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Populism as a Political Style: UK, Italy and France.

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Abstract

This thesis first of all offers a brief review of the main theories about Populism criticized by Moffitt and Tormey. Moreover, Benjamin Moffitt and Simon Tormey will build upon the weaknesses of these dominant theories in order to present their alternative model of Populism as a Political Style. My goal is to validate Moffitt and Tormey’s model by applying it to three case studies (UK, Italy and France) in order to conceptualise the expression of the phenomenon, and eventually make predictions for Europe. The question I will systematically seek to answer is how populism as a political style has expressed itself in the UK, Italy and France.

Applying the chosen model to my three case studies will lead us to three hypothetical options regarding the expression of populism. First, this expression of Populism as a Political Style in the UK, Italy and France, varies according to the socio-political context in which it emerges. Second, the expression of the Populist phenomenon creates tensions towards the European community. Third, the expression of populism creates tensions within the country, resulting in social/domestic instability.

I will conclude that Populism itself is a phenomenon that evolves through time, therefore the definition of the term may also vary through time. In this current context, the model is efficient today although it might be so in the future.
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1. Introduction

Context

The Populist phenomenon is a key feature of contemporary political landscape; its complex aspects make its conceptualization significantly difficult. In fact, there is very little agreement among the different conceptions of Populism. The dominant theories seek to offer a universal categorization the phenomenon by offering a set of key elements that are applicable any case study. However, in contemporary politics, the European political spectrum challenges the validity of these dominant theories about Populism.

Aims, research Question, Hypothesis

The aim of my work is to first offer a brief review of the main theories about Populism criticised by Moffitt and Tormey. Moreover, Benjamin Moffitt and Simon Tormey will build upon the weaknesses of these dominant theories in order to present their alternative model of Populism as a Political Style. My goal is to validate Moffitt and Tormey’s model by applying it to three case studies (UK, Italy and France) in order to conceptualize the expression of the phenomenon, and eventually make predictions for Europe. The question I will systematically seek to answer is how populism as a political style has expressed itself in the UK, Italy and France.

Applying the chosen model to my three case studies will lead us to three hypothetical options regarding the expression of populism. First, this expression of Populism as a Political Style in the UK, Italy and France, varies according to the socio-political context in which it emerges. Second,
the expression of the Populist phenomenon creates tensions towards the European community. Third, the expression of populism creates tensions within the country, resulting in social/domestic instability.

**Review of Moffitt and Tormey’s Model of Populism as a Political Style.**

One of the dominant perceptions of populism criticised by Moffitt and Tormey is Mudde’s, who defines the phenomenon as a “thin centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ and the ‘corrupt élite’, arguing that politics should be an expression of the volontée générale (general will) of the people” (Mudde, 2007, p.23). However there are various problems that emerge when defining Populism as a thin entered ideology. Populism, according to Mudde, appears to be comparable to thin ideologies such as feminism or ecologism (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.383). However, “unlike feminism or ecologism, there are no philosophers or theoreticians of populism, hardly anyone self-identifies as ‘populist’, and there is no kind of wider global ‘populist movement’ or Populist International” (Moffitt, Tormey, 2014, pp.383). Thus, while Moffitt and Tormey agree that populism has a significant ideational element, their model suggests that these elements are better conceptualised as part of populism’s political style (Moffitt, Tormey, 2014, pp.383).

Secondly, Ernesto Laclau’s (2005a; 2006) conceptualisation of populism as a political logic has made the strongest impact. Moffitt and Tormey criticise Laclau’s view of populism as a political logic by suggesting that this conceptualisation is too broad to allow any meaningful application. Moreover, Moffitt and Tormey explain that if we are to take Laclau’s
conceptualisation seriously, we should be able to apply it to any case study. Therefore, “Laclau’s attempt to equate populism with the political is of little help in understanding sameness or difference”, key task of comparative politics (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.384).

Another dominant perception of the Populist phenomenon is Laclau’s earlier theoretical work from the Essex School of discourse analysis. Laclau and Mouffe (1985), figure heads of this approach, consider populism to be an anti-status quo discourse that symbolically divides society between ‘the people’ and its ‘other’ (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.385). Moffitt and Tormey here criticise the bulk of literature about populism as it often serves to verify the universal applicability of Laclauian framework rather than to truly analyse the subject at hand. Secondly, Moffitt and Tormey criticise the Classical content analyses, which seek to develop a qualitative coding scheme which “attempts to measure the ‘level’ of populism in a certain set of discursive texts” (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.385), while recent quantitative approaches “seek to undertake computer assisted analyses of a large set of texts based on the appearance of certain key terms” (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.385). Moffitt and Tormey first criticise the Classical content analyses by suggesting that there is little agreement on what sources should be measured from speeches to party manifestos to party broadcasts (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.387). The quantitative content analysis critique suggests that it is difficult to see “how charting the percentages of how other certain key words appear in party material, can really do much more than verify or supplement already existing theoretical assumptions” (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.385). Moreover, according to Moffitt and Tormey, both these empirical approaches to populism as a discourse “fundamentally miss important elements of populist appeal- namely the ‘stylistic’ elements beyond what is recorded on the page”, visual, performative and aesthetic elements (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.5). Ultimately, Moffitt and Tormey suggest that the discursive approach to populism should be seen as a
A methodological approach (to supplement or understand the phenomenon) rather than a primary framework for exploring populism.

The last approach criticised by Moffitt and Tormey is Populism as Strategy/Organization. Kurt Weyland’s defines populism as a “political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganised followers” (Weyland, 2001, p.14). The problem with this definition is that it identifies modes of organisation or strategy, such as a number of social movements or forms of community politics could fall under such a definition (Hawkins, 2010, p.168). Additionally such definition also misses both stylist and ideational elements of populism. Moffitt and Tormey in fact agree with Hawkins (2010, p.39), pointing out that such “conceptualisations of populism emphasise largely material aspects of politics that is, coalitions, historical preconditions and policies. This is an incomplete account.” Finally, Moffitt and Tormey explain that this approach leaves out the classic referent in discussions of populism, “the people” (Moffitt, Tormey, pp. 386), key feature that differentiates populism from other styles of politics.

This brief overview of the key approaches to populism (as ideology, logic and discourse) provide valid outlines of some of the features of populism, though these categories appear as problematic. Moreover, Moffit and Tormey’s thinking of ‘populism as a political style’ offers a promising and new perspective that helps solve a number of the issues raised above. By focusing on the performative elements of the phenomenon, Moffitt and Tormey’s model will allow us to contextualise populism’s position in the contemporary ‘stylises’ political landscape.

Following this brief explanation of Moffitt and Tormey’s critical perspective of the main perceptions of populism, the model of populism as a political style focuses on contemporary
populism in order to acknowledge the changing shape of the political under conditions of reflexive modernity (Becker, 2006). Thus, Moffitt and Tormey define the concept of political style as the “repertoires of performance that are used to create political relations” (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.387). This new model of populism as a political style which I will systematically apply to my three case studies, distinguishes three elements.

The first element of Populism as a Political style is Appeal to the People. This element differentiates populism from other political styles, the ‘people’ being both “the central audience of populists, as well as the subject that populists attempt to ‘render present’ (Arditi, 2007a) through their performance. The people are therefore the holders of sovereignty, which implies a dichotomous division of society between the ‘people’ and an other/s” (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.391). Moffitt and Tormey differ from Mudde’s division between the pure people and the corrupt elite, as they do not believe that populists necessarily think of the elite as corrupt or always opposed to the elite (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.391). Further, the ‘elite’, the ‘establishment’ or the ‘system’ are usually blamed, in the populist discourse, for crisis, breakdown, corruption or dysfunctionality.

Second element of Moffitt and Tormey’s model, preparing the ground for populism to emerge, is the one of “Crisis, breakdown, Threat”. The perception of crisis, breakdown or threat leads to the demand to act decisively and immediately. Moreover, crises are often related to the breakdown between citizens and their representatives, but can also be related to immigration, economic difficulties, perceived injustice, military threat, social change or other issues (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.391). Furthermore, this need for immediacy of political action, will lead populists to favour “short-term and swift action rather than the ‘slow politics’ (Saward, 2011) of negotiation and deliberation”. Politics thus becomes highly instrumentalised and utilitarian (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.392). Thus, as Laclau has demonstrated, it can be complex and
sophisticated, “as a number of previously disconnected grievances can find articulation under a populist claim” (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.392).

The last element of the model of populism as a political style is the one of “bad manners”. According to Moffitt and Tormey, much of populists’ appeal comes from their disregard for ‘appropriate’ ways of acting in the political realm (Moffitt, Tormey, 2017, pp.392). Thus, communication ways such as the use of slang, swear words, political incorrectness, high tone of voice, and being overly demonstrative, are tools adopted by populists to express their discontent. Leaders might adopt this communication strategy to connect more easily to the people as a whole, as they can be easily understood by the masses.

Moffitt and Tormey’s model of populism as a political style thus appears to be more appropriate to our contemporary political context, in which the phenomenon shows specific characteristics differentiating its current expression from past scenarios. The analysis of the emerging differences and similarities in the expression of populism for each one of our case studies, will allow us to draw conclusions about the expression of Populism as a Political style in the European context and relations.
2. UK Case Study

Apply Moffitt and Tormey’s model to the UK

The British case is a very complex one and must be analyzed in depth in order to understand the role of populism in the political shifts that the country has witnessed recently. Throughout this chapter I will distinguish left from right wing populism as key terms for the understanding of the populist phenomenon. Moreover, this section of my thesis aims to explain Moffitt and Tormey’s model of ‘populism as a political style’ and apply it to the British case in order to identify the ways in which populism has emerged in the country, and detect the key elements allowing this rise.

Right/left Populism

First, it is important to distinguish the different parties and their respective political agendas. The populist radical right parties of the UK are the BNP (British National party) and the UKIP (UK Independence party), whereas the radical left parties are the SSP (Scottish Socialist party) and additionally, two mainstream parties of the left and right are the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. This chapter seeks to distinguish the different party features and the way in which they have evolved through time. It is the way in which these changes manifest themselves and the political strategies adopted by the main parties in response to these shifts that characterise the Populist phenomenon. This chapter focuses on Britain, the Brexit referendum and the analysis of populist elements emerging in the country; the following case studies about Italy and France,
will allow me to test the applicability of Moffitt and Tormey’s model of ‘populism as a political style’ to other European countries witnessing very different economic, social and political shifts.

Moffitt and Tormey in fact, criticise the main theories about populism (as ideology, logic, discourse and strategy/organization) and introduce the category of ‘political style’ arguing that this new category outweighs the others. Moffitt and Tormey’s inductive model of populism as a political style aims to contextualise populism within the “increasingly stylised and mediated milieu of contemporary politics” (Moffitt, Tormey, 2014, pp382.), from the 1990s onwards, by focusing on its performative features. The key elements of such model were discerned through a review of the literature on contemporary populism. Moffitt and Tormey though noticed a wide disparity in regard to populist leaders’ ideological approaches, discourses and political organisational strategies, therefore they decided to focus on style. Moreover, the analyses of a set of politicians across the world allowed these authors to determine the stylistic features that linked such leaders and create a concept “allowing us to chart the family resemblances between a number of disparate cases”(Moffitt, Tormey, 2013, pp-390). The model’s resulting key elements, which must not be considered in isolation from one another, are the following: “Appeal to ‘the People’”, “Crisis, Breakdown, Threat” and “Bad Manners”. Thus, applying Moffitt and Tormey’s new compelling way of thinking about the phenomenon to the UK case study will bring to light the key elements that feed the people’s sense of discontent allowing leaders to gain consent and populism to rise in the country.

Before applying Moffitt and Tormey’s model to the UK, I will start by borrowing three useful theses from Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser to emphasise the differences between left and right wing populism in the UK. Such distinction will bring to light the complexity of the country’s political spectrum at the time in which the populist phenomenon manifested itself in the UK.
Although Moffitt and Tormey prefer not to define populism as a thin centred ideology, the UK case study presents specific ideational elements which must be taken into consideration. Mudde and Kaltwasser theorise that right wing populism is primarily exclusionary (key groups as outsiders). Left wing populism on the other hand, is primarily inclusionary (focusing on policies of economic, cultural and political incorporation). Additionally, left wing populism is predominantly focused on socioeconomic issues (such as egalitarianism), whereas the right focuses more on ethnic identity. Moreover, “the relationship of host ideology to populism varies: populism is less ideologically important to the right than to the left, who are populists first and socialists second”\(^1\). Consequently, the exclusionary and nationalistic ideological aspects of the right prevail over the populist ideology. Therefore, this right wing ideological stance might be one of the causes of Brexit. Hence, I chose to apply Moffitt and Tormey’s model to Britain through an analysis of the Brexit referendum results and the country’s political shifts throughout history. The aim is to show that it is not an ideology which triggered Brexit, but rather a specific political style feeding the people’s sense of discontent that brought about the Brexit referendum. Moreover, political decision-making depends on and adapts to the people’s “mood”. Therefore, the ultimate goal of the parties becomes to gain consensus rather than achieve order and stability.

**Brexit referendum**

In “Populism, Nationalism and Brexit” by Craig Calhoun, 2017, we understand that Brexit was a vote against “London, globalisation, and multiculturalism as much as a vote against Europe.” Though how and why has Europe become the enemy? Calhoun suggests that Brexit is a vote against those who benefitted from the European Union and a nostalgic vote against a frustrating
present. Brexit is additionally, according to Calhoun, the expression of English nationalism. Indeed, England and Wales voted to leave the EU, while Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to remain. Calhoun adds that the issue with the EU is sovereignty and not cultural integration or shared history, as “sovereignty simply suggests autonomy, the ability of the country to make its own decisions about its future, its relations with others and who can cross its borders” (Calhoun, 2017, pp. 61). Though Calhoun subtly comments that addressing migration flows, achieving security against terrorism and other forms of transnational conflict and crime, require international cooperation. Similarly, issues like climate change and financial instability are of common concern. In other words, the voters of Brexit focus more on expressing their discontent rather than choosing solutions. According to Calhoun, the Brexit vote in fact expressed frustration and resentment, as well as the hope for a better lifestyle celebrating a proud national identity. Therefore the Brexit vote, and the way in which it appealed to the people, seems to be a Populist vote. A vote, which according to Calhoun, responds to weakness rather than conveying strength.

Populism as a political style’s key element of “Crisis, Breakdown and Threat” perfectly fits this description. The economic malaise played in favour of the people’s sense of discontent and as Moffitt and Tormey suggest, populism is not simply a vote of the people against the corrupt elite (Rousseau), since the elite is not necessarily corrupt- it is a vote of protest. As a matter of fact, “leaders of the Brexit campaign encouraged the country’s sour mood by cementing allegations that the UK gave far more to Europe than it received in return” (Calhoun, 2017, pp.65). Hence, populist leaders exploit the element of “crisis, breakdown and threat” resulting from the economic malaise, to appeal to the people. This strategy allows populist leaders to gain consent and comply to Moffitt and Tormey’s element of “appeal to the people”, differentiating populism from other political styles. Rather than taking “responsibility and think the issues might lay in the
domestic UK policy, or economy, or tax structure” (Calhoun, 2017, pp.70), populist leaders prefer the easier path to quickly motivate voters in their favour: find someone or something to blame. Such political strategy has often been adopted by many leaders of the past during times of crisis, such as the period following the two World Wars. Though there is no significant historical evidence that proves this strategy to be efficient. Though Populism as a new and recent phenomenon, presents characteristics that are specific to contemporary politics, allowing it to emerge today as it never has before.

**Nationalism, Globalization**

According to Jonathan Hearn in his 2017 work “Vox Populi: Nationalism, Globalisation and the Balance of Power in the making of Brexit”, the 2016 Brexit referendum revolved around two main themes: “people wanted to limit the levels of immigration and they wanted to take back control over the laws by which they were governed (pp.20).” Hearn suggests that behind such resentment towards immigrants and the EU, there is a feeling of powerlessness. The author adds that the phrase Vox Populi (the voice of the people is the voice of God), has always been part of the English political history. In fact, the article mentions David Hume saying that “centralised power can never ultimately force submission of a large mass of people” (Hearn, 2017, pp.22). Moreover, the people are ruled by opinion, and opinions matter. Therefore, the Brexit vote was an opportunity for many people to speak up and express their discontent. The polls analysed through Hearn’s work distinguish the leavers from the remainers, and show that the people with higher education or employment, as well as the young, preferred to remain. Moreover, the ones identified as Asian, Black or Muslim, were more inclined to choose remain. The supporters of the Greens or the SNP (Scottish National Party), the Labor Party and the Liberal Democrats were also more likely to vote remain. On the other hand, the older, the retired or the unemployed, were more
inclined to choose to leave; as well as the ones with a lower level of education or a lower income employment, were leavers. These results reveal the possible causes for the people’s feeling of resentment. The polls also allow us to evaluate the ways in which the Brexit leaders might have appealed to the people.

Hearn begins by defining nationalism, one of the key aspects of the country’s divide, as the “making of combined claims, on behalf of a population, to identity, jurisdiction and territory” (Hearn, 2017, pp.24). Additionally, Hearn explains how various pieces of research have proved that governments were more effective at countering the people’s misconceptions about the country’s civic and ethnic diversities, rather than correcting these perceptions. Hearn in fact suggests that Brexit, “like devolution, mobilises national identities not simply in terms of ethnicity and culture but also in terms of the adequacy of peoples’ rule over themselves.” (Hearn, 2017, pp.25). Therefore, nationalism is one of the sub-elements of populism as a political style in the UK, as political tool to “appeal to the people”. Moreover, when looking at the country’s voting pattern, the remain vote appears to be much stronger in large, ethnically diverse cities (often housing major universities), where the highly educated and paid are concentrated. Therefore, most remainers saw “multiculturalism, social liberalism, feminism, the green movement and immigration, as ‘forces for good’”, whereas most leavers saw these as “forces for ill” (Hearn, 2017, pp.26). The government, through various pieces of research, appealed to the people by countering once again these divided perceptions of society in order to gain consent.

Another cause for the referendum’s results according to Hearn’s data analysis, is globalisation. The data confirms that the leavers saw globalisation as “the force of ill”, whereas the remainers saw it as the “force of good”. Hearn adds that the “Brexit vote for globalisation was associated with “economic processes of global capitalism” but also with “political process of
economic integration” (Hearn, 2017, pp.27). Most people though look for concrete agents to blame for their troubles, such as states and other institutions (which are more visibly available to take the blame). The EU is thus much more identifiable than global capitalism, as well as cultural differences that are more visible than GDP, trade imbalances and transnational corporations. Such explanation shows the political spectrum in which populism as a political style is likely to emerge, corresponding to the model’s element of ‘Crisis, Breakdown and Threat’. Once again, Moffitt and Tormey’s understanding of populism as a political style is applicable to the UK.

Hearn follows by explaining that the polling data indicates two clear axes of polarisation, around class and age. The younger, benefitting from the EU and the opportunities that it offers in terms of education, preferred to remain. On the other hand, “the older are more likely to see their fortunes as largely set, less pliable”. Some did vote according to their class or age position, some didn’t. Such readings rest on a long shift in the economy and the class composition of British society: “first the deindustrialization of the mid twentieth century was decomposed and today it is even less stable and precarious than it was in the past” (Hearn, 2017, pp.29). Therefore there is more than one explanation that lies behind the Brexit vote; populism may present strategies of exclusion or inclusion as ideological elements, though it is more complex than that. The socio-economic unstable context required an immediate and aggressive political response which motivated the leaders to benefit from the people's anger. This choice made by the leaders is part of the populist political style. Moffitt and Tormey’s model is applicable to every element we have analysed regarding the Brexit vote. Though understanding the rise of populism in Britain requires a deeper explanation of Euroscepticism, as it becomes a central strategy by which non-mainstream parties or factions within mainstream parties attempt to gain political advantage. According to Moffitt and Tormey, such advantage corresponds to their element of political appeal.
**Euroscepticism**

The paper “The rise of post-imperial populism: the case of right wing Euroscepticism in Britain” by Gifford (2006), challenges explanations of British Euroscepticism in terms of the politics of opposition and the workings of the party system and proposes that a structural crisis of British party politics has allowed Euroscepticism to enter the political mainstream. The author defines Euroscepticism as a “distinct and powerful national movement asserting conceptions of Britain’s identity”. Moreover, Euroscepticism can be organised within a hard-soft dichotomy. Hard Euroscepticism can be defined as ‘opposition to the idea of political and economic integration, expressing itself as a principled objection to the current form of integration in the European Union on the grounds that it offends deeply held values, or more likely, is the embodiment of negative values’ (Szczerbiak and Taggart 2004). Soft Euroscepticism on the other hand, ‘involves contingent of qualified opposition to European integration’ (Gifford, 2004), expressing itself in terms of opposition to the specific policies or of the defence of national interest. In addition, to such definition of the term, the difference between hard and soft Euroscepticism will lead to the central argument that it is in fact a “structural crisis within the party system, rather than the party system per se, that allowed Euroscepticism to take a hold within British politics”(Gifford, 2004). Therefore, following Moffitt and Tormey's model, the populist element of Crisis allowed Euroscepticism to rise in Britain.

Gifford’s work follows by explaining that membership of the European Community became part of an elite driven strategy to transform the state from the 1960s onwards. As Euroscepticism has articulated a profound and fundamental opposition between Britain and Europe, the paper makes the central proposition that it is the populist manifestation of
Euroscepticism in Britain that is significant in explaining its rise and influence. Therefore, Gifford’s article will bring to light the difference between regular political decision making and populist political decision making, with Euroscepticism being the tool that allowed specific leaders to ‘appeal to the people’.

“The rise of post-imperial populism: the case of right wing Euroscepticism in Britain”, (Gifford, 2004) also makes a distinction between constitutional and popular democracy: the first, referring to the institutional requirements for good governance and the second, referring to the will of the people. Moreover, the emerging separation between these two “forms of rule” is related to the declining importance of the political party. It is interesting to note that the article specifies the populist role of the party: mobilise electorates and achieve meaningful identification to a political ideology. Moreover, while the procedural and institutional role of parties has been maintained, their function in securing wider popular support hasn’t. Populist politics therefore emerged as a solution to the “legitimation deficit” (Gifford, 2004) of modern political parties. Thus in populist democracies, parties transform themselves into mass movements for national appeal. It is important to distinguish a populist from a regular Democratic Party system first and detect the populist aspects that fit under Moffit and Tormey’s model. In this case, Britain’s national appeal corresponds to Moffitt and Tormey’s appeal to the people, and Euroscepticism is the tool to achieve it, a tool that emerges during a party crisis leading to its transformation.

Gifford’s following argument is introduced by explaining that in fact populism is characterised by its appeal to the people emerging from the pathologies of traditional representative democracies. Moreover, populist movements’ political debate becomes a defensive posture and changes the way discussion takes place. These movements articulate “powerful symbolic and cultural causes that are central to the shift to populism” (Gifford, 2004). In the British
case, the disillusionment with the two party system was already evident by the early 1970s, when there was a post-imperial crisis within the British system. The paper explains that the characteristics of such crisis were the declining legitimacy of the established elite, as well as the “dealignment and electoral volatility and the intensification of factionalism within the main political parties” (Gifford, 2004). Such trends came from the failure of governments to halt British economic decline and modernise. Governing post-imperial Britain became very difficult because of the civil war in Northern Ireland and the intractability of trade union militancy (Gifford, 2004). One solution to this growing sense of crisis was to try and build a popular national consensus.

Moreover, “Thatcherism and New Labour both aimed to transcend and marginalise the parties which they claimed to represent” and it is in “such context of imperial decline, the nation has had to be persistently regenerated and there has been the need for an ‘other’ against which a ’new Britain’ can be redefined.” The ‘other’ was for Britain, since the 1970s, the project of European integration. It is therefore no surprise that the parties successfully used the project as a “populist tool”. Additionally, politicians from the left and from the right, such as Eric Powell and Tony Benn appealed to the people outside of the mechanisms and institutions of the party system. These politicians were in fact on the “No side” of the Brexit referendum. Therefore, a Eurosceptic movement emerged through a mobilisation against pragmatic party elites who maintained membership to the European Community central for the nation’s survival. Thus, ‘the centrality of the Westminster parliament and the myth of exeptionalism’ (Gifford, 2004) was threatened by Euroscepticism, a part of a degenerating approach to international affairs. The strength of Euroscepticism as a populist tool lies in its capacity to appear contemporary and radical. Britain’s post-imperial crisis allowed the expression of this tool, and membership of the European Community could not be debated without evoking nationalism: ‘Europe’ became the ‘other’ of
British political identity and interests, a threat to the nation’s social and political development. The paper proceeds by explaining that the manifestation of British “Euroscepticism as populism and the implications of this are explored through a case study of the mobilisation in the Conservative party during the Maastricht crisis of the Major government”(Gifford, 2004). The key feature of right wing Eurosceptic discourse during the Maastricht debate was that the members of the Conservative party were the guardians of popular sovereignty. Membership of the European community became a political, economic and social threat to the nation. The leaders of these Eurosceptic parties claimed to be the defenders of the “exceptionalness” of Britain against the European community. By the mid-1990s, it was noticeable that public attitudes towards such membership became more ‘negative and sceptic’. Therefore, this crisis over Maastricht ratification traumatised the British political system.

The idea that the left mainstream Labour party is a pro-integration European social democratic party, is not credible. The Conservative party as well remains reluctant to any further integration. Moreover, there is a chronic problem in achieving a stable European leadership able to solve and face European issues. The paper concludes by suggesting that Eurosceptic forces have targeted elites claiming to directly represent the “real interests of the people”; and successively, Eurosceptics have mobilised as a populist national movement. Finally, they have contracted the nationalist discourse seeing Europe as the ‘other’ in opposition to an integration project that has never been fully embraced and accepted by a large group of unhappy people. The Brexit referendum is the ultimate result of years of repressed resentment.

Finally, if we consider populism as a political style as Moffitt and Tormey conceived it, Euroscepticism and nationalism are political tools that allowed the populist parties and their
leaders to emerge in Britain, though they are not sufficient to characterise populism as an ideology. Even though Populism seems to have always existed, its recent manifestation is quite innovative as the leader’s appeal to the people is specific to the socio-economic context of the UK. A populist leader in this case can belong to the right or to the left, it is the political style adopted which will allow populism to emerge. What appeals to the people changes according to the social imbalances/inequality and to the economic difficulties of the country. In such increasingly unstable circumstances, it is not surprising that the most recurring response to the people’s discontent has always been a tendency to exclude the ‘other’. The chosen ‘other’ becomes the enemy of the nation and the cause for the country’s crisis, as the most efficient and immediate response to gain electoral consensus. Therefore, excluding this enemy becomes the core element of a strategy allowing the Populist Party or leader, to save the nation. Furthermore, populism is not an ideology, rather populism as a political style consists in the political adoption of ideational elements as the immediate response to the country’s instability.
3. Italy Case Study

Apply Moffitt and Tormey’s Model to the Italian Case.

As we have successfully applied Moffitt and Tormey’s model of populism as a political style to the UK, we will attempt to do the same with Italy. In fact, Italy’s new government has been easily labeled as “populist”, though the manifestation of the populist phenomenon strongly differs from the one of the UK. In order to apply the model to the Italian case, we must first understand the socio-political context that has favoured the manifestation of populist elements in Italy. I will begin by focusing on two main parties, The Five Star Movement and the Northern League, which ended months of political uncertainty by going into coalition in the summer of 2018.

The MS5

The Five Star Movement (MS5) appeared in Italy in 2005, officially constituted in 2009 and became the most voted party in 2013. Founded by a comedian, Beppe Grillo, the Five Star Movement was launched through the Internet, on the founder’s internet blog. The MS5 in fact uses the web as a key political tool, a home for the MS5’s voters. Such tool will differentiate the Five Star Movement from the other parties by allowing its members to “appeal to the people” in a more modern and innovative way. In “The ‘Post-Modern’
Populism In Italy: The Case of the Five Star Movement” by Maria Elisabetta Lanzone, the author describes the Five Star Movement by identifying the populist characteristics of the party and by bringing to light the strategic steps taken by the party to rise in government and gain increasing consent. Lanzone’s analysis in fact shows several elements corresponding to Moffitt and Tormey’s model of populism as a political style. Though the model’s elements are present in several European countries, as we have seen in our UK case study, it is interesting to see how the populist phenomenon varies significantly in its expression according to the country we choose to focus on. In fact, the expression of populism is so peculiar to each country, that it may seem impossible at first to find a common denominator allowing us to define the term. Though Moffitt and Tormey’s broad element of “crisis, breakdown and threat”, will serve as common denominator for the analysis of our chosen countries (UK, Italy and France) allowing us to understand, and ultimately to explain, the different expressions of the populist phenomenon.

First of all, “The ‘Post-Modern’ Populism In Italy: The Case of the Five Star Movement”, it is explained that mass engagement has been what seemed to be the most appropriate means to foster political participation (Lanzone, 2014). The MS5 in fact adopts specific tactics with the goal of appealing to the people. Moreover, this chapter distinguishes the means through which the MS5 managed to foster political participation by focusing on the masses rather than the few, as key feature of populism. In the late 90s, parties lost their appeal all around Europe. Lanzone’s data shows that, ”between the 1970s and the 1980s in many European countries, the level of membership fell by around two thirds” (Lanzone, 2014). Such drop will result in a loss of trust for the parties and will therefore require new parties to foster political participation. Additionally to the “Crisis breakdown and threat"
element from the model of populism as apolitical style, Lanzone explains that the country’s crisis reached its climax with the corruption scandal of Tangentopoli, in the mid nineteenth century, allowing populism to emerge while the “Partitocrazia” fell, as the parties lost their power (Lanzone, 2014). Therefore, the discontent of the people was key for the emergence of populism as a political style in Italy, as this context of crisis favoured the rising populist leaders who appealed to the people by attacking the weakened parties. In this context, only 3% of citizens expressed trust in parties (Lanzone, 2014).

The Five Star Movement was founded by the comedian Beppe Grillo and specific party’s characteristics, such as its unique communication strategies, belong to Moffitt and Tormey’s model of populism as a political style. Lanzone defines the populist vote in Italy as a “protest vote”, a gradual “disintegration process which began with the 1990s fragmentation and that generated an increasing feeling of discontent” (Lanzone, 2014). Therefore, the leaders of the party such as Beppe Grillo, were able to foster political participation by increasingly appealing to the masses, rather than the few. The element of “appeal to the people” is evident: the MS5 built its strategy around Rousseau’s idea of the “pure people against the corrupt elite”, which is valid for this case study as this political tool benefitted from past and current corruption scandals. Scandals such as the one in September 2012, when leader Franco Florito (PDL) and the Lazio regional government led by Renata Polverini, were involved in scandals linked to the improper use of public funds (Mosca, 2014). Additionally, In October of that same year, the centre right government (leader Roberto Formigoni, Lombardy) “was forced to suspend the legislature due to its members being involved in some cases of corruption, pork barreling and external collusion with the Mafia” (Mosca, 2014). Moreover, the revelation of Antonio Pietro’s unscrupulous use of his
party’s (Italia dei Valori) electoral reimbursements (Mosca, 2014), triggered and increasing feeling of distrust towards the government. These numerous cases of corruption suggest that in this case, the élite is easy to blame.

In Italy, the populist leaders’ expression of populism as a style consists in blaming the elite of corruption, though this is not universally true. This strategy will allow the populist parties to foster political participation by presenting themselves as an alternative to a corrupted government. Lanzone defines the 2013 success at the general elections of the Five Star Movement as the result of three main elements: “the crisis of old parties, the personalisation with the predominance of political power (a strong people’s spokesman) and the media’s increasing influence”(Lanzone, 2014). The article proceeds by explaining the very interesting role and function of the MS5 as the apparent “answer to the renewal of the political class” and the main tactic used by the movement is “people calling” (Lanzone, 2014) corresponding to Moffitt and Tormey’s “appeal to the people” key feature for populism as a political style. The populist phenomenon here appears as the rise of the voices expressing feelings of frustration, not neat decisions. Therefore, fostering such frustrated participation can mean to foster, what Lanzone calls a “protest vote”, rather than proposing solutions. Thus, the protest vote is the typical populist vote, as ‘against’ rather than ‘for’, something or someone.

Secondly, the party defines itself as a non-party, detaching itself from other parties, with the aim of allying with the people against the “corrupt elite”(Lanzone, 2014). Though according to its regulations, Lanzone explains that the MS5 is a free association of citizens where everyone and anyone are welcome at the address ‘www.beppegrillo.it’ (Lanzone, 2014). The author then brings to light a paradox: “from an electoral perspective, the MS5 is
a party since it presents its lists during electoral contests and asks its candidates to be elected” (Lanzone, 2014). Thus, apparently, the movement seems able to interpret the citizens’ will through traditional forms of mobilisation, its “movement intent” results from a need for renewal reflecting its populist purposes by refusing the traditional party structure-power (Lanzone, 2014). Additionally, populist expressions are based on two organisational elements of cohesiveness according to Lanzone’s analysis, “a very strong and charismatic leadership and the consideration of a main argument, especially the immigration problem” (Lanzone, 2014). In this case, anti-immigration might serve as a key ideational tool exploited by populist parties and leaders, in order to gain electoral consensus. This political style strategy responds to the increasing socio-economic instability of the people. Thus, we recognize Moffit and Tormey's elements of appeal to the people and of crisis/breakdown/threat. However in this case, the leaders’ choice to adopt populism as a political style often mirrors the mass’s sense of discontent through agitated speeches. The aim is to foster political participation by all means, even political incorrectness. Beppe Grillo’s speeches are in fact characterised by such communication strategy, as he is well known for his use of slang, swear words and his being overly demonstrative. Grillo’s role as a ‘charismatic’ leader able to appeal to the people is also a key factor favouring the emergence of populism as political style, complying to Moffitt and Tormey’s element of "Bad Manners". The MS5 benefitted from this communication style, as he successfully connected with a fraction of the Italian population which no other party appealed to.

In “Riding the Populist Web: Contextualising the MS5 in Italy” by Liza Lanzone and Dwaine Woods (2015), the authors use their theoretical model to explain the rise of the MS5, as the only political movement able to attract votes from different regions of the peninsula.
While, Lanzone and Woods explain the rise and persistence of populism in Western European democracies as an indication of a crisis of representation, they underestimate other key elements of populism as a political style that must be taken into consideration to characterise the populist phenomenon. However, it is still interesting to analyse Lanzone and Woods’ layout of the populist discourse employed by the MS5 to politicise resentment. In addition, the article’s analysis of the movement is reframing of social cleavages in Italy, with a “web-based ground up mobilization strategy”, as well as its conclusion regarding the MS5’s contradictory aspects that “could threaten its durability”, are just as relevant to our case study (Lanzone, Woods, 2015). Moreover, Lanzone and Woods argue that whereas the “Northern League creates a quasi-ethno-regional cleavage out of northern resentment over taxes/state transfers to the poorer south or Berlusconi’s repackaging of a traditional anti-communist theme, the MS5 simply transfers local issues into a national grievance framework” (Lanzone, Woods, 2015). The article defines the Five Star Movement as trans-ideological in its strategy of presenting itself as “representative of the Italian people irrespective of region, class, past ideological affiliation”(Lanzone, Woods, 2015). As a matter of fact, Grillo and other leaders of the movement focus their agenda around a significant other, corrupt politicians and unscrupulous capitalists for example (Lanzone, Woods, 2015). Such agenda distracts the people form the greater national role of the country and feeds the masses’ anger in order to increase its political consensus. Grillo in fact adopts Rousseau’s phrase “the pure people against the corrupt elite” in his favour, and as Lanzone and Woods explain, “This recurrent anti-elitist refrain is employed to highlight the purported virtues of the people as the source of political legitimacy” (Lanzone, Woods, 2015). Hence, the virtues of the people make no difference when it comes to populist political representation.
Therefore, even though the movement does not classify itself as neither belonging to the political left nor to the political right, “it is viewed as having a center-left position on most socio-economic issues while maintaining an ideologically right wing position regarding immigration” (Lanzone, Woods, 2015). In fact, Grillo's position places him closer to the anti-immigrant Northern League when it comes to issues such as granting citizenship to the children of immigrants and overturning the punitive laws regarding illegal immigrants in Italy (Lanzone, Woods, 2015). Once again, the populists exploitation of ideational elements complies to Moffitt and Tormey's model as a right/left characteristic for populism as a political style.

**The Lega Nord**

Another party that will be important in distinguishing the expression of the model of populism as a political style in Italy is the Lega Nord. Zaslove’s book “The reinvention of the radical right: populism, regionalism and the Italian Lega Nord” (2011), will help us understand the role of radical right populist parties of Western Europe since the 1990s. This chapter of the thesis will aim to apply Moffitt and Tormey’s model by defining the political spectrum that allowed the Lega Nord to emerge as a member of the centre-right coalition government in Italy between 2001 and 2006 then again from 2008. Zaslove’s analyses the Lega Nord, arguing that it is a radical right party. In order to detect the key elements of the model of populism as a political style to what Zaslove calls the Italian radical right party, we must first detect the party’s populist radical right characteristics. The author argues that the Lega’s radical right populism is combined with regionalism, contending that the party moved
towards radical right populism only in the mid-1990s and showing that the Lega shares features with other European radical right parties (Zaslove, 2011, pp. 5).

Zaslove in fact places the Lega under the same radical right wing populist family as several other countries. First, the LN as radical right Populist Party has its own specific electorate, in terms of class, age, gender and education (Zaslove, 2011, pp.12). It is possible, according to Zaslove, to identify the “ideal” radical right populist voter, “generally young, male, with a low level of education and a high level of distrust towards economic and political elites and immigrants” (Zaslove, 2011,pp.12). Moreover, the author touches upon specific historical and political contexts, similar to the ones concerning the rise of the MS5, to explain the increasing success of the Lega Nord. Such contextualisation will allow us to detect Moffitt and Tormey’s element of “crisis breakdown and threat” allowing the populist expression of the LN. As a matter of fact, in the postwar era, Zaslove explains, Europe underwent a dramatic socio-economic and political change to which Italy was not immune: civil societies in fact secularised, gender and family relations gradually changed and “the Fordist production concentrated the Northern Industrial Triangle of Turin, Milan and Genoa, no longer dominated the economy” (Zaslove, 2011, pp.16). Moreover, new pressures on the Italian state emerged as the levels of debt government spending increased while the process of European integration began. Additionally, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the transformation of the Italian communist party into a centre-left socialist party changed the Italian political system after 1989, (Zaslove, 2011, pp.16). Moreover, the state’s leading political figures involvement in the previously mentioned corruption and political scandals, will allow for the emergence and success of the Lega Nord as well- which ran in the 1996 elections without a coalition partner due to its failed alliance with Forza Italia and the Alleanza Nazionale (Zaslove, 2011, pp. 23). Once again, this political style feature also complies to Moffitt and Tormey's elements of appeal to the people and crisis/breakdown/threat. Additionally, the Lega was an important coalition member in the Berlusconi government until the coalition was defeated in 2006 by the centre-left, its support still increased. Moreover, throughout the 1990s and the early years of the Second Republic, the Lega’s influence was evident as it radicalised from populist regionalism to radical right
populism. However, between 2001 and 2006, again in 2008, the party transitioned from a party of opposition to a party of government (Zaslove, 2011, pp.28).

We have now framed the Lega Nord as radical right Populist Party adopting the populist discourse of third wave parties. The high rates of corruption scandals in Italy, allow us to agree with Mudde, who defines populism as the expression of the antagonistic relationship of the pure against the corrupt élite. However, as we have seen in the previous cases, this “appeal to the people element” is not sufficient to categorise a party as populist, even less as radical right populist. Moreover, Zaslove first gives us a historical frame which we might consider: in February 1991, Uberto Bossi emerged as the leader of a new political party in Northern Inlay, the Lega Nord (Zaslove, 2011, pp.38). Over the next several years, Bossi would lead the Lega to unanticipated success through “political manoeuvring and a persona that shocked many observers”. Bossi in fact addressed his supporters in a new political language with adversarial ideas. Bossi spoke dialect and accused other politicians to be corrupt and out of touch with the average person (Zaslove, 2011, pp.38). Therefore already in those years, we can detect the elements of charismatic leadership, appeal to the people, and bad manners. The feeling of discontent among the Italian peoples also places this emergent Populist Party in a context of crisis, corresponding to Moffitt and Tormey's model of “crisis breakdown and threat”. However, this context and these communication strategies are still not enough to place the Lega on the radical right side. To characterise populism and exclusion, and therefore to define the party as a radical right populist one, the author contextualised the party within Italian and European politics through the 1990s and into the new millennium. Thus, Populism is not a thin centred ideology, though the party's extreme ideational elements will characterise the Lega as a right wing populist party. Zaslove's book
reflects upon Pietro Ignazi’s late 1990s distinction between neo-fascist parties and the radical right parties. Ignazi adds that there are two forms of extremist parties: those with direct links to inter-war fascism and a new post-industrial extreme right, focusing on a new post industrial extreme-right (Zaslove, 2011, pp.49). Building upon Ignazi’s theory, Betz and Taggart distinguished new right wing parties from Neo-fascist parties. In this case, it is interesting to see how Betz and Taggart suggest that the success of these right wing parties rely on their populist element of appeal to the people by “mobilising the voter’s resentment against the political elite” (Zaslove, 2011, pp.52). Moreover, Betz highlights the core ideological features such as opposition to immigration and support of market economy. These ideological features aim to characterise populism as an ideology by drawing a distinction between right wing populist parties and the others. Therefore, according to Zaslove’s interpretation of Betz’ theory, the success of these right wing populist parties results from their populist style, specifically from their right wing ideology. Hence, Zaslove explains Kitschelt’s development of these ideas by suggesting that ideologically, the radical right combines authoritarianism and opposition to immigration with support for a market economy; an ideology that tends to attract working-class and petit-bourgeois voters who fear the context of an internationalising economy (Zaslove, 2011, pp.52). Zaslove will in fact argue that most theories fall within one of the four dominant schools of thought; radical right populism best conceptualises the core characteristics of the most successful right wing political parties, of which the success is measured by electoral politics, expressing the ability to mobilise support and influence on public policy (Zaslove, 2011, pp.55). Understanding the difference between a radical right populist party from a right wing party or a left wing populist party will be key for the understanding of the Lega Nord’s evolution through time.
into a radical right populist party that is both radical and populist. Zaslove will in fact aim to understand who the “pure people” are, since populists tend to fade the boundary between insiders and outsiders, he will reflect upon Mudde’s theory on populism explaining that the people remain sovereign against the “dangerous others” (Zaslove, 2011, pp.58). Moreover, populism also possesses a common form of organisation and mobilisation, combining centralised organisational structures with charismatic populist leadership. Nationalism, as explained by Zaslove, identifies as a core characteristic of radical right populist parties, its core concept being the Nation- as Mudde argues. Additionally, such populist nationalism is fused with attacks on economic elites, politicians and intellectuals, feelings of resentment that have more recently been directed at the European Union (Zaslove, 2011, p.28). Such theoretical approach reminds us of the ideational populists’ style elements adopted by the UK’s political leaders. Similarities will also emerge between Salvini’s Lega Nord and Marine Le Pen’s French radical right Populist Party, the Front National.
4. France Case Study

Apply Moffitt and Tormey’s Model to the French Case.

Six months before becoming president of France, Emmanuel Macron presented his alternative to the traditional mainstream parties, his aim was to shake up the old political order. Originally, Macron’s alternative appeared as Populist, as it promised to belong to neither political camp, left nor right. However, the recent yellow jackets manifestations suggest that once in government, this alternative clearly fails to represent and consider the needs of most of the French people. Moreover, understanding this loss of populist appeal will allow us to conceptualise the expression in France of populism as a political style. Following this newcomer's victory of the 2017 presidential elections, the voices of the people who felt to be ignored by their government and leaders, began to be heard. This “reaction of the so-called Yellow Vest protesters to the French government’s sudden retreat on a gas tax increase. The Yellow Vests, who have thrown France into turmoil with violent protests in December 2018”\(^2\), wanted more, sooner rather than later: lower taxes, higher salaries, freedom from gnawing financial fear, and a better life (Nossiter, 2018). In Mayer’s article “The Political Impact of Social Insecurity in France”, we understand the context that allowed populism to emerge and trigger a series of events that would change the political and social dynamics in France, domestically but also internationally. Throughout this chapter, I will first seek to explain the historical-political context that allowed for the expression of populism in

the case study of France. Moreover, I will distinguish the characteristics of Macron’s original populist appeal, which have been obscured once in power. Furthermore, I will shift my focus on the key elements of populism as a political style of the French populist radical right party Front National. Thus, the analysis of these distinct expressions of populism as a political style in France will suggest the causes for the alternative's loss of populist appeal. Finally this chapter aims to characterise the expression of populism in France, on a domestic but also on the international scale and the country’s relations with Europe.

**Context**

Mayer’s article begins by exploring the two events that put an end to the “Thirty Glorious Years” of economic growth in France after WWII: two oil shocks in the mid-1970s which lead the country to a period that French sociologist, Robert Castel, called the return of social insecurity” (Castel 1995, 2003, 2005; Castel and Martin 2012). In her case study, Mayer uses France to demonstrate the “correlation between crisis-driven economic insecurity and the wave of populism that is sweeping through Europe, both in the right and more recently in the left”(Mayer, 2018). Moreover, according to Mayer’s work “The Political Impact of Social Insecurity in France”, the French Front National (FN), co-founded by Jean-Marie Le Pen in 1972 (father of the current leader of the party, Marine Le Pen) as the oldest and most successful among the radical parties that arose in Europe at that time (Mayer, 2018). Marine Le Pen in fact replaced her father in 2011, and began a “de-demonization” of the party, which resulted in an increasing electoral success (Mayer, 2018). Although Emmanuel Macron won over Marine Le Pen in the 2017 presidential elections, she obtained a record of 34% vote share, representing 10.6 million voters (Mayer, 2018). These findings presented in Mayer’s article, show that “precariousness hinders participation in the
electoral process: social explosion breeding political exclusion” (Mayer, 2018). Moreover, according to Mayer's data, there is a “statistically significant positive association between scores on our indicator of precariousness and support for the two populist candidates”-Le Pen and Mélenchon (Mayer, 2018). The author adds that when considering political attitudes, this positivity disappears and even “becomes slightly negative for the radical left candidate” (Mayer, 2018). Additionally, Mayer suggests that the more insecure are more difficult to mobilise and for the parties, “what counts first is how they feel about the European Union, immigration, government intervention, and their position on the left-right scale” (Mayer, 2018). In contrast, according to this study, the indicator of precariousness shows that Macron clearly is the president of the well-off and economically secure voters. Therefore, it is already predictable that many French voters do not feel represented enough. In fact, this discontent would generate violence (ex, the Gillets Jaunes), and enhance specific elements of populism as a political style.

The Front National

Like Mayer, Hans-Georg Betz’ believes that the economic problems engendered by the Great Recession, have opened ample room for populist mobilisation. Therefore, Moffitt and Tormey’s element of “crisis, breakdown and threat” is fundamental for the expression of populism in France. Marine Le Pen, in fact, benefitted from the profound economic, political and particularly psychological crisis that continues to traumatisethe French people. This crisis allowed the new FN leader to redefine herself as: “promoter of the French sovereignty”, “advocate of ordinary people against the ravages of globalization”, “alternative to the political establishment”; and as “sole genuine defender of the country’s historical heritage, cultural identity and fundamental values” (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015). Marine Le Pen successfully shifted the program of her campaign’s focus on immigration towards broader questions of political economy. The FN leader
in fact, sharpened the populist profile by accusing the political establishment of perpetuating a system benefiting the “elite” at the expense of the more numerous “pure people” (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015). In this case, the populist strategy of the FN consists in blaming the élite, however it is important to note that, contrarily to Mudde's approach, the élite is not necessarily corrupt here. This strategy follows Moffitt and Tormey’s model of populism as a political style, complying to the element “appeal to the people”. The Great Recession demotivated the French voters who already showed little confidence in the established parties, the political class and the political process in general. Therefore, under such circumstances, “the resurgence of the FN in hardly surprising; such success being boosted by the failure of the successive governments to deal with the socio-economic impact of the crisis” (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015). Additionally, as consumer confidence declined, so did the approval ratings for the president of the republic, the FN’s public image steadily improved (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015). Moreover, Betz’ chapter suggests that according to Jean-Marie Le Pen’s reasoning, “democracy in France had been confiscated by a new oligarchy that occupied every locus of political power” (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015). The result was a separation between the people and their representatives, who were blamed for doing nothing to defend the French. Hence, the populist strategy here aims to choose the most appropriate ‘enemies of the French’ in order to appeal to the masses, mobilize voters and increase the FN’s electoral consensus. Therefore, once again, providing solutions, and taking responsibility for domestic and international issues, do not seem like a priority for parties such as the Front National. The leaders of these parties prefer to follow their populist agenda.
Ethno Nationalism

In “The Populist Challenge: Political Protest and Ethno-Nationalist Mobilization in France”\(^3\), by Jens Rydgren, the author proceeds with a deep analysis of the French Front National, with the aim of explaining its historical and political evolution. Rydgren will thus discuss how the ideology of the FN corresponded to the available niches, and what strategies it adopted to attract voters. This deeper analysis of the FN party will allow me to systematically apply Moffitt and Tormey’s model of populism as a political style to the French case study, showing the ideology behind the Front National and distinguishing it as a radical right wing populist party. Moreover, this chapter of the book introduces three ideological elements. First, “the party’s ethic is based on the natural order, everything that is in accordance with this natural order being ethically good, ex: nation, family…” (Rydgren, 2004). Second, the idea of resource distribution benefits only those belonging to the national ethnic community and the party’s ideology rests on an ethno-nationalist, populist, and charismatic foundation (Rydgren, 2004). Third, the basic unit of society being the people of the nation, the power belongs to them and to the movement of leaders giving these people a voice (Rydgren, 2004). Moreover, most of the FN’s ideological corpus is based on themes of immigration, law, and order, as for most European radical right wing parties (Rydgren, 2004). In fact, the FN aims to stop all immigration to France and make punishment more severe, including restoration of the death penalty (Rydgren, 2004). Additionally, the family is viewed as the fundamental institution in society/the backbone of the nation, the FN wants to reduce the problem of declining birthrates, as well as the decreasing importance of family institutions, through political means (Rydgren, 2004). The Front National consequently has a very simple view of the role of

women in society: to give birth and educate children. Since the phenomenon of working women has negative social effects, feminism and socialism are seen as enemies (Rydgren, 2004). Furthermore, the party’s conception of the people is based on ethnicity and on the populist perception of the pure people, social classes being denied (Rydgren, 2004). It is these people that Marine Le Pen seeks to convince, by exploiting problems such as unemployment and other economic issues such as insecurity, criminality, health problems etc… Problems that Le Pen believes to be solvable by means of national preference (Rydgren, 2004). Therefore, according to Moffitt and Tormey’s model, the FN’s populist strategy presents key ideational features. Once again however, these characteristics do not categorise the populist phenomenon as an ideology, they are most often specific to the radical right wing parties. As suggested by Moffitt and Tormey, the party's populist style results from the parties' response to the country's socio-political instability. The unhappier the people are, the more aggressive will the party's approach be in order to appeal to the people immediately and efficiently.

One key radical right ideological element is Nationalism. This ideological element has always played a fundamental role throughout history and in contemporary politics it is still adopted by specific populist parties. In France, nationalism belongs to the radical right wing populist agenda. Once again, although the expression of populism in France presents some ideological features, populism cannot be considered as an ideology as these features are not sufficient to characterise the phenomenon. Furthermore, the fourth chapter from Rydgren Jens’ book, focuses in fact on Ethnic Nationalism in France, suggesting that the rise of the FN can in part be seen as a “resurgence of ethno-nationalism” (Rydgren, 2004). Moreover, the Front National’s populist ideology believes that the supreme virtue belongs to the pure people, always innocent. Coherently with the long tradition of French extreme right nationalism, the blame regards elements such as
immigrants, globalisation, the feminist lobby etc... (Rydgren, 2004). Therefore these elements should be kept separated or excluded “in order to prevent the national identity or character from eroding” (Rydgren, 2004). The national character of the FN therefore appears as ethnic, closed, exclusionary and conservative/ reactionary. Other key ideological elements resulting from the expression of populism as a political style are also the FN’s anti-immigration themes and strategies. Actually, the FN mobilised electoral support by means of the anti-immigration issue. Thus, according to the FN, the ethno-national identity is threatened by what Le Pen has called a “veritable invasion of immigrants posing a deadly menace to the French nation” (Rydgren, 2004). Additionally, the FN has often referred to Muslims with strong exclusionary words, defining them as particularly dangerous and claiming that they are so culturally different that their assimilation and integration becomes impossible (Rydgren, 2004). Once again, the populist strategy to appeal to the people by all means, political incorrectness included, this aggressive approach complys to Moffitt and Tormey’s element “bad manners”. Such communication strategy adopted by Le Pen, before his daughter replaced him, is evident in his speeches at the time: “Islam, which is already the second religion in France, threatens our identity (1985: 206)” (Rydgren, 2004). In the late 1990s, the party used to be more radical and even used biological racism and anti-semitic speeches to mobilize voters in those same years. The new leader of the Front National today is very aware about the extent to which her father’s strategy was extreme. Today, the daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen in fact took his place and gained electoral consensus by redefining the extremely radical aspects and reputation of the FN, leaning more towards the center. The FN still links immigration issues to the ones of security and threat in order

4 Chapter 5 from the book:
to appeal to the people, as it does for competition for scarce resources as frames for anti-immigration. Thus, unemployment and the emotional stress created will benefit populist parties like the FN, which will exploit this discontent as Moffitt and Tormey’s element of “crisis breakdown and threat” in their favour. The aim remains to appeal to the people and gain electoral consensus rather than solving these problems per se.

In the sixth chapter from “The populist challenge: Political protest and ethno-nationalist mobilization in France”, the author focuses on the power of populism and the anti-establishment strategy. The author weighs on the importance of political pessimism which distinguishes the FN voters from the others by presenting Ignazi’s graph showing the percentage of French who agreed with the statement “things have a tendency to become worse” (Rydgren, 2004). In addition, this chapter of the book reflects upon Many and Surel’s research showing the level of confidence in Societal Institutions in France, Germany, Italy, the UK and the EU as a whole (Many and Surel 2000: 25-26). According to this graph, although French voters distrust political institutions and politicians, they still support the democratic system (Rydgren, 2004). Such duality is key as the distrust of these political institutions is in fact part of the populist strategy of the FN, as well as the party’s support for the democratic system. Additionally, Ignazi’s research (1996b-75) presents people’s attitudes toward Politicians through the years 1977-1985, showing a strong discrepancy between the voters’ expectations and the results coming out of the political process (Rydgren, 2004). Moreover, already in the late 90s, the established parties were perceived as inefficient and such discrepancy explains the increased sense of discontent among the French people. Additionally to this confusion, political scandals and cases of corruption did not help the French people to trust the government. These factors show the political context that allowed for populism to rise during the 80s and 90s and the increasing disappointment of the voters’ expectations. Therefore, the
people's sense of discontent has been accumulated and fed by the parties for a long time now. It is no wonder that the resulting populist expression of this increasing sense of discontent became violent with the Gillet Jaunes.

**Yellow Vests**

In the article by Serge Halimi and Pierre Rimbert from Le Monde Diplomatique de Février 2019 “Lutte de classes en France”, the authors explain the insurgence of the ‘gilet jaunes’ as the failure of any political party to represent the majority of the people. The outcome lead the masses to express their discontent through violent revolts on several established dates. Moreover, this is the ultimate expression of populism as a political style, mobilising the people to revolt against the elite. Thus, the ruling parties and their leaders in government are unable to make these people feel represented by ignoring their issues while prioritising the élite. These people are therefore motivated to mobilise in order to claim their legitimacy generating disorder and domestic turmoil (Halimi, Rimbert, 2019). Finally, Hubé and Truan’s chapter from the book “Populist Political Communication in Europe”, the authors show the difficulty in giving a definition to Populism in the French context. In fact, the strong ideological elements adopted by the FN as well as the recent violent reactions lead by the masses, are specific to the French context. Moreover, even though parties and their leaders such as Macron’s alternative have adopted populist strategies to gain electoral consensus by siding with the people against a corrupt élite, they end up disappointing their voters as well as the french people as a whole. Therefore, adopting populism as a political style in a more consistent and systematic manner, consists in the constant and systematic populist response to the people's ‘mood'. Macron should have maintained his populist agenda even when in government, responding immediately to the needs of all rather than focusing on the élite. On the
other hand, we must consider that the Gilet Jaune manifestations represent masses’ sense of discontent and madness, hence complying to all their demands might create greater instability rather than finding balanced solutions.
5. Discussion and Conclusions

Moffitt and Tormey’s model of Populism as a Political Style has proved to be applicable to our three case studies. This model is an improvement of the previous dominant perceptions about the populist phenomenon as it takes into account the theoretical weaknesses that emerge in this new socio-political spectrum. The expression of Moffitt and Tormey’s elements of populism as a political style (“appeal to the people”, “crisis breakdown and threat” and “bad manners”) is specific to each one of our case studies. Although all our case studies present these elements of populism as a political style, specific emerging features are characteristic of our contemporary context.

**Appeal to the People**

All of our case studies comply to the model’s element of appeal to the people. However, Moffitt and Tormey improve Mudde’s conception of populism, defining it as the pure people against the corrupt élite. Moffitt and Tormey consider that the populists do not necessarily perceive the elite as corrupt. Actually, the corruption threat is still strong today in our Italian case study, where corruption scandals make it very difficult for populists not to perceive the élite as corrupt. Corruption therefore remains a key concern in Italian politics and is therefore exploited.
by populist leaders from both parties, the LN and the MS5, as their political tool to increase their parties’ populist appeal.

In the UK and France, this corruption threat is not as central as it appears in Italy. However, in the French political spectrum, Macron’s failure to meet the people’s expectations by focusing his policies in favour of the wealthy, might fit Mudde’s description of populism as the opposition of the pure people against the élite. However, there is no data proving that Macron’s loss of populist appeal was connected to any corruption scandal; and the political appeal of yellow jackets people cannot be defined as a ‘pure’ approach.

Furthermore, the French and Italian case studied brought to light an interesting common political approach. Marine Le Pen’s strategy to shift her father’s original radical right extremist party towards a more central political position, has also been adopted by Salvini’s Lega Nord. Thus, even though the UK case study showed how its mainstream parties adopted ideological right wing populist strategies in order to gain electoral consensus, the populist phenomenon cannot be defined as a thin centred ideology. Moreover, the expression of the populist phenomenon is specific to our contemporary political spectrum. In this context, the political strategy of adopting right wing populist elements as tools to motivate voters, appears to work for the UK mainstream parties. However, the LN and the FN had the opposite problem, as the old extremist radical right ideological characteristics of these parties do not gain a significant electoral appeal today. Thus, these populist leaders appealed to the people and gained consensus by moderating some of their extremist ideological views. Therefore, populism as a political style is a more fit alternative for our contemporary context, in which Populist parties might benefit from right wing ideational elements, without becoming ideological.
Crisis, Breakdown, Threat

The model’s aspect that has a strong influence of the expression of the populist phenomenon in all our case studies is the element of crisis, breakdown and threat. In this globalised contemporary political spectrum, the latest economic crisis has affected most of European countries and the world. This context has destabilised the UK, France and Italy, as it threatened their socio-economic and political stability negatively. This resulting instability fed the people’s sense of discontent and need for change. Therefore the populist leaders and parties of our three case studies exploited this context of crisis, breakdown and threat to mobilise voters in their favour. The people’s growing sense of discontent required populist leaders to provide an immediate political response in order to mobilise voters in their favour. In all our case studies, the strategy adopted by populist leaders was to blame a significant “other” for the country’s growing instability. This form of political discourse efficiently and immediately appeals to the people, though it hardly provides any solutions on the long term. Our UK case study the populist strategy was to blame the European Union as the cause for the model’s element of “crisis, breakdown and threat”. Also the LN and the MS5 find themselves at odds with the European Union’s strict economic policies. In France, this populist strategy is adopted domestically by the Yellow Vests, who have lead revolts against the leading party and its leader. In this case Macron becomes the “other”, the enemy of the people.

Bad Manners

The last element of our chosen model is “bad manners”. This element presents itself as the use of swear words or of general political incorrectness as a political style. Moreover, this populist expression often appears in the speeches of the most extremist leaders of the past. In our
contemporary scenario, bad manners are used by leaders of populist parties in order to appeal to the masses, people from any social class, especially the angriest most disappointed ones. The FN was at first a lot more extremist, in fact Jean Marie Le Pen was often very politically incorrect in his speeches. Today in France, we may consider the Yellow Vests’ aggressive political agitation as “bad manner”, the use of violence may also comply to this element. In Italy, MS5’s Beppe Grillo, is wildly known for his loud speeches, enabling to connect easily with the people from any social class. Salvini’s appeal to the people may also appear as “loud” or aggressive in his tone of voice or wording; however, the LN leader remains a lot more formal in his political style. In UK on the other hand, the expression of this element is very weak, as the political style of the leaders of this case study use formal and generally politically correct approaches.

Conclusions

Therefore, the model’s three elements are present and expressed in all our case studies, some appear in a weaker form, others are stronger according to the country. Populism as a political style is a broad term that consists therefore in three elements, which consider the theories of the past with their weaknesses. Moreover, the contemporary context and the issues that have emerged throughout Europe are the result of the globalized world we live in. Thus economic issues, instabilities and the resulting political shifts, do not affect just one country but rather the world as a whole. Consequently, Populism itself is a phenomenon that evolves through time, therefore the definition of the term may also vary through time. In this current context, the model is efficient today although it might be so in the future.
Bibliography


(Mayer, 2019)


