



Critical Heritages (CoHERE): performing and representing identities in Europe

Work Package 2: Work in Progress

Critical Analysis Tool (CAT) 1: The rise of populist extremism in Europe: Theoretical Tools for Comparison

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CoHERE explores the ways in which identities in Europe are constructed through heritage *representations* and *performances* that connect to ideas of place, history, tradition and belonging. The research identifies existing heritage practices and discourses in Europe. It also identifies means to sustain and transmit European heritages that are likely to contribute to the evolution of inclusive, communitarian identities and counteract disaffection with, and division within, the EU. A number of modes of representation and performance are explored in the project, from cultural policy, museum display, heritage interpretation, school curricula and political discourse to music and dance performances, food and cuisine, rituals and protest.

WP2 investigates public/popular discourses and dominant understandings of a homogeneous 'European heritage' and the ways in which they are mobilized by specific political actors to advance their agendas and to exclude groups such as minorities from a stronger inclusion into European society. What notions of European heritage circulate broadly in the public sphere and in political discourse? How do the 'politics of fear' relate to such notions of European heritage and identity across and beyond Europe and the EU? How is the notion of a European heritage and memory used not only to include and connect Europeans but also to exclude some of them? We are interested in looking into the relationship between a European memory and heritage-making and circulating notions of 'race', ethnicity, religion and civilization as well as contemporary forms of discrimination grounded in the idea of incommensurable cultural and memory differences.

This essay concentrates on the theoretical review of the current state of populism in Europe, which has been an important subject of study since the 1960s. The essay starts with a discussion on the definition of populism referring to the works of different scholars since the 1960s. Subsequently, it elaborates the features of contemporary populism, which has become very widespread in the last decade in a Europe hit by financial and refugee crises. Thirdly, the essay discusses the correlation between the 'end of ideology' discussions of the 1960s and the rise of populist political discourses along with neo-liberal forms of governance. The essay concludes with a brief discussion on the levels of analysis in the inquiry of populism to find out what is more relevant to consider: the leader, or the party?

Keywords: identities, ethnicity, society, multicultural society, Europe, history, uses of the past, politics.

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The Rise of Populist Extremism in Europe: What is Populism?

Introduction

This essay is designed to portray theoretical debates to better understand the current state of the populist movements and political parties in the European Union, which is hit by various kinds of social-economic and financial difficulties leading to the escalation of fear and prejudice *vis-à-vis* ‘others’ who are ethno-culturally and religiously different. The main premise of this essay is that the ongoing social-political-economic-financial change in the EU resulting in fear against the unknown such as Islam, Muslims, refugees and migrants is likely to be turned by individual agents into cultural/religious/civilizational reification and political radicalization in order to overcome fear. Accordingly, this essay is the first part of an ongoing work (WP2 in the CoHERE Project) to offer a set of theoretical tools to compare the rise of populist movements in five EU countries (Germany, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands) as well as in Turkey. The essay will start with the elaboration of the contemporary acts of populism from a theoretical perspective to lay the ground for finding a set of theoretical tools to compare the six countries with regard to the growing incidence of populism. This work in progress aims to define the notions of European heritage that circulate broadly in the public sphere among the populist political parties and movements, and to investigate how the ‘politics of fear’ relates to these notions of European heritage and identities. However, this essay will only concentrate on the theoretical explanations utilized in the literature to understand the current state of populism.

What is Populism?

In 1967, researchers at the London School of Economics including Ernest Gellner, Isaiah Berlin, Alain Touraine, Peter Wosley, Kenneth Minogue, Ghita Ionescu, Franco Venturi and Hugh Seton-Watson organized a conference with a specific focus on populism. Following this pivotal conference, the proceedings were edited by Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (1969) in a rather descriptive book covering several contributions on Latin America, the USA, Russia, Eastern Europe, and Africa. One of the important outcomes of the book, which is still meaningful, was that “populism worships the people” (Ionescu and Gellner 1969: 4). However, the conference and the edited volume could not really bring about a consensus beyond this tautology, apart from adequately having displayed particularist characteristics of each populist case. In one of the first attempts to conduct an extensive comparative analysis of the concept, Gellner and Ionescu wrote (1969: 1):

“There can, at present, be no doubt about the importance of populism. But no one is quite clear just what it is. As a doctrine or as a movement, it is elusive and protean. It bobs up everywhere, but in many and contradictory shapes. Does it have any underlying unity? Or does one name cover a multitude of unconnected tendencies?”

One of the interesting conclusions of this path-breaking conference was very well explicated in one of Isaiah Berlin’s interventions during the conference (1967: 6):

“I think we are all probably agreed that a single formula to cover all populisms everywhere will not be very helpful. The more embracing the formula, the less descriptive. The more richly descriptive the formula, the more it will exclude. The greater the intension, the smaller the

extension. The greater the connotation, the smaller the denotation. This appears to me to be an almost a priori truth in historical writing.”

Today, the state of play in the scientific community is not that different from the one in the late 1960s with regard to the definition of populism. Many studies have been conducted and written on the issue. But rather than having a very comprehensive definition of the term, the scholars have only come up with a list of elements defining different aspects of populism such as: anti-elitism, anti-intellectualism, and anti-establishment positions; affinity with religion and past history; racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Islam, anti-immigration; promoting the image of a socially, economically and culturally homogenous organic society; intensive use of conspiracy theories to understand the world we live in; faith in the leader’s extraordinariness as well as the belief in his/her ordinariness that brings the leader closer to the people; statism; and the sacralisation of the people (Ghergina, Mişcoiu and Soare, 2013: 3-4).

In a recent article, Cas Mudde (2016a), tries to answer the following question in order to understand the rationale of the populist masses in the wake of Brexit and the rise of Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders, Alternative for Germany, Five Star Movement, JOBBIK, Sweden’s Democrats, True Finns and many others: what is driving their resentment? Much of the discussion has swirled around which recent event – the Great Recession or the European refugee crisis – has done the most to fuel the rise of right-wing populism. Accordingly, a follow-up question Mudde has posed is whether the resentment is primarily economic or fundamentally cultural. His immediate answer to the second question is that neither event explains the phenomenon, which after all, predates them both. He reminds the reader that in 1999, the far-right Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) received nearly 30 per cent of the national vote, and later Jean-Marie Le Pen even made it into the run-off of the presidential election in 2002. Hence, one could certainly argue that the recent economic crisis and the refugee crisis may have played a role, but they are at best catalysts, not causes. After all, if resentment as a social concept posits that losers in the competition over scarce resources respond in frustration with diffuse emotions of anger, fear and hatred, then there have been several other factors in the last three decades which may have triggered the resentment of the European public, such as de-industrialization, unemployment, growing ethno-cultural diversity, multiculturalism, terrorist attacks in the aftermath of September 11 and so on. (Berezin, 2009: 43-44).

There are various approaches to analyse typologies of populism in Europe as well as in the other parts of the world. The most common approach explains the populist vote with socio-economic factors. This approach argues that populist sentiments come out as the symptoms of detrimental effects of modernization and globalization, which is more likely to imprison working class groups in states of unemployment, marginalization and structural outsiderism through neo-liberal and post-industrial sets of policies (Betz, 1994; and 2015). Accordingly, the "*losers of modernization and globalization*" respond to their exclusion and marginalization by rejecting the mainstream political parties and their discourses as well as generating a sense of ethnic competition against migrants (Fennema, 2004). The second approach tends to explain the sources of (especially right-wing) extremism and populism with reference to *ethno-nationalist sentiments rooted in myths about the distant past*. This approach claims that strengthening the nation by emphasizing a homogenous ethnicity and returning to traditional values is the only way of coming to terms with the challenges and threat coming from outside enemies be it globalization, Islam, the European Union, or the refugees (Rydgren, 2007). The third approach has a different stance with regard to the rise of populist movements and political parties. Rather than referring to the political parties and movements as a response to outside factors, this approach underlines the *strategic means* employed by populist leaders and parties to appeal to their constituents (Beauzamy,

2013). An eclectic use of these approaches is probably more reasonable to analyse the rationale behind the growing popularity of populist movements and parties. However, one could also argue that the former approach is more applicable to the West and South European context, while the second is more appropriate for the explanation of the East European populism. Since the third approach concentrates on the organizational capacity and style of the populist leaders and parties, it is probably beneficial to help us understand all sorts of contemporary populisms.

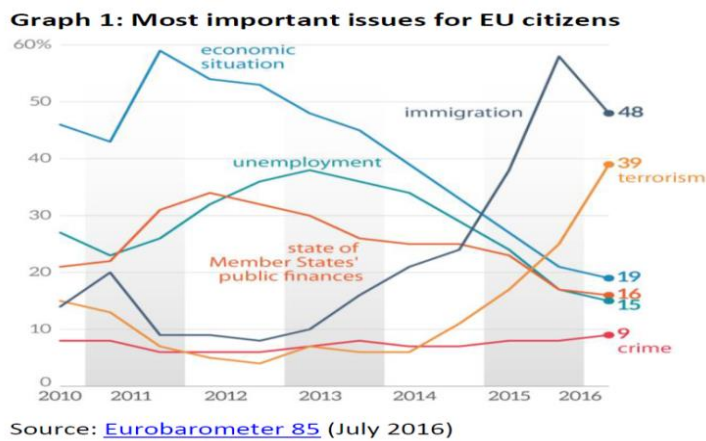
Mabel Berezin (2009) makes a different classification to explain the main analytical approaches to the new European right. He claims that there are two analytical axes on which European populisms capture their nuances: the *institutional axis*, and the *cultural axis*. In the institutional axis, their local organizational capacity, agenda setting capacity at national level, and their policy recommendation capacity, and at national level to come to terms with unemployment-related issues are of primary subjects of inquiry. In the cultural axis it is their intellectual repertoire to offer answers to the detrimental effects of globalization, their readiness to accommodate xenophobic, racist, Islamophobic discourses, and the capacity of their inventory to utilise memory, myths, past, tradition, religion, colonialism and identity. Using these two axes in analysing European populisms at present may provide the researcher with an adequate set of tools to understand the success and/or failure of local and national level. Through them, one could try to understand why and how many populist parties in Europe become popular in particular cities, but not in the entire country, as well as the role of non-rational elements such as culture, the past (or pasts), religion and myths in the consolidation of the power of populist parties.

It seems that right-wing populism becomes victorious at national level when its leaders are able to blend the elements of both axes, such as blending economic resentment and cultural resentment in order to create the perception of crisis. It is only when the socio-economic frustration (unemployment and poverty) is linked to cultural concerns, such as immigration and integration, that right-wing populists distinguish themselves from other critics of the economy. This is the reason why right-wing populists capitalize on culture, civilization, migration, religion and race while the left-wing populists prefer to invest in social class-related drivers. As Ernesto Laclau (2005a) noted, a situation in which a plurality of unsatisfied demands and an increasing inability of the traditional institutional system to absorb them differentially coexist, creates the conditions leading to a populist rupture. This rupture may very well be sometimes right-wing and sometimes left-wing populism depending on the historical path each country has before taken.

These populist parties across Europe and beyond also draw on different political imaginaries and different traditions, construct different national identity narratives, and emphasize different issues in everyday life. As Ruth Wodak (2015: 2) illustrates very well, some parties in Europe gain support by linking themselves with fascist and Nazi past as in Austria, Hungary, Italy, Romania and France. Some parties gain legitimacy through the perceived threat from Islam as in the Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland. Some others endorse an Evangelical/Christian fundamentalist rhetoric as in the US. Some establish their legitimacy through Euroscepticism as in Finland and Greece. And some parties build up their legitimacy through an Islamist ideology and a perceived threat originating from unidentified enemies outside and within, such as Turkey (Kaya, 2015). One could argue that populist parties in different national settings often follow a path-dependent lineage to choose their rhetoric and discourses to mobilize their constituents.

Regardless of the issues, European public seems to have a shared opinion about the most important challenges they are currently facing in everyday life. The Heads of State or Government of the 27 members of the EU and the Presidents of the European Council and European Commission met in

Bratislava on 29 June 2016 to diagnose the present state of the European Union and to discuss the EU-27's common future without the UK. The Bratislava meeting resulted in the 'Bratislava Declaration', which spells out the key priorities of the EU-27 for the next six months and proposes concrete measures to achieve the goals relating to: 1) migration, 2) internal and external security, and 3) economic and social development, including youth unemployment and radicalism. These topics were already outlined in advance by European Council President, Donald Tusk, and generally reflect the issues that most concern European citizens. Graph 1 displays the perception of the European citizens with regard to their priority of the most important issues according to the Eurobarometer Survey 2016.¹



In a context of global economic crisis and uncertainty, the rise of neo-populist movements and Euroscepticism are two sides of the same coin. It poses the question as to whether the decrease of credibility in politics and the temptation to “overcome” the traditional parties with populist movements would be beneficial for European democracy. One of the puzzling features of populism is that it does not really fit into conventional conceptions of the left-centre-right political spectrum. For instance, in Latin America, populist movements have often been associated with the political left, which receives the strong support of the urban working class. However, in Europe, populist movements have been considered more of a right-wing phenomenon, which is often fuelled by peasant or worker support of nationalist myths and ideologies. But the distinctions are certainly not clear-cut, as left-wing populist movements may contain elements of right-wing nationalist ideology, and even European fascist and Nazi movements had distinctly socialist components in their political agendas (Howard, 2000). Nonetheless, one of the distinct elements which separate the left-wing populists from the right-wing ones is their reliance on the idea of re-educating people, an idea which originates from the socialist teachings that they grew up with. As opposed to the left-wing populists, the right-wing populists rely on the so-called *common sense* of people.

There is no unique definition of the term "populism". Drawing on the interventions of Edwards Shils (1956) in the aftermath of the World War II, some scholars take it as *an ideology* (Mudde, 2004, 2007, 2016b). Some scholars read populism as *a strategy* embodied by various political parties to generate and sustain power by means of plebiscites, referenda and public speeches (Weyland, 2001; and Barr, 2009). Other scholars are more content with defining it as *a discourse* based on the assumption that populism is a part-time phenomenon instrumentalized by populist individuals whenever it is necessary to build up a stronger link with “the people” (Wodak, 2015; Hawkins, 2010). Based on a Gramscian interpretation,

¹ See European Parliamentary Research Service Blog, <https://epthinktank.eu/2016/10/03/outcome-of-the-informal-meeting-of-27-heads-of-state-or-government-on-16-september-2016-in-bratislava/most-important-issues-for-eu-citizens/> accessed on 4 August 2016.

some scholars, on the other hand, tend to see it as a *political logic* (Laclau, 2005a, 2005b). In his seminal work, Peter Worsley (1969: 247) has already stated that populism is not a phenomenon that is specific to a particular region, nor is it the unique bastion of any ideological side of politics. It is rather an aspect of a variety of political cultures and structures. Eventually, following the Marxist scholar Peter Worsley (1969), some others define populism as a political style (Taguieff, 1995; and Moffitt, 2016). Pierre-Andre Taguieff (1995: 10, 41) makes his position very clear with the following quotation:

“the only way to conceptualize populism is to designate a particular type of social and political mobilization, which means that the term can indicate only one dimension of political action and or discourse. It does not embody a particular type of political regime, nor does it define a particular ideological content. It is a political style suitable for various ideological contexts... [Accordingly] a democracy or a dictatorship may have a populist dimension or orientation, they can have a political style.”

Unlike socialism, communism, environmentalism, feminism, social democracy or fascism, populism is still far from being a fully-fledged ideology since it does not still bear an internationally recognized and homogenously defined set of norms and values. There are rather national and regional manifestations of populism ranging from Europe to Latin America, or the Middle East. Hence, the ideology of an individual leader, or a political party might be, say, Communism, Socialism, Islamism, Nationalism, Fascism, or Ecologism, but the *discourse*, or the *strategy*, or the *political logic*, or the *political style* employed by the leader or the party in question could still be populism.²

The political communication strategy employed by populist parties splits society between the "pure people" and the "corrupt elite", and posits that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people. The current academic debate identifies political populism along four general patterns of action and argumentation. Populist parties:

- 1) Refer to an assumed common sense that is opposed to the present institutional arrangements. In opposition, they often call for stronger elements of direct democracy, for example through referendums;
- 2) See themselves as opponents of a mandated political establishment and criticise the political elite of the country as corrupt, self-serving and not in touch with the problems of the people;
- 3) Try, using attention-grabbing marginal positions, to mobilise those groups of the population who are critical of politics or who are even apolitical; and
- 4) Tend to polarise and personalise politics by often using friend or foe arguments and significantly simplifying political issues (Mudde, 2004).

Most populist parties in the European space reject today's institutional framework conditions for European integration. Populist parties are often considered by scholars as pragmatic, post- or not ideological. However, the absence, or the explicit rejection of a doctrine of reference does not imply the absence of a core of certain principles. The symbolic core of populism may consist of the following three elements (Taggart, 2000; and Franzosi, Marone and Salvoti, 2015):

- 1) Recurrent use of the concept of ‘the people’, which is often referred to as an organic body, the ‘ordinary citizens’ stand as the exclusive source of political legitimacy, as opposed to an elitist portrayal of the political realm;

² For further discussion with regard to populism as an ideology and as a style see Tarchi (2013).

- 2) Anti-elitism, which stresses the rejection of the political class as a whole. Metaphorically conceived as a ‘caste’, all political as well as social institutions and their professionalised components including long-time politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, and also scholars are angrily confronted; and
- 3) Condemnation of the traditional institutions of representative democracy. Representative institutions therefore become a barrier to the realisation of a ‘true’ democracy ‘from below’, where sovereignty is truly in the hands of the ‘people’ and politicians are mere executors.

Altogether, these three dimensions give rise to a uniform attitude which is exhibited by both the leadership and political activists. Populism often emerges as a particular kind of “democraticism” (Shils, 1956; and Meny and Surel, 2002). The struggle against the institutions of representative democracy picks up on discourses and slogans traditionally rooted in the conception of ‘direct democracy’. All of the political parties and movements to be depicted in this essay with regard in France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey bear all these features of populism. Referring to the work of Edward Shils (1956), Peter Worsley (1969: 244) eloquently summarizes this kind of democraticism exposed by populist politics:

“Populism, for [Shils], involves subscription to two cardinal principles: (a) the supremacy of the will of the people ‘over every other standard [such as] traditional institutions; (b) the desirability of a ‘direct’ relationship between people and leadership, unmediated by institutions. Such styles of popular participation, it is commonly observed, are generally accompanied by a quasi-religious belief in the virtues of the uncorrupted, simple, common folk, and a converse distrust of the ‘smart’ effete, supercilious, aristocratic, idle, wealthy...: ‘an ideology of resentment against the order imposed on society by a long-established ruling class, which is believed to have a monopoly of power, property, breeding and culture. Populism in this view involves distrust of the ‘over-educated’ and denies any degree of autonomy to the legislative branch of government, just as it denies autonomy to any institution. It hates the civil service and is hostile to the politician...”

The ongoing academic debates on the definition of populism mostly pay tribute to the works of Laclau (2005b) and the Essex School (Stavrakakis, Yannis and Giorgos Katsambekis, 2014). Moving beyond the Essex School, two operational criteria could be highlighted here: a discourse-oriented approach to populism is premised on establishing whether a given discursive practice under examination is, *first*, articulated around the nodal point, “the people,” and, *second*, to what extent the representation of society it offers is a predominantly antagonistic one, dividing the society into two antagonistic camps: the elite, the establishment, or the power block on the one side, and “the people,” the underdog, or the non-privileged on the other. When those two conditions are in place at the same time, it is safe to call a party or a movement “populist” (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014: 123). The terms along which the “people” and its enemy are constructed often seem to be determined *a priori*: the people should be “pure,” “good,” “homogenous” and always right, while the “establishment” should be “corrupt,” “evil” and wrong (Katsambekis, 2016; Mudde, 2007). Paul Taggart’s conceptualization of “the people” as “the heartland” could help us understand what the populists mean by “the people”. According to Taggart, the heartland is a place “in which, in the populist imagination, a virtuous and unified population resides” (Taggart, 2000: 95). The people in the populist propaganda is neither real nor all all-inclusive, it is rather a mythical and constructed sub-set of the whole population (Mudde, 2004). In other words, “the people” for the populists is an imagined community, much like the nation for the nationalists. It may be only the Christians for Marine Le Pen in France, as it may be only Sunni Muslims for the President Erdoğan in Turkey. Then, as Jan-Werner Müller (2016) rightfully suggests, one could define the populists as a

different category of elites who try to grab power with the help of a collective fantasy of political purity. The Manichean dichotomy between “the people” and “the enemy” was very well elaborated by Isaiah Berlin (1967: 16) during the LSE Conference on Populism in 1967:

“the enemies of the people have to be specified, whether it be capitalists, foreigners, ethnic minorities, majorities or whoever it might be. They have to be specified. The people is not everybody. The people is everybody of a certain kind, and there are certain people who have put themselves beyond the pale in some sort of way, whether by conspiring against the people or by preventing the people from realising itself, or however it may be. The people must be specified. So must the enemy. The people is not the whole of society, however constituted.”

Populist extremism feeds on the antagonism it portrays between the constituted ‘pure people’ and the enemies such as ‘the Jews’, ‘the Muslims’, ‘ethnic minorities’, or ‘the corrupt elite’. In Europe, this purity of the people is largely defined in ethno-religious terms, which rejects the principle of equality and advocates policies of exclusion mainly toward migrant and minority groups. Despite national variations, these parties and movements can be characterised by their opposition to immigration, concern for the protection of national/European culture, adamant criticisms of globalization, the EU, representative democracy and mainstream political parties and by their exploitation of the ‘culturally different’ to the ethnic/religious/national Self. Their appeal to the idea of having a strong leader is also very common across the populist movements in the World. Populists simply argue that established political parties corrupt the link between leaders and supporters, create artificial divisions within the homogenous people, and put their own interests above those of the people (Mudde, 2004: 546).

The immigration issue is central to the discourse and programmes of all radical parties in Europe. According to a survey made in the second half of the 2000s, for instance, voters of such populist parties are significantly more likely to say their country should accept only a few immigrants, or even none: in Austria 93 per cent of these voters (versus 64 percent overall); in Denmark 89 per cent (44 percent); in France, 82 per cent (44 percent); in Belgium 76 per cent (41 percent); in Norway 70 per cent (63 percent); and in the Netherlands 63 per cent (39 per cent). In fact, fewer than 2.5 per cent of voters of populist extremist parties across six countries want to see more immigration (Rydgren, 2008: 740). Regarding immigration in Europe, a more specific form of hostility towards settled Muslim communities can be observed, particularly in the past decade. A large number of voters are anxious about increasing diversity and immigration which provides the electoral potential for these parties. Anti-immigration sentiment often goes together with anti-Muslim sentiments. For instance, in 1994, 35 per cent of the Danish People’s Party supporters endorsed the view that Muslims were threatening national security; by 2007 the figure had risen to 81 per cent (as opposed to 21 per cent of all voters) (Goodwin, 2011: 10). Anxiety is not solely rooted in economic grievances, but support for these parties and public hostility to immigration is mainly driven by fears of cultural threat. The discriminatory and racist rhetoric towards the ‘others’ poses a clear threat to democracy and social cohesion in Europe.

To that end, the Norway terrorist attacks of 22 July 2011 against the government, the civilian population and a summer camp of the Workers’ Youth League, the youth organisation of the Labour Party in Norway, are a sad reminder of the dangers of extremism. The perpetrator, Anders Behring Breivik, a 32-year-old Norwegian right-wing extremist, had participated for years in debates in Internet forums and had spoken against Islam and immigration in Europe. Some critical voices are now questioning the rise of right-wing extremism and populist movements as they resemble at first sight past experiences of Nazism, Fascism and the Franco regime, which are still alive in our collective memory. Furthermore, the rise of populist extremism in European politics is challenging democracy with regard to individual

rights, collective rights and human rights. For instance, citizenship tests performed in the Netherlands, Germany and the UK are designed from the perspective of a single and dominant culture and, in my view, undermine political and individual rights insofar as they tie those rights to an understanding and full acceptance of a single culture (Kaya, 2012).

Europe's far-right parties have rejoiced at Donald Trump's win at the American elections held on 8 November 2016 and the UK's vote to leave the European Union, hailing both as a victory for their own anti-immigration, anti-EU and anti-Islam stances and vowing to push for similar results in countries such as France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Hungary, Germany and Sweden. The European public is not different from the rest of the world in the sense that it is also becoming more and more polarized between various Manichean understandings of the world as in the antagonistic dichotomies of "us/them", "pure people/corrupt elite", "privileged/underprivileged", which are interpellated and hailed by populist discourse.

Features of Contemporary Populism

Moffit (2016: 29) classifies very well three main features of populism in today's world: 1) *appeal to the people versus to the elite*; 2) *bad manners*; and 3) *crisis, breakdown or threat*. Cas Mudde (2007) defines populism as "a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people". It is "thin-centred", probably because it is not yet as thick as Communism, Socialism, Feminism, Ecologism, such that it does not qualify as a fully-fledged ideology. This Manichean understanding of the world which is based on a Cartesian duality between "pure people" and the "corrupt elite, or between "good" and "evil", or "believers" and "infidels", or the "majority" and the minority", or "friends" and "foes", appeals to the overall population, regardless of social class distinctions and political affiliations and is marked by deep suspicion of politicians, the powerful and the wealthy in society. Daniel Şandru (2013) draws our attention to a remarkable coincidence. Populism as a term apparently began its journey in the language of politics at around the same time when some thinkers started to proclaim the "end" of ideology in the beginning of the second half of the 20th century. This was the time when class-based ideological cleavages were being replaced by ethno-cultural, religious and identity-based rhetoric in world politics, a point which will be revisited shortly. It could be argued that populism has some democratic elements, or what Shils (1956) calls "democraticism", as it supports popular sovereignty and majority rule. In fact, populism has also taken progressive shapes in history by upholding anti-elitism and the will of the people (Mudde, 2004; 2007). Populist politicians dismiss sophisticated institutions and bureaucratic jargon priding themselves on simplicity and directness, mostly delivered by charismatic and politically savvy leaders who represent "the people". By appealing directly to the people, populism is also said to attract and increase political participation of marginalised groups in society.

As rightly pointed out by Isaiah Berlin (1967: 3) "populism stresses the 'internal' values of the chosen group as against the 'external' values of the enlightened cosmopolitanism of the philosophers". Research has shown that populist parties, with their dynamism, grassroots networking, and adeptness at social media tactics, have been particularly effective in re-engaging young voters and the disaffected working class in politics (Köttig et al., 2017; Goodwin, 2011; Strabac et al., 2014; Kaya and Kayaoğlu, 2017). Similarly, populism can give a voice to groups that do not feel represented by mainstream parties or the elites, and in this way, can advance certain topics, which either intentionally or unintentionally are not being addressed by mainstream parties or receive little attention on the political agenda.

Similar to the appeal they have for “the people”, populist leaders often have another similarity: “bad manners”. Moffitt (2016) rightly reminds us that slang, swearing, political incorrectness, being overly demonstrative and colourful as opposed to being rigid, rational, technocratic, intellectual, and politically correct, are often what the populist politicians prefer to use in public. The rationale here is to present themselves to the people as if they are just one of them and close to the values, codes, norms and priorities of the people – a proximity the other elitist politicians could never have with the people. Populist leaders tend to use the right language, dialect, accent, mimics, body language, gestures, and ways of dressing to accord with the environment they are in. All these choices are often culturally specific, and have great political and cultural resonance (Ostiguy, 2009). For example, President Erdoğan’s practice of marching down dusty streets, graveyards, or the poor neighbourhoods in the country in his popular checkered ‘prestogal’ jacket without a tie, is a way of showing his appeal to the people.³ These kinds of performative acts by populist politicians are staged to show a kind of “ordinariness” to the people. But this does not mean that populist leaders only stage such performative acts of “ordinariness”; they also stage alternative performances to invoke their followers that they are also extraordinary leaders with some merits, such as proving their virility and masculinity for male leaders, and femininity and maternalism for female leaders (Moffitt, 2016: 66). Silvio Berlusconi’s notorious escapades with women, Erdoğan’s nick name “*Uzun Adam*” (tall man), and Vladimir Putin’s tabloid pictures showing his topless body while hunting animals are examples of this. Sometimes, the performative acts of extraordinariness might have some religious connotations. Hugo Chavez presented himself as the reincarnation of Simon Bolivar; Berlusconi once declared himself as the Jesus Christ of politics (Moffitt, 2016: 63); and George Bush once presented himself as the Messiah (Singer, 2004). Populist leaders have another commonality showing their unordinariness to the people, i.e., their constant endeavour against the enemies in the name of the people they represent. Based on a constant state of paranoia, they voice the expectation that they will be killed by their enemies. Chavez’s obsession was that he was going to be poisoned by the Colombian oligarchy (Halvorssen, 2010). Similar to the ways in which other populist leaders often act with the experience of death, one of Erdoğan’s repeated sentences in his public speeches is as follows: “I started this march by wearing a shroud.”⁴ The threat or fantasy of death via the hands of the enemy is a common trope among populist leaders.

The third common feature of populism is that it receives its impetus from the perception of crisis, breakdown, or threat originating from an outsider or insider element, or from an outside enemy, or from an enemy within (Taggart, 2000; Moffitt, 2016). The global financial crisis, the refugee crisis, migration crisis, fundamentalist Islam crisis, Minaret crisis, headscarf crisis, Burkini crisis, any sort of military threat, or many other crises are often articulated and rearticulated by populist politicians for their own vested interest to keep people on alert, so that it is easier to communicate with their constituents through at least one of these radically simplified terms and terrains of political debate. It is not a surprise then that populist politicians to constantly invest in crises since they simply live on them. In Latin America, sometimes populist politicians refer to imperialist conspiracies; in the Netherlands Geert Wilders often exploits the increasing Islamisation of the Netherlands as an imminent threat to social, economic and political well-being of the nation. In Erdoğan’s Turkey, sometimes the threat is the Gülen movement, sometimes it is the EU, or the USA, or “the interest lobby” (*faiz lobisi*). Populist leaders tend to upkeep the popular support by constantly dramatizing and scandalizing existing problems, or even the fabricated problems, crisis, breakdowns, or threats (Wodak, 2016; Albertazzi, 2007). Dramatization and

³ See “Erdoğan 'makes his own fashion,' Turkey’s semi-official agency says,” <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/erdogan-makes-his-own-fashion-turkeys-semi-official-agency-says.aspx?pageID=238&nID=76826&NewsCatID=338>

⁴ See “Erdoğan challenges Turkey’s most popular whistle-blower,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, 21 February 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/erdogan-challenges-turkeys-most-wanted-whistleblower.aspx?pageID=238&nID=78651&NewsCatID=338>

scandalization imply a set of multiple references to the populist leaders, who construct themselves as knowledgeable, saviours, problem solvers and crisis managers that may lead their constituents to have more confidence in the efficacy of the populist political style (Wodak, 2016: 11).

The end of Ideology, and the birth of Populism?

The debate about whether populism is an ideology deserves some more clarification. In contemporary politics, the use of the term populism started to become popular in the 1960s and onwards when the term ideology was declared to be out of date by some scholars such as Daniel Bell (1965). The paradigm of the end of ideology seems to be a neo-liberal attempt to discredit class-based analysis in social sciences as well as to propagate the significance of identity-based culturalist analysis. In this sense, it is quite striking to see that the term populism started to become popular in parallel with the intensification of neo-liberal attempts to culturalize, ethnicize, religionize and civilizationalize what is actually social, economic and political (Dirlik, 2003). In this sense, it is beneficial to take a look at the history of the concept of ideology. The term was first used by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836) in 1796 to refer to a ‘new science of ideas’ (literally an *idea-ology*) that set out to uncover the origins of conscious thought and ideas. In coining this science as a separate discipline, his expectation was that ideology would eventually enjoy the same status as established sciences such as biology and zoology. However, in the mid-19th century Karl Marx gave a more enduring meaning to the term, defining it as a set of beliefs and ideas leading the masses to *false consciousness*. Marx went even further, redefining the function of ideology as a way to naturalize the status quo by persuading oppressed social classes to accept the dominant regimes of truth, or dominant descriptions of reality, which render ‘subordination’ natural. Marx actually meant that ideology amounted to the ideas of the ‘ruling class’; that is, ideas that thus uphold the class system and perpetuate exploitation. Marx and Engels ([1846] 1970: 64) wrote the following in their early work *The German Ideology*:

“The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force in society is at the same time the ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production.”

As far as capitalist production is concerned, the ideology of the property-owning bourgeoisie fosters *delusion*, or *false consciousness*, among the exploited social groups, preventing them from recognizing their own subordination and exploitation. Nevertheless, Marx did not believe that all political views had an ideological character. He held that his own work, which attempted to reveal the processes of class exploitation and oppression, was scientific. In his view, a clear-cut distinction could be drawn between science and ideology, between *truth* and *falsehood*. Subsequently, however, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1988) and Antonio Gramsci (1971) redirected this distinction by referring not only to ‘bourgeois ideology’ but also to ‘socialist ideology’ or ‘proletarian ideology’ – terms that Marx would have considered absurd.

The emergence of totalitarian dictatorships in the period between the two world wars prompted writers such as Karl Popper ([1945] 1966) and Hannah Arendt (1951) to view ideology as *an instrument of social control to ensure compliance and subordination*. Such Cold War liberal usage of the term treated ideology as a ‘closed’ system of thought, one that refused to tolerate opposing ideas and rival beliefs by claiming a monopoly of truth. Eventually, Louis Althusser moved away from the earlier Marxist understanding of the concept of ideology, which was believed to create what was termed a ‘false consciousness’, or an incorrect understanding of the way the world functioned. According to Althusser

(2001), it is impossible to access the 'real conditions of existence' owing to our reliance on *language*, which shapes what we think, imagine, and believe. However, through a rigorous 'scientific' approach to society, economics, and history, we can come close to perceiving, if not those 'real conditions', at least the methods by which we are indoctrinated with a certain ideology by complex processes of recognition.

Althusser also made a distinction between conventional state apparatuses (government, administration, army, police, courts, and prisons) and ideological state apparatuses (education, family, media, church, culture, and means of communication). In contrast to the conventional state apparatuses, the ideological state apparatuses are less coercive, less centralized, and more heterogeneous; they are also believed to access the private rather than the public realm of existence. The main thing that distinguishes ideological state apparatuses from state apparatuses is ideology: 'the repressive state apparatus functions by violence, whereas the ideological state apparatuses function by ideology' (Althusser 2001: 97). Althusser's understanding of ideology has in turn influenced a number of important Marxist thinkers, including Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau, Slavoj Žižek, and Fredric Jameson.

It was first the American sociologist Daniel Bell (1965) who claimed in 1960s that 'the end of ideology' has become the defining element of the post-industrial age, leading to the popularity of populist political discourses coupled with ethno-cultural, religious, and identity-based rhetoric. The rationale behind this argument was that there was no longer any new grand theory and ideology left to be construed. In his view, ethical and ideological questions had become irrelevant because in most western societies parties competed for power simply by promising higher levels of economic growth and material affluence. In other words, economics triumphed over politics. If there was nothing left to put forth in terms of political ideals and ideologies, then it could also be argued that the history as we knew it has come to an end. Having witnessed that one of the two antithetical forces of the age of Cold War, capitalism, has had the victory over the other, Francis Fukuyama (1989) did not hesitate in declaring 'the end of history'. He derived his argument from the Hegelian paradigm, which treats the history as the constant struggle of ideas. If history is composed of the struggle of ideas, then it would be reasonable to argue that history has really ended because there was no longer a rival idea left to oppose capitalism in order to make the dialectical cycle linger on.

According to the metanarratives of modernity such as nation-state, West, proletariat, high culture, teleological thinking, progress and totality, attachment to what is traditional, religious, and ethno-cultural would gradually be replaced with more rational, secular and universalist social identities. Yet, what has happened was the other way around (Hall, 1993: 274). The loss of traditional landmarks of politics which used to be mainly based on ideological confrontation, has led to the fragmentation of national identities into ethno-cultural and religious identities. The rise of local and particular identities refers to the dissolution of ultimate narratives of universal truth, enlightenment, rationality, secularity and progress.

In the age of populisms, it seems that the attempt to (re)construct traditional, local, authentic and mythical conceptualisations of identity is a new trend. It seems that modern societies are trapped in a Manichean and/or Cartesian binary oppositional way of thinking. It is as if the world is divided between good and the evil, majority and minority, Christian and Muslim, secular and religious and so on. Is there a *third position*, which could remove us from these dichotomies? Actually, this question is vital for many other areas such as philosophy and cultural studies. Emmanuel Levinas (1986, 1987, 1998), for instance, has always been in search of this 'third' party that is supposed to regulate the relationship between the 'self' and the 'other'. And he claimed that this 'third' party is nothing but 'justice'. On the other hand, scholars such as Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Mike Featherstone, Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze are inclined to break up this duality in cultural studies by introducing the *third space*,

or the *'third culture'* (Bhabha, 1990; Guattari, 1989; Gilroy, 1987). The third space is what Felix Guattari (1989: 14) refers to as the 'process of heterogenesis'. Guattari argues that "our objective should rather be to nurture individual cultures, while at the same time inventing new contracts of citizenship: to create an order of the state in which singularity, exceptions, and rarity coexist under the least oppressive conditions". He describes this formation "as a logic of the 'included middle', in which black and white are indistinct, in which the beautiful coexists with the ugly, the inside with the outside, the 'good' object with the bad" (Guattari, 1989: 14), and the self with the other. William Connolly's (2003) intervention in this respect is quite meaningful, as he questions the politics of identity in various contexts, and locates the linkage between identity and difference in a wider space.

Connolly touches upon many issues and concepts, some of which are identity, difference, freedom, democracy, global politics, agonistic respect, coexistence, secularism, theism, non-theism, liberalism and communitarianism. In doing so, he often refers to the works of Nietzsche, St. Augustine, Hobbes, Heidegger, Levinas and Derrida. In "the ground of the perhaps," where he fruitfully displays a theoretical form of "third space", he aims to construct an alternative viewpoint structured around

"nontheistic reverence for being, the presence of difference in identity, the problematic terms of relation between personal and collective identity, the cultivation of agonistic care for strife and interdependence in identity/difference, democracy and genealogy as ways to foster the experience of contingency, political attentiveness to the globalization of contingency, and the activation of non-territorial democratization to supplement and invigorate territorial democracy in the late modern-time" (Connolly, 2003: 220).

Shedding light upon any kind of personal and collective identities, he embraces a nontheistic source of ethical inspiration without claiming universality for it. Such a position implies a strong support for an active *pluralisation* of ethical sources in public life in a way that breaks both "with a secularism that seeks to confine faith to private realm, and with a theo-centered vision that seeks to unite people behind one true faith" (Connolly, 2003: xxi). Nontheistic ethical inspiration rather aims to bind ethico-political life to negotiations and settlement between subjugated parties more than to common confession of a universal faith, or a consensus forged by the putative power of the better argument. Contrary to what the populist politicians claim, Connolly rightly states that there is no true identity because every identity is particular, relational and constructed. Identity is constructed through a dynamic and interactive social process that is discursively shaped in a specific social and historical context, and continually interwoven with economic and power relations (Eisenstadt, 2000).

An identity, be it individual or collective, forms itself in relation to a set of differences. An individual, or a group, is subject to the pressures to fix, regulate or exclude some of those differences as "otherness". The quality of democratic regime depends on the acknowledgment of response to these pressures. One of the philosophical discussions which Connolly (2003) invokes in this very context is "agonistic respect", or what some critiques call "agonistic democracy". He defines agonistic virtue as a civic virtue that allows people to honour different final sources, to cultivate reciprocal respect across difference, and to negotiate larger assemblages to set general policies in a way that confirms political interdependence among citizens. Michael Walzer (2002) similarly addresses the significance of the politics of identity in search of respect and recognition leading to what Connolly calls 'agonistic pluralism'. Walzer also underlines the official recognition of the otherness of the other by the State:

"Identity politics is only sometimes aimed directly at the state – as when a subordinated group with an established territorial base demands autonomy or secession. When the groups are dispersed as in immigrant societies, the acting out of demand for respect takes place mostly in civil society... It is more often as workers or believers or neighbours than as citizens that men

and women search for ways to take pride in who they are... the benefits [of identity politics] are associational more than political... Identity politics in modern pluralist societies is most importantly and most problematically the politics of weak groups, whose members are poor and relatively powerless. It would seem that the best way to respect them is to address their collective weakness... We might require, say, state-sponsored celebrations of the common history and culture of this or that group: holidays, media programs, museum exhibits, and so on... Promoting respect is what we should aim at..." (Walzer, 2002: 40-41).

Thus, official recognition of the otherness of such groups like migrant communities, Muslim minorities, autochthonous minorities, or any other sociologically/anthropologically defined minorities may prompt them to incorporate themselves more into the majority society. In this view, a more egalitarian representation of those groups in the museums, media, politics and other legitimate spaces of communication is more likely to contribute to the formation of cohesive societies in Europe.

Subject of Scientific Enquiry: Leader, or the Party?

One of the intriguing questions in studying populism is to decide whether it is better to focus on the leader, or the party. Based on a comprehensive study, Moffitt (2016) concludes that the choice is often made on the basis of the region, or the country one is studying. The literature shows that those who focus on the leader have tended to be situated within the studies on Latin American, African or Asian-Pacific populism, whereas those who focus on parties are more likely to study European populism. Latin American populist leaders such as Hugo Chavez, and Alberto Fujimori Fernando Collor, Asian-Pacific populist leaders such as Michael Sata, and Ráida Odinga often pop up when one talks about populism in these regions. In this regard, Turkey also fits into this first category where the leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's image and persona precede the party. However, it is often the political parties coming to the fore when one enquires about the populist movements in Europe, such as UKIP in the UK, the Front National in France, the Five Star Movement in Italy, or JOBBIK in Hungary. However, recently it is also becoming common to observe that the leaders of such political parties are being perceived to be prior to their parties. Nigel Farage has certainly become very popular in connection with the Brexit referendum in June 2016. Marine Le Pen has always enjoyed a certain popularity in France and Europe. The popularity of Geert Wilders has already topped that of his Party of Freedom in the Netherlands. Regardless of the region, there is one thing which is very clear for every case under scrutiny: one can imagine populism without a party, or movement, but it is rather difficult to imagine contemporary populism without leadership.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report has been to undertake a literature survey based on theoretical and empirical analysis to bear on the questions of cause and response: what factors are causing growing numbers of citizens to endorse populist parties of right or left? It is often presumed that the affiliates of such populist parties are political protestors, single-issue voters, "losers of globalization", or ethno-nationalists. However, the picture seems to be more complex. Populist party voters are dissatisfied with, and distrustful of mainstream elites, and most importantly they are hostile to immigration and rising ethno-cultural and religious diversity. While these citizens feel economically insecure, their hostility springs mainly from their belief that immigrants and minority groups are threatening their national culture, social security, community and way of life. They are perceived by the followers of the populist parties as a security challenge threatening social, political, cultural and economic unity and homogeneity of their nation. The main concern of these citizens is not only the ongoing immigration and the refugee crisis, they are also profoundly anxious about Muslim-origin people who are already settled mostly in western European countries. Anti-Muslim sentiment has become an important driver of support for

populist extremists - a sentiment that is based on the perception that all Muslim-origin people are ethnically, culturally, religiously, politically and economically homogenous. This means that appealing only to concerns over immigration such as calling for immigration numbers to be reduced or border controls to be tightened, is not enough.

Populist parties seem to be investing in the worsening economic conditions, public attitudes to immigration, attitudes and prejudices towards Muslims and Islam, and public dissatisfaction with the response of mainstream elites to these issues. The views and ideas they espouse cannot be dismissed as those of a marginal minority. It seems that these parties are here to stay. Public concern over immigration and rising cultural and ethnic diversity, anxiety over the presence and compatibility of Muslims, and dissatisfaction with the performance of mainstream elites on these issues are unlikely to subside. As Mathew Goodwin (2011) stated in research conducted in 2011, the enduring nature of this challenge is perhaps best reflected in then-recent findings that demonstrate how populist extremist parties are not the exclusive property of older generations. There is evidence that those who vote for such parties are also influencing the voting habits of their children. For instance, it is known that 37 per cent of the support for Front National leader, Marine Le Pen in France comes from those aged under 35, who are hit by a prolonged state of chronic unemployment.

This review has also argued that a populist political style has become very widespread, together with the rise of neo-liberal forms of governmentality, capitalizing on what is *presented as* legitimate in cultural, ethnic, religious and civilizational terms. The supremacy of cultural–religious discourse in the West is likely to frame many of the social, political, and economic conflicts within the range of societies’ religious differences. Many of the ills faced by migrants and their descendants, such as poverty, exclusion, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of political participation, and unwillingness to integrate, are attributed to their Islamic background, believed stereotypically to clash with Western secular norms and values.

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