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A ‘Populist Zeitgeist’?

Understanding contemporary populism within the framework of postmodern political communication

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1. Introduction

In recent years Eurosceptic parties have emerged and some previously marginalized populist actors have become a significant and powerful part of the political scene in many European countries – such as Nigel Farage, Marine Le Pen, Alexis Tsipras, or Pablo Iglesias -, which raises many questions, among which is whether their position is related to the way populists communicate and interact with the media. In other words: does communication play a significant role in the rise of populism or is contemporary populism itself a form of political communication?

This 'paranoid context' - as it had been labelled by Timmer et al. (2018) based on the work of Hofstadter (2008) – of the rise of this new wave of populism came after a period of liberalism: after the end of the Cold War and Communism, there was a global transition toward Western liberal democracy and market economy which according to Francis Fukuyama (1989: 3-4) represented the victory of economic and political liberalism; Fukuyama believed Western liberal democracy to be the final form of human government. Given the fact that after 1989 democratic governance became the 'right' and accepted way to govern, the recent turn to illiberalism and xenophobia seems unexpected. A unique characteristic of this moment in contemporary politics is how global it is in its scale: journalists and scholars have both argued that authoritarian populism is on the rise in several countries (Timmer et al., 2018) and by some it is claimed to be responsible for historical moments, such as the Brexit.

While populism is meant to be a socio-political movement representing the concerns of an underrepresented majority, recently it has rather become a characteristic or code for far right-wing governments that use the language of 'the people' in order to justify their power. The question arises: is populism an aberration or a phenomenon that is part of democracy? Is it a development of the mediatization of politics, where certain acts of speech or styles of rhetoric are increasingly successful? To answer these questions and as the populist style of communication is argued to be mainstreaming, it has become important to analyse and understand it further. The aim of this research is firstly to describe this phenomenon from the political communication point of view: arguing that contemporary populism is in fact a style of political communication used strategically and test this theory by analysing two case studies based on a critical framework. Secondly, it is the aim of this research to analyse how the communication of allegedly populist actors affect or influence the communication of the establishment.

While there is no agreement on the definition, importance or the future of populism, and even though we will only be able to find the answers and understand it retrospectively, the actors of politics have to react to the phenomenon in the present as populism has become a significant feature of contemporary politics. Therefore, the question arises: what is populism and to what extent mainstream political actors have to adapt to it to confront it; or rather: is populism the new mainstream?

2. Structure and methodology

As said, there are many definitions about populism, therefore, a thorough literature review will be provided in which all aspects of populism will be analyzed. Special attention will be directed towards the view of understanding populism as a style of political communication or discourse practice; consequently, the role of mediatization in the postmodern era will be examined, as questions arise whether or not the media contributes to the success of populist figures and if yes, to what extent.

The majority of definitions agree that populism is built on a dichotomy: 'us' versus 'them', 'the people' versus 'the powerful elite', etc. Many times, an in-group and an out-group is created, most commonly divided to 'the nation' and 'the outsiders', generally immigrants. As the dichotomy of 'the elite' and 'the people' is present in all definitions of populism (Mudde, 2004; Rooduijn, 2016: 6) and is therefore essential in the study of it, the constructed nature of political identities and its implications regarding populism will be examined as well, such as the construction of 'the people' or the discourse theoretical perspective of populism A chapter will be devoted to transnational (or international) populism, as one of the questions receiving most attention about populism is whether it is mainstreaming or not, or in other words: are we witnessing a 'populist zeitgeist'?

The theoretical part will be tested through two case studies: the first being the case of *Brexit, UKIP and Nigel Farage* and the second being the case of *Viktor Orbán and his 'illiberal democracy' in Hungary*. As to the case selection, due to the limitation of length, the intention was to select two cases as distinct from each other as possible in order to be able to test the hypotheses in different contexts and therefore get a result which is more suitable to be generalized and to be drawn conclusions from.

The case of Brexit, which provides an example of populism in Western Europe, was selected as it represents a historical moment in European history, but not much attention had been directed towards it in relation to populism, while Nigel Farage had been regularly labelled as a populist political actor. Attention will be directed towards the Leave campaigns (the official *Vote Leave* and *Leave.EU* as well) and to the features of the political communication of Nigel Farage (UKIP), as he personally dominated much of the campaign and the international media as well. Farage's influence on how leaving the European Union became a mainstream political movement after decades of latent Euroscepticism will be highlighted.

The case of Hungary has been selected as it provides an example of the East-Central European region and has even been argued to be the worst-case scenario of it regarding the backlash of democracy (Ágh, 2016: 279). The Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán has been referred to as a populist actor several times and is well-known to be the most powerful political speaker of the post-Communist Hungary (Szilágyi and Bozóki, 2015: 153-156). Accordingly, attention will be directed towards the backlash of democracy in the ECE region and the 'illiberal democracy' being built in the country. The features of populist political communication will be analyzed through the refugee crisis, two main speeches of Viktor Orbán and the discursive continuity of them since his 1989 speech. Special attention will be directed towards the Hungarian media system which now tilts heavily to the pro-government media outlets.

As the aim of this paper is to comprehend populism as a style of political communication, the analysis of the case studies will be conducted according to the critical framework developed by Block and Negrine (2017), which is accepted here as the primary definition of

populist political communication and is therefore the starting point of analysis. The categories of the critical framework are as follows:

1. The use of identity,
2. the use of rhetoric,
3. and the use of media.

This framework – which will be presented in an upcoming chapter - provides us with the ability to analyze the most relevant features of the postmodern, contemporary political communication and therefore has the capacity to draw up the features that are the peculiarities of the populist style. Furthermore, using a critical framework allows us to systematically compare the cases of Brexit and Hungary and test the hypotheses.

Besides the analysis through the critical framework, the claim that populist parties - or the way they communicate - has an actual effect on mainstream parties of the establishment or on general political discourse will be tested in both of the case studies.

The aim of the research is to seek an answer for the following questions:

1. Can populism be conceptualized as a style of contemporary political communication; if yes, what are its features?
2. Considering the mediatization of politics, does the media contribute to the popularity of populist political actors?
3. To what extent mainstream political actors have to adapt to populism to confront it?

As a starting point of the research, we suppose the following:

1. Populism is a style of political communication that is habitually used as a political tool – mostly via the media -, in order to appeal to the ‘left-behind’ and disenchanted public.
2. In order to gain more popularity, when a populist actor arises, mainstream parties are likely to follow and adapt to populist political communication.

3. The definition of populism

There have been many attempts to define populism itself and albeit the concept is not new, the scientific debate about it had been revitalised due to the rise and flourishing of extreme-right parties in Europe. Yet, as it will be shown below, despite its popularity, until today populism remains a vague and contested concept. While political scientists frequently refer to the term or label certain political actors as populist, its definition has not been completely settled until now (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007). In this chapter all of the most prominent definitions of populism will be presented and analyzed: highlighting both their differences and similarities in order to reach conceptual clarity.

3.1. Populism in historical context

To understand populism in a historical context, attention should be turned to Jagers and Walgrave (2007: 2-3) who quote Taguieff (1998) when arguing that three waves of populism can be distinguished, which are the following:

1. Agrarian populism could be found in the second half of the 19th century, the Russian Narodnik movement[1] or the American People's Party can serve as examples of it.
2. The Latin-American variant of populism could be found across South-America during the 1940s and 1950s, with examples such as Argentina under the authoritarian rule of Perón or of Vargas in Brazil. This wave of populism was characterized by nationalist and charismatic leaders claiming to govern for the people and against the established interests.
3. New-right populism appeared in the 1970s[2] and mobilises against traditional politics which is pictured as self-serving and ignoring the real wishes of people. Issues such as immigration, taxes, crime and nationalism can be typically found in its focus.

To conclude, there are three elements that can be found in each of the waves of populism and therefore define populism, namely:

a) Populism always refers to 'the people' and populist actors justify their actions by appealing to and identifying with them;
b) populism is rooted in anti-elite feelings*;*
c) populism considers the people to be a monolithic or homogeneous group without internal differences (Ibid.).

3.2. 'The people': a thin-centred ideology

Broadly speaking, the three main and most relevant approaches to define populism had been to characterize it as a: 1) thick ideology, 2) thin ideology or 3) as discourse or style of political communication (Rydgren, 2017: 485-490). Despite the wide range of attempts to define populism, most of them have at least two points of reference in common: 'the elite' and 'the people', or in other words: 'the people versus the powerful'. The most well-known and mostly accepted definition is the one of Cas Mudde. According to him, populism is:

[1] More information about the Narodnik Russian social movement can be found at: https://www.britannica.com/event/Narodnik

[2] There are different opinions regarding the exact date, as other authors such as Mudde (2004) claim that this type of populism only appeared in the 1990s.

‘An ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.’ (2004: 543)

Some scholars claim that three main approaches can be distinguished, all of which attempt to define populism. Firstly, populism can be conceived as a ‘particular form of political organization’. An example of this can be Latin America, where populism as a movement is usually characterized by a strong leader supported by a heterogeneous group of people. Secondly, it can be argued that populism is a political style. Thirdly, populism can be defined as a ‘thin-centered ideology’, a discourse or a set of communicative messages. Populism defined as a set of communicative messages means that in this case populism does not characterize and refer to the political actor, but rather to the message of the given political actor (Rooduijn, 2016: 5-7). Furthermore, as for example Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017: 6) argue, populism cannot be understood as a thick-centered ideology as its morphology is restricted and it seems to be attached to other ideologies, making it ultimately a thin-centred ideology (Rydgren, 2017: 491).

To conceptualize populism as a thin-centered ideology was suggested by Mudde (2004: 544), which means that there is a restricted core attached to a narrower range of political concepts. In the case of populism, this core concept is ‘the people’, as even the concept of ‘the elite’ takes its identity from it, being its opposite. As it has been mentioned, it is important to note that as a thin-centred ideology, it can easily be linked to and combined with other ideologies – either thin or full -, such as communism, nationalism or socialism, etc. Rydgren (2017: 491) calls these ‘host ideologies’ and argues that the fact that populism is usually mixed up with one of these ideologies makes sense when trying to understand contemporary European radical right-wing parties. This approach means that populism is a general, abstract concept about politics and society that is open to a diverse set of more concrete political ideas and programs – depending on both national and historical contexts (Aalberg et al., 2016). As such, this conceptualization does not offer an all-inclusive worldview, but rather focuses on the antagonistic relationship between the two constructs: the ‘good people’ and the ‘evil elite’. The definition of Mudde can be thought of as a minimal definition, as ‘the lowest common denominator that prototypical populist actors across cases and over time share with each other is that they contrast the Good, homogeneous people with the Evil, corrupted elite’ (Rooduijn, 2016: 6).

As to the third constitutive feature of populism: homogeneity or exclusion is related to the horizontal dimension. In populism, typically, people are considered to be a homogeneous group, yet, some isolated groups can be found within them, as some kind of ‘internal enemy’. Therefore, some specific segments of the population can become excluded from ‘the people’, being defined as a threat or a burden for the rest of the group. These groups-within-the-group are often scapegoated and blamed for the misfortune that affects the population (Ibid.). Out-groups are created within a given country or nation, distinguished from ‘the people’.

Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that both ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ can refer to different things: the former most of all it refers to the nation or the electorate, while the latter can refer to a political elite, an economic elite or even, cultural elite or as it will be analysed later: even to a transnational elite (Rooduijn, 2016: 6, 101-102). As a constructed category, the meaning of the people and the elite is defined by who creates the category itself, such as the populist political actor. In a later chapter the construction of the ‘people’ and the ‘elite’

will be further analysed. All in all, it can be argued that the main two components of populism are people-centrism and anti-elitism: the centrality and sovereignty of the homogeneous people is corrupted by the elite (Ibid.). While most scholars consider anti-establishmentness as a central feature of populism, it cannot be considered as an exclusive feature of populism, as anti-elitist attitudes can be found in many radical political movements (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007: 4).

Another concept to be mentioned is the one of Müller (2016), who had provided a definition that is less inclusive. As he argued: 'After all, every politician – especially in poll-driven democracies – wants to appeal to 'the people'; all want to tell a story that can be understood by as many citizens as possible, all want to be sensitive to how 'ordinary folks' think and, in particular, feel' (2016: 2). In his point of view, populism does not only consist of the reference to the people and opposing the elites, but that in addition to these we must add anti-pluralism as well: populist actors claim that *only* they represent the people (Ibid.: 3). In claiming that they are alone who represent the people, they also discredit their opposition when arguing that they are part of the so-called 'elite'. Furthermore, therein lies the danger of populism: democracy requires pluralism, while populism is by nature anti-pluralist. Populist actors must claim that they represent the whole of the people, therefore claiming that a part of the people is 'the people' with whom only they (the populist actors) can identify (Rydgren, 2016: 491-492; Müller, 2016, 20-23).

3.3 The broad definition: populism as a thick ideology

In the case of its broad definition, the thick ideology approach, the focus had been directed at the complexity of populism. This literature emphasizes the homogeneous people and the reliance on the so-called 'sacred heartland': populist ideology is nostalgic and usually directed toward the past, as present-day populist movements generally tend to criticise the current state of the world in which we live in, arguing that people have become uprooted or alienated and they express a longing for a return to the 'sacred heartland'; rootedness and a coherent community of the people being its features (Rydgren, 2017: 485-490).

Although populism is more commonly referred to as a thin concept, we cannot overlook the possibility of it being a thick concept. Another definition of populism defines it as a thick ideology as follows: 'populism refers to the people, vents anti-establishment ideas *and* simultaneously excludes certain population categories' (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007: 3). As it can be easily noted, this definition strongly resembles the three elements that can be found in each of the waves of populism presented in the previous pages. In this interpretation, the differences between thick and thin populism can be summarized as it follows: appealing to the people is a minimal and necessary condition and can be alone characterized as thin populism. However, if this is combined with anti-elitism and exclusion or homogeneity (excluding certain population categories or emphasizing the homogeneity of the people), thick populism is formed (Ibid.: 3-5). The comparison of thick and thin populism – in this sense – is illustrated in Figure 1.

	Thin populism	Thick populism
The people	x	x
The elite		x
Homogeneity / Exclusion		x

Figure 1. Distinguishing thin and thick populism[3]

As in other definitions or understandings of populism, the groups of 'the people' and 'the elite' can be found here as well; with the former presented as a monolithic and unitary entity mostly without internal divisions, yet still excluding a large group of individuals, such as ethnic minorities or internationalists. Populists tend to equate the 'people' with the nation itself and emphasize the importance of a so-called organic community (Rydgren, 2017: 485-490). The use of the already mentioned term 'heartland' had been suggested by Taggart (2000: 3, 95), which emphasizes how populist ideology builds on the idealized image of the 'people' who are located in the 'heartland', which can be understood as a similarly idealized landscape, home to the 'people' that can be defined as a nation or as a region as well. The people who inhabit this ideal heartland are 'the people' to whom populist rhetoric is intended for. As the 'people' cannot be seen as anything but inherently good, they cannot be blamed for the backlash or decadence of the contemporary society. Therefore, the blame is put on 'the elite', who are sometimes argued to be working 'behind the scenes', as in conspiracy theories (Popper, 1971: 95; Müller, 2016: 32; Rydgren, 2017: 489). Arguably, some of the features that are attributed to populism can be claimed to be rather the attributes of the radical right parties or even of traditional conservativism (Rydgren, 2017: 489).

In summary, since its appearance, populism had been conceptualized as an ideology (although widely rejected), as a thick ideology, as a thin ideology where the core concept is 'the people', as a communication style (an appeal to the people or an act of speech), as a discourse practice, as the phenomenon of the 21st century, as the development of the mediatization of politics and as a mental map through which individuals analyse and comprehend political reality, etc. (Aalberg et al., 2016).

As to political communication point of view which will be analysed thoroughly in an upcoming chapter, it might be understood as a set of features or elements of communicative messages that have their roots in the goals, motives, and attitudes of political actors, the media, or citizens (Block and Negrine, 2017). Jagers and Walgrave (2007) note that populism can be seen as a political communication style, one that contains a central binary between an „us" and a „them". It is an appeal to the people with antipolitics, anti-elitist and anti-establishment ideologies; a discourse characterised by plain language that provide a sense of closeness between leaders and their politically disenchanted publics. It can be argued that as parties generally tend to suffer from 'declined partisanship and increased electoral turnover', in their search for new means to connect with the electorate, they might find populism as an answer or solution (Ibid.: 2). There seems to be two dominant interpretations: firstly, populism as a highly emotional and simplistic discourse that is directed at the 'gut feelings' of people; and secondly, opportunistic policies with the aim of

[3] Based on Jagers and Walgrave (2007: 3-4).

pleasing the people in order to get their support. An example for this can be lowering taxes just before the elections (Mudde, 2004).

3.4. Left-wing and Right-wing populism

Although populism is mainly associated with radical right-wing parties, populism can be also found in the (radical) left, especially in South America, although we can find left-wing populist parties in Europe as well. The main difference between the left- and right-wing populism mainly lies in the topics covered by them. In South-America or Southern Europe the most essential problems are poverty and inequality, therefore populist political actors are more likely to use left-wing populism. Generally, it can be argued that in Europe right-wing populism is more typical, with issues such as anti-immigration or xenophobia. What is common in these two types of populism is that they state that the elite is not capable of dealing with essential social problems, moreover: it does not even take them into consideration (Policy Solutions, 2015).

A distinction can be made between *exclusionary* and *inclusionary* populism. The latter can mainly be found on the left and 'are inclusionary due to their focus on equality and on strengthening the political participation of lower classes and excluded groups' (De Cleen, 2017: 14), such as the poor and the indigenous people. A great example can be provided here by mentioning Hugo Chávez in Venezuela or recent European populist movements such as the Podemos in Spain. Exclusionary populism is typical in the right-wing of politics, however, 'the elite' is excluded by the inclusionary left-wing, and the exclusionary right-wing populists as well, which makes populisms in a way inherently exclusionary (Ibid.: 14-15). Actually, some argue that while populism can be combined with many different ideologies, it only becomes exclusionist if it is combined with a radical right ideology (Rooduijn, 2016: 102).

3.5. Charismatic leadership

In his essay called 'The three types of legitimate rule' Max Weber has distinguished three types of authority: traditional, legal and charismatic. As liberal democracies have overcome the traditional type, it was on the basis of their presumed competence that politicians used to be held in quite high esteem in western democracies. The emancipation of the citizens has undermined the competence and (legal) authority of the elite, consequently the charismatic authority emerged. Although charismatic leadership is not equal with populist leadership, there are some important similarities indeed (Mudde, 2004: 556).

Currently, populist parties often have a charismatic leader, furthermore, there seems to be a general trend towards strong party leaders, who can successfully communicate with 'the people', the disenchanted public (Ibid.). According to Kriesi (2014: 363), one of the reasons why populists introduce a charismatic leader may be to provide a closer link between the governing political actors and the citizens; a political actor who can act as the spokesperson of the 'vox populi' and therefore provide a direct form of representation by offering this 'short-cut'. This kind of personalized leadership characterizes populism. Groups of the disenchanted public do not just merely follow their (populist) leaders, but also develop an emotional connection with them and can feel recognized and empowered through them. This connection is essential: it encourages the importance of the connections built on shared values and patriotic feelings mixed with the general dissatisfaction with the political elites.

A great example - which will be further analysed in a later chapter - can be provided by Nigel Farage – leader of the UK Independence Party until 2016 – who had been extremely

successful in connecting with his followers, the so-called Ukippers, via the exaltation of shared national values or beliefs. UKIP became 'the people's party', distinguishing British values from those of Europe. Nigel Farage used a communication style that can be labelled populist, as he thrived on basic nationalistic feelings of ordinary people transmitted into a rather informal style, in order to build bonds with and among the public (Block and Negrine, 2017). As the BBC concluded: 'for UKIP voters, Nigel Farage is UKIP' (Ibid.: 186; BBC, 2015).

3.6. Populism is not a synonym for the radical right or nationalism

To summarize it in a sentence, some radical right parties are populists, but not all of them are. Even the ones that are populist are much more than merely populist: exclusionary nationalism and authoritarianism occupy a much more central position in their politics (De Cleen et al., 2018: 5). Yet, radical right parties are often referred to as populist and vice versa, even though populism might not be the most appropriate term for their description, as they are mainly defined by ethnic nationalism. Their discourse is characterized by ethnic nationalism which influences the populist elements as well (Rydgren, 2017: 485).

Radical right parties that have emerged since the 1980s in Europe (e.g. Front National, FPÖ or the Danish People's Party) are united by their ethnic nationalism, claiming to promote the majority culture of their nation, which they wish to keep as ethnically homogenous as possible. This nationalism is naturally followed by an exclusionary attitude, directed towards immigrants and in some cases minorities. Their discourse or communication is dominated by issues related to immigration or refugees. The ethnic nationalism that characterizes these parties has to be distinguished from populism, while it must be noted that the former *influences* the populist messages of these parties, which are usually centered around anti-elitism, originating from the idea that 'the elite' (consisting of various actors) had betrayed the given country by embracing multicultural and internationalist ideas, or as it is argued in some cases: that they had sold out the country's sovereignty to the European Union (Ibid.: 485-487). All in all, nationalism is a characteristic of radical right parties that had emerged in Europe recently, but it must not be mistaken with populism. This chapter will intend to differentiate them.

According to Moffitt (2017), there is a seemingly taken-for-granted relationship between nationalism and populism, however, the link between them – as he quotes Stavrakakis (2005: 246) – is 'an unstable construct, a contingent, historically determined articulation'. As the two phenomena are often mentioned together, in a way they had become tied to each other and sometimes they are incorrectly used as synonyms.

De Cleen (2017) makes a thorough analysis of the two concepts and theoretically clarifies their differences, distinguishing them as distinctive discourses. According to him, the main reason behind their relatedness is that most of the notable examples of populist politics have been at the same nationalist and vice versa: nationalisms often had a populist component. For example, the PRR parties[4] such as the French Front National or the Freedom Party of Austria often reject ethnic-cultural diversity. The most important element of these parties is not populism, but rather radical right politics, at the core of which exclusionary ethnic-cultural nationalism can be found. As these parties are often labelled populist, thus their nationalism is often misunderstood (Ibid.: 10). Furthermore, as the nation-state is the

[4] Populist radical right parties. They can be characteirzed by the ideological dominance of nationalism over populism (De Cleen, 2017: 13).

dominant context for political representation, populism usually operates within this national context, which can also be a source of confusion (Ibid.: 1).

In the case of nationalism, the nation can be understood as the organizing principle or the nodal point around which the discourse is structured, and all other signifiers (e.g. culture, democracy, state) acquire meaning in relation to the nation. Nationalist discourse is structured around the 'in/out relation', thus drawing a distinction between the members and non-members of a given nation. Shared time, space, language or customs are used to differentiate the ingroup of members (Ibid.: 3-5). In contrast to this, populism 'the people' and 'the elite' are the organizing principles or nodal points. Their relationship is constructed through the antagonism of 'down/up': picturing 'the people' as a powerless group and 'the elite' as illegitimately powerful. The structure of the down/up axis is what differentiates populism from other discourses: the way 'the people' are constructed is essential (Ibid.:5-8). Nationalism and populism can clearly be distinguished and labelled as two distinct discourses.

To summarize, in the case of populism the 'down/up axis' refers to hierarchical position and power and the nodal points are the people-as-underdog and the elite (down/up structure), whereas in the case of nationalism, the nodal point is 'the people-as-nation' (in/out structure). Populism claims to represent the group of 'the people', while discursively constructing it in the same time. Moving away from ideology and defining populism discourse-theoretically strongly resembles the thin ideology definition by Mudde (Ibid.) In the posterior chapter of social constructivism, the discourse-theoretical perspective of populism will be further analysed.

3.7. Populism as a style of political communication

There have been some attempts to understand the populist communication style, as one of the fundamental characteristics of populist actors lies in their style of communication (Block and Negrine, 2017: 190). Populism had been characterized both as a discourse or style of political communication, which will be used as synonyms here, as they refer to the same thing: understanding populism as a 'particular mode of political expression', moving away from the definitions of both thick- and thin ideology. In this sense, populism can be seen as a variable: a populist political actor can be understood as *more or less* populist (Rydgren, 2017: 492-493; Moffitt, 2016: 21).

From a political communication point of view, populism might be understood as a set of features or elements of communicative messages that have their roots in the goals, motives and attitudes of political actors, the media, or citizens. It is the communicative construction of 'the people' what constitutes the core of populist communication, while anti-elitism and the exclusion of out-groups are key characteristics of it (Aalberg et al., 2016).

It can be understood as an appeal to the people with antipolitics, anti-elitist and anti-establishment ideologies; a discourse characterised by plain language that provides a sense of closeness between the populist political leaders and their electorate, the generally disenchanted public, etc. (Block and Negrine, 2017: 179). The populist style – which can be mainly associated with anti-establishment and nationalistic appeals combined with religious and cultural intolerance, building bonds among the like-minded and demonizing the 'other' – appears to be defining the political agenda of the century (Ibid.: 191). Therefore, it is time to ask: is it possible that populism is merely a style of political communication? As it can be seen hereinafter, some scholars argue that most likely it is.

3.7.1. Empty, exclusionary, anti-elitist and complete populism

In their research, Jagers and Walgrave (2007) – who define populism as a specific political communication style[5] - used three elements to distinguish four different kinds of populism (or populist communication), which are the following: empty populism, exclusionary populism, anti-elitist populism and complete populism.

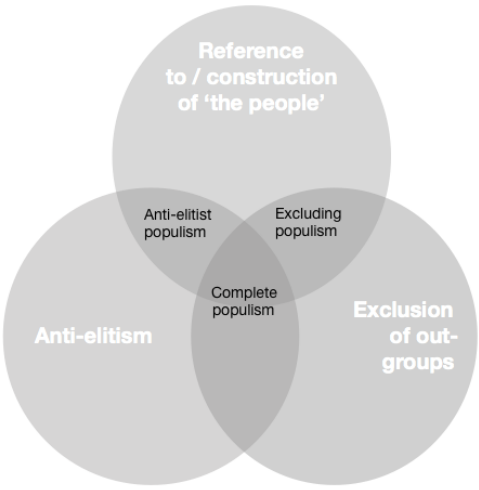


Figure 2. Elements and types of populism. [6]

In their understanding, empty populism means that the only element present is the references to the people. References to the people combined with the exclusion of out-groups leads us to exclusionary populism, and references to the people combined with attacking the elite is anti-elitist populism. Complete populism is the combination of all three elements. Empty populism can be seen as typical for using references to the people, as a communication strategy for the mere reason of attracting or mobilizing voters. Anti-elitist populism (if it stands alone) is considered to be closer to left-wing populism, while exclusionary and complete populism are typical of right-wing populism. It can be argued that the effects of references to the people are boosted when they are combined with criticism of elites and certain out-groups. Whereas this theory excludes several other potential combinations; when comparing allegedly populist and non-populist messages, the presence or absence of these four elements should be taken into account (Aalberg et al., 2016).

Jagers and Walgrave (2007: 3) – building on the earlier mentioned concept of thin-ideology by Mudde (2004) - propose a thin definition of populism, considering it as 'a political communication style of political actors[7] that refers to the people', therefore conceptualizing it as a communication frame that appeals to and identifies with 'the people', while pretending to speak in their name. It is a way to wrap up all sorts of issues, and as they argue: the most important element of a political style is actually the content of its discourse. Therefore, in their understanding populism displays closeness to the people by talking about them, and by appealing implicitly to them the populist communication style emphasizes their

[5] 'First, taking a clear position in the ongoing definition struggle, we define populism primarily as a specific political communication style. We conceive of populism as a political style essentially displaying proximity of the people, while at the same time taking an anti-establishment stance and stressing the (ideal) homogeneity of the people by excluding specific population segments' (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007).
[6] Based on Jagers & Walgrave (2006: 334-336), as cited in Aalberg et al. (2017).
[7] In their understanding, 'political actor' can refer to politicans, political parties, leaders of political movements, interest group representatives and journalists (2007: 3).

sovereignty and popular will. This conceptualisation of populism leaves behind all pejorative and authoritarian connotations: the thinly defined populism can be understood as 'a normal political style adopted by all kinds of politicians from all times' or 'a strategy to mobilise support, it is a standard communication technique to reach out to the constituency' (Ibid.: 4). In sum Jagers and Walgrave (2007: 5) proposed a clear and multi-layered definition of populism: if we consider populism to be a style of political communication adopted by political actors and we conceptualise it as 'rhetorically appealing to the people (thin concept) combined with a vertical and horizontal differentiation (thick concept), we end up with four types of populism that can be classified in four quadrants along a vertical and a horizontal axis'. As mentioned, these four types are: empty populism, anti-elitist populism, exclusionary populism and complete populism.

The construction of the in-group, 'the people', implies homogeneity. It can be viewed as a unity that has common values and interests, therefore it is capable of having a common will. In this sense, populism can be declared anti-pluralist, as it doesn't acknowledge the existence of legitimate differences among the in-group and therefore has problems with cultural, religious or other kinds of diversity. By appealing to the people, populists are attempting to bring a subject called 'the people' into being: they are the ones who produce it, while they claim to be presenting it. Populist actors, through their communication processes, try to create a new social identity among citizens (or promote certain aspects of their social identity) in order to unite them and generate a sense of belonging to an imagined community charged with positive emotions. Communicative messages are able to prime these aspects of social identity, while varying their influence on several things; such as information processing, opinion formation, behaviour and activation of notions of the in-groups and out-groups. In this sense, anti-elitism and exclusion of out-groups can be regarded as equivalents that make the standard to which 'the people' are contrasted, while at the same time contributing to the identification with the in-group. In summary, the (communicative) construction of 'the people' and references to it are key components of populist messages, mixed with anti-elitism and anti-out-groups as additional elements (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007). Populisms representatives support the pure rule of the majority, oppose intermediaries and open political discourse and favour the idea of a homogenous society; therefore, populism can be regarded as illiberal (Aalberg et al., 2016).

3.7.2. Identity, rhetoric and the use of media

Block and Negrine (2017) suggests a critical framework for the understanding of populist political communication that integrates three key categories: identity, rhetoric and the use of media:

1. **Identity** stands for representing an idealized self that embodies the difference and exclusion ('us' and 'them') and for the anti-politics, anti-elitist, anti-establishment ideologies;
2. **rhetoric** involves adversarial, emotional, patriotic and abrasive speech through which they connect with the discontented often via grassroots, community-oriented, communicative practices and spaces;
3. and the **use of media** refers to the competent use of various communication channels, analysed in the way how populist figures use it in the articulation and representation of politics. Their tactics may include playing the underdog, using abrasive speech, earning media spaces by a bullying style against the establishment and staging newsworthy political events.

With regards to the category of the use of media, it is important to note that populism, especially populist communication, has to be understood in the era of mediatization, therefore the role of the media cannot be dismissed or overlooked. While politics are becoming more mediatized, certain acts of speech or styles of rhetoric are becoming increasingly important, as they can lead to growing media coverage, which in case of political parties or political actors, can consequently lead to a wider awareness and visibility (Ibid.). Therefore, particular attention will be paid to the concept of mediatization and to the role of the media in a later chapter, as it is essential for the understanding of populism and its alleged mainstreaming in contemporary Europe.

With regards to the category of identity, it must be noted that in the construction of 'the people' the key role is played by the populist (and usually charismatic) leader. Identity construction is a highly relevant category in the analysis of the populist communication style, therefore, in a later chapter it will be thoroughly analysed.

In sum, if we characterize populism as a style of political communication, we can conclude that it has 'deeper roots associated with identity and culture, a specific style of rhetoric, and savvy use of various communication channels […] through which populists connect with the political feelings, aspirations, and needs of those who feel disenchanted, excluded, aggrieved, and/or disadvantaged by conventional center-ground politics or by social advances that threaten their ways of life' (Ibid.: 179). As to the disenchanted public: Norris (2016) argues that the surge of populist actors can be traced back to their appeal to those who feel threatened by cultural changes and the backlash of traditional, cultural values (Ibid.). From this point of view, populism is primarily an act of speech (communication via words, signs, images to connect with the people and demonise the elite / establishment / other) that can be regarded as a particular style of political communication. As Block and Negrine (2017: 190) argue, 'a fundamental characteristic of populist political actors lies in their style of communication, in their acts of speech'. As said, populist political actors use a direct and simple language to connect with the disenchanted public; presenting themselves as the solution to the problems that the electorate is facing. This conceptualisation is in accordance with the previously analysed definition from Jagers and Walgrave (2007), as both of the definitions conclude that populism can be conceptualised and understood as a style of political communication and therein lies the essence of it. If we contrast populist actors with other non-populist political actors – such as the center-ground elite – we can see how the latter works with a pluralist conversation, in which they seek consensus (rather than confrontation) and keeps 'distant and protected by the walls of political correctness' (Block and Negrine, 2017: 190).

3.7.3. Appealing to the disenchanted public: the backlash of traditional values and democracy

As previously noted, Norris (2016; Block and Negrine, 2017: 179) argues that the surge of populist actors is directly connected to their appeal to those who feel threatened by cultural changes, or more importantly: to the backlash of traditional values. According to Norris, as she refers to it, 'populist authoritarianism' (which can be regarded as the third wave of populism, as noted previously) is caused by a general backlash in Western societies. In the past few decades these societies have been gradually becoming more liberal on several issues (such as LGBT rights, tolerance of diversity, secular values, support for agencies of global governance, 'political correctness', etc.), however, this 'long-term generational shift' had threatened traditional cultural values, which had caused a fear – especially among less educated and older citizens – of becoming marginalized within their own countries. In this

sense, the surge of populist actors can be thought to be fuelled by this backlash; it is the disenchanted public who populist actors try to appeal to via the specifics of populist political communication, as discussed above.

While Norris focuses on the backlash in Western societies, the backsliding of democracy and the consequent emergence of extreme right and populist actors is also prominent in East-Central Europe, however, it may be due to different reasons. As Ágh (2013: 1) argues, after the collapse of the communism these nations had very high expectations and had expected a Western welfare state to emerge 'overnight'. Nevertheless, their disappointment has been tragic. The deep popular dissatisfaction and the loss of credibility of parties has opened the way to Euroscepticism in the ECE (Ágh, 2016: 279; Pew Survey, 2014). To sum it up, people felt that democracy came with a high price: the deep and quick economic transformations produced huge social contradictions and high unemployment, which the weak democratic state had not been able to control. Democracy had emptied, which had provided the background for the decline of democracy and the emergence of authoritarian systems in ECE, of which the Hungarian case can be regarded as an 'ideal type' or 'worst-case scenario' (Ibid.: 279). As Ágh states (2016: 280), the emptying of democracy had provided the background for the emergence of Fidesz by 2010, which meant transition to the authoritarian rule. In a later chapter the case of Hungary will be further analysed, aiming to provide an understanding of how the emptying of democracy can be understood in relation to the emergence of populism in this particular case.

3.7.4. Popular populist topics

In 2016, the Policy Solutions political research institute has analysed the position of populism in the European Union. In their analysis, they selected eleven European countries where populist parties had the biggest support: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, Italy and Slovakia. While the programs and campaign messages of the populist parties can be different from country to country, there are some topics and issues that can be identified in the majority of them. In 2016, these were the following:

a) referendum (as an instrument to overcome the power of 'the elite')
b) anti-corruption
c) anti-austerity
d) recovering autonomy
e) refugee and immigrant hostility

The importance of the existence of these common, overlapping topics that reflect on problems affecting Europe as a whole, is that they can provide a basis for cooperation and create unity among the populist parties of Europe, which can ultimately contribute to a 'populist zeitgeist'.

As to the **referenda**, the Brexit – which has been labelled as the most important moment since the fall of the Berlin Wall by Marine Le Pen (Dallison, 2016) - can provide an excellent example of the ability of the Eurosceptic and anti-EU populist parties to enforce their interests. As it has been highlighted then, populist actors do not only pose a threat to mainstream parties and the political system when they have formal positions of power; but – by giving simplistic answers to complex problems - are able to shift the whole political system in the direction of populism (Policy Solutions, 2016). As Norris (2016) had put it: even flash parties such as the UKIP can infect the political culture and mainstream parties, as

in the case of Brexit the 'UKIP fuelled more rabid anti-European sentiments and was one of the reasons Conservatives called the EU Brexit referendum.

In the eastern region of Europe referenda were mainly about the refugee quotas, while in the western region the focus was directed towards issues regarding the EU membership and the common currency. Fidesz, the governing party of Hungary, built a whole campaign on their referendum about the quotas in order to address their electorate. In summary, referenda have become an instrument of politics, facilitating a more direct form of democracy. All of the referenda were defied against the European Union as a whole or one of its policies, pleasing Eurosceptic voters and putting the emphasis on recovering autonomy. (Ibid.: 29-31).

Recovering autonomy correlates with Euroscepticism, which characterizes most of the newly emerged populist parties in Europe (but not all) and can be even found on the left side of the political spectrum of populist parties (Ibid.: 35). **Refugee and immigrant hostility** differs across regions: while in Eastern Europe it mostly refers to rejecting the refugee quota, in the rhetoric of Western European countries anti-immigration and anti-Muslim discourses can be found, supplemented by the rejection of cultural diversity (Ibid.: 34). **Anti-austerity** is one of the most popular messages of populist parties, however, due to the refugee crisis in 2016 and the subsequent wave of immigration coupled with the Brexit and the strengthening of Euroscepticism that it had generated, it became overshadowed (Ibid.: 36). With the topic of **anti-corruption**, populist parties aim to reflect on the earlier abuses of other parties, therefore picturing themselves as new and 'clean'. Despite the effort, there are several examples of populist parties being accused of corruption (Ibid.: 39-41).

4. Political communication in the age of mediatization

'The progress of the twentieth century has seen the political arena become more international, as the media have extended their reach, geographically and temporally. In the twenty-first century media audiences are the targets of political communication not only from domestic sources, but foreign ones' (McNair, 2007: 13).

Parallel with the universal suffrage that had been achieved in most of the advanced capitalist societies in the twentieth century, the technological revolution occurred and had brought about the appearance of the means of mass communication, making print, film, radio and television available to mass audiences (Ibid.) The development of the communication technology has brought about the phenomenon of mediatization, starting especially after World War II. Mazzoleni (2014: 42) refers to Schulz (2004) when listing the processes of mediatization, which are accordingly the following:

> a) Extending human communication beyond their natural limits,
> b) replacing social activities and institutions, and most importantly:
> c) obliging social actors and organizations to accommodate themselves to the logic of the media.

Obviously, the process of mediatization also has an effect on politics in general, as the media have gained a central position in most political routines (Mazzolenni, 2008: 3048). Researchers have used many labels to describe this process, such as personalization, agenda shaping, fragmentation, simplification, etc. While politics and the media have always been interlaced – politics has tended to use communication to achieve its aims -, the appearance of the new media meant that the mediatization of politics and political communication have become radicalized. The term 'Mediatization 2.0' refers to the situation in which the traditional media's logic has blended with interactive modes of communication, therefore making the political system even more dependent on the media (Mazzoleni, 2014: 44). Furthermore, these interactive modes of communication work better than ever as transmitters of messages: messages from the citizens can be communicated upwards to the political leaders. The emergence of the internet itself, with platforms such as blogging, or the social media has provided many new opportunities for the public to participate in political debates.

Williams and Delli Carpini (2011) list a number of effects of this 'new information environment' (cited in Mazzoleni, 2014: 44):

a) Increase of the information available to citizens;
b) which information is gathered, retrieved and transmitted at a faster rate;
c) individuals can control the information received by them;
d) there is an 'increased ability to target specific contents to specific audiences';
e) and an increase in the communication between the citizens and the elites (both horizontally and vertically, all kinds: one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-one, many-to-many).

Therefore, previously marginalized opinions and political groups can also manifest themselves in the new media environment, moreover, their statements can have global reach (McNair, 2018). It is important to note that online media has a high affinity to populism's rhetorical persuasion, as they both follow the same logic: quick click and broad audience (Usherwood, 2016). For all these reasons mentioned above, in order to analyse or understand

contemporary political processes – such as the rise of populism -, the role of the media and its effects must be taken into consideration.

4.1. Political Populism, Media Populism and Mediatized Populism

Mazzoleni (2014) makes a thorough distinction between political populism, media populism and mediatized populism, which will be summarized below.

Political populism (which had been discussed in the first chapter) isn't a new phenomenon as it had appeared in the 19th-century America. Recently, it has appeared in many mature democracies, often partly as a consequence of globalization. As Mudde (2004: 542) noted, populist discourse started to mainstream in the contemporary western democracies.

Media populism refers firstly to the inner character of contemporary mass communication, secondly, to the ideological outlook and conduct of certain news channels. Its connected to newsworthiness. According to Krämer (2014: 42-60), media populism is a distinct phenomenon, and the term refers to populism among the media that is independent of populism whatsoever. Though, it may be parallel to populist political movements and even seek strategic alliances with them. It cannot be argued that it is a common feature of all media, rather a matter of degree or typicality that is defined by certain stylistic and ideological elements, such as the construction and favouritism of in-groups, hostility toward the elites or institutions, reliance on a charismatic leader and group-related commonsense, and an appeal to moral sentiments, 'thus on an emotionalizing, personalizing, and ostentatiously plain-spoken discourse' (Krämer, 2014: 48). According to Jagers and Walgrave (2007: 319-345), media populism is the engine of political populism.

Mediatized populism refers to how the media often legitimizes the slogans or actions populist actors. It is well known that the politics and the media are interconnected, and populist actors do not hesitate to earn media attention by different strategies. Although this isn't only a characteristic of populist actors; they often demonstrate themselves as media-savvy, perfectly understanding newsworthiness and acting accordingly, both in the traditional and in the new media. Their public actions often fill the hunger of the media for entertaining events, human-interest stories, unusual language, etc. They often fuel greater visibility by communicating or acting in ways that will surely generate media attention.

As Mazzoleni (2014: 51-54) describes it, there are four stages of the life cycle of populist movements identified by academic research, namely: the ground-laying phase, the insurgent phase, the established phase and the decline phase. The media can be regarded as an "accomplice" in all of the phases. All in all, in present-day politics media management can be regarded as a basic feature of politics, and populist actors are not an exemption. Therefore, populism can only be analysed and fully understood within the framework of 'the media-driven influences that shape its contemporary features' (Ibid.: 54).

4.2. The concept of political communication

Although the term 'political communication' had been mentioned several times already, the precise meaning of it hasn't been determined; therefore, this chapter will intend to understand what is exactly meant by the term, and also to consider how it can be linked to both mediatization and populism: or in other words, to show how these terms are actually interconnected and consequently affect each other in several ways. How does political communication relate, in theory, to populism?

As it was cited by McNair (2007: 3-4), according to Denton and Woodward (1990: 11) what in fact makes a communication 'political' is its content and purpose. Most importantly, the intentionality of such communication has to be determined, which is defined by McNair (2007: 4) as 'purposeful communication about politics', incorporating not only all forms of communication by political actors, but also communication addressed *to* them, or communication *about* them. To summarize it, all political discourse can be included in this category, which does not only refer to verbal or written statements, but also to visual means of communication, such as a dress or a logo design. As McNair puts it:

'all those elements of communication which might be said to constitute a political 'image' or identity' (2007: 4).

The power of political communication should not be underestimated for several reasons. The success of political actors – such as political parties – depends on their ability to efficiently communicate with the public: the people who will vote for them, therefore legitimizing them. Using the mass- and the social media has become indispensable for the political actors to communicate with their public, so did the use of political marketing: targeting audiences, branding political actors, etc. For the vast majority of people, the media is the primary source of information about politics, and politicians have combined the techniques of social psychology with the use of the opportunity provided by the mass media. (Ibid.)

As it has been suggested by Kaid et al. (1991), political reality has three components or categories, which are: objective political reality, subjective political reality and constructed reality. The latter refers to the events as they are being covered by the media, which heavily influences subjective perceptions of the issues covered (McNair, 2007: 11).

4.3. Postmodern political communication

In postmodern societies, public opinion has increasingly become policy-formulating as political actors have become more sensitive to public opinion. The value of ideology and value-systems has decreased, and attention has shifted to the communicative aspects of politics - such as the image of a political leader, his or her rhetorical abilities -, making actual political content less valued and marginalized – at least when being compared with considerations about appearance, personality or image (McNair, 2007: 38-39).

As it is argued, with the rise of the mass media, masses had been brought into the political process to a previously unprecedented degree. In parallel with this process, as Boorstin had argued with regards to the rise of advertising and public relations in politics, it 'express[es] a world where the image, more interesting than the original, has itself become the original. The shadow has become the substance' (quoted in McNair, 2007: 40). People had become consumers of politics (primarily via the media), but some argue that they are not active producers of it (Ibid.). By all means, it cannot be denied that the way in which political actors communicate – not forgetting the means of visual communication -, had become increasingly important in the last decades. With the mediatization - moreover, mediatization 2.0 -, political actors are now judged by their communication more than ever, which also gives them an opportunity to actually exploit this overwhelming attention and use it for their own benefit.

4.3.1. The role of the media

The role of the media in the political process have been heavily debated, although its importance cannot be denied, as it is necessary for the health of liberal democracies to have an independent media system on which the public can rely to inform about public matters, such as politics. There is a dialectical relationship between the media and the political process, where the media should be an independent actor who protects the people from abuses of power and acts as an instrument of democracy. However, some – instead of focusing on the positive impact the media could have -, had turned their attention to its agenda-setting function. McCombs (1981: 121-140) argues that this function is the main contributor to the political process, highlighting that the media orders and structures political reality, showing the audience what is 'really' important at a time, therefore in a way communicating the meaning of politics. Doing so, they actually insert these political events into narrative frameworks. In the end, the dominant framework persists (McNair, 2007: 43-67).

In the dialectical relationship between the media and politicians, the media's demand for news is met by the need of the politicians to be reported, therefore creating a mutual interdependence between them in an era where the news space to be filled has become much wider. At this point a distinction can be made between the 'quality' and the 'tabloid' journalism, the latter focusing on news that can be labelled as more dramatic and relatively simple – and yet receiving more coverage than the more complex issues covered by quality journalism. The main purpose of the press since its emergence as a mass medium has been 'to produce information in commodity form, and to maximise advertising revenue by selling that information to the largest possible number of readers' (McNair, 2007: 61).

According to McNair (2007: 60, 2018: 72), a distinction can be made between the work of Chomsky and others who argue that the media is propagandistic in its nature, and others such as Hallin or McNair, who rather stress the flexibility and adaptability of the media in a fluid and dynamic political system, where elites are continuously rotating. Regardless of our understanding of this matter, it is important to stress that in the postmodern era those political actors who lack the proper public relations machinery and who do not form a part of mainstream political discourse will tend to less interesting for the journalists, or in a broader sense, for the media. According to Mazzoleni (2014: 43), politicians have increasingly understood that they have to fulfil the demands of the media if they do not want to be ignored by the mass audiences.

5. The constructed nature of political identities

The role of identity cannot be overlooked in the study of populism, as much of the populist arguments are in fact based on it. As an example, one of the most important popular topics of populist political actors is immigration, which exists in the larger frame of national identity (Fukuyama, 2017).

According to Fukuyama, the modern concept of identity is built on three components:

1. Firstly, on a distinction between an inner self and an outer social reality combined with the belief that the former is being suppressed by the larger society;
2. Secondly, on the belief in a collective identity that is based on tradition and shared experience;
3. Thirdly, on the demand for recognition, which is regarded to be what makes identity politics political, as recognition is usually granted through political action.

As Fukuyama argues, all these three components can be found in contemporary populist movements: they attack external elites who are claimed to be suppressing 'the people'; a collective identity is built around the traditional ethnic identity which is threatened by newcomers; and they feel that due to the liberal worldview they cannot even demand the traditional identity to be recognized anymore (Ibid.).

In the analysis of political identities, the theory of constructivism can be used: a social theory which can aid the process of understanding the way in-groups and out-groups are created, furthermore, it can be used as a tool to understand the notion of 'the people', which is the core concept of populism. Constructivists are mainly concerned with human consciousness and knowledge, they treat ideas as structural factors that influence how actors interpret the world. In their point of view regulative and constitutive norms shape what actors do, and the meaning that actors bring to their activities are shaped by the underlying culture. Constructivists highlight the socially constructed nature of the actors and their identities: in their point of view, to understand and be able to explain human action, it must be understood how meaning is given to activities and how identities are constructed (Barnett, 2014: 156-168). In summary, according to the social theory of constructivism, the social world is not given as an external reality but rather depends on human thoughts and ideas, therefore it can be understood as a world of human consciousness. According to this theory, what is important is not the physical entity itself, but rather the ideas and beliefs concerning the entity, or in other words: what the entity signifies in the mind of people (Jackson et al., 2006).

Language and communication play a central role in the process of changing interests, while persuasion and argumentation play a central role in socialization (Checkel and Moravcsik, 2001). Manipulative and argumentative persuasion can be distinguished: in the case of the former social interaction is exempt and it is often concerned with political elites manipulating the public. The strategic use of arguments (rhetorical action) build upon manipulative persuasion. In contrast, argumentative persuasion can be understood as a social process of interaction that involves the change of attitudes or as a mechanism through which a change of preference can occur (219-221). 'It is an activity or process in which a communicator attempts to induce a change in the belief, attitude or behaviour of another person… through the transmission of a message in a context in which the persuade has some degree of free choice' (Ibid.:221). In this sense, persuasion is a process of convincing someone through reasonable argument. It is needless to say: political persuasion mostly happens in a mediatized environment, where language and communication play an increasingly important role.

Accordingly, the construction of identities can be understood as a discursive attempt of persuasion done *by* the political actors and (mainly) *via* the media.

5.1. The discourse theoretical perspective of populism

In an earlier chapter populism and nationalism had been distinguished as distinct discourses; in this chapter the discourse-theoretical perspective of populism will be further analysed. As it had been noted earlier, one of the main features of populism is the construction of two groups opposing each other: an 'us' (or as it is usually referred to: 'the people', in the case of populism: people-as-underdog constructed through an up/down antagonism) and a 'them', also referred to as 'the elite'.

Socio-economic and socio-cultural changes are often argued to be what populist actors capitalize on: the 'losers of globalization' is a well-known expression of such position and can be viewed as an 'objective cause' of populist politics. However, populism cannot be reduced and viewed only as a 'symptomatic effect' of extra-political developments, especially considering the fact that these developments are 'given particular meaning and salience in discourses, depending on the political goals and ideologies of the actors in question' (De Cleen et al., 2018: 4). The same can be argued about both 'the people', 'the elite' and 'the crises' to which populist actors claim to respond. In other words, populist actors actively interpret these elements, providing specific understandings to social, economic or cultural aspects. As such, attention must be drawn to the discourse theoretical tradition (e.g. the work of Ernesto Laclau [1977, 2005a, 2005b]), which offers an explanation to populist politics that can be said to correlate with the understanding of populism as a style of political communication. As De Cleen (2018: 4) refers to Laclau (2005b: 33):

'Consequently this conceptualization of populism goes against the tendency to see populism as a set of ideas about politics and society: the focus shifts from the 'contents' of populism – *what* are the demands formulated by populist actors, what is their ideology – to *how* it articulates 'those contents – whatever those contents are''.

The discourse theoretical approach implies that attention should be directed towards how populism is *articulated* with a range of other elements, such as nationalism or conservativism. This approach can be used to establish a logic that can be invoked to promote different political goals: might it be from the radical left or the radical right, progressive or regressive. To provide an example, two political parties, the Front National (France) and Podemos (Spain) can be compared: while in the case of the former the meaning of the people mainly derives from exclusionary nationalism, Podemos articulates a more inclusive understanding, drawing on sources such as social democracy, radical left movements, feminism, etc. Populist elements are articulated with non-populist elements, which highlights why one must be careful when talking about a 'populist Zeitgeist' or claiming that we live in populist times (Ibid.: 1-6).

5.2. The construction of 'the people'

Benjamin Moffitt (2017) also draws attention to the work of Ernesto Laclau (2005) who had analysed the so called 'constructivist turn' in political representation, explaining why constructing 'the people' is – according to him – a main task of radical politics. As Moffitt notes:

‘Laclau makes the important argument that populism is not an ideology, set of beliefs or worldview, but rather is something that is done – it is the discursive and performative construction of ‘the people’ against the system, the outcome of this process being the dichotomous division of society.’ (2017: 415)

Therefore, it is important to see that ‘the people’ does not exist until the point that they are constructed by political actors. ‘Political practices do not *express* the nature of social agents but, instead, *constitute* the latter’ (Laclau, 2005b: 33). In other words: it is the populist political actors that create the notion of ‘the people’, which does not exist prior to this constitution. Therefore, populist actors first create the group for whom they claim to speak for through representation, which can be argued to be controversial. The construction of ‘the people’ is done ‘in the performative dimension of naming’ (Laclau, 2005a:103). As Laclau (2005a) argues, the populist leader is of high importance in this process, as the created group is unified symbolically around one individual, the leader; which correlates with the earlier chapter on charismatic leadership, that being a determinative factor of populist leaders.

Another concept to consider is the ‘chain of equivalence’, as referred to by Laclau and Mouffe (2001). Populist actors, in the process of constructing their ‘people’ and in order to appeal to a rather wide range of interests or concerns, bring together different demands and identities: this is the so-called chain of equivalence. What is common in these demands and identities – and therefore makes them form a chain – is that they all feel endangered by an ‘elite’: therefore, the construction of ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ are parallel (De Cleen et al., 2018: 4). Creating an ‘us’ and a ‘them’ can be understood as the creation of frames: mental structures that shape the way we see and interpret the world around us, that exist in the human conceptual system and are primarily evoked by language (Lakoff, 2004 in Szilágyi and Bozóki, 2015: 162).

5.3. Constructing the ‘transnational people’

In his article, Moffitt (2017) defines transnational populism[8], while at the same time distinguishing it from both international cooperation between populists and national populism. Besides, he analyses the role of the media in broadcasting transnational populist claims. To fully understand contemporary far-right populism in Europe, it is important to turn our attention to the notion of transnational populism, especially in contrast to national populism.

As it has been mentioned earlier, there is a taken-for-granted relationship between populism and nationalism, therefore, it had become an increasingly interesting question whether transnational populism – which is populism without the nationalist element -, exists at all. With regards to the difference between transnational and international populism, Moffitt engages with the work of De Cleen (2017) when stating that transnational populism constructs the people – who are opposed to national and transnational elites – beyond national borders, therefore are spread over several different national contexts and may be opposed to some kind of transnational, international or supra-national elite, or even to a specific national elite. The construction of the elite here is secondary, as what provides the difference between national and transnational populism is ‘the people’. According to De Cleen (2017), an example of transnational populism can be international cooperation between national populist actors (commonly referred to as international populism), or the construction of people-as-underdogs transnationally (not only linking up national people-as-underdogs). All things considered,

[8] In his article, Moffitt defines populism as: ’a political style that features an appeal to ’the people’ versus ’the elite’, ’bad manners’ and the performance of crisis, breakdown or threat’ (2017: 410). Building on this definition, Moffitt defines transnational populism the exact same way.

populism often opposes a nationally defined people-as-underdog to international elites, but the construction of a transnational people-as-underdog has been very rare (Ibid.: 19).

International collaboration between populist actors – such as when European radical right populist actors (PRR) protest persistently against the European Union and its elite or against 'Brussels' – can be understood as a sort of meta-populism, where a chain of populisms is created: different populism unite and bring together their specificities as they oppose common international, transnational or foreign elites (De Cleen, 2017; Moffitt, 2017). The question arises: can transnational populism be anything more than a chain of (national) populisms? European radical right populist parties generally have a nationalist character and antipathy against organisations that are above the nation-state, therefore, they are not likely to become a transnational movement, especially considering the fact that these populist parties have no formal political institutions of any kind, except for the European Parliament (Moffitt, 2017: 411). However, the PRR parties can provide an interesting example to the existence of people-as-underdog, as they have constructed a contradiction between 'ordinary people who resist multiculturalism and cherish their national identity, and national and European elites that are undermining national identity through lenient integration and migration policies' (De Cleen, 2017: 20). PRR parties often present themselves as the defenders of European identity, defending it from immigration and Islamisation, while at the same time blaming the European elites for promoting immigration (Ibid.: 23).

In short, the 'transnational people' are made up of those identities that construct the populist leader's characterisation of 'the people' who are under attack from some kind of 'elite', across several countries. It is a far more diffuse group than the nationally bounded 'people', and also harder to characterise. The audience of transnational populism can have a wide range of actors, such as politicians, transnational organisations, citizens from several different countries, and most importantly: media actors (Ibid.).

5.4. Transnational populism and the media

As it has been argued before, media is a primary actor of postmodern political communication. In the case of transnational populism, the importance of the media is even higher. As populist claims are constitutive, they are reliant on an audience, which – according to the mediatization discussed earlier -, can be found through media channels. Media becomes the channel for the construction of transnational populist identities, performing a vital role in the broadcast and amplification of the populist messages, thus making them reach a wider and possibly international audience (Moffitt 2016; 2017).

Media populism has been mentioned before and it is particularly relevant in the case of transnational populism. The media is likely to present itself as an authority that represents the people as a proxy, actively judging the mediated claims it transmits on the behalf of these people, in a way being 'their voice' (Ibid.: 419). According to Krämer (2014: 49), in order to make this kind of representation possible, the media outlets have to make people forget that they are organisations and rather picture themselves as some kind of pure movement that lacks institutional structures and has no relationships to political actors whatsoever. Social media can also be mentioned at this point, especially that is undoubtedly more representative of the people and at the same time less bound by national boundaries, compared to the traditional forms of media. Most importantly, in social media the dynamics of communication are reflexive and multidirectional. Transnational populism mostly operates online (Moffitt, 2017: 420): a trend which is termed by Gerbaudo (2014: 83) as 'populism 2.0'.

Although transnational populism is still admittedly rare (especially compared to nationally bounded populism), as globalisation and transnationalism proceed and as a result of it political identities shift, in the future it is likely that more examples of transnational populism will appear. However, due to the barriers in establishing transnational identities, it is unlikely that it will overtake nationally bounded forms of populism and become the most dominant form of it. Anyway, no matter how rare transnational populism is now, the phenomena does highlight that populism and nationalism are not interlinked, and that populism is able to expand transnationally and to create 'the people' across national borders (Moffitt, 2017).

5.5. Establishing political identities

Another concept to be considered is the one of political identities. According to a theory developed by Meléndez and Kaltwasser (2017), the growth of populism depends on the pre-existence of an anti-establishment political identity and on the degree to which the public can (or in this case cannot) identify with existing political parties. This special type of political identity emerges if political actors are capable of activating anti-establishment sentiments by using populist rhetoric to criticize 'the elite'. Therefore, as it is argued, voters cannot develop an anti-establishment political identity without populist agency. From this point of view, political identities can be understood as emotional and rational attachments to a party which offer a mental map by which their voters can structure their preferences. Identification with a party can be both positive and negative. The following figure demonstrates how anti-establishment partisanship can be defined:

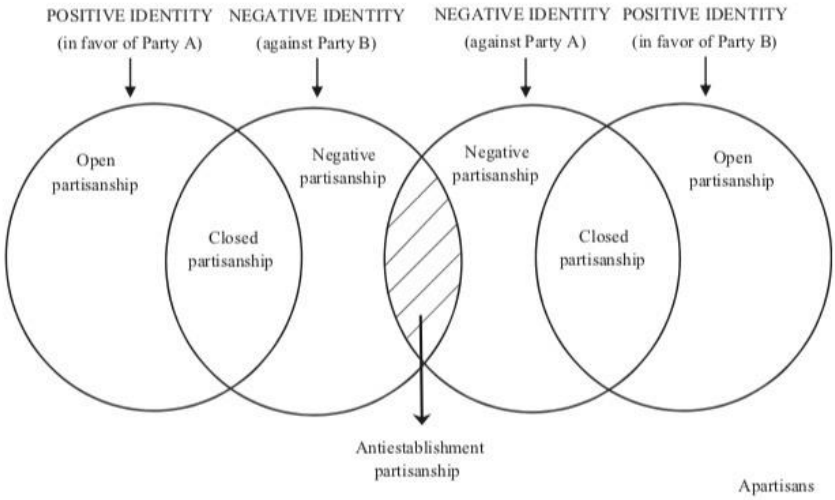


Figure 3. Different types of partisanship[9]

The difference between the anti-establishment partisanship and apartisans is that while the former has multiple negative identifications, apartisans do not have and kind of political identifications, nor positive, nor negative (Ibid.).

Meléndez and Kaltwasser (2017) argue that in the case of party politics, a new political identity can emerge and be a fertile soil for the rise of populist actors only when the voters systematically reject all of the mainstream political parties. In other words, this rejection itself becomes the so-called anti-establishment partisanship, which can only occur if certain political actors skilfully employ the populist set of ideas to blame the establishment for the problems that people have to face (Ibid.: 11). Although this theory can only be used in the

[9] Meléndez and Kaltwasser, 2017:5.

case of party politics and does not answer many of the questions that arise about populist actors outside of party politics, it does highlight an interesting aspect. Namely, that 'without populist agency, it is difficult to see the rise of an anti-establishment political identity' (Ibid.: 11). The anti-establishment political identity is constructed by populist actors in order to exploit the sentiments of the citizens and use it for their own political benefit, while channelling the negative feelings against an 'elite', 'establishment' or any kind of 'others'.

6. Mainstreaming populism: a populist zeitgeist?

'Populists do not need to win election to enact their policies and spread their style of politics. They can do so through the very mainstream parties whose votes they threaten to take; infecting them and living off their political blood' (The Economist, 2018)

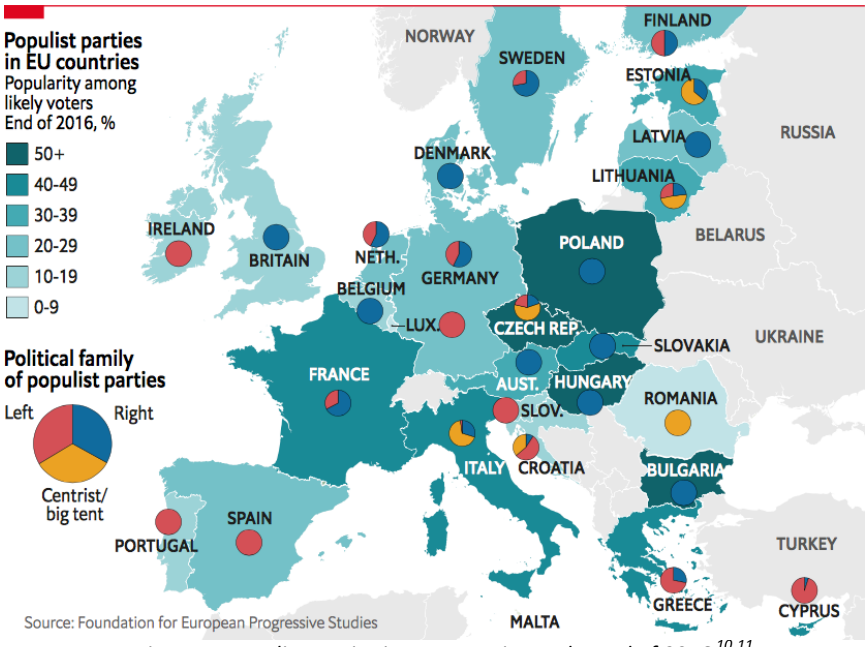


Figure 4. Populist parties in EU countries at the end of 2016 [10] [11]

After the rise of the Eurosceptic parties across Europe, the term populism and the PRR[12] parties came up and suddenly more and more political actors had been labelled populist. As a consequence of the upsurge of these so-called populist parties, much academic attention had been directed towards them, therefore a great deal is known already about the causes of their upsurge (Rooduijn, 2013: 2). However, much less is known about the consequences of the rise of these parties, and it is in a timely fashion to ask the question: is populism becoming the mainstream; are we witnessing the populist Zeitgeist? What was the response of mainstream politics to the populist upsurge?

In his well-known and much cited article, Cas Mudde had argued that the populist discourse has become mainstream in the politics of western democracies (2004: 542) and that since the 1990s populism had become a regular feature in these countries (Ibid.: 551). This might be surprising, however, although the influx of refugees and the financial crisis contributed to the most recent wave of populism, it has been growing since the 1980s (The Economist, 2018). During this time populism had been mostly used by outsider parties, however, mainstream politicians have been using it as well to counter their populist challengers (Mudde, 2004: 551). Therefore, a vicious circle is created, where mainstream actors either have to give in to populists and in response to their appearance create a more populist democratic system, or they have to resist them (Ibid.: 562).

[10] The Economist, 2018.
[11] The map of populism - along with a populism tracker - was created by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies and Policy Solutions, aiming to become a comprehensive website investigating the trends of populism. For further information such as publications about populism and current populist trends published by FEPS & Policy Solutions, visit their website: https://progressivepost.eu/spotlights/populism/map/
[12] Populist Radical Right.

The phenomena of populist discourse becoming mainstream in the politics of western democracies was referred to as 'the populist Zeitgeist'[13] by Mudde; stating that when a populist challenger appears, mainstream parties that are part of the establishment will employ a strategy of actually using populist themes and rhetoric in order to fight off the challenge: this is the dynamic that brings about the populist Zeitgeist (Ibid.: 562-563). To summarize it, Mudde claims that the populist rhetoric has been incorporated by mainstream political actors as well, partly to fight off the challenge that the newly emerged PRR parties meant for them. Populist parties can influence the discourse of other parties, furthermore: populist arguments are becoming increasingly prominent in the media (Ibid., 542), which is usually referred to as 'media populism'.

To answer the question what fuels the mainstreaming of populism or what drives mainstream political actors to use populist discourse, we can state that the popular attractiveness (standing up for the ordinary and powerless people and representing them) and the success of the populist parties triggers mainstream parties to become more populist in order to try to get more popularity. As Rooduijn argues, mainstream parties can employ three different strategies in order to respond to the rise of populist parties: they can employ a dismissive strategy, adopt an adversarial strategy or adopt an accommodative tactic. In case of the accommodative tactic, mainstream parties hope that if they at least partially adopt elements of the populist ideas, they can win back their voters and keep their electorate by undermining the distinctiveness of the populist party. This scenario is likely to happen if mainstream parties have either lost seats or when populist parties are on the rise and thus challenging them. Mainstream parties and the market-oriented mass media are both interested in appealing to an even larger audience and some claim that they increasingly employ the seemingly successful populist set of ideas or discourse to this end (Rooduijn, 2013: 8-13).

6.1. The spiral of populism

The concept of the 'spiral of populism' – which can be seen in Figure 5 – gives a possible explanation regarding how a populist zeitgeist could come into being: as populism – representing the interests of ordinary people – is an attractive message for many citizens, vote-seeking parties and the market-oriented media will increasingly incorporate the populist set of ideas into their own messages. However, by doing so, they will cause the citizens to be less satisfied with politics in general, and this declining political satisfaction will again spur the success of the populist parties (Rooduijn, 2013: 15).

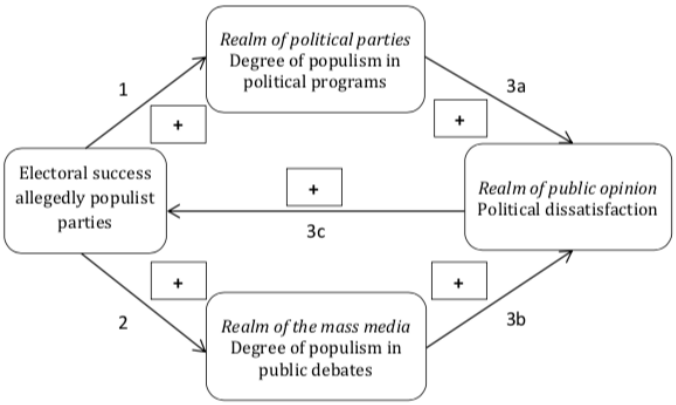


Figure 5. The spiral of populism[14]

[13] Zeitgeist can be translated as 'the spirit of the times'.
[14] Rooduijn, 2013: 10.

In spite of all these, it must be stated that there is academic evidence for mainstream parties not copying populist parties as well. As for example the findings of Rooduijn show, while mainstream parties are likely to adjust their position about immigration and integration issues, they are not becoming more populist. Nevertheless, populist parties are also affected by their own success: once they experience electoral growth, they adjust their political programmes. As it had been noted by De Cleen et al. (2018: 5), parties are likely to turn to populism in order to acquire power – using it as some kind of strategy to do so -, but this does not necessarily mean that they will remain populist once they are in power. The fact that populist parties can become less populist by adjusting their programme and that mainstream parties can at the same time become more populist indicates that parties are not *either* populist *or* not populist, but rather *more* or *less* populist. Therefore, the dichotomous approach is not valid in this case (Ibid.: 95-96). Furthermore, the dichotomous approach does not take into consideration populism as a set of ideas and only focuses on political parties (Ibid.: 7).

It is important to note that while copying populist positions is a notable tendency in some cases, there are examples to the exact opposite, especially given the fact that the surge of 'illiberal democracy' has produced a backlash. It cannot be stated that Europe is heading in the direction of the PRR parties until there are pro-European and pluralist political actors such Emmanuel Macron[15] and the En Marche! or the Spanish Ciudadanos (The Economist, 2018). Furthermore, while the relevance and importance of populism in contemporary politics cannot be denied, it must be questioned if it is really as central and pressing as it is assumed to be: one must be careful not to get entangled with a 'neo-popular bubble' – a term coined by Csigó (2016) -, or populist hype (presupposing a huge outpouring of discourse on populism).

The importance of populism – more specifically: contemporary populist politics – must be treated carefully and it must not be overestimated, furthermore, it has to be differentiated from other conceptual frameworks or ideologies. Populism has become a framework for the understanding of political reality, but there are still prominent questions to be answered, such as if the increased discourse about populism relates in any way to 'the dynamics of public debate, media logics, and the functioning of the academic field' or if the anti-populist outpouring – which refers to the widespread criticism of populism that followed it as a response in general and in specific cases as well (e.g. Brexit) – has had a 'performative effect of consolidating the position of populist actors as the main opposition to the *status quo*, enabling them to punch way above their weight in terms of shaping the political agenda' (De Cleen et al., 2018: 9-10).

[15] Emmanuel Macron has been referred to as a populist actor and has even accepted the label himself, as in this case it meant 'talking to the people' without going through traditional parties. Yet, he cannot be described as a populist 'as his claim to be an alternative to traditional parties was not built around the systematic construction of 'the ordinary people' against 'the elite'' (De Cleen et al., 2018: 5).

7. Case 1: Viktor Orbán and his 'illiberal democracy' in Hungary

The aim of this chapter is to understand contemporary Hungarian politics within the framework of populism and the backsliding of democracy in the East-Central European region. After a general introduction follows the outlining of the transition process and the subsequent decline of democracy in the ECE region which is argued to have contributed to the rise of populism. In the case study of Hungary, populism will be analysed according to the previously presented critical framework developed by Block and Negrine (2017), where identity, rhetoric and the use of media are considered to be the units of analysis.

Following the end of the communist era, liberal democracy has emerged and had become the accepted way of governance and the founding principle of European societies. However, major changes are happening: authoritarian right-wing populism is sweeping the western world – of which Hungary can be considered as an example (Jones, 2016). Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has announced in his speech of 2014: his government is committed to build an 'illiberal democracy'[16], thus marking a vision of the country's future in ideological terms, while using typically populist rhetoric.

7.1. Transition from democracy to a semi-authoritarian regime?

Backsliding of democracy made the ECE countries 'vulnerable first to a populist turn and then to an authoritarian turn with the elitist, oligarchy-prone parties in their over-centralized states' (Ágh, 2016: 278). Populism – being prominent in Central Europe both as a political discourse and as party strategy – is prominent in the ECE region, while liberal democracy is argued to be at particular risk in the post-Communist countries. While some scholars think of Hungary as the oddity of the region, others claim that it is 'in the forefront of a general populist-authoritarian turn of the Eastern peripheries' (Enyedi, 2016: 20).
Following the end of communism and the subsequent transition, East-Central European countries had high expectations for catching up with the West, which was generally identified with democratization. However, the expectations were followed by deep popular dissatisfaction and the emptying of democracy, which might have opened the way for Euroscepticism in the region (Pew Research Center, 2014).

According to Ágh (2016), Hungary has become a Potemkin democracy, as since the 2010 elections the formal institutions of democracy have been only a façade, arguing that the country is the worst-case of the decline of democracy in East-Central Europe (Ibid.: 279-280). The emptying of democracy has been an ideal background for the emergence of Fidesz in 2010 and the transition to authoritarian rule and Potemkin democracy. Fidesz – with two-thirds supermajority -, has managed to change the entire political-legal system and 'establish a new kind of authoritarian system in which all changes were "legal" and seemingly "democratic" ' (Ágh, 2016: 281). The backsliding of democracy and 'populism from above' has led to an elected autocracy. After Fidesz had won the 2014 elections – again with a two-thirds supermajority which due to the unfair elections only meant 25% of the entire electorate -, and Orbán had declared an 'illiberal democracy', the government had started its freedom fight against the European Union (Ágh, 2016: 283-284).

[16] The full speech in English can be found here: Tóth, Cs. (2014): Full text of Viktor Orbán's speech at Baile Tusnad (Tusnádfürdő) of 26 July 2014, The Budapest Beacon, Available at: https://budapestbeacon.com/full-text-of-viktor-orbans-speech-at-baile-tusnad-tusnadfurdo-of-26-july-2014/

However, there is a point that is very important to emphasize: due the loss of by-elections in October 2014 - and thus losing two-thirds majority -, and to the changes in both public discourse and political landscape; Fidesz has begun to radicalize with appropriating topics represented by Hungary's far-right party, Jobbik until then, in order to regain supporters and thus proceeding the path of populism (Ágh, 2016: 283-284). In this sense, the case of Hungary correlates with the previously presented theory of Mudde (2004: 551), namely that mainstream politicians are likely to 'use populism' (understood here as themes, as rhetoric, as a discourse or style of communication) when they feel that they are threatened by populist challengers; thus a vicious circle is created, where mainstream political actors try to fight populist actors by actually 'giving in'. Jobbik had been able to push the rhetoric of Fidesz further to the right and by appealing to Jobbik supporters, Fidesz gained control of public opinion (Timmer et al., 2018: 5).

7.2. The refugee crisis: 'Muslim invasion'

The refugee issue does not seem to lose its relevance for Fidesz, as even in the election campaign of 2018 has been largely based on the exploitation of the refugee issue and the inherent fearmongering that led a wide segment of the population believe that the European Union intends to flood Hungary with refugees and *only* Fidesz - particularly the prime minister -, is capable of stopping the European Union of forcing its will on the country (Müller, 2016). The government had framed the issue as 'us or the migrants'. Analysing the responses that had been given to the refugee crisis by the Hungarian government is vital in order to be able to understand both the identity and the rhetoric of the Hungarian governing country.

On 15 September 2015, the Hungarian government declared a 'state of migration emergency' due to the situation at its Serbian border, which had been caused by 'mass migration' (Fekete, 2016:40; Scheppele, 2015). The refugee crisis had been labelled to rather be a Muslim invasion that necessitated a military response, with the governing party regularly stating that European people should not become a minority in their own continent. Hungary had failed to acknowledge its obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and the Dublin regulations and had spent millions of euros on a referendum titled the 'National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism' and on setting up anti-immigration billboards all over the country, with captions such as: 'If you come to Hungary you must not take away the work of Hungarians!'[17]. 'Illegal migrants' – as they had often been referred to by the ruling party or the part of the Hungarian media leaning towards them -, had been accused of endangering Hungarian citizens by taking their jobs and consequently, their social security. The Fidesz government has often argued to be defending European culture and values, and actually being the only political actor doing so (Fekete, 2016: 40-41).

Emphasizing that they are the only actor capable of defending European culture and values correlates with the previously mentioned theory of Müller (2016), who argued that populism is mostly defined by anti-pluralism: populist actors claim that *only* they are capable to represent the people (or in this case, to 'defend them from the Muslim invasion'). As Enyedi points it out (2016: 20-21), although Hungary was the first to reject the idea of the proposed European quota system, it had been followed by many neighbouring countries, implying that the values prevailing in the region concerning national and racial homogeneity are different from those of the Western discourse, and that the deepening of conflicts related to

[17] A picture of the billboard can be seen here: http://www.euronews.com/2015/06/12/five-of-the-most-controversial-anti-immigration-posters

multiculturalism and globalization coupled with the inability of the European Union to maintain the image of competitiveness may ultimately allow for a larger populist presence in the region.

In summary, the refugee crisis came in handy for the government, providing an opportunity for the creation of a new 'enemy' and for a negative campaign against it, in order to regain popular support (Ágh, 2016: 283-284). The crisis had definitely contributed to the improvement of the electoral position of Fidesz 'by means unrelated to political competition traditionally understood in liberal democracies' (Győri et al., 2017: 79). As argued by some, anti-immigration rhetoric had also served to hide expropriation of public funds and the unprecedented assault on media pluralism and press freedom (Ibid.) Since the peak of the refugee crisis has passed, the government had to come up with a new way of keeping it in the limelight, therefore they proposed a referendum against the refugee quotas in 2016 (Győri et al., 2017: 13), and had also found new enemies since then (e.g. György Soros or the civil society). As discussed previously, refugee and immigrant hostility, recovering autonomy (e.g. the freedom fight against the EU or Brussels) and referendums have been among the most popular populist topics in 2016 (Boros and Kadlót, 2016), all of which we can identify in the actions and rhetoric of the Hungarian government.

7.3. The government's use of identity

The policies and political vocabulary of Viktor Orbán in many cases foreshadowed the direction in which the country is heading, as the Prime Minister regularly speaks about cultural survival and patriotism, marking outsiders and insiders (the well-known 'us vs. them' comparison of populism), raising fears about for example Muslims in the name of the Christian-national idea. In fact, Viktor Orbán has mentioned several times the possibility of Europe being 'Islamized' and the cultural decline that would follow, claiming that these are threats to the Christian Europe and are a result of the 'liberal babble' of European elites (Fekete, 2016: 43-44). As Orbán argued on the final day of the 26th annual Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp[18], human rights are a kind of 'western fundamentalism' and he had also stated that: 'we would like Europe to remain for the Europeans, and we want to protect Hungary for the Hungarians'. Furthermore, he argued that there is a clear connection between immigration and terrorism; between immigration and growth in unemployment; and that the arrival of immigrants means a consequent increase of crime. At the end of his speech Orbán announced that the 'overwhelming majority' of Hungarians had returned the 'National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism' and had supported the anti-immigration policies of the government, however, the truth is that only one in five households even bothered to return the questionnaire (Kovács, 2015), causing the poll to turn out invalid due to low voter turnout. Yet it is true that almost all Hungarians who voted in the referendum (98%) rejected the migrant quotas of the European Union (Győri et al., 2017: 13). However, as Győri et al. (2017: 13) points it out, 'it was clear from the outset that the goal of the massively expensive exercise was entirely party political and symbolic'. As it had been argued in previous chapters, populist actors claim to represent the will of the majority of the people in a given nation (sometimes transnationally) – Enyedi (2016: 10-11) refers to this as 'majoritarianism' -, therefore it is of vital importance that the results of the often-used referenda are in accordance with the policies of the government. However, as this case indicates, even if the results and the policies are *not* in

[18] The speech and the most important statements of the Prime Minister had been summarized in the Website of the Hungarian Government, and can be found here: http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/news/hungarians-have-decided-they-do-not-want-illegal-migrants

accordance, it can still be argued that they are, by simply altering the definition of 'majority'.

The Hungarian Prime Minister does not only stand up against – as he refers to them – 'illegal migrants' but also against the European Union, usually referred to as 'Brussels', claiming that the sovereignty of the nation-states is limited and decreasing (Kovács, 2015). Particularly in the period between 2006 – 2010, the governing party of Hungary, Fidesz could be characterized as anti-elitist at the discursive level, contrasting ordinary Hungarians with the international economic and cultural establishment and 'their local representatives', such as the 'foreign-minded' or the cosmopolitan leftists and liberals. While presenting themselves as the ones defending ordinary people from the forces of globalization, they tend to portrait the opposition (particularly the Socialist Party) as being on the side of multinational corporations. The fact that the government of Hungary was presented as an underdog compared to for example 'Brussels' or other international agencies meant that even after the party became the de facto political elite, it could continue to voice anti-establishment feelings (Enyedi, 2016: 14). This correlates with the previously mentioned transnational populism, where the national people are contrasted with an international or transnational elite. As Enyedi argues (2016: 15), it is well known that conspiracy theories and moralism are attributes of populist discourse, the essential question here is against whom they are used? In the case of Fidesz, conspiracy theories are used primarily against global elites, however, moralistic discourse 'can target both the luxurious lifestyle of elites and the lack of self-discipline in lower classes'. While the latter might seem strange, Jobbik and Fidesz – being the two populist political parties in Hungary – both reject the rights-based liberal approach and rather consider fulfilled duties as the precondition for membership in the national community (Ibid.: 14). As Müller (2011: 8) argues, Orbán wants the citizens to conform to an ideal of hard work, family values and civic engagement (referred to as *Bürgerlichkeit* by the Germans), while he appears as a strong leader promising to restore the grandeur of the nation.

The Fidesz government represents a Christian and national vision of politics; even the preamble of the new Hungarian Constitution – which was adopted in 2011 and entered into force in 2012, succeeding the 1949 constitution - emphasizes the country's Christian roots and heritage and the importance of the nation and the family (Fekete, 2016, 44-45). Alternatively, as Enyedi (2016: 10) argues: the Fidesz government was able to adjust the constitution and a large part of the national political institutional framework to suit their ideologies. In the case of Hungary, as in many other cases, populism is linked to the nationalist vision of politics, with Christianity and the nation being the recurring guiding principles. As Müller (2011: 7) argues, after their election in 2010, Fidesz has started a 'national revolution' in the name of the so-called 'national values', which are in this case work, home, family, health and order.

As to the identity of the governing party, Fidesz, it can be argued that it had all started in 2006, with a leaked recording from the then Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, in which Gyurcsány for example admitted to lying to the public and was followed by a flare of tensions and protests in the country. Fidesz has capitalized upon the dissent of the protesters and had won the elections in 2010. 'As a result, a populist right-wing government under the leadership of Viktor Orbán emerged victorious and positioned themselves as the people's party' (Timmer et al., 2018: 13).

7.4. Viktor Orbán's use of rhetoric

Public discourse has generally shifted to the right in Hungary, which is partly attributable to the role played by the radical right segment of the mainly Fidesz-owned media, as extreme nationalism, authoritarian values and hostility to the West were often presented in the nationally marketed media outlets. As a result, ideas and rhetoric that previously had been considered to be far-right can now be found in the center of political discourse of the general public (Győri, 2015: 31-33). In 2015 Fidesz has reversed its declining fortune and with the ongoing exploitation of the refugee issue they have managed to define Hungarian politics and public discourse for years (Győri et al., 2018: 16).

7.4.1. The 2014 speech at Băile Tușnad: building an illiberal democracy

Orbán's speech of 2014 at Băile Tușnad might be said to be ideologically defining his policies; 'commentators have since used the speech and the concept of illiberal democracy as the prism through which they evaluate much of what Orbán and his government are doing' (Győri et al., 2017: 35). Therefore, the speech might be marked as an ideological milestone: one, that had raised many concerns ever since.

'The term illiberal democracy became popular in Western policy circles in the mid-1990s as a way to describe regimes that held elections but didn't observe the rule of law and violated checks and balances in particular' (Müller, 2016: 50). As to the term itself – coined by Fareed Zakaria (1997) as a description of what westerners view as an undesirable political regime type (Győri et al., 2017: 35) -, it is necessary to understand: the costs of open authoritarianism are too high (Müller, 2016: 50). Officially abolishing democracy can be followed by an enormous loss of international reputation. Being self-identified as an illiberal democracy; governments can claim that their countries are still democracies, just not liberal ones – making a conceptual split between liberalism and democracy. This is where populist rhetoric steps in: illiberalism appears to mean opposing unfettered capitalism where the strong always seems to win and countering the extension of rights to minorities (such as homosexuals). Or to put it in another way: it is about defending 'the people' (which is the core concept of populism), while building a Christian and nationalist vision of politics. In this case, the European Union (often referred to as 'the elite' in populist rhetoric, as opposed to 'the people') can be made to look like an agent of capitalism and libertarian morality, while populist governments get to present themselves as resisting a hegemonic liberalism and liberal universalism promoted by Western liberal elites, promoting instead traditional morals and values. As plenty of people today aren't committed to democracy because they feel that democracy – packed in neoliberal wrapping – isn't committed to them, a populist figure such as Viktor Orbán can be highly effective in presenting himself as a strong leader who is ready to nationalize companies and protect ordinary people (Müller, 2016: 55-60).

As discussed previously, according to Mudde (2004), as a thin-centered ideology, populism can be attached to a narrower range of political concepts and can be easily linked to and combined with other ideologies, such as nationalism – which is clearly the case in Orbán's speech of 2014. Mentioning national interests several times, demonizing and opposing to the liberal values, the so-called elite and the European Union itself, making references to the ordinary people *('*… the continuous life experience of vulnerable, weak families that had smaller economic protection than others during the last twenty years', etc.) while promising a brighter future provides us with a textbook example of populism.

7.4.2. The 2015 speech: a Eurosceptic turn

In his speech of 2015[19] – given at the Summer Open University of Bálványos as well -, Orbán emphasized the numerous terror attacks in the West and pointed out a contrast between the emerging fear in western Europe and the calm in Hungary; continuing his grand narrative about the decline of the West, which started before the refugee crisis. In his own narrative, Orbán appears as a 'brave maverick resisting mainstream liberal dogma' and standing up for the ordinary people. He argued that he was choosing a manner of speech that is banned in Europe, as speaking honestly about how the elites pursue their cosmopolitan project would be followed by being exiled from the European mainstream (Győri et al., 2017: 34-36).

Given its increasingly long term in government, Fidesz could not claim anymore to be an underdog, therefore the idea of fighting the Hungarian establishment wore out, making the international dimension of politics crucial in terms of the communication of the party. The refugee crisis had given 'this rhetorical tool a new lease on life' and has played a major role in stabilizing the support of Fidesz – despite the ongoing accusations of corruption. In his speech, Orbán cited the failure of the European Union to properly handle the refugee crisis to confirm his theory that competencies should be taken away from 'Brussels' and returned to member states. This marked a Eurosceptic turn in his position: although Orbán had criticized 'Brussels' for years by then, the specific goal of disempowering 'Brussels' to the benefit of member states opened up a new dimension of Euroscepticism in this case: Orbán is now actively challenging the leadership, the powers and the ideological underpinnings of the European Union (Ibid.: 36-37).

As to the Eurosceptic turn of Fidesz, it must be mentioned what had happened to Jobbik - the far-right populist party of the country - almost simultaneously. As mentioned, in an era where not only the governing party became increasingly Eurosceptic, but the public political discourse has also been shifted to the right in general; a party which had been known to be an extremist – and often claimed to be racist - party from the far-right, actually readjusted its strategy and started its mainstreaming process. In 2014 it became clear for Jobbik that they have to readjust their strategy to be able to access a broader base and the party's then president, Gábor Vona has announced a shift in the political communication and general outlook of the party: they would build a 'people's party' that can compete with Fidesz for the moderate centre ground of politics. Vona denied that the policies of Jobbik had been racist and argued that all that had to be changed was actually the communication of the party, making it able to appeal to a wider segment of society. This shift of Jobbik has caused Fidesz to be openly hostile to it, implying that at that point they have felt threatened by Jobbik. Later, the media outlets connected to Fidesz started to discredit Jobbik through for example character assassination (Győri et al., 2018: 26-27).

7.4.3. Discursive continuity in the speeches of Viktor Orbán

The funeral of Imre Nagy in 1989 was a historical event in Hungary and had been followed by nationwide attention. Hundreds of thousands attended the ceremony on Heroes' square and it had also been broadcasted live in the television. An inexperienced young politician, Viktor Orbán has given a truly memorable, emotional and radical speech at the funeral, in which he expressed national unity and demanded free elections. This speech can be marked

[19] The full, English language speech can be accessed here: http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-presentation-at-the-26th-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp

as the first rhetorical success of Orbán which since then had been followed by many others, as Orbán has undeniably become the most powerful political speaker of the post-Communist Hungary (Szilágyi and Bozóki, 2015: 153-156).

The new speeches of Orbán recreated the setting and the pattern of the 1989 speech: he spoke on behalf of the nation and announced 'breaking news'. In the 2002 election campaign, Fidesz introduced a radically new style of communication, applying a number of professional communication techniques (such as viral marketing), mediatized its agenda and 'applied a language that discursively identified the party with the whole nation' (Ibid.: 156). Fidesz was the first party to use mass media strategically in order to achieve its political goals and a new era of mediatized politics had begun, with Orbán's speeches being presented as media events, usually aired live. Presenting the speeches this way, created the impression of uniqueness (Ibid.: 156-159).

As it was argued by Szilágyi and Bozóki (2015: 159-164) the 1989 speech determined Orbán's subsequent political communication, as its discursive strategies became constituting elements of his later rhetoric as well. A major part of this discursive overlap is through grammatical formulas of first-person-plural pronouns and common nouns, implying that Orbán is the representative of the whole nation, presenting a collective perspective. Although by then Fidesz was only one party among many others, after 1998 Orbán gradually shifted toward a discourse that can be characterised by first-person-plural pronouns. The 2002 election is a milestone in this sense: the agent of his rhetoric explicitly became the nation from this point, after losing the election he even argued that 'the nation cannot be in opposition', openly equating his supporters with the whole political community of Hungary. From then on, Orbán regularly referred to his supporters as 'Hungarians'. The collective mode of self-presentation involved a sharp distinction between 'we and they' or 'us and them', which can be familiar from populism. His narratives presented his political opponents as exploiting elites against whom he stands up on behalf of the nation. In his communication, labelling became important: they served as frames of differentiation. As Szilágyi and Bozóki conclude their theory:

'Thus, the revolutionary rhetoric that had once been used to initiate a transition to democracy is now used to complete a constitutional coup d'état against an established democracy. As it seems, discursive continuity can serve different political goals successfully, depending on the given political context, regardless of whether those goals are democratic or autocratic.' (2015: 164)

7.5. The Hungarian media environment and the use of media

Fidesz has managed to shift the political balance in the media towards themselves, making the traditional framework of analysis (free versus unfree; dictatorial versus pluralistic) difficult to apply in this case. As of today, the Hungarian media environment tilts heavily towards the publicly-funded pro-Fidesz media (Győri et al., 2018, 60-62). It has taken years of carefully planned strategy for Fidesz to achieve the almost hegemonic position in the field of the media that they occupy today, which process intensified after the split between Fidesz

and Lajos Simicska[20], although earlier the party relied on his business empire for media support (Ibid.). Figure 6 illustrates the major changes in the ownership structure of the Hungarian media *only* in 2016:

Title of media product	Type of media	Political orientation of new owner
TV2	National TV channel	Rightwing
Class FM	National radio channel	Lost its frequency
Origo.hu	Online newsportal	Rightwing
Népszabadság	National daily newspaper	Closed by new rightwing owner
Világgazdaság	National daily newspaper	Rightwing
Heves Megyei Hírlap	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Új Dunántúli Napló	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
24 óra	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Somogyi Hírlap	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Tolnai Népújság	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Új Néplap	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Békés Megyei Hírlap	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Petőfi Népe	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Napló	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Fejér Megyei Hírlap	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Vas Népe	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Zalai Hírlap	Regional daily newspaper	Rightwing
Figyelő	National weekly newspaper	Rightwing
Népszava	National daily newspaper	Leftwing
Vasárnapi Hírek	National weekly newspaper	Leftwing
Szabad Föld	National weekly newspaper	Leftwing

Figure 6. Changes in the ownership structure in 2016 [21]

According to Győri (2015: 69) the long-term strategic goal of Fidesz had been to take direct control of specific segments of the domestic media, while ensuring to have indirect content control over the ones they cannot directly control. The first major instrument to achieve their goal was the media law adopted in 2010 which had threatened the press freedom in numerous ways. After winning the elections in 2010 Fidesz has quickly moved the public television and radio broadcasters under its influence and has at the same time improved its positions in the commercial electronic media market. While its attempt to take over *RTL Klub* had failed, after the sale of *TV2* in 2013 its popular news show (*Tények*) had started to heavily favour Fidesz in its reporting. Simultaneously, hegemony had been achieved through acquisition and access control methods: radio frequencies had been redistributed to the ones politically sympathetic to the governing party. Through financial pressure they had 'taken over' *Origo.hu* as well, one of the top two news portals of the country. Interestingly, the takeover happened after *Origo* published reports that could be damaging for Fidesz (Ibid.: 64-69; Győrvári et al., 2017: 66; The Economist, 2014).

Government advertising and other media subsidies had always played an important role in Hungary: now they are almost exclusively given to the politically loyal, making the allocation of government advertising budgets the most straightforward method of pressure. As it is difficult to control popular mass media this way, the advertising tax had been

[20] Lajos Simicska had been a member of Fidesz since its founding in 1988, however, he had stayed behind the scenes for the most of it and had rather been responsible for the economic machine underpinning the party's operation. He was one of the wealthiest men in the country by 2014 and most importantly: the owner of the Fidesz-friendly media empire. For unknown reasons, his friendship with Viktor Orbán has ended and a public quarrel had started. In the 2018 election campaign, Simicska had supported Jobbik (the far-right party), the fiercest competitior of Fidesz (Politico, 2018). After their split with Viktor Orbán, almost the entire Hungarian media system had been restructured.

[21] Győri et al., 2017: 65.

introduced in 2014 in order to harm businesses that have either no ties to the government or are foreign-owned, however, it was primarily a pressure instrument to get hold of the television channel *RTL Klub*. The advertising tax had put the government-critical media in a hard situation, while the government-friendly media had many ways to compensate for lost revenue. In summary, through a gradual process, the governing party had expanded its influence across the entire media spectrum of Hungary, making it dangerously monochrome: for the time being, they have a near hegemonic position in the radio market and a dominant position in the television news market. And while harshly critical media can still be found online, it must be taken into account that online media can hardly reach the rural and poor population, making the democratic public discourse impossible (Ibid.: 64-69). As to the media that was able to survive on the left, they are mostly consumed by the elderly population of Budapest. Furthermore, as it had been pointed out by Timmer et al. (2018: 25) Fidesz constructs the media outlet to be 'the enemy' if it is the voice of the opposition: in order to maintain its position of discursive superiority, oppositional voices are framed as 'fake' or 'evil'.

The strategy of Fidesz to keep the refugee issue at the centre of the public agenda despite the absence of actual refugees had been largely made possible by the massive pro-government media which broadcasted the government propaganda (Győri et al., 2017: 79). It must be pointed out that - as is had been highlighted previously -, the media at the rural parts of Hungary is almost entirely dominated by the governing party, which is especially troublesome in the case of the people not having access to any kind of independent media outlet and therefore to opposing views.

As it can be seen, the media environment in Hungary highly favours the governing party, Fidesz, which is the result of years of strategic planning and is undeniably of primary importance in analysing how the governing party or its prime minister uses the media. However, it has to be emphasized that populism usually goes hand in hand with charismatic political leaders, such as in the case of the Hungarian Prime Minister, who can be argued to be the most popular politician of the country. Orbán appeared in the country's political life a long time ago: he gave his famous speech in 1989 at the reburial of Imre Nagy (the leader of the 1956 Hungarian uprising), in which he demanded the Russian troops to go home in front of a crowd of approximately 250,000 people (The Times, 2011; Kamm, 1989). It was a historical moment indeed, Szilágyi and Bozóki (2015: 153-164) even argue that Orbán has built his entire political career on this single speech and as previously argued, a discursive continuity can be observed since then regarding his speeches. As of today, he has more than 600,000 followers on Facebook – making him the politician with the highest number of followers in the country -, where he regularly posts videos not only of formal events, but of ordinary, everyday life situations as well, or at least that is what they seem to be. To provide an example, for the Easter of 2018 he posted a video of himself cooking the traditional Easter ham, which had been seen by more than 1,5 million people [22]. On the second day of Easter he posted a video of himself and his granddaughter, which had also been seen by more than 1,4 million people [23]. Orbán's way of communication is basically unidirectional: for quite a few years he only gives interviews to government-friendly media outlets, therefore he never has to face critical questions. In fact, the last time he gave an interview to the most prominent government-critical news portal, *Index*, has been more than ten years ago, in 2007 (Orosz, 2014; 444.hu, 2014). Nevertheless, in the government-friendly media sphere propagandistic articles are published among several different media outlets across the

[22] Available at: https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/10156087060756093/
[23] Available at: https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/10156091354531093/

country simultaneously, which are literally identical in their content (Simon and Rácz, 2017).

7.6. Conclusion

As Müller argues: one might keep in mind that Orbán was once a young liberal calling for the withdrawal of the Russian troops, yet, 'this budding politician got nowhere with a liberal agenda. So Orbán changed course and reinvented Fidesz as a nationalist, morally conservative, and religious party' (Müller, 2011: 6). Thus, Orbán had taken advantage of the pre-existence of the feelings of the disenchanted public and had channelled it in a convenient way (e.g. against the EU, projecting general dissatisfaction onto an external actor), which demonstrates how populism –especially populist political communication - in the region cannot be understood without keeping in mind the general disillusionment that had followed the transition process and the consequent backsliding of democracy. Furthermore, Orbán's success 'stem from capturing a range of right issues – refugees, the crisis on the left between 2006-2010, the hope for a strong leader, etc. – and dominating political discourse with them' (Győri et al., 2017: 25).

Based on the categories of Block and Negrine (2017), a table summarizing the political communication features of Viktor Orbán and Fidesz can be seen in Figure 7:

Identity	**Rhetoric**	**Use of media**
▪ use of enemies (migrants, Brussels, Soros, etc.) ▪ anti-immigration ▪ defending European culture and values ▪ criticizing multiculturalism ▪ opposing liberal values ▪ recovering autonomy ▪ traditional values (family, Christianity) ▪ people's party	▪ refugee crisis as a rhetorical tool ▪ use of referenda ▪ 'freedom fight' against the EU ▪ nationalist discourse ▪ speeches of Orbán as media events ▪ professional communication techniques (e.g. viral marketing) from 2002 ▪ the use of first-person-plural pronouns and common nous ▪ reference to voters as 'Hungarians'	▪ billboards with anti-immigration messages ▪ Use of Facebook by Orbán (videos) ▪ strategic use of mass media ▪ almost hegemonic position in the media ▪ dominance of pro-government outlets

Figure 7. The political communication features of Viktor Orbán and Fidesz

All in all, populist political rhetoric and Potemkin democracy go hand in hand in this case, highlighting the severe disappointment that had followed the transition process after the fall of Communism. As anticipated by this case: unless the mainstream political elite provide answers and make an effort to meet the demands of the disenchanted public, it is likely that populist leaders will continue to rise in the region.

8. Case 2: The Brexit, the leave campaigns and Nigel Farage

Populism had left its mark on the UK, as the event of the Brexit indicates. The aim of this chapter is to understand the event of Brexit within the framework of populism and populist communication, which have been accused of contributing to it. After a general introduction follows the description of how the idea of leaving the European Union had become a mainstream political movement and the analysis of the political communication features of Nigel Farage, who has been regularly labelled as a populist political actor and had personally dominated much of the campaign and international media as well. Furthermore, the Remain and Leave campaigns will also be analysed. As in the previous case study; the analysis will be conducted according to the previously presented critical framework by Block and Negrine (2017), where identity, rhetoric and the use of media are considered to be the units of analysis.

8.1. The underlying causes

Bachmann and Sidaway (2016: 47-50) argue that the underlying causes of Brexit can be found in imperial geography and that the factors leading to the rise of nationalism and populism are related to geopolitical decline, uneven development and inequality. The latter two have caused concerns among the working class and the older population about cosmopolitism and globalization in general. Furthermore, being part of the European Union, the United Kingdom has become two nations: a nation of winners – using the globalized world to their advantage -, and a nation of losers, who cannot; causing fractions within the society. This process has been aided by the rightist politics who tended to blame negative development on the European Union itself, thus channelling public anger away from themselves and 'putting the blame' on the European Union.

According to Wallerstein (2016), four key elements have underlined the outcome of the referendum: popular anger at the so-called Establishment and its parties; geopolitical decline of the United States; politics of austerity; and identity politics. Regarding identity politics – as it has been mentioned already -, British politicians had convinced their voters that decline has external factors, primarily external rule from Brussels. According to Vasilopoulou (2016: 219-226), domestic issues were not that relevant in shaping voters' opinion, instead, 'utilitarian concerns regarding the cost and benefit of European integration coupled with support for / opposition to EU freedom of movement are very likely to influence vote choice' (Ibid.: 226). Cost-benefit evaluations of EU membership can be found behind these concerns, but concerns relating to ethnic diversity and multiculturalism as well (Ibid.).

The importance of identity is often emphasized with regards to the Brexit, arguing that the British did not adapt to European norms and values and subsequently, they did not develop a European identity either. However, it might be argued that the EU facilitated this process by allowing the British to see the EU as being only about economic integration (Keil, 2016). Marcussen et al. had referred to the British refusal to adopt a European identity as 'Anglo-Saxxon exceptionalism' (Arnold, 2015). 'Popular public opinion in the UK sees itself as having an exclusively British identity, while Europe continues to constitute an 'other'' (Ibid.).

Those who supported the Leave campaign refer to the referendum as the 'will of the people', which implies a homogenous monolith, ignoring the fact that 62,5% of the electorate – the ones who voted against the Brexit and those who did not participate -, did not vote in favour

of leaving the European Union. This correlates with the perceptive of Müller, who argues that 'for a political actor or movement to be populist, it must claim that a part of the people is the people' (Müller, 2016: 22; Freeden, 2017: 8). According to Freeden (2017: 7) 'the people' – in whose name populist actors speak via a simplistic set of messages- is a de-pluralized, unreal, yet very powerful weapon of argument. It might be important to note that – according to Mudde (2013: 11) -, 'as far as there has been influence of PRRPs on European democracies, it has been on redefining the people; or, more accurately, re-defining the people in the manner that they had always been implicitly defined in the pre-multicultural society – namely as ethnically homogenous.' Populist actors – in general and in the case of the Brexit as well -, took advantage of the pre-existence of a fertile breeding ground.

8.2. Becoming a mainstream political movement

The Brexit is not only a culmination of the Leave campaigns but decades of latent Euroscepticism. There were voices speaking up for the withdrawal of the UK since the country joined the common market in 1973 and some argue that 'a sizeable proportion of Conservatives have never been comfortable Europeans'. To be fair, the British public did not have a direct say on their relationship with the EU, as what they joined in 1975 was a common market of nine states. Since then, the EU transformed to a political union where 'Brussels' has influence over many areas of policy. Ever since the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, Eurosceptics claim that powers were transferred from the British Parliament to Brussels. The long period of economic growth silenced these voices and being part of the EU and its Single Market seemed good for the country's prosperity (Mason, 2016; Cooper, 2016).

However, after being placed on the backburner for nearly 20 years, the financial crash of 2008 has changed everything: the issue of withdrawing the UK has appeared again after the economic crisis and populist anger against transnational elites and immigration came along with the rise of the UKIP. Consequently, backbenchers put pressure on Cameron to put a poll about leaving the EU (Ibid.).

December 2012 Boris Johnson publicly demanded Cameron to renegotiate Britain's relationship with the EU and put it to the voters in a referendum (Payne, 2012). Cameron committed to call a referendum by the end of 2017. As Mason (2016) puts it: 'Brexit … moved from being a niche obsession to a victorious, mainstream political movement'. The referendum came during a 'populist zeitgeist' and the EU and Brussels were pictured as being led by political elites who were not democratically voted by the British (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the financial crisis in 2008 and the fall in living standards resulted in an increase of public resentment towards European migrants entering the country since the early 2000s, the accession of Eastern European countries. This resentment had been underestimated by mainstream political actors and it was this vacuum that Nigel Farage and the UKIP had stepped in. The Conservatives had tried to fight off the challenge raised by UKIP with the EU referendum, although they did not expect to win an overall majority in 2015 and therefore expected the referendum pledge to go into Coalition talks. Yet, when they did win a majority (BBC, 2015), they had to embrace the referendum.

According to Mason (2016) 'Cameron might never have called the referendum had it not been for the rise and rise of Nigel Farage and UKIP', which belief is commonly shared. Cameron called for the referendum in January 2013, when the UKIP was increasingly

gaining popularity in local elections. The frequent media appearances of Farage helped to build a link between the EU and immigration, preparing the ground for the referendum. While earlier Brexit was regarded as an obsession of either 'very right rightwing Conservatives and Ukippers' (Ibid.), it had become a movement of mainstream politics.

8.3. The use of identity and rhetoric in the leave campaigns

Three campaign groups have competed before the referendum: *Britain Stronger in Europe*; *Vote Leave* and *Grassroots Out/Leave.EU*. As to the parties, the Greens and the Liberal Democrats were situated in the remain group, while UKIP was situated in the leave camp (Vasilopoulou, 2016: 219-226). The official organization that supported the Leave campaign was the Vote Leave, as such it was the recipient of public funding from the Electoral Commission. Nigel Farage was associated with the Leave.EU (Wilson, 2016: 544).

The mainstream Labour and Conservative parties didn't express a uniform opinion on the subject of the referendum. The arguments of the *Britain Stronger* Campaign had revolved around better economy, better leadership and better security, emphasizing that EU membership has a positive impact on the country's economy. Two rival groups have competed to become the official Leave campaign: the more moderate *Vote Leave* campaign and the *Grassroots Out/Leave.EU* – the latter endorsed by the UKIP. The arguments by the leave campaigns greatly overlap, however, while immigration appears to be the primary concern of the latter, *Vote Leave* focused more on the economy and business interests [24](Vasilopoulou, 2016: 219-226). Yet, 'taking back control' over immigration soon proved to be the most resonant message and immigration had been linked to depressed wages or difficulty in getting a GP appointment (Mason, 2016). As Vasilopoulou argues: 'domestic political entrepreneurs such as UKIP have been able to link the issue of immigration, and more specifically EU freedom of movement, to Britain's EU membership' (Ibid.: 222). According to her, those who felt close to the UKIP were more likely to support the Brexit.

The leave campaigns in general invocated xenophobia and racism; hostility to immigration was the most important issue and the second most important reason for voting to leave (Ashcroft, 2016; Wilson, 2016: 546). The question became whether people are happy to accept free movement in return for free trade (Mason, 2016). Therefore, the most important promise of the campaign was to actually reduce immigration by 'taking back control' of their borders from an elite that indulges an 'out-group'. In this case the elite is the European Union and the out-group refers to foreigners. In addition, the fear of the waves of future immigration was also present in the campaign, as the leave campaigns fuelled such fears by claiming that Turkey will join the European Union shortly (Wilson, 2016: 543-546).

The key slogan of the campaign – largely assisted by right-wing tabloid press – had been 'take back control', which implies a perceived loss of control. Thus, many authors argue that the outcome of the referendum is rooted in the British Empire. As Bachmann and Sidaway (2016: 48) had put it: '… Europeanization, and Brussels in particular, became associated with lack of control – incited by the speeches of leading British politicians and one of the world's most effective right-wing tabloid press, in plutocratic hands (Mail, Express and

[24] An example that embodies the difference between the two leave campaigns was provided by Wilson: the official *Vote Leave* campaign drove around a bus in the UK on which it was inscribed that EU membership costed the UK £350 weekly, which could be spent to improve the National Health Service. On the other hand, *Leave.EU* had a campaign poster picturing male refugees from Syria who were lined up to enter the UK – of course only, if it remained in the EU. Even by the judgment of the *Vote Leave* campaign, Farage's campaign poster went too far (Wilson, 2016: 545).

Sun)'. The campaign exploited the difficult socio-economic situation of the lower classes and managed to project their dissatisfaction onto the EU. As Jürgen Habermas (2016) had argued in an interview: 'the perception of the drastic rise in social inequality and the feeling of powerlessness, that your own interests are no longer represented at the political level, all this forms the background to the mobilization against foreigners, for leaving Europe behind, for hating Brussels. In an insecure daily life, a 'national and cultural sense of belonging' are indeed stabilizing elements'. Channelling these feelings had been the key factor for the victory of the Leave campaign (Bachmann and Sidaway, 2016: 47-50).

As to the exploitation to the difficult-socio economic situation of the lower classes: the Brexit is often represented as the victory of those who were economically left behind or as the victims of globalisation whose jobs were disappearing and whose income was stagnating (Wilson, 2016: 546-548). UKIP drew its support from the traditional Conservative vote base, especially middle aged and financially insecure man, therefore, UKIP and its messages had been positioned accordingly (Crines and Heppell, 2017: 3).

Income had played an important role in the outcome of the referendum: the tendency was that the majorities in poor areas voted to leave the EU and as the report of the Legatum Institute (2016) indicates, 65% of households earning more than £60,000 voted to remain, while only 20% of the ones earning less than £20,000 did so. However, there are poor areas in which the majority voted to remain; thus income cannot be the only defying factor in the behaviour of voters (Wilson, 2016: 546-548). Goodwin and Heath (2016) argue that where the majority voted for the Brexit was mainly in areas 'that are filled by pensioners, low-skilled and less well-educated blue-collar workers and citizens who have been pushed out the margins not only by the economic transformation of the country over recent decades but also by the values that have come to dominate a more socially liberal media and political class' (cited in Wilson, 2016: 547). In this sense, Brexit symbolizes the will of the 'left behind': social groups that feel insecure and marginalized and think that local or transnational elites do not represent their interests or understand their anxiety about the rapid social, economic and cultural changes (Ibid.).

8.4. Comparing the rhetoric of the Remain and Leave campaigns

As an analysis of the Remain (*Britain Stronger in Europe;* Stay) and Leave (*Vote Leave;* Leave) campaigns between 20 February and 20 April shows, the words used most were different regarding the Remain and Leave campaigns[25]. While the Remain campaign mostly referred to 'jobs', 'trade' and 'businesses', the Leave campaigns focused on to be 'controlled', the 'NHS'[26] and 'money'. As to the use of social media, the Remain campaign had 837 tweets and 44 Facebook posts, while the Leave campaign had 1216 tweets and 64 Facebook posts in the given interval (Lavoie, 2016).

As argued by Dr Simon Usherwood, both campaign intended to make connections and used special wording to do so: the Britain Stronger in Europe showed a tendency to use the word 'Europe' instead of 'EU', implying therefore that leave the EU is actually leaving Europe. While the Remain campaign focused on the economics benefits of the EU, the Leave campaign emphasized emotional arguments about 'taking back control' (Ibid.).

[25] Note that in this analyzis the Leave campaign refers to the official campaign, *Vote Leave*, while the UKIP (and therefore Nigel Farage) was connected to the *Leave.EU* campaign.
[26] NHS refers to the National Health Service in England.

The Leave campaign heavily criticized that the EU's immigration system and Nigel Farage even referred to the day of the referendum as the 'Independence Day' of the UK, trying to create a romantic vision of a once again free Britain. Yet the politics of fear was also prominent in the campaign, on both sides. The Remain campaign's message centred around the uncertainty and instability that would follow the Brexit.

8.5. Nigel Farage's use of identity and rhetoric

Although the UKIP had been founded in 1993 as a single-issue party, it was until Nigel Farage's second term at leadership that the party lacked a leader with high visibility – which is something that is typically found within populist parties (Deacon and Wring, 2016: 175). In fact, since Farage's election as UKIP leader in 2010, the party's popularity has increased significantly: they witnessed a rise in their membership and their support at local elections increased significantly as well. In Farage, UKIP have found the charismatic leader or 'inspirational figurehead' that characterises populist movements, as it had been argued by Mudde (Crines and Heppell, 2017: 2-3; Mudde, 2004: 527-540).

As to the UKIP, as Crines and Heppell (2017) argue it fulfils the criteria to be an anti-establishment party: it challenges the status quo of a major policy issue, they see themselves outside of and thus against the establishment, and they claim that there is a fundamental divide between establishment parties and 'the people'. UKIP defines itself as being in opposition to the mainstream parties and their elites and the underpinning of this approach is an emphasis on populist messages presented via plain, straightforward language. The rhetorical construction of the monolithic establishment allows Farage to picture himself as the anti-establishment figure who represents 'the people'.

Farage – personally dominant leader of the UKIP until 2016 – 'is one of the few British politicians capable of provoking an opinion' (Chakrabortty, 2013). He had been extremely successful in connecting with his followers, the 'Ukippers', via the exaltation of shared national values or beliefs. UKIP became 'the people's party', distinguishing British values from those of Europe (Farage, 2013; 2015). Nigel Farage used a communication style that can be labelled populist, as he thrived on basic nationalistic feelings of ordinary people transmitted into a rather informal style, in order to build bonds with and among the public. As the BBC concluded: 'for UKIP voters, Nigel Farage is UKIP' (Block and Negrine, 2017: 186; BBC, 2015).

Farage exaggerates the differences between Britain and Europe, which in this case stands for the European Union or other European institutions and for European immigrants as well. As he argued in his 2015 speech: 'Britain is more than just a star on some else's flag'. Farage managed to picture himself as the 'man of the people' who defends ordinary people from corporations or the EU itself (Ibid.). It can be argued in general that the primary attitudinal driver behind supporting the UKIP is 'Europhobia' and their negative attitude towards immigration (Crines and Heppell, 2017: 3), as both of these factors resonated highly with the feelings of the electorate.

Farage, like populist political leaders in general, claims to be one with his people and picture himself as trying to 'redeem his nation' via 'taking back control'. For example, Farage has referred to 'Ukippers' as 'his kind of people' (Owen, 2015; Block and Negrine, 2017: 183). As argued by Block and Negrine (2017: 183), there is an emotional bond between populist leaders and certain segments of the population: populist leaders, by representing themselves

as one with the citizens, manage to make their electorate develop an emotional connection with the political leaders and therefore feel recognized and empowered *through* them (Ibid.).

Communication cannot be degraded only to words, as gestures or creating peculiar spaces to communicate and create bonds with others also has to be taken into consideration. The populist political communication style of Farage is also characterized by 'the pint, fag and cheeky grin routine' (Robinson, 2015: 9) and its repetition in pubs, community meetings or other settings – and of course counting on the media to report it. After Deacon (2014) attended a speech of Farage in Sheffield, he argued that Farage is an exceptional performer on stage: he is capable to mobilize emotions and connect with his electorate through their grievances and has also mastered the grassroots campaigning strategy. Regularly visiting pubs and having conversations therein while having a pint all illustrates the non-mediated communication aspect of his leadership that Block and Negrine argues to be one of the characteristics defining the populist political communication style.

As the analysis of the rhetorical style of Farage conducted by Crines and Heppell (2017)[27] indicates, most of the time Farage employs a *pathos* driven rhetoric and a *performative* style of delivery which is often *epidictic*: he especially uses humour originating from his personality as a 'likeable character' and anger, with which he refers to the 'injustices endured by the UK by being a member of the EU'. He often uses techniques of persuasion via fear and has recognized immigration to be the best rhetorical tool to demonise the European Union. While usually he neglects the topic of economy, when he does mention it, it is placed in the context of immigration or the European Union being the cause of economic problems, such as the issue of minimum wage or unemployment. Farage does not only differ from mainstream parties in the issues he prioritises but even in the use of language: 'emphasis on 'common sense' solutions presented through 'straightforward language' is deliberately presented as a contrast to the 'obscure and elusive discourse' of mainstream elites' (Tournier-Sol, 2015: 151 cited in Crines and Heppell, 2017: 23).

8.6. Nigel Farage and the media

As the party's most valuable media asset, Farage himself was key means for mobilizing voters (Usherwood, 2016). 'Farage's "pint, fag and cheeky grin routine", though tested, became a feature of his coverage across media' (Block and Negrine, 2017: 189). He was regularly pictured at a pub with a beer and a cigarette, emphasizing his 'ordinariness' (Cushion, 2014). The media allowed him to control the way how he was represented.

In an era of growing dissatisfaction with mainstream politics, governments, institutions, etc., Farage appears to be 'an anti-politician who embodies many of the characteristics that people feel are absent from his mainstream rivals: he appears blunt, forthright, authentic, patriotic, principled and charismatic' (The Telegraph, 2013). While the media heavily criticized him, Farage took advantage of the controversies generated by media outlets that were critical of his anti-Europe, anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism message; while

[27] In their research, Crines and Heppell partly rely on the Rhetorical Political Analysis (RPA). RPA draws inspiration from the Aristotelian triptych of *ethos* (the person), *pathos* (use of emotion) and *logos* (use of logic). As they claim, persuasive rhetoric may derive from constructing an argument around the *ethos* of the speaker; *pathos* refers to the speaker's ability to establish emotional connections with the audience and can also draw upon negative emotions such as fear or anger; and *logos* refers to the use of logical or empirical arguments which can appeal to the audience's sense of rationality. The speaker's ability to generate a reaction also depends on their style of delivery, of which they distinguish three: *deliberative* (considered), *judicial* (forensic), and *epideictic* (based on drama and performance) style.

using both old and new media to communicate to and build bonds with his followers while antagonizing his enemies and appealing to shared British imaginary at the same time. Despite all criticism from the media, his image remained unaffected (Block and Negrine, 2017: 188-191).

A summary can be found below about the political communication features of Nigel Farage, based on the research of Block and Negrine (2017):

Identity	Rhetoric	Use of media
▪ UKIP as the 'people's party' ▪ British values (distinct from European ones) ▪ building bonds with and among the public ▪ anti-EU & nationalistic ideology ▪ man-in-a-pub	▪ exceptional skills ▪ capable of mobilizing emotions ▪ grassroots campaigning strategy ▪ nationalistic feelings of ordinary people transmitted in informal style	▪ weekly newspaper column ▪ active in social media (especially on Twitter) ▪ regularly pictured at pubs with a beer and a cigarette (ordinariness) ▪ high media coverage

Figure 8. Features of Nigel Farage's communication[28]

British media, having given up their differential attitude towards politicians, started to generally criticize their competence and integrity, making it a permanent reporting mode. Personalities, plurality, conflict, strategy and tactics became increasingly important. As it has been argued previously, populism has high news value: charismatic leaders and their rhetoric correspond well to media logic (Aalberg et al., 2016).

The media has been accused of contributing to the UKIP's 2013 success in the 2013 British local elections with giving it disproportionate, unchallenging coverage (Mazzoleni, 2014: 50). Furthermore, with regard to the Leave campaign: mainstream anti-EU media, such as the *Mail*, *Sun* and *Express* had produced slogans and prospectus for the campaign of Brexit, shaping the debate and giving confidence to the slogans of the Leave campaign (Seaton, 2016). On the other hand, pro-EU *Guardian* and *Observer* concentrated more on the party's racism and intolerance (Deacon and Wring, 2016: 180). Figure 9 illustrates the issues in UKIP-related headlines for all British (national) newspapers from the 25th of April until the 22nd of May 2014:

	All national press (%)	*Guardian/ Observer* (%)	*Mirror/Sunday Mirror* (%)	*Times/Sunday Times* (%)	*Sun/Sunday Sun* (%)	*Mail/Mail on Sunday* (%)	*Express/Sunday Express* (%)
Racism/xenophobia/religious intolerance	17.5	23.4	20.4	10.3	15.4	27.8	14.0
Other intolerance	7.1	6.5	5.6	1.3	14.1	16.7	2.0
Lack of policy credibility	2.2	1.3	3.7	1.3	1.3	–	2.0
Propriety and integrity	2.2	–	3.7	9.0	–	2.8	–
Other party problems (indiscipline, indiscretion, political gaffes, other electoral problems)	18.5	11.7	29.6	16.7	21.8	26.7	12.0
No reference to the above	52.6	57.1	37.0	61.5	47.4	36.1	70.0
Number of cases	508	77	54	78	78	36	50

Figure 9. Headlines of British newspapers 25 April – 22 May 2014[29]

[28] Based on the work of Block and Negrine (2017).
[29] Deacon and Wring (2016: 181).

There is no evidence that media coverage had increased based on media logic, it could also be the electoral success of the party that had made it newsworthy. However, 'media coverage of the rise of UKIP provides an opportunity for considering broader issues and principles concerning the relationship between mainstream media and neo-populist parties' (Deacon and Wring, 2016: 180).

8.7. Conclusion

There have been many attempts to identify the underlying causes of Brexit. Some stressed the importance of imperial geography, uneven development or inequality, while others stressed the importance of identity politics, etc. With regards to identity politics, British politicians had blamed the European Union for decline, channelling public anger away from themselves. In other words, populist actors had taken advantage of the pre-existence of the feelings of the disenchanted public and had channelled it in a convenient way, labelling the outcome of the referendum as the 'will of the people', which is an utterly populist argument. The leave campaigns have exploited the difficult situation of the lower classes and had channelled these feelings against the EU, which can be regarded as the key factor for their victory. Furthermore, the UKIP have been able to link immigration and the European Union freedom of movement to Britain's EU membership, thus framing the question in their own way. These altogether shaped the outcome of the referendum, largely assisted by the right-wing tabloid press (and the general tabloidization of political discourse). The UKIP and more specifically Nigel Farage had a major part in the leave campaign and in mobilizing voters, using populist strategies to do so.

Populism had left its mark on the UK, however, it must be emphasized that populism can only be understood with regard to the concept of mediatization, as the growing importance of certain acts of speech, styles of rhetoric or staging newsworthy events lead to increased media coverage. Populist actors are intensely covered by the media, even if negatively – giving them higher visibility and access to a broader public, while multiplying and magnifying their messages and therefore heightening their perceived legitimacy. Features of the populist style - such as the simplification of complex issues -, correspond well to media logic; populist actors can frame messages to fit storytelling techniques. As it was argued by Mudde (2013: 15-16), the transformation of the mass media and the consequent tabloidization of political discourse contributes to the popularity of populist figures. Media coverage of the rise of the UKIP, their messages and the leave campaign provide an opportunity for considering broader issues and principles with regard to the relationship between the media and populist parties.

9. Discussion

The recent rise of Eurosceptic and allegedly populist parties has attracted much attention from both the international media and from scholars, as the emergence of these political actors as significant in the scene of European politics has raised many questions. Indeed, one of the reasons of the concerns that have emerged in relation to the PRR[30] actors is that their appearance comes after a relatively long period of liberalism, where it was a widely held belief that Western liberal democracy can be regarded as a final point in seeking ways to the best way of governance and where being part of the European Union was desirable for all European countries.

However, after the wave of the newly emerged Eurosceptic and far-right actors came a wave of populism, where the international media has labelled several actors from many countries as populist and the two definitions consequently even became blended: they were often used as synonyms. Albeit the term is not new, the definition of populism has not been generally known among the public, furthermore, there has not even been a scholarly agreement as to its exact definition.

The aim of this research, as outlined in the introduction, on the one hand had been to conceptualize the definition of populism and therefore to understand what lies in the heart of the 'Populist Zeitgeist': what can actually be defined as the essence of populism that is claimed to be mainstreaming and where are the limits that separate populism from other ideologies or discourses? On the other hand, as having decided at an early stage to treat populism as a style of political communication or as a discourse practice based on the evidences provided by the literature, in the postmodern media environment it was inevitable to analyse the role of the media and the mediatization of politics, especially given the fact that claims have emerged regarding the media's contribution to the upsurge and increasing popularity of populist actors, commonly referred to as '*mediatized populism'*.

The findings of this research indicate that contemporary European populism can indeed be conceptualized as a style of political communication, however, the constructed nature of political identities has to be taken into consideration as well. While populism is mostly done discursively, the constructed nature of 'the people' and 'the elite' – the latter being derived from the former -, has to be emphasized: it is the appeal to 'the people' that underpins populist communication, nevertheless, it is the political actor who creates 'the people'. In other words: populist actors first create the group whom they claim to represent.

Therefore, while keeping in mind the much-cited definition of Cas Mudde[31], it must be pointed out that this definition, combined with the understanding of populism as a thin-centred ideology, can be correlated with the discourse theoretical approach of populism associated with Laclau, which argues that populism is the 'discursive and performative construction of 'the people' against the system, the outcome of this process being the dichotomous division of society' (Moffitt, 2017: 415). Therefore, the focus shifts from the contents of populism to *how* these contents are articulated (Laclau, 2005b: 33). The communicative construction of 'the people' and claiming to be the *only* political actor

[30] Populist Radical Right.

[31] In his definition populism is: 'An ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people' (2004: 543).

representing them[32] lies in the core of populist communication. The populist political communication style can be characterized by the populist actors' use of identity, use of rhetoric and use of media, as it has been presented (Block and Negrine, 2017).

In the beginning of this research it was presupposed that populist political communication is habitually used as a political tool in order to appeal to the disenchanted public, which hypothesis had been confirmed by both of the case studies. It can be argued in both cases that the populist political actors[33] had taken advantage of the feelings of the disenchanted public and had channelled them in a convenient way. Furthermore, the case of Hungary highlighted that in the East-Central European region populism has to be understood keeping in mind the general disillusionment that had followed the transition process.

Another aim of analysis had been to determine whether or not populist political actors affect and influence mainstream political parties: however, to be able to give a proper answer to this question, more case studies have to be conducted, in which besides concentrating on national contexts, the spectrum of transnational influence could also be investigated. This may be regarded as a possible subject for future research. As to the case of Hungary and the Brexit, it can be argued that populist political actors[34] had in fact influenced mainstream politics. However, in the case of Hungary the discursive continuity of Viktor Orbán's speeches and the claim that Fidesz at least since 2006 had positioned itself as the people's party suggests that the rise of Jobbik had only contributed to its populism and cannot be regarded as its primary cause, which highlights that populism can be seen as a variable: a political actor and its communication can be understood as *more or less* populist, regardless of where it is positioned in the political spectrum.

Populism appears to be defining the political agenda of the century, therefore it is of primary importance to understand the phenomenon and find its place between a series of ideologies and discourses. The proposal of this research is to understand populism parallel to the mediatization of politics and the specificities of postmodern political communication, primarily as something that is done at the discursive level and can be understood as a particular style of political communication that has become an increasingly typical characteristic of European politics in the recent years. In this sense, populism embodies both the feeling of general disillusionment with politics on which populist actors thrive and the decrease of the value of ideology and the subsequent shift of attention towards the communicative aspects of politics.

[32] Referring to the concept of anti-pluralism by Müller (2016: 20-23).
[33] In this case 'populist political actor' refers to *Fidesz* in Hungary and to the *UKIP* in the United Kingdom.
[34] In this case 'populist political actors' refers to *Jobbik* in Hungary and *UKIP* in the United Kingdom.

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Appendix 1: List of abbreviations

Fidesz – Alliance of Young Democrats (now Hungarian Civic Alliance)
ECE – East-Central Europe
EU – European Union
GP – General Practitioner
NHS – National Health Service
UKIP – United Kingdom Independence Party
Ukippers – Voters or Supporters of the UKIP
US – United States
PRR – Populist Radical Right
PRRP – Populist Radical Right Parties
RPA – Rhetorical Political Analyzis

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