

Populism in Net Neutrality Speeches

An American Way of Populism

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Abstract

This thesis started with a consideration: If populism have become a way of rhetoric in American populism as is claimed in *The Populist Persuasion; An American History* by Michael Kazin, how have that effected the debates. To find an answer to this, it was necessary to find a specific debate to focus on, and make sure it was a contemporary debate, where the answer gained, would actually be true in the modern world. This led to the choice of the debate around Net Neutrality, this is a big area, and one with a lot of attention. Which have led to a lot of sources on this area.

With the focus decided, it was necessary to find the problem, and what it was this thesis wanted to contribute with. Therefore the focus of the thesis, is on the two different sides of debate uses the same populist key elements to further their arguments.

The thesis will take you through a brief examination of how populism have looked through history, and how it have looked especially in America, here there will also be a short explanation of how the development of Net Neutrality have looked. The thesis will include a definition of populism, and an explanation of some of the many faces populism have had through the times, and how many different ways populism can be explained. The analysis will be following faircloughs critical discourse analysis (CDA) model, there will be an discussion of why this model have been chosen and some of the dangers there is when conducting a CDA. And will have a textual analysis, processing and social analysis. Together with the 5 key elements it is beieved it will give the best idea of the arguments used and the similarities and differences. The key elements are:

1. Emphasizing the sovereignty of the people
2. Advocating for the people
3. Attacking the elites
4. Ostracizing others
5. Invoking the heartland

The analysis will be structured using the 5 key element from populism, and it quickly becomes apparent that the opponents of Net Neutrality sees the sovereignty of the people, as having a large array of choices for the internet. There way of advocating for the people is mostly economic. When they attack the elite, the focus is on the previous government that implemented Net

Neutrality. The others they ostracize are other countries America does not wish to be compared with and their idea of a heartland is the time before Net Neutrality.

The supporters of Net Neutrality tend to focus on the fact that the sovereignty was taken from the people, when Net Neutrality was removed, without listening to what the public wanted. They claim, that the people want Net Neutrality restored, and this is what they will give them. This will result in better economy in the area, and also a more secure internet for the people. The elite that the supporters attack, is mostly the people who removed Net Neutrality, but also the corporations that they believe will benefit from the situation. They ostracize Russia for having interfered with America with fake email addresses, and the heartland they mention is the American dream, where freedom is important.

The findings in the analysis will be compared, and it becomes clear that while they use the same 5 key elements, they use them in different ways. Sometimes they end up concluding the same, and others they conclude completely different.

Introduction

It has been almost a year since the rules of Net Neutrality were repealed in the United States (Kastrenakes, 2018), and the new rules called “Restoring Internet Freedom” were installed instead (Rathnam, 2018). The effects of changing the classification of the internet back to an information service, is not yet visible. Ajit Pai the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) claims that investments have been up since the repeal of Net Neutrality, however his opponents are skeptical of this claim. They believe that the only reason we haven’t seen a bigger change in the negative direction, is that the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) would rather make small changes and test the waters gradually than make a big splash and get a negative reputation (Eggerton, 2018). We might even see the law change once more, to go back to a place with Net Neutrality. There are many discussions concerning whether some of the new rules, or lack of rules, should be rolled back, and if it should go back to a system with Net Neutrality.

The internet is incredibly important to most people today, everything is online, and life gets arguably harder for the standard American if they don’t have access to the internet. A lot of small inconveniences that have been removed with the internet becoming common place, and many people cannot imagine a life without the internet. The Internet is such a big part of people lives that there are

arguments that the internet should be a Human Right, and since 2012 the United Nations have considered the internet as a Human Right and stated that every person have the right to connect and express themselves on the internet (Guedim, 2019). The internet is a big part of our lives today, which is why the debate about Net Neutrality is so important and why so many people care about it and its continued outcome.

With Fake News, Twitter wars and more politicians employing a social media strategy- A lot of political information can be found on social media like Facebook, and some users having livid debate of their different opinions in these groups. In the current political climate, it can be argued that populism and populist arguments are a big part of debates, and affect how we receive information from speeches, and decides how the speaker or debater angles his/her arguments. It is therefore incredibly interesting how today's political climate, and the way political debates and arguments are held, are affected by populist trends.

Literature review

Even though the debate about Net Neutrality is relatively new, and the removal of it is recent, there have been a lot of studies dealing with the most relevant issues regarding Net Neutrality, some are dealing with the results of the removal, the fears of what can happen or the economic possibilities that have now opened up. Others deal with a more historical study of how it happened, and some study the debate about Net Neutrality and the political background there is for this debate. Hong Guo et. Al. argues that most studies done on Net Neutrality focusses on the supply side, and there haven't been done enough research on the demand side, to consider how the removal of Net Neutrality actually will affect both the consumers and the businesses (Guo, Cheng, & Bandyopadhyay, *Broadband Network Management and the Net*, 2013). The article *Broadband Network Management and The Net* considers what effect it would have on the economy to remove Net Neutrality, and what considerations should be taken to ensure the consumers get the best outcome. This article is good at illustrating the different opinions on whether Net Neutrality is a good idea, and while it does not debate about the arguments used by politicians, it provides a good insight into what economic considerations there is from both sides of the debate. It is also an example of what many of the articles about Net Neutrality is about. A lot of them takes an economic consideration and try to examine how the removal of Net Neutrality will have affected the economy, and how the emergence of Net Neutrality likewise could affect it. This is however not what this thesis will be about. While the economic considerations about Net Neutrality are important and it is background knowledge

needed to understand most of the debate regarding Net Neutrality. The idea behind this thesis, is to look at the debate, and the arguments used here. To see if there is a pattern that can be distinguished in how the speeches are constructed using key elements from populism.

A later article by Hong Guo highlights how the competition between internet providers and content providers have affected the Net Neutrality debate (Guo, Bandyopadhyay, Lim, Yang, & Cheng, 2017). It is again a very economic study, examining how the relationship between content providers and internet service providers can be affected by Net Neutrality and by the removal of Net Neutrality. The arguments about Net Neutrality often have one side claiming that there is an economic gain in removing Net Neutrality, and the other side claiming that the content providers would be affected negatively by the removal of Net Neutrality. The study claims that there are some instances where the removal of Net Neutrality would have a beneficial effect for the content providers. While this study shortly mentions the Net Neutrality debate, and what economic arguments are used in the debate. It is still mostly an economic study, with little focus on how the politicians have argued their case. It is a useful article since the focus is no longer only on the economy, but also on the debate. Here we can see how economic consideration can have an important effect on the debate, and it also considers how the debate constructs their arguments using economic considerations. While the article mainly deals with economy, it is important to note that we can see some considerations of the debate. In the speeches there will be economic arguments, and therefore it is necessary to have background knowledge about how and why the economic considerations appeared. On the other hand, this article, does not look deeply at neither the debate or the speeches, and this thesis hopes to give an angle to the Net Neutrality debate, and the politicians rhetoric that have not been seen in other articles.

In “The Net Neutrality Debate on Twitter” Wolf Schüneman et al. discusses how the change in technology have affected the debate. And if the social media era has had an impact on political decisions regarding Net Neutrality (Schüneman, Steiger, & Stier, 2015). This article examines twitter feeds, and data from twitter, to see how the debate have evolved here, and if both the opponents and supporters of Net Neutrality uses social media to broadcast their opinion. It is becoming increasingly clear that social media is a part of politics, and that most issues is also debated here, it is argued, that some people get most of their information about politics from social media. Schüneman concludes that while social media have influenced the debate about Net Neutrality, the normal channels of debating are still hugely influential, and do have a bigger impact than twitter. This shows us, that while social media have had an impact, the traditional debate and traditional speeches, are still influential, and thus, still a good area of analysis. This article also helps highlight, that there

are many different academic approaches to the Net Neutrality debate. It is not just the economic aspects that should be considered. At the same time, it also shows, how the debate is on several different platforms, there are the traditional speeches and articles, but some of it has also become a part of social media. This shift in how political issues are perceived could also have impacted how a speech is constructed, and how the arguments in speeches are perceived.

The article “The Role of Innovation and Wealth in the Net Neutrality Debate: A Content Analysis of Human Values in Congressional and FCC Hearings” focusses on the debate and the arguments used by the opponents and supporters of Net Neutrality. This article has a focus on what arguments both sides use, and the difference between them. And it concludes that the supporters of Net Neutrality have a higher focus on innovation in their arguments, and the opponents focusses on wealth (Cheng, R, Wang, Ishita, & Oard, 2012). The difference in arguments and what the two sides have a focus on, is important to better gain an understanding of what the difference is in the debate, and what it is more than economic considerations. This makes it very interesting that the most important aspect for both sides is something economic with both wealth and innovation being considerations in that direction. While the article deals with the arguments, it is very focused on what arguments the different sides prefer. This thesis will try and find a common rhetoric between both sides, and highlight how one of the themes in American politics, is the use of populism as a mode of persuasion (Kazin, 1995). This theme is also to be found in the Net Neutrality debate, and with speeches from each side, it will be clear just how this mode of persuasion is used and how they can compare to each other.

Research questions

"What are the similarities and differences between the populist discourse in speeches made by opponents and supporters of Net Neutrality from June 2016-2019 in the U.S."

Historical overview

To gain a better understanding of exactly what is going on with Net Neutrality, and why it is such an important area to debate. Here will be a brief overview of the history of internet regulations and practices in the United States. This historical overview will start from the 90s, when the World Wide Web became publicly available (Bryant, 2011) and onwards.

That the internet should stay out of the government's reach was an idea that began with the Clinton administration when they had a deregulatory overhaul of the communication industry. It was believed that any unnecessary regulation could hinder the internet's growth and that any regulations on this area should be regarded with suspicion (Zelnick & Zelnick, 2013)

In the 1990s and into the 2000s internet access grew substantially, by year 2000 more than 40 million people had access to the internet from their homes. In the year of 2002 the FCC chairman classified the internet as an information service rather than an telecommunications service. This was very important since information service is under title I where a telecommunication service is under act II of the communications act. Services under telecommunication classifications is heavily regulated while information services are not. This was based on the idea that the internet would grow and innovate faster with less regulation (Zelnick & Zelnick, 2013). This created a legal framework where the internet was largely exempt from governmental regulations and control.

The first movement towards a change happened in 2005 when the FCC established four principles for open internet (Dortch, 2005):

- *“consumers are entitled to access the lawful Internet content of their choice”* (Dortch, 2005, s. 3). With this, it is understood that there should be no restrictions of what legal content you can view on the internet.
- *“consumers are entitled to run applications and use services of their choice, subject to the needs of law enforcement”* (Dortch, 2005, s. 3). This principle is about being allowed to run whatever program, application or service on your device that you desire, if it is not illegal or prohibited by law enforcement.
- *“consumers are entitled to connect their choice of legal devices that do not harm the Network”* (Dortch, 2005, s. 3). Consumers should have the ability to connect their device to the internet, as long as the device is legal and does not harm the Network.
- *“consumers are entitled to competition among Network providers, application and service providers, and content providers”* (Dortch, 2005, s. 3). This is to ensure that there will be competition among providers and no monopoly will occur.

These four principles were not immediately set in place, but were a sign of a willingness to use these principles going forward, whenever the FCC in the future would make legislations. The

principles were believed to give encouragement to broadband deployment, and at the same time help preserve and promote the interconnected nature of the public internet (Dortch, 2005).

With the Obama administration in 2010, the change in mindset from FCC could be seen clearly when they made the Open Internet Order in December 2010. The biggest change with the open internet order, was the way regulation of the internet was approached, beforehand it had been a bottom-up approach, meaning that companies and people were free to use the internet as they saw fit, with little to no government interference. With the new rules, it was changed to a top-down approach, now there was the possibility of a greater regulatory oversight of how citizens as well as companies approached and used the internet (Zelnick & Zelnick, 2013). This means that it was now possible to regulate the internet, break up monopolies and, it was believed, give a better change for smaller companies to enter the market.

In 2015 a new Open Internet Order was agreed upon. This order changed the regulation of the internet service to a public utility and changes the classification to a telecommunications service (Heitmann, et al., 2015). This change was important, since it made it possible for the government to actively regulate the internet. It was believed that this regulation would make the internet a place for free expression and democratic principles. Even with Internet Service Providers fighting this regulation, it was eventually approved by the court, that FCC did indeed change the regulation like this (Fisher, 2016)

In 2018 it all changed again though. The new FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, was strongly against the regulations, and worked to change the classification so the internet again would be treated as an information service. The change occurred June 11, 2018 (Mills, 2018). However, this is still a subject with large controversies, and some people are fighting to have the Net Neutrality rules back. The democrats recently introduced Save the Internet Act, a legislation that would restore the regulations of the Obama period of Net Neutrality Rules (Shoot, 2019). This shows us that the discussion is far from over, and that many people do not believe the right decision were taken when repealing the Net Neutrality rules.

History of populism in the United States

Since this thesis is focusing on the United States, and populism can differ from country to country, it is important to have a basic understanding of how populism have shown itself in the United States, and why it is still a stable of American politics.

According to Paul Taggart: “*it is hard to understand politics in the United States without some sense of populism. It is impossible to understand populism without having a sense of the populism in the USA*” (Taggart, 2000, s. 25), therefore, it is imperative for this thesis that we have a quick overview of how populism have evolved in the US, and what implications it have on American politics today.

With the People’s party in the late nineteenth century, we see the first example of American populism. Historians have a hard time agreeing on what kind of populism it was with this movement. However, they can agree on the fact that the movement was about “the people” and against outsiders from the group (Lowndes, 2017). Some historians have seen the movement as one marked by xenophobia and hatred for cities, others have described it as an economic challenge to concentrated capital and as an early expression of the wish to open up the market (Lowndes, 2017). While the efforts of the People’s Party eventually failed, and they did not make it to government, it has had a lasting impact on future American politics. Michael Kazin even argues that populism is essential to US politics. According to Kazin, populism roots are deeply embedded in the whole idea of “Americanism”, with a combination of anti-elitism, rationalism and the idea of an American dream (Kazin, 1995).

In the 1950’s we find another example of populism in American politics with George Wallace who were elected Governor of Alabama. He had started his political career by talking about highways, schools, taxes and other issues that are popular with the people, but what elevated him to a place of power, was when he started focusing on race segregation (Taggart, 2000). His stance on segregation can be seen in his inaugural speech with this quote about how he will: “*toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever*” (White, u.d.). Wallace is catering to a specific segment of the voters, the ones who are anti-black. Wallace kept a style that was easy for the common man to identify with, wore cheap suits, had his hair slicked back and admitted he liked ketchup on everything (Taggart, 2000). In contrast to the People’s Party, which was a mass movement working its way up. Wallace was a populist politician who had a focus on three pivotal areas. As mentioned, there was his focus on segregation and race politics, he also had a distrust of the establishment, and did not trust the liberal political establishment, the banks or the rich. His last key area was a defense for those he saw as outside the establishment, which mostly consisted of white Southern farmers (Taggart, 2000). All three areas are inherently populist, his hate for the others, distrust of the establishment and his want to help the “people” and those who embody the idea of the heartland.

Populism in the United States can be divided between the left- and right-wing versions. These versions can be distinguished by looking at the principal foe. For the left-winged populist, the foe is the economic elite, for the right-wing the foe is non-white others and sometimes the state itself (Lowndes, 2017). The left-variant is often associated with the 19th-century Peoples Party and populist politics in the southern region of the United States. But since the mid-twentieth century populism has been used far more by the right. Lowndes argues, that the reason for populism in right-wing politics, is because of how US political history has been defined by a sense of whiteness and masculinity, especially by forces who promote visions of producerism (Lowndes, 2017). Today we can see an example of right-wing populism in Donald Trump. He is adored by his supporters as a “disruptive teller of unvarnished truths” (Lowndes, 2017, s. 240). These unvarnished truths are often outrageous statements, be it about Muslims, women or his opponents. At the same time Trump tries to appeal to an idea of a strong man and making America strong (great) again (Lowndes, 2017).

An important distinction of populism in America, and populism in general. Is that even today, populism is used as a mode of persuasion in American politics (Kazin, 1995).

Methodology / Research design:

This thesis has been conducted using an interpretive deductive research approach. It will look at speeches from 2016-2019 about Net Neutrality using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), to figure out the answer to the research question. The speeches will be looked at with the five key elements from populism, to find similarities and differences in the speeches.

Ontology

This thesis uses a constructivist ontology. Both in the sense that there will be presented a specific version of a social reality, where speeches will be analysed with the help of CDA and populism to explain how they are similar and differ. But also, in the sense, that the reality is considered as an ongoing accomplishment of social actors, and not as something external that totally constrains them (Bryman, 2016). This means that the culture of our speakers, and their constructed reality is viewed as something that can constantly be reaffirmed by the environment or the social group they are with, and this reality is maintained by the active involvement by social individuals. Constructivism is especially important in the understanding of discourse analysis, like the one this

thesis will employ later. In this it is believed that categories do not have an inherent meaning, but their meaning is built by social constructions (Bryman, 2016). This can be seen in the belief that while both opponents and supporters of Net Neutrality use arguments that might seem similar, they end up with different conclusions.

Epistemology

Using interpretivism gives this thesis an alternative to the dominating epistemology in social science of positivism. Interpretivism believes that the subject matter of social science is vastly different from that in the natural sciences, and therefore requires a different way of research procedure (Bryman, 2016). The goal is to gain an understanding of the similarities and differences between the opponents and supporters of Net Neutrality, instead of trying to explain why there is a behavioral difference. An important part of the interpretivist epistemology is the goal to empathize with the subject matter and interpret actions from their worldview, a fundamental belief is “...*that social reality has a meaning for human beings and therefore human action is meaningful – that is, it has a meaning for them and they act on the basis of the meanings that they attribute to their acts and to the acts of others.*” (Bryman, 2016, s. 27). This means that people give their own reality meaning, and give their actions meaning depending on what meaning they attribute them. This also makes CDA an ideal tool to interpret the speeches and to use as a framework.

Qualitative research

The thesis will be employing a qualitative research strategy, since the focus will be on analyzing speeches with an emphasis on words and rhetoric (Bryman, 2016). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is not based on numbers, it is often used with interpretivism when the goal is to understand the problem. And it is often used in relation with textual analysis, and with smaller scale research questions (Walliman, 2006). This research type is focused on people, words opinions, feelings etc. this is ideal for this research question, since we are dealing with a group of people and their way of describing a certain issue. One of the hallmarks of qualitative research is interpretive research, and often deals with things like, qualitative interviews, focus groups, analysis of text and documents and discourse analysis (Walliman, 2006).

Case Study

This thesis will employ a comparative case study method, to find similarities and differences in the arguments between the opponents and the supporters of Net Neutrality in the U.S. The case study focusses on a single case, in this thesis, this case is the Net Neutrality debate in the U.S. This entails a study that focusses on a complexity and a nature of the problem in question (Bryman, 2016), in this case the similarities and differences between the use of arguments in speeches. It is one of the basic methods in social science, that leads to establishing and formulating general conclusions and propositions (Lijphart, 1971). The number of cases analyzed in a comparative study should be at least two, in this thesis, it will be five speeches from each side. A comparative case study involves studying similarities, differences and patterns between different objects and people (Lijphart, 1971). This design will allow the thesis to gain an insight into what the differences and similarities between the speeches are, and how the arguments using a populist rhetoric leads to different conclusions. This allows the thesis to apply an identical analytical framework to all the speeches and allows an extraction of meaningful and replicable conclusions.

Theory

Populism

Populism is an interesting concept; everyone has their own meaning of what it means and how to use it. Populism then becomes both elusive and recurrent in international relation studies. You can find very few terms that have been used as widely in contemporary politics, and few that have been defined with less precision. We know intuitively what we are talking about when we call a movement or ideology populist, but when trying to translate the intuition to concepts it can be difficult. (Howarth, 2015). This often leads to the term being used with no actual explanation of what exactly is understood by it.

Populism definitions through history

In broad terms there have been four basic approaches to an interpretation of populism.

The first approach is about determining social class and characteristics, both its movement and its ideology. Here populism is deemed to be typical of a social class. Here populism will be represented as a kind of peasant ideology, or an ideology that exalts peasant values. Thus, this

interpretation of populism will also be used in explaining mobilization that is typical of a society of small farmers, who moves to bigger cities. And it will also be used as a political or ideological explanation of mobilizing masses for a confrontation with local leaders (Howarth, 2015). This approach, however, does not help in getting a clear definition of populism. If Populism is a peasant ideology, what does all these peasant movements have in common? And how can the ideology be used to different explain different movements, who appears to have nothing in common? Often populism in this regard is used without a clear and precise definition, since it tries to define and symbolize a complex of features of the concrete movement that is under investigation (Howarth, 2015).

In response to the difficulties in establishing class connotations of populism lead to the second conception, which could be called a kind of theoretical nihilism. According to this belief populism is devoid of content and meaning. And populism should be erased from the vocabulary of social sciences. Instead it is believed we should replace it with a more direct analysis of the movements focusing on their class nature, that previously have been called populist. Here it is believed that analyzing class bases of any movement will be the key to discovering the nature of the movement (Howarth, 2015). But despite the differences between the movements they do possess some common crucial attributes, that can justify assuming they analytically is under the same rubric called populist. Even if the concept of populism is purely and illusion, this does not explain why the illusion or appearance of something in common have emerged (Howarth, 2015).

The third conception tries to overcome some of the difficulties with populism by restricting the term to a characterization of an ideology and not a movement. Here the typical features of the ideology are: Mistrust of traditional politicians, hostility to the status quo, appeal to the people not to the classes and anti-intellectualism. (Taggart, 2000) This ideological complex can be used on different social movements even if they have different bases, and populism can then be used on different movements with different historical conditions, and then make a generalization that was not possible to make before. And while this approach has enriched the study of which forms populism has appeared in, it has two major inadequacies. The first one is how the features of the populist ideologies are presented in a purely descriptive way; thus, they are incapable of constructing their own unity. And secondly nothing is said about what role is played by the strictly populist elements in specific social formations (Howarth, 2015).

The fourth conception of populism is also the most evolved and consistent theory. This is the functionalist conception of populism. Here populism is a phenomenon created by the process of transitioning from a traditional to an industrial society. The process of economic development that is used to explain this type of populism is evolved from a well-known model of Gino Germani (Howarth, 2015). This model explains the transition from a traditional society. In the model the transitional stages are considered a form of asynchronism, which means that there will be coexisting elements from industrial and traditional society while the transition is happening. The coexistence might be geographical, institutional, sociological or motivational. And the modernization of one of these elements will provoke changes to the others, and not necessarily modern. There are different ways the symbiosis can appear, but the two most important to the understanding of populism is the demonstration effect and the Fusion effect (Howarth, 2015). In the first case, some habits and mentalities that correspond to a more advanced stage of development will be diffused in backwards area, such as consuming even though production is low. In the case of the Fusion effect the reinterpretation of ideologies and attitudes from an advanced state, will reinforce the traditional features themselves (Howarth, 2015). Two other concepts are important to the understanding of this concept of populism, these are mobilization and integration. Mobilization is the process where formerly passive groups acquire deliberative behavior. Integration is a different kind of mobilization where it is carried out by existing channels where it is legalized by the regime in power, and also a mobilization where the regime's framework of legitimacy is accepted by mobilized groups, and the existing legality is accepted.

Using this theoretical framework for understanding the emergence of populist movements, the historical history of transition in Europe and Latin America has a clear meaning for how populism is defined. In Europe there is a clear distinction between two stages; democracy with limited participation and democracy with total participation. In the first stage the foundation of a rational state with a bureaucratic type of authority is established. However not everyone has the right to vote and popular classes are still having the traditional mentality and are not integrated into the new forms of society (Taggart, 2000). In the second state the masses become integrated into a political life, but this mobilization occurs with a process of integration, and thus it avoids both traumas and significant ruptures in the political apparatus. Where in Latin America the demonstration effect, the fusion effect and the amount of asynchronism, that is far greater than seen in Europe unites to produce a political consequence, of the impossibility of carrying out a mobilization through integration. This

means that the populism evolving from here will be distinct from the one in Europe where integration was possible. Since populism have to different realities to emerge in.

The fourth conception of populism can then be boiled down to this: “*Hence populist movements constitute a haphazard accumulation of fragments corresponding to the most dissimilar paradigms*” (Howarth, 2015). Populism is then defined by its ability to explain social movement even though the movements are having different troubles. Populism is the things that corresponds from these movements and the dissimilar paradigms.

Modern Populism

One of the difficulties when trying to define populism, is that when you look at examples of populism through history, none of the popular movements have had all of the characteristics that define ideal populism, Russian populism focuses on a romanticized view on the peasantry which has little in common with the nineteenth-century populism in the United states that focused on agrarian radicalism (Taggart, 2000). While the populist People’s Party in the US never managed to get elected and eventually collapsed, it illustrated many key terms in populism, and is one of the reasons why you can still see populist ideas in the language and tone of US politics today (Taggart, 2000) With this reasoning there will be looked for populist themes in the debate about Net Neutrality, and there will be a focus on language and tone.

In Laclau’s understanding of populism, it is believed that a movement cannot be inherently populist, but that it instead is articulation and the logic of its contents that can be identified as populist. This means, that it is the causes the movement are focusing on, that is seen as the populist part, but also that the populism can be found in the way these causes are articulated (Laclau, 2005). Laclau purposes three theoretical propositions:

1. That to specify populism, you need to start the analysis from units that are smaller than a group, whether it is at a political or ideological level (Laclau, 2005)
2. That the meaning of populism can be found in the mode of articulating the social, political or ideological contents in the group, and not in the content entering the descriptions of the practices in the group. (Laclau, 2005)
3. There appears a structuring effect from the form of articulating, that manifests itself in the modes of representation (Laclau, 2005).

Here it can be understood, that to find and clearly define something populist, it starts from a unit that is smaller than the whole group. This can be the place the movement started, or the person it later latched onto. What the populist group want, and how it can be described as populist, can be found in the way the movement articulates their ideology and their political content, and not in the specific practices or descriptions of the group. It is then way people in the group talk about their goals and ideals, and even more the way the front figure talks about it, that becomes important in the political context. In the end the way the group represents itself, will be decided by the frontrunners or the leader's way of articulating themselves. This articulating will make the structure of how the group work as a unit.

An important part of Laclau's thinking is that there can be no populist discourse without the construction of an enemy (Howarth, 2015), someone or something the populist movement can work against. This can be an already established government, one of the candidates running or another *enemy* entirely. The construction of a populist discourse is produced because of an inherent bias, this bias will tend to become an empty signifier, where an empty signifier is a word or term that points to no actual object and has no agreed upon meaning. This means that the bias that started the whole populist movement, might end up not being important for the populist movement. An example could be the use of poverty as a strong argument in populist debates, but only because the political background believes this to be an important area of contest. On the other hand, the only way a movement or person can use populist politics is by distilling the meanings of words and ideas to a point where the movement only have one thing in common in the end: Its leader (Howarth, 2015). Thus, populism can also start from anywhere, since it is not about a specific kind of politics, but instead about the way you articulate the politics. Populism is a way of articulating themes of governments, institutions and so on, and since it is about how the themes are articulated, Laclau argues that, there is no political system without populism (Howarth, 2015).

In this thesis, the definition of populism will be:

“Populism has the task of constructing itself as an entity out of reaction to representative politics. This raw material for this exercise are 'the people', and the resonance of this concept with the rhetoric of representative politics is fortuitous for populism” (Taggart, 2000, s. 116).

This means that populism is something that is constructed as a reaction to the politics that is happening, and in American politics it will be seen with the representatives using populism as a mode of rhetoric.

Five key elements

To determine if there can be found a populist rhetoric in the speeches, and to better highlight the differences between the supporters of Net Neutrality and the opponents, this thesis will present five key elements that can determine if a rhetoric is populist. The five key elements are originally deduced from Ernesto Laclau's understanding of populism.

1. *Emphasizing the sovereignty of the people:* Within this element, a populist rhetoric is about fighting for the people's will and right. The goal is to restore sovereignty of the people, and not listen to the elite. This might lead to the speaker having a rhetoric as a savior. Who will make things right and give their people what they want. (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2017)
2. *Advocating for the people:* This element is similar to the previous one, but here it is more about regarding the people's well-being and their needs as want above everything else. This can be seen in the speeches if the speaker make it sound like the people is the reason why they are doing it, and that it is the people's need they set before everything else. (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2017)
3. *Attacking the elites:* This is about making an elite an enemy of the people and going against them for the betterment of the people. In the analysis there will be a different elite depending on what reality the speaker constructs. It might be the elite who created Net Neutrality, and it can be the elite who got rid of Net Neutrality. (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2017)
4. *Ostracizing others:* This is about making a specific group of people into an enemy of the population. Instead of just being the elite, this group of people can also belong to other parts of society. This group can be perceived as a threat from the outside, but also as a threat inside of the group. This can help creating nationalist feelings, and often the ostracizing will be of people such as immigrants, minorities, criminals and so on. (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2017)
5. *Invoking the heartland:* The heartland is what group of people have together, something they can relate to each other with. It is about the glory in the past, and a romanticized idea of how great the place has been. It is about invoking feelings at the listeners. This could be when talking about how the internet was at a better place beforehand. But it could also be about how the American values that are so deeply rooted in the culture should not be forgotten. (Engesser, Ernst, Esser, & Büchel, 2017)

Limitations

The first place where this thesis has been limited, is in the selection of speeches, there are several reasons why it has been limited to ten speeches. Firstly, there have been chosen ten speeches, five for opponents of Net Neutrality and likewise for the supporters, the reasoning for this exact selection of speeches, can be found later under the headline Data Selection. However, it has been necessary to limit the choice of speeches, since otherwise the analysis would grow to a scope that is not possible for this thesis. There has been a limited amount of speeches to choose from, which is another of the reasons why there are 10 speeches. The speeches have been limited because of time constraints, and while a bigger data set is always good, in this thesis it has been evaluated, that five speeches for each side will be enough, to give an idea of how the speakers uses populist arguments.

Another limitation to this thesis is the choice of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the main way of analyzing the speeches. There could together with CDA have been used other methods of analyzing such as forms of appeal (Porter, 2014) and others. But for this thesis it has been deemed enough to use CDA as a framework to find the 5 populist key elements. With CDA it is possible to find how the speakers construct their arguments, and if they use populist key elements. Since this is enough to reach a conclusion, and since there is both time and page limit to consider, this thesis have chosen to limit itself with its methods.

Another limitation with CDA is also found. This thesis will focus on Fairclough's use of the term, and how he constructs the analysis. This is necessary since there is many ways of doing CDA, and to limit the scope of the method, the choice of Fairclough have been made. This is only done, since this give the thesis a clear framework of how the analysis is done, and how populist arguments can be found in the speeches.

Several limitations can be found in the research question. The focus will be on politics in America, and even more specifically on populist similarities in the debate about Net Neutrality in American politics, this limits the field of research considerably. Early on the process the idea of a comparative study between American Net Neutrality and European was decided against, and instead it was limited to a study in American politics. There were several reasons for this limitation. Firstly, European and American politics for Net Neutrality is very different, and it is difficult to find any European source that is against Net Neutrality (Bhatti, 2018). And thus, it was evaluated, that a comparative study between Europe and America might not be the best course to go forward. Instead it focusses solely, and America and the political turmoil Net Neutrality brings there.

There is also a focus on populism in this thesis, other theories could have been applicable when talking about Net Neutrality, things like Neoliberalism, Constructivism and Social Identity Theory have been considered to be a part of this thesis. But have been ruled out, since they would not help with finding an answer to the research question.

The research question also leads us to another restriction, the time period of the speeches. June 2016 has been chosen as the starting point specifically since this is when Net Neutrality was when an appeal court sided with internet users and kept Net Neutrality (Falcon & Gillula, 2016). This gives us a selection of speeches, from right after Net Neutrality was cemented as a part of the American system, till after it was removed again, and should give us a wide array of speeches.

One limitation that have been unavoidable is time constraints. And due to this the thesis have a limited scope, and have not focused on more than 10 speeches, and have been focused solely on the United States.

Research Design

Data selection

The following will be a quick introduction to the ten speeches used in this thesis, with argumentation for why they were chosen, and how the selection took place. This thesis will be analyzing 10 speeches, the reasoning for this number is so there could be five speeches for each side of the debate, and it seemed like an appropriate amount to see if there are any modes of argumentation that goes again between the different speeches. It also gives the thesis a stronger ground of making its deductions on. The timeframe did make it difficult to select speeches, and therefore it was also limited to ten speeches and not more.

Opponents of Net Neutrality

1. The first speech for the opponents is “Remarks of Chairman Ajit Pai on restoring internet freedom” (Pai, 2017), from her on called appendix A1. Since Ajit Pai is the Chairman of Federal Communications Commissions, he is an important figure to analyze with anything having to do with Net Neutrality. He is generally seen as a front man of the removal of Net Neutrality, and therefore his speech is highly influential.

2. The second statement is also by Ajit Pai (Borgerding, 2017)(Appendix A2). This speech is chosen, since it is made just before the vote for the removal of Net Neutrality, and can give us a clear insight to what Ajit Pai was thinking at the moment, and we can see which populist key elements he uses to convince people that his way is the right way.
3. The third speech is by commissioner Brendan Carr (Borgerding, 2017) (Appendix A3). This is a speech from the same time as Ajit Pai's previous speech but will be used to show us how other people in the opponent's camp think the same. And it can help us see if there is some way of argumentation that the different speeches have in common, and how they separately use populist key elements.
4. The fourth speech is by Senator Mike Lee (Lee, 2017) (Appendix A4), and is from the same period as the previous two, it helps us gain an understanding of just how the opponents of Net Neutrality believe the removal will help. He is also not a member of the FCC, and therefore an outside voice on this issue, who nonetheless have the same sentiment as other Net Neutrality opponents
5. The last speech from Net Neutrality opponents is made by the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission (Simons, 25)(Appendix A5). This speech is chosen since it is from a later time than the others and might give an insight into if the argumentation has changed, or they still are the same.

Supporters of Net Neutrality

1. The first speech for the supporters is by FCC commissioner Mignon Clyburn (Dellinger, 2017) (Appendix B1), this speech is made on the day they voted on the removal of Net Neutrality, and she dissented from the vote, and believed that the repeal of Net Neutrality would only be temporary. She is the first of our supporters of Net Neutrality, since she has been close to the process, and her way of articulating her arguments is relevant.
2. The Second speech is by Jessica Rosenworcel (Rosenworcel, 2017) (Appendix B2), who also dissented from the vote, and therefore can help give us a better picture of how exactly the supporters of Net Neutrality believe. She will help make their use of populist key elements clearer.
3. Senator Maggie Hassan is the third speech for the supporters (Maggie, 2017) (Appendix B3). This speech is chosen, since she is not a part of the FCC and therefore an outsider, this speech

also gives us a reaction from the supporters of Net Neutrality, when they were informed that the FCC had plans of removing Net Neutrality.

4. Nancy Pelosi is currently serving as the speaker of the United States House of representatives. This makes her a very important political voice, and it is from her we have our fourth speech (Peloci, 2019) (Appendix B4). Her speech is chosen, since it gives us an insight into what supporters of Net Neutrality believes in the highest layers of politics, and since it gives us an insight into what they think now that Net Neutrality have been removed.
5. The last speech is by Senator Elizabeth Warren (Warren, 2018)(Appendix B5). Her speech is chosen to have more variety, and to have more than one speech from after Net Neutrality was removed, so we can examine how their arguments hold up to each other.

Data analysis

Analytical Framework

Critical discourse analysis

To find a satisfying conclusion to the research question, the thesis will employ a critical discourse analysis (CDA). The CDA employed will be based on Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model. CDA give the thesis the ability to analyze and discuss the rhetoric in the speeches and give a better overview of how populist arguments are being used to further different means.

CDA is an interdisciplinary problem-oriented research approach, that steams from a critical theory of language, which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. (Janks, 2006). CDA is sometimes referred to as Critical Linguistics, this gives a good idea of what context CDA comes from. CDA takes sees the context of language use as crucial and takes an interest in the relation between language and power (Wodak, 2011). The method focusses on a critical linguistic approach looking at a larger discursive text or speech as the basic unit of communication. This research method specifically considers institutional, political, gender and media discourses (Wodak, 2011), where in this thesis, it will focus on finding a specific populist rhetoric.

This thesis will employ Fairclough's model of CDA, since this in general is one of the most employed theories (Janks, 2006), but also because it involves dimension of discourse and discourse analysis, which makes the analysis more clear, and possible to replicate. The model consists of three interrelated dimensions of discourse (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989):

1. Object of analysis
2. Process by which the object is produced and received by human subjects
3. Socio-historical conditions that govern the processes

The object of analysis can be a verbal or visual text/speech and it can also be a combination of these two. In this thesis the object of analysis will be ten selected speeches, five from Net Neutrality supporters, and five from Net Neutrality opponents. The second dimension is the discursive practice that conceptualizes the text between sender and receiver. The text is interpreted by both receiver and producer and can affect how the receiver interprets the speech and their construction of reality (Walliman, 2006). Close attention should be paid to the intertextuality between the producer and consumer of the discourse. The third dimension are the conditions of the production and interpretation, this is things like where the speech is held, and if there's any new historical event, which might impact the process of consuming and producing the speech.

And each of these three dimensions require a different kind of analysis.

1. Text analysis
2. Processing analysis
3. Social analysis (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989)

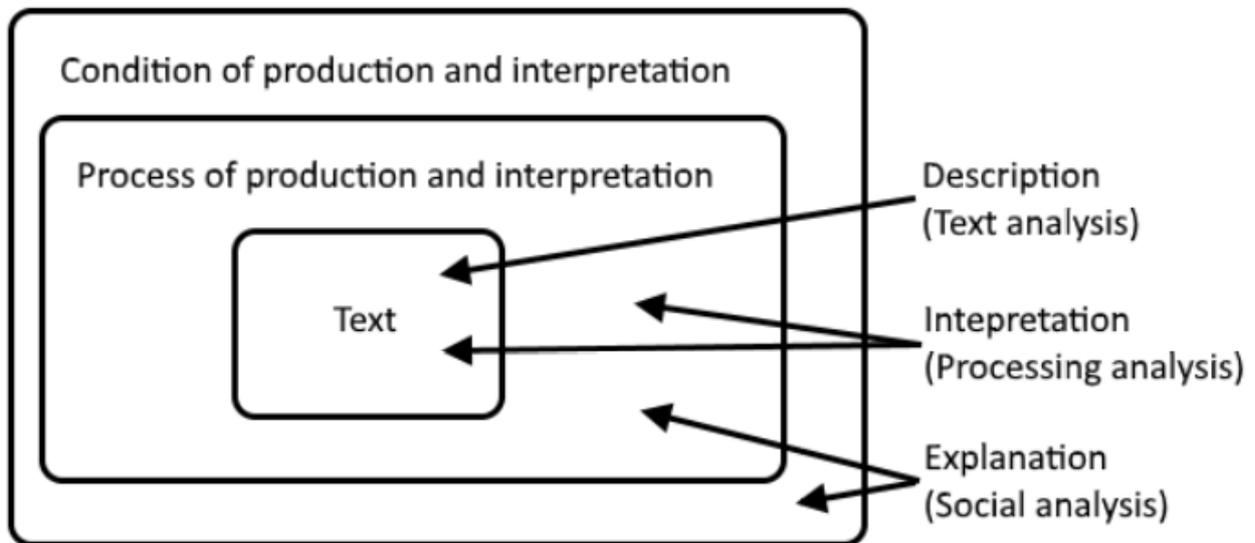


Figure 1 Fairclough's dimension of discourse

Figure 1 helps to better illustrate just how the three dimensions and analysis work together. The three analysis can be conducted in any order, but the most common one is to start with the textual analysis, and then work a level up for each analysis, it is important that all of the levels turn out to be mutually explanatory, and that it is in the interconnections that the interesting patterns and disjunctions can be found, and needs to be described, interpreted and explained (Janks, 2006). In this thesis the goal is to find populist constructions in the speeches.

One of the intricacies of Fairclough's model shines through, if it is imagined that the squares are three-dimensional boxes stabled together. This signifies that if you take one of the boxes out and focusses solely on that one, it can take some time to get it back in the stack and fit together with the others as neatly as before (Wodak, 2011). With that in mind, it is important that while the focus might be on one form of analysis, that the other forms are never forgotten, and constantly considered as something that could affect the box that is getting worked on. Some people prefer to work on all three simultaneously, in this thesis the approach have been to focus on the textual analysis, but never lose sight of the two other dimension, and if something occurred that find in to the other boxes will be analyzing the text, this was noted down.

Textual analysis

When conducting the textual analysis, there are ten questions that can be used as a guideline to make sure the analysis gets around to every area in a text. The ten questions are from the book *Language and Power* (Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 1989), they are meant as a procedure of how a CDA can be conducted and will help the analysis grow naturally. These ten questions will be presented in this chapter, and it will be explained how they help the analysis.

Vocabulary

1. What *experiential* values do words have?

An experiential value is a trace and an indication of the constructed reality the producer sees and can elude to how they interact and perceive the world. People's perception of their constructed world can often be seen in their vocabulary, and certain words with ideological meanings or rewordings or overwordings can elude to the perception (Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 1989).

In this thesis the experimental values can help determine if both sides, use some of the same buzz words, words with ideological values and if there are any resemblance or differences between the two sides.

2. What *relational* values do words have?

This focusses on how the choice of wordings depends on and helps create social relationships between participants. This can both be as a relational value to a word, like a racist vocabulary, but it can also be about why the word has been chosen even though it's racist (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). When looking for relational values, an important aspect is euphemism, where you change one word for a similar one that better corresponds with your audiences' values. Formality is also often discussed in the relational values of words, so if you are using a formal language depending on the audience (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). In this thesis, the relational values will help identify racist language, and if there are any considerations done in choice of words, if they are formal, what relation they have to the audience etc.

3. What *expressive* values do words have?

Expressive values are when the writer/speaker uses words that have an implicit meaning, either positive or negative (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). This can be used to make the speakers own agenda clear, without actually saying the agenda. In this thesis this will especially be seen with the ideologies and their use of expressive words.

4. What *metaphors* are used?

Metaphors is a way to explain an experience in terms of another. In a CDA the interesting aspect is the relationship between alternative metaphors (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). The relationship between different metaphors, and the difference between opponents and supporter's construction of the Net Neutrality debate, can be highlighted with finding metaphors.

Grammar

5. What *experiential* values do grammatical features have?

Experiential values in grammatical features, are many. One of the best ways to identify them is to look at what type of sentence it is (Action, event or attribution), and then look at why that kind of sentence is used, is something left out, is an agent not mentioned, or where is the focus. The three types of sentences can be either positive or negative, and this can also

influence the intertextuality and the intertextual context (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). In this thesis, the experiential values of grammatical features, will be used to explore how the speakers construct their arguments pro or against Net Neutrality, and if they sometimes leave out agents to further their cause.

6. What relational values do grammatical features have?

There are many grammatical features of a text that has relational values, but for this thesis, the focus will be on three: Mode of sentence, modality and pronouns. There are three modes of sentences declarative; a sentence that declares or states something. An imperative mode; Imperative questions do not have a subject and is generally short statements. A grammatical question, which generally are questions, both wh-questions, also yes/no questions and questions starting with a verb (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). The different modes show us the relationship between the speaker and receiver, and what they hope to gain from using these grammatical features.

The feature of modality is about the speaker's authority, both in the one they construct for themselves, and the one the listeners assign them. Modality is expressed by modal auxiliary verbs like: May, might, must, should can, ought etc (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). When looking at relational values in pronouns it is especially important to look at how and when the pronouns "you" and we are used to get an idea of what reality is constructed (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989).

The thesis will look at the grammatical features to get an understanding of how the speaker relates to the **consumer** of the speech, and if there are any coherence between this and a populist constructed reality.

7. What expressive values do grammatical features have?

The easiest way to find expressive values in the grammatical features, is by looking for expressive modality. This can normally be seen in phrases with "may", "must", "can't" and "should", there is also other forms of expressive modality (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). The interesting aspect is if these modality forms expresses an authenticity claim, and in this thesis, if they make claims about Net Neutrality that seem true in their constructed reality,

8. How are (simple) sentences linked together?

The way sentences are linked together, can help give us an understanding of what underlying understanding there is. An example of this is the use of logical connectors, where the speaker link the sentences in different ways, this can be a call back, to an earlier sentence, or it can be a link that eludes to something being either given or a surprise (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). The link between texts is also about cohesion, and references back to earlier mentions in the speech. In the analysis of the speeches, this will be used to understand how the storyline of the speech is constructed, and if there are some populist tendencies that can be seen several times.

Textual structures

9. What interactional conventions are used?

Interactional conventions are how the text/speech deals with others, if there are any interactions, interruptions or other ways of interacting (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). In the speeches the interactional conventions that will be relevant, is how the speaker constructs the listeners reality, if he/she attributes some values or opinions to the listener. This can be values about the heartland or other populist attributes.

10. What larger-scale structures does the text have?

This mainly concentrates on newspaper articles or incident rapports; these kinds of text often have a structure that they follow. To find populist arguments in the speeches, it is not relevant to look at larger-scale structures of the text.

Processing analysis

The textual analysis will give us the background knowledge to undertake the processing analysis, which is also the interpretation of the constructions found in the textual analysis. According to Fairclough, you cannot look at a text, without considering the social implications, and the social discourse of which it was delivered (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989). The value of a speech and the meaning of it cannot be evaluated without considering the social context of how and where it was delivered, secondly you also have to consider the discourse of how it was delivered, and the different power relations that could have had an impact. It is not possible to distinguish form and textual analysis, and thus it is necessary to understand the form and the context of the speech to gain

an understanding of the significance of the findings in the textual analysis (Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 1995). In this stage of the analysis, three questions can help us process the speeches:

1. *“What interpretations(s) are participants giving to the situational and intertextual context?”* (Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 1989, s. 162). What interpretation can the listeners to the speech have in the context of populist values. And how does the context of the speeches construct the populist arguments.
2. *“What discourse type(s) are being drawn upon”* (Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 1989, s. 162). What grammatical rules are used, and how is the sentences constructed, are there any sentence cohesion that have a special meaning.
3. *“Are answers to questions 1 and 2 different for different participants? And do they change during the course of interaction”* (Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 1989, s. 162). How do the opponents and supporters of Net Neutrality differ in their argumentation style, is there a difference between how they use populist arguments?

Social analysis

The social analysis doubles as the explanation. This is where everything gets explained, and how the discourses chosen can have an influence on the populist construction of arguments in the speeches. The explanation generally have two dimensions, one focusing on the social struggles, and the broader historical features that can have had an effect on the discourse, and one focusing on the power relationship and how this have defined the discourse (Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 1989). In this thesis the explanation will focus on how populist arguments have evolved, and what explanation that can be for using a constructed populist rhetoric. It will also focus on how the power relationship have been a part of defining the American use of populism in politics, and why it is still relevant in American power politics.

Critique of CDA

One of the big criticism of CDA, is that it is too vague, and thus it can be a bit too easy to suit to the researchers needs, and instead of having strong rules about how to use CDA, it is a vague concept, that can be used be the researcher in the way he/she prefers (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In this thesis, there is an awareness of this issue, and that is why the analysis will follow Fairclough’s model

of analysis, which makes CDA a lot less vague, and makes it a model that can be used to find the populist tendencies that this thesis looks for.

Another weakness is that the selection of text is done with the analysts interest at heart, and the selection is specifically made to cater to one conclusion (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In the chapter about the selection of speeches, the selection in this thesis will be defended and explained. It is however important to note, while unlikely, it is possible that with another selection there could have been another conclusion.

One of the major weaknesses of CDA is the role of the analyst, it can be argued, that it is easier to look critical at a text you disagree with, than one you agree with (Janks, 2006, s. 330). It is important when doing a CDA to be aware of this, and not let the personal opinion of the analyst determine the end result of the analysis. CDA is a subjective approach which relies on the presupposition of the individual, and if two people are given the same text and asked to do an analysis, there is a chance that they will end up with two different conclusions depending on their history, culture, backgrounds etc.

Five key elements in populism deductive

The following will be a short presentation of the five key elements in populism, and how they will help us understanding the constructed populist arguments in the speeches and define exactly what it is this thesis is looking for in the speeches. The five key elements will be quickly presented here, with an explanation of what there will be looked for in the speeches. Later in the thesis a more thorough examination of the elements will be presented

1. *Emphasizing the sovereignty of the people*

The sovereignty in the people, will be found when/if the speaker talks about the people's right, or protects them from a right that is perceived to be taken away from them. Also, if there is talk about some people having their rights taken away, or if a choice has been made without the people having a choice.

2. *Advocating for the people*

When advocating for the people, the speaker will look to have the people best interest at heart and fighting for something better for them. This can be for the whole of the American people, but also for minorities and targeted groups.

3. *Attacking the elites*

When talking about a perceived elite, who does not want anything good for the people, and who are advocating for the other side. This can be corporations, politicians, celebrities or others.

4. *Ostracizing others*

When perceiving something as inherently American and wanting to avoid ending up as others. This is also when talking about how much better it is this way, then if it was done some other way.

5. *Invoking the heartland*

When talking about American values, and how the perceived ideals will be stronger if they follow the way of the heartland. This is also what happens when they talk about the past, and how something once was better, and how it could be like this again. The heartland can also be a vision of the future where things are different and better.

These five key elements will show us how and if the selection of speeches is populist. It also gives us a framework to base the CDA analysis on.

Analysis

Introduction of analysis

The analysis will first look at the five speeches from the opponents of Net Neutrality, and find populist key elements in these, and afterwards it will look at the supporters. The analysis is structured with every key element having its own header, so it can be seen just what each speech says about the different areas.

Opponents of Net Neutrality

Following is the opponents of Net Neutrality and how they use populist key elements in their speeches.

Emphasizing the sovereignty of the people

Firstly, this thesis will look at the first key element of populism, “Emphasizing the sovereignty of the people”, and how the opponents of Net Neutrality uses this in their arguments to further their agenda. In the remarks from Ajit Pai on restoring Internet Freedom from 27. November 2017, we find several examples where he is somehow emphasizing on the sovereignty of the people: *“When there’s less investment, that means fewer next-generation Networks are built. That means fewer jobs for Americans building those Networks. And that means more Americans are left on the wrong side on the digital divide.”* (Appendix A1 line 70-72). We find several examples of important words with negative expressive values; *“less investment, fewer ... built, fewer jobs”*. In this example the focus on the sovereignty of the people, and their choices, is that they should have the ability to choose their own economic future, and that with Net Neutrality their ability would be limited. There would be fewer money in the sector and fewer jobs, this could affect the average American. Another interesting instance in this example it the metaphor used about having some Americans left on the wrong side of a digital divide. It gives us an idea of how Ajit Pai sees the issue, that if Net Neutrality is not removed, there will be a big division between those who have good access to the internet, and those who are left behind. It also eludes to the fact that Ajit Pai, believes the people should be allowed to have the same possibility to access the internet, and that Net Neutrality threatens the sovereignty of the people.

Two other examples from Ajit Pai’s statement are: *“That should be a welcome development for every American who cares about his or her privacy”* And *“But the reason that Internet service providers aren’t offering such packages now, and likely won’t offer such packages in the future, is that American consumers by and large don’t want them.”* (Appendix A1, line 135-136 and 168-170), these also shows just how, Ajit Pai believes that the sovereignty of the people is threatened by Net Neutrality rules. In this case there are positive experiential values in both *“Welcome development”* and *“American”*. There is in general a focus on how the removal of Net Neutrality betters the economy, and therefore development is seen as having a positive connotation in this example. At the same time *“American”* is highly impactful and have a positive relational value, not only is it used to give an idea of speaking to the whole people, and for the listeners to gain a relationship with the speaker, but also to highlight that these ideas are a part of the American idea, and what *“American consumers”* want. The sentences are a way for Ajit Pai to promise the American people, that the changes will not change their sovereignty, and that they still will have the same ability to choose freely if they so wish, both in services and in the offer of jobs.

When we look at Ajit Pai's Statement from December 2017, we see another argument, where he emphasizes on the sovereignty of the people *"The main complaint consumers have about the Internet is not and has never been that their Internet service provider is blocking access to content. It's that they don't have access at all or enough competition"* (Appendix A2, line 30-32). Here, the focus is not as before mostly on the economic aspects, but on how the consumers, should be allowed to have access to all the competition that is available, and that there therefore should be as much competition as possible, which the removal of Net Neutrality will grant. He also have a very clear expressive value with the sentence *"never been that their Internet service provider is blocking access to content"*, which eludes, that what the supporters of Net Neutrality claims will be the issue with its removal, is not even a concern for the average citizen. But that instead the people want access, and that with the removal, they will have it.

When we look at the statements from Brendan Carr and Mike Lee, we see that the other opponents of Net Neutrality likewise have an opinion on emphasizing the sovereignty of the people. Brendan Carr says: *"Second, consumers will regain strong online privacy protections. Before the FCC stripped it of jurisdiction, the FTC—the nation's most experienced privacy enforcement agency—brought over 500 privacy enforcement actions, including against ISPs. By reversing Title II, consumers get those privacy protections back"* (Appendix A3, line 66-69), and makes it clear that some of the protections, and safety, they claim people had before Net Neutrality, is something that would come back, by removing Net Neutrality. This protection of privacy is a big deal in America, and a big part of the kind of sovereignty the opponents of Net Neutrality want to promise the people. The phrase *"the nation's most experienced privacy enforcement agency"* have a very expressive value, that, with the removal of their jurisdiction the people are now less secure, since it is no longer one of the most experienced agencies that protects them. Mike Lee have the same reasoning: *"And importantly, this order restores enforcement power to the Federal Trade Commission to protect consumers from "unfair or deceptive" practices"* (Appendix A4, line 95-96). Here removing Net Neutrality is also believed to bring back better protection for the people and give consumers safety back.

There are several ways the opponents of Net Neutrality use the populist key element of sovereignty of the people. It is mostly for economic reasons, and about giving the consumers their economic autonomy back, by letting them have more choices, more innovations, and by letting the

competition rule the market. This will according to the Net Neutrality opponents give the consumers more sovereignty in their choices. Their other arguments in this key element, revolves around protecting the consumers, and how there will be more private online security, by the removal of Net Neutrality.

Advocating for the people

The populist key element advocating for the people, is one of the elements seen most often in the speeches. There can be a very likely explanation for this, since you want people on your side, and you want your side of the case to seem as appealing as possible, it is only natural to advocate to the people, and to believe that your side is the one that will help people the most.

In Ajit Pai's first speech, he mentions several times, how the removal of Net Neutrality will help the consumers: "*Consumers will be empowered by getting more information from Internet service providers (ISPs). My ISP transparency rule will be stronger than it was in 2014.*" (Appendix A1, line 32-34). The word empowered have a very positive experiential connotation, and shows us, how Ajit Pai wants people to see the removal of Net Neutrality. In his world view, the removal of Net Neutrality will help consumers be stronger, and give them more information from the ISPs, with this we can also see that what is advocated for the people, is their right to information. And that with the removal of Net Neutrality this information will be easier to gain, it will even be easier than it was in the period before Net Neutrality was firstly introduced. The last part of this quote is a strong declaration" *My ISP transparency rule will be stronger than it was in 2014*", by using this grammatical feature Ajit Pai eludes, that this is an important part to notice. He knows some consumers will look at the first part of the quote with skepticism, since the rules might not have been strong enough before the introduction of Net Neutrality, and he tries to also advocate to this group of people, by saying that it will be better this time.

Ajit Pai also advocates for the people in the following: "*The results have been bad for consumers. The first negative consumer impact is less infrastructure investment. The top complaint consumers have about the Internet is not and has never been that their ISP is doing things like blocking content; it's that they don't have enough access and competition.*" And "*Ask yourself: How is this good for consumers?*" (Appendix A1, line 63-66 and 96-97). But instead of saying how he will

do it better for the consumers, he notes what the consumers have lost, in his eyes, with the introduction of Net Neutrality. We can see several negative connotations “*Bad... negative... complain... don’t have enough access and competition*”, where both *bad* and *negative* are adjectives with a negative connotation, and both shows us how he feel about Net Neutrality, and how he want the listener to think about it. It also diminishes some of the issues the supporters of Net Neutrality often bring up, and makes it seem like this is not a problem for the consumers. Thus, he is advocating for their rights, and what he perceives would benefit the consumers. The grammatical question “*How is this good for consumers*”, is used to specify, that this can’t possibly be good for consumers, and is said in a sarcastic tone, so the listeners does not doubt, that Ajit Pai and his removal of Net Neutrality will be good for them.

In the next speech by Ajit Pai, he also advocates for the people several times. But here he starts with a different approach: “*During my time at the FCC, I’ve met with entrepreneurs who have started businesses, doctors who have helped care for patients, teachers who have educated their students, and farmers who increased their crop yields, all because of the Internet*” (Appendix A2, line 4-6). This approach is interesting, because he not only advocates to the people, but he uses specific examples to make people relate with him, and to make his claims seem more believable. The formality in this sentence, is very informal, which is done to cater to the general audience, and to make Ajit Pai seem more approachable and human in his interactions. It also shows us, that he knows the internet is a big deal for a lot of different people, and therefore he needs to mention different groups of people, with a different background and status, so more people can feel like he advocates for them. Interestingly enough, he caters to a specific group again in the end of the speech “*It also means more ways that startups and tech giants alike can deliver applications and content to more users. In short, it’s a freer and more open Internet.*” (Appendix A2, Line 101-105). So Ajit Pai does not just advocate for the general people, but also for the people working in startups and in smaller companies. In his optic a freer and more internet will only help the people as seen earlier in his arguments.

In the speech he also goes back to talking about consumers in general: “*And this light-touch approach was good for consumers, too.*”, “*That means fewer jobs for Americans building those Networks. And that means more Americans are left on the wrong side of the digital divide.*”, “*None of this is good for consumers. We need to empower all Americans with digital opportunity, not deny them the benefits of greater access and competition.*” And “*But the consumers and innovators of*

tomorrow will pay a severe price.” (Appendix A2, line 19, 36-38, 56-57 and 87-88). The message is clear, if Net Neutrality is removed, the American people will pay the price. Ajit Pai advocates that with Net Neutrality, there will be lesser jobs for the people, and more people with bad technological opportunities. With the removal of Net Neutrality, he claims that the economy will prosper, that people will have more opportunities, and that there will be a greater array of choices for the consumer. On the other hand, he paints the opposite picture with sentences with negative connotations, that claim that there will be a price to pay if Net Neutrality stays, and that the price will be paid by the average American. Therefore, he advocates for the removal of Net Neutrality, so the people can have the best possible future.

Brendan Carr also uses the populist key element of advocating for the people, several times during his speech. Firstly, he begins his speech, with talking about how the now removed Net Neutrality is a great development for the consumers *“This is a great day for consumers, for innovation, and for freedom.”* (Appendix A3, line 3). Here we see a sentence with many positive experiential values *“Innovation and freedom”* especially. It shows us that Brendan Carr sees the world as a better place if there is ease of innovation, and with less government control, but also that he adheres to the American dream of freedom. And when these two positive connotations are together in a sentence about the consumers, it eludes that he believes this will help the consumers, or at least that this is what the consumer want to hear. This is not the only time Brendan Carr mentions consumers, he does it again later with: *“What we’re doing with today’s vote is reversing a two-year old decision and returning to a tried- and-true regulatory framework—one that we know from our own experience works for consumers and for innovators.”* (Appendix A3, line 28-30). Here he claims that with the removal to Net Neutrality, they go back to a regulatory framework that they know works. With the expressive values in *“Tried- and-true”*, Carr makes it known, that he does not believe Net Neutrality works, and that the best way to combat it, is to go back to the regulations that was before. And that these regulations already have been proved to work, and that they will work again, while giving the consumers the best possibilities.

Brendan Carr also advocates to the people in a different way, by calling them “Americans”, this happens several times in the speech, and always while talking about what Americans want: *“Americans cherish the free and open Internet”* and *“First, Americans will enjoy robust online protections... restore those important protections for Internet openness.”* (Appendix A3, line 23 and 62-65). With the use of *Americans*, Carr makes gives a positive relational value to

his relationship with the listener. He is not just advocating for himself, but for the listener as well, and for the Americans, the people. He talks about what it is the Americans enjoy with the internet, and most of this can be taken back to the idea of an American dream. There is a free and open internet, where everyone is equal and have the same opportunities, and this open internet will be protected, while the consumers who uses the internet will also have protection. There is a positive expressive value in the use of “*Americans will*”, this is a promise, that this is what the American will get. Brendan Carr advocates for the people in two ways. Both for the consumers and for the Americans. The consumers will get the best possible internet and the best options, and the Americans will get a free and open internet.

Brendan Carr is not the only one who uses the tactic of advocating to the *American*, Mike Lee uses the same tactic with the following: “*And this translates into spottier coverage and slower speeds for Americans—especially those living on the periphery of society, in poverty or in rural areas.*” And “*As Americans chart a path forward in the coming years, we will face an important choice: Do we want an Internet run by regulators, or an Internet run by innovators?*” (Appendix A4, line, 62-63 and 85-86). He advocates to the people as Americans and claim that Net Neutrality would make their internet worse, and that it especially would hit poor Americans, and people in the periphery. With the experiential negative values in: “*Periphery, poverty, rural*” Mike Lee shows the listener, that he is scared these people will be hit badly by Net Neutrality, but with the removal they will stand stronger. He also shows the listener, that he doesn’t forget the weakest in the society. Now that the Americans have to take the choice together, he makes it seem like the removal of Net Neutrality, is a choice taken by the American people, and that they therefore also are a part of it, thus, he hopes to make a relational bond with the listener, by saying it is something they are in together. When he asks if they would rather have an Internet run by regulators or innovators. The word regulator has a negative connotation, and innovator a positive. While the Americans have a choice, in his optic the best option for the people is the removal of Net Neutrality. A new spin Mike Lee puts on advocating for the people as an opponent of Net Neutrality is: “*If these companies block or throttle Web traffic, rest assured the public will know about it.*” (Appendix A4, line 94). The word will have an expressive value of this is something that will happen. This is to try and assure the listener, that if any of the fear of what could happen with the removal of Net Neutrality is realized, the public will know about it and be protected. Mike Lee believes he advocates for the people, and that they should not suffer the consequences he sees from Net Neutrality, so his arguments is mostly about “What if”,

and how the removal of Net Neutrality will make sure a bad situation does not occur. And, that the consumer will still be protected, even if Net Neutrality is removed.

Joseph J. Simons also focuses on consumer protection on his speech: *“Today, I am going to talk about how the FTC’s two missions—competition and consumer protection—apply to the internet ecosystem”* (Appendix A5, Line 15-16), according to him there is two important things with the state of things, firstly it can focus on competition, and on the other side the consumer will be protected. At the same time, he: *“makes it clear that the FTC has authority to protect consumers when internet service providers (ISPs) engage in non-common carrier behavior, such as cable service or video services.”* (Appendix A5, line 26-28). This serves to remind the people, that they will be protected.

The opponents of Net Neutrality have different ways of advocating for the people. There will be better competition and access for consumers, we also see the arguments that with Net Neutrality it was worse for the people, they were less protected, and had fewer choices. Some of the speakers also advocates to the people, by using “Americans”, and focusing on values that are traditionally seen as American, like freedom. There is also a focus on how the people will be protected even with the removal of Net Neutrality.

Attacking the elites

Ajit Pai has a unique way of attacking the elite, and the most literal way. In a good portion of his first speech he attacks Hollywood celebrities, and uses tweets they have published, to argue against them, and prove his case. There can be several reasons for his choice to focus on Hollywood celebrities, firstly they are someone people know, secondly by arguing against their tweets, something the listener might have read, he can hope to sway the listeners alignment. But lastly, it might also have something to do, with arguing against the elite, attacking the powerful and famous, and by this gaining good will with his listeners. We can see his responses to the elite, and his reasoning here: *“some of the more eye-catching critiques have come from Hollywood celebrities, whose large online followings give them out-sized influence in shaping the public debate”, “Or, as Kumail Nanjiani, ... “We will never go back to a free Internet.” But here’s the simple truth: We had a free and open Internet for two decades before 2015”, “Cher, ... tweeted that the Internet “Will*

*Include LESS AMERICANS NOT MORE” if my proposal is adopted. But the opposite is true. The digital divide is all too real”, “...Mark Ruffalo: “Taking away #NetNeutrality is the Authoritarian dream. Consolidating information in the hands of a few controlled by a few. Dangerous territory.” ... tweet I was tempted to just say “Hulk . . . wrong””, “George Takei ... recently tweeted an article claiming that this was happening in Portugal, which doesn’t have Net Neutrality, and that this would happen in the United States if the plan were adopted” and “Shifting gears, Alyssa Milano tweeted, “We’ve faced a lot of issues threatening our democracy in the last year. But, honestly, the FCC and @AjitPaiFCC’s dismantling of #NetNeutrality is one the biggest.” I’m threatening our democracy? Really?” (Appendix A1, line 114-116, line 118-121, 138-141, 145-148, 155-158, 176-178). Just looking at the amount of times he talks about Hollywood celebrities, it is clear that there is a meaning behind attacking them and their opinions. While the Hollywood celebrities have a large online following, and therefore a big reach, Ajit Pai have found it necessary to discuss some of their arguments in the speeches. He makes his claims seem like the truth with “*But here’s the simple truth: We had a free and open Internet for two decades before 2015*”, and that the celebrities arguing for keeping Net Neutrality is wrong in their assessments. He also tries to keep the tone light and fun with: “*Hulk... Wrong and.*” *I’m threatening our democracy? Really?*” The way the last sentence is linked together, makes it clear that he sees this claim as preposterous. While he responds to the celebrities it is apparent that he does not think highly of them, with sarcastic comments and diminishing their opinions. Which is a clear attack on the elite, probably done to gather people around the notions that the celebrities are silly and should not talk about things they don’t know anything about.*

In the second speech by Ajit Pai, he moves on to attacking the old government, and the previous elite in the white house: “*Entrepreneurs and innovators guided the Internet far better than the clumsy hand of government ever could have.*” And “*On express orders from the previous White House, the FCC scrapped the tried-and-true, light touch regulation of the Internet and replaced it with heavy-handed micromanagement*” (Appendix A2, line 21-22 and 23-25). Here the metaphor about hands of the government is used a lot: “*Clumsy hands, light touch, heavy-handed*”, it is apparent that the listener should see the government as something clumsy, who puts their hands directly into something that only requires a delicate touch, and that there was no need for the government to do this, since it almost destroyed the internet. Ajit Pai sees the previous governments introduction of Net Neutrality as a mistake, as something that should be removed again, since he preferred the old way of regulating the internet. And therefore, he attacks the elite, to make it seem like their choices have been wrong, and further his own agenda. Ajit Pai, also argues that the elite from Silicon Valley that

is supporting Net Neutrality have ulterior motives: *“Some giant Silicon Valley platforms favor imposing heavy-handed regulations on other parts of the Internet ecosystem. But all too often, they don’t practice what they preach. Edge providers regularly block content that they don’t like. They regularly decide what news, search results, and products you see—and perhaps more importantly, what you don’t.”* (Appendix A2, line 124-128). This is an attack on the technological elite, that argues for Net Neutrality and is done to make the listener doubt if they can trust them. He makes it seem like a nightmare scenario when the Silicon Valley companies can decide your fate, they are “heavy-handed”, they block content without asking, and makes you less free by deciding what you can’t see. This attack on the technological elite, is done to make their voice smaller, and make people doubt if they can trust them. But also, so you can band together, and be against the others.

Brendan Carr also attack the previous government: *“We are reversing the Obama- era FCC’s unprecedented decision to apply Title II regulations to the Internet. I am proud to help end this two-year experiment with heavy-handed regulation—this massive regulatory overreach”* (Appendix A3, line 3-5). Here we have the same metaphor used with hands again “*Heavy-handed*” and “*overreach*” which gives the idea that the previous government, had their hands completely in the regulations, and that they should not have changed it. He also uses the word *experiment* with the expressive value that Net Neutrality should never have happened, and he’s glad it is over. In Brandan Carr’s statement, we can also see that he believes Net Neutrality is to be blamed on the previous government, the elite, and that they massively overstepped. Mike Lee also believes the government overstepped with the introduction of Net Neutrality: *“This innocuous-sounding change subjected the Internet to a host of regulations that were originally meant for New Deal-era telephone monopolies like Ma Bell.*

In essence, the government imposed 1930s-style regulations on 21st-century technology.” (Appendix A4, line 48-50). He does not believe this kind of regulations was proper to introduce to modern technologies.

Attacking the elites is something the opponents of Net Neutrality tend to do. Ajit Pai attacks the Hollywood elite, to make people feel a connection to him, and to prove they are not better than the average person. But in general, the attack is on the previous government, and on the introduction of Net Neutrality which they believe is a huge regulatory overreach.

Ostracizing others

Ostracizing others can seem a lot like attacking the elite, and in most of the speeches, there was a preferential approach to attacking the elite instead of ostracizing others. However, we can find an example of ostracizing others in the first speech by Ajit Pai: *“These comments are absurd. Getting rid of government authority over the Internet is the exact opposite of authoritarianism. Government control is the defining feature of authoritarians, including the one in North Korea.”* (Appendix A1 line 151-153). Here he ostracizes North Korea and makes it clear that the argument that the removal of Net Neutrality would be authoritarian is completely wrong, by pointing out that it is nothing like the regime in North Korea, and that authoritarian is mostly about government control. With the experiential word “absurd”, Ajit Pai makes it clear that he does not believe it is authoritarian. And his way of disproving it, is by ostracizing North Korea, claiming that America is not like them.

In Mike Lee’s speech he ostracizes fear mongers, and the ones who defend Net Neutrality regulations: *“If you believe the passionate voices defending these regulations, then you may think the FCC just jeopardized the Internet that we all know and love—and sometimes loathe. These activists paint a scary vision”* and *“We will look back on these dire predictions as hysterics, like Y2K or the Mayan Apocalypse of 2012.”* (Appendix A4, line 12-14 and 19). By saying that the visions they paint are scary, the important part is that “*vision*” together with “*scary*” have an expressive value of it just being a vision, it is something made to be scary, something made to get people to support Net Neutrality. With the expressive value of the word “*may*” we can also see that Mike Lee believes that while you might believe in the visions, and that he understands why that is scary, he does not himself believe in it. And you should not let the activists get to you. The word “*activist*” is also a deliberate choice to describe supporters of Net Neutrality, to make them seem like a small group, and like someone who is not right. These predictions by the activist is nothing to be taken seriously. And thus, he ostracizes the supporters of Net Neutrality, as fear mongers and activist, who does not know what they are talking about.

When ostracizing others, the opponents of Net Neutrality have two examples. Ajit Pai that ostracizes North Korea, as a way of saying, removal of Net Neutrality is far from Authoritarian.

And Mike Lee, diminishing the supporters of Net Neutrality as activist, that you should not take seriously.

Invoking the heartland

When invoking the heartland, the opponents of Net Neutrality in general remembers the time before Net Neutrality was implemented, but also eludes to the American dream and talks about freedom and other American values. Ajit Pai talks a lot about a time before Net Neutrality, and how everything worked back then: *“Democrats and Republicans decided in the 1990s that this new digital world wouldn’t be centrally planned like a slow-moving utility. Instead, they chose Internet freedom. The results speak for themselves.”* (Appendix A1, line 7-9). Here we can see the choice of how the digital world was planned, was something that led to the American value of freedom. *“Slow-moving”* is have an expressive value, of what could have been, if it had been planned differently, but also of what it will be with Net Neutrality. The positive connotation of the word freedom makes it hard to argue with him, for when he makes a throwback to history and internet history, the people will imagine the heartland, and what was good back then. This is also one of the reasons, why Ajit Pai chooses the phrase *“restore Internet freedom”* when talking about removal of Net Neutrality, it is to get the listener to imagine the heartland. *“The plan to restore Internet freedom will bring back the same legal framework that was governing the Internet three years ago today and that has governed the Internet for most of its existence. Let me repeat this point. The plan will bring back the same framework that governed the Internet for most of its existence.”* (Appendix A1, line 16-19). Here we can see Ajit Pai’s callback to earlier times, and how the removal of Net Neutrality will bring people back to how it was better before and the Heartland, where the internet is free. Another example of this way of looking at the internet before Net Neutrality is: *“Why am I proposing to return to the pre-2015 regulatory framework? The most important reason is that it was an overwhelming success.”* And *“Innovators and entrepreneurs grew startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world”* (Appendix A1, line 36-37 and 120-121). It is obvious that Ajit Pai believes the time before Net Neutrality was better, and therefore he makes this to a part of his heartland in his speech.

With Ajit Pai’s next speech he uses the opportunity to invoke a completely different kind of heartland: *“But what if we aren’t done? What if virtual reality with dual 8k displays actually becomes something meaningful? What if those imagined remote medicine applications are actually*

developed? What if the Internet of Things moves beyond this messy experimentation phase and into real-time value generation, not just in the home but in all kinds of unimagined commercial applications? I certainly hope we will have the bandwidth to support all of that!” (Appendix A2, line 76-80). Here we get to imagine a better future, where the internet is even better, and technology is developed in such a way, that the people’s lives get easier. He claims that this is not possible with Net Neutrality, but with the removal it might be possible. Therefore, he invokes the heartland of a future America, where they still have the same cultural values, but with more evolved technology.

Brendan Carr also invokes the heartland of the past with: *“Prior to the FCC’s 2015 decision, consumers and innovators alike benefited from a free and open Internet”* and *“There are reasons that consumers enjoyed a free and open Internet long before Title II. There are reasons why consumers are free to access any website or online content of their choosing. And those reasons will continue to hold true long after our Title II experiment ends”* (Appendix A3, line 6-7 and 51-53). Here are several things to notice, firstly the positive experiential value of the *“Free and open internet”*, eludes to the heartland of the times before, back when the internet was free and open, which is very important for the American peoples cultural understanding. The whole idea of the American dream is clearly a part of the opponents of Net Neutrality reasonings, since they want the internet to go back to being free and open. Again, the introduction of Net Neutrality is called an experiment, which have a negative connotation, and eludes to the fact, that Brendan Carr wants it to be over, so they can come back to the way things where before. Brendan Carr also expresses his believe, that with the removal of Net Neutrality things will go back to how they were before, and we will be back to something assembling the Heartland: *“After a two-year detour—one that has seen investment decline, broadband deployments put on hold, and innovative new offerings shelved—it is great to see the FCC returning to this proven regulatory approach.”* (Appendix A3, line 19-21)

Mike Lee also invokes the Heartland to try and further his arguments. He has some historical callbacks with: *“In 1996, President Clinton and Congress inaugurated the “light-touch” regulation of the Internet. They wanted the information superhighway to be “unfettered by Federal or State regulations.”*

They were rewarded with a tremendous outpouring of innovation that has improved the lives of practically every American.

I say we emulate their wise example, and see what free men and women can invent in the next twenty years.” (Appendix A4, line 107-112). He reminds the listener of a time that some of them might remember with nostalgia, where the internet had just started up, and it was better to approach the internet with a light kind of regulation. And this light touch regulation is what he attributes the innovation in the area on, he also claims that it has improved the lives of many Americans. This historical throwback is a way of invoking the heartland, and reminding the people how good it was, and how good it is when America is free and with few government regulations. He also attributes many of the technological advances on this heartland: *“Not only was this a common-sense arrangement, it facilitated a “virtual renaissance” of innovation and discovery.*

This renaissance gave us things like smartphones, ride-sharing, and super-fast fiber optic Internet. It gave us 3G . . . then 4G . . . and soon 5G wireless service!” (Appendix A4, line 37-40). And without the light regulated start of the internet, America might not have had all those things. He invokes the heartlands as an explanation of why it is good that Net Neutrality is removed. It is a sense of the past is better, and since it was not broken why fix it.

The heartland invoked by the opponents of Net Neutrality, is mostly a time with technological advance, and the time before the introduction of Net Neutrality. They claim that most of the advances that happened in technology have been because of the light touch regulations that had been on the internet until the time of Net Neutrality. Therefore, it is only natural, that they mostly invoke a heartland that is before the introduction of Net Neutrality. They also sometimes invoke a heartland with promises of a better technological future now that Net Neutrality is removed.

Supporters of Net Neutrality

The supporters of Net Neutrality also have their own arguments under the 5 key elements of populism. And in the following it will be shown how they use a populist discourse to argue for Net Neutrality

Emphasizing the sovereignty of the people

The supporters of Net Neutrality also use emphasis on the sovereignty of the people to further their arguments. The Net Neutrality supporter Mignon Clyburn says: *“Because the large majority of Americans are in favor of keeping strong Net Neutrality rules in place. The sad thing about this commentary, it pains me to say, is what I can only describe as the new norm at the FCC: A majority that is ignoring the will of the people. A majority that will stand idly by while the people they serve lose”* (Appendix B1, line 21-24) Here she tells the audience, that while she wants to let them have the choice, and that their voices matter, they are being ignored by the opponents of Net Neutrality and thus, they do not have sovereignty in the state, since their opinions does not matter. There is a strong relational value to the sentence: *“It pains me to say”*. Mignon Clyburn, cares about the people and their sovereignty, and it pains her, that the opponents of Net Neutrality do not listen or accepts the sovereignty of the people. She again tries to fight for the sovereignty of the people with *“What saddens me is that the agency that is supposed to protect you is abandoning you, but what I am pleased to be able to say is the fight to save Net Neutrality does not end today. This agency does not have, the final word. Thank goodness”* (Appendix B1, line 135-137), here it becomes clear that while the opponents of Net Neutrality aren’t willing to accept the people’s sovereignty, it is not over, and she will keep fighting to protect the people and their rights.

Jessica Rosenworcel also emphasizes that the people have sovereignty that should be upheld with: *“The public has been making noise, speaking up, raising a ruckus. We see it in the protests across this country, those that are outside here today. And we see it [in] how they lit up our phone lines, clogged our e-mail in-boxes, and jammed our online comment system. Now that might be messy, but whatever our disagreements are on this dais I hope we can agree that that is democracy in action -- and something we can all support.”* (Appendix B2, Line 65-69). This kind of democracy is something she believes we should listen to, and that the people voice should be heard. It is clear for her that the people are against the removal of Net Neutrality, and since they clearly are against it, Net Neutrality should stay. With *“Lit up”*, *“clogged”* and *“jammed”* there is an experiential value of the vast amount of inquiries they have received. This is to show how much the people care, and that she has heard them. She will fight for the people voices to be heard, and their sovereignty respected.

Speaker Pelosi also have something to say about the sovereignty of the people. And this is again about, how, the politicians in charge of removing Net Neutrality, does not listen to the wants of the many: *“Net Neutrality is a bipartisan priority for the American people. As Mr. Chairman Doyle*

said, a full 86 percent oppose the Trump assault on Net Neutrality, including 82 percent of Republicans, outside.” (Appendix B4, line 23-24). She believes Net Neutrality should be a priority for politicians, and that it is a priority of the people. The experiential meaning of Trump *assaulting*, Net Neutrality, is to show us that the attack seems deliberate, but also that it is quite fierce, and that it is something the listener should feel something about. Since most people according to Pelosi are for Net Neutrality, the fact that it is assaulted must mean something. Pelosi advocates that there should have been listened to the people and that their sovereignty was respected.

There is also a different way of advocating the sovereignty of the people by the supporters of Net Neutrality, this can be seen with a quote from Elizabeth Warren: *“That's not the way government is supposed to work. The internet was created by a bunch of government and government-funded workers, and it is the government's job to protect Americans' access to a fair and open internet.”* (Appendix B5, Line 41-43). She advocates that it is the governments job to protect the Americans access to the internet, which also eludes that this right is not protected with Net Neutrality. And if their right to an open internet isn’t protected, they will not have the same sovereignty in their choices in this technological area.

The supporters of Net Neutrality generally support the people’s sovereignty, and especially uses the arguments, that the removal of Net Neutrality was made without listening to the people. And that the people’s opinion on this area is even sometimes ignored. They also argue that access to fair and open internet is affected by the removal of Net Neutrality, and that the consumers might be worse of, now that Net Neutrality have been removed. Which is especially bad, since the sovereignty of the people was not respected, and the choice have not been made with the people’s best interest in mind.

Advocating for the people

The supporters of Net Neutrality often use the populist key element of advocating for the people. They do this especially, since they believe that Net Neutrality is what is best for the general public and the consumers, and they use this in several arguments about why there should be Net Neutrality. Mignon Clyborn advocates for the people in several instances: *“Outraged, because the FCC pulls its own teeth, abdicating responsibility to protect the nation’s broadband consumers”*

and “*And if past is prologue, those very same broadband internet service providers, that the majority says you should trust to do right by you, will put profits and shareholder returns above, what is best for you*” (Appendix B1, line 5-7 and 10-12). Both quotes tell the same story, that with the removal of Net Neutrality, broadband services providers will get more powers, when there is less regulation to keep them in check. They will use that power to further their own business, and not think of the consumer or the people. When she talks about how “*FCC pulls its own teeth*”, this is a very clear metaphor, that the FCC are deliberately wounding themselves, and if any company steps out of line, the FCC will no longer have any teeth to show as a response. So, by removing Net Neutrality and given up some of the regulative power the FCC previously had, they no longer do what is best for the people. Instead they are doing what is best for the corporations. She also argues that the FCC does not listen to the consumers at the moment, but instead only listen to corporations: “*I hold in my hand letters that plead with the FCC to keep our Net Neutrality rules in place but what is striking and in keeping with the new norm, despite the millions of comments, letters, and calls received, this Order cites, **not even one**. That speaks volumes about the direction the FCC is heading. That speaks volumes about just who is being heard.*” (Appendix B1, line 26-30). With “*keeping with the new norm*”, she makes an expressive statement, that this is normal, and the reality is that the FCC does not listen to the people, and instead listens to the elite. This is something she does not find okay, and she gives the feeling that she will fight for a change, and that she sets the people first, and not corporations. She also argues that the problem is FCC works for the corporations and not with the peoples best interest in mind with: “*And if you’re wondering why the FCC is preempting state consumer protection laws in this item **without notice**, let me help you with a simple jingle that you can easily commit to memory: If it benefits industry, preemption is good; if it benefits consumers, preemption is bad.*” (Appendix B1, line 124-127)

Another point we see with some of the supporters of Net Neutrality, is that they not only advocates for the general public, but that they also focusses on smaller groups and cultures, Clyborn states the following “*Particularly damning is what today’s repeal will mean for marginalized groups, like communities of color, that rely on platforms like the internet to communicate, because traditional outlets do not consider their issues or concerns, worthy of any coverage*” (Appendix B1, Line 65-67). Here it is considered that the people she advocates for, is also people of color, and other marginalized groups. This way it is not just about the standard American consumer, but also other groups who sometimes fall outside of the debate. Here she argues that normal outlets do not take up some of the problems people of color faces, and it therefore is necessary for them to have easy access

to the internet so they can hangout, and there can come a focus on the issues. Inherently this also means, that she fears these groups will have a more difficult time getting access to the internet and some webpages, than they have now. It is important for Clyborn, to advocate for this people as well since they are a marginalized group, and by advocating to them and other groups like this, she shows that she also cares for the weaker groups of people in the society, and advocates that they should have the same ability to access places on the internet as everyone else.

Jessica Rosenworcel claims that: *“I’m not alone with these concerns. Everyone from the creator of the world wide web to religious leaders to governors and mayors of big cities and small towns to musicians to actors and actresses to entrepreneurs and academics and activists have registered their upset and anger.”* (Appendix B2, Line 43-45), here it is very clear that she advocates for the people. And she mentions several different groups of people, so she can advocate for as big a group as possible, but also so as many people as possible can align themselves with her case. By specifying that she is not alone with the concerns, and that she speaks for different people from different parts of life. With such a large array of people, she will advocate for a large portion of the people listening to her. It is also to prove that she has listened to some of the critique the removal of Net Neutrality has gotten, and that she will fight for the people, and to get Net Neutrality reinstated. Rosenworcel herself, claim that she is frustrated with the development: *“Now I, too, am frustrated. But here’s a twist: I hear you. I listen to what the callers to my office are saying. I read the countless, individually written e-mails in my in-box, the posts online, and the very short and sometimes very long letters. And I’m not going to give up -- and neither should you”* (Appendix B2, 89-91), but she makes it clear that she listens, and that she still will advocate for the people and their wishes. With saying that she *listens*, and *reads* the emails and letters, she gives the sentence a relational value to the listener. She cares about the peoples concern and will do her best to advocate for them and change the status.

We also find Senator Maggie Hassan advocating for the people several times in her speech in support of Net Neutrality. *“Net Neutrality is integral to promoting innovation, supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses, and encouraging economic growth in my home state of New Hampshire and across the entire nation.”* And *“At the request of big cable companies and Internet Service Providers, the Republican controlled FCC, led by Chairman Ajit Pai, is taking aim at common-sense consumer protections that could change the free and open Internet as we know it.”* (Appendix B3, line 11-13 and 22-25). By using the positive connotation of *innovation* and *economic*

growth Senator Hassan gives the sentence an expressive meaning of what will happen without Net Neutrality. Since Net Neutrality is integral for those things to happen, it is eluded that without it there would be less possibilities for economic growth. These economic bonuses are focused on entrepreneurs and small businesses, and while she mentions that it encourages growth both in her home state as well as in America. It is the people she advocates for, them and their economic possibilities in the future. At the same time, she claims that the internet as we know it will change without Net Neutrality, specifically that the people will be protected less without it.

Just like Clyburn did, senator Hassan also advocates for the outsiders and the unrepresented voices several times: *“M. President, Net Neutrality isn't just great for startups and entrepreneurs, it has also created a platform for traditionally underrepresented voices - including women and minorities - to be heard - and as importantly, to add to our economic strength.”*, *“When turned away from traditional media outlets, women can turn to the Internet as an autonomous platform to tell their stories, in their own voices, thanks to the vast array of online media platforms enabled by Net Neutrality.”* And *“M. President, the open and free Internet is too powerful of a tool for civic engagement and social and economic mobility - especially for our underrepresented populations - to take away.”* (Appendix B3, Line 47-49, 54-56 and 72-73). While Clyburn focused on colored groups, senator Hassan uses the speech to put focus on another underrepresented group of people, women, she claims that without Net Neutrality this group of people will have a harder time expressing themselves, and their choices will be limited. Senator Hassan identifies herself with the group of women with calling their voices underrepresented, and now Hassan represents them. This argument is mostly about the vast array of platforms the woman can express themselves on, and that some of them will slowly disappear with the removal of Net Neutrality. Therefor senator Hassan advocates for the group of people that are women, and fights for Net Neutrality so that they will have the same opportunities as they are used to. She simply beliefs that Net Neutrality is too big a tool in the underrepresented groups autonomy that it cannot be taken away.

Speaker Pelosi also uses her voice to advocate for the people in her speech. She starts very early in the speech by saying *“To young people in our country, to every person in our country, from sea to shining sea, and to the future of our country, I join my colleagues in defense of the free and open internet, which is a pillar of our democracy.”* (Appendix B4, line 5-7). Here she advocates for every person in the country, and not only that, also to the people of the future. She says that she will defend a free and open internet, where *defend* have the expressive value, that something has been

under attack, and that her and her colleagues will stand and defend it. Together with a *free and open internet*, it shows that the thing they are defending is not just the internet, but some part of the American values, that it must be free and open. This indicates that Speaker Pelosi believes the internet is freest with Net Neutrality, and therefore she will also advocate for the people, and their wish of having a free internet. *Democracy* is always a strong word to use in a speech, and in this example, it has an experiential value that democracy has been threatened somehow by the removal of Net Neutrality, this becomes even more apparent since Speaker Pelosi now wishes to defend it. This is not their only time Speaker Pelosi advocates for the people with imagery of a battle: “*And let us salute the millions of Americans who have marched, mobilized, made their voices heard in this fight: the four million Americans who wrote to the FCC, that would be the Federal Communications Commission, to support the 215 Obama-era Net Neutrality protections; The 10 million Americans who weighed in again this time to oppose the 2017 Trump decision to destroy those protections;*” (Appendix B4, line 14-18). The people *marched, mobilized* and *made their voices heard* in a *fight*. The imagery of a fight clearly goes through this speech. Speaker Pelosi advocates for the people, and she does it in a battle. In this same vein it can be believed, that her end game is to keep fighting for Net Neutrality, since she believes this is that right thing for the people, and what the people want. Speaker Pelosi also shows just how much the people are engaged in the debate with: “*And, Mr. Speaker, it’s now 4.8 million and a growing number who have watched the Committee proceedings and the House Floor today. That is the – so much enthusiasm in our country. That’s the extent and growing interest. That’s unheard of for the work we do here.*” And “*This debate is not just about legislation. It is about the quality of people’s lives. More than 30,000 San Franciscans, in my own district, have wrote my office about the impact of Net Neutrality in their lives.*” (Appendix B4, line 20-22 and 38-39). This makes it clear just how many people Pelosi believes she advocates for.

Senator Elizabeth Warren also has a quote where she advocates for the people: “*This may be what the special interests want, but the American people are opposed to the very idea of a restricted internet. Net Neutrality provisions are wildly popular. When it comes to a free and open internet, 83% of Americans are clear about their position*” (Appendix B5, line 15-18). She even gives a percentage of how many Americans want Net Neutrality. So according to this she is now advocating for 83% of the people and what they want. The *special interest* has a negative experiential value, the people do not like an idea of someone’s special interest being upheld instead of a system that caters

to the people. This gives her a strength in advocating for the people, and in claiming they want a free and open internet, which they can only gain with Net Neutrality in place.

The supporters of Net Neutrality often advocate for the people. There seem to be three different ways of doing this. 1. By claiming that Net Neutrality makes the internet open and free, and that this is what the people want, and therefore Net Neutrality should prevail. 2. That minorities will have a harder time without Net Neutrality, they will find it more difficult to access places on the internet they can access now, and therefore they will be without a medium to express their feelings and discuss problems in their minority with each other. But without Net Neutrality it would be more difficult for them to communicate with each other and in general more difficult to get their story and opinions heard. 3. Using numbers, and the fact that they have gotten so much communication from people who supports Net Neutrality.

Attacking the elites

When using the populist key element of attacking the elite, the supporters of Net Neutrality often focuses their attention on corporations and big businesses who they claim only have an economic interest in the removal of Net Neutrality. Mignon Clyborn attacks the economic elite in the following: *“I dissent. I dissent from this fiercely-spun, legally-lightweight, consumer-harming, corporate-enabling Destroying Internet Freedom Order”* and *“Because the public can plainly see, that a soon-to-be-toothless FCC, is handing the keys to the Internet – the Internet, one of the most remarkable, empowering, enabling inventions of our lifetime – over to a handful of multi-billion dollar corporations”* (Appendix B1, line 3-4 and 8-10). Clyborn uses some strong experiential adjectives in *fiercely and lightweight*, first to show that she believes that the story of Net Neutrality is spun by the opposition, and that she believes is wrong. The removal of Net Neutrality is done with a fierceness, to help the corporations and not the consumers. She even calls it *consumer enabling* and *corporate enabling*, just to make it clear to the listener, that his corporate elite, that has influenced the removal of Net Neutrality does not have the public best interest at heart and should not be trusted. Clyborn makes her fear of the elite and their intentions clear with the next quote. She makes it clear how remarkable the internet is, and without Net Neutrality the elite will have the keys, and consumers will just have to trust, that they will not abuse that power. Clyborn claims, that the corporate elite

does not have the consumers best interest at heart with: *“We will be in a world where regulatory substance fades to black, and all that is left is a broadband provider’s toothy grin and those oh so comforting words: we have every incentive to do the right thing. What they will soon have, is every incentive to do their own thing.”* (Appendix B1, Line 53-55). Her fears are that the corporate elite will do what is best for them, and not listen to the people. She attacks the elite, to make the listeners aware of the fact, that they do not have the consumers best interest at heart, and that without Net Neutrality the internet will be at mercy of the elite, and what they want to do with it.

Jessica Rosenworcel also attacks the corporate elite in her speech, and fears for the future: *“As a result of today’s misguided action, our broadband providers will get extraordinary new powers. They will have the power to block websites, the power to throttle services, and the power to censor online content. They will have the right to discriminate and favor the Internet traffic of those companies with whom they have a pay-for-play arrangement and the right to consign all others to a slow and bumpy road”* (Appendix B2, Line 31-35). She makes it clear just what the broadband elite will be capable of, and uses the strong adjective *extraordinary* to show how dangerous she believes these powers to be, and also to show that this kind of corporate control should be unheard of, and that she thinks this power should not be at the broadband providers. She worries for the people, that it will be the elite who gains anything from the removal of Net Neutrality, and that the rest will be left on a *slow* part of the internet, where your connection is worse, and you have less options. This is what Rosenworcel believes will happen when the corporate elite is in control of the internet. But Jessica Rosenworcel also attack another elite, the one that is now taking the decisions, and are the reason for the removal of Net Neutrality: *“I dissent from the corrupt process that has brought us to this point. And I dissent from the contempt this agency has shown our citizens in pursuing this path today. This decision puts the Federal Communications Commission on the wrong side of history, the wrong side of the law, and the wrong side of the American public.”* (Appendix B2, line 4-7). She calls the whole process corrupt, which has a strong negative experiential value, and as soon as she starts the sentence with something is corrupt, and that she dissents from it. She does not agree with the process. And calling it corrupt, also means that she does not see the process as just or fair. Corrupt people are also often in the elite, and this is arguably an attack on the *corrupt* elite that allowed the removal of Net Neutrality to happen.

Senator Hassan also attack the corporate elite: *“So it's no surprise that what corporate ISPs want next is to remove baseline protections that allow even the softest voice to be heard or the smallest of businesses to thrive against larger competitors.”* and *“So clearly this is just another*

"gimme" to big cable and industry stakeholders who want to put profits ahead of customer service and consumer protections." (Appendix B3, line 17-18 and 31-32). Firstly, she claims that the removal of Net Neutrality is part of removing protections for smaller businesses, implicit this also means that the large corporations will be allowed to throttle others, and to use this power to become bigger. The companies want to put profits ahead of the customers. With the use of "gimme", she gives the listener a picture of a big child asking for something with both hands stretched out. The attack on the elite, is focused on how they will throttle the consumers, and how the consumer will be forgotten in the corporates elite search for profit and power.

As a supporter of Net Neutrality, Speaker Pelosi also attacks the elite in her speech. She also focuses her attention on the corporate elite, and how the removal of Net Neutrality was done to further their agenda: "*We are restoring protections so we can stop unjust discriminatory practices by ISPs, that would be Internet Service Providers, that try to throttle consumers' browsing speed, block their internet access and increase their costs. Throttle their speed, block their access, increase their cost*" (Appendix B4, line 26-29). When talking about restoring Net Neutrality she mentions that it is to stop the *unjust* practices by ISPs, she clearly believes that what have been done by the removal of Net Neutrality, is done to support the economic elite, and not for the best for the people. Therefore, she mentions all the things she believes the ISPs are trying to do to the consumers, and how this should be stopped. No one like an elite that abuses people, and therefore she tries to make it seem like that is the case. If the elite abuses their power like that, then of course the people will be against them.

Elizabeth Warren also proves that the supporters of Net Neutrality often disagree with the economic elite, in their goal to get Net Neutrality reinstated: "*Mr. President, the repeal of these protections has corporate greed and corruption written all over it.*" (Appendix B5, line 15) and "*I'll tell you why, because under this administration the FCC has become a puppet for giant internet providers*" (Appendix B5, line 15 and 20). First, she calls the removal of Net Neutrality, something that has greed and corruption written all over it. The economic elite is not only greedy, but the removal of Net Neutrality has been a corrupt process, and therefore she believes it should be amended. It is also important to note, that she says it has corruption *written* all over it. She does not state that it was corrupt, just that it seems like it, the word *written* is expressive, in that she can't say that it is corrupt, but she believes it is, and wants the listener to feel the same. No-one likes a corrupt elite. She also calls the FCC a puppet for internet providers. This is again an attack on the elite both the FCC and

the economic elite. Since the FCC allowed it to happen, and implicit it is corrupt. If economic elite controls the FCC, who will protect the people. Elisabeth Warren does not stop at attacking the economic elite, but directly attack the chairman of FCC, Ajit Pai *"The FCC's current chairman, Ajit Pai, has made it clear that he will work to put special interests over what's good for the American people."*, *"When Donald Trump won the White House, then FCC Commissioner Pai said that Net Neutrality's days were numbered. And once Trump selected Pai to lead the FCC, Chairman Pai immediately got to work getting rid of Net Neutrality."* and *"But Pai dismissed those concerns. He demonstrated that, no matter what, he would forge ahead with his plan to hand over the internet to the biggest and most powerful internet providers."* (Appendix B5, line 21-22, 25-27 and 35-37). She claims Ajit Pai put special interest over what is best for the American people, Pai have had the agenda to remove Net Neutrality from the start, and that even when hearing other people's concern, he still went along with his plan to hand over the internet to an economic elite. This gives us a clear picture of Ajit Pai as a somewhat corrupt man, who will put someone's economic interest over what is best for the American people, and that he have had this agenda from the start, and no amount of good arguments can sway him from his course. This is a clear attack at him and his integrity. Which the listener might agree with and understand as an attack on the elite that made the removal of Net Neutrality happen.

The supporters of Net Neutrality attacks three different elites. The most prominent elite that they all mention and criticizes, is the corporate elite, and the big broadband providers. They claim that this economic elite does not have the people's best interest at heart, and because of their actions and the removal of Net Neutrality consumers will suffer. The economic elite only sets themselves first and focusses on profit and securing their own businesses. The other elite they disagree with, is the government that let the removal of Net Neutrality happen, this political elite is accused of being corrupt and in the pockets of the economic elite. Lastly, we have a direct attack on Ajit Pai, as he is the chairman of the FCC and accused of having had the agenda of removing Net Neutrality from the start, and his integrity is questioned.

Ostracizing others

Ostracizing others is very like attacking the elite, and not as popular in the rhetoric of the speeches as attacking the elite is. However, the supporters of Net Neutrality also use the 4th key element. Mignon Clyborn says: *“There has been a darker side to all of this over the past few weeks. Threats and intimidation. Personal attacks. Nazis cheering. Russian influence. Fake comments. Those are unacceptable. Some are illegal. They all are to be rejected. But what is also not acceptable, is the FCC’s refusal to cooperate with state attorney general investigations, or allow evidence in the record that would undercut a preordained outcome.”* (Appendix B1, line 45-49). There’s a clear ostracizing of radical groups in this statement. Both Nazis and Russia are mentioned. This is also important, since there have been a fear of Russia interfering with America. And Nazis is always a group that you do not want to be compared to. Both groups are chosen to give people a fear that these groups interfered with the removal of Net Neutrality, and that they will be stronger without it, and can interfere even more.

Jessica Rosenworcel also ostracizes other with:

“Two million comments feature stolen identities.

Half a million comments are from Russian email addresses.

Fifty thousand consumer complaints are inexplicably missing from the record.” (Appendix B2, Line 73-75). Here Russia is mentioned again, with fake comments from Russian email addresses. It is to make it clear that Russia have influenced what happens in American politics. This is to ostracize Russia’s influence, and to make it clear that the supporters of Net Neutrality know that there has been a breach, where Russia have had an influence.

When supporters of Net Neutrality try to ostracize others, they focus on the fear there is of Russia’s involvement in American politics.

Invoking the heartland

When looking at how the supporters of Net Neutrality invokes the heartland in their speeches. The first example we find is from Jessica Rosenworcel with: *“Net Neutrality is Internet*

freedom. I support that freedom” (Appendix B2, Line 3). When supporting internet freedom, it is important to remember, that much of the heartland in America is directly related with the American dream. Therefore, when supporting internet freedom, Rosenworcel gives a directly nod to the American dream. When reminding the listener of the American dream, she makes it clear that this is the heartland, and that internet should be free. She even later goes to mention, that the open internet has a foundation of openness, and is the envy of the world: *“And here in the United States our Internet economy is the envy of the world. This is because it rests on a foundation of openness.”* And *“But today we wipe away this work, destroy this progress, and burn down time-tested values that have made our Internet economy the envy of the world.”* (Appendix B2, Line 10-11 and 28-30).

It can be argued that this idea of America being the envy of the world, is a part of the American dream, and the heartland of what they want to believe. Jessica Rosenworcel also have a throwback to history, and the Heartland of days gone past: *“Net Neutrality has deep origins in communications law and history. In the era when communications meant telephony, every call went through, and your phone company could not cut off your call or edit the content of your conversations. This guiding principle of nondiscrimination meant you were in control of the connections you make”* (Appendix B2, Line 18-21). Here she argues that Net Neutrality has roots far back, when things were simpler. And it makes the listener imagine this time, when it was simple, and the world was less connected and thus, there were not the same fears of control of the internet.

When invoking the heartland, the supporters of Net Neutrality focuses on the feeling of an American dream. One where freedom prevails, and one where America is the envy of the rest of the world.

Comparison

To find the difference and similarities between the supporter and opponents of Net Neutrality, this thesis will compare the two sides use of populist key elements in their speeches.

Emphasizing the sovereignty of the people

When talking about the sovereignty of the people, the opponents of Net Neutrality tends to focus on economic reasons, and the wish to give the consumers economic autonomy back. On the other hand, the supporters of Net Neutrality, focuses on the fact, that the removal of Net Neutrality was made without listening to the people, and that the peoples wishes was largely ignored in the removal, thus, the people had their sovereignty threatened. The opponent of Net Neutrality believes that by removing Net Neutrality, there will be an economic boom, and more innovations and choices, this will result in the people having more sovereignty in their choices of how and what they will use the internet for. And by removing Net Neutrality the people will also get a bigger online security that will protect them. The supporters of Net Neutrality argue, that with the removal, it will be more difficult for some people to access the internet, and that they haven't had the ability to show their sovereignty and take their own choice in the removal of Net Neutrality.

That the opponents focus mostly on the economic choices, can be attributed to what they want from the removal of Net Neutrality, they argue that it is to gain economic gain, and this of course is their focus on what kind of sovereignty they promise the people. The supporter on the other hand, have seen the sovereignty of the people being taken away with the removal of Net Neutrality, since the people did not have a say in the removal, and it seems that many of the concerns from the public have been ignored.

Advocating for the people

Both sides tend to use advocating for the people a lot in their argumentation, which is only natural, since they are trying to convince people, that they have their interest at heart, and to make it seem like their position on the issue is the best. Both opponents and supporters of Net Neutrality, claim that their way will make the internet more open and free, and with the most choices for the consumers. The difference is that for the opponents of Net Neutrality this openness the consumer can expect, is because there will be less government control, and therefore, they believe, the market forces will regulate the internet, and give the consumers a bigger and better amount of choices. The supporters of Net Neutrality do not believe that the big corporations have the people's best interest at heart, and that a regulated internet will be what is best for the consumers, and the way they can get the best and least discriminatory internet.

The opponents tend to have a focus on America, and American values, and claims this is what they protect with the removal of Net Neutrality. Here we again see them talking about freedom, and that people should be free to choose, and government regulations should not limit companies or consumers choices, and they also claim that they will make sure there is protection for the consumers.

The way supporter of Net Neutrality advocates for the people, is also to mention minorities, and how this removal of Net Neutrality will hurt them, and they will have less possibilities on the internet in the future. At the same time, they use stats of how many people cared about the removal and have contacted them and in other ways made their voice heard.

The big difference between the two sides use of advocating for the people, is that the opponents of Net Neutrality focuses on how the removal will make the market forces better the economy in the area, and thus there will be more choices eventually, and also without government regulations, they claim the people will be more free to make their own choices. The supporters also claim that Net Neutrality will give them better economy, but also that the removal would make the area poorer and with less choice. Importantly, the supporters claim that with the removal of Net Neutrality the opponents do not advocate for the people, and that they instead have done what is best for big corporations.

Attacking the elites

Both sides engage in attacking the elite, and the supporters seems to be the ones who most often does it, since they believe the removal of Net Neutrality happened without the approval of the people. Ajit Pai, attacks the elite in a very literal way, he argues against the Hollywood elite, and explains why their concerns are wrong or misleading. The rest of the attack on elite by opponents of Net Neutrality is made on the previous government that introduced Net Neutrality and changed the regulations in the area. This stand in contrast to the supporters of Net Neutrality that attacks the current governing elite, and their willingness to ignore the people and remove Net Neutrality. They also attack the companies and big broadband providers, that they say are the ones gaining from the removal, and that they have corrupted the process and have not the people's best interest at heart. They also directly mention Ajit Pai as compromised and not willing to think of the people but following his own agenda.

Here the big difference is in what elite they attack, only the supporters of Net Neutrality attacks an economic elite, and both attack the government that either introduced Net Neutrality or got rid of it.

Ostracizing others

Both sides of the Net Neutrality debate choose to ostracize other nationalities. Where the opponent claim that they should not be compared to North Korea, as a way to make light of being called authoritarian, the supporters claim that there is evidence that Russia have had an influence, and there are many comments coming from Russian email addresses. The opponents also ostracized the supporters of Net Neutrality by calling them activist and making them seem like a small group with no popular support behind them.

The ostracizing is not something any of the sides use a lot of in their speeches, and mostly uses it as a way of saying, that at least the development is not like in other countries. Or that they must be careful, since there can have been outside interference in politics.

Invoking the heartland

Both sides of the debate like to invoke the heartland. Where the opponents of Net Neutrality use the time before it was introduced, as a proof America is great without Net Neutrality, and that it worked perfectly fine before. They also invoke a vision of a future with technological innovation caused by the lack of Net Neutrality. The supporters of Net Neutrality do not invoke a Heartland as often. But when they do it is in line with the American dream, and an idea of an America where the internet is the envy of the rest of the world.

Conclusion

The similarities between the populist discourse in the speeches by both the supporters and opponent of Net Neutrality are the following: Both sides, claim that they want what is best for the people, and that the people will gain better economic choices by following their ideas. According to both sides, the people will also be protected the most by them. The way the speakers uses ostracizing of others is similar in some way. They both claim another country as the choice of

ostracizing. But where the supporters claim Russia have had an involvement in the debate, the opponents claim that they should not be compared to North Korea and uses this to make some of the critique against them seem farfetched. Both sides also engage in attacking the elite, and especially in attacking the government that they do not agree with, with one side claiming that the previous government overreached, and the other side claiming that the current government and removal of Net Neutrality is almost corrupt, or at least doing it for their own and the companies gain.

In general, the opponents of Net Neutrality have a larger focus on economy than the supporters have. This can also be seen when the supporters attack the elite, and they focus on the big corporations they believe the opponents support. There is also a stronger sense of advocating for the people in the supporter's rhetoric, since they also claim the support of minorities, and claim to fight for these. The supporters of Net Neutrality also claim that the opponents do not listen to the people or acknowledge their sovereignty and instead have let the corporations decide on the removal of Net Neutrality.

This thesis have found both similarities and differences in the way both sides use the populist key elements, but most importantly it have made it clear, that both sides use populist arguments, and can come to vastly different conclusions in what they argue are best for the people.

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