poverty, unemployment, and support for the disabled.[139] The RSA at this time was increasingly anti-immigrant, particularly towards Asians. A by-election in Auckland East caused an opening to emerge for a Labour candidate and after cajoling by the Parliamentary wing of the party, Lee sought the nomination and won by one vote. Pushing Labour's programme of increased equality and democracy, along with advocacy for the feminist movement and the beginnings of a xenophobic and anti-Catholic platform, Lee came within 400 votes of capturing the seat for Labour.[140]

The Reform Party candidate who was a friend of Lee's from the war, Clutha MacKenzie, won the seat, but a poll taken on Election Day showing that many Liberal voters were moving towards the Labour Party was a promising sign.[141] Lee stressed that the outcome of a Reform win should not move Labour and the Liberals closer to a potential coalition, stating that "we can march alone, and march faster, without the useless encumber of dead parties".[142] In the 1922 General Election, Lee once again sought and gained the nomination, and this time won the Auckland East seat for Labour, winning four polling booths on the back of a large working class vote. Lee's constituency contained Mt Eden prison, where he had been held as a prisoner. Nationally, Labour won the votes of the urban poor, but was rejected in the provinces.[143] Crucially, however, Labour was now a major player, at the expense of the dying Liberal Party,

---

[138] R. M. Chapman, *The Political Scene, 1919-1931*, Auckland, 1969, pp. 6-8, in Olssen, p. 20
[139] Olssen, pp. 20-21
[140] Auckland Star, *'City East Election'*, 1 Nov 1921, p. 1, in Olssen, pp. 22-23
[141] John A. Lee, *Letter to the Editor*, in *Auckland Star*, 19 Nov. 1921, p. 12, in Olssen, p.22
[142] Auckland Star, *'Liberalism and Labour'*, 1 Dec 1921, pp. 4-5, in Olssen, p. 23
[143] Olssen, pp. 23-24

and the rebel Lee had broken through into the cosy establishment setting of Parliament.[144]

Theory Application

This study hypothesises that Lee's leadership will closely fit the leadership style identified by Panizza and Laclau's populism theorems. An attempt will be made to contrast examples supporting this with events and decisions that indicate the use of heresthetics, and heresthetical positioning, as described by Riker and Shepsle.

Practical examples of Lee's populism include attacks on the political establishment, and establishing in- and out- groups of immigrants, Maori and Catholics, in the style of Panizza and Laclau's populist who divides society into a 'people' and an 'other'. Further examples include Lee's ability to relate to the common man, the rise of his idolism, and the domination of his political vehicle, the Democratic Labour Party. Strategic decisions that could be identified as heresthetics include Lee's great political success, the stewardship of Labour's state housing scheme, and his unsuccessful attempts to strategically position the Democratic Soldier Labour Party to appeal to differing, contradictory voting groups in the 1943 general election. These examples will be discussed in the following sections.

A Thorn in the Side of the Establishment

Lee quickly adjusted positively to life in Parliament, enjoying the company of his fellow young caucus members, railing against the old guard of the House, and quickly gaining a reputation as a witty, engaging, and pointed orator.[145] While Labour and Lee focused much of their efforts on the tiring Reform Party government, internal ructions within Labour, and his role in them, also became a hallmark of Lee's early parliamentary career. As would become common throughout his career, Lee attacked the party establishment, especially its plans to nationalise land.[146] Lee believed that a rapid

---

[144] Ibid.
[145] Olssen, pp. 25-26
[146] Henderson, p. 12

elevation to full socialism in New Zealand was politically and practically impossible, and that a nationalisation programme would scare away the small farmers and urban section owners necessary for a national election victory.[147]

Labour became more agrarian in its campaign approach leading into the 1925 election, referring to themselves as "a body of men determined to carry on the principles of the Seddon Government".[148] According to Lee, Labour was 'on the march' in 1925, buoyed by distress in the dairy regions and a disorganised Liberal Party that was close to merging with the Reform Party. Lee held his seat with a majority of 750 votes in 1925, but Labour lost five seats, including two city seats. Internal debates in Labour blamed both a hostile press and an excessive commitment to doctrinaire socialism. Lee was in a strong position, however, a popular member in a small caucus, ready to assert his influence.[149]

Lee entered the 1928 election campaign confident of holding his seat, despite boundary changes sending the two strong Labour areas of Auckland East into Michael Joseph Savage's Auckland West seat. The Liberals (now the United Party) had selected Sir Joseph Ward as leader, who Lee did not believe to be a strong candidate. Lee viewed Gordon Coates and Reform as vulnerable, as they had alienated much of their urban base. Lee claimed that his goal was to 'stop the human family from living in a pigsty', and he attacked the local United candidate as a spent force. Ward's United Party won 28 seats, and while Reform lost heavily, Labour's amended land plans failed to win country voters. Lee lost to the United candidate by 37 votes. According to Olssen, key Lee supporters, such as skilled workers and pacifists, were believed to have stayed home on Election Day.[150]

---

[147] P. J. O'Farrell, *Harry Holland: Militant Socialist*, Canberra, 1964, pp. 145-146, in Olssen, p. 34
[148] E. P. Malone, *'The Rural Vote: Voting Trends in the Waikato, 1922-1935'*, MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 1958, p. 78, in Olssen, p. 35
[149] Olssen, pp. 35-36
[150] Olssen, pp. 44-46

Lee was now out of Parliament. Jobless and broke, Lee took a job managing a hotel in Rotorua. While disconnected from party politics, Lee remained engaged, writing articles and beginning work on his novels. Lee refined his positions, and came to the conclusion that economic independence for New Zealand rather than the nationalisation of industry was the way forward for Labour, and he soon was set on returning to Parliament.[151]

1931 Re-Election

Lee sought the Labour nominations for Auckland East and Grey Lynn in 1930, and won both, choosing to run in Grey Lynn. Complaints from the losing candidate in Grey Lynn over illegal union approaches to delegates caused the selection process to be re-run, which Lee won convincingly,[152] although he could not prevent the aggrieved candidate running as an Independent. Lee won in a 4 way race with 60 percent of the vote in four polling booths. Labour won four more seats,[153] and while many in the party were downcast that the victory over the United-Reform coalition had not yet arrived, Lee saw that it was close.[154] He stated that Labour could win all seats held by the old Liberal Party, and that the ruling coalition of interests could not survive.[155] Lee attended and spoke at large protest marches and meetings of workers and the unemployed as the Great Depression began to hit, events which were fast becoming violent. The Coalition was rapidly losing touch with the New Zealand people, particularly in the cities, and the reduction in the pension in a monetarist effort to stave off debt exacerbated this.[156]

Labour's leader Harry Holland died in 1933, and Lee attempted to ensure that the more moderate Michael Joseph Savage did not become leader. Lee cajoled other candidates

---

[151] Olssen, p. 51
[152] Robin Hyde, *'The Grey Lynn Labour Split'*, in *New Zealand Observer*, 24 September 1931, and Olssen p.53
[153] Olssen, pp. 53-54
[154] Malone, p. 154
[155] Olssen, p. 54
[156] Olssen, pp. 56-58

to oppose Savage, including Peter Fraser, but when they were not willing to go up against the Labour Party establishment and union support Savage held, he reluctantly threw his hat in the ring, only to withdraw soon thereafter when defeat was obvious. Savage won uncontested, and historian Erik Olssen theorises that Savage never forgave Lee for his attempts to prevent his rise to the leadership. A profile written by Lee of Savage the day after the selection demonstrates the contempt he felt for Savage's brand of socialism, in which Lee describes him as 'dull, stodgy, ponderous in thought', a man who 'enjoys a good joke but never cracks one', convinced of the sinful nature of sex, and who views socialism as merely the fair division of goods, rather than the 'opportunity to play football, get brown on a beach, dance a foxtrot, lie on one's back beneath the trees, enjoy the intoxication of verse, the perfume of flowers, the joys of a novel, the thrill of music'.[157]

Lee was the personal opposite of Savage, and their contempt for each other would last throughout their careers. Around this time, Lee's first novel, *Children of the Poor,* was released, an eponymous tale of the squalor of his childhood. While highly controversial, receiving condemnation and bans from the conservative establishment, the book was publically successful, and in the words of Olssen, "his onslaught on Victorian sensibilities helped create a freer atmosphere within which other New Zealand artists could grow and work".[158] Savage found the book 'unscrupulous and salacious'.[159]

Exclusion from Cabinet

Lee stumped vigorously for Labour in the 1935 election campaign, conveying the anger of the party rank-and-file, drawing large and electrified audiences, and wooing the followers of the nascent Social Credit movement of Major Douglas by attacking

---

[157] Lee, *Letter to Marie Lee*, 13 October 1933, in Olssen p. 66
[158] Olssen, p. 69
[159] Ibid.

bankers and demanding further national issues of credit.[160] This strategy helped Labour in the small towns and rural areas that had previously been out of their reach. Labour proposed to insulate the New Zealand economy and fund its plans through national control of credit,[161] a policy Lee had advocated since 1930. Lee romped home in Grey Lynn with a massive majority, as Labour swept to power with 52 seats in Parliament. [162]

Lee felt he was surely headed to Cabinet, in either the Defence or the High Commissioner to London roles, due to his service and support to the newly enlarged caucus.[163] After Savage was confirmed as Prime Minister, Lee was informed that he would only be offered the position of Under Secretary to the Prime Minister. Initially accepting the explanations of geography and inexperience for this slight, Lee later learned that Fraser and Nash had both pushed Savage to appoint Lee, with his wide influence and following, to Cabinet. Savage's personal dislike of Lee thwarted this, and only further pressure forced Savage to offer the consolation role to Lee.[164]

Lee and his fellow 'young-guns', newly elected leftist MPs, were a thorn in the Prime Minister's side, and pushed Savage to enlarge the size of Cabinet and to accept certain caucus positions he otherwise would not have. During a fiery debate on pensions and cabinet election, Lee sided with the rebels and stated his intention to resign the symbolic post of Under-Secretary unless he was placed in Cabinet by Savage.[165] Due to their animosity and Savage's distrust of Lee, this was impossible, but Savage decided to make Lee the Director of Housing under the Prime Minister in order to make use of Lee's talent and to avoid further splits in the party. Lee accepted, despite some

---

[160] R. Clifton, *'Douglas Credit and the Labour Party, 1930-1935'*, MA Thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, 1961, p.232, in Olssen, p. 75
[161] New Zealand Labour Party, *Labour's Election Policy: Security and Prosperity for All: Maximum Production and Equitable Distribution: Annex to Annual Report of National Executive*, 1935, p. 2, in Olssen, p. 76
[162] Olssen, pp. 76-77
[163] Olssen, p. 77
[164] Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp.40-41, in Olssen, p. 79
[165] Olssen, pp. 90-91

pressure for him to continue to rebel and play a long game for the leadership. The housing shortage crisis was now in Lee's hands. [166]

Heresthetics and Housing

Lee was energised in his new role, buoyed by an opportunity to effect popular and socialist change through the implementation of Labour's state housing plans. Lee pushed for high quality and affordable houses, and deftly manoeuvred around sectional interests, notably private construction firms and the building unions. Lee employed successful heresthetics to outmanoeuvre union interests, setting up scenarios in which their support was guaranteed despite grievances over pay, while also securing the construction services of James Fletcher and his powerful firm at a reasonable price. Lee established multidimensionality through the strategic options he presented to both parties, allowing the government to claim success when progress on housing seemed unlikely. Lee did his best public policy work in this period, executing Labour's plans with "vision, taste and skill",[167] and using the best principles of town planning to build suburbs 'fit for Ministers of the Crown'.[168] Lee became a master pragmatist, but only when the result would still fit with his idealistic vision, and he gained a reputation as being able to get approval from Finance Minister Walter Nash faster than any other Cabinet Minister.[169]

Lee's skills were evident in how he brought both the militant unions and James Fletcher on the side of the housing scheme, and his rhetorical ability was demonstrated in the House in a series of masterly speeches on state housing in Labour's first term.[170] Although the scheme had not gone as far as he liked - as workers had lost some control over the projects, rents were not flexible in some areas, and the slums that had

---

[166] Olssen, p. 91
[167] Olssen, p. 112
[168] Ibid.
[169] J. Wells, *'The History of State Housing Construction in New Zealand'*, MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 1944, p. 39, in Olssen, p. 112
[170] New Zealand Parliament, *Parliamentary Debates*, Volume 249, 9 December 1937, pp. 1195-1196, in Olssen, pp. 112-113

blighted his early life were not fully cleared - overall, Lee was successful. Savage had appointed Lee in expectation of his abrasive style bringing about failure in the portfolio, and Lee's success therefore angered Savage.[171] Savage replaced Lee with Tim Armstrong as Minister of Housing in December 1938, permanently cementing the distrust and animosity held between the two symbols of the initial stages of the First Labour Government.

Populism in Cabinet

While Lee was Minister of Housing, he attempted to aggressively remove Maori from customary land, indicating a populist defining of a separate 'other', outside of his perception of the populist 'people'. Lee viewed Maori land claims to be flimsy, and he only respected Maori who had assimilated closer to the Pakeha ideal of civility. This was demonstrated by his attempt as Minister of Housing to remove 120 Maori from land in Orakei to construct state housing and clear slum land, in which he dismissed legal, moral and tribal concerns, and was only forced to back down from the illegal action by public pressure from religious and rights groups.[172]

Expulsion and Psychopathology

Lee's relationship with Savage became increasingly strained throughout Labour's second term, 1938-43, which was achieved in an electoral landslide in 1938. The left faction of the parliamentary party, most of its members not in Cabinet, became frustrated with the methods the Prime Minister used to slow down the process of socialist reform, including refusing to accept decisions made by the majority of caucus. Lee damaged the hopes of reconciliation between the two blocs by attacking Savage himself, despite the genuine grievances that he could have attacked instead. Lee believed that Savage's massive public popularity had turned him into a petty dictator, no better than the guards of the Burnham school. Advice was given to Lee to tone

---

[171] Olssen, p. 113

[172] Robin Hyde, *'Who Says the Orakei Maoris Must Go?',* in *New Zealand Observer*, 19 August 1937, pp. 6-7, and Olssen, pp. 105-105

down his attacks, but he countered that if he swallowed his opinions he would no longer have been Jack Lee, only a shadow of someone else.[173]

Savage's increasingly petulant replies to Lee's arguments over policy led to Lee calling Savage a 'spoilt child' following a particular incident in relation to amending election policy. Savage sat in a private room by himself after Lee would not withdraw his statement that Savage had pulled a 'slippery trick'.[174] Lee embraced these arguments, as he would always win the battle of rhetoric, and could emotionally outlast Savage. As Savage grew unwell near the end of his Prime Ministership, Lee believed that the increasingly rattled and introverted Prime Minister was unfit to govern. He let this be known at a Cabinet meeting, directly calling Savage 'mentally sick'.[175] Lee had an article anonymously published in the influential socialist journal *Tomorrow*, called *Psychopathology in Politics,* and with this move many in the party believed Lee's combativeness had gone too far, and demanded his expulsion.[176]

Psychopathology referred to Savage indirectly, talking of a leader who is "vain of mind and short of temper, and believes that everybody who crosses his path has demoniac attributes. Wherever this problem occurred, except that the party managed to cut off the diseased limb, it went down to crushing defeat".[177] With Lee's signature writing style evident in the article, it became clear to those who knew how sick Savage was, that he was the target of the diatribe. Lee wanted the left to regain power, and thought that this would position himself to become leader ahead of Fraser. Mainly, however, this was Lee being himself, and saying what he believed with no thought to the practical consequences: a true rebel. Such an article would have been vitriolic from the National opposition, but from an Under-Secretary of Cabinet a severe punishment was never in doubt.

---

[173] Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 19-25, in Henderson, pp. 12-13
[174] Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 63-64, in Henderson, p. 13
[175] Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, p. 159, in Henderson, p. 13
[176] Henderson, p. 13
[177] Olssen, p. 147

On the 25th of March 1940 the Labour Party assembled for its conference, with Lee and the article at the top of the agenda. A note from Savage himself was read out, calling Lee's attacks 'from the political sewer', adding that it was 'making his life a living hell'. The conference heard of Savage's closeness to death, and the apparent recovery that was blighted and reversed when Savage heard of the article.[178] Lee was accused of stabbing Savage in the back, with Fraser stating that it would have been more decent for Lee to have shot Savage dead.[179] As the debate on Lee's proposed expulsion began, Lee encapsulated the reasons for his insurrection in a speech, and defended his methods in the face of attacks from delegates on his conduct and his character, in which they referred to Lee as 'from the gutter' and 'worthy of a guttersnipe'.[180] Lee stated that "I came into the Labour movement the day I stepped out of khaki because I am a socialist. Maybe I came into it because being hunted gave me the character Mr Stewart says I lack… While a woman is making a living by selling her soul then, by God, I'm in the gutter with her… I've put a lot of energy into the Labour cause. I've loved the movement… If I go, I'll go determined to work harder than ever for the things for which I stand".[181]

Lee was expelled from Labour on a 546-344 card vote,[182] although there was no celebration in a sombre conference hall. A New Zealand Herald editorial stated that "he was caught in a conflict of loyalties and may claim that what he stood for were the higher loyalties, the principle and the word rather than the person and the practice".[183] An idealistic rebel more than a parliamentarian, Lee's time as a power player in a major political party was over, as was any chance of future influence over government. Lee's

---

[178] Olssen, p. 158
[179] Olssen, p. 159
[180] Henderson, p. 13
[181] Lee, *Simple on a Soapbox*, pp. 194-195, in Henderson, p. 13
[182] Olssen, p. 159
[183] Olssen, p. 160

personal need for struggle and challenge was not finished, however, and he immediately began to work on a new voice for New Zealand's downtrodden.[184]

The Democratic Labour Party – A Movement Dominated by its Leader

Lee believed that he could convince part of the left faction of the Labour caucus to join his new party, which was based on radical socialism and opposed a Labour Party he labelled "beyond redemption".[185] Following the formation of the Democratic Labour Party shortly after the Labour Party conference, however, only Speaker Bill Barnard and half of Lee's Grey Lynn branches came over to the DLP. Lee and Barnard went on a speaking tour of New Zealand, signing up hundreds of Labour activists who were dissatisfied with the moderate course the party was undertaking. Post-expulsion, the branch membership of the Labour Party notably dropped.[186] Lee established a populist platform that appealed to the disaffected, supporting the war but not conscription, demanding no reduction in the standard of living or working conditions, and pushing for a term that was derived from his soldier heritage: a 'conscription of wealth'.[187] Lee strategically appealed to these sentiments and war weariness in the New Zealand public, and much of the early momentum of the DLP can be attributed to Lee's success in voicing the fears and suspicions of others.[188]

Lee and the DLP distributed radical pamphlets, calling Savage a hypocrite for his own attacks on Joseph Ward as a sick Prime Minister in office, and containing the full *Psychopathology* article.[189] The DLP newspaper, *John A. Lee's Weekly*, began distribution in July 1940, with Lee editing and writing much of the content. Lee's personality was both a blessing and a curse for the DLP, with many members pushing for Lee to reduce his role as leader, strategist and policymaker. Lee referred to the

---

[184] Olssen, p. 161
[185] Ibid.
[186] Olssen, p. 164
[187] New Zealand Parliament, *Parliamentary Daily*, Vol. 257, 30 May 1940, pp. 33-34, and Olssen, p. 162
[188] Olssen, p. 162
[189] John A. Lee, *Expelled from Labour Party for Telling the Truth*, Auckland, 1940, in Olssen, p. 163

party as 'his', an unsustainable position for a socialist movement. Branches began to break away, and key members of the executive went to the press with their complaints of Lee's dominant and overbearing approach.[190]

Populist Party Platform – Appeals to Anti-Immigrant and Anti-Catholic Sentiment

The party was growing tired[191] of what Olssen refers to as Lee's "xenophobia, his anti-union tirades, and his jingoism".[192] Lee looked to form a new coalition of voters, making attempts to appeal to the Social Credit supporters of the early 1930s, and middle-class small businessmen in opposition to Labour's tax plans, in a pragmatic move away from the radical socialist approach of the party's founding.[193] A by-election after the death of a left-wing Labour MP in Waitemata provided the first electoral test for the DLP, in which its candidate, Lee acolyte Norman Douglas, came a disappointing third after a dirty campaign in which Labour attacked Lee's conduct, early life and the content of his novels.[194] The DLP slowly withered, save for the occasional article in *Lee's Weekly,* and Lee focussed on assailing all comers in the House, and became increasingly xenophobic against Catholics in his statements.[195] Lee began attacking the Catholic Church and its links to European fascism, in what he called the 'Christian Corporate State'. Lee labelled the Pope a supporter of fascism, as long as fascism upheld the rights of Catholics. Protestant political groups sided with Lee on some of these points, but the Government chose to ignore Lee, as it did on many issues that were designed to provoke and cause division, fearful of the social impact Lee could have.[196]

---

[190] Olssen, p. 167

[191] An example of clashes within the DLP was the decision in April 1941 of the Petone Branch to withdraw from the party because the party's policy and platform, driven by Lee, "had become National Socialist, with just a tinge of Labour policy to make it seem acceptable to unwary persons", as reported by the 29 April 1431 edition of the *Otago Daily Times,* and noted in Olssen, p. 167.

[192] Olssen, p. 167

[193] Democratic Labour Party, *John A. Lee's Weekly*, Auckland, 14 August 1940, p.4, in Olssen, p. 169

[194] Olssen, p. 172

[195] Lee stated in *Lee's Weekly* on 18 March 1942 that 'the present Pope is in the Fascist tradition', and stated in *Lee's Weekly* on 22 April 1942 that 'the Vatican holds its nose and keeps its eyes on Heaven, while Mussolini and Franco rape the Italian mind'.

[196] Olssen, p. 178

Lee reactivated the DLP through the *Weekly* to contest a by-election in 1943. The DLP pushed for scholarships to university students, a family tax credit, equal pay legislation, arts and music funding, and extending the vote to 18 year olds. Lee and the DLP candidate attacked the Government for stabilising inequality through the stalling of socialist policies, and they criticised the direction of the Labour-National war cabinet. The DLP finished a strong second, giving it momentum going into the general election of 1943, and the party was renamed the Democratic Soldier Labour Party, in a nod to Lee's military past.[197]

Lee's domineering ways and dismissal of many ex-DSLP loyalists led the only other MP, Bill Barnard, to quit the party. The DSLP's chances were further hit when National decided to run candidates in the working class urban seats, although the DSLP was buoyed by strong candidates, particularly radio preacher Colin Scrimgeour in Wellington Central, who faced Prime Minister Peter Fraser (who replaced Savage on the latter's death on the 27th of March 1940). Vastly popular socialist Scrimgeour had been taken off the air by the Government after Savage's death for calling for Lee's return to Labour.[198]

Heresthetic Attempt to Broaden Voting Base

The DSLP's slate of candidates was mostly nationalistic in zeal, and xenophobic,[199] in the same style as Lee himself, although often the message was confused, with some candidates standing on free-enterprise soldier platforms.[200] This heresthetic attempt to broaden the political coalition of the DSLP by trying to gain the support of pro-business, pro-military voters was unsuccessful, demonstrating the unwieldiness of

---

[197] Olssen, pp. 181-183
[198] Olssen, p. 184
[199] Olssen states on page 187 of *John A. Lee* that DSLP candidates "were self-conscious nationalists, responsive to war issues, responsive to Lee's xenophobia and to his vision of the soldiers' future role. Most of them also believed that too many men had been conscripted and that debt-free money should be used more widely. There ended the consensus".
[200] Olssen, p. 187

using a populist movement constructed around an idolism and cult of personality to expand into multidimensional rational voting choices.

Departure from Parliament

On election night, Lee lost his Grey Lynn seat, polling 23.29% of the vote, the DSLP won no other seats; and cost Labour five marginal seats by splitting the anti-National vote. Lee's time in Parliament was over.[201] Lee left the DSLP, which survived in name only for a few more years. His focus moved to writing books, and editing and distributing the *Weekly*, which continued in various forms until 1954, at great financial cost to the Lees, but providing a much needed release for his still boundless energy and determination to speak and fight.[202] He lived out his days writing, which was his true love; and managing a small book shop in Grey Lynn. Lee received an honorary degree in 1969 from the University of Otago.[203]

Legacy

The rebel was finally at peace with his life, his work, and his family. His sizeable body of work stands as a testament to his passion and drive, and he was recognised by the retiring Chief Parliamentary Reporter in 1973 as the greatest orator to ever be heard in the New Zealand Parliament.[204]

The Gustafson Framework and John A. Lee

The preceding analysis in this chapter explored John A. Lee's political career in the context of two competing strands of theory; traditional populism and heresthetics. This analysis found that cogent examples of traditional populism significantly outweigh the occurrence of clear heresthetic manoeuvres in Lee's case. As posited in the introduction, it is hypothesised that through application of Gustafson's model of populist political leadership, we will find that Lee, as a leader who more comfortably

---

[201] Olssen, p. 188
[202] Olssen, pp. 203-205
[203] Olssen, p. 210
[204] Olssen, p. 211

fits Panizza and Laclau's framework, will also be accurately described by Gustafson's theory. This will be tested by applying each of Gustafson's six criteria to Lee, with a number being provided after this analysis stating how many out of the six Lee has met. As the preceding sections of this chapter have already canvassed Lee's career, and uncovered events and decisions related to his style of populism, the Gustafson application draws from the empirical evidence previously identified. It is to be viewed as a critical reading of the previous discussion, and does not draw from new sources.

The Six Criteria

1. The leader claims to know what 'ordinary' people desire and believe, in contrast to corrupted and ignorant political parties and leaders of the established elite.

Throughout his career, John A. Lee railed against the establishment on both the left and the right. Borne out of the experience of the depression conditions of the early 1900's, Lee entered politics and based his career around the common hardships of working people in New Zealand. After growing up poor and on the run throughout his youth, and fighting a war in the name of an establishment which Lee found it difficult to support, his type of socialist activism focussed strongly on the structural problem of the elite holding back progress. His dislike for the moderates of Labour, such as Savage and Nash, was public and widespread. Lee, an effective propagandist, railed against the United and Reform governments of the Depression years, hammering them for being out of touch with the working man, and on issues of national military and financial sovereignty. Lee's distaste for established and entrenched power ultimately led to his downfall, while being one of his touchstones for popular support among voters.

- Criterion Met -

2. The leader draws their support from the marginalised and out-of-power, particularly during recession and rapid change.

Lee can be seen as a quintessential example of such a populist; he drew his initial public support by speaking about unemployment and poverty in the urban slums of

Auckland, from people marginalised by both politics and the economic system, and could do so from a position of genuine empathy and shared experience. As he rose in Parliament, large crowds followed this message; and his highest political position, managing the Government's large social housing construction, followed the marginalisation of the Great Depression. In rebellion against the moderates of his own party, Lee drew public support from the marginalised: those who believed that the party had failed to achieve the socialist dream that its propagandists (including Lee) had espoused. These supporters, who were also damaged by the rapid change of wartime and the political concentration of the two major forces in politics in the wartime cabinet, also aided Lee's Democratic Soldier Labour Party.

- Criterion Met -

3. The leader is anti-elitist, and sees hidden agendas behind decisions that affect business and government, that are detrimental to the 'silent majority'.

Lee had little respect for authority; even as he became part of the elite politicians in charge of running the country's public finances, and his rebellious nature caused tension. Throughout the policy formulation processes with Labour and the Government, Lee struck out in private, and at times in public, against the relationship between the fiscal moderates in his party and the banks, which he wanted to nationalise. More controversially, his comments on the relationship between some political leaders and the Catholic Church indicate a willingness to embrace hidden agenda theories and conspiracies.

- Criterion Met -

4. The leader is nationalistic, inward looking and opposed to foreign 'meddling' or investment. This can sometimes be ethnocentric and racist. Immigration is a common issue in which a 'them-us' divide is forged.

Lee, like many of his contemporaries, was distrustful of immigrants, blaming them for the loss of jobs that would have otherwise gone to people born in New Zealand. Lee's

positions included a particular antipathy towards the Chinese, as was common in New Zealand politics since the beginning of the party era. Lee, possibly as a product of his military service, was more nationalistic and patriotic than some of his fellows on the left. One issue in which Lee fought on multiple occasions with the moderates in Labour was credit, and foreign borrowing. Running against established monetary policy, Lee pushed for New Zealand to cut international financial ties and establish a Social Credit system of homemade borrowing, involving nationalisation of all banks and financial houses in New Zealand. Lee also had an anti-Catholic streak, and referred to fascist conspiracies involving the papacy. As canvassed on page 49, Lee showed displayed a disposition against Maori land claims and efforts to assert Maori sovereignty.

- Criterion Met -

5. The leader uses a simplified nostalgia to hark back to a 'Golden Age' of prosperity and security.

Lee, as a committed and vocal socialist, viewed political history immediately prior to the First Labour Government as anathema to his political aims. While Lee recalls his camaraderie with his fellow soldiers in nostalgic terms, his own past and experience was defined by visceral poverty and a lack of engagement by the state. Lee uses a form of simplified rhetoric to hark forward to a socialist future, where unemployment and poverty would only be found in history. While noting the legacy of the reforming Liberal governments, Lee is critical of past conservative governments, business and community leaders, and of the Labour Party as he becomes disheartened by the First Labour Government's moderate direction.

- Criterion Not Met -

6. The leader is the operational leader of the movement, section or party but comes to embody it publically.

From the beginning of Lee's political career his powerful rhetoric drew people towards him. Lee's particular appeal to veterans and his oft-repeated exclamations in support

of the returning soldier, even as an early backbencher, provided a foundation for his life in politics. A strong personal following, first achieved in Auckland, that could be seen in the impressive crowds that would meet him at street corner meetings and political agitations, developed in Lee's early parliamentary career before entering Cabinet. Publication of his early novels and political writings rapidly spread his name, and due to their controversy added to his growing cult of personality. As his relationship with Labour deteriorated, Lee increasingly began to call on his large following for support. With his split from Labour and the formation of the Democratic Soldier Labour Party, his transformation was complete. The party was built around Lee, operationally run by Lee, and was defined by his career and personality. Lee's weekly and monthly newsletters received notable nationwide circulation, and the movement was seen almost solely as 'Lee's party'.

- Criterion Met -

Amount of Criteria Met

5/6

Conclusion

Through the application of the three separate theories, Panizza and Laclau's populism, Riker's heresthetics, and Gustafson's framework, it can be concluded that John A. Lee is a traditional populist, and closely fits Gustafson's definition of a New Zealand populist leader. Lee formed a populist movement that focussed heavily on him as the operational leader of the movement who came to dominate it. Idolism of Lee by his followers closely matched the brief rise of his political party, and the party was shaped and defined by Lee's personality and politics. Multiple examples were identified in this study of Lee, through both rhetoric and policy, dividing society into a 'people' and an 'other'; clear in- and out- groups. These included positions that were opposed to immigration, Maori land claims, as well as an anti-Catholic movement towards the end of Lee's political career. Lee attacked the status quo and the political establishment

throughout his career, including inside his own party, both in government and in opposition. Through shared hardship and experience, particularly his military service, Lee could closely relate to many of his fellow citizens, who were damaged by an economic depression and war.

Counter-examples that challenge the closeness of Lee to the Gustafson, Panizza and Laclau models of populism are few in Lee's career, and only two examples of heresthetics were identified in this study: the successful strategic decisions of Lee's time managing the state housing programme, and the unsuccessful heresthetics of the Democratic Soldier Labour Party's 1943 general election campaign.

Chapter Four – Case Study: Winston Peters

Introduction

In this chapter, Peters' political biography will be canvassed, and the competing theory strands of this study will be applied to key events and decisions made by him. Little biographical work has been undertaken in relations to Peters, but the study is grateful for the compilation of sources formed by Dr. Bryce Edwards of Otago University in his excellent series of posts on his *liberation* website.[205] It is hypothesised that Peters will closely resemble the populist leader described by Panizza and Laclau, while he will meet only some criteria of Riker's heresthetic leader theorem, and only on a limited number of occasions.

Peters appears to be the leader Gustafson envisioned when crafting his six point criteria of New Zealand populist leadership, and this chapter will both reinforce the validity of this claim, and offer wider insights into Peters' populism. Peters, as the only of the case studies who can be accurately categorised by Gustafson's six point criteria, presents this study with a unique opportunity to test the depth of the framework in explaining populism leadership. These insights will include the fundamental divisions of social groups as explained by Panizza and Laclau, and previously unclear examples of Peters employing, or attempting to employ, heresthetics.

Early Life

Winston Raymond Peters was born on the 11th of April 1945 to a Scottish mother, Joan, and a Maori father, Len, the middle child of 11 in the Peters family of Whananaki.[206] The family belonged to the Ngati Wai iwi, meaning 'the people of the sea'. Named after Winston Churchill, he had a typical northern Maori childhood, working on the land and

---

[205] Bryce Edwards, '*New Zealand First Party History'*, 17 November 2008
http://liberation.typepad.com/liberation/2008/11/nz-first-party-history-1-origins.html

[206] Pat Booth, '*Winston Peters: The Man YOU Want As Prime Minister',* in *North and South*, 14 June 1990, pp. 42-43

attending the small local school.[207] His father was a carpenter and a worker in the freezing works, while the Peters boys, of which there are 7, milked the cows before and after school. After his parents had run out of money to put him through boarding school in Auckland, Winston was sent to Whangarei Boys High School.[208]

After completing a teaching diploma in Auckland, Winston taught for one year before enrolling in a BA in History and Political Science at Auckland University. His independent streak and his pride were on show at this early stage, as he refused scholarships and other assistance available to him, preferring to work to pay for his study, including work on the docks, at a freezing works, as a waiter, and many other odd jobs.[209] Attracted by the promise of good money for hard work, Peters went to Australia in 1969 to work as a blast furnace worker for BHP in Newcastle, and then into the mines at Snowy Mountain.[210]

His ambition once again took hold as he set his sights on becoming a lawyer. He headed back to Auckland, and upon arriving at Auckland University to enrol, was told he was too late. Peters went straight to the Dean of the Law School and argued his case, persuading him to let him enrol.[211] He graduated in 1974, and was known amongst his peers as an average student, but one with great application, particularly under pressure and at exam time. Peters joined the National Party in this period, because it was the party closest to his 'philosophy of independence'.[212] Peters was no student radical; rather, he was carefully dressed, prepared and respectful when speaking in university forums on political issues.[213] As a young graduate, Peters worked for Russell McVeagh on the case of his own iwi, Ngati Wai, and a claim for their land

---

[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Booth, p. 48
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.

not to be taken for public recreational use. Peters practised law for eight years, and in this period made his first moves in the political world.[214]

Peters stood as National's candidate in the Maori seat of Northern Maori in 1975, one of the few political moves that placed Peters' career trajectory closer to that of Maori politics, a domain that Peters has never embraced or accepted as part of his politics, but the only realistic proving ground for a young Maori politician in the National Party in 1975. This became an attack point for Peters' opponents, with his parliamentary nickname in his first terms being 'Luigi', which was either a stab at his good looks, and dress sense, or the re-emergence of a vehemently denied rumour that Peters pretended to be Italian rather than Maori at Auckland University, despite captaining the Auckland Maori rugby team.[215] A very safe Labour seat held by Matiu Rata, Northern Maori was not expected to be the launching ground of Peters' parliamentary career, but his campaigning skills were demonstrated when Rata's majority was reduced by over 1000 votes, from a majority of 5260 votes over National in 1972, to a majority of 4151 over Peters in 1975 .[216][217]

Peters entered Parliament in 1979, following a bitter court battle over a contested election result in Hunua from the 1978 general election. Peters had lost on the night to Labour's Malcolm Douglas, but he took the result to court, claiming that some Labour votes were invalid and fraudulent. The court eventually sided with Peters, giving him the seat and a majority of only 192 votes. Attacks from Labour were numerous after this result, and Peters' bitterness towards his political opponents can be partially attributed to such a fraught start to his career: victory through the courtroom, requiring himself and his wife Louise to spend their savings in order to fight the legal battle.[218]

---

[214] Booth, p. 43
[215] Booth, pp. 47-48
[216] New Zealand Election Study, *Historical Data (1905-1993),* http://www.nzes.org/exec/show/data
[217] Booth, p. 43
[218] Ibid.

Peters launched his parliamentary career in 1979 with his maiden speech, with a notable line criticising those who "exploit every tremor and spasm in society, the economy or race relations, seeking to use every such event as a vehicle to project his own public personality".[219] This quote seems ironic, coming from the man many view as a close embodiment of the populist ideal, a crusading leader who built a movement in his image, fighting against the political establishment.

In the 1981 election, Peters lost his Hunua seat, after a redrawing of the electorate moved 2000 voters from the urban Otara seat into Hunua. Peters returned to practising law, including setting up his own practice in Howick. In 1984 Peters stood for nomination in Kaipara, only to lose it to Lockwood Smith. As Muldoon had called a snap election, however, National needed a candidate in Tauranga and after an approach by local officials, Peters entered the contest. He threw himself into the process, and while only having a day and a night to work the delegates, he met every one and noted their reactions and preferences. After deciding he would win, he submitted his nomination just as the deadline closed, and entered a frantic election campaign. Peters' campaigning skills were once again evident; on election night he won Tauranga, and had lifted National's majority in the seat from 1800 to 4000.[220]

Peters moved to Salamanca Road in Kelburn, into a flat with fellow National MPs Don McKinnon, Paul East and Philip Burdon. The flatmates became close friends while in opposition from 1984-1990, sharing one car between the four of them, and two of them sleeping in double beds in the lounge.[221]

Theory Application

Subsequent sections of this chapter will be dedicated to identifying events and decisions involving Winston Peters' leadership that relate to the test theories of the study: traditional populist theory and heresthetics. If the hypotheses of the study are

---

[219] Booth, p. 44
[220] Ibid.
[221] Rosemary McLeod, '*The Lonely Mission of Winston Peters'*, in *North and South,* 11 August 1992, p. 47

accurate, Peters' career will more closely follow the trajectory of the traditional understanding of populism, that of Panizza and Laclau. Examples will be identified that show the rise of Peters' leadership to dominate a movement, as is consistent with Laclau's theory, and the divisions of the electorate into in- and out- groups of the 'people' and the 'other', as is consistent with Panizza's theory.

Traditional populist examples include Peters' aggressive issue emphasis in his first spell in opposition, his accusations of corporate cronyism, the formation and positioning of New Zealand First, his return to populism after the collapse of the National-led coalition, his subsequent campaigns in opposition and his return to Parliament in 2011. These populist examples express, through the issue focus of New Zealand First, the active naming and dividing of society into in- and out- groups of a 'people' and an 'other', with the 'other' broadly defined as big business, financiers, immigrants, Maori nationalists and Islam. Peters' 'people' can be broadly viewed as New Zealand First's voter base: older New Zealanders, pensioners, those who have felt betrayed by both National and Labour, and middle- to low- income voters in New Zealand's provincial towns and cities. Heresthetic counter-examples are provided, both to illustrate the unseen aspects of his political personality, and to contrast their minimal number and lack of evidence-based depth in comparison to populist examples. These examples will include the strategy around entering into government with both National and Labour, and the decision to stay in opposition regardless of the result of the 2011 election.

Aggressive Opposition

In 1984, back in Parliament, Peters launched into the role of attack dog against the Labour Government, at a pace and frequency that was both impressive and concerning for his colleagues. He began to gain public approval for his scattergun approach to scandal, including demanding inquiries into ministerial renting of Wellington flats, scratches on the bottom of the Cook Strait ferry, Russian spying in New Zealand waters and the controversial sinking of the *Mikhail Lermontov* in 1986. Peters' first major scandal and bout of publicity came in the domain of Maori politics, attacking the

Government over Maori privilege and excess, a particular lightning rod in heartland New Zealand. Peters attacked Maori Affairs Minister Koro Wetere and his department's role in controversial Maori development contracts.[222] Between 1984 and 1987 Peters debated in the House for 200 more hours than any other member on these scandals.[223]

Following the Fourth Labour Government's re-election in 1987, Peters was joined on his staff by a young researcher named Michael Laws, and, armed with the newly enacted Official Information Act, stepped up his campaigns against corruption.[224] While Laws was behind much of the direction, Peters gained serious traction in the public's eyes with a series of attacks in the 1987-1990 parliamentary term, including more questionable Maori loans, attacking the race relations commissioner, and exposing dodgy business and Government PR deals.[225] Laws attributes this heightened success to a new way of 'packaging' the scandals Peters found, in a way that allowed the media to easily understand, digest, and repeat them to the voting public.[226]

Popularity came quickly to an increasingly confident Peters. As Peters' profile grew, in contrast to stoic National Party leader Jim Bolger and the rapidly disintegrating Labour Government, he became the people's choice for Prime Minister by mid-1990.[227] Peters overtook Bolger as preferred Prime Minister in June 1988, Prime Minister Lange in March 1989, and in July 1990, with just over 20% support, overtook a briefly surging Geoffrey Palmer (who replaced Lange as Prime Minister in 1989) in election year.[228] Bolger was still odds-on to become Prime Minister in a landslide election win, but he wasn't even the preferred Prime Minister inside his own party; from as early as June 1988, 38% of National Party supporters wanted Peters as their leader.[229]

---

[222] Ibid.
[223] Booth, p. 53
[224] Ibid.
[225] McLeod, pp. 47-48
[226] McLeod, p. 48
[227] Booth, p. 50
[228] Ibid.
[229] McLeod, p. 48

Peters had one chance to become National Party leader in this buoyant period; in August 1989, when a faltering National Party replaced its party President, rumours of a coup to unseat Bolger abounded as his approval ratings reached a new low and Labour received the boost of a newly stable leadership team. What saved Bolger was division in his backbench; Peters was estimated to have around 14 votes in a leadership bid, while neo-liberal firebrand Ruth Richardson was said to have garnered 10 if it went to a vote. Neither side's backers could decide how each camp could combine their votes; the gap between populist Peters and liberal Richardson was too much to bridge and the personal distrust too great.[230] In 1990, after this failed bid, Michael Laws saw that the only opportunity for Peters to become National leader was if Bolger retired after two terms, as the National Party was overly cautious and wary of change, particularly if a victory of the scale expected in 1990 occurred.[231]

In Government

Following National's landslide victory in 1990; a campaign in which Peters had at times eclipsed his leader and attacked his own party's economic policy, Peters found out from journalist Barry Soper that he had made it into Cabinet, ranked at number 17 and Minister of Maori Affairs.[232] Peters decided to embrace his portfolio work with dedication, despite the low ranking and distrust in him held by the leadership. Peters formed a policy called Ka Awatea, a blueprint for solving Maoridom's problems with uniquely Maori solutions.[233] While Peters had begun to reconnect with the Maori community, his personal popularity dropped to 10% compared to Bolger's 23%.

In government, and lacking the populist issues on which to crusade, Peters was slipping. Crucially, Peters did not do the adequate groundwork on his policy and its preparation to Cabinet, and had not ensured his colleagues' support. This problem was

---

[230] Booth, p. 54
[231] Ibid.
[232] McLeod, p. 48
[233] Ibid.

to occur throughout his periods in government.[234] Peters went to the media, stating that the government must accept his project, now heavily modified, or there was no need for a Minister or Ministry of Maori Affairs. After attending a meeting that had been sanctioned by Bolger, Peters' policy was launched with little fanfare, and by October 1991 the underperforming Peters was sacked as Minister of Maori Affairs, as a result of poor public reaction to Ka Awatea, internal reaction in the Cabinet against Ka Awatea, and Peters' method of promoting the policy directly to the media, over objections from Cabinet colleagues.[235] Maori broadcaster Derek Fox provides an illuminating insight on this period in Peters' career; "He was starting to succeed in Maori terms, which usually means you're going to lose in Pakeha terms".[236]

Accusations of Crony Capitalism

Peters moved quickly to try to regain the attention of the public. He rose to prominence again in early 1992, with attacks on the credibility of the government, and the emergence of a new populist issue.[237] Peters attacked the financial deals related to the collapse of the Bank of New Zealand, and particularly the influence of investment firm Fay Richwhite, and the involvement of lobbyists from the Business Roundtable. Once again, Peters' popularity and profile grew, despite being a backbencher in an increasingly unpopular government. The BNZ/Fay Richwhite controversy struck home with middle-New Zealanders hurt by successive rounds of economic reforms, and angry about the excessive wealth spent by such groups on the America's Cup challenge while unemployment remained high.[238]

With the message crafted by Laws, another key issue was advanced by Peters' throughout his early time in parliament: proportional representation. By late 1992, commentators such as Glen Pettit from the Bay of Plenty Times observed that Peters could win his Tauranga seat in the event he either leaves or is kicked out of National,

---

[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid.
[238] McLeod, p. 49

and the soon-arriving change in electoral system, signalled by the 1993 non-binding referendum, could open up a new avenue to power for Peters.[239]

While in Hastings to be the MC at Michael Laws' wedding, Peters met with Selwyn Cushing, a wealthy businessman. Peters subsequently made a claim in Parliament that he had been offered a bribe by Cushing, whom Peters claimed was working for the Business Roundtable, to stop his attacks on the corporate elite. Laws saw this at the time as being reckless, a misunderstanding, or the result of a hangover from the night before.[240] Peters eventually mentioned this claim outside of Parliament, forcing a libel suit from Cushing that cost Peters and his family a significant amount of money and time, and demonstrated a trait that has harmed Peters in his career: an at times reckless attitude towards attention to detail and planning.[241] His old flatmates from Salamanca Road began to desert him, as his statements became increasingly anti-National and anti-corporatist, and the situation of having a firebrand populist with growing support sitting on the backbenches became untenable for National.

Expulsion

In late 1992, Winston Peters was expelled from the National caucus on a vote of 50 to 12, and despite briefly considering fighting for the National nomination in Tauranga, Peters saw that his political survival depended on the formation of a new political party.[242] Peters' popularity was boosted further by the expulsion, and he continued his crusade against big business and the BNZ deal. Intent on making a statement, Peters resigned from Parliament to seek a new mandate for himself as an independent member, winning the subsequent by-election in April 1993 with 90% of the vote, in a very weak field, made up of assorted low-profile independents.[243]

---

[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Michael Laws, *The Demon Profession*, Auckland, 1998, pp. 210-225
[243] Vote.co.nz, *Winston Peters*, 2011, http://vote.co.nz/2011/candidates/profile/winston-peters

Now separated from National, behind the scenes discussions began on the formation of a new party. As early as August 1992, discussions shepherded by Laws began within National and the small Liberal Party[244] regarding the formation of a 'New National' minor party to compete for the centre vote in the potential proportional system in New Zealand.[245] Negotiations between the Alliance[246] and Peters had begun in secret as early as December 1991, but several difficulties held back the probability of success; Peters was concerned with the multiple party structure of the grouping, the role of Jim Anderton, who dominated the movement, and the leftist tendencies of the majority of the party.[247] The talks were ended in early July 1993 by the Alliance leadership, as Peters was not dedicated to the process, and strong public support was forming for a Peters' led-party, up to 31% in one poll.

New Zealand First – Populist Policy and Campaigning

New Zealand First was launched at Alexandra Park raceway on Sunday the 18th of July 1993, with a party logo in patriotic black and white, a policy platform that was mostly unformed and general, and steeped in populist rhetoric.[248] The party's position in the populist centre, in the image of its leader, became clear: an anti-establishment platform, formed around strong nationalism, policies to stop asset sales, restrictions on immigration (particularly from non-English speaking countries), and advocating direct

---

[244] The Liberal Party was founded by National MPs Gilbert Myles and Hamish MacIntyre in 1992, as a result of their opposition to the economic direction of the National at the time, particularly Finance Minister Ruth Richardson. By the 1993 election, The Liberal Party had become a member of the Alliance grouping of political parties.

[245] Laws, *Demon Profession*, pp. 220-235

[246] The Alliance, founded in 1991 as a merged grouping of four political parties: Jim Anderton's NewLabour Party, the environmentalist Greens, the Maori-focussed party Mana Motuhake, and the descendants of the Social Credit movement, the Democratic Party. Jim Anderton, as the most prominent politician in the grouping, led the Alliance at its founding. By the 1993 election, The Liberal Party had merged with the Alliance. This arrangement of parties remained in place until the Alliance's split in 2002. The Alliance's politics were broadly left, and stood against the neo-liberal economic policies of both Labour and National that were demonstrated in the mid to late 1980's and early 1990's.

[247] Ibid.

[248] Martin Hames notes in *Winston First*, Auckland, 1995, that at the party launch, Peters stated that "the government had sold assets to people who did not even speak our language".

democracy and accountability.[249] Thoroughly opposed to the neo-liberalism of successive Labour and National governments, and distrustful of big business, NZ First was able to draw support both from the left with its protectionist, Muldoonist economic platform, and from the right, with its illiberalism on race, Treaty issues, immigration, and 'bludgers' of the welfare, political and corporate variety.[250]

While support for NZ First began at a high mark, polling before the 1993 general election had the party down to around 10%, hampered by an unclear policy platform and a lack of guiding principles. Laws commented that "I failed to detect a philosophy, a principle or even a defining policy that would flame the Peters personality into the kind of all-encompassing prairie populism needed to win a general election".[251] In the 1993 election, New Zealand First gained a disappointing two seats, Peters in Tauranga and Tau Henare in Northern Maori, and 8.4% of the electorate votes across the country.[252] The party campaign was unorganised, and Peters was hamstrung by the lockout of the party from state election funding and television air-time, instead having to campaign on the ground in each electorate.[253]

Two major issues that are linked to Peters' populism provided the spark for what was to come for New Zealand First in 1996: political and corporate cronyism and immigration. A complex conspiracy was beginning to emerge in the early 1990s surrounding tax avoidance in the Cook Islands, New Zealand merchant banks, the BNZ, Fay Richwhite (who had profited heavily from state asset sales), and the IRD. Winston Peters latched onto this issue, pitting his powerless 'everyman' against the powerful who had conspired to 'rip off' the New Zealander taxpayer. This was in the wider

---

[249] Jonathan Boston and Elizabeth McLeay, *'Forming the first MMP government: Theory, practice and prospects'*, in Jonathan Boston, Elizabeth McLeay, Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, *From Campaign to Coalition*, Wellington, 1997, p. 217, in Edwards, '*New Zealand First Party History'*
[250] Edwards, '*New Zealand First Party History'*
[251] Laws, *Demon Profession*, pp. 220-235
[252] Electoral Commission, *General elections 1890-1993 – seats won by party*, http://www.elections.org.nz/elections/resultsdata/fpp-seats-won.html
[253] Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts, '*The Last Hurrah: The New Zealand General Election of 1993 – What Happened and Why'*, in Jack Vowles and Peter Aimer (eds.), *Double Decision: The 1993 Election and Referendum in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1994, in Edwards, '*New Zealand First Party History'*

societal context of the history of neo-liberal reforms advocated by the political and business elite, which were undertaken by both National and Labour, and held in contempt by much of working-class and middle New Zealand.[254]

Peters tabled in Parliament the tax documents of tax haven shell company European Pacific, which were given to him as a tipoff in a Montana Winebox in early 1994.[255] Peters, whose finance sector credibility was bruised by what many commentators saw as 'conspiracy theory ramblings' involving the BNZ bailout of the previous three years, threw the issue into public profile. This forced the Government into a long running inquiry on the Winebox that provided a publicity platform for Peters and his lawyers throughout the 1990s, despite the findings ultimately being inconclusive.[256]

In early 1996, New Zealand First was polling respectably, and Winston Peters was about to announce the party's position on a policy issue that both sparked their election campaign, and became a defining issue for the party. Beginning with a State of the Nation speech on February 1st, in response the increasing levels of Asian migration to New Zealand in the 1990s, most notably in Auckland, Peters called for immigration to be 'cut to the bone'. The policy limited arrivals to 10,000 per year, and the speech stated that immigrants were draining social service budgets, taking New Zealand jobs and driving up real estate prices out of the reach of the working New Zealander. Results were dramatic: a taboo subject avoided by the political establishment was used as a lightning rod to inflame middle-New Zealand's resentment, particularly in the context of a de-regulated economy and the social dislocation of rapidly evolving industries and communities.[257]

Within two months New Zealand First was closing in on National in the opinion polls, peaking at 29%, ahead of both Labour and the Alliance. New Zealand First entered the 1996 election with high hopes of deciding the next government, with a populist

---

[254] The Daily News, '*Everything you ever wanted to know about the winebox inquiry*', 5 April 1997, p. 18
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Edwards, '*New Zealand First Party History*'

pipeline to the New Zealand heartland through their policy platform, and a link to the Maori community through Peters and particularly Tau Henare. New Zealand First pursued aggressive strategies to recruit winnable candidates in the Maori seats, sending a message of real political power for Maori in the first MMP election.[258]

Low on funds due to a loan taken out to fund a professionalised bus tour for Peters, and a lack of large-scale fundraising capability as a result of his anti-corporate message, New Zealand First had significant organisational problems in the 1996 election campaign. There were controversies around the party list, and the wider party was disconnected from the parliamentary wing. In addition, the lack of funds meant the party couldn't conduct internal polling, and a large amount of election material that was printed could not be distributed.[259]

These factors, coupled with a drop in support following the initial surge earlier in the year, and an economic rationalisation of an unclear and financially untested manifesto, lessened the hopes of a second place finish for New Zealand First and Peters. On election night, New Zealand First won 13.35% of the vote, ahead of the Alliance on 10.2%, but behind Labour on 28.19% and National on 33.87%. New Zealand First swept all the Maori seats, delivering a powerful new bloc to the party in parliament.[260] New Zealand had undertaken its first MMP election, and the result delivered Peters and New Zealand First as kingmakers, able to choose Labour or National to become the Government.[261] Commentators quickly began to anoint Labour's Helen Clark as New Zealand's first woman Prime Minister; the accepted wisdom was that Peters would not return to prop up the government that had expelled him, and the party that he had vigorously attacked.[262]

---

[258] Ibid.
[259] Laws, *Demon Profession*, pp. 363-368
[260] Electoral Commission, *1996 General Election – Official Results and Statistics*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_1996/
[261] Donna Chisholm, '*Winston the kingmaker*', in *Sunday Star Times*, 13 Oct 1996, p.1
[262] Ibid.

Peters led a small team to negotiate with National and Labour, a process that took seven weeks to complete. Commentators stated that Peters was unlikely to go into formal coalition with National; he would either go into coalition with Labour, or support a minority-National government issue by issue, and bring down the government and side with Labour and the Alliance if there was a severe policy disagreement. Amongst New Zealand First voters on polling day, 75% preferred Labour over National, and later polls throughout the negotiations put that number at 63%, and at 45% for a Labour deal versus 37% support for a National deal amongst all voters.[263]

The National Coalition

On the 10th of December 1996, in a televised speech to the nation, Peters gave his coalition decision. In dramatic fashion, at a time when he was arguably at the peak of his political power, Peters left announcement of the decision of his choice of a coalition partner until the last line of the speech; he would form a formal coalition government with National until 1999.[264]

This decision was made for a variety of reasons: Peters was offered the new position of Treasurer, which appeared at the time to give him control of the Finance portfolio. This was something that Labour was not willing to do. In addition, members of the New Zealand First negotiating team, particularly Jack Elder, formerly a Labour MP, and Peter McCardle, a former National MP, found Labour's team to be presumptuous and overconfident.[265] Interestingly, in an interview in 2005, Peters blames Jim Anderton for scuttling the potential deal with Labour. Peters stated that Anderton sent a letter to Labour illustrating that the Alliance could not support New Zealand First on all issues of conscience, and would therefore have a veto power over New Zealand First in terms of supporting the potential governing arrangement. Peters could not fathom giving

---

[263] Jeremy Kirk, '*Teams talk, Peters appears tired*', in *The Press,* 26 October 1996, p. 23
[264] The Evening Post, '*The winner is… National*', 11 Dec 1996, p. 42
[265] Michael Laws, '*The Rise, Fall and Redemption of Winston Peters*', in *North and South*, 16 May 2005, p. 49

Anderton such power, particularly from a party competing for the same anti-establishment vote.[266]

Peters himself has never stated his personal preference, but it could be argued that while the party left the Muldoonist, nationalistic and independent roots that drew Peters to National, Peters never truly left them. Faced with a choice of supporting an unpopular National government that had managed to win a plurality of the vote or a grouping on the centre-left with no dominant party, Peters may have returned to his roots, hoping to steer the government with his powerful influence. Peters also had a legitimate claim of choosing stability; by going with the party with the plurality of seats, his coalition had the highest mathematical chance of remaining cohesive throughout the parliamentary term.

Tau Henare had made it clear to the party in the 1996 campaign that there was no way Bolger was going to be propped up as Prime Minister after the election, although Peters had reprimanded Henare for this statement, perhaps foreshadowing the decision.

Heresthetics and the Coalition Decision

Heresthetical analysis reveals that Peters may have had a long term focus to the coalition decision. Michael Laws reports of a conversation that took place between himself and Peters after the arrangement was finalised, in which Peters claimed he viewed the government as not just about getting to 1998 or 1999, but to actually continue as a real coalition in the mould of a merger of interests like the Liberal/National grouping in Australia.[267] This can be viewed as an attempt by Peters to apply heresthetics to his political environment, positioning his party in a strategic location in which it would be guaranteed power and importance as part of a permanent coalition. Peters had not made the choice signalled by the populist campaign New Zealand First had run in 1996; instead, he made a decision of which the

---

[266] Ibid.
[267] Laws, *Demon Profession*, p. 391

political repercussions were certain, but, in his mind, the long term strategic opportunities were as well. This attempt to solidify power from a position of political strength was a clear, but unsuccessful, heresthetic gambit. The popularity and credibility of the party was heavily damaged despite potentially good intentions.

As part of the coalition arrangement, National gave some policy concessions to Peters and New Zealand First – notably, increased spending on health, such as free health care for under sixes, higher education funding, some dialogue over immigration and overseas investment, and a promise to send the issue of compulsory superannuation (favoured by Peters) to a referendum.[268] Peters believed that he had also extracted a great price from National for Government with the Treasurer role, but in practice National's Finance Minister Bill Birch did much of the policy work, while Peters' role was mostly symbolic. The voters expecting New Zealand First to move the government's approach away from liberalisation were disappointed, as Peters' first Budget in 1997 signalled the elimination of all tariffs and a lack of aversion to foreign investment. Tellingly, Laws stated that "Peters wanted the mana associated with the senior role rather than the role itself".[269]

Populist Revival

By early 1998, support for Peters and New Zealand First had slumped to the low single digits, with a TVNZ/Colmar Brunton Poll showing the party at 2 percent and Peters at 3 percent as preferred Prime Minister in April.[270] Peters attempted a revival of his fortunes by calling himself 'the People's Treasurer', and pointing to the gains his party has made while in Coalition, particularly the removal of the superannuation surtax. National had promised to remove the surtax as part of the 1990 manifesto, but failed to do so while in Government in 1990-1996. Peters campaigned on this issue

---

[268] Nick Venter, '*A contradictory populist*', in *The Dominion*, 15 August 1998, p. 27
[269] Laws, *Demon Profession,* p. 387
[270] Helen Bain, '*Peters the populist is back'*, in *The Dominion,* 14 April 1998, p. 6

throughout the mid-1990s, and ultimately removed the surtax through policy negotiation with National as part of the Coalition.[271]

Peters also found a potent populist issue in the payment of pensions to war veterans damaged by exposure to French nuclear testing in the Pacific while on observation duties; the issue had been ignored by the two major parties, and Peters targeted it as an injustice wrought by the establishment onto the populace, and through his influence and his position, he was able to secure the payments.[272] By this point Jenny Shipley had become Prime Minister after replacing Jim Bolger in a leadership coup in 1997, and Peters' relationship with his superior was poor, lacking the personal connection that had developed between himself and Bolger despite their long-held differences and rivalries. By August 1998, Peters was sacked as Treasurer, over opposition to the Government's plan to privatise Wellington Airport, after a tense period in which Peters publically moved away from the increasingly right wing program that he had originally signed off on when appointed Treasurer.[273]

A clash and separation was inevitable as Peters faced the reality of an electorate moving against National, the low poll results of New Zealand First, and the association of his cabinet position with the unpopular economic programme. The public's perception of the wider New Zealand First party was severely damaged in this period, particularly following actions by some of the Maori MPs in the party, known as the 'Tight Five'. A scandal involving Aotearoa Television, which received state funding, having its funds used by NZ First MP Tuku Morgan on expensive items of clothing, was the type of political spending scandal that can damage the public perception of a party, particularly one claiming to be fighting against the greed of the entrenched political and business elite.[274]

---

[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Ibid.
[274] Ibid.

While obtaining some notable policy gains while in coalition with National, the Treasurer position, in the words of journalist Nick Venter, proved to be Peters' downfall.[275] An increasingly unpopular Shipley-led National government continued, held together by the votes of independent MPs who had split off a directionless New Zealand First, and an independent ex-Alliance Maori MP. Facing low poll numbers, blamed for creating the conditions for the formation of an unpopular government, and in third place in polling on election night in 1999, Peters and New Zealand First faced electoral oblivion. Labour, the Alliance and the Greens had made peace and New Zealand was heading towards a decisive victory for the left. With little money and structure remaining in the party, Peters led a valiant effort of retail campaigning, stumping up and down the country, and by the slimmest of margins managed to save his party from complete defeat. New Zealand First dropped below the 5% threshold once the votes were counted, finishing on 4.26%, but Peters saved the party by winning the Tauranga seat by only 63 votes.[276] A term on the opposition benches beckoned, in the position which Peters was most familiar with - attacking a government.

Return to Populist Opposition

In Parliament with a reduced caucus of 5 MPs, and with a Labour-led coalition government in power, Peters was able to refocus his efforts on a specific plank of populist issues that would resonate with his electorate, particularly those who were conservative but did not hold a desire to return a splintered National Party to power. Peters' main focus was the issue that had sparked his party's surge to the lead of the opinion polls in the mid-1990s: immigration. He once again criticised the level of immigration in New Zealand, particularly Asian migrants, blaming them for rising house prices, an increased cost of living, and high interest rates.[277] The other two sections of NZ First's platform were a tough law and order policy, and a pledge to end the 'Treaty

---

[275] Venter, p. 27
[276] Electoral Commission, *1999 General Election – Official Results and Statistics*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_1999/
[277] The Press, *'Leader Forums – Winston Peters'*, 1 September 2005

of Waitangi grievance industry', to provide one law for all,[278] making a stark contrast with the progressive and liberal government. Prime Minister Helen Clark called an early election in June 2002, after internal strife in the Alliance party over the Afghanistan War lead to uncertainty of the stability of the Alliance in the coalition. Labour also held a strong lead in political opinion polls, further strengthening Prime Minister Clark's position. The election was held on 27 July 2002, and Peters was able to drum up support for the three key policies of New Zealand First's platform, with a campaign slogan of 'Can we fix it? Yes we can'.

The short election campaign, a poorly run effort by National, the high popularity of the Prime Minister and the realisation in the final weeks that Labour was very likely to win collapsed National's vote as swing voters searched for moderating coalition partners for Labour.[279] The rise of the moderate United Future party on the back of a strong debate performance by MP and party leader Peter Dunne gave Clark choice post-election, marginalising Peters' chances of being kingmaker in the style of 1996. From this position, Clark was able to rule out the increasingly divisive Peters during the campaign. Peters nevertheless romped home in Tauranga, and his party received 10.38% of the party vote, delivering 13 seats, as National's vote collapsed to an all-time low of 20.93%.[280] A new government was formed involving Labour, the Progressives (ex-Alliance leader Jim Anderton's new party), and United Future, with the Greens spurned due to disagreements over Labour's genetic engineering policy. Peters and his party were placed in a strong position in Opposition to make gains in a crowded field.

Message discipline was the focus of New Zealand First in opposition, and a strong focus was given to the three messages Peters pushed during the 2002 election campaign.

---

[278] John Armstrong and Audrey Young, '*Interview: Winston Peters, NZ First party leader*', in *New Zealand Herald*, 30 July 2005
[279] Jonathan Boston, Stephen Church, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *New Zealand Votes: The General Election of 2002*, Wellington,2003
[280] Electoral Commission, *2002 General Election – Official Result*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2002/

Regularly polling strongly, New Zealand First found momentum in opposition, and remained on course to once again be a player in New Zealand politics.

New National Party leader Don Brash altered this dynamic with his game-changing Orewa address on race relations in 2004, in which he attacked separatism and Treaty grievance in New Zealand, calling for "one law for all". An immediate and unprecedented poll bounce for National occurred,[281] with one of Peters' key policy positions now taken up by a party with more outreach, funds and media coverage, in a move that Peters' called "theft of someone else's intellectual property".[282] New Zealand First went into the 2005 campaign emphasising 5 issues – the same three from 2002; and an additional emphasis on caring for seniors, notably through the Super Gold Card subsidy scheme and raising the superannuation rate, and a renewed call for economic nationalism and retention of New Zealand control of assets and exports.[283] In the tense global environment post 9/11 and the Bali bombings, Peters raised concerns over Muslim radicals residing in New Zealand, emphasising media stories that had been reported over a long period, claiming that there was a militant Muslim underbelly in New Zealand hiding behind a moderate facade.[284] Peters again raised the spectre of Asian immigration in 2005 with an address at Orewa stating that they were bringing 'imported criminal activity' to New Zealand.

By June/July 2005, New Zealand First was polling around 10% in the major opinion polls, a strong performance considering the media focus on the two major parties, and the policy positioning of National.[285] New Zealand First advisor Damian Edwards stated that this was seen in the party as a stepping stone to a 20% performance on election

---

[281] New Zealand Herald, '*Poll puts National ahead of Labour'*, 15 February 2004, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=3549317
[282] The Press*, 'Leader Forums – Winston Peters'*, 1 September 2005
[283] Damian Edwards, '*New Zealand First – squeezed from every side'*, in Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *The Baubles of Office: The New Zealand General Election of 2005*, Wellington, 2007, p. 118
[284] The Press*, 'Leader Forums – Winston Peters'*, 1 September 2005
[285] Edwards, '*New Zealand First – squeezed from every side'*, p. 115

night.[286] Traction in the campaign was made on seniors policy; however the framing of the entire election debate around tax, particularly the small tax cut offered by Labour and the large, broad cuts offered by National, marginalised New Zealand First, which emphasised its core issues rather than macroeconomic policy.[287]

On election night, New Zealand First's support dropped to 5.72%, and Peters lost his Tauranga seat to wealthy local businessman Bob Clarkson.[288] This drop can be attributed to the loss of anti-National voters concerned that in a close election New Zealand First could once again support a National government, and a concerted charm offensive by the Labour government to emphasis their success in delivering policy outcomes for seniors.[289]

In the election campaign, Peters had given a speech in Rotorua signalling that he would support, as government, the party with the most seats, would not be part of a government with the Greens, and that he would eschew the 'baubles of office'.[290] Following the election, the close result of Labour, with 50 seats and National, with 48, meant that a Government arrangement wasn't immediately clear, and overtures were made by National to United Future and the Maori Party. Peters, however, stuck to his word, and went with Labour, once again keeping the Greens out of Ministerial positions, in accepting the Foreign Affairs Ministerial position, outside of Cabinet, Peters was viewed by many as having broken his word, accepting the type of "bauble" he had promised not to take.[291]

---

[286] Ibid.

[287] Ibid.

[288] Electoral Commission, *2005 General Election – Official Result*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2005/

[289] Edwards, '*New Zealand First – squeezed from every side*', pp. 122-123

[290] New Zealand Herald, '*Peters rejects formal coalition',* 7 September 2005, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10344466

[291] Television New Zealand, '*APEC meeting Winston's first task',* 14 November 2005, http://tvnz.co.nz/view/page/411368/626761

Government with Labour

The following parliamentary term was tough for Peters and New Zealand First. Significant policy gains were made, as they were in 1996-1998, in the form of the Super Gold Card subsidy, the raising of the superannuation payment rate, and the establishment of KiwiSaver, passed with New Zealand First's confidence and supply votes, as a step towards the compulsory super scheme that Peters had always championed.[292]

Personal triumphs for Peters were also evident; he grew into the role of Minister of Foreign Affairs, becoming an adept statesman, through improving bilateral relations with the United States and a significant increase in the country's diplomacy budget, foreign aid and trade outreach.[293] Peters had never before performed well in Government, as his combative, anti-establishment persona runs counter to consensus decision making, but his time as Minister was scandal-free, even allowing a free trade agreement with China to be signed over his personal objections.

A growing political donations scandal embroiled Peters and the party near the end of the parliamentary term. Amidst intense media pressure, and Serious Fraud Office, Police and Parliamentary Privileges Committee investigations, Peters was forced to stand down from his position.[294] While eventually being cleared of any wrongdoing in the former two investigations, and receiving a censure from Parliament in the latter, the relentless negative media coverage took its toll on New Zealand First's election chances.[295]

---

[292] New Zealand Herald, '*'Supergold' discount card for pensioners from August next year',* 11 November 2006, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10410283
[293] Cliff Taylor, '*When Condoleezza met Winston',* in *New Zealand Herald*, 27 July 2008, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10523720
[294] Dominion Post, '*Peters stands aside as Minister'*, 29 August 2008, http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/603732
[295] Patrick Gower, '*Party cleared, but PM leaves Peters outside'*, in *New Zealand Herald*, 11 October 2008, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10536944

2008 Election Platform

At the 2008 election campaign, Peters, still combative and energetic, took to the country himself, pushing his party's election message of 'Protect and Save your New Zealand',[296] with minimal positive media coverage. The party platform focussed on economic nationalism, and protecting the gains made by New Zealand First, such as KiwiSaver and the Super Gold Card.[297] Campaign strategist Damian Edwards wrote that the killer blow to the New Zealand First campaign came when National leader John Key ruled out New Zealand First as a possible coalition partner, leaving next to no margin of error for the party, at that time polling in the low single digits.[298] This eliminated the chance of voters wanting a change of government from the increasingly unpopular and embattled Labour administration giving their vote to New Zealand First to provide a moderating influence in a new coalition. Despite the myriad challenges, the party still defied the polls by receiving 4.07% of the vote.[299] Out of parliament, with Peters trounced by National rising star Simon Bridges in Tauranga, the party vowed to continue and take its messaging directly to the people in the coming three years, buoyed by the fact that New Zealand First's result was the fourth highest in terms of party vote in 2008.[300]

Populist Rebuild of New Zealand First

Following the 2008 election, Peters and New Zealand First rebuilt the party behind the scenes for the first year of the 49th Parliament,[301] with few public statements until debate began on the Government's replacement legislation for the Foreshore and

---

[296] Damian Edwards, '*New Zealand First'*, in Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), Key to Victory: the New Zealand general election of 2008, Wellington, 2010, p. 116
[297] Ibid.
[298] Edwards, '*New Zealand First'*, p. 119
[299] The National Business Review, '*NZ First's loss would be National's gain',* 5 November 2008, http://www.nbr.co.nz/article/nz-firsts-loss-would-be-nationals-gain-37391; A rolling average of polls compiled by NZPA put New Zealand First at under 3%.
[300] Electoral Commission, *2008 General Election – Official Result*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2008/
[301] Rt. Hon Winston Peters, *The Road Back*, 12 December 2009, http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO0912/S00165.htm

Seabed Act, a law that put contested areas of the coastline in Crown control, in opposition to Maori land claims. The original law was one that Peters supported and voted for, and he stood against the new bill, releasing statements and doing media interviews repeating his "one law for all" stance and attacking the "Treaty industry". Peters was filling a niche in politics that had been abandoned by National since John Key's repositioning of the party.[302] Peters claimed the party retained a sizeable membership, and New Zealand First began gaining more visibility when the National Party announced its 2011 election policy of partial asset sales, giving Peters fertile electoral ground for his brand of economic nationalism.[303] His speeches and addresses to town halls and community meetings, which drew significant crowds for a party outside Parliament,[304] focussed on several points: the failure of neo-liberal economics, the danger of social dislocations due to the breakdown of communities, the excessive wealth of the rich and powerful, the deregulated finance industries and a continued call for "one law for all". The de-emphasis of immigration as an issue was notable and important; the party had been characterised by a policy that was perceived as being reactionary, and the stigma of racism was absent from an issue platform that focussed on economic populism.

New Zealand First began to gain more media coverage from its 2011 campaign launch,[305] and poll results, which Peters regularly attacked as being unreliable and untrustworthy, showed NZ First inching toward the 5% threshold.[306] The National Party

---

[302] New Zealand First Party, *Foreshore and Seabed Sell-out says Peters*, http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1006/S00152.htm, 15 June 2010
[303] Rt. Hon Winston Peters, *NZ For Sale*, 3 August 2010, http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1008/S00013/nz-for-sale.htm
[304] Sunday Star Times, Tony Wall, '*Winston: The comeback king'*, 5 December 2010, http://www.stuff.co.nz/sunday-star-times/features/4421238/Winston-The-comeback-king; (Article states that large crowds have been meeting Peters at public events, included 450 on the North Shore in the preceding week)
[305] Television New Zealand, '*Peters promises tax cuts at NZ First campaign launch'*, 30 October 2011, http://tvnz.co.nz/politics-news/peters-promises-tax-cuts-nz-first-campaign-launch-4489739
[306] Roy Morgan Research, N*ew Zealand National-led government's winning lead dips again*, 11 November 2011, http://www.roymorgan.com/news/polls/2011/4719/; (In a polling period a week either side of NZ First's campaign launch, New Zealand First registered at 4.5% support, just outside the 5% threshold and up from 2.5%, 2% and 1% in the previous three Roy Morgan polls)

held a large lead over Labour, and disaffected Labour and anti-National voters needed a new political home to place their frustrations, and to provide an alternative voice against the unpopular asset sales platform National was proposing. A political factor complicated this, however; National had again ruled out Peters as a potential coalition partner,[307] reducing the party's potential voter base. Political in 2011 pundits had all but written off New Zealand First.

Heresthetics in the 2011 Campaign

In an attempt to ameliorate the political damage of National's ruling out of New Zealand First, Peters made an address in Kelston, in which a stance was announced that ruled out going into government with either major party; instead, NZ First would vote issue by issue from a position of opposition. This gave New Zealand First an increased chance of returning to Parliament, opening up the potential for conservative voters who did not want to elect a Labour government to vote for the party.[308] This was an effective strategic movement: an example of Peters playing heresthetical offense from a position out of power, altering the previous repercussions around voting for New Zealand First to a multidimensional field. Removing fixed dimensionality, and enabling conservative voters who were opposed to asset sales to vote for a party that would not support Labour, would provide aggressive opposition, and would prevent National from gaining an outright majority, meaning that the now complex range of voting options allowed Peters to make a last minute push for these voters. Unlike past heresthetic manoeuvres by Peters, this decision was highly successful, as it laid the electoral platform for the party's return to parliament.

2011 Campaign

Four very separate outside occurrences altered this dynamic, providing the platform for an unlikely comeback. Firstly, Labour proposed increasing the retirement age to 67

---

[307] Claire Trevett, 'PM rules out any NZ First deal', in New Zealand Herald, 2 February 2011, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10703680
[308] Rt. Hon Winston Peters, The Real Issues – NZ First Coalition Position, 6 November 2011, http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1111/S00151/speech-peters-nz-first-coalition-position.htm

in increments starting in 2020, giving Peters a platform to vigorously oppose a policy seen as attacking a natural constituency for him, the elderly.[309] Secondly, increasing coverage for Peters, and dissatisfaction with Labour, brought New Zealand First up to 2.9% in a TVNZ/Colmar Brunton poll, judged to be high enough by TVNZ criteria to let Peters into the nationally televised minor party leaders' debate,[310] an event from which the party was previously scheduled to be excluded. Peters, in a commanding and measured performance, won the debate in the eyes of most commentators.[311] Thirdly, the 'teapot tape' scandal gave Peters a new issue in which to establish a media presence. Prime Minister John Key and ACT candidate John Banks, whom Key was tacitly endorsing for the seat of Epsom in order to provide a lifeline to the damaged ACT Party – one of National's coalition partners - were secretly taped at their public meeting in an Auckland cafe. The contents of the tape were controversial, and made their way to Peters. Crucially, Key was said to have been disparaging to elderly New Zealand First supporters, and Peters used this in a campaign speech, providing two days of media coverage in which he was able to advance the New Zealand First's wider platform.[312] Finally, the use by the 'Vote for Change' anti-MMP campaign of Peters'

[309] Radio New Zealand, '*Policy no solution to ailing economy – Peters'*, 28 October 2011, http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/election-2011/89401/raising-retirement-age-essential,-says-labour-leader, and Gordon Campbell, '*Daunting rebuild ahead for Labour'*, in *Kapi-Mana News*, 29 November 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/local-papers/kapi-mana-news/opinion/6052047/Daunting-rebuild-ahead-for-Labour; "The Epsom teapot saga may have earned Winston Peters some headlines, but Labour's plan to raise the retirement age was probably more politically advantageous to New Zealand First in the long run. To no discernible advantage to its own cause, Labour's policy enhanced Peters' standing as a staunch defender of the few privileges that older New Zealanders currently enjoy".

[310] Television New Zealand, '*Peters' debate slot 'better late than never''*, 11 November 2011, http://tvnz.co.nz/election-2011/peters-gets-tvnz-leaders-debate-spot-4522146; (TVNZ's criteria for participation in the debate for parties outside of Parliament was to reach at least 3% in one of the two preceding ONE News/Colmar Brunton polls, of which NZ First scored 2.9% in the second, which was rounded up in Colmar Brunton's summary to 3%).
[311] Andrea Vance, '*Winston Peters winner in minor party debate'*, 17 November 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/campaign-trail/5981643/Winston-Peters-winner-in-minor-party-debate; (A public text poll on TVNZ after the debate scored Peters the winner with 36% of the vote).
[312] 3News, '*Transcript of Winston Peters' teaparty tape speech'*, 17 November 2011, http://www.3news.co.nz/Transcript-of-Winston-Peters-teaparty-tape-speech/tabid/419/articleID/233100/Default.aspx

image on their election advertising, in an attempt to disparage the current electoral system, provided a visual link to many more New Zealanders than his party could financially afford to reach.[313]

The last days of the 2011 campaign showed a surge in the polls for New Zealand First to over the 5% party vote threshold.[314] On election night, Labour's vote dropped below most predictions to 27%, and New Zealand First surged up to 6.8%.[315] The party and Peters were back in Parliament, having stormed home in the more conservative regional cities; gaining second in the party and electorate votes in Peters' old seat of Tauranga, and registering a strong third in the party vote in the Bay of Plenty and Whanganui.[316]

Idolism

The populist movement associated with New Zealand First has always been sustained by the popularity and presence of Winston Peters. Laclau states that the decisive moment in the formation of a populist movement often comes when a populist leader, who actively constitutes such an expression of populism, rises in the political sphere. Peters' early rise to political prominence as a National MP, following a series of explosive scandals and high profile clashes with the political and business elite, framed the populism that would emerge around Peters, to be heavily focussed on the leader rather than the movement itself. Since the formation of New Zealand First, Peters has been its only leader, and the party's fortunes have risen on his high preferred Prime Minister ratings, the scandals he has uncovered, and the populist issues he has emphasised that have gone untouched by the political establishment. The party's fortunes have also fallen when Peters has been involved in his own scandals, and when

---

[313] Danya Levy, *'Peters poster used to oppose MMP'*, 31 October 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/5879062/Peters-poster-used-to-oppose-MMP
[314] Roy Morgan Research, *National set for election victory, but no majority as 'teapot tape' scandal dents National and benefits NZ First*, November 24 2011, http://www.roymorgan.com/news/polls/2011/4724/
[315] Electoral Commission, *2011 General Election – Official Result*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2011/
[316] Ibid.

tenures in government for New Zealand First have removed aspects of anti-establishment rhetoric from the party's political platform. The focus on Peters, including his likeness on all election material throughout the campaigns contested by the party, and the lack of other publically prominent members of New Zealand, has left the party in danger of relying so heavily on Peters' idolism that, at this juncture, it seems unlikely that it could survive his eventual retirement.

At present, following the 2011 election, Peters is back in his natural proving ground of opposition: master of inquiries, scandal and sensation, ready to oppose and propose, champion of the 'people', and already seen by some as a de facto Leader of the Opposition.

The Gustafson Framework and Winston Peters

Through the analysis of Winston Peters' political career, and the application of Panizza and Laclau's traditional populism and Riker's heresthetics, it is clear that Peters is significantly more a pure populist than a heresthetician. This was demonstrated by the identification of key events and decisions made by Peters that fit Panizza and Laclau's theories, which outweighed the number of heresthetic manoeuvres that could be identified. As was the case with John A. Lee, it is predicted that an application of Gustafson's model of populist political leadership will show that Peters is accurately described by Gustafson's theory. Peters appears to be the very leader Gustafson had envisioned when crafting his model and this theory application will attempt to demonstrate that. This will be tested by systematically applying each of Gustafson's six criteria to Peters. The application is a critical reading of the previous discussions, and does not draw from new sources; instead, it draws from the empirical evidence found in the political biography material.

The Six Criteria

1. The leader claims to know what 'ordinary' people desire and believe, in contrast to corrupted and ignorant political parties and leaders of the established elite.

Peters' politics, in the tradition of other populist conservatives such as Sir Robert Muldoon, closely fits the paradigm of 'the people' against a large and entrenched 'other' of elites in politics and society. Peters has demonstrated this through his rhetoric, his attacks on privilege and power, and most importantly through the issues he has focussed on. Peters has been willing to raise controversial issues, including Asian immigration, the danger of Islam in New Zealand, and the problems of the Maori renaissance. National and Labour have been reluctant to raise such issues, due to risk of being labelled racist or offensive. Peters' great political successes, including deciding who would govern in 1996, have stemmed from his attacks on the established elite.

- Criterion Met -

2. The leader draws their support from the marginalised and out-of-power, particularly during recession and rapid change.

Some of the first wave of support for Peters and New Zealand First in the mid 1990s can be attributed to the anger of a section of the electorate damaged by the neo-liberal reforms of both National and Labour. Skewing to an older demographic, and mostly in the regional centres, this voting bloc had experienced the loss of entire industries, a fundamentally changing and increasingly diverse New Zealand society, the upheaval of their workplace relations, and most importantly, a loss of trust.

The consecutive political hairpin turns of 1987 and 1990, where Labour and National both implemented a fundamentally different policy platform from what they promised on the campaign trail, fuelled Peters' rise. The support of this section of society that felt that the political establishment was completely contemptuous of them and their concerns, and had become untrustworthy, led to New Zealand First and Peters' peak in 1996. Despite losing much of his outsider credibility in separate terms as a Minister in National and then Labour governments, since returning to Parliament in 2011 Peters has continued in this vein, promising to be a voice for those ignored by elites.

- Criterion Met –

3. The leader is anti-elitist, and sees hidden agendas behind decisions that affect business and government, that are detrimental to the 'silent majority'.

Peters' career has been built on scandals in this vein. His popularity has peaked when going around the traditional government and media-driven storylines to push issues such as the relationship between the government and big business in the Winebox case, and the closeness between those who sold state assets in the 1980s and 1990s and those who purchased them. His attacks on Asian immigration in the mid 1990s challenged both major parties on an issue he believed the public felt strongly about - an immigration policy that Peters believed was detrimental to the cultural and social fabric of New Zealand, enacted to support a cosy relationship between employers and government. Peters is in his element when identifying a previously hidden conspiracy that involves actors attempting to hide the truth from the general population.

- Criterion Met -

4. The leader is nationalistic, inward looking and opposed to foreign 'meddling' or investment. This can sometimes be ethnocentric and racist. Immigration is a common issue in which a 'them-us' divide is forged.

As a National MP of the Muldoon school, since his early career Peters has been opposed to foreign ownership of state assets and has made calls for restrictions on immigration. Uniquely, despite being of Maori heritage, Peters has also won the support of many who believe that the elite consensus around Maori development that began in the 1980s is hurting New Zealand, and that the development of separate institutions has forged a divide in society. The politics of envy conjured by Peters' attacks on the wealth and trappings of Asian migrants in the 1990s proved electorally successful, and helped New Zealand First reach its peak of public popularity. Subsequent terms have been bookended by a consistent position against asset sales, under both Labour and National Governments, with the recent 2011 campaign dominated by criticism of proposed asset sales, the reckless nature of finance companies, and foreign ownership of New Zealand.

- Criterion Met -

5. The leader uses a simplified nostalgia to hark back to a 'Golden Age' of prosperity and security.

Peters' rhetoric and campaign images have consistently referred to New Zealand as being great in the past tense, recalling times of prosperity and security. Peters often links the loss of this Golden Age - which is generally agreed to be the long period of political, social and economic stability before the last terms of the Muldoon government - to the rise of a neo-liberal grouping of big business, Maori interests, foreign investment, immigration and liberal elites, looking to deny the people their New Zealand. Campaign images have used the flag and patriotic images of war and struggle as symbols of this nostalgic New Zealand.

- Criterion Met -

6. The leader is the operational leader of the movement, section or party but comes to embody it publically.

From Peters' time as a popular National backbencher and shadow cabinet spokesperson, popularity has sought him, and he has sought it. Focussing his energies on government scandal and issues the establishment in National and Labour were unwilling to raise, Peters rose to high prominence in his party, eclipsing his leader at times in preferred Prime Minister polls. Peters and National became increasingly intertwined, much to the chagrin of those high in the party leadership, who saw Peters as a dangerous rabble-rouser. As Peters and National parted ways when in office, the formation of New Zealand First finally provided a political vehicle that could hold and encapsulate Peters' personality and worldview. Since its formation, the success and failure of the party has largely rested on Peters' shoulders, with few notable fellow MPs. Throughout New Zealand First's election campaigns, Peters alone has been the main feature, and the party would be unlikely to survive without its only leader.

- Criterion Met -

Amount of Criteria Met

6/6

Conclusion

While Winston Peters is the ideal candidate for Gustafson's criteria of a New Zealand populist leader, as demonstrated by this study of his political career, improvements can be made to the wider understanding of his brand of populism. Through application of populist and heresthetic theory, it is clear that Peters, more than any other of the case study leaders, is a quintessential populist. Peters' leadership closely matches the theoretical path explored by Panizza and Laclau, and this explanation of active naming of a 'people' and an 'other', coupled with the movement-defining rise of Laclau's populist leader, helps us understand how Peters' leadership was formed, and identifies the theoretical and cultural basis for the design of the Gustafson model. While demonstrating some heresthetic traits, the small number of these examples and their fleeting half-life in Peters' career indicates that the traditional thinking and the New Zealand-specific approach of Gustafson was accurate in attributing the label of populist to Winston Peters. Peters is a true populist - railing against the establishment, defining society into a large 'people' against a changing but defined, 'other', nationalistic, nostalgic, idolized, distrustful of outside groups, and drawing support from the marginalized.

Chapter Five – Case Study: Richard Seddon, 'King Dick'

Introduction

Premier Richard Seddon, known as 'King Dick' by both friends and detractors by the end of his tenure, has the singular honour of being preserved in effigy in front of New Zealand's Parliament. His legacy is far reaching; he came to embody the State while Premier, and his presence in statue has come to signify the power and authority of government in New Zealand.

An academic consensus exists on the central importance of Seddon's Liberal government in the formation of the modern New Zealand state. What has not been thoroughly examined is what the driving force behind Seddon's leadership was; while being identified by historians as an example of personality-driven leadership and political idolatry, this study will challenge these preconceptions by analysing Seddon's reign in the context of clashing theoretical frameworks of popular movements. The chapter is informed by the biographical research conducted by David Hamer and Randall Mathews Burdon.

Seddon will be viewed through the twin prisms of traditional populist theory and social choice heresthetics, and be found to be a hybrid of the two approaches to populist governance. The analysis of Seddon through Gustafson's six point framework finds that he meets most, but not all, of Gustafson's criteria for a populist leader.

Seddon is the bridge in the wider study, a leader whose deep grounding in the ordinary life, aspirations and prejudices of his electorate is fused with a strategic mastery of his wider legislative and political environment. This mastery meant that his opponents were denied victory and his popular coalition remained stable. Seddon is the populist heresthetician - a politician who was both fully conscious of his strategic placement and where to place others, while still adopting genuine populist positions regarding the elite, the old establishment, and those deemed to be outside of the 'people'.

Through a reading of his career, the case will be made that Seddon is the sole example in this study that fits both theoretical models, and thus constitutes a stark example of a need to provide a broader framework for the understanding of populism in the wider academic literature.

Early Life

Born in 1845 in Lancashire, son of a headmaster and a teacher, Richard Seddon was a restless child.[317] Removed from school at 12 due to not being academically inclined, Seddon worked on his grandfather's farm until he was 14, when a falling out saw him become an apprentice at the local iron foundry.[318] He worked there and at the Vauxhall Foundry in Liverpool until he was 18, when he lost the latter job after contracting smallpox, although he did manage to leave with an engineers' certificate. Seddon left for the Australian goldfields in 1863, first working in government railway workshops, and then unsuccessfully prospecting in Bendigo. Traits that would serve him well in New Zealand were first observed upon his return to the workshops: including his notable physical strength and his speaking on behalf of a political candidate to his workmates.[319]

West Coaster

Seddon left for Hokitika in February 1866, having become engaged to Louisa Spotswood in Melbourne, but unable to marry as her family would not approve of the union until his career improved.[320] He followed an uncle to Waimea to dig for gold, and made a decent living applying his engineering experience to irrigation of the fields.[321] Seddon opened his first trading stores at this time, most notably at Big Dam, turning a profit and enabling him to marry Louisa and settle down on the West Coast. Business

---

[317] David Hamer, *'Seddon, Richard John'*, in *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, Auckland, September 2010, p. 1
[318] Ibid.
[319] Ibid.
[320] Ibid.
[321] Hamer, *'Seddon, Richard John'*, p. 2

slowed, so Seddon gained a publican's license for the store, and quickly became a larger than life community figure.[322]

Politics and debate came to him easily, as a man always ready for a fight, both metaphorically and literally.[323] Seddon was elected to the Arahura Road Board in 1870, became its chairman in 1872, and was elected to the Westland Provincial Council for Arahura in 1874. In 1876 he showed his determination by being elected and becoming chairman of the Westland County Council after two failed runs.[324] Seddon flexed his legal muscles by representing miners in work disputes, and moved to the new goldfields at Kumara in 1876, establishing the Queen's Hotel there. He made his first run for Parliament that year, coming fourth in Hokitika.[325] The new settlement flourished, with Seddon's hotel the centre of social life and debate, and in this context he became its first Mayor in 1877. Business for his hotel, butchery and store ebbed and flowed, and Seddon was forced to sell parts of his small empire and rely more on his legal work. Undeterred by his earlier loss, Seddon ran for and won Hokitika in 1879.[326]

Parliament

Beginning his career as a supporter of Premier George Grey, Seddon quickly became known for his long winded speeches (including 19 pages of Hansard for his maiden speech)[327] and his loud speaking style, for which he apologised 'on account of his provincial accent'[328] after receiving negative reactions from unimpressed colleagues. His hometown, Kumara, became part of the new mining seat of Kumara in 1881, and as a strong miner's advocate Seddon held this seat from 1881 to 1890.[329] Notable in this period for being a parochial local member, and a great filibusterer, Seddon stayed

---

[322] Ibid.
[323] Ibid.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid.
[326] Ibid.
[327] Randall Mathews Burdon, *'Seddon, Richard John'*, from *An Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, ed. A. H. McLintock, Auckland, 1966, p. 2
[328] Hamer, *'Seddon, Richard John',* p. 3
[329] Ibid.

away from the larger policy debates of the 1880s, such as the Vogel loan programme. This ceased when Seddon voted with the government to support centralisation, in order to attain new spending for the West Coast region, previously starved of funds and public works.[330]

Liberal Government

By the 1890 election, party politics were in their early beginnings as Seddon (as part of a larger group) began to form the Liberal Party under John Ballance's leadership. Winning the new Westland seat in 1890 on the back of strong support for a maritime strike, Seddon became a Minister upon the formation of the Liberal government in 1891, responsible for Public Works, Mines and Defence.[331] While still under attack for his verbose and brash style, Seddon took the populist style developed in West Coast mines, hotels and pubs around New Zealand, and connected with new voters and communities that did not know him, hearing their entreaties for public works. Hamer notes that in this period Seddon learned something crucial to the heresthetic art of his dominant premiership: the 'art of giving away very little while flattering his audience'.[332]

Ballance became seriously ill in 1892, and Seddon's colleagues elected him caretaker leader over Liberal Party colleague William Pember Reeves. Seddon was subsequently elected to this position permanently following Ballance's death in April 1893. Ballance was said to have endorsed the prohibitionist Sir Robert Stout as his replacement, but the pace of his illness prevented arrangements being made, as Stout had resigned from Parliament to return to his law practice.[333] In June 1893, following Stout's return to Parliament in a by-election, Seddon was reconfirmed as leader, and would soon critically outmanoeuvre his rival on one of the most prominent issues of the time.

---

[330] Ibid.
[331] Burdon, *'Seddon, Richard John'*, p. 2
[332] Hamer, *'Seddon, Richard John'*, p. 3
[333] Burdon, *'Seddon, Richard John'*, p. 2

Theory Application

It is theorised that Seddon's career will contain examples of both heresthetic strategy in the style of Riker, and populist positioning as found in the Panizza and Laclau schools.

Five examples in which Seddon exercised heresthetics will be canvassed, and four examples of political positioning and rhetoric that indicates a traditional populist disposition will be discussed. Together these examples demonstrate a heresthetician grounded in the language and heritage of a populist leader. The heresthetic examples of Seddon's leadership are: strategy around women's suffrage, land and labour policy, his handling of prohibition, pork barrel politics and nepotism, and the old age pension debate. Populist examples will include Seddon's creation of in- and out- groups of the 'people' and the 'other' in the style of Panizza and Laclau, immigration policy and rhetoric, excursions into imperialism, the rise of his idolism, and Seddon's closeness to his countrymen, their values and their prejudices.

Women's Suffrage

By May 1893 Seddon had confirmed that he would carry out the Ballance legislative plan that was in place before his death.[334] Movements to give women the vote began in New Zealand in the 1880s, notably with the establishment of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1886. Its establishment gave credence to this change, due to the fast-rising push for prohibition and a political alliance between the two movements, each of whom believed they could help each other achieve their goals.[335] Seddon himself stated in 1886 that 'if you give too much power you unsex women'[336] and that women wouldn't want the right to vote and would be burdened, away from their proper duties.[337] Seddon voted against proposals for enfranchisement in 1879 and 1887, and he abstained on the first Female Suffrage bill that passed the Lower House in

---

[334] Randall Mathews Burdon, *King Dick: A Biography of Richard John Seddon*, Auckland, 1955, p. 108
[335] Burdon, *King Dick,* p. 109
[336] Ibid.
[337] New Zealand Parliament, *New Zealand Hansard,* Vol. 54, p. 566, in Burdon, *King Dick,* p. 109

1891.[338] By 1892, Ballance had attached female suffrage to an electoral bill, which passed through the Lower House, but it was amended by the Legislative Council to protect women from being 'unsexed', and only allowed the vote by post.[339] Seddon, serving as leader for the sick Ballance, objected to the voting by post amendment as an affront to democracy and fair, private elections.[340]

The bill was reintroduced by Seddon in 1893, where it once again reached the Legislative Council.[341] Members of the Legislative Council, led by George McLean, who was against women's suffrage, moved the amendment to vote by post that wrecked the previous Bill.[342] The political calculus was changed at the last minute as two members of the Council changed their mind, and voted down the amendment, thereby giving women the vote, much to the surprise of Seddon.[343] Seddon showed ill-concealed dismay when the Bill finally passed, unsure of the leanings of the new female elector, and fearful that they would undo his plans for reform.[344] He was proved wrong; women became part of his durable coalition of working New Zealanders, and by 1896 Seddon had changed tack completely after history demonstrated their value. Seddon voted in favour of a private member's Bill for admitting women to Parliament, and pushed for more votes on the subject when this attempt failed.[345] When speaking for the country abroad, Seddon used the vote for women as an example of another grand and successful New Zealand experiment, led by his far-sighted leadership.[346]

---

[338] Burdon, *King Dick,* p. 110
[339] Ibid.
[340] *King Dick,* p. 111
[341] *King Dick,* p. 112
[342] Ibid.
[343] Burdon, *King Dick,* p. 113
[344] *New Zealand Hansard,* Vol. 163, p. 129, in Burdon, *King Dick*
[345] Burdon, *King Dick,* p. 119 (The Electoral Act of 1893 gave all women the right to vote, and was passed by the Legislative Council on 8 September 1893)
[346] Burdon, *King Dick* p. 120

Land and Labour Policy

The Liberals held together their coalition of common people through shared language and goals, and legislative reforms that sought to appease both the urban and rural working man. To do this, Seddon and his ministry had to convince the working poor that public money can, and should, be spent on helping the small farmer, while the individualistic small farmer had to be convinced that unions had a role in the managed economy.[347] In 1894, two landmark legislative achievements detailed how Seddon's personality-driven coalition would both survive and provide rewards to its supporters: John McKenzie's agrarian land reforms and William Pember Reeves' industrial relations policy.[348]

Colonial experience had left much of the country's productive land held by wealthy estates, an arrangement that immigrants such as Seddon and McKenzie had left the Old World to avoid. The Liberals put in place a programme of purchases of Maori land, a graduated land tax, and state acquisitions (at times forced) of estate land, and vastly expanded the power of the Agriculture Department to issue low-interest loans to the poor as well as provide technical assistance.[349] In order to preserve the integrity of the workers' arm of the party, which at times threatened to splinter into the slowly emerging labour leagues and federations, new industrial policy was championed.[350] Arbitration between a judge, employer, and union was set up in wage and work disputes, employment preference was given to union members of registered unions who had given up the right to strike, and the Factories Act brought child labour and excessive conditions and hours to an end.[351]

These compromises left both sides mostly content. Potential for a split in the coalition remained, as neither urban nor rural was fully satisfied, and after the death of Seddon

---

[347] Jack H. Nagel, *Populism, Heresthetics and Political Stability: Richard Seddon and the Art of Majority Rule,* in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 2, April 1993, p. 152
[348] Ibid.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Ibid.

and the rise of the conservative opposition into organised political parties, as well as the parallel formation of organised political labour movements, this did indeed occur.[352] In office Seddon had achieved his aim, protecting his premiership and his party from a split, as he had done in the prohibition debate, as demonstrated in the following section. By inoculating against internal ructions in his voter base, he left his opponents, from both left and right, with little room to manoeuvre, and the playing field for his heresthetic gambits remained wide open. From his aggressive reforming foundation, Seddon could use popular issues to his advantage, and force his opposition into unwinnable scenarios, through the deployment of precise heresthetic defence.

Prohibition

The issues of prohibition and temperance reached high prominence in the late 19th century and early 20th century, and Seddon faced increased pressures on multiple fronts to address the problem of the 'demon drink'. Much of this pressure came from his long time leadership rival, Sir Robert Stout. Although Stout had left Liberal politics to return to legal practice when Ballance died, he had nonetheless expected Seddon to move out of his way upon his return to Parliament. Seddon did not stand down, and he won a subsequent mandate for his leadership at the 1893 general election. Stout, a prohibitionist, saw potential disruption for Seddon through manipulation of the issue, particularly because Seddon himself was once a publican.[353] Identified by Nagel as a heresthetical move designed to continue the rapid turnover of ministries of the pre-party politics area and, with Opposition help, bring down Seddon's premiership, Stout's move was countered by Seddon in one his most decisive heresthetic displays.[354]

Faced with an issue that had the potential both to split the Liberal Party at a stage when party politics was still a new phenomenon, and install a rival in his place as premier, Seddon reacted by manipulating the dimensionality of the system. Knowing that his rival had engaged in an effective heresthetical offensive manoeuvre, Seddon's

---

[352] Nagel, p. 154
[353] Nagel, pp. 157-158
[354] Nagel, p. 158

heresthetical defence involved confounding the previously simplistic 'wet' or 'dry' argument, engineering a legislative and electoral process that, while not pleasing all suitors, would please enough to maintain the power of his premiership.

Stout introduced a bill into Parliament calling for prohibition, designed to inflame and trigger a two-dimensional choice in the minds of the electorate and members; Seddon countered by introducing a bill he said would remove politics from the debate.[355] His bill did this in three sections, by introducing conscience votes in Parliament on the issue; delegating responsibility for liquor licensing to local authority referendums; and not making a party stand on the issue, instead seeking a measure that would be in accord with public opinion.[356] Seddon's bill, in contrast to Stout's, called for local referendums not to be conducted by a majority vote to either be 'wet' or 'dry', but rather through a system of compromises, victory quotas and split options for either no increase, a reduction or total abolition of liquor licenses in each district.[357] Turnout restrictions that would void the result of referendums were inserted, and full abolition required a higher vote of 60%, compared to the 50% for reduction or no change.[358]

Parliament was convinced by this approach, and Seddon's bill won passage, sending the issue to the local level, thus preventing Stout's plan of rising to power in a general election on a wave of prohibition fervour. Both the liquor trade and prohibitionists helped Seddon's Liberals send voters to the polls in the general election that ran parallel to the first of the referenda; with the passion of the local option votes driving up turnout, most voters from either side of the debate voted Liberal. Seddon's complicated ballot measures ensured that while public support for some reduction in liquor licensing held, only one local district had gone dry by 1899. Seddon had masterly executed heresthetical defence, blunting the aggressive attack on a divisive issue by a

---

[355] David Hamer, *The New Zealand Liberals: The Years of Power, 1891-1912,* Auckland, 1988, p. 188, in Nagel, p. 158
[356] Ibid.
[357] Ibid.
[358] Ibid.

rival by adding new fields of choice, moving the arena of passion away from his sphere of power, and preserving the strength of his party and his leadership.[359]

The Pork Barrel

In reaction to the instability inherent in the years prior to his premiership, Seddon sought to restrict the avenues of influence to a smaller group, one identified by loyalty to party and to Seddon. Prior to party politics, individual members engaged in a level of pork-barrel politics that caused rapid turnover in ministries, as the old provincial governments scrambled for the loan-funded public works.[360] Both to retain a strong grip on power and to enable his platform to be successful, Seddon remade the system of favours and promises in his favour, using parochial concerns and naked ambition to his advantage.[361]

While in the past, members of coalitions were rewarded for rebellion by receiving public works projects in their districts in exchange for their continued loyalty, Seddon instead rewarded members who pledged to his leadership and the Liberal Party, and he ignored others.[362] Seddon delayed funding and projections for public works spending until the latter stages of each session in order to put more pressure on recalcitrant members earlier in the session, and he summarised his position in 1905 by stating that: "it is unreasonable and unnatural to expect the Government to look with the same kindly eye on districts returning members opposed to the Government as on those which returned Government supporters".[363] Entrants into the rapidly growing civil service found themselves similarly rewarded for loyalty to Seddon, who bypassed competitive hiring laws by appointing many supporters to civil service cadetships. Nagel points to an example of Seddon rebutting his great rival, Sir Robert Stout, who

---

[359] Hamer, *New Zealand Liberals*, p. 119, and Nagel, p. 159
[360] Randall Mathews Burdon, *The Life and Times of Sir Julius Vogel*, Christchurch, 1948, p. 96, in Nagel, p. 164
[361] Nagel, p. 164
[362] Hamer, *New Zealand Liberals*, p. 77, Nagel, p. 165
[363] James Edward LeRossignol and William Downie Stewart, *State Socialism in New Zealand*, London, 1911, p. 109, in Nagel, p. 165

had accused Seddon of nepotism, by stating that in contrast to the strong loyalty to party under his watch, Stout had made a point of appointing political opponents, punishing good loyalty.[364]

Prospective members were valued in a similar fashion to current members, and Seddon, at the height of his power, endorsed certain Liberal candidates when multiple ones were standing in one seat, an intervention without precedent, and only after receipt of what was known as the 'hallmark'.[365] The hallmark was a written pledge of support a candidate must sign in order to gain endorsement, swearing loyalty not just to the party but to Seddon himself. This blunt instrument was effective; Seddon was known to interject in the chamber to assert that a member's district was actually won by him, in order to ensure no confusion over his influence was felt.[366] In his Cabinet the same approach was employed, particularly after experimenting by appointing an ally of Stout to Cabinet in 1896, which heralded a period of minor instability.[367] Seddon retreated into the tactic he knew: reward those who are loyal, and leave potential opponents out in the cold. In order to maintain policy and messaging stability, and increasingly paranoid about disloyalty and the potential of his large programme unravelling, Seddon was by 1905 simultaneously Premier, Treasurer, and Minister of Labour, Defence, Education, Immigration, Government Insurance and the Public Trust.[368] This burden stifled debate, but it kept the Liberal government strong and steadfast, and succeeded in keeping power concentrated in the people's champion, Seddon.

<div align="center">

The Pension

</div>

By 1896, Seddon's government had delivered many gains to New Zealand, had amassed large legislative achievements, and the Liberal coalition of town and country

---

[364] Hamer, *New Zealand Liberals*, p. 114, in Nagel, p. 166

[365] W. H. Oliver, *The Story of New Zealand*, London, 1960, p. 158, in Nagel, p. 166

[366] Leslie Lipson, *The Politics of Equality: New Zealand's Adventures in Democracy*, Chicago, 1948, p.244, in Nagel, p. 166

[367] Hamer, *New Zealand Liberals*, pp. 126-8, 202, in Nagel, p. 167

[368] Nagel, p. 167

seemed unbreakable. In response to issues that could split this grouping, Seddon continued to search for the battleground that could keep this alliance of the middle ground together. Nagel identified Seddon's pension victory as a prime example of this heresthetical tactic of outflanking potential opponents from a position of strength - before they made, or thought to make, the move themselves. By both breaking new ground in liberal politics and reinforcing the commitment the Liberals held to the 'ordinary man', Seddon timed his new plans for a government funded pension expertly.[369]

Without a bill or fiscal plan, Seddon proposed the pension just before the 1896 election, tantalising the voters and challenging the country to re-elect his government to see how this bold new policy could be funded. Duly re-elected, the bulk of the next term was dedicated to passing the bill, which was passed in 1898 amidst great opposition from conservative opponents - although the final shape of the bill was not as generous as Seddon knew it could have been, and it contained a provision for review just before the 1902 election.

Comprehensively victorious at the 1899 election, Seddon hinted at increases in the pension rate and a lowering of the eligibility age in the review process; and subsequently he again talked of the possibility of a subsidised, worker contributory plan that was not means tested, this time during the 1905 campaign.[370] The rural/urban coalition held; those of modest means duly re-elected a government eager to aid these 'battlers', and offer increasingly more generous forms of public assistance, in retirement, education and work. Seddon did not merely respond to public opinion; he formed it, with programmes previously unheard of in much of the world, and he then raised the spectre of losing these newfound gains if his government were not re-

---

[369] Nagel, p. 160
[370] Nagel, p. 161

elected. This is a cogent example of heresthetics ahead of either opposition manoeuvring or public demand.[371]

Nagel supplies an apt quote of Seddon speaking to future Liberal Prime Minister Joseph Ward, one that demonstrates the tactical thinking behind his legislative expansionism: "You are too young, Ward. You want to give everything at once. You should always keep something up your sleeve for next year. Keep the bastards on a string then they'll keep you in office".[372]

Creation of the 'People' and the 'Other'

While Richard Seddon fits the definitions provided by Shepsle and Riker of a heresthetic leader, the application of the theoretical frameworks of Panizza and Laclau also help inform us about his brand of populism. Seddon stands apart in this study as the leader who most broadly draws from both the heresthetic and populist schools of political leadership; Seddon can thus be viewed as a populist operating as a heresthetician, strategic but also grounded in a connection to the ordinary man's hopes and prejudices.

Seddon is the bridge between the three case studies: a master heresthetician, whom subsequent leaders have attempted to replicate through their pursuit of public opinion, but one who shares with Peters and Lee the emotional connection to the masses, the vast 'people' of whom they believe they are the champion. The following analysis will illustrate a rare political colossus, a leader who manipulates his strategic environment for political victory, but does so from a base of genuine empathy and shared experience with the common man.

A crucial tenet of Francisco Panizza's definition of traditional populism is that the 'people', established by a process of both in- and out-group naming, is the core political actor in a populism movement. In Seddon's case, this would refer to the

---

[371] Ibid.
[372] Hamer, *New Zealand Liberals,* p. 140, in Nagel p. 161

movement he built around himself, and the wider Liberal movement that was ultimately shaped and defined by him.

From his early political experiences on the West Coast amongst rough-hewn miners, traders and local agitators, Seddon's people-driven populism began to take hold of his political personality. In his seminal biography of Seddon, R.M. Burdon writes that this experience of community meant that Seddon assimilated their thoughts and feelings, and that "as a meter for registering public reactions he never failed to function with astonishing accuracy. His ability to interpret the general will enabled him on more occasions than one to appear as a creator of the public opinion that in actual fact he only followed".[373]

Seddon knew his popularity was the source of his power, and he dedicated much of his public life to its upkeep. Seddon had an impeccable memory, particularly for names, faces, and personal details, and could return to the subject of a conversation ended months or years ago on the next meeting.[374] He had little in common with intellectuals, many of whom were repelled by his crudeness, and were unwilling to see his qualities and skills as a master of political power.[375] The naming process undertaken by the Liberal alliance and Seddon was to define the 'people' as those of modest means in the towns and the country. It is worth noting that this could be done in a genuine way, as the Premier himself had fit this definition.

Liberal populism defined the 'people' in the mould of Seddon himself: hard working, congenial, but with a distaste for those who had been born into wealth, privilege, and social position, and against new threats to a homogenous, egalitarian nation, such as agitating Maori and immigrant Chinese. This process is what Panizza terms an 'anti-status quo discourse', a process of naming who the 'people' will be within a populist movement, and who the 'other' will be, in this case the status quo that had ruled New Zealand before the rise of Seddon's working class: the landed estates, and the British

---

[373] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 76
[374] Ibid.
[375] Ibid.

born political class. Nagel notes that, in the view of Hamer, the Liberals believed in the wholeness of the concept of 'the people', and as such, were uncomfortable with narrow class-based legislation.[376]

The slow awakening of 'the people' as a political idea had begun by the 1890 General Election, with the working man, in the aftermath of a broken maritime strike, beginning to coalesce around like-minded Liberals, as action through politics became more important than action by strike. Seddon, and his contemporaries in the Ballance Cabinet, such as John McKenzie, a Scot who vowed to break up the large estates, became a focal point for working class concern; they stood as ordinary men with extraordinary ability to cajole and persuade. The effect of this early stirring of industrial power elected five Liberal Government-supporting labour-backed members, enabling a Liberal speaker to be elected.[377]

In the context of the 1896 election campaign, Burdon writes a passage that encapsulates the place for the 'people' in Seddon's brand of power populism: "the actual substance of Seddon's remarks was less effectual in gaining votes than his own stimulating, ubiquitous presence. Because its expression was both genuine and spontaneous his goodwill was irresistible. No Premier had ever made his face, voice and figure familiar to so wide a range of the populace. No Premier had ever shown such positive and obvious delight in their society. Popular demands he anticipated; popular aspirations he treated with understanding and sympathy; popular prejudice he shared. The humblest among his packed audience thrilled with pleasure and pride to see that a great man, despite his greatness, could appear so very like one of them".[378]

Laclau also points to the process of active naming being a central tenet of populism, particularly through a process of identifying an enemy of which an alternative 'people' can be constructed. Seddon's personal philosophy of supporting the ordinary man was identified by Burdon as not being guided by political principles but by a "self-imposed

---

[376] Hamer, *New Zealand Liberals*, p. 357, in Nagel, p. 161
[377] Burdon, *King Dick*, pp. 90-91
[378] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 145

obligation to protect the under-dog against the agents of economic tyranny. As executor of the people's will he took infinite pains to discover and carry out their wishes. Seddon had always regarded big business with dislike and suspicion".[379] We see that Seddon was both steeped in the traditions and ambitions of the common man, and that he developed his type of populism through a reflection of his fellow New Zealanders' prejudices, in a process that solidifies who Seddon's populism viewed as the true 'people', and who was viewed as the enemy of the people.

Immigration

As noted in Randall Burdon's *King Dick,* from his early days as a parliamentary candidate, stemming from his alarm at the large numbers of Chinese who came to the goldfields, Seddon had almost always attacked Chinese migrants in his speeches.[380] One of his notable practices as an early opposition politician was to draw attention to sensationalist cases of any malpractice by Chinese workers, and despite the 1881 poll tax that put in place a 10 pound fee on any Chinese immigrant, Seddon pushed for further restrictions.[381] Seddon successfully lobbied to have increases in penalties for ship owners bringing over Chinese workers without paying the tax, as well as limits to the number of Chinese that could be transported as a ratio to the size of the ship.[382] Seddon publically sparred with his long time rival Sir Robert Stout over the issue, accusing Stout of owning shares in a mine where Chinese labour was used.[383] His time as Premier also saw a deliberate and significant reduction of the Chinese population in New Zealand, from 5004 in 1881 to 2846 in 1901, mainly due to the dramatic rise in the poll tax from 10 pounds to 100 pounds in 1896.[384]

---

[379] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 299
[380] *New Zealand Hansard*, Vol. 57, p. 227, in Burdon, *King Dick,* p. 79
[381] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 79
[382] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 80
[383] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 169
[384] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 80

Imperialism

Nagel identifies New Zealand and British patriotism as an ongoing popular device used by Seddon. Seddon used the state reforms of his administration to inspire, calling them world leading, pioneering and unique to New Zealand. He summoned imperial fervour through his passionate support of the Boer War, winning many votes and swaying all but a few members of Parliament. He also caused embarrassment with his patriotic rhetoric when visiting South Africa after the War in 1902, interrupting delicate peace talks by demanding the Boers unconditionally surrender to Imperial forces.[385]

Nagel notes that this considerably helped Seddon win the 1899 and 1902 elections. In 1901 the grandson of Queen Victoria arrived for New Zealand's first grand royal visit, and Seddon was omnipresent at all events in full regalia, organising showings of old age pensioners and war heroes supported by the state, all products of the pioneering reforms.[386] Against British wishes, Seddon forcefully lobbied for imperial annexation of Samoa, to be administered by New Zealand, and the incorporation of Fiji into New Zealand.[387] Seddon attacked British caution at a time when the United States had taken Hawaii in 1898, a move Seddon let be known publically was not preferable to a British administration. His nationalism eventually wore down the Imperial Colonial Office to allow New Zealand to annex the Cook Islands in 1901.[388]

Idolism

Ernesto Laclau's definition of what constitutes populism identifies a key aspect of a populist leader – namely, their embodiment of the movement itself. Laclau refers to the clarity this gives to such a movement and states that it is what can set populist parties and movements apart from brief excursions into popularity-driven populism. When the leader defines and embodies what it means to be part of the 'people', it

---

[385] Burdon, 'Seddon, Richard John', p. 4
[386] Judith Bassett, *A Thousand Miles of Loyalty: The Royal Tour of 1901*, in *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 21, 1987, pp. 133-137, in Nagel, p. 162
[387] Burdon, 'Seddon, Richard John', p. 4
[388] Hamer, 'Seddon, Richard John', p. 6

defines the movement itself and establishes what (and who) its enemies are. Seddon's fervent following amongst his fellow Coasters was the original support base for this movement, and a regional populism in Laclau's definition emerged. It is only after a period of consolidation in the Premiership that he began to be seen as his own man, defined apart from his predecessor, Ballance.

Burdon writes that a symbol emerged by the time Seddon's power was far reaching and impenetrable; "the title of 'King Dick' was approved both by friends and enemies though for entirely different reasons, the latter accepting it as a satirical comment on his despotic methods, while for the former it served as an expression of unstinted admiration. His tenure of office represented the nearest approach to permanent power that had been witnessed in the Australasian colonies. What conceivable combination of forces might be expected to oust him from a position that he appeared to have rendered impregnable? Premiers came and went at the people's will; kings were less easily displaced".[389]

Shared Values and Closeness to the Populace

Summarising Seddon's contribution to history after his death, Burdon identified his rugged egalitarianism, his distaste for organized wealth and privilege, and his genuine closeness to his constituents as political legacies; "Seddon's egalitarian precepts, though never practiced in the actual administration of government, were preached with enormous effect. In his day New Zealand politics lost what semblance they had ever had of being the preserve of a privileged class; nor since his death has wealth or social position been anything but a handicap in the political field".[390] Burdon further stated that "Seddon's statesmanship was guided and governed by a love of humanity. The tradition of the commonplace in public life, to which he subscribed and gave countenance, was also a tradition of self-sacrifice, accessibility, and sympathy towards

---

[389] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 220
[390] Burdon, *King Dick*, pp. 320-321

the helpless – a tradition that none of his successors have wished or dared to ignore".[391]

As discussed previously, Seddon shared the prejudices of his fellow countrymen, and this aided the formation of the 'people' present in his populism, through a process of in- and out- group formation identified by Panizza as present in all populist movements. As early as the 1879 election, Seddon had attacked Maori agitation against European expansion in the tenured lands, stating that he thought that roads and railways driven through the Maori hinterland would be more effective than armed coercion. As identified in the earlier section on immigration policy and positioning, Seddon believed that immigration was dangerous, and that "you could not reason with Chinamen; in fact immigration of any sort should be restricted".[392] While tactically useful, these prejudices were genuine in Seddon's case, not merely a heresthetic manoeuvre in order to deny his opponents issue space.

Known as a man of the people in all senses of the phrase, Seddon, in the words of Burdon, came to know the character of a nation as other men come to know the character of personal friends.[393] The access he accorded to his electorate was immense; people would queue outside his house to ask him for favours and suggest to him policy, and by the peak of his power he began riding on horseback in the streets of Wellington, both for his health and to reduce the amount of people who could stop him in the streets to praise or cajole him.[394] The lengths Seddon would go to retain his personal link to his voters are legendary; long treks throughout the provinces, late night debating sessions and a notable recurring scenario detailed in Seddon's biography. Visitors would frequently call on Seddon at Parliament, and Seddon would take them in, particularly if they were fellow West Coasters. Seddon, after realizing that a meeting had gone overtime, would ring a secret bell to his secretary, who would come in to remind him of an urgent Cabinet meeting. Seddon would, in faux outrage,

---

[391] Ibid.
[392] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 43
[393] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 283
[394] Burdon, *King Dick*, pp. 283-284

state that he was busy with friends, and would repeat this spectacle two or three times. The guest would leave, and tell their family and friends that the man of the people, King Dick, had kept Cabinet waiting on their personal conversation.[395]

Intertwining with his predilection for patronage, Seddon would help his fellow Coasters to an end that would greatly anger his opponents; when told that a Coaster, who had been in a Government department by Seddon, was told that he could not work there due to the fact that he could not read or write, Seddon simply told the departmental head that he should teach him how to.[396] Another occasion was detailed where Seddon had gone fishing on a Sunday; and after coming under attack from church groups for disrespecting the Sabbath, Seddon received defence from a vast segment of the people, incensed that worriers would deny their hero some rare leisure.[397]

Legacy

Burdon reflects on the level to which Seddon had come to define both the Liberals and New Zealand itself, solidifying a form of state populism and idolism that has yet to be matched. Burdon states that Seddon had not only been head of the country's government; he was the government itself, and when King Dick died the monarchy itself came to an end. His legacy was inescapable, even for his opponents. Burdon writes that Prime Minister William Massey "sought to exploit and perpetuate his memory by choosing the name of 'Reform' for the party he led to power. Those who held reactionary views chose other party designations and even claimed to be following in the footsteps of the great Liberal".[398]

The Gustafson Framework and Richard Seddon

The application of Barry Gustafson's six-point framework of New Zealand populist political leadership to Richard Seddon's career will enable the study to test the results

---

[395] Burdon, *King Dick*, pp. 284-285
[396] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 288
[397] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 287
[398] Burdon, *King Dick*, p. 320

of the preceding political biography and theory application. As stated in the introductory remarks to this chapter, Seddon is both heresthetician and populist, and the analysis of specific evidence has demonstrated that there is a balance between examples of traditional populism and heresthetic manoeuvres in his career. The historical bridge between the two competing theory camps, Seddon is therefore expected to be found to meet at least half of Gustafson's six criteria. The traditional populism of Seddon will lend itself to match with some of Gustafson's criteria, while the heresthetic approach will lead Seddon, as a case study, away from Gustafson's definition of a populist leader. In the following section, each of Gustafson's six criteria will be applied to Seddon, in the context of the preceding analysis of his political biography, and the empirical evidence that was identified when applying populist theory and heresthetics. Following this, an estimate of the amount of Gustafson's criteria met by the Seddon case study will be stated. A brief summary of concluding remarks in relation to Seddon will end the chapter.

The Six Criteria

1. The leader claims to know what 'ordinary' people desire and believe, in contrast to corrupted and ignorant political parties and leaders of the established elite.

Seddon's 'ordinary' credentials are unquestioned, due to his language, presentation and history, and his knowledge of the desires and stresses of the common man were clear. Seddon positioned himself against outside 'others', such as immigrants, those who stood against the will of the British Empire, big business and agitating labour. His repertoire of enemies of the great 'people', the Liberal electoral alliance, did not include much of the political elite; indeed, he could be read as part of the elite as a supporter of the Grey Ministry, and as Ballance's successor. The true skill of Seddon is demonstrated in how he fashioned the elite-level alliance of the Liberal Party to realise, through his heresthetic abilities and political strength, policy goals that gave ordinary people what they desired, sometimes before they even knew they desired it.

- Criterion Partially Met -

2. The leader draws their support from the marginalised and out-of-power, particularly during recession and rapid change.

Seddon's Liberal coalition, forged from those of modest means in the cities and country, was unique among past-colonial administrations, as they were often based on large land holding interests alongside organised business. Many 'ordinary folk' saw themselves in Seddon. Seddon came to power when these two classes were in a period of struggle, during the long depression of the late 1800s. However, once in power, the reforms instigated by Seddon lifted many of these groups into an emerging middle class, with new social protections a reminder of his influence. Those once marginalised had influence over the decisions of the state, through Seddon's comprehensive system of favours and patronage, and many who supported Seddon found themselves now in positions of power themselves. Those on the left of politics also agitated, more notably closer to Seddon's death, for a more worker-focussed movement aligned away from middle class and artisan demands, although this break did not occur until significantly later. While Seddon drew his support from those who did not have a voice to power, his reshaping of New Zealand changed this dynamic, so the marginalised now became the class the state was most responsive to.

- Criterion Partially Met -

3. The leader is anti-elitist, and sees hidden agendas behind decisions that affect business and government, that are detrimental to the 'silent majority'.

Seddon's demeanour and rhetoric was clearly anti-elitist, framed by his genuine experience of struggle and living and working the hard life on the West Coast. Seddon saw himself as a figure, with manipulation, that led the 'silent majority' of working men on the farm and in the workshop. However, as a supporter of the Grey government, and through the deals and bargains made on his way to the premiership, such hidden agendas being undertaken in New Zealand could often be linked to Seddon himself. Once in government, Seddon ruthlessly focussed on trumpeting his own achievements, which were large and impressive in scale, and moved his political strategy to one that

still related to his support base, but rather acted as a representative for them inside the elite, rather than railing against it. Compared to his academic contemporaries in high office, many of whom were filtered out as he consolidated Cabinet around himself, Seddon never truly became one of the elite in the perception of his people.

- Criterion Met -

4. The leader is nationalistic, inward looking and opposed to foreign 'meddling' or investment. This can sometimes be ethnocentric and racist. Immigration is a common issue in which a 'them-us' divide is forged.

Seddon was a fierce patriot and Imperialist, proud of both New Zealand and the mother country. His excursions into imperialism, which angered Great Britain, demonstrated the projection of power he desired to bring to New Zealand foreign policy. Seddon was vocally opposed to Chinese immigration, viewing Chinese as both untrustworthy and indecent. One of his Government's most popular achievements and one in which Seddon took great pride was the increased poll tax, designed to discourage Chinese immigration. Seddon's tactical and heartfelt reverence for the Royal visits, in which he proudly demonstrated the products of his state, as well as the outsize force he sent to fight the Boer rebellion in South Africa, all illustrate the Empire nationalism Seddon embodied.

- Criterion Met -

5. The leader uses a simplified nostalgia to hark back to a 'Golden Age' of prosperity and security.

Seddon's leadership and heresthetic populism was focussed primarily on each upcoming legislative challenge, with Seddon employing heresthetic devices and rhetoric to appeal to future achievements. Seddon's accomplishments were large and ground-breaking, and therefore much of the positive language employed by Seddon pointed towards recent Liberal achievements, for which Seddon was either responsible or to which he was closely linked. While aspects of New Zealand's settler past were

viewed fondly by Seddon, his pride and boastfulness was aimed at the grand achievements of his premiership, as he genuinely believed the newly forged New Zealand state was an example for the world. In warnings to the electorate of the danger of not returning his party to office, Seddon would invoke such nostalgia.

- Criterion Not Met -

6. The leader is the operational leader of the movement, section or party but comes to embody it publically.

While an elected Premier, Seddon's larger than life demeanour and his systematic dominance of the political landscape meant that the New Zealand state itself, along with the Liberal Party, came to be embodied by Seddon. His influence over the public service, through projects and appointments, and his adept mastery at setting the issue agenda through grand proposals, rendered both those in his own party who were sycophants, and his political opposition, to be perpetually irrelevant. The Liberal Party, controlled in its appointments, Parliamentary candidates and direction by Seddon, was seen by much of the citizenry as Seddon's party.

- Criterion Met -

Amount of Criteria Met

4/6 – Three Met, Two Partially Met

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Richard Seddon, while meeting most of Gustafson's criteria for a populist New Zealand leader, can be more accurately categorized by a combination of theoretical perspectives. Seddon, as shown by the five heresthetic examples, was a calculating leader, concerned with the strategy-value of sentences and the strategic positioning of his party to form political coalitions. He would expand dimensionality in order to construct winning positions for his arguments,

and once secure in power would undertake notable cases of heresthetic defence to deny his opponents opportunities to destabilize his leadership.

Seddon also had a deep grounding in populist rhetoric and positioning. He was adept at forming a 'people', the ordinary working man of country and city, and defining that grouping against a named 'other': immigrants, ethnic groups, landed elites, the political class, wealthy businessmen, the enemies of Britain and his political opponents. In cue with Panizza and Laclau's populism, a strong idolism formed around Seddon as he came to dominate his movement, and the rise of his leadership defined his young party. These points are demonstrated both through Gustafson's framework, and through the four populist examples displayed in this chapter.

What this case study has discovered is that there is a fourth type of populism outside of Gustafson's framework, Panizza and Laclau's paradigm, and Riker's heresthetic. This form of populism can be termed heresthetic populism, in which the leader's positions and personality cannot be separated from their populist heritage and their grounding amongst their citizens. This placement helps to explain why, in the context of most failed populist leaders, Seddon was very successful. Seddon's ability to view his political arena as one of disequilibrium, and his willingness to manipulate issue choices and dimensionality, coupled with the shared values, prejudices and divisions he held with the electoral coalition he forged, enabled him to espouse populism, separating society into in- and out- groups, whilst still being able to construct winning political outcomes.

Chapter Six - Renshon and Character

The preceding analysis placed each case study within an appropriate theoretical construct, and determined the validity of previous academic claims regarding New Zealand populism. While this answers the question of what type of populism each leader possessed or possesses, it does not explain what, in regards to the leader's personality and character, underpinned the leader's particular brand of populism. The subsequent analysis will attempt to provide a qualitative explanation of the particular brand of populism of each case study.

It is proposed that of the three foundations of character, as identified by Stanley Renshon, canvassed in the earlier discussion of theory in the literature review, the domain of relatedness has the greatest explanatory power when differentiating each of the populists in this study. This section draws upon the picture of each leader presented in the historical analysis of the case study chapters.

Renshon describes relatedness as 'one's basic stance towards relationships with others', and categorises it into three separate types of relationship stance. As stated earlier in this study, Renshon states that leaders either move towards others in relationships, move away from others, or move against others. Leaders who move towards others reach out to people to begin and maintain relationships; leaders who move away leave relationships after they outlast their use, or are disappointed by previous relationships; and leaders who move against people seek to make contact, but not in a friendly or intimate fashion. In relation to determining factors of political outcomes, Renshon states that relatedness is linked to a leader's ambition and character integrity, reinforcing the entirety of the foundations of character.

John A. Lee

Patterns of Relatedness

John A. Lee, as identified in his political biography, grew up in a harsh world of poverty, vice, and crime. Raised by a single mother, his family suffered through her alcoholism,

grinding poverty and forced prostitution. Lee as a teenager spent his formative years on the run, in a repressive military school, working harsh summers of manual labour, and eventually in prison. The changing environments of his early life and the harshness of conditions meant that Lee did not foster close relationships until his time amongst his peers on the battlefield in World War I. Lee saw himself as a soldier above all else, and it is possible that the closest Lee ever felt towards a group of people was during his time serving in the army. His discovery of socialism as a young man also opened his eyes to relationships based on the collective good, in stark contrast to the world he saw around him. As politics became his sole purpose following his return to New Zealand, Lee drew large crowds and followers, and he had a dedicated partner in his wife throughout his life. While Lee was now surrounded by people offering good will and support, his biographies have little mention of close friends, in politics or otherwise. Lee was not a total social recluse, but spent much of his time outside of politics writing his novels and books, and reading. He was ultimately content when writing, calling it his first love, and retired to his book store in his old age.

His relationship stances in caucus politics tell us much about his relatedness. Lee had loose allies in the political left of the caucus, but would often clash with the party establishment, and would vocalise his objections in caucus to a level that would ensure disdain and punishment from Savage, Fraser and Nash. Lee could not bring himself to cultivate politically useful relationships with those whom he disagreed with in Labour, viewing them as beyond reproach. This was demonstrated by the fact that a man of his talent was not originally picked for Cabinet, the manner in which the party turned on him regarding his expulsion, and the fact that only Bill Barnard, one of his few friends on the left of the caucus who stayed with Lee, left to join the Democratic Labour Party following its formation.

Shaped by formative experiences, and reinforced by the disappointment felt about his Labour colleagues who did not embrace the socialist vision he had for New Zealand and instead supported what he viewed as a corrupted regime, Lee's political life is

characterised by a relationship stance that moved against people. Lee's relatedness reinforced his politics; his unwillingness to cultivate politically useful relationships sustained his anti-establishment leanings and his populism was forged in a harsh world that he believed had betrayed him, and was confrontational and inflexible.

Winston Peters

Patterns of Relatedness

Winston Peters' political career has been defined by a stance in relationships that moves away from others. Peters stated early in his career that his political philosophy could be summarised as 'independence', and since his entry to parliament through a legally contested recount battle in Hunua, Peters has been confrontational in his relationships. The sustained abuse directed towards Peters in his early political career by Labour members who believed he had stolen the election framed much of his conduct in opposition. Peters dedicated his time in the House to scandal, intrigue and conspiracy, with varying degrees of success. Peters maintained friendships with the National MPs he shared his Wellington flat with, although he acted independently of them much of the time, ignoring their advice on the degree to which he sustained his attacks. Following his election into cabinet in 1990, in which he received a low ranking and found out his placement from a journalist, it was clear that Peters had not successfully sought out or maintained political relationships with the party establishment that would have aided his rise. His earlier failure to agree on an arrangement with the Richardson faction in which he would take over as leader from Bolger also demonstrates this unwillingness to compromise or forge relationships for political gain.

His sacking from cabinet, and de-selection as a National candidate, showed that this independence could not function in a party in which his success would be determined by an ability to maintain useful relationships. At this time his friendships with the MPs he had shared a home with also deteriorated. New Zealand First, a vehicle dominated by Peters, suited his relatedness, in which his dominance of the party allowed him to

naturally stand off from his colleagues. Peters' time in government with National was hampered by his relatedness; he was outmanoeuvred by Finance Minister Bill Birch in economic policy, and could not effectively manage his own caucus. The breakdown in the relationship with the Prime Minister after the ascension of Jenny Shipley, and the inability of Peters to cultivate a meaningful relationship with her, comparable to the one that he had managed with Jim Bolger, doomed the National-New Zealand First coalition to failure.

Peters is a clear example of a politician whose basic relatedness stance is to move away from others. He has often neglected to begin or maintain important relationships, or move away from them when they are either not politically useful, or if he feels betrayed. While Peters has formed useful political relationships in the past, ones based on respect and clear boundaries, such as those with Bolger and Clark, his general tendency is to move away from his fellow politicians and supporters, and this has been demonstrated through the manner in which his political fortunes have fallen in his career, and the legal challenges he has been forced to mount to defend his conduct and integrity.

<div align="center">

Richard Seddon

</div>

Patterns of Relatedness

Richard Seddon's life was built on the foundation of the people; both as a wider concept and as a literal process of interaction throughout his career. From his early life as a gold prospector, a publican and a community council member, Seddon was a public figure. He had an uncanny ability to remember names and faces, and would entertain his customers in his shops and public hotels with stories and feats of strength. Seddon was an aggressive networker, cultivating a long list of political and social contacts, all of whom aided his rise to Parliament, and whom Seddon would go to extraordinary lengths to please. Seddon's ascension to power was aided by the relationships he maintained from the time of the Grey ministry, of which he was a supporter, and this helped him defeat his rival, Stout, for the Liberal premiership. As

Premier, stories of the closeness between Seddon and his constituents are detailed extensively in the preceding case study chapter.

His great strategic legislative victories can in part be attributed to his excellent powers of persuasion, and his ability to read people's emotions and aims. Seddon would use personal relationships to build an entire government in his name, through extensive networks of patronage, friendships, nepotism and favours. Seddon would work with his fellow MPs on matters of large legislative importance until late at night, and his House schedules when facing filibusters and wrecking amendments were punishing. Seddon began to alienate himself from his Cabinet in his final years, as he concentrated power and portfolios around him, but the personal connections did not dissipate; he merely no longer trusted the affairs of a state, as defined by him, to be run by any other actors.

Seddon's political life was defined by a relationship stance that moved towards people. Hence, Renshon's leader who moves towards people, reaching out to begin and maintain relationships to further their political goals, defines Seddon accurately. Seddon was comfortable around his fellow working-class "common man", and actively sought social connection constantly. Seddon's working life was built around maintaining relationships for profit and friendship, his political rise was characterised by the use of networks and relationships to gain power, and his maintenance and domination of political power was built upon a foundation of relationships, friends, favours and patronage.

Conclusion

Through the application of Renshon's foundations of character, a qualitative explanation of the differing types of populism evident in each case study can be identified. A clear trend is noticeable. Lee and Peters, the two case studies that fit Gustafson's model of New Zealand populism, and most closely match the populist theorems of Panizza and Laclau, both move against or away from others in their basic stance of relatedness. In contrast, Seddon, the case study that least resembles

Gustafson's New Zealand populist leader and demonstrates multiple examples of heresthetics, moves towards people in his basic stance of relationships with others.

When viewing these case studies from the position of political success, the value of Renshon's analysis increases. The true populists in the study, Lee and Peters, have been less politically successful than Seddon, who rose to the Prime Ministership, maintained the support of his political party, and did not have to resign in political disgrace. Renshon's model help explain this phenomenon; the ability of each leader to seek out and maintain useful political relationships is evident in the character of the more successful leaders, while those who have rebelled against and been disciplined by their parties have lacked this crucial ability.

This construct can also explain why Seddon, despite holding populist positions, and being grounded in the values and language of populism, could become a successful heresthetician; his interpersonal skills could overcome unstable populist fervour. Through the use of Renshon's analysis, we can also see why strategic attempts by Lee and Peters, as canvassed in the case study chapters, failed; a true master of the art of heresthetics must possess a clear view of his strategic playing field, but also must have the ability to place their opponents in unwinnable situations, and to gain this ability you must be able to be flexible and maintain relationships in order to gain, maintain and solidify political power.

This analysis has shown that there are similarities in the foundations of character among the pure populists, and there are significant differences in some of the foundations of character between these pure populists and the populist heresthetician. It is expected that these patterns would continue with further analysis of a wider selection of case studies. This brief exploration of one crucial explanatory variable portends a rich future research area as psychologically informed analysis can add further layers of depth to the understanding of the forces that forge and foster populism.

Chapter Seven - Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that, through the application of theoretical frameworks, we can acquire important information about both the classification of populist leaders and their character. Three quantitative theories, traditional populism, Gustafson's model, and heresthetics, were identified, reviewed and applied to three specially selected case studies of leaders who have been labelled 'populist'. One crucial dimension of a fourth theory, Renshon's foundation of character; namely, 'relatedness', was identified and applied to the case studies, to provide a qualitative explanation of each leader's particular style of populism. This section will discuss the results of this process: in particular, what the process tells us about the leaders, the theoretical frameworks, and populism in New Zealand. It will provide two new frameworks to the academic literature: a multi-methodological model for the analysis of populist leadership in New Zealand, and a populist continuum on which to place individual populists once said analysis is completed. The thesis will conclude with a discussion of where future study should be directed.

The first of the case study leaders, John A. Lee, is placed clearly into the pure populist classification. Application of the competing theory strands introduced into the analysis, traditional populism and heresthetics, demonstrated evidence of a high occurrence of traditionally populist decisions in Lee's political career, and only two heresthetic manoeuvres, of which one was a failed attempt. Analysis of John A. Lee through the prism of Gustafson's six-point framework found a strong correlation, in which five of the criteria for populist leadership were met. As was hypothesised, Gustafson's model was broadly accurate in identifying and classifying Lee's brand of populism. The strong result for both traditional populism and Gustafson's framework identifies Lee as a pure populist in the multi-methodological model, and Renshon's foundations of character act as a useful qualitative explanation of this identification. The application of Renshon's theorems demonstrated that Lee's relatedness was found to be generally

placed in the 'against' sphere, as Lee's career showed a notable failure to successfully function in groups, or foster useful long-term political friendships.

The second case study leader, Winston Peters, is also ultimately placed into the pure populist classification. When applying heresthetics and Panizza and Laclau's populism to Peters' political career, many clear examples of traditional populism were identified, while only two examples of heresthetics were found, of which one was a failed attempt, as in the case of Lee. The application of Gustafson's framework to Peters produced a very strong correlation, in which all six criteria were met. Peters appears to be the specific leader, or at least one of the leaders, Gustafson had envisioned when crafting the framework. The pure populism of Peters, and the classification of this in the multi-methodological model, is clear in the context of these results. Through applying Renshon's relatedness construct, we can see that, similar to Lee, Peters' relatedness stance is seen to be broadly away from people. Peters functions moderately successfully within groups, but does not become particularly close to fellow politicians, or foster useful long-term political friendships. He is not naturally antagonistic in his stance, but his rigid character undermines his ability to operate within co-operative group structures.

The final case study leader, Richard Seddon, provides us with the first major diversion in both classification and explanation. Seddon is what is termed a 'mixed variant' in the multi-methodological model of populist leadership: a populist heresthetician. Through the application of Panizza, Laclau and Riker's theorems, a balance of empirical evidence is found for both traditional populism and heresthetics in Seddon's career. When applying Gustafson's six-point framework to Seddon, a moderate correlation is found, in which four of the six criteria are met. Therefore, a mixed classification is appropriate for Seddon. After applying Renshon's foundations of character to Seddon's leadership, the standout result reinforces a key divergence from the previous two case studies. His relatedness is broadly defined as a relationship stance that moves towards others, seeking out human contact and friendship, functioning successfully in groups, although

often through his personal dominance, and cultivating political alliances when necessary. This is in contrast to Lee's relationship stance against others, and Peters' movements away from others in relationships.

Through active application of the Gustafson model, the study has illustrated the strengths of the model, and the clear weakness. As demonstrated by the multi-methodological model, Gustafson's framework is very effective at identifying pure populist leaders, such as Peters and Lee. When confronted with more nuanced variants of populism, the Gustafson model still has cogency, as demonstrated by the fact that Seddon still met a majority of the criteria, but does not accurately explain the finer details of such variants. The decision to include a strategic analysis of leadership in the study, through heresthetics, has proved to be valuable in the formulation of the final model, due to this weakness in the current pre-eminent model of New Zealand populism. Gustafson's model is clearly academically sound, and as such is co-opted into the model, but this study has shown that through broad theoretical tools, we can produce more accurate classifications of populist leaders.

The two main competing theory strands of the study, traditional populism and heresthetics, were found to be usefully applicable to the careers of leaders, and enabled the study to attain insights into differing styles of populism. Clear empirical evidence that matched up to one of the two theories was able to be identified. As hypothesised, Panizza and Laclau's theorems were found to reach similar conclusions about case studies as Gustafson's model, and it became clear that these two theories accurately explained large aspects of pure populism. Heresthetics was found to be a compelling alternative explanation for leadership that seeks to build popular coalitions, and through the analysis of Seddon, the study illustrated the capability of a leader to mould the two competing strands into a powerful form of political dominance over a system.

Renshon's foundations of character are found to be an effective qualitative explanation of the classification result of the multi-methodological model, with particular

similarities and contrasts demonstrated by the cleavages between the pure populists and the mixed variant of the study. This explanation points to key deciding factors in a leader's character that can allow them to be drawn, unconsciously or consciously, to certain styles of populism. Exploration of case studies in the multi-methodological model in future scholarship will enable the assumptions around the validity of using Renshon's foundations of character as a qualitative explanation to be more rigorously tested.

What follows are diagrams which provide visual representations of the multi-methodological model advanced in this conclusion.

Figure 7.1. Multi-Methodological Model of Populist Leadership
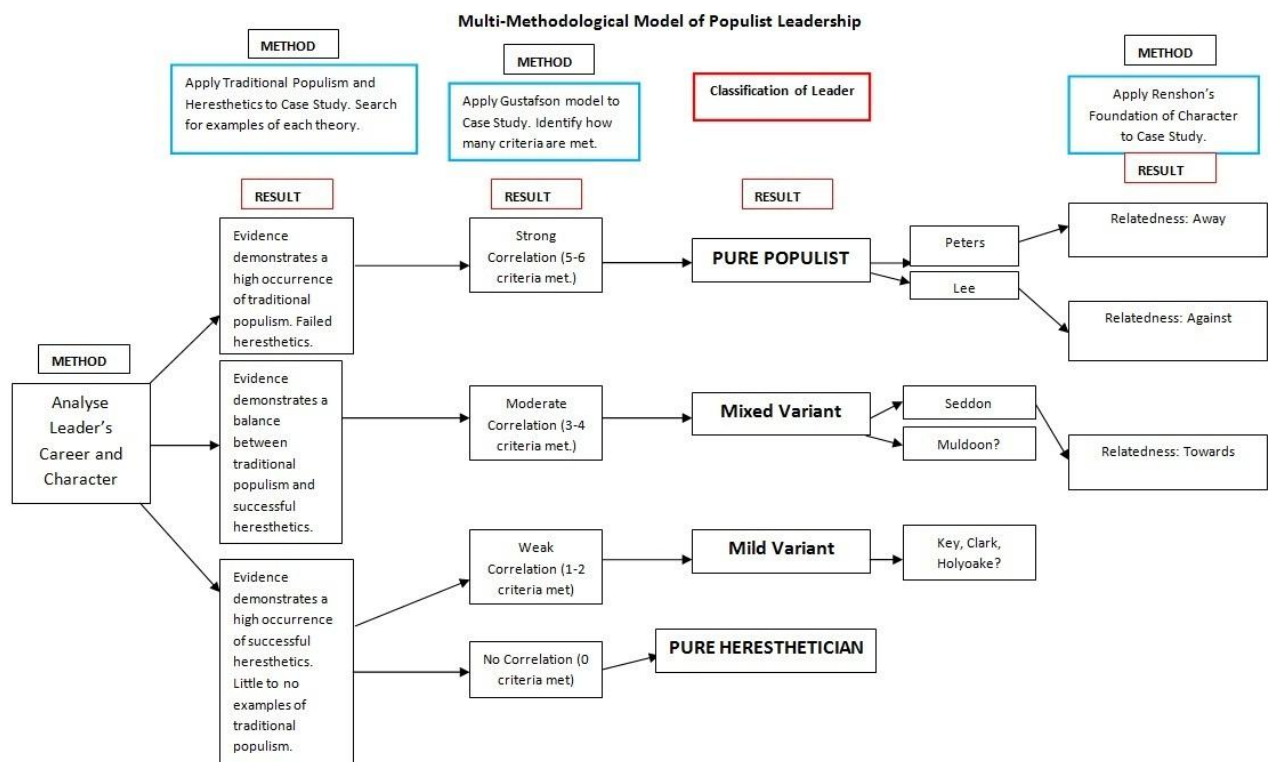
A New Theoretical Tool – The Multi Methodological Model of Populist Leadership

The multi-methodological model presented in this conclusion provides the literature with a theoretical framework that draws upon multiple differing theories of populism, in an attempt to broaden the understanding of populism in relation to leaders, and

enable future scholarship to more comprehensively classify populist leaders. It is based on the evidence of this thesis, but is applicable to any New Zealand leader, and theoretically will produce outcomes that accurately classify any leader in the populist/heresthetics continuum. It improves on the current pre-eminent model, Gustafson's framework, by incorporating it into a wider model that draws on the experience of international populist scholars, and also takes into account the strategic nature of some examples of popular leadership, and the balance of personal character inherent in each leader.

The practical application of the multi-methodological model works as follows; firstly, a leader is selected, and the broad parameters of their career are established through background research. In the next stage, traditional populist theory and the theory of heresthetics is applied to the case study, in a search for empirical evidence that indicates a predilection for either of these cases. The first result is produced at this stage, and depending on the relative balance of traditional populist examples and heresthetic examples, a select path is chosen in the model, as indicated in the figure. Following this, Gustafson's six criteria of populist leadership is applied, and the result will match the previous linkage in the first method section, as displayed in the figure of the model.   A strong correlation will match a high occurrence of traditional populism, a moderate correlation will follow after a balance between traditional populism and heresthetics, and weak or no correlation to the criteria will follow a high occurrence of successful heresthetics. Each of the four strands of the model will then produce a classification result, deeming the leader to be a pure populist, a mixed variant, a mild variant, or a pure heresthetician.

Once the result is evident, Renshon's foundations of character can be applied to the leader, in an attempt to find a qualitative explanation for their particular explanation. As the figure demonstrates, the similarity of the character integrity and relatedness stance of the pure populists contrasts with the Renshon application results of Seddon. It is hypothesised that similar cleavages will be present when other leaders are entered

128

into the model, which also are found to be of the mixed and mild variants, or pure heresthetician.

Figure 7.2. Gustafson's Framework Continuum and the Multi-Methodological Continuum
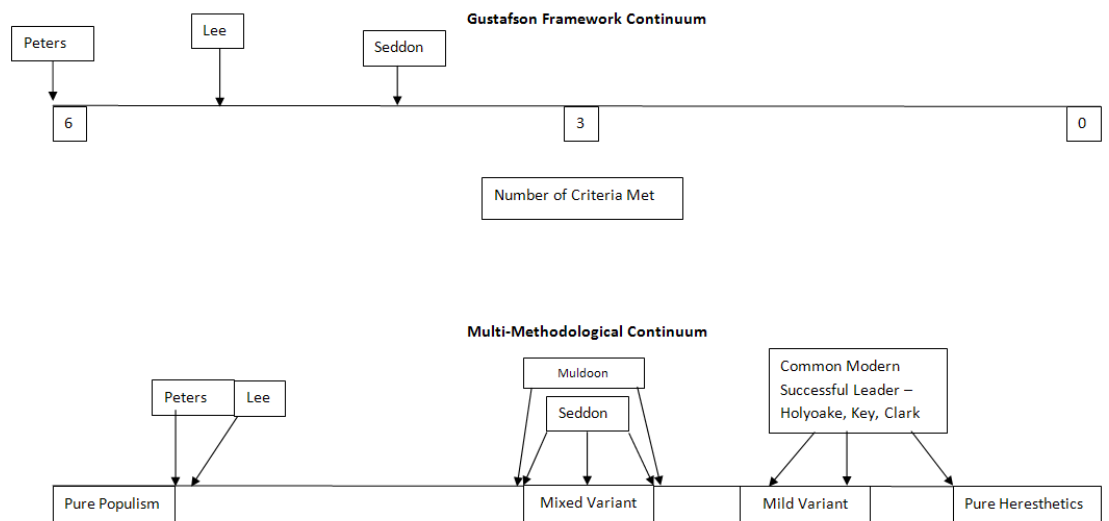
A New Theoretical Tool – The Continuum of New Zealand Populist Leadership

In addition to the multi-methodological model, the study provides two continuums to better visualise the placement of leaders on the populist spectrum. The first is a graphic illustration of the Gustafson model, in which leaders can be placed on a continuum that demonstrates the number of Gustafson's criteria met by the case study. This is useful, both to give an appreciation of the relative scale of difference between each leader when only using this model to classify populism, and to contrast with the second continuum, which demonstrated the nuanced approach of the multi-methodological model. After the application of the multi-methodological model to case study leaders, the leaders can be mapped on the second continuum. This visualises the differences between leaders, providing a scale that is easy to understand, and the change in placement on the continuum compared to the original Gustafson model demonstrates the added value, in terms of accuracy and a depth of understanding, of

using a broader array of theoretical tools to classify populist leaders. With the addition of more leaders to the multi-methodological model, more points on the continuum can be plotted, enabling the literature to see a wider view of the placement of historical leaders in New Zealand.

Future Study

Due to the creation of the multi-methodological model of populist leadership, many avenues of future study would be academically valuable. Firstly, more case studies are needed to thoroughly test the validity and rigidity of the model. The conclusions drawn from the model, in particular the classification system, would benefit from an expansion of case studies. The qualitative explanation of the leaders in this study, Renshon's foundations of character, would also be aided by the application to more varied leaders. The general trends identified in the explanations of this study could be further tested by a comparative exercise of the character of other leaders. A further analysis of other notable populist leaders, particularly Muldoon, will not only test the model, and provide a deeper analysis of the mixed variant, of which it is theorised Muldoon would fit with Seddon, but will also provide a historical basis for the modern evolution of populist political leadership in New Zealand.

The most fertile ground for future research in the area of populist leadership in New Zealand is the mild variant of populism, identified in the multi-methodological model. Anecdotal evidence, and brief excursions into analysis of other leaders careers, has led the writer to view this variant as crucial to the understanding of populism in New Zealand. The mild variant, balanced more towards heresthetics, but still possessing some populist approaches, is hypothesised to be the dominant variable of successful modern populism in New Zealand, particularly amongst Prime Ministers. Leaders such as John Key, Helen Clark and Keith Holyoake may fit this classification, and a thorough analysis of these leaders, through the multi-methodological model, will provide a more detailed understanding of the proposed mild variant to the literature. The mild variant is theoretical at this stage, due to the constraints of this study, but deep research into

such a variant will uncover nuanced details of modern populist leadership, particularly in the light of technological advancements in the field of political marketing, research and targeting.

Bibliography

- 3News, '*Transcript of Winston Peters' teaparty tape speech'*, 17 November 2011, http://www.3news.co.nz/Transcript-of-Winston-Peters-teaparty-tape-speech/tabid/419/articleID/233100/Default.aspx

- Armstrong, John and Audrey Young, '*Interview: Winston Peters, NZ First party leader'*, in *New Zealand Herald,* 30 July 2005

- Bain, Helen, '*Peters the populist is back'*, in *The Dominion*, 14 April 1998

- Booth, Pat, '*Winston Peters: The Man YOU Want As Prime Minister',* in *North and South*, 14 June 1990

- Boston, Jonathan, Stephen Church, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *New Zealand Votes: The General Election of 2002*, Wellington, 2003

- Burdon, Randall Mathews, *'Seddon, Richard John'*, from *An Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, ed. A. H. McLintock, Auckland, 1966

- Burdon, Randall Mathews, *King Dick: A Biography of Richard John Seddon*, Auckland, 1955

- Campbell, Gordon, '*Daunting rebuild ahead for Labour'*, 29 November 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/local-papers/kapi-mana-news/opinion/6052047/Daunting-rebuild-ahead-for-Labour

- Chisholm, Donna, '*Winston the kingmaker'*, in *Sunday Star Times*, 13 Oct 1996

- Dominion Post, *Peters stands aside as Minister*, 29 August 2008, http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/603732

- Edwards, Bryce, '*New Zealand First Party History'*, 17 November 2008, http://liberation.typepad.com/liberation/2008/11/nz-first-party-history-1-origins.html

- Edwards, Damian, '*New Zealand First*', in Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *Key to Victory: the New Zealand general election of 2008*, Wellington, 2010

- Edwards, Damian, '*New Zealand First – squeezed from every side,*' in Stephen Levine and Nigel S. Roberts (eds.), *The Baubles of Office: The New Zealand General Election of 2005*, Wellington, 2007

- Electoral Commission, *General elections 1890-1993 – seats won by party*, http://www.elections.org.nz/elections/resultsdata/fpp-seats-won.html

- Electoral Commission, *1999 General Election – Official Results and Statistics*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_1999/

- Electoral Commission, *2002 General Election – Official Result*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2002/

- Electoral Commission, *2005 General Election – Official Result*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2005/

- Electoral Commission, *2008 General Election – Official Result*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2008/

- Electoral Commission, *2011 General Election – Official Result*, http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2011/

- Erikson, Erik H., *Identity and the Life Cycle*, New York, 1980

- Gower, Patrick, '*Party cleared, but PM leaves Peters outside*', in *New Zealand Herald*, 11 October 2008, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10536944

- Green, Donald P. and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*, Yale University Press, 1994

- Gustafson, Barry, *Populist roots of political leadership in New Zealand*, in Raymond Miller and Michael Mintrom (eds.), *Political Leadership in New Zealand*, Auckland University Press, 2006

- Hames, Martin, *Winston First*, Auckland, 1995

- Hamer, David, *'Seddon, Richard John'*, in *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, Auckland, September 2010

- Hamer, David, *The New Zealand Liberals: The Years of Power, 1891-1912,* Auckland, 1988

- Henderson, John T., *The Childhood Origins of Political Struggle: An Interpretation of the Personality and Politics of a New Zealand Radical*, in *Political Science*, Vol. 26: 2, 1974

- Kirk, Jeremy, '*Teams talk, Peters appears tired'*, in *The Press*, 26 October 1996

- Laclau, Ernesto, *On Populist Reason*, New York, 2005

- Kohut, Heinz, *The Analysis of the Self*, New York, 1971Laws, Michael, *The Demon Profession*, Auckland, 1998

- Laws, Michael, '*The Rise, Fall and Redemption of Winston Peters'*, in *North and South*, 16 May 2005

- Lee, John A., *Children of the Poor*, Auckland, 1934

- Lee, John A., *Delinquent Days*, Auckland, 1967

- Lee, John A., *Simple on a Soapbox*, Auckland, 1964

- Lee*,* John A., *The Hunted*, Surrey, United Kingdom, 1936

- Lee, John A., *The Lee Way to Public Speaking,* Auckland, 1965

- LeRossignol, James Edward and William Downie Stewart, *State Socialism in New Zealand*, London, 1911

- Levy, Danya*, 'Peters poster used to oppose MMP'*, 31 October 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/5879062/Peters-poster-used-to-oppose-MMP

- Lipson, Leslie, *The Politics of Equality: New Zealand's Adventures in Democracy*, Chicago, 1948

- Maske, Kellie, and Garey Durden, *The Contributions and Impact of Professor William H. Riker,* in *Public Choice*, Vol. 117, No. 1/2, October 2003

- McLean, Iain, *Review Article: Riker and the Invention of Heresthetic(s),* in *British Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 32, No. 3, July 2002

- McLeod, Rosemary, '*The Lonely Mission of Winston Peters*', in *North and South*, 11 August 1992

- Nagel, Jack H., '*Populism, Heresthetics and Political Stability: Richard Seddon and the Art of Majority Rule*,' in *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 2, April 1993

- New Zealand Election Study, *Historical Data (1905-1993),* http://www.nzes.org/exec/show/data

- New Zealand First Party, *Foreshore and Seabed Sell-out says Peters*,

- http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1006/S00152.htm, 15 June 2010

- New Zealand Herald, '*Peters rejects formal coalition*,' 7 September 2005, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10344466

- New Zealand Herald, '*Poll puts National ahead of Labour*,' 15 February 2004, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=3549317

- New Zealand Herald, '*'Supergold' discount card for pensioners from August next year*,' 11 November 2006, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10410283

- Olssen, Erik, *John A. Lee*, Dunedin, 1977

- Panizza*,* Francisco, *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy,* in Francisco Panizza (ed.), *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, London, 2005

- Peters, Rt. Hon Winston, *The Road Back*, 12 December 2009, http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO0912/S00165.htm

- Peters, Rt. Hon Winston, *NZ For Sale*, 3 August 2010, http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1008/S00013/nz-for-sale.htm

- Peters, Rt. Hon Winston, *The Real Issues – NZ First Coalition Position*, 6 November 2011, http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1111/S00151/speech-peters-nz-first-coalition-position.htm

- Poole, Keith T. and Howard Rosenthal, *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting,* Oxford University Press, 1997

- Radio New Zealand, '*Policy no solution to ailing economy – Peters'*, 28 October 2011, http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/election-2011/89401/raising-retirement-age-essential,-says-labour-leader

- Renshon, Stanley A., *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*, New York, 1998

- Riker, William H., *The Art of Political Manipulation*, Yale University Press, 1986

- Roy Morgan Research, *National set for election victory, but no majority as 'teapot tape' scandal dents National and benefits NZ First*, November 24 2011,

- http://www.roymorgan.com/news/polls/2011/4724/

- Roy Morgan Research, N*ew Zealand National-led government's winning lead dips again*, 11 November 2011,
  http://www.roymorgan.com/news/polls/2011/4719/

- Schofield, Norman, *Rational Choice and Political Economy*, in *Critical Review*, Vol. 9, 1995

- Schumpeter, Joseph*, Capitalism, socialism and democracy*, Second Edition, New York, 1942

- Shepsle, Kenneth A., *Losers in Politics (And How They Sometimes Become Winners): William Riker's Heresthetic,* in *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 2, June 2003

- Sinclair, Upton, *The Jungle*, Chicago, 1906

- Taylor, Cliff, '*When Condoleezza met Winston',* in *New Zealand Herald,* 27 July 2008,
  http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10523720

- Television New Zealand, '*APEC meeting Winston's first task',* 14 November 2005, http://tvnz.co.nz/view/page/411368/626761

- Television New Zealand, '*Peters promises tax cuts at NZ First campaign launch'*, 30 October 2011, http://tvnz.co.nz/politics-news/peters-promises-tax-cuts-nz-first-campaign-launch-4489739

- The Daily News, '*Everything you ever wanted to know about the winebox inquiry'*, 5 April 1997

- The Evening Post, '*The winner is… National'*, 11 Dec 1996

- The National Business Review, '*NZ First's loss would be National's gain',* 5 November 2008, http://www.nbr.co.nz/article/nz-firsts-loss-would-be-nationals-gain-37391

- Trevett, Claire, *PM rules out any NZ First deal*, in *New Zealand Herald*, 2 February 2011, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10703680

- Vance, Andrea, '*Winston Peters winner in minor party debate'*, 17 November 2011, http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/campaign-trail/5981643/Winston-Peters-winner-in-minor-party-debate

- Venter, Nick, '*A contradictory populist'*, in *The Dominion*, 15 August 1998

- Vote.co.nz, '*Winston Peters'*, 2011, http://vote.co.nz/2011/candidates/profile/winston-peters

- Wall, Tony, '*Winston: The comeback king'*, in *Sunday Star Times*, 5 December 2010, http://www.stuff.co.nz/sunday-star-times/features/4421238/Winston-The-comeback-king

- Weingast, Barry R. and Kenneth A. Shepsle (eds.), *Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions,* University of Michigan Press, 1995