

**A Plan for the People:**  
**A critical discourse analysis of the campaign platform and**  
**victory speech of Premier Doug Ford (2018-2019)**

by

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## **Introduction**

Populism is found in federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal levels of government. To assume that populism's influence is only relative if it is visible at a national stage is negligent and dangerous. As recent literature has investigated, the political discourse of liberal democracies is currently facing a problematic shift towards populist rhetoric. Politicians have grown more and more attached to integrating populist language in their political communications in order to push their own agenda. For instance, the United Kingdom's 'Brexit' referendum and the United States presidential victory of Donald Trump symbolizes a turn towards right-wing candidates who seek to preserve national identity, and traditional values. (Lahiti, 2018; Ford & Goodwin, 2017)

However, populism has no political identity and it does not favour one side of the political spectrum as opposed to the other. Thus, populism is a thin-centered ideology that can adapt to any ideological branch. (Mudde, 2004) This study argues that populism is situational, episodic, and highly adaptable to right-wing politics at a provincial level of government. This study will examine the Ontario Premier Doug Ford's 2018-2019 candidacy, and electoral success through his use of populist language in political speeches, and his political platform. Using Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis (CDA), this study will examine text and its influence on social and cultural changes in the province of Ontario. Following Fairclough's (1989) assertion that language is not neutral, this study will contextualize the selected corpus and provide a critical language awareness of populism's relevance in Ontario. Furthermore, as Fairclough (1995) argues a critical discourse analysis can work towards the achievement of uncovering the role of discursive practice in creating unequal power relations and radical social changes in society. This study has two purposes (1) To examine populism at a provincial level and discover how populist discourse can reproduce power relations and voter identity (2) To explore how, in the case of

Ford, populism was used as a political communication style to mobilize support and Conservative ideology.

The inspiration for this study is drawn from the recognition that despite populism's prevalence in Canada since the Reform Party of Canada was formed in 1987, it is still a relatively understudied phenomenon in the field of political communications. Populism has no consensual definition. However, in the examined literature, populism can be characterized by the reoccurring elements found in each distinct case. These elements are drawn from Jager's and Walgrave's (2007) argument that most populists appear 'with the people', and structure their discourse around anti-elitist sentiments. The authors also argue that politicians who engage in populist language perceive people as a monolithic group with similar values, which, in effect, reproduces the exclusion of certain bodies and groups. Despite the reoccurring elements found in populist discourse, the question that remains significant in scholars' research is whether populism can be categorized as an ideology, a syndrome, a political movement or a political style. (Mudde, 2004) This research argues that populism is a thin-centered ideology with set characteristics and elements that can act as a double-edged sword, depending on how it is communicated and received. Furthermore, it is argued that populist language is discursive and representational in practice. Therefore, this research will analyze Doug Ford's political discourse to exemplify how populist language can be used to mobilize and represent conservative ideology.

The outline of this research paper will be comprised of five chapters. Chapter 1 of this research paper reviews existing literature on the topics of illiberal democracy, categorizing 'the people' and 'the elite,' populism as a style and rhetoric, political discourse, exclusion strategies, voter identity, and multiculturalism. It includes a review of current definitions of populism and the various implications that derive from its core elements in practice. Chapter 2 will highlight

the theoretical frameworks used in this study, specifically to contextualize of Doug Ford's 'Victory Speech' and 'Plan for the People'. Hall's *Theory of Language*, Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, and Burke's *Theory of Dramatism* will be discussed in detail to outline the role of persuasion and identity when political actors deploy populist language. Chapter 3 is comprised of the design and methods used for this study, including the research questions, data collection, and data analysis techniques. This section will also provide a review of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, which will be used as this research's methodological approach when analyzing the selected data. Chapter 4 of this paper presents the findings and will contextualize the data collection based on three dimensions.: word level, interpretation level, and explanation level. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the limitations of the study, implications for populist language, and possible future directions for research.

## Chapter One

### A Review of Existing Literature

The recent success of populist politicians in liberal democracies has influenced scholars in the field of political communications to define and categorize populism. The term “populism” has become recognized as a matter of concern when debating the future stability of democracy. It has been used to explain unprecedented wins in recent politics, such as Donald Trump’s victory in the 2016 United States Presidential Election. (Lahiti, 2018) It has also been associated with various socio-political and cultural changes over the past decades, more recently, the 2015 Syrian Refugee Crisis. (Abdalla, 2017) Populism is recognized as elusive, episodic, and relatively versatile in liberal democracies. (Mudde, 2004) This proposes the question of how has populist rhetoric become so effective in contemporary politics? According to Mudde (2004), populism is a thin-centered ideology that, "considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite,’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.” (p.543) This definition is interpreted that within society, there are two distinct groups that coexist, ‘the people’ and ‘the elite.’ Mudde’s definition of populism will be used in this research, as the division of two homogeneous and antagonistic groups is prevalent in the case of Ontario. Moreover, as it will be discussed further in this research, the process of identifying who ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ are is central to creating divisive groups in Ontario.

#### *Populist Conservatism*

In the review of literature categorizing populism as a thin-centered ideology, the common finding is the consistent use of exclusion strategies, people centric language, and anti-elitist sentiments found in right-wing electoral campaigns, and its politicians’ political discourses.

(Blassnig, Büchel, Ernst, Engesser, 2018; Charalmbabous & Christoforou, 2019; Blassnig et al., 2012) In particular, Harper (2018) argued that populism can be categorized as an ideological branch of conservatism, known as, 'populist conservatism.' (p.77) Harper defines populist conservatism as the practice of using conservative means for populist ends. In simpler terms, this means that conservatism is the host ideology and populism is the rhetorical tool to mobilize, "conservative values and ideas into the service of working people and their families." (Harper, 2018, p.77) The two distinct groups that Mudde identified as 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite' also appear in populist conservatism, but in verbiage that Harper claims speaks to the average conservative supporter. The two groups found within this ideological branch of conservatism, are the 'elites' and the 'regular working people'. (Paquet, 2018) The discursive practice of rewording the categories of each distinct group contributes to the versatility of populist language. Therefore, populism is highly reliant on political actors' ability to use persuasive language that reflects their perception of how each group should be categorized. (Mudde, 2004)

### *Market Populism*

The division that exists within populism's traditional categories of 'the people' and 'the elite' influences the current power relations reproduced in society. Politicians use discursive strategies that also capitalize on the lack of trust between government and citizens. Similar to the strategic categorization of 'the elites' and 'the regular working people' found in 'populist conservatism,' Sawyer and Laycock (2007) proposed a comparative analysis of market populist discourse by the Australian and Canadian federal government, during the Howard and Harper era, respectively. This study outlined a form of populism that capitalized on Canada's economic disparity and 'the taxpayer' resentment towards allocating funds to support 'special interests' and



the welfare state. This form of right-wing populist ideology is known as, 'market populism' in which presents society as two distinct groups 'the elite' and 'taxpayers'. (Sawer & Laycock, 2007) In populist discourse, the term 'the elite' and 'the people' have become asynchronous words. This furthers the argument that political actors use populist language to mobilize their values and beliefs through words that are interpreted with various meanings. In effect, these words homogenize the categorization of various groups in society towards single, yet divisive groups. (Hall & Jaques, 1983) For instance, former Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper once publicly denounced political parties for prioritizing 'special interests' ahead of working families and 'mainstream' Canada. (Sawer & Laycock, 2007) As a result, Canadians were left wondering why taxpayers were responsible for supporting 'special interests'. The 'special interests' during this era were aligned with 'the elite,' and Harper's rhetoric was positioned towards targeting government programs and expenditures that support, "feminists, anti-poverty groups, the gay rights movement, native Canadians and other ethnic and racial minorities." (Sawer & Laycock, 2007, p.6) According to Sawer and Laycock (2007) and Carlaw (2017), the power differences between these groups is a product of populist discourse working towards enhancing corporate power and social inequality. However, power relations also develop due to political actors pitting special interests groups such as: human activists, and ethnic and racial minorities, against 'the people' and 'taxpayers'.

As will be discussed further in this research, the province of Ontario is one of the most multicultural and influential provinces in Canada. Despite Ontarians' rich culture, and individual traits that make everyone unique, Ontarians are categorized and identified as being part of either 'the people/the hard-working people/taxpayers', or 'the elite/special interests.' The implication that develops from the categorization of these groups in Ontario, is its deliberate impact on how

people identify themselves and one another. This process of identification contributes to the discursive process of 'otherness', and the creation of shared cultures that form an imagined community in Ontario.

### *Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*

In European politics, division and the categorization of citizens is more apparent than ever. As traditional political parties on both sides of the spectrum are distrusted and recognized as incapable of addressing its citizen's needs, the insurgent of populist political movements develop as a reaction. According to Charalmbous and Christoforou (2019), populism is a specific style of political rhetoric that is framed around the core components of people-centrism, otherness, and crisis. Their study explores these components using a content analysis of press releases on Greece's, Greek Golden Dawn (GD) and the National Popular Front (ELAM). The GD and ELAM are identified as ultranationalist and far-right movements that employ anti-immigrant and anti-systemic discourses. (Charalmbous & Christoforou, 2019). The current economic turmoil that Greece is experiencing acts as the 'crisis' that justifies anti-immigrant and openly racist practices from both parties' discourses. The national economic crisis in Greece can be manifested in various ways, but most importantly, by the tension between domestic citizens and its government. (Charalmbous & Christoforou, 2019) According to Zaslove (2008), the success of radical right populists in party politics is dependent on their ability to effectively identify and exploit the fears and anxieties of their targeted audience. In Greece's case, the GD and ELAM capitalized on their country's economic crisis and restructured their rhetoric according to citizens' financial anxieties. In effect, the citizens of Greece internalized and inherited the party's perspectives on immigration, political elites, political institutions, and globalization. (Charalmbous & Christoforou, 2019) Populism in this case is episodic and

viewed as a rhetorical style to push forward a nationalist vision of an imagined ethnic community. However, within this imagined community, political actors reinforced the division of two distinct groups by creating an antagonism in which ‘the people’ are challenged with an injustice that ‘the elite’ created. (Zaslove, 2008) If members of society oppose this belief, they are categorized as supporters of the elite and ‘dangerous others’ who threaten the general will of the people. (Zaslove, 2008) This dramatized, and socially constructed tension between ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ are then reinforced in society by intense feelings of anti-elitism and exclusion strategies.

The implementation of exclusion strategies in right-wing populist movements is a key element in the mobilization of conservative ideology. (Wirz et al., 2018) A popular exclusion strategy amongst right-wing populists is to include logical and informal fallacies within their rhetoric. (Blassnig et al., 2018) An example of a logical fallacy found within right-wing populist rhetoric is ‘scapegoating’. (Zaslove, 2008, pg.23) A ‘scapegoat’ in this context are the ‘outsiders/others’ of a community. In Greece’s case, the scapegoats were the immigrants and refugees depicted as the ‘outsiders’ that created the economic turmoil. Thus, the boundaries between insiders and outsiders are socially constructed and used to exploit minority groups in practice. Therefore, it is certain that those considered ‘insiders’ belong in the category of ‘the people’, and those that are ‘outside’ as aligned with ‘the elite.’ According to Albertazzi and McDonnell (2008) and Canovan (2002), ‘the people’ are a homogenous and virtuous group in which represents the ‘us’ in populist discourse. However, it is significant to recognize Me’ny and Surel’s (2002) claim that ‘the people’ are perceived as the vital members within a community. This study will argue that Doug Ford’s emphasis on recognizing ‘the people’ as his support group in his ‘Victory Speech’ contributed to developing an imagined community in Ontario. In relation

to Ontario, this imagined community, according to Taggart (2000), is disseminated to the public majority as, 'the heartland.' By definition 'the heartland' is, "a place 'in which, in the populist imagination, a virtuous and unified population resides.'"(Taggart, 2000, p.95) However, for an imagined community to prevail, it must occupy itself with a charismatic leader and like-minded individuals that support populist opinions. (Zaslove, 2008) Therefore, as this study will argue, in order to construct the 'heartland' in Ontario, Ford is reliant on deploying language that polarizes political discussion and replaces public opinion with popular opinion.

### *Populist Rhetoric*

Political actors' desire to control and regulate public opinion is a matter of implementing effective rhetorical tools in their discourse. The integration of informal fallacies with populist claims has become highly recognized as problematic in contemporary politics (Blassnig et al., 2018). According to Blassnig et al. (2018), an informal fallacy can be defined as false arguments and untrue claims due to an individual's lack of reasoning. A study conducted by Blassnig et al. (2018) analyzed the UK and Switzerland's right-wing populist politicians' use of informal fallacies as a rhetorical tool in the media during election campaigns. The authors found fallacious arguments in more than a third of the texts they analyzed. One of the findings found that fallacious arguments are used with populist claims as a rhetorical tool to steer discourse into a direction that serves the political actor's self-interests. (Blassnig et al., 2018). This practice is also referred to as 'strategic maneuvering,' which grants populist political actors the power to control the direction of discourse. (Blassnig et al., 2018, p.108) In effect, it also replaces public opinion with mainstream popular opinions. This study is particularly relevant as it aims to reveal the implications that derive from the blurred line between a fallacious argument and an argument with reasoning. For example, an implication that arises is people consistently digesting

misleading and untrue information. The practice of people being unaware of which political claims are true and false, leads to a population that is susceptible to exploitation. Therefore, this study will argue that ‘the people’ in Ontario have become susceptible to false claims about ‘special interest’ groups.

Similarly, Lahiti (2018) conducted a textual rhetorical analysis on Donald Trump’s campaign and presidential speeches. The results of this study indicated that Donald Trump’s unambiguous rhetoric and rhetorical devices were able to align his identity and beliefs with the majority of Americans. (Lahiti, 2018) Despite Donald Trump’s political solutions being “hollow in substance and thus misleading” (Lahiti, 2018, p.110) he was able to dramatize an emerging crisis involving the United States and its people, to which the only solution was his presidency and an “America first” policy. Lahiti (2018) highlighted six rhetorical strategies that were included in Trump’s discourse to create his identity during the campaign. The first was through ‘identifying’ similar values and beliefs as other Americans. (Lahiti, 2018) An example of ‘identifying’ is when speaking to military families, a political actor will emphasize traditional patriotic values and metaphors. This practice is also perceived as a communication strategy for populist politicians to align themselves with ‘the people.’ The second way is ‘formal patterns,’ which is a strategic selection of language that is easy for an audience to comprehend and relate to. (Lahiti, 2018) This can be executed through the use of repetition in a politician’s rhetoric. It can also be viewed as populists consistently claiming their policies will support ‘the people.’ The third way is ‘framing,’ which is the use of language that creates unity based on specific ideas that define people. (Lahiti, 2018) An example of this within the case of the United States is Trump's sentence composure of including "our" and “country” in the same context. (Lahiti, 2018, p.60)

Concerning populist language, this is interpreted as a metaphorical device that is used to create a shared trauma or common threat that brings people together during a crisis. However, it can also be used to attract voters towards a charismatic leader that positions their discourse around resolving threats to 'the people'. (Bos, Van Der Brug, De Vreese, 2012; Hall & Jacques, 1983)

The fourth way of creating an identification, according to Lahiti (2018) is through 'ambiguous symbols.': using words that are interpreted in a multitude of different ways. An example of this could be a Canadian political actor speaking of 'Canadian values' but not clearly defining what they are. In populist discourse, it can also be an example of using words such as 'the people' and 'the elite' without explicitly defining them. The fifth way is 'mystification,' which can be defined as utilizing universal or general motives to practice a personal or situational motive covertly. (Lahiti, 2018) For example, the United Kingdom Independent Party (UKIP) constructed the Brexit referendum as a nationalistic response to the European Union's demand for support of the Syrian Refugee Crisis. (Ford & Goodwin, 2017) The referendum was disseminated to the public as protecting the citizens of the United Kingdom from outsiders, but in reality, only pushed forward the party's own personal islamophobia. (Abdalla, 2007) Lastly, as previously discussed, 'scapegoating' is the practice of shifting the blame of one individual on to another. In essence, the rhetorical tools found in populist campaigns are what contribute to political actors creating an identity that can resonate with the people. Therefore, these rhetorical tools can be used to support the mobilization of a political actor's identity and legitimize their candidacy in liberal democracies. The significance of this claim is the recognition that once populist political actors are in a position of power, they can use authoritative language to position themselves as the true representatives and voice of the people.

*Populist Style*

Bos et al., conducted an experimental study in the Netherlands that focused on what effects a populist style and populist rhetoric have on party leaders' perceived legitimacy in a liberal democracy. This study conducted an online survey among a representative sample of Dutch citizens. Bos et., asked citizens to complete a post-test questionnaire on the possible mediators and perceptions found in a news article that was manipulated to have content on populism, political cynicism and political knowledge. It was found that Dutch voters with minimal education and political cynicism, were more susceptible to populist rhetoric and style than voters with greater education and higher tolerance for government. (Bos et al., 2012) Voters that were recognized as political cynical, were argued as people who hold negative attitudes towards the political establishment and supported anti-establishment sentiments. (Bos et al., 2012) The purpose of this study was to examine the reception of populist rhetoric on voters individual-level characteristics. (Bos et al., 2012) Based on their findings, Bos et al. (2012) argued that it is more effective to analyze mainstream party's presentation style than the elements of their rhetoric , for example, as Jagers and Walgrave (2007) did. Therefore, the significance of this study contributes to the possible individual-level characteristics that can explain why certain individuals are more susceptible to right-wing populist communication strategies compared to others. (Bos et al., 2012) Also, as it will be discussed further in this research, this study will find common similarities in how Doug Ford's electoral campaign was structured around resonating with voters who felt distrust in government.

According to Bos et al. (2012), there are indications that right-wing parties resonate greater among voters with lower education opposed to others. For instance, the 'insecurity' thesis claims that the lower educated can be defined as people that are more reluctant towards globalization and mass immigration, as drastic transitions and changes contribute to their anxiety

levels. (Bos et al., 2012) Thus, populist right-wing parties deploy 'simple and clear' messages that persuade lower-educated voters their identity needs to be protected. (Mudde, 2004) As previously mentioned, the concept of 'the heartland' is perceived as a beacon to protect 'the people' from external dangers and threats. As a result, right-wing politicians use a populist style that is relatively adaptable and effective when attempting to speak the language of the common man. (Albertazzi (2007) Therefore populist movements are centered around an imagined community or 'heartland' that is typically targeted towards people with minimal education such as, "the 'man in the street,' 'Average Joe' or 'the ordinary man' who is often not that highly educated." (Bos et., 2012, p. 196) As my study will critically analyze the discourse used in Doug Ford's 'Plan for the People' and his 'Victory Speech', it will test the claim that an anti-elitist approach is effective when attracting voters that are political cynical.

An anti-elitist approach, according to Bos et al. (2012) is situated around the critique of mainstream parties and elites having minimal connection with 'the people.' In effect, it is argued that populist parties structure their political discourse around anti-establishment sentiments to attract people who feel 'left behind' by political elites. (Ford & Goodwin, 2017) Comparing the UKIP case discussed earlier with Bas et., study (2012), Ford and Goodwin (2017) claimed that changes to Britain's economic and social structure activated political cynicism in voters who were reluctant towards cultural, economic, and social impacts on traditional society. (Ford & Goodwin, 2017) In Britain's context, the 'left behind' are politically cynical. However, populist political actors will not address them as cynical, and they will instead recognize them as 'the people' who deserve a government they can trust. They are also recognized as 'the people' who will contribute to saving the voice of nationalism and identity in a perceived crisis. According to Ford and Goodwin (2017) within the United Kingdom, there is a division created due to age and



education level. For example, University graduates identify their values and beliefs as representative of the liberal, cosmopolitan, and Europhile side of the division. (Ford & Goodwin, 2017) According to Ford & Goodwin (2017), as the years passed, a new class of financially secure and degree-holding middle-class professionals came to dominate the national economy, society, politics, and media. Thus, as society is perceived as more liberal, a causal reaction impacted the traditional values and nationalistic culture in the United Kingdom. As the younger generations influenced a more liberal and modernized social structure within society, political discussion transitioned towards supporting a capitalistic society that advocated for international and globalized markets. (Ford & Goodwin, 2017) Therefore, as society became more liberated and diverse, it influenced a surge in multiculturalism. As a result, the white-working voters of the United Kingdom felt their opportunities were declining as a more, “diverse and educated electorate, with middle-class professionals became the politically and numerically dominant group.” (Ford & Goodwin, 2017, p.3) The significance of comparing these studies is the contemporary example of the effectiveness populist claims have on certain age groups, politically cynical and lower educated voters. Populist parties can capitalize on voters' emotions and make them engage in a self-exploitative practice due to their anxieties regarding social and cultural changes. The relationship between language and power, in turn, is reproduced through power relations that manipulate voters' identities. According to Bos et al. (2017) “even a minimal manipulation of a limited number of words results in significant effects, especially among certain groups. This is a significant indication that repeated and consistent use of populist communication strategies can lead to even stronger effects, particularly among parts of the electorate that are susceptible to it.” (p. 206)

## *Populism as Identity*

Similar to populism, ethnicity and ethnic groups are elusive and complex to categorize and define. According to Sorofman (1986), factors used for the determination of an individual's ethnicity are geographical location, territoriality, kinship, migratory status, language, religion, literature, food choices, and political and social interests. Despite the various characteristics and elements that contribute to an individual's distinct identity, populist right-wing political actors are reluctant towards immigrants, migrants, temporary foreign workers, and refugees having their own sense of self-autonomy. (Carlaw, 2017) Although, according to Bannerji (2000), the concept of identity is subjective as colonialism influenced people to claim assigned and suppressed identities based on an ethnocentric bias. Furthermore, Bannerji (2000) and Stazack (2008) claim that identity is reproduced through the discursive process of "otherness," which allows individuals to be categorized into two hierarchical groups: "them" and "us". Under populist elements, the 'in-group' is recognized as the members belonging within society. According to Stazack (2008), the discursive process of "otherness" is central to the construction of power relations in society. In effect, a hierarchical relationship is created within a discourse that devalues racialized group's identity by imposing discriminatory practices. Thus, power can be manifested into discourse as political actors' ability to strategically communicate the categorizations of individuals into a monolithic group is prevalent in contemporary society.

According to Pied (2018), conservative populist politics have imposed the discursive process of otherness, by using race in the narrative of "us" and "them" to remake the "white working class." (p.195) Pied's study focused on how conservative populist politics have capitalized on political cynicism, which is predominantly found among white low-wage and unemployed small-town residents. As globalization is communicated to domestic citizens as

providing greater opportunity for people of colour compared to the white working class, a race and class-based narrative is developed. (Pied, 2018) Through this narrative white workers were construed as being the victims of economic decline and ‘others’ were the obstacle to economic prosperity. Amid economic struggles, certain countries were challenged with job insecurity, unaffordable health care, and a decline in quality of living. As Pied (2018) and Carlaw (2017) claim, conservative nationalist politics capitalized on mainstream politicians’ inability to addresses these issues. As a result, populist politicians were able to transform the white working class into a cultural and ideological category. The culture that developed within this ideological category is the hypermasculine, blue-collar patriot that defends nationalistic pride and ‘the homeland’ from the ‘others’. (Pied, 2018) As Pied (2018) claims, the making of the white worker has always been influenced by capitalism and white supremacy. However, with a marketable platform and support of ‘the people,’ populist discourse effectively created power relations through influencing a divide based on race, ethnicity, and political and social interests.

As Wirz et al. (2018) claims the practice of exclusion strategies can be found in various components of right-wing populist communication, populist content, and populist style. In particular, Wirz et al. (2018) study analyzed how right-wing populist communication and its dissemination in media can affect citizens' attitudes toward immigrants. Populist communications in this study are defined as a set of features that can reflect populist ideology on a communicative and content level. (Wirz et al., 2018) Similar to Jagers and Walgrave’s (2007) claim, populist content is characterized as when political actors refer to people as a monolithic group, appear anti-elitist, and exclude societal groups. However, populist content is heavily reliant on its form (how it is said), which is reflective of “emotional, dramatic, absolutist, and colloquial language.” (Wirz et al., 2018, p.497) As their study reveals, through exemplifying the

negative stereotypes of immigrants that derive from populist communications; populist discourse is highly persuasive and problematic as it has influenced the perceived legitimacy of political actors, reinforced populist nationalistic attitudes, and widened the racial division in society. Therefore, as populist discourse echoes anti-elitist sentiments and the excludes racialized groups, the discursive practice of addressing one of these elements can evoke emotions that activate various implications.

In reference to Canadian politics, Carlaw (2017) claimed that Stuart Hall's coined term 'authoritarian populism' is a dimension of 'conservative populism.' As Carlaw analyzed the Reform Party of Canada's transition to the Alliance Party, reoccurring characteristics and trends of the party's political and government approach depicted "authoritarianism." Thus, authoritarian populism was found in the Reform Party of Canada, as they aimed to reproduce division through creating a social hegemony that deployed manipulative narratives of the general public's fears and anxieties. (Carlaw, 2017) According to Carlaw (2017), the primary purpose of obtaining hegemonic power is one's ability to freely rule through the normalization of practicing unethical and immoral policies. In Canada, the Conservative Party's practice of authoritarian populism mobilized discourses that contributed to the infringement on Canada's liberal democratic system. For example, according to Carlaw (2017), the decline of (im)migrants' accessibility to rights, opportunity, and security in Canada was an implication of the Conservative Party's government failing to address the needs of all Canadians. Using the province of Ontario as an example, I propose that through populist language certain bodies and groups are still exposed to colonial practices that deny fundamental rights and freedoms.

While a radical form of nationalism is mobilized within Western democratic countries, the implications from its existence in society are detrimental to democratic institutions and social

relations at all levels of government. For example, in the city of Toronto, Ontario, populism can be found in a metropolitan area. (Silver & Taylor, 2019) Silver and Taylor (2019) claim there is a parallel between Doug Ford, and his brother Rob Ford found within the populist repertoire of Ford Nation. Silver and Taylor (2019) analyzed Rob Ford's 2010 campaign and mayoralty in Toronto through the application of a discourse analysis of their research. Silver and Taylor (2019) claimed that although Rob Ford was portrayed as a fiscal conservative, his beliefs and values did not align with the familiar right-populist tropes, such as Christian nationalism, anti-immigration, and moral superiority. The common populist elements found in Rob and Doug Ford's rhetoric is the attraction towards identifying with the people, appearing as anti-elitist and remaining apart of the "silent majority." As Doug Ford had stated in the publication *Ford Nation*, he

"Ford Nation is not about political parties, conservative or liberal allegiances, personal beliefs, or whether someone is wealthy or not. Ford Nation is about standing up to the political elite; the same old, same old; wasting money, and unaccountable and unreachable leadership." (271)

The anti-elitist narrative found in Rob Ford's rhetoric is used similarly in Doug Ford's speeches and political platform. The discursive strategy of using unifying words that reproduce a feeling of solidarity, is to resonate with voters desire to be a part of nationalist belonging that challenges political establishments. Silver and Taylor (2019) argue that populism emerges from creating an engaging relationship with supporters through collective language.

This research will also draw upon the argument of Kipfer and Saberi (2016), that populism found within Ford Nation can be perceived as a deeply racialized form of authoritarian governing, urbanization, and "attempt to re-order relations of force in the current conjuncture by articulating fragments of support from a contradictory array of social forces." (Kipfer & Saberi, 2016, p.129) As Kipfer and Saberi (2016) state, Rob Ford's deployment of populism was

arguably inherited from Mike Harris's Ontario Conservatives. Furthermore, Kipfer and Saberi (2016) argue that Rob Ford and Doug Ford situated a deeply racialized form of authoritarian populism in the city of Toronto. The Ford brothers' campaigns cultivated anti-elitist sentiments and focused their political language on appealing to the people. However, following Mudde's (2004) claim that populism is elusive and thus difficult to define and categorize, my research will further Kipfer and Saberi's claim that 'Ford Nation' is a product of authoritarian populism. As my research will show, despite Doug Ford's rhetoric and discursive practices drawing similarities to common populist elements, his language proposes a populist style that attempts to transition the imagined community of 'Ford Nation' to the "better Ontario".

Populism's relevance specifically in provincial politics is an under researched area. The impact that provincial politics in Canada has on national-level politics - and vice versa remains influential on one another. The research that I will be conducting will contribute to the current studies on populism, and the potential implications that arise from the mobilization of populism in provincial politics as it gathers a more significant following. As stated, the political discourse of Western democracies is currently facing a problematic shift towards populist rhetoric.

Language as a means of communication to disseminate one's personal beliefs and attitudes is dangerous if it incorporates fallacious populist claims of how society should be perceived. In this research paper, I will argue that Doug Ford's 'Plan for the People' is disseminated in a language that speaks to "the people," but works against those it is supposed to support. This research will answer the following questions (1) How was Doug Ford's populist language used to shape his victory as Premier? (2) What are the potential implications of Doug Ford's use of populist language?

## Chapter 3

### Theoretical Perspectives

#### *Theory of Language*

Hall's view on language is highly applicable to contemporary politics and populism in particular. This research will draw on Hall's (1997) *theory of language*, which perceives language as discursive and representational. Hall's arguments are grounded in the belief that language is a medium that can represent and produce thoughts, ideas, and feelings that are shared in a given culture. According to Hall (1997), the reproduction of thoughts, ideas, and feelings are dependent, "on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them and making sense of the world in broadly similar ways." (p.2) Behaviors, values, and meanings are thus reproduced in a shared culture and also permeate society. This research will draw on Hall's theory of language to examine how populist language in Doug Ford's 'Victory Speech' and 'Plan for the People' is used to influence human behavior and reproduce a shared culture in Ontario. This research will also draw on Hall's discursive approach, which analyzes the effects and consequences of representation. Using Hall's discursive approach, this research will examine how Doug Ford's populist language can create various meanings that result in the exclusion of certain bodies and groups.

#### *Theory of Dramatism*

According to Burke (1969) people's, attitudes, emotions, values, and beliefs influence a word's meaning and the motives behind their usage. Thus, words cannot be neutral. Furthermore, Burke (1969) claims that language can influence people's worldviews and their concept of reality. In simpler terms, this means that language can change how people think, act, and interpret their environments around them. Burke's focus on exploring human relationships and

their motives, stems from his desire to study and examine ways in which people influence one another. Burke's theory of dramatism study's human actions according to the belief that life can be compared to the dramas found within theatrical plays. (Burke, 1969) According to Lahiti (2018), the fundamental concept of dramatism is the ways in which symbolic language is used by political actors to influence people. This study will consider Burke's theory of dramatism when analyzing the selected corpus at a text level. Burke's theory of dramatism will be used to reveal ways in which Doug Ford has dramatized crises in Ontario, to create a narrative that his electoral success is the only viable solution for Ontario moving forward.

As previously stated, Burke (1969) believed that human beings are capable of creating their own realities through symbolic language. If this claim is valid, the implications that could arise is actual reality being subjected to change. Furthermore, it also proposes the implications that arise from a political actor's ability to manipulate language in favour of their perceptions of reality being recognized as real among society. (Burke, 1969) A fundamental concept that derives from this is identification. I will use this concept in the study's CDA at the norm level, to claim that the process of identification is subjective as voters in Ontario are exposed to language that is populist and symbolic in its nature. Thus, the identity people perceive as their own is a reaction to the categorization of 'the people' and 'the elite.' According to Lahiti (2018), Burke defined identification as the process in which the diversity of, "principles, feelings, ideas, experiences, perceptions, attitudes, values and images of an individual" (p.37) meet at an intersectional point. However, I believe that populist actors exclusion strategies homogenize these elements of identification. In effect, the exclusion of certain bodies and groups polarizes voter identity and political discourse.



## *Populism*

Jagers and Walgrave (2007) argue that for populism to exist, it needs to be heavily connected to 'the peoples' desire to seek change. Jagers and Walgrave (2007) claim that the influence of culture in reproducing power and identity derives from a politician's ability to use political communication styles and strategic language that produces meanings. The application of Ford's strategic language will be analyzed in this research as a discursive tool that is used to develop a shared culture in an imagined community within Ontario. Ford's ability to use populism as a political communication style, is imperative to his mobilization of support in his constituency. For example, Ford's ability to identify who "the people" are and what they want, contributes to Jagers and Walgrave's argument that once political actors have identified their targeted audience, they will gravitate towards appearing anti-elitist and isolate groups that do not identify with "the people." In this research, Jagers and Walgrave's key elements of populism will be used to reveal patterns of populism found in Doug Ford's language. The choice of using these elements in the findings section of this study, is to help Ontario voters become more aware of populist characteristics in the current discourse.

Similar to Jagers' and Walgrave's definition of populism as a thin-centered ideology, Mudde (2004) expands on the theoretical concept of populism and claims that it is a reaction to illiberal democratic practices. Populism, in this sense, is linked to democracy due to people all having the same values and interests. This study will draw on Mudde's (2004) claim that despite populism accepting democratic practices such as people electing their leaders, there is an overarching belief of majoritarianism that excludes the opinions of minority groups when creating policies for the populace. This study will also interpret the selected corpus according to Mudde's (2004) claim that populism is emotion-driven, and its simplistic discourse intends to

legitimize politicians by communicating with 'the peoples' feelings through narratives. For example, as this study will find, the narrative that is prevalent in the case of Ontario is 'the people' versus 'the elite' and 'special interests'. This study will draw on Mudde (2004) claim that this narrative is situational and is only active in society when there is political resentment towards the current government in power, for example, Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal Party of Canada.

### ***Imagined Community***

The theoretical concept of an inherently limited and sovereign nation that is governed by a collective body of people that interpret the world alike through a shared culture is the 'heartland,' or as Anderson believes an "imagined community." Mudde claims that (2004) "the heartland' helps create an artificial division within an imagined community, similar to the "nation of the nationalists." (p. 546) However, in practice this artificial division excludes all people that do not share similar beliefs and interpretations of those residing in this imagined community. Anderson examined how nations could be created through a shared language. Canada for example is a multinational state that is comprised of several ethnicities and French/English language groups. However, the idea of being "Canadian", is to have so-called "Canadian" values and shared traits. As Anderson (1983) claims, nationalism does not develop a nation, but rather is the invention of one. This means that within a nation, there is a sense of entitlement and pride of one's geographical identity, which can be categorized as nationalism. According to Anderson (1983), people feel bonded by a shared culture and thus develop the idea of a single community that embodies all their ideals. However, the formation of imagined communities is highly exclusive and narrow-minded, to which acknowledges an imagined boundary of who belongs in a nation and who does not. (Anderson, 1983) The nation, as an imagined political community becomes

problematic and complex as populist actors exploit the concept of nationalism and use it to promote inequality.

According to Anderson (1983), the nation is imagined because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of the communion.” (p.6) The common elements found in each great classical community was a "sacred language" or "national print-language" that mobilized diverse groups into one culture. Therefore, language has the power to influence diverse people to form into an imagined and homogenized community based on a shared language. In terms of populist language, it is evident people-centrism, anti-elitism, and exclusionary language has become a discourse in itself that has contributed to the mobilization of division within Ontario. The imagined community of ‘Ford Nation,’ has attracted diverse groups across Ontario to form into a single monolithic group that has resulted in magnifying the cultural divide within the province. Furthermore, it has contributed to the mobilization of policies and enactments that have threatened equality in Ontario.

### ***Inside Out and Outside In***

Ahmed (2014) furthered the argument of an exclusionary imagined community by analyzing texts that publicly circulate an alignment of people within collective groups such as, ‘others’. According to Ahmed (2014), certain words are used to construct narratives that work towards triggering people’s emotions. Ahmed (2014) argues that, emotions are reproduced through social and cultural practices. Therefore, Ahmed proposed the ‘Inside Out and Outside In’ approach in which, “Emotions are not “in” the individual or the social but produce the very surfaces and boundaries that allow the individual and the social to be delineated as if they are objects” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 9) As a result, members of society delineate themselves based on

emotions and exclude ‘others’ due to the internalized division between certain groups. For example, as Ahmed (2014) studied, the British National Front used the term ‘the others’, to represent illegal immigrants and asylum seekers that threatened the existence of the nation. This narrative develops through the discursive process of ‘otherness’, in which creates a division of people within a nation based on personal pronouns. For example, as Ahmed argued, “the ‘illegal immigrants’ and ‘asylum seekers’ are those who are ‘not us’, and who in not being us, endanger what is ours.” (Ahmed, 2014, p.1) As it will be studied in this research, Doug Ford has created a narrative in Ontario that triggers people’s emotions through the use of personal pronouns such as, “you”, “we”, and “our”. In effect, this narrative invites ‘the people’ to adopt these pronouns through the intense feelings and emotions that develop within an imagined community. As it will be studied, certain groups, such as Indigenous communities, are perceived as a provincial threat, as the collective group of ‘we’ is only available to white Aryans. (Ahmed, 2014)

## **Chapter 4**

### **Design and Methods**

#### **Methodology**

This research was a qualitative, deductive study, that used a critical discourse analysis as its method. Discourse in this study is defined as, “ways of representing aspects of the world – the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the ‘mental world’ of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth.” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 176) According to Fairclough (1995), critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach that is concerned with how power is exercised through language. CDA is recognized by scholars as a methodological approach that discovers hidden or partially hidden, discourses within texts and social practices. (O’Halloran, 2003) according to Van Dijk (1993), CDA's main purpose is to reveal selective language in text and talk that is used to reproduce social power abuse, dominance, and inequality in a social and political context. As O’Halloran (2003) claims, “CDA interprets texts on behalf of readers who do not take up a critical position to indicate how such readers can be manipulated unwittingly by the text.” (p.2) This study will apply Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and the three dimensions within it.

The first dimension is the ‘description’ stage, which systematically analyzes vocabulary, grammar, and text structure. (Fairclough, 1989) This dimension is analyzed at the word level and emphasizes the collection of which words and characters are chosen when one is speaking or writing. This dimension is significant to the research I will be conducting, as it will analyze Doug Ford's use of pronouns (we/you) and assertions about ‘the people’ and ‘the elite.’ Furthermore, this study will conduct a textual analysis in accordance with Fairclough's concept of modality. According to Fairclough (1989), modality can be defined as the use of auxiliary

verbs to exercise a writer or speakers' authority. Within modality, two dimensions exist depending on the direction authority is situated towards. For example, if it is directed towards the authority of one participant in relation to others, it is a relational modality. However, if the direction is concentrated on the speaker or writer's authority regarding the truth or representation of reality, it is an expressive modality (Fairclough, 1989).

The second dimension of Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis is the discursive practice. This dimension involves the production and consumption of texts and is considered the interpretation level. This dimension is concentrated on the composure of sentences, and ways in which one speaks to disseminate values, attitudes, and beliefs to a recipient. This dimension will be used within this research to analyze the discursive practices found in Doug Ford's text. The final dimension is social practice, which is interested in the standards of society and its social structures. This dimension is considered the explanation level, as it perceives language as a communication tool to create opinions and characterize society's attitudes, traditions, and customs. This dimension is significant to the research I will be conducting, as it will help to examine how language and populist style elements can be used to mobilize normalcy, shared cultures, and the exclusion of certain bodies and groups. The choice of applying critical discourse analysis to this study was to critically interpret the text used in Doug Ford's discourse and how it reproduces power relations, identity, and an imagined community.

## **Data Collection**

The objective of this study is to examine how Doug Ford used populist language to win the Ontario General Election, and the potential implications of Doug Ford's use of populist language. The method of analysis in this research will critically contextualize Doug Ford's discourse in his, 'Victory Speech,' and political platform the 'Plan for the People.' The methods

of communication that were chosen are written text and speech. The first piece that was analyzed was Doug Ford's 'Plan for the People'. Although Doug Ford's campaign has been verbally communicated in the form of a speech, it will be analyzed as written text to ensure the accuracy of critically interpreting Ford's choice of words and sentence construction. This is justified through Fairclough's (1995) argument that discourse is about text analysis, and that any text is meant to contain interpretations. In consideration of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis of Thatcherism (1989), this study will draw on similar findings that were found in Ford's victory speech and political platform. This analysis will include a data chart that has a frequency count for Ford's word choice, in order to reveal possible uses of repetition of pronouns and auxiliary verbs.

The selection of Ford's 'Victory' speech and the 'Plan for the People' platform was strategically chosen in order to critically analyze Ford's imitation of populist style elements and characteristics. The justification for choosing Ford's victory speech is to critically analyze his language as he transitioned into a position of power, to note if any elements of his language changed as a result of being victorious. CDA is concentrated towards analyzing language's relationship with power. I believe that Ford's victory speech is his first opportunity to address an audience in a legitimized position of power. Furthermore, this research is focused on analyzing Ford's discourse with preexisting works of literature findings of what constitutes a populist politician, and what language resonates the greatest with voters.

Lastly, the selection of Doug Ford's 'Plan for the People' was included, as it can depict the ultimate goals, values, and beliefs of Ford and the Progressive Conservative Party. The justification for choosing this corpus is that each text selection is directly from Doug Ford. The reason this study chose not to include media coverage, press releases or related stories regarding

Doug Ford is to eliminate any bias based on personal or journalists interests. Furthermore, as Blassnig et al., (2018) argues journalists are not neutral, and act as gatekeepers that select some stories and statements while discarding others. Although it is difficult to remain objective during this study, I analyzed the selected corpus based on assertions that have been made regarding similar case studies, for example Fairclough's CDA on Thatcherism. When referring to Doug Ford's political platform 'Plan for the People', I will use PFTP; For Doug Ford's, 'Victory Speech';VS.

### **Data Analysis**

This research will apply transcription and cross-checking of audio recordings to written texts. Ford's speeches will be collected through online archives such as TVO, YouTube, Ontario PC Party, and Macleans Magazine. The selected corpus will be transcribed and cross-checked word by word, in order to ensure accuracy within the text. The process of the transcription will be completed by cross-checking between video-recordings audio to ensure that each speech is an authentic and original written transcript.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Findings**

The following chapter is the critical discourse analysis of the 'Victory Speech' and Ford's political platform, the 'Plan for the People.' This study intends to reveal the hidden ideology of populism, and power relations by analyzing the selected texts in three stages: description, interpretation, and explanation. At the first stage, the linguistic choices of the texts will be analyzed by using the grammatic features of pronouns and auxiliary verbs. The findings in this stage also reveal how the use of pronouns such as, "we," "our," and "you" are used inclusively and exclusively. Furthermore, the findings in this section will also discover how pronouns can be used as discursive and representational language to reproduce the discursive process of "otherness" and "people centrism."

The second stage will be analyzed and interpreted according to Jager's and Walgrave's (2007) key elements of populism as a political communication style. This stage will focus on the consumption of voters, and whether Ford's language is used strategically to resonate with politically cynical and low-wage voters. The reason this study is analyzing populist discourse's effect on the individual level moderator of low-wage voters opposed to those that are lower educated (for example, Bos et al), is to avoid any bias that would occur from assuming lower education is the reason voters resonated with Doug Ford. Furthermore, as it will be studied in this research, Doug Ford's language is more situated towards targeting a voter's financial income opposed to their education level. In the third stage, the linguistic choices will be explained in a broader social context in which the texts are used to reproduce power relations, identity, and an imagined community. The research questions addressed in this chapter are (1) How was Doug

Ford's populist language used to shape his victory as Premier? (2) What are the potential implications of Doug Ford's use of populist language?

### ***People Centrism***

#### *Assertions about 'the people'*

According to Zaslove (2008), 'the people' represent the foundation and the starting point for populists. In the selected texts, there are multiple assertions that Doug Ford makes about 'the people.' What is significant about these assertions in terms of Ford's relationship to the audience and, as a political leader to 'the people', is that he exercises an authoritative role through representational language. Ford, as a leader for 'the people' implicitly tells them what their values, beliefs, and desires are. However, Ford also situates himself as part of 'the people,' he informs them of what they are like based on his own self-perceptions; rather than allowing them to identify themselves based on their own self-autonomy. The following section will discuss the use of pronouns in Ford's discourse used to position himself as a member of 'the people' and thus an active voice on sociopolitical matters on their behalf. For example, Ford states in his Victory Speech, "My friends, together in 88 short days we achieved the impossible. We united our party and united our province and this is your victory. Tonight, is your night." (Ford, 2018, 1a) Ford's repetitive use of personally addressing the audience as 'my friends' in his 'Victory Speech' is interpreted as an attempt to create a feeling of solidarity and familiarity with him as an ordinary person among 'the people' (see Appendix A, 3-4, 12, 18-22, 28, 33-35, 54-59). Furthermore, Ford credits his victory to 'the people' and claims that the people of Ontario voiced themselves through his win (see Appendix A, 3-5). It was found that Ford claims that his supporters will deliver on the plan for the people, in which is positioned around reducing taxes, reducing gas prices, creating more jobs, and saving the people of Ontario money (see Appendix

A, 29-34).

The platform 'A Plan for the People' depicts Ford's perception of who 'the people' are and what they want. As Ford is the self-proclaimed voice for 'the people,' the assumption can be made that the discourse within his plan is structured according to their shared values, beliefs, and ideals. In the categorization of 'the people,' there is a sense of shared culture found within their similarities. However, there are common assertions that Ford makes about 'the people' in which addresses them as a single monolithic group. Thus, as a leader of 'the people' Ford's plan can contribute to the formation of a singular and homogenized identity of who 'the people' are.

According to Ford's 'Plan for the People,' 'the people' can be identified as:

- The people in Ontario that were forgotten by Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government. (see Appendix B, 1-2)
- The people in Ontario that have lost trust in government. (see Appendix B, 2)
- The people that believe the Liberals are the corrupt elite that prioritize special interest groups. (see Appendix B, 19, 231)
- The hard-working people in Ontario that pay taxes to the political elites. (see Appendix B, 4)
- The 'little guys.' (see Appendix B, 14)
- The people that demand respect from the Ontario government, as taxpayers. (see Appendix B, 31-36)
- The lower- and middle-class families in Ontario. (see Appendix B, 42).
- The people that were being exploited by the Liberals and executives working for Hydro. (see Appendix B, 59-60)
- The workers in Ontario that want to find a job. (see Appendix B, 178-179)

- The people and parents that want to restore the previous sex-ed curriculum in schools. (see Appendix B, 247-248)
- The people that support the “Ring of Fire” in Northern towns to gain resources from Indigenous lands. (see Appendix B, 260-262)

In summary, ‘the people’ can be identified as a homogenized group of hard-working taxpayers and lower-and middle-class families in Ontario. This group is positioned as an anti-elitist coalition with a shared feeling of cynicism towards the provincial government. This collective feeling of cynicism results in a shared culture among members in this community, believing ‘the elites’ and ‘special interests’ are the cause of Ontario’s problems. Therefore, as Ford states “My friends, a new day has dawned on Ontario [...] And we will make Ontario once again the engine of Canada.” (Ford, 2018, 1a) it is implicitly referencing the process of reverting back to the past before the Liberal Party was in power, and special interest groups were prioritized. However, in order for society to return back to its previous state, Ford uses symbolic language that reproduces pre-existing traditions, norms, and values. As it will be further analyzed in the following sections, one of the practices that are being reinforced is the exclusion of special interest groups through a ‘people first’ commitment.

### *Identifying with ‘the people’*

As Fairclough claims, ‘we’ refers to a collective group, which in the context of this study references ‘the people of Ontario.’ Doug Ford uses the pronoun ‘we’ mainly in his Victory Speech (VS), both inclusively and exclusively. The inclusive use (e.g., “Together we made history. We have taken back Ontario. We have delivered a government that is for the people.”)(Ford, 2018, 1a) is significant in that ‘we’ is used as representational language of Doug Ford, his audience, and everyone else that supported his candidacy (see Table 1). The use of pronouns within this context was to memorialize Ford’s electoral success as a victory for himself

and ‘the people.’ This grammatic feature helps to assimilate his position in power as a symbolic voice for ‘the people.’ However, it remains uncertain whom Ontario was taken back from, as Ford is making an implicit claim that his voice now speaks for a reclaimed Ontario. The specific arrangement of the sentence composure and the focus of reverting back to the past is strategically selected. However, in this context ‘we’ does not identify which side those who did not vote, or support Ford's candidacy are a part of in this battle for reclaiming Ontario. For example, Ford states, “Those who didn’t support us, I want you to know I will work even harder to earn your confidence.” (Ford, 2018, 1a) Thus, ‘we’ is used as a representation of the collective, which is interpreted as excluding those that did not vote for Ford and the vision for a ‘better Ontario’.

(see Appendix A, 49) Therefore, it is found that the pronoun ‘we’ is used to situate Doug Ford with ‘the people’ as a collective and homogenized group, at the expense of excluding all others who opposed his claim to be the voice of the people.

Table 1. ‘We’ Frequency Count

<b>Pronoun (Personal)</b>	<b>‘Victory Speech’ (VS)</b>	<b>Lines</b>	<b>‘Plan for the People’ (PFTP)</b>	<b>Lines</b>
<b>‘We’ – Collective Group</b>	13	16, 22, 25, 26, 29, 38, 47, 48, 52, 58, 59	4	30, 58, 82, 210
<b>‘We’ – ‘Progressive Conservative Party</b>	8	13, 19, 29, 30, 34, 52, 57	16	39, 64, 86, 122, 124, 127, 145, 183, 216, 239, 247, 274, 276, 288, 289

Note: This table represents the frequency count and use of repetition of the ‘We’ pronoun found in selected corpus.

In the text ‘The Plan for the People’ ‘we’ is used significantly more in reference to the Progressive Conservative Party, rather than ‘the people’ as his already known supporters. For example, Ford states, “With your help we can open Ontario for business again; create good jobs;

lower your day-to-day costs; bring prosperity back to our province; and restore accountability, respect and trust to Queen's Park.” (Ford, 2018, 1b) The meaning behind ‘we’ in this context is intended to reach the people as a general public rather than just his already known supporters. Thus, his plan's discourse is structured around explicitly stating what his party and position as Premier of Ontario will entail. ‘We’ is interpreted as situational due to the selected texts providing different significance when addressing particular audiences. For example, within the context of Ford’s ‘Victory Speech’ ‘we’ is used to represent his supporters. Whereas, in his ‘Plan for the People’ ‘we’ is used to outreach the entire population of Ontario and the Progressive Conservative Party. Ford's discourse, in this sense, is written as an active voice for the Progressive Conservatives and the entire population of Ontario. For instance, Ford commits to restoring Ontario to its past greatness' before the Liberals occupied government. He claims that the PC's, with his leadership, will restore the values ‘the people’ of Ontario deserve (see Appendix B, 42-43). These values are aligned with Ford's and the PC's five promises to the people once elected into government. These values are responsibility, accountability, and trust. Therefore, Ford's language becomes representational of the Progressive Conservative Party's values, beliefs, and ideals. Furthermore, these values are interpreted as words that apply to Ford's anti-elitist discourse. Thus, speaking in a language that will resonate with voters who are politically cynical. (Bos et al., 2012)

Similar to the pronoun ‘we,’ the possessive pronoun ‘our’ is used in Doug Ford's ‘Victory Speech’ and ‘Plan for the People’ in two different contexts. However, the one common representation found consistently throughout both texts, is using ‘our’ to assert that ‘the people’ are a part of Ford's vision for Ontario and have a shared culture. For instance, in Ford's ‘Victory Speech,’ he uses the word ‘our’ to represent his team the Progressive Conservative Party (see

Appendix A, 13, 27-28, 33, 52-53) . However, on the following lines Ford's use of 'our' represents his supporters and audience in Ontario (see Appendix A, 32, 45, 55, 59-60). For example, Ford uses 'our' to address his audiences' children as if they are his own by stating, "We will work every single day for a better Ontario, a better future and a brighter future for our children[...] We're going to turn this province around, so our children and their children will always be proud to call Ontario home." (Ford, 2018, 1a) The strategic placement of the possessive pronoun 'our' situates Ford's language towards the perception that his values and ideas serve people and their families. Furthermore, by using 'our' to describe Progressive Conservatives, people's children and his supporters become a homogenized group. Thus, this is interpreted as a way to over-inflate and mobilize his following base beyond the PC party. In effect, as Ford moves forward in his victory speech, he positions himself as among the people by using the word 'our' as a collective group that are a part of a shared culture with similar values and beliefs. For example, Ford states, "Ontario; I owe everything to you. Your support, your energy, your belief in our cause [...] You are the reason we are here today." (Ford, 2018, 1a). Ford emphasizes that the people's belief in a shared cause is the reason he is in a position of power to represent them. However, this is also interpreted as a narrative of romanticizing the past to deem Ford as a symbol for "hope and prosperity" in creating a "better Ontario".

The pronoun 'you' is used similarly to how Fairclough perceived its use in the case of Thatcherism. 'You' is used as an indefinite pronoun within Ford's 'Plan for the People' in reference to the "people in general". (Fairclough, 1989) The significance of including 'you' as an indefinite pronoun within Ford's platform, contributes to his outreach of addressing all people at a personal and direct level. Therefore, the difference between 'our' and 'you' is the explicitness, directness and personalized meaning it carries. Opposed to the implicit and indirect meaning that

is found in the use of ‘our’. For example, in Ford's ‘Plan for the People,’ there is a repetition (See Table 2) of personally addressing his audience as ‘you’ in order to appeal to voters' emotions by familiarity while registering an intense and direct feeling of solidarity.

(PTFP) “I believe you deserve better. You know me. You know what I stand for. You know that I am here for the people. I entered politics to help the little guy. To make life easier for you and your family. Not only so you can make ends meet, but also so you can get ahead and prosper.” (Ford, 2018, 1b)

‘You’ in this context, is used to deliver a people-centric style that legitimizes Ford's authority in power as leader of ‘the people.’ As Ford is legitimized as the voice for ‘the people,’ ‘you’ becomes a representational word that implies solidarity with all people in Ontario. This allows Ford to influence social practices, and his audience's perceptions and precepts as his voice become more widely accepted. This means that the mobilization of Ford's own perceptions, beliefs, values, attitudes, and ideals can be reproduced through his ability to have an outreach of all people, as opposed to just his known supporters. In this sense, Ford is speaking in the name of ‘the people’ by claiming they know him, and therefore can trust him.

Table 2. ‘You’ Frequency Count

<b>Pronoun (Indefinite)</b>	<b>‘Victory Speech’ (VS)</b>	<b>Lines</b>	<b>‘Plan for the People’ (PTFP)</b>	<b>Lines</b>
<b>‘You’ – ‘The People’</b>	34	2-5, 7, 10, 11, 18, 19 21, 22, 24, 27, 33, 37, 43, 44, 45, 47, 49, 51, 61	0	-
<b>‘You’ – The People in General</b>	0	-	19	2, 3, 13, 14, 15, 17, 23, 28, 139, 151, 156

Note: This table represents the frequency count and use of repetition of the ‘You’ pronoun found in selected corpus.



As shown in Table 2, the pronoun 'you' can be used in inclusionary and exclusionary discourse. The pronoun 'you' can be in reference to 'the people' as his already known supporters, or 'the people in general' as the population of Ontario as a whole. Ford's use of 'you' in his 'Victory Speech' is interpreted as an exclusionary language that only refers to 'the people' that supported his candidacy. For example, Ford uses 'you' to recognize that his victory is a result of all the people that voted for him (see Appendix A, 44-48). In this section alone, Ford uses the pronoun 'you' 6 six times while alluding towards a dramatized narrative that there is a fight to be won in Ontario. However, within Ford's 'Plan for the People' the context of 'you' changes towards addressing the people in general as it intends to situate a common language that can be understood by all voters in Ontario. For example, in the section of Ford's plan that is titled 'respect for the taxpayers' Ford claims, "I will reduce gas prices: lower gasoline taxes by 10 cents a litre and diesel taxes by 10.3 cents a litre, saving you every time you fill up your car or truck." (Ford, 2018, 1b) Therefore, language can be representational and situational depending on the structure of the discourse and its intended purpose. In this context, Ford used a general knowledge that most people in Ontario drive, more specifically those within suburban areas and daily commuters. In Ford's platform, it is found that he attempts to resonate with the remaining general public in Ontario by directly addressing them with a generalized incentive for all people that drive. The change in the use of 'you' is significant as it furthers the argument that in order for Ford to over-inflate and mobilize his following base beyond the PC party and his already known supporters, it is apparent that his discourse contains language that is understood by all Ontarians.

### *Constructing 'the heartland'*

The implication that arises from the use of pronouns in Ford's discourse is the potential

normalcy of 'the people' forming into a homogenized group when being addressed as 'we' or 'our.' As previously mentioned, the context of these pronouns is consistently changing depending on the text and its intended purpose. The inclusionary and exclusionary meanings that derive from these pronouns, can reproduce power relations and the polarization of public opinion (Fairclough, 1989). Furthermore, in Ford's discourse, the process of using language that is inclusion of the majority results in a reaction of excluding minorities. This means that despite certain pronouns being used to create feelings of inclusion, there is transaction within Ford's discourse that trades the inclusion of 'the people' at the expense of excluding certain bodies and groups. Moreover, despite Ford's dramatized narratives appealing to some, it results in the expansion of a provincial division. As people recognize their similarities and become united by a shared identity that Ford instilled, they become bonded by a shared culture. Thus, Ford's leadership can act as a beacon for like-minded individuals to form together in a collective community. However, the idea of a single community that embodies only 'the people' ideals is highly exclusive and problematic. The formation of imagined communities is relatively narrow-minded, to which develops an imagined boundary of who belongs within this community and who does not. (Anderson, 1983) The discursive strategy of using pronouns such as, 'we', 'you', and 'our' facilitates this idea of an imagined community. As each pronoun is used to isolate certain groups in society, it creates constructed identities that are separated by imagined boundaries. Therefore, it is interpreted that Ford creates an imagined community by mobilizing the dramatized narrative of 'us' versus 'them' through the use of pronouns, that in effect actively shapes a person's identity.

The interpretation of a word's meaning can vary, depending on a person's values, attitudes, beliefs, and preconceived perceptions. As people enter into an imagined community,

there shared culture results in a homogenization of thoughts. Ford, acting as the leader within this community, has contributed to the dissemination of anti-elitist sentiments through his dramatized narrative that Ontario is a place to be rescued from 'elites' and 'special interests.' In effect, this study argues that the current division in Ontario will grow exponentially as a collective body that excludes people with different social and political interests from their own becomes practiced. As it will be analyzed in the following section, Ford's discourse has made assertions about who 'the elites' and 'special interests' are in this battle for reclaiming Ontario.

### **Anti-Elitism**

#### *Assertions about 'the elite'*

According to Charalambous and Christoforou (2019), in populism, there is a narrative of antagonism that 'the people' are the underdogs and ordinary citizens. In this narrative, 'the people' presume a role in defending their homeland from 'elites' and 'special interests' that have brought injustice in society. In the selected texts, there are multiple assertions that Doug Ford makes about 'the elite.' What is significant about the assertions made in terms of Ford's relationship to the audience and, as a representative, for 'the people', is that he positions himself as the charismatic leader opposing the elite in order to defend Ontario. However, this idea of Ontario is considered the "new" and "better" province that 'the people' are the foundation of creating. For instance, Ford explicitly states that help has arrived, now that he has entered into a position of power by stating, "My friends, help is here[...] Our team will work every single day to deliver this vision. We will work every single day for a better Ontario, a better future and a brighter future for our children. An era of economic prosperity, the likes of which this province has never seen before." (Ford, 2018, 1a) This is interpreted by 'the people' that Ontario is a place that needs saving. Furthermore, Ford refers to the work he and his team will do, as the step towards

creating a “better” Ontario. The vision for a better Ontario, according to Ford, is a “government that respects you, a government with integrity, a government that will always put you first.” (Ford, 2018, 1a) Thus, it is interpreted that the previous government in power (Liberals) did not respect ‘the people’ as they prioritized others and lacked integrity in office. The former government in power can also be depicted as the elites as he explicitly states that there is a common problem all people in Ontario have. For example, Ford states, “The problems facing Ontario share one thing in common: Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government just doesn't care about you anymore. Her government is untrustworthy. She will say and do anything just to stay in power.” (Ford, 2018, 1b) This problem is claimed to be Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government as they are untrustworthy and do not care for the people. Therefore, every reference to the ‘elites’ can also be a reference to the Liberals and vice versa. For instance, in Ford’s ‘Plan for the People’ there are direct references to Kathleen Wynne as a representative voice of the elites and special interests (see Appendix B, 1-6, 3-38, 134-136) . As a leader of ‘the people’ Ford’s plan and ‘Victory Speech’ can contribute to the identification of who ‘the elite’ are. ‘The elites’ can be identified as:

- Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals. (see Appendix B, 4-6)
- The Liberal insiders, such as Hydro One executives. (see Appendix B, 59-60)
- Teachers and institutions that teach a curriculum that includes ‘special interests’ groups. (see Appendix B, 230-233)
- Those that did support or run under the PC banner. (see Appendix A, 20)

In summary, the criteria for being identified as an ‘elite’ is simplistic as it depicts any persons that are, aligned with opposing political ideologies or that support an Ontario envisioned by the Liberal government. This division outlines the discursive process of ‘otherness’ that relies

on an 'us' versus 'them' narrative. In this context, Ford uses 'the elites' and 'special interest' groups as scapegoats for the reasons why 'the people' do not have access to financial stability, job opportunity, effective healthcare, and a responsible government. In effect, 'the people' first commitment becomes highly effective in Ford's discourse. As found in both texts (VS, 11, 19) and (PFTP, 37-38) the interpretation behind Ford explicitly committing to put 'the people' ahead of 'the elites' and 'special interests' is a populist tactic to relieve people's anxieties and cynicism towards a government that prioritizes 'others' before the true people contributing to the economy of Ontario. Ford's ability to identify 'the people' as a homogenized group makes them more prone to become susceptible to exploitation through populist discourse. Furthermore, Ford executes this by opposing mainstream politics and identifying as the one candidate who has been impacted by these in the same way as the people. As a result, Ford's structures his discourse around inheriting 'the people's' problems as his own, in order to justify the exclusion of elites and special interests in his 'the people' first commitment.

#### *Creating the 'other'*

According to Zaslove (2008), special interest groups can be defined as the excluded social groups or 'dangerous others' in a community that pose a threat to the vitalness of 'the heartland.' The creation of the 'other' in Ontario stems from the traditional populist narrative that pits 'the people' against the special interest groups. According to Mudde (2004), the divide that perpetuates populism as a practiced discourse in contemporary politics is, 'the pure people' vs. 'the corrupt elite.' However, as previously stated, these categories often have other groups in society associated as belonging with them. Similar to the case of Greece, 'the people' in Ontario represent a group of people that formed an imagined community with a shared culture based on anti-elitist sentiments. As Anderson (1983) claims, despite all members of this community not

meeting one another, there is still a connection that is formed. This connection is what Ford expresses as the collective “cause” that brought ‘the people’ into power in Ontario (see Appendix A, 45). However, within the narrative of ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite,’ the people must protect the heartland from those excluded. People that are excluded, are comprised of different cultures, beliefs, and values. Although, despite their various distinctions, they are categorized by Ford as a monolithic group. The excluded are ‘the others’; however, in Ford’s discourse, they are referred to as the ‘elites’ and ‘special interests.’ Therefore, this study argues that the formation of an imagined community in Ontario reproduces power relations between ‘the people’ and ‘special interest’ groups.

### **Homogeneity and Exclusion of ‘Special Interests’**

#### *Assertions about ‘the special interests’ and exclusion strategies*

According to existing literature, there are various definitions of ‘special interests’ groups that makes identifying who belongs in this category elusive. According to Laycock (2012) the perspective of Canadian conservatives identifies ‘special interests’ as, “feminists, anti-poverty groups, the gay rights movement, native Canadians and other ethnic and racial minorities and the government programs and expenditures elites support.” (p.52) Despite Ford being the leader for the Progressive Conservatives in Ontario, his perception of special interests may differ. Therefore, I analyzed his use of the category ‘special interests’ in the selected texts before assuming that his meaning followed previous Canadian conservatives. The use of ‘special interests’ in Ford’s ‘Plan for the People’ is mainly found when he is addressing the areas of education and Northern communities. For example, Ford states in his plan:

“Today, however, more and more of our schools have been turned into social laboratories and our kids into test subjects for whatever special interests and so-called experts that have captured Kathleen Wynne's ear.” (Ford, 2018, 1a)

For the people that read this text, it is difficult to identify who the special interests are without prior information regarding its context. Ford explicitly evokes “social laboratories” in an attempt to undermine the gay-positive sex-ed curriculum that was put in place by Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal Party. Ford’s criticism of a curriculum that is more affirming of subject matters on sexual consent, gender identity, same-sex relationships, and masturbation. The process of reverting back to the 1998 curriculum that is in support of faith-based groups, is significant as it exercises an authoritative role through speaking on behalf of ‘the people’. In effect, Ford is using religious beliefs in order to reinforce an imagined community that is homophobic. Therefore, it is interpreted that in Ford's discourse, ‘special interests’ groups include the LGBTQ+ community. However, the implication found from this categorization is the negative connotation associated with the LGBTQ+ community and human rights groups as they become recognized as a part of the ‘special interests.’ As the sex-ed curriculum is reverted back to traditional beliefs, the progress made for equality in Ontario becomes challenged by exclusionary strategies that pin ‘the people’ of Ontario against the LGBTQ+ community and human rights groups. In effect, the clash of personal beliefs that is reproduced through power relations between heteronormative, patriarchal institutions and the LGBTQ+ community regresses any progress made in harmonizing these groups together. Therefore, despite their similarities of being both active contributors to the provincial and national economy, their differences in beliefs on traditional norms are used as exclusion strategies to isolate them from the vision of a “better” Ontario.

Similar to the findings that were found in Ford's perspective on education, the categorization of 'special interest' is prevalent when addressing the Northern communities in Ontario. Ford claims that:

“The Liberals and NDP like to talk about the North but are quick to forget about the incredible potential in our Northern communities. A PC Government will, finally, open up the incredible resources of our North, starting by cutting through the special interest and bureaucratic delays blocking us from developing the Ring of Fire.” (Ford, 2018, 1b)

In this context, 'special interests' are used to refer to the Indigenous communities that are occupying lands in the James Bay Lowlands of Northern Ontario. As framed by Ford, the 'Ring of Fire' is depicted to 'the people' as valuable resources that contribute to economic development. The strategic use of the sentence being composed as the 'special interests' are “blocking” development, contributes to the narrative that Indigenous communities are one of the groups to blame for economic disparity. Despite, the chromite mining and smelting development project (Ring of Fire) being hazardous to the environment as it depletes lands that are inhabited by the seven Cree communities (Talaga, 2019); they are perceived as a threat to 'the people' and Ford's vision for Ontario. As Ahmed (2014) argues, 'you' implicitly invokes 'we', as groups of separate people can form together in a narrative that thrives on the emotion of hate against a common enemy. In the case of Ontario, the 'others' and 'special interests' are represented as the Indigenous communities that are blocking 'the people' from taking what they falsely believe is theirs.

It is interpreted that in Ford's discourse, 'special interests' groups do include the Indigenous communities. The implication of Ford addressing the Indigenous people as a threat in order to gain resources from unceded territory is the colonial appropriation and capitalist



exploitation of Indigenous identity. As Green argues, “Traditional indigenous views of land are inimical to capitalism and its construction of land as a resource to be owned, developed, exploited, and profited from. The tension between these views and the imperatives of incorporation into the capitalist economic order may be seen in struggles within indigenous communities, governments, and organizations; and in struggles between indigenous communities and the settler state, acting for a “development” (that is, a capitalist) agenda.” (Green, 2009, p.38) Furthermore, the implications that arise from Indigenous communities becoming categorized as apart of ‘special interests’, is their identities becoming subjected to political influence. As a result, Indigenous communities are used as scapegoats for being a cause of Ontario’s economic disparity, that later can become internalized by ‘the people’ and shared across an imagined community. Therefore, Indigenous identity is politicized and used as a tool for the “legitimation, domination, and exclusion of others within particular cultural communities.” (Green, 2009, p.37)

### *Polarization and Homogeneity*

Critical issues are addressed by voters and political actors in every election. Every individual voter will think what is important and what is not, and this is what decides if a government adequately addressed these issues or not. However, if individuals are homogenized into a collective group, their interests and contribution towards public opinion becomes less impactful. The process of polarizing public opinion is an implication that derives from the populist element of homogenizing individuals into collective groups. Thus, the exclusion of certain bodies and groups results in the polarization of discourse that does not address all members of the province equally. According to Mudde (2004), the polarization of political debate is a result of populists perceiving individuals as belonging to separate categories.' As

mainstream politics inherit populist elements, people are pushed towards assimilating into their socially constructed categories, Furthermore, the normalcy of populist elements in sociopolitical discourse becomes widely internalized and intensified in practice. For example, the discursive process of "otherness" is interpreted as a reaction to the tension that stems from the division of 'the people' and the 'special interests.' According to Stazack (2008), the power relations that are reproduced through this division can result in the racialization of groups in Ontario. I believe that as tensions grow between 'the people' and 'special interests', members of both groups will rally and protest against one another as a reaction to populism not being adequately addressed. Thus, Doug Ford and 'the peoples' vision of an imagined community in Ontario, is an example of antagonizing a division that already exists in Ontario. As previously stated, the categorizations of groups result in the association of other groups that could be unintended. For example, according to Pied (2018), the process of exclusionary groups resulted in the remaking of the white working class in the United States. Despite political actors not explicitly referencing their support towards white-nationalist groups, the internalizations and intensification that develop from populist elements are claimed to be triggered through associations. (Pied, 2018)

As it was discovered, despite Ford intending to resonate with hardworking taxpayers and low-middle-incomes families through his platform and victory speech, different support groups were drawn to his candidacy. For example, the group that had one of the most significant impacts on Ford's image during his candidacy was the appearance of Faith Goldy – a political commentator and white nationalist that is endorsed by the alt-right neo-Nazi movement in Canada. (Cohn, 2018) Although Doug Ford's 'Victory Speech' and political platform do not explicitly challenge multiculturalism in Ontario, it still attracted a voter community that supports the exclusion of certain bodies and groups. The recent activation of white nationalists in Ontario

that support Doug Ford's mandate proposes an implication that Doug Ford's use of populist language and dramatized narrative of reclaiming Ontario has contributed to the cultural division in Ontario.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine populism at a provincial level, specifically , how populist language was used by Ford to gain support in the 2018 Ontario General Election. This study found that populism was used as a political communication style in Doug Ford's election campaign to mobilize an anti-elitist platform with the goal of creating a "better" Ontario that prioritizes 'the people' before 'special interest' groups. Populism was used as a thin-ideology to support the mobilization of Conservative values and beliefs towards voters that identified as a part of 'the people'. This was effectively done by Ford's use of populist style elements and strategic language that categorized his targeted voters as a single group 'the people' and the 'taxpayers'.

The findings based on the narrative of Ontario needing saving from the 'corrupt elite' and 'dangers others' revealed that the province is currently divided, and heading into a direction that excludes nontraditional values, beliefs and ideas. his language implicitly refers to reverting back to traditional ways. In effect, power relations have become formed between Ford's government, its supporters, and the members of 'special interest' groups. It appears as through resonating with hardworking taxpayers and low-middle income families in Ontario, Ford can be defined as a 'conservative populist'. However, Ford's practice of capitalizing on Ontario's alleged economic disparity and 'the taxpayer' resentment towards allocating funds to support 'special interests' and the welfare state makes him identifiable as a 'market populist'. Lastly, Ford has used language as a discursive tool for situating himself as the charismatic leader of 'the people' in a narrative that pins them against 'the elites' and 'special interests' groups. As a result, 'the people' hold all centralized power and authority and exclude certain bodies and groups in the process. Therefore,

the fundamental principles and values of a liberal democracy are infringed upon and replaced with a populist version of democracy.

### *Implications for Populist Language in Ontario*

This study reveals specific implications for populism in academia, and its use in political practice. It appears in the examined literature, there is an awareness of populism's implications. However, there is minimal work that focuses on the provincial level of government, and how the mobilization of exclusion strategies and anti-elitism are being formed internally. Each case of populism in practice, follows and shares similar fundamental elements that make it effective in every country, and at every level of government. As it was found in this study, populism works well with conservative ideology, as it places the wider interests of the common people and 'silent majority' ahead of the special interests and privileged elites. Populism's versatile nature can help mobilize support rapidly, and its language is representational and discursive. Therefore, language can be used as a tool for strategically directing discourse. The implication that arises is politicians directing discourse towards special interest groups being denied fundamental rights and freedoms, while discrimination and bigotry continue to go unchallenged. Furthermore, the oppression of certain bodies and groups in Ontario begin to reflect a violation of human rights standards. These individuals are being denied hate-free living conditions and treated as outsiders within their own communities. As discourse reflects an exclusionary community that supports discriminatory and racialized practices, progress in society becomes undermined. The implication that develops from discourse and the categorization of groups is collectivism. Therefore, I argue that 'the people' of Ontario have become a predictable mass due to populist language being used to create a power struggle that replaces freedom of thought with socially

constructed ideals. As a result, the exclusion of certain bodies and groups are becoming internalized in Ontario and accepted as a norm.

#### *Limitation of the study*

There were a few limitations of this study. Firstly, I was not granted access to voter information and could not identify which groups resonated with Ford the most, based on race, ethnicity, class and/or other factors. The findings were based on assumptions that were found in the type of language that Ford had used. It is important to note that the findings in this study are meant to generate an awareness of populism in Ontario, not to provide conclusive evidence or claim that Doug Ford is indeed a populist. The purpose of this study was to create a critical analysis of language that gives readers an idea of how to locate populist language in a politicians' speeches and platform. Thus, this study intended to make voters aware of populist language that can be found in future candidates' platforms and political speeches. As previously mentioned, had I had more time I would have conducted a textual rhetorical analysis as well to discover populist languages role in persuasion. Furthermore, this study was not intended to provide conclusions on how to define populism. Had the expectations for the length of this project been greater, I would have included the Ontario Leader Debates within the selected corpus. Lastly, I would have also liked to conduct interviews of active voters and supporters of the Progressive Conservatives in order to question what elements of Doug Ford's platforms resonate with them the most.

#### *Recommendations for Future Research*

The study provides several potential research directions. As this study touched on the current power relations that are formed through populist discourse, future research could investigate the specific impacts of populist language on the LGBTQ+ and Indigenous

communities. Another potential research direction is a comparative analysis of how populist language is used in right-wing parties, and to left-wing parties. This research could investigate the populist elements found in my study and see if they also apply to left-wing parties. Another potential research direction might be the benefits and/or drawbacks of populist language, as it has been argued to refocus the political agenda on important issues that are not adequately addressed by governments in power. This research could examine how populist language is used to benefit democracy and represent the people as a whole.

### *Concluding Remarks*

I will conclude this paper with a quote that a fellow colleague had said to me. This quote inspired the study of language, and I feel captures the current issue of populist language being used to mobilize exclusion in society. “We choose what we want to show emotions towards and what we don’t, we choose what we want to speak up about and what we don’t care enough about. It is ironic, humans were given the gift to communicate with one another and make our world better, yet all we do is use this gift to divide one another and set ourselves back.”

## Appendix A

### Doug Ford Victory Speech: Transcription via Macleans

(1) Wow! I'll tell ya.

(2) That's an incredible welcome, I thank you. Hazel McCallion, I thank you.

(3) Thank you so much my friends what a response. This is incredible. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I'll never forget the trust you put in me. My friends this victory belongs to you. This victory belongs to the people. And tonight the people of Ontario have spoken.

(6) People from every walk of life, from every corner of this great province, people from every political stripe, you have come together around one common vision of Ontario. You have sent a clear message: a message of hope and prosperity.

(9) A vision for the people of this province, a vision of a government that works for the people. A government that respects you, a government with integrity, a government that will always put you first.

(12) My friends, help is here.

(13) Our team will work every single day to deliver this vision. We will work every single day for a better Ontario, a better future and a brighter future for our children. An era of economic prosperity, the likes of which this province has never seen before. Prosperity that will benefit every resident of Ontario, and tonight we have sent a clear message to the world: Ontario is open for business.

(18) My friends, I am so proud. So proud of the incredible team that you have sent to Queen's Park: a team of all-stars that will work for you, a team that will always put you first and we are grateful to all of those who put their names forward. All of those who ran under the PC banner, thank you for your hard work and sacrifice.

(22) My friends, when we began this journey, I made a commitment to you. I made a commitment to Ontario. I promised to work hard, I promised to run an honest and positive campaign, to focus on the policies that matter to you. I promised to deliver a strong, stable majority government and together we did that.

(26) Together we made history. We have taken back Ontario. We have delivered a government that is for the people. A government that will respect your hard-earned tax dollars. And my friends, the party with the tax payers dollars is over, it's done. But the work has just begun. Our team will get to work immediately. We will deliver on our plan for the people. We will bring accountability, transparency and integrity to the tax payers of Ontario. We will reduce your taxes, reduce your gas prices and keep more money in your pocket.



(32) A plan to fix our economy and create more good, paying jobs. A plan to invest in the priorities that matter to you. And, my friends, together, with our skilled team of MVPs, this is what we will deliver.

(35) My friends, I want to thank my family for all of your support, love and support. To my wife, Karla, my mom, Diane, and my four girls, you've been my rock. I couldn't have done this without you. And I can tell you, I know that my brother Rob is looking down from heaven.

(38) I'm just getting chills talking about him right now. I know Rob is celebrating with us tonight, we owe so much to Rob's legacy. A legacy of service to the people, a legacy started by my father, Doug Ford Sr., and legacy that will continue.

(41) I want to thank my incredible campaign team, the best political team ever assembled, ever. A skilled and dedicated team who worked hard and stuck together. And I want to thank the thousands and thousands of volunteers from all across Ontario. You left everything on the field.

(44) But most of all, I want to thank each of you, I thank you. I want to thank the people of Ontario; I owe everything to you. Your support, your energy, your belief in our cause. You are the ones who kept me going, who energized me at every single stop and reminded me what's at stake, what we are fighting for. You reminded me to stay humbled and stay focused. You are the reason we are here today.

(49) Those who didn't support us, I want you to know I will work even harder to earn your confidence. I also need to acknowledge my opponents in this race. To Kathleen Wynne and Andrea Horwath, you fought a hard, very hard campaign. And I'll tell you, Ontario is better for it. We have had our different approaches, but we all share in the same goal of a better Ontario.

(53) And I want to work together to deliver on our mandate, a mandate for the people.

(54) My friends, a new day has dawned on Ontario! A day of opportunity, a day of prosperity and a day of growth. We're going to turn this province around, so our children and their children will always be proud to call Ontario home.

(57) We will make sure Ontario is the greatest place on Earth to live, to do business and to raise a family. And we will make Ontario once again the engine of Canada.

(59) My friends, together in 88 short days we achieved the impossible. We united our party and united our province and this is your victory. Tonight, is your night.

(61) I thank you, and God bless each and every one of you. Thank you.

## Appendix B

### ‘Plan for the People’: Transcription via Ontario PC Party

**(1)** The problems facing Ontario share one thing in common: Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government just doesn't care about you anymore. Her government is untrustworthy. She will say and do anything just to stay in power.

You work harder than ever before and pay more than ever before. Yet Kathleen Wynne and her government continue to waste your hard-earned money and spend your tax dollars on schemes that only benefit Liberal insiders and political elites. There is no respect for taxpayers.

The NDP promise change, but they are not being honest about what their change looks like. The NDP want to double down on Kathleen Wynne's tax-and-spend policies. Under the NDP your gas **(11)** will be more expensive, your taxes will go up, and your hydro bills will continue to increase. This is because, behind closed doors, the NDP are more about appeasing special interest groups than actually delivering real relief to the people.

I believe you deserve better. You know me. You know what I stand for. You know that I am here for the people. I entered politics to help the little guy. To make life easier for you and your family. Not only so you can make ends meet, but also so you can get ahead and prosper.

We're going to replace Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals with a practical, affordable and responsible government that trusts and respects you.

Ontario is ready for a government that works for the people.

...Not Liberal insiders.

...Not NDP radical special interests.

**(21)** ...But for the people

It's that simple.

No matter what, you can count on me to give you straight talk. I've spent my entire career telling it like it is. I'm going to be up front and honest about what I'm going to do. And I'm going to do what I say I'm going to do.

This also means that I won't make reckless promises. When I make a promise — I keep it. Period.

And here are my promises to you: Five clear, honest commitments you can count on from a government that will focus on the fundamentals and get Ontario back on track.

**(31)** With your help we can open Ontario for business again; create good jobs; lower your day-to-day costs; bring prosperity back to our province; and restore accountability, respect and trust to Queen's Park.

Doug

HELP IS ON THE WAY.

A DOUG FORD ONTARIO PC GOVERNMENT WILL CLEAN UP THE MESS IN GOVERNMENT AND RESTORE RESPECT FOR TAXPAYERS.

HIS GOVERNMENT WILL PUT THE PEOPLE AHEAD OF INSIDERS AND ELITES BY FOCUSING ON FIVE CLEAR PRIORITIES.

We will:

PUT MORE MONEY IN YOUR POCKET

**(41)** Scrap the carbon tax, reduce gas prices by 10 cents per litre, and give real tax relief to lower- and middle-class families.

CLEAN UP THE HYDRO MESS

Fire the \$6 million man running Hydro One and lower your hydro bills by 12%.

CREATE GOOD JOBS

Send the message that Ontario is 'Open for Business' and bring quality jobs back to Ontario by lowering taxes, stabilizing hydro bills and cutting job-killing red tape.

RESTORE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRUST

Order a line-by-line audit of government spending to bring an end to the culture of waste and mismanagement in government.

**(51)** CUT HOSPITAL WAIT TIMES

End hallway health care by creating 15,000 new long-term care beds over the next 5 years and adding \$3.8 billion in new support for mental health, addictions and housing.

## hydro

For too long, well-connected insiders have been getting rich off your hydro bills. The Green Energy Act alone represents Ontario's largest-ever wealth transfer from the poor and middle class to the rich.

Once upon a time, Ontario used to be a leader in hydro, with stable prices that helped attract and create jobs. We can lead again, but change is needed now.

An Ontario PC Government will clean up the Liberal hydro mess, fire the millionaire hydro executives getting rich off of your bills and act to ensure our electricity system works for the **(61)** people, once again. This means no carbon tax or cap-and-trade schemes. And it also means that, after years of skyrocketing electricity rates, your hydro bills will finally start coming down.

We will:

Clean up the Hydro Mess and fire the board of Hydro One and its \$6-million-dollar CEO. Our first act will be to end the Liberal practice of making millionaires from your hydro bills!

Stop sweetheart deals by scrapping the *Green Energy Act*.  
Cut hydro rates by 12% for families, farmers, and small businesses by:

Returning Hydro One dividend payments to families.

Stopping the Liberal practice of burying the price tag for conservation programs in your **(71)** hydro bills and instead pay for these programs out of general government revenue.

Cancel energy contracts that are in the pre-construction phase and re-negotiate other energy contracts.

Declare a moratorium on new energy contracts.

Eliminate enormous salaries at Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One.

Stabilize industrial hydro rates through a package of aggressive reforms.

What this will cost:

Hydro One Dividend - \$300-\$400 million per year.

Moving Conservation Programs to Tax Base - \$433 million per year.

## rebuilding Ontario

Ontario families deserve major infrastructure investments in both our **(81)** biggest cities and our smallest towns.

We can also do more to help other parts of Ontario get moving. Whether it is by investing in expanded broadband, increasing local infrastructure funding, or exploring highway expansion across the province. Ontario businesses, families and workers can all count on an Ontario that will move faster than ever before.

We will:

Deliver two-way, all-day GO service, including expansions to Bowmanville, Kitchener and completing the Niagara GO Expansion, and support regional transit projects in places such as Ottawa, Hamilton, Mississauga/Brampton, Kitchener-Waterloo and London.

Upload responsibility for subway infrastructure, including the building and maintenance **(91)** of new and existing subway lines, from the City of Toronto to the Province. Add \$5 billion in new subway funding to the \$9 billion already available to build the Sheppard Loop with Scarborough, the Relief Line, and the Yonge Extension while building future crosstown expansions underground. Keep responsibility for day-to-day operations, including labour relations, with the City of Toronto along with a guarantee that the City will continue to keep all revenue generated by the subway system.

Actively explore potential for high-speed rail and highway projects including the potential six-laning of Highway 401 to the 416 between Toronto and Ottawa. Also, complete the environmental assessment for the GTA West Corridor, invest in increasing safety on the 401 West and four-lane Highway 17 in eastern Ontario and Highway 3 in Southwestern Ontario.

**(101)** Expand natural gas distribution to rural communities by enabling private sector participation and use the up to \$100 million in savings to invest in cellular and broadband expansion.

Increase the Risk Management Program (RMP) cap by \$50 million annually to help farmers and other producers better manage risks outside of their control.

What this will cost:

Two-Way GO/Regional Transit Projects – Will maintain current funding as detailed in Ontario's previous transportation and infrastructure budget.

Upload Toronto Subway System - Costing to be amortized over life of subway projects once operational, plus \$160 million per year for existing assets.

**(111)** Highway Improvement Plan - \$20 million for studies/401 improvements, \$5 million per year for Highways 3 and 17 amortized over 50 years once completed.

Natural Gas and Broadband/Cellular Expansion – Up to \$100 million in savings by enabling private sector to expand natural gas, with savings re-invested in broadband/cellular projects.

Risk Management Program Increase - \$50 million per year, starting in year three.

**restoring responsibility, accountability and trust:**

Ontario doesn't have a revenue problem. It has a spending problem. Efficiencies exist all across the government, whether it is how different agencies and ministries purchase goods or how they deliver services.

The Liberal budget deficit is accompanied by a trust deficit. People see that the system just isn't working for them anymore.

**(121)** By opening up the books to an outside audit and expanding the resources available to Ontario's Auditor General we will rebuild responsibility, accountability and trust so Ontario can get back on track.

We will:

Launch an independent commission of inquiry whose mandate is to get to the (131) bottom of the deficit scandal and to propose timely solutions to solving the deficit problem. As part of this effort, we will call in an outside audit of Kathleen Wynne's reckless management of Ontario's finances and make the final results of the audit public.

Expand the Auditor General's authority to include approval of government ads that Kathleen Wynne took away.

**(131)** Return to a balanced budget on a responsible timeframe.

Centralize government purchasing.

Conduct a value-for-money audit of every government program.

Put a stop to political elites abusing the public trust, including preventing government agencies, boards, and commissions from buying pricey tables to political speeches and events.

What this will cost:

Value-for-Money Audit and Commission of Inquiry - \$1 million total.

### **respect for taxpayers**

Under Kathleen Wynne you are paying more and getting less. And under the NDP you can count on paying more.

**(141)** Our commitment to lower taxes is also a commitment to fairer taxes. There is no excuse for continuing to tax low-income Ontario workers who are making minimum wage. We're going to make Ontario's tax system fairer for low-income households by making sure that minimum wage workers pay no income tax.

We will:

Put more money in your pocket and save an average household over \$450 per year by:

Cutting hydro rates by 12% for families, farmers, and small businesses, saving an average family over \$170 a year.

Scrapping the Carbon Tax and cancelling Kathleen Wynne's cap-and-trade slush fund, saving an average family \$285.

**(151)** Cut income taxes by 20% for the second income-tax bracket, saving you up to \$786 a year.

Challenge, in the Supreme Court of Canada, any attempt by the federal **(161)** government to impose a carbon tax on Ontario families.

Reduce gas prices: lower gasoline taxes by 10 cents a litre and diesel taxes by 10.3 cents a litre, saving you every time you fill up your car or truck

Stop taxing the poor: Introduce a minimum-wage tax credit so those on minimum wage pay no tax.

Give parents a break: Create a 75% refundable tax credit for child care costs for children aged 0 - 15 and respect parents by leaving to them the choice of what kind of **(161)** child care is best for their kids.

Amend the *Assessment Act* to ensure that Ontario Branches of the Royal Canadian Legion pay no property tax

Preserve rent control for existing tenants across Ontario.

Increase the supply of affordable housing across the GTA while protecting the Greenbelt in its entirety.

What this will cost:

12% Reduction to Hydro Bills – Detailed further in hydro section.

Ending Cap and Trade - \$1.9 billion per year to be offset by eliminating corresponding slush fund.

**(171)** 20% Middle Class Income Tax Cut - \$2.26 billion per year, starting in year three.

Challenge Federal Government on Carbon Taxation - \$30 million over mandate.

Lower Gas Taxes by 10 Cents a Litre - \$1.19 billion per year.

No Income Tax for Minimum Wage Workers - \$558 million per year.

75% Refundable Tax Credit for Childcare - \$389 million per year.

## **jobs**

Government doesn't create sustainable jobs on its own. What Government can do, however, is create the conditions that make it easier to start a business, grow a business or invest in Ontario — and to build an economy that allows more Ontario workers to find a job right here at home.

Instead of corporate welfare, we're going to make our business taxes competitive. Instead of **(181)** complex regulations that reward the insiders with the best lobbyists, we're going to cut red tape to reward the entrepreneurs with the best ideas.

We will:

End Corporate Welfare: Cancel the corrupt 'Jobs and Prosperity' Fund, which the Wynne Liberals have used to give grants and handouts to a small group of businesses on an invite-only basis.

Support Regional Economic Development Funds which provide necessary help to regions like rural and Northern Ontario to attract investments and create good jobs.



Reward Job Creation: Lower business taxes from 11.5% to 10.5% and lower the Manufacturing and Processing rate by the same amount so that more employers can **(191)** invest, grow and create jobs in Ontario.

Help Small Business: Reduce the small business tax rate by 8.7%.

Cut red tape and stifling regulations that are crippling job creation and **(201)** growth.

Customer service guarantee: single-window access for approvals with a hard one-year deadline.

Help fill the skills gap by increasing access to apprenticeships and reforming the foreign credential recognition process to help qualified immigrants come to Ontario and contribute to the economy to their fullest potential immediately.

Further expand sales of beer and wine into corner stores, grocery stores, and box stores, based on market demand and not government decree. Maintain the LCBO's **(201)** role in wholesale and distribution and as a location for the people of Ontario to buy their beer, wine and spirits.

What this will cost:

Ending Corporate Welfare – Savings of \$270 million per year.

Continue Existing Regional Economic Development Funds - Will maintain current funding as detailed in Ontario's previous economic development budget.

Reducing Business Taxes - \$1.3 billion per year starting in year two.

Reducing Small Business Taxes - \$60 million per year starting in year two.

## **health**

A health care system that doesn't work for patients, seniors and families is a health care system that just isn't working at all. It is unacceptable that, for all the money we invest in **(211)** health care, people are still left languishing on waitlists or are stuck, frustrated and suffering on stretchers in hospital hallways because there is nowhere to go.

It's time to listen to front-line medical professionals, including nurses and doctors to ensure that long-term stable funding is available to do the capacity planning that our health care system deserves.

We will:

Help those in need: Invest \$3.8 billion in mental health, addictions and housing supports over 10 years.

Support our seniors: Introduce free dental care for low-income seniors.

Cut hospital wait times and end hallway medicine: Build 15,000 long-term care beds **(221)** in five years and 30,000 beds in 10 years.

What this will cost:

Increasing Mental Health Funding - Cost shared with federal government, approximately \$190 million per year for 10 years.

Free Dental Care for Low-Income Seniors - \$98 million per year.

Building New Long-Term Care Beds - Capital costs amortized over duration of asset, total per year cost is \$62,000 per bed once operational.

## **education**

At one time, Ontario schools focused on teaching the skills that matter: reading, writing and math. This approach helped to prepare our kids for the challenges of work and life.

Today, however, more and more of our schools have been turned into social laboratories and **(231)** our kids into test subjects for whatever special interests and so-called experts that have captured Kathleen Wynne's ear.

By ignoring parents and focusing on narrow agendas or force-feeding our kids experimental curricula like 'Discovery Math' the Liberals are leaving our children woefully unprepared to compete with other students from across Canada and around the world. And instead of helping our kids pass their tests, the NDP want to cancel the tests altogether.

It's time to get back to basics, respect parents, and work with our teachers to ensure our kids have the skills they need to succeed.

We will:

Get back to basics: Scrap discovery math and inquiry-based learning in our classrooms **(241)** and restore proven methods of teaching.

Get back to basics: Ban cell phones in all primary and secondary school classrooms, in order to maximize learning time.

Focus on the fundamentals: Make mathematics mandatory in teachers' college programs.

Fix the current EQAO testing regime that is failing our kids and implement a standardized testing program that works.

Respect parents: Restore Ontario's previous sex-ed curriculum until we can install a new one that is age appropriate and based on real consultation with parents.

Uphold moratorium on school closures until the closure review process is reformed.

Mandate universities to uphold free speech on campuses and in classrooms.

**(251)** Provide an additional \$38 million in funding for all children with autism, above and beyond the funding already in the government's plan.

What this will cost:

Increasing Autism Funding - total \$100 million over mandate.

## **north**

The Liberals and NDP like to talk about the North but are quick to forget about the incredible potential in our Northern communities. A PC Government will, finally, open up the incredible resources of our North, starting by cutting through the special interest and bureaucratic delays blocking us from developing the Ring of Fire.

We will:

Develop our natural resources: Move forward with resource revenue sharing from **(261)** mining, forestry and aggregates to help Northern towns and Indigenous communities share in resource development.

Ensure hunting and fishing revenues go toward their stated purpose of conservation.

Cut the aviation fuel tax for the North to reduce the cost of living in the North.

Bring back passenger rail service to the North.

What this will cost:

Revenue Resource Sharing - Approximately \$30 million per year, starting in year two.

Reduce Aviation Fuel Taxes for the North - \$11 million per year.

Bring Back Passenger Rail to the North – Combined \$45 million for refurbishment and operating costs.

## **environment**

**(271)** Whether your top priority is clean air and water, conservation, fighting climate change, or simply doing more to prevent litter — we all have a role to play in protecting our environment.

By embracing innovation and focusing on initiatives that deliver results, we will ensure we pass on a cleaner environment to future generations.

We will:

Keep Ontario beautiful by protecting and preserving our waterways and supporting and enforcing our air quality programs.

Improve enforcement, including hiring more conservation officers and increasing policing of major polluters.

**(281)** Set up an emissions-reduction fund to invest in new technologies to reduce emissions right here in Ontario.

Clean up our communities: Commit resources to reduce garbage in our neighbourhoods and parks.

What this will cost:

Creating a Cleaner Ontario – Combined cost of all initiatives is \$500 million over mandate.

## **justice**

Every Ontario family deserves to live in safety, with peace of mind that they will be protected from gun and gang violence. We will ensure that our laws are up to the task of fighting 21st century issues, while respecting victims and law-abiding families. We will also ensure our brave **(291)** women and men in law enforcement have the resources they need to keep us safe.

We will:

Restore the funding that the Liberals cut in half to the anti-guns-and-gangs units in Ottawa and Toronto in order to better protect our communities and stop crime.

Dedicate resources to fight organized crime, including the production and smuggling of contraband and illicit drugs, as well as child exploitation and human trafficking.

Respect the vulnerable: Commit resources to combat domestic abuse, including elder abuse.

Fix Bill 175 (Police Services Act) and treat our police with respect.

Hire more corrections, probation and parole officers to hold criminals accountable and protect victims.

**(301)** Build a culture of respect with zero tolerance for those who abuse positions of authority.

What this will cost:

Restore Funding to Anti-Gang and Anti-Gun Units - \$3 million per year.

Additional Resources for Fighting Organized Crime and Respecting the Vulnerable – \$35 million over mandate.

Hire Additional Officers - \$30 million per year, starting in year two.

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