

TRANSATLANTIC PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY POPULISM: A
NARRATOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE RHETORIC OF PROMINENT US AND
EUROPEAN POPULIST LEADERS

BY

ALLISON CATHERINE WHEELER

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in European Union Studies
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2020

Urbana, Illinois

Advisers:

Professor Carl Niekerk, Chair
Mr. Lucas Henry

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an investigation into the narrative structures and content of twenty-first-century populist leaders in the European Union (EU) and the United States. The volume of research on populism today appears to be at an all-time high as globalization becomes more ubiquitous and peaceful international relations are on thin ice. The goal of this research is to use case studies of populist leaders' speeches compared against one another to identify trends, anomalies, and impacts in reference to definitions commonly accepted by the academic community and the media. The case studies have been chosen from current politicians considered populists by leading researchers in the field, such as Cas Mudde. I am interested in the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán; Marine Le Pen of France; Geert Wilders of the Netherlands; the President of the United States, Donald Trump, and Senator Bernie Sanders of the United States. These case studies will be analyzed in an effort to understand the variance of populism across Europe and across the Atlantic with an actor, the US, that has historically been an influential political and economic ally and, at times, adversary of the EU since its inception in the 1950s. For the sake of comparison, this research also includes a case study of Taoiseach Leo Varadkar of Ireland, an EU member state that, interestingly, has not experienced the pulls of populism as have become manifest elsewhere in the EU. Scholarly consensus is that populism is indeed a very "thin" ideology and while it has common overarching themes in the 21st century, its inherently paradoxical nature allows for an irrefutable degree of variance within. Additionally, its degree of success and the traction it does or does not gain in a political system is dependent on its own sensitivities and the narratives in which leaders frame prominent issues of the time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my advisers for their time, guidance, and patience as we worked together to make this project, as well as the staff of the EU Center, my professors, and friends at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for helping me along this journey. I am truly grateful for every experience this institution has offered me in my time here.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH PROPOSAL.....	1
CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN & CASE STUDIES.....	22
CHAPTER 4: POPULIST NARRATIVES IN CONTEXT.....	42
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS & CONCLUSION.....	54
REFERENCES.....	67

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH PROPOSAL

If we want to try to begin understanding the state of contemporary populism, we must be aware that there is no exact way to define it, nor to characterize those who latch their ideologies to it. We can work towards understanding the characteristics that develop around this cultural phenomenon so that we can better identify the dynamics surrounding those individuals with a populist agenda who emerge in national politics today. Populists organize their rhetoric around a concept of “the people” that emphasizes inclusiveness, while setting clear boundaries of just who those people are, and against whom in the establishment they need to be fighting in order to be heard.

While populism maintains just a few guiding characteristics, it manifests in different ways. For the purpose of this research, I would like to focus on two major regions of the world where populism is seemingly growing in tandem with one another: The United States and Europe. By taking a transatlantic approach, I aim to investigate the nuances of modern-day populism and how the often very similar challenges faced across both regions of the world are approached in a variety of different ways by populist leaders. To achieve this, I plan to do a case study on three populists in Europe and cross-analyze the narratives they have built for their campaigns in order to find where European populism converges and diverges within itself. Beyond that though, I plan to look at contemporary populism on a larger, transatlantic scale, by then analyzing the rhetoric of self-proclaimed American populist leaders, currently President Donald Trump and Senator Bernie Sanders and find the areas where they agree and disagree from what is found in the multi-European perspectives.

For my European case studies, I plan to compare and contrast the rhetoric encapsulated within the public speeches of Viktor Orbán of Hungary, Geert Wilders of the Netherlands, and

Marine Le Pen of France. I ultimately chose to analyze these politicians because they all represent the right-wing demographic of their respective countries and utilize similar platforms; they do so in ways that resonate amongst different stakeholders, different populations, different nationalities and geopolitical positions, with different sensitivities to perhaps the same problems. These countries have exceptionally different pasts, yet still have come under the influence of populism in very similar ways, and I would like to dissect the narratives that have been utilized and find how they fit into, or fall apart, in comparison to the way theorists such as Cas Mudde / Rovira Kaltwasser and Jan Werner Müller have depicted populism to exist in the twenty-first century.

I have chosen to analyze Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders as my US case studies in the same way. Though representing the same country, their rhetoric and calls to “the people” conflict with each other on a number of issues. By cross analyzing the rhetoric of American populists from both ends of the political spectrum with European populists, I aim to also find the areas of convergence and divergence on a set of social, economic, and security related issues that concern both the US and in Europe at the moment. In including Sanders and Trump within this conversation, it should be understood that they are very different in the types of populist characteristics they take on. Calling both, Sanders especially, “populists” is something that scholars are critical of, and I take this into account for this research.

Case study data will be analyzed qualitatively, and will consist of the transcripts of speeches, interviews, and written statements from each individual and will be used in comparison with accepted theories on populism.

CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: INTRODUCTION

What is populism? This is a question that is asked more and more frequently as the populist phenomenon has swept over states, regions, and whole continents in recent years. Today's populism is closely associated with radical-right parties in Europe (Mudde, 2004) that have been making their discontented voices heard in the aftermath of what is called 'the migrant crisis' (ca. 2015) and the absorption of millions of migrants from the war-torn countries of the Middle East (European Commission, 2016). Despite that though, there has also been a resurgence of populism of the left, predominantly seen in Latin American countries like Venezuela, and the United States (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). While the term "populism" has become somewhat of a buzzword nowadays, there is no denying the prevalence of it becoming intertwined with national and international politics today and influencing the state of the global order. While populism has been attributed to politicians across Europe, the United States, Southeast Asia, and Australasia (2017), the scope of my research is limited to analyzing populism and the populist narratives constructed by select individual politicians within the United States and Europe, as to construct a pan-European and transatlantic perspective on this topic.

The United States and the European Union (EU) are each other's' closest allies (Smith & Steffenson, 2017), though developments and changes over the past three years have put certain strains on the EU-US relationship, as President Donald Trump does not believe that the preservation of the European Union is of strategic importance for US Foreign Policy (Brattberg & Whineray, 2020; Krastev, 2017). The transatlantic relationship brings together their economies through mutual imports and exports, they share defense resources via NATO, and have a popular

culture, and normative values, such as democracy, human rights, and rule of law in common (2017). Given that these two political entities are already so influential for each other because of this “special relationship”, that has formed out of their strategic partnership, can the influence of populism perhaps work in the same or similar ways? The first signs of the U. S.’s populist resurgence in the twenty-first century came around the US presidential election of 2008 with the vice-presidential candidacy of Sarah Palin who exhibited the characteristics of a strong female populist leader (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Most recently and more relevantly, though, the campaigns for the 2016 election, that included candidates such as Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, have been generally acknowledged as right-wing and left-wing populists, and at the same time they were acknowledged as radicals within the Republican and Democratic parties respectively. Similarly, and around the same time (if not earlier), twenty-first century populism, particularly right-wing populism, found its way into EU member states in countries like Hungary, France, and the Netherlands. Though in the past populism has only experienced short-lived successes (Judis, 2016), something appears to be different in this new era. Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election, and populists are either in power already in Europe or present as major and sometimes majority parties, in parliamentary positions, and they also made gains on the EU level in the recent European Parliament elections of 2019 (European Parliament, 2019).

Scholars have delved into research of historical and contemporary populism and the causes for their emergence in politics. The purpose of my research, though, is to take the generally respected scholarship of researchers such as Cas Mudde / Rovira Kaltwasser and Jan Werner Müller one step further and apply their theories to the *narratives* of prominent populist leaders today from across Europe and the US. It is no secret that politicians use the power of narrative to gain support of their constituents, naturally, but if we look at and beyond polling

numbers and instead scrutinize their words more deeply, we will be able to draw conclusions about how populism truly exists today and the way it, or they, as populist politicians influence and impact their countries, regions, and international peers.

While these scholars have generally accepted that there is no one true binding definition for populism (even though they do offer general definitions within their texts anyway), for the purposes of this research, I will use a “working definition” created in collaboration. This working definition will help me navigate the comparison of the European narratives with one another, as well as with the American narratives. In today’s political culture it can be difficult for the general population to understand exactly what is meant when a political party or particular politician is labeled as “populist”. So how are we supposed to understand something in this context that is not a political ideology and that can span across the political spectrum? From observations of populist parties throughout history to today, there are several key characteristics that we can ascribe to populist parties of all types.

Working definition

Isolated populism, as I interpret it from various scholars and researchers, is a type of political modality, or way of political thinking, that has five main characteristics:

- (1) argues for the inclusiveness of the “true” people
- (2) does not outright reject, but criticizes the establishment
- (3) is anti-elitist (in whatever form that elite may be perceived with differences from region to region)
- (4) anti-globalist

(5) challenges the liberal democratic order by rejecting plurality and minority rights

For the purposes of this research, I further utilize a definition that understands “liberal democracy” as a form of political order that protects and promotes majority rule, rule of law, plurality, and minority rights (Mueller 2016; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017) as just some of its key components. This working definition is not given to wrap populism in a neat box and supersede the definitions and published works of the scholars in this field. On the contrary, it will be utilized throughout my research project as a sort of qualitative constant to examine and experiment with just how similar and/or different populism manifests in the US and the in states within European Union.

2.2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON POPULISM

The resurgence of populism in the twenty-first century has been followed by extensive scholarly input on this phenomenon as we see it sweeping the world today. And while populism had its roots in late nineteenth-century America and Europe, the inherent “thinness” of this idea has shaped and reshaped the term over time, leaving scholars still trying to answer the seemingly simple question, “What is populism?” even today. In fact, many scholars from differing academic disciplines like political science, economics, and sociology have tried to tackle this political and cultural behemoth that is creating great shake-ups on both extremes of the political spectrum.

Grasping populism as a political phenomenon is complex, in one respect, because the current state of global politics. Since the end of World War II, there has been significant restructuring of the global order, particularly from the perspective of the “western” world (i.e., the focus of this research on the United States and Europe). The creation of the European Union

in the 1950s, and the enlargements, restructuring and liberalizing of the international economic system, globalization, and the ever-changing state of international relations that followed it have put considerable stress on domestic politics. The combined supply and demand in contemporary societies have created a wave of populist leaders and parties, whose narratives can and are being shared across national borders and intercontinental oceans in a matter of seconds through modern technology and media. I propose questions, though, that ask, how unique these narratives are from politician to politician, or country to country, and to what degree they agree and disagree with the available scholarship. Populism research has naturally followed closely along with populism as a phenomenon within contemporary politics. Several scholars have emerged at the forefront of populist literature. The works of Cas Mudde and peers in the field, like Jan Werner Müller, John B. Judis, and Chantal Mouffe have contributed significantly to this research area and adjacent research, and I will use them to shape the arguments in this project.

Populism today exists in societal contexts that are very different from those that shaped its origins. For both Europe and the US, populism first came to be in the late nineteenth century, born out of agrarian groups that would, in the US for example, become the People's Party(ies) that challenged mainstream political parties to appeal to and represent the "true" people (Judis, 2017). While it took a stronger hold in the US than in Europe in the twentieth century (where no evidence of populism existed in the post-War periods), both experienced short-term waves of movements that never truly caught on until the end of the 20th century and currently in the 21st (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

The research Cas Mudde has developed on populism gives very well-rounded and comprehensive analyses of the phenomenon. From his collaboration with Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser in *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*, to pieces like "The Populist Zeitgeist", his

writings have presented the information of how and why and under what conditions populism is able to thrive in political systems all over the world. From Mudde's perspective, here is what we know and what scholarship accepts about populism today. Mudde acknowledges how generalized the term is, citing it as one of the main problems of identifying populism as something that is definable. The core, though, of populism as we understand it today is summed up in this definition

Populism: "a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, 'the true people' versus 'the elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté generale* [general will] of the people" (2017). At its very basis, this definition describes populism, of course. However, this definition can be modified to include several other factors that pertain not to populism generally, but as it exists today and take into consideration the twenty-first-century variables that caused it to reemerge. Mudde & Kaltwasser use this definition to simply introduce populism to a broad audience, and as such, it does its job in formulating the concept's fundamentals.

In 2016, Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on Victory Day to his opposition, "We are the people. Who are you?" (Müller, 2016). This quote makes a clear point about the concept of "us versus them" within a society. There exists a paradox of inclusivity that passively creates a second group of "others", to be distinguished from an explicitly identified group of "the people". This, I argue, takes Mudde's definition one step further in identifying the broad relationship between the people, the elite, and the outsider today and thus, is a criterion in my working definition. In the context of populism today, that outsider is most often the immigrant. With the waves of immigrants and refugees seeking asylum within European and US borders, they are easy targets for populists to villainize and scapegoat.

Populism cannot get off the ground without reason to mobilize. Right now, for example, in the context of looking at governments that are under populist influence and in at-risk democracies, it is beneficial to take a step back and look at the culture of politics in which populism has been found to be active. The determining factors for populism's success, according to Mudde & Kaltwasser, divide into three categories: personalist leadership, social movements, and political parties (2017). This categorization basically shows that a populist movement can have its roots from a top-down approach, a bottom-up "grassroots" approach, or a combination of the two. Success from any of these approaches, though, is dependent on the leader that becomes the face and voice of "the true people". That leader can take on a variety of shapes, such as "the entrepreneur", and "the strong(wo)man" (2017), both examples of leaders chosen for the case studies in my research.

Focusing on the voices and narratives of populism is vital to the research I will set forth. There is a great deal of weight placed on the "say" of the populist leaders – for they are the ones promising change for the people. Jan-Werner Müller, takes on the "say" versus "do" aspect of these leaders, thus kick-starting the conversation to analyze the rhetoric of populists more closely. Concisely, what Müller extracts from populist politicians in comparison to regular politicians in their speech is the aspect of the competition of morals. He states, "Populists, by contrast [in comparison to non-populists], will persist with their representative claim no matter what; because their claim is of a moral and symbolic – not empirical – nature; it cannot be disproven" (Müller, 2017). There is little reliance on facts and figures for populists, but instead the emphasis on the true people and the opposition to their success in society (by the elite). He states, "populist rhetoric can be pinned down" (2017) and that is precisely the goal of this research.

Part of the populist rhetoric, as Müller explains, is rooted in its opposition against existing power structures, or “the establishment” that tries to “undermine [these structures’] claim to exclusive moral representation” (2017). Thus, this factor, the opposition against existing structures, in an exemplary way demonstrated by Viktor Orbán ’s party, has been included in the working definition for this research. The concept of the malevolent establishment, much like the inclusivity paradox, is a bit ironic. The populist leader/party uses their narratives to build their identity as a party of and for the people, that opposes the power structures in place. However, if and when they come to power in the form of a national majority, they themselves quickly replace and renew the establishment itself. Here too we find a paradox.

From the criteria presented in the working definition, most gather truly from the fundamentals of populism as populist scholars have analyzed them. The concept of embracing anti-globalism though, may be a bit less evident and needs to be elaborated on. George Monbiot introduces the concept of “epidemic loneliness”, alienation, and abandonment sweeping over the world not on an individual level, but as a societal phenomenon (Monbiot, 2017). One of the causes of this, Monbiot argues, is globalization. Globalization has taken away the power of the local economies and has produced a world economy where competition is the only option for success. This perpetuates the unequal wealth distribution and the inherent “loss” or silencing of those (“the people”) that cannot compete within globalized or globalizing economies (2017). Though Monbiot does not make the direct connection to populism, he is of the opinion that the remedy to this economic alienation is rebuilding communities from the ground up that “[...] restore our sense of belonging” (2017). And in a more abstract and reduced form, that forms part of the populist narrative: taking back what belongs to the people. Being an anti-globalist populist, then, as I plan to utilize the term, reflects the efforts of the party/leader to look inward-

and not embrace globalization. This effort, therefore, aims – or claims – to champion the efforts and struggles of the working class, the “true people” of a nation, placing emphasis on the fact that a populist politician is, indeed, working on behalf of the *them* and not *others*.

Today, scholars recognize that the major theme through which populists operationalize anti-globalist sentiments is the heavy-handed rhetoric, mainly from the right-wing, of anti-immigration policies (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). This not only marks their anti-globalism, but also potentially codifies one difference between right and left-wing populists. According to John B. Judis of *The Populist Explosion*, a key difference between the left and right is in the “us versus them” ideal and who are meant by that. Judis argues that left-wing populists are *dyadic* in the sense that they simply differentiate between “the people” versus “the elite”, while right-wing populists are instead *triadic*, where beyond the basic “us versus them” of the left, there is also another “them”, that is “coddled” by the elite- such as immigrants (Judis, 2016). With this differentiation by Judis in mind as an umbrella over these two, further research and awareness of the vast differentiations that exist in this realm are needed. For example, there is certainly the phenomenon of left-wing anti-immigrant voices as well, as seen in the Social Democratic Party of Denmark, that, in fact, just won a major election this past year in June of 2019 (Elabdi, 2019).

Political philosopher from Belgium, Chantal Mouffe, provides a more nuanced understanding and definition of left-wing populism in her book published in 2019, *For a Left Populism*. Mouffe identifies, through examples, where the beginnings of left populism have arisen in Europe, what its objectives are, and what makes it different from right-wing populism. While Judis offers a simple introduction as to how left-wing populism manifests, Mouffe dives deeper into the conversation. After the global market crashes of 2008, which heavily impacted the economies of the southern European states, it is no surprise that Mouffe notes that the first

emergence of this type of party came from Greece and Spain. These political movements, like Syriza, she says, are “political movements implementing a form of populism aimed at the recovery and deepening of democracy” (Mouffe, 2018). Since 2008, parties resembling that of Syriza in Greece and Podemos of Spain have emerged across Europe, like Germany’s Die Linke, and Britain’s Labour Party, under Jeremy Corbyn (2018). However, something that particularly resonates with this research is how Mouffe frames the usage of language, or how these left populist / social democrat parties *should be* using language that reframes the right-wing’s language that attracts “the people” in order to follow the populist politician. She says the left populists should approach the political arena with a different vocabulary that can offer something to voters who have egalitarian demands (2018). Mouffe uses the example of the right populists’ current usage of xenophobic language to express ideas of representation of the “true people”. Instead of this, the left should instead use different vocabulary, she says, “directed toward another adversary” in order to satisfy the same demands, but in different ways (2018). Understanding left-wing populism, though, is more difficult because there has not been an incredible amount of success in the implementation of this strategy in either Europe or the United States (although the past popularity of Jeremy Corbyn offers an example of where the left was successful in gaining voters from the extreme right in the UK).

The relationship between populism and democracy, too, is complex. Though, according to Mudde & Kaltwasser, that of populism and *liberal* democracy adds more complexity to the relationship because it is understood that they are “at odds” with one another (Mudde & Kaltwasser 2017). Liberal democracy is separate from democracy itself because it is regarded as a type of political regime that is meant to protect fundamental rights of minorities from a potentially tyrannical majority. The terms “liberal” and “democracy”, they argue, are inherently

unaligned with each other within the context of populism because of its rejection of pluralism, and thus, the protection of minority rights (2017). Mouffe contributes to the conversation by saying, that conflict is by nature, very important to the concept of democracy and that, “by its very definition, a democracy is conflictual. The *demos* is divided, and there’s always one part of the *demos* that has *kratos* or power over the other part” (Mouffe, 2019). Müller follows up on this reality for populism in spelling out the idea then, of *illiberal* democracies as “democracies” that take away fundamental rights such as civil liberties and minority rights. This contested relationship then, has been included within the working definition to acknowledge that populism self-perpetuates the challenge toward liberal democratic institutions.

What is certain from the review of literature on existing populism research, is that we are not dealing with a simply manageable phenomenon today. With factors like globalization, economic and migrant/ refugee crises changing the causes of populism from what they have been in the past, we have to struggle a bit more to find out what we want to know about it and how we are able to create connections around it.

2.3: LITERATURE REVIEW ON RHETORIC AND NARRATIVE

The way we interact with populism today is very different from even twenty years ago. A politician’s words are like ammunition. The way a politician speaks, the phrasing and verbiage, the audience, and the message are all factors in the success, or influence, that politician has. Today, we are so easily exposed to the types of populist messages shared by political parties and politicians via online news sources, television, and social media. It is easier than ever for populists to spread their messages far and wide and with frequency enabled to us via platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The goal of this research is not only to answer questions

about contemporary populism itself, but more specifically, about the construction of the narratives of populist leaders today.

As Mudde & Kaltwasser make clear, populism at its core separates “the true people” from “the elite”. Populist leaders, therefore, must construct their various narratives, like speeches, social media posts, manifestos, etcetera, with a goal to influence their intended audiences and potential constituencies and certain types of legislation within their countries or regions. A narratological approach to researching populism today is a way to methodologically find out the true power of words and the implications they can have on the outcomes of elections and even national and supranational policies (of the European Union, in this case).

The clear definition of groups for populism (the leader, the people, and the elite, and/or the “other”) makes it relevant for us to look towards the words themselves in a narrative, such as the intent and targets of personal pronouns such as “I” and “you” and “we” and “them” as well as to whom these words specifically are being directed. Calling upon experts on all narrative, not necessarily political narrative, helps lay the corresponding groundwork to this take on populism research. The role of the narrator, or politician, him- or herself is central to the argument. These narratives in particular aim to build a rapport, or a trust, between the narrator and the intended, or the ideal, even, *narratee* (Genette et al., 1980). The effects of a public narrative in a political framework can be boundless and have many implications, thus the work of a politician’s speech writer is critical to a campaign during an election year, for example, or in times of crisis like that of the European immigration ‘crisis’ that surged in 2015.

The foundations of a narrative and its purposes are crucial to what the populist politician tries to accomplish. We gather from the works of scholars on populism that the components the modern-day populist uses are heavily reliant on narratives that create and reciprocate strong

emotions (typically of anger and discontent with a flurry of issues, people, institutions, etc. ...). This includes the *construction* of the “other” and persuading a society, or at least their constituents, that there is indeed an “other” that should be demonized and made into a threat to their way of life. Construction of the “other” is just one example of the many techniques used by populists to persuade.

The study of rhetoric is incredibly long and rich with information. Into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, though, focus has been placed on the boundary between what constitutes just rhetoric or narrative on the one hand and what is propaganda on the other. While research for this project in particular does not ask the question specifically on propaganda and the populist narrative in the twenty-first century, there are elements in the following discussion that focus on rhetoric framed as propaganda – when discussing the elements of a political narrative, it is sometimes difficult not to equate the two. In my research, rather, I am more interested in the message that is being delivered and in picking apart the construction of that message, and its desired effect on “the people”. This endeavor leads us back to the great ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates and Aristotle and their basic ethics of rhetoric. Aristotle, who created the ideas of logos, pathos, and ethos as modes of persuasion, said thought that “rhetoric is both useful and necessary for political discourse. [...] Its first and only requirement that it be effective for a particular audience” (Soules, 2015).

When we narrow down the concept of rhetoric and direct it toward the object of this research, we arrive at narrative. The term “narrative” is rather broad for what it encompasses. Aristotle defines it as “the imitation of action, a fabrication involving something familiar” (Soules, 2015). While our minds may be predisposed to categorize narrative as fiction rather than that it belongs to non-fiction, I do not want to limit its scope in such a manner. The narrative of

the populist is something that embeds its goals in persuading a targeted audience (the people) to believe in the carefully crafted stories in order to gain influence. We can attribute so much of the key components of what makes a populist's narrative, their speeches, so powerful to the very basics of what Aristotle says creates an effective piece of rhetoric. While it may seem reductionist to bring this argument back to basics, that is what my research ultimately wants – what lies behind the words of a populist and in looking at multiple case studies, do they all fit into a certain mold? Or is populism nuanced beyond the point of having unifying definers and markers?

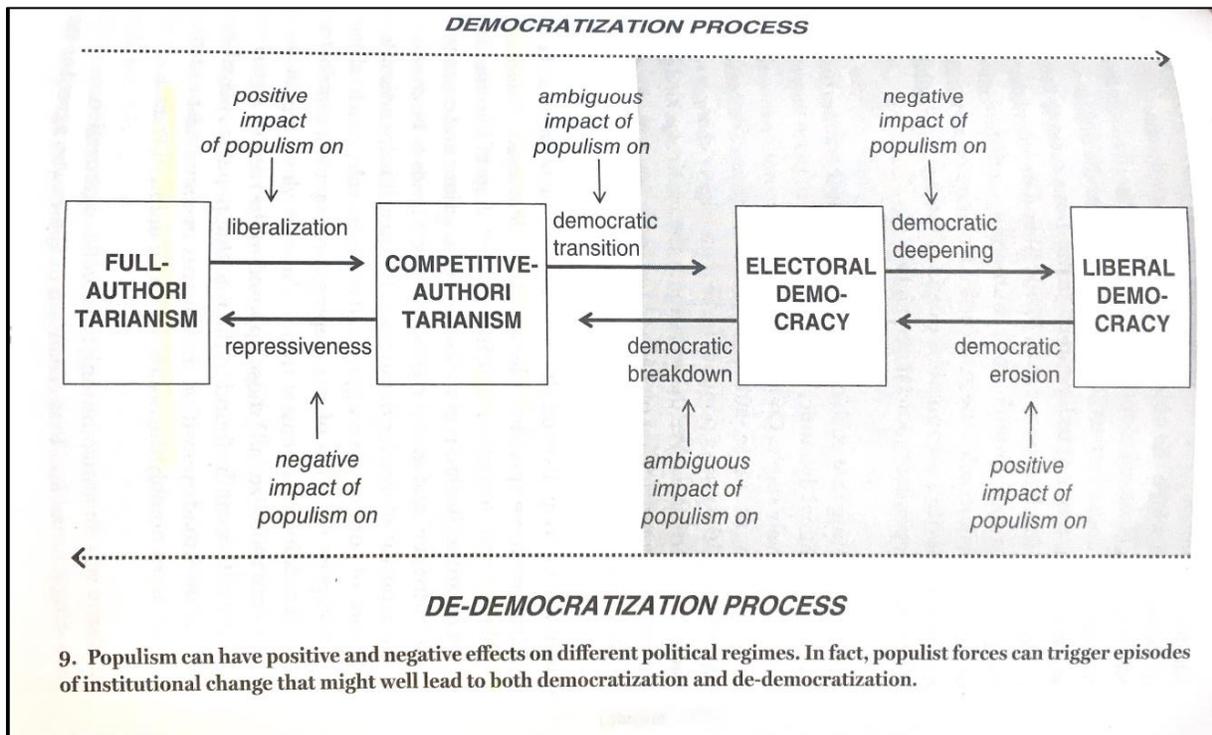
2.4: THE EUROPEAN UNION AS AN INTERNATIONALLY INFLUENTIAL ACTOR AND THE TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP

This research focuses on understanding the European Union itself as *a normative power*, rather than focusing on it as an economic entity, as it is very often characterized. There has been a fair amount of research that strives to understand how we should frame the EU in political terms today. There has been nothing like the EU as a supranational power. Its presence as an international foreign policy actor is undeniable. In terms of its economic power, for example, it has created a system of bilateral trade deals between individual countries. As a normative power, the EU is literally understood as an institution that has the power to create, market, and export its values and ideologies; it is also being described as “power over opinion” (Manners, 2002).

While the EU itself, in terms of its executive bodies, like the Commission or the Council, are resisting the tenants of populism itself, its members states indeed are vulnerable to populist voices. As a normative power, the EU has established several ‘core’ norms that have been built up over time. These are a reflection and summarization of the *acquis communautaire* and are what we can understand as the kind of ideological “goods” that are exported from the EU: peace,

liberty, democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights (2002). To understand how the EU itself deals with its member states and the own national governance of these states, it is crucial to see that these must always refer to these European norms and that the EU ensures that every member state adheres to them. These norms, as Manners lists them, are vital for accession to the European Union itself and are a key component of the Copenhagen criteria. According to a subset of political criteria, a country looking to join the EU must have “stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities” in addition to fulfilling specific economic and other institutional criteria (EUR-Lex, 2020).

Figure 1. Democratization Process / De-Democratization Process (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017)



It is important to acknowledge at this juncture that not all the individuals in this case study are currently in power in their countries. Of the populist politicians I have chosen, only 2 are in positions of power as heads of state: Viktor Orbán, as the leader of the Fidesz party, has the position of Prime Minister of Hungary, and Donald Trump, President of the United States. As can be extracted from Orbán's speeches, he has been governing his country in a way that rejected the norms and political criteria that all EU member states are required to follow. In the wake of the refugee crisis, Orbán has slandered minorities, overpowered his courts (Jovanovic, 2020), and his regime has taken measures that have made Hungary the glaring example of democratic backsliding in Europe. Many scholars have pointed out that there are current member states of the EU that would not qualify for membership given these non-economic criteria, especially the countries that have not committed to the rights and protection of individuals and minorities, whether these are religious, ethnic, or national (Judt, 1996).

The core norms held by the European Union are also the tenants of what we understand today as liberal democracy. There is no one-size-fits all democratic system that can be prescribed to every country that rules under a democratic order. Today, when using the term "democracy", many of us mean a *liberal* democracy, but not all of us, and that is where the tensions lie, especially in this age of populism. Figure 1.0 demonstrates a sliding scale of (liberal) democracy and just how populism supposedly fits into that scale. The creators of this scale acknowledge that populism can have both positive and negative effects on the democratization process. Ultimately, this scale shows that populists exercising power are able to manipulate the democratic process in ways that can erode or fortify democracies. In fact, if the accepted definition of populism is thought about in context of a liberal democracy, it comes into direct conflict with it, since it "fundamentally rejects the notions of pluralism, and therefore, minority rights" (Mudde &

Kaltwasser, 2017). Twenty-first-century populists are often working to erode the liberal democratic system. I will expand on this in the section on Hungary and Ireland.

In an effort to analyze these populist narratives from a transatlantic perspective as well, the importance of the European “voice” or “voices” also needs to be mentioned. While the focus of my research is not directly on the EU as an institution itself, as mentioned before when I discussed the EU and its relationship to member states as a normative power, emphasis needs to be placed on the positioning of the EU as an international actor and the characterization of how it speaks. There exist scholarly debates on whether the European Union speaks to other foreign actors, such as the United States, as just one voice (from the executive powers in Brussels), or with many voices, stemming from all of its institutions and member states (Gjovalin & Nicolaïdis, 2014). A key aspect of my argument lies in the consideration that the EU is an entity that is able to speak and spread information, ideologies, and political thought with the help of its many voices via its member states (more specifically, the leaders of those states), and by means of those who represent their political parties within bodies such as the European Council and the European Parliament. While the narratives and actions of some of these politicians are not expressly reflected on and endorsed by the EU, because the country is a part of the EU itself, its power and voice in the world, even if we are dealing with a small country, are amplified because of this institutional framework.

Many refer to the US and the EU as having a “special relationship” (Smith & Steffenson, 2017) due to the multifaceted ways in which the two powers are intertwined today. The most prominent area of connection between the two powers is economic in nature, so much to the point that the EU and US economies are labeled as “intertwined” in many regards. The beginnings of the US-EU relationship are deeply entrenched in economic, political, and security

developments of the post-war period and the Cold War. It is no secret that post-World War II, the US pushed the adoption of a Western market system in Europe that was “thus paralleled by the desire to promote the strengthening of liberal democracies in Europe” (Smith a.o. 2017). This period was crucial for the formation of political ideologies and the influence of the United States in Europe and for what would become the European Union itself. US influence on and the consequent sharing of the democratic ideology was a starting point for the transatlantic partnership.

There is a history of US export of political values to the EU, but something this research attempts to map is the potential influence of the EU politicians back on US politicians and if that is something that we are able to pick out from the patterns and content of their narratives. Already, considerable research has been done on the capacity of the EU to influence international organizations, and the overarching idea is that its ability to participate in them and exert influence is linked to the competency area as well as who is speaking for the EU (Smith a.o. 2017). This framing of the way the EU operates with all of its member states and core institutions is based on the EU’s intergovernmentalism as well as its goals for integration.

Intergovernmentalism understands the process of European integration as reliant on the cooperation between national governments as opposed to EU institutions themselves (Staab, 2011). A variant of intergovernmentalism, *liberal intergovernmentalism*, expands the theory to state that “the forces at play in domestic politics to explain the various governments’ behavior in the EU” and that the role of member states should not be underestimated as the foundation of the EU (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2015). The example commonly used to illustrate this theory is EU foreign policy, as there is not one unified policy. Under the guidance of this theory, we are able to understand the potential influence of the member states in international relations, whether that

be through formal or informal political avenues. In interacting with Europe as well, the United States can choose to “defect from common EU positions, to develop ‘special relationships’ with member states” (Smith & Steffenson, 2017). While such actions may undermine the solidarity of the EU, it is not necessary an explicitly targeted act by the US, and instead “a reflection of the different incentive and natural political leanings shaping the policies of the member states” (2017).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN & CASE STUDIES

3.1: RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Questions

1. What are the major themes of populism in the EU versus the US, and how do they compare?
2. What do populist narratives tell us about the political systems and the transatlantic relationship of the US and Europe?
3. Can populism really be concretely defined? What are the implications if we cannot?
4. How do these narratives influence public opinion and voting populations since 2015?
5. How is populism manifesting itself in other European Union countries today?
6. How effective is the narratological method in researching this topic?

Hypotheses

- *H1*: Using narratology to compare populist rhetoric will show how the guiding concepts of populism can manifest themselves in very different ways across the political spectrum, national borders, and continents.
- *H2*: Populism is still inherently, by its nature, paradoxical and difficult to define, but there are constants that can be isolated from narratives that give it a loose binding.
- *H3*: The themes within contemporary populism transcend borders and domestic politics and are thus influential in political culture between the United States and Europe.
- *H4*: The influence of populists and the populist narrative are highly contextual and based on a country's political sensitivities

Research Design

The narratives of American and European populist politicians will be dissected using the criteria of the working definition. By doing this, I hope to gain perspective on just *how* “populist” these pieces of rhetoric are, as well as provide useful insight into research on populism that is otherwise lacking. For the scope and scale of this project, the data collection, therefore, will be done qualitatively, with the potential of expanding into qualitative data collection in the future, should this project expand.

The process of choosing the populist politician and their narratives that will be used could have taken many different directions. While there is not one perfect strategy, the choice of the case study model for this project lends itself for a “most different systems design”, using a number of leaders generally considered populist from Europe, even though European countries have very different political histories and cultures in comparison to the US populist parties and are placed on different ends of the political spectrum. This is to say though, that while this model is not perfect, for the scope of this research, the case studies are not needed to be an exact fit within a research design model. Remarkably, we have observed populism to be alive and well on both ideological extremes of the political spectrum today: from left-wing democratic socialism, to ultra-right-wing nationalism. Thus, case studies were chosen to include narratives representative of a diverse range of populists on the right and on the left.

The decision to include the chapter on narrative effectiveness strays away from the idea of dissecting the narrative itself and begins to delve into how we are beginning to see populism influence or *not* influence a nation. This chapter also means to address the fact that there are in fact still countries in the European Union that have not been affected in the same way by populism as it obviously has in other countries. While not a deep analysis of the differences and

similarities, this section aims to bring to light several key differences that we can correlate to the presence or absence of populism and successful populist leaders within a country's political system.

Case Studies

1. President Donald Trump (United States – Republican Party)
2. Senator Bernie Sanders (United States – Democratic Party)
3. Marine Le Pen (France – National Rally)
4. Geert Wilders (The Netherlands – Party for Freedom)
5. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán (Hungary – Fidesz)

For each individual politician, I have selected one speech which I want to analyze with the same set of criteria in mind, thus creating a consistent basis for testing. Once each selection has been analyzed and the findings have been discussed, I will be able to compare and contrast the broken-down narratives from each politician and country and be able to begin drawing conclusions for the research questions I set on the outset of this project.

Not only is the content of the populist narratives important for the purpose of grasping how populism itself exists and thrives today, but through this research I seek to understand the reality of the influence of these narratives. Through research on election results and public opinion data, I hope to find a connection between the words spoken by the populist leaders and their effect on their constituencies. The purpose underlying the speeches of politicians is to solidify a voter base and attract new voters for themselves. They put together these persuasive and emotive narratives that are presented to millions of people not just within their own country, but all over the world. In one of my case studies, I will focus on Hungary to understand

differences in public opinion on a specific topic that dominates the populist rhetoric. Immigration is a leading issue in both Europe and the United States today and is an intensely debated topic that dominates political agendas. I aim for this part of the research to have several purposes. For one, I hope to analyze the influence that a populist narrative can have on voting bodies in countries where populism is undeniably present. Furthermore, I want to know why, or at least begin to understand why, populism has not been successful in some countries in the EU as it has so ferociously in others; for this I will utilize the same kind of narrative analysis format.

In an effort to take this research a step further in the analysis of the populist narratives, I would like to include a case study of an EU country where populism appears not to have taken hold with the vigor that it has in other countries (as the ones listed above). I am interested in the Republic of Ireland (Hereby referred to as “Ireland”). Despite years of turmoil, societal frictions and seemingly favorable conditions for the emergence and influence of a populist party, there is not much of note in the twenty-first century that would qualify as populist in Ireland when we compare it to other countries in the EU.

Therefore, Ireland will serve as somewhat of a different case study that will be compared with the countries listed above that serve as the populist case studies of EU countries. I want to know what conditions have set Ireland apart from these countries, specifically focusing on the rhetoric of the current Taoiseach, or Prime Minister, Leo Varadkar, and taking into account, historically, how Ireland has been affected by and reacted to crises such as the European refugee ‘crisis’ of 2015 (which served to fuel the populist narratives of the other states). There is not an extensive amount of research on the concept of populism in Ireland, although, existing literature¹

¹ See https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ozaTDAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA127&dq=Ireland+populism&ots=NlKu5XEBTa&sig=DqhE7Bu4r8JAs87xLwPWmH3m_wg#v=onepage&q&f=true

indicates that existing populism in Ireland is situated on the left of the political spectrum (Sinn Fein) and varies from the popularly accepted characteristics of populists today (Suiter, 2017).

3.2: DONALD TRUMP (UNITED STATES)

President Donald Trump, elected in the 2016 US Presidential election, is one of the country's first generally acknowledged populists in the twenty-first century. He built his campaign for the Republican Party on a platform that called to bring jobs back to the United States and fix the immigration system with his infamous wall on the US-Mexico border. He won the 2016 election by gaining the votes of working-class voters of America (Tyson & Maniam, 2016). Trump, throughout his four-year term, has continued to reach out to his constituents, for instance in the manufacturing regions of the US, like Lima, Ohio. On March 20th, 2019, President Trump visited the Lima Army Tank Plant and delivered remarks to the plant's workers and local politicians regarding saving and the expansion of the factory's manufacturing capabilities. I read the transcript from this speech with the criteria from the working definition of populism in mind to analyze this text.

Inclusivity paradox: The trademark of populist behavior is using an inherently inclusive rhetoric that reaches *das wahre Volk* (Müller, 2016) or the true people, of a nation. This is often achieved by the utilization of the pronoun “we” when speaking publicly. Trump utilizes the “we” within these remarks in a way that refers more often to his presidential administration than to his audience of American factory affiliates and Ohio politicians. In his speech, aimed at detailing national security, he says “We took over a mess. We took over a mess with North Korea. We took over a mess in the Middle East. We took over. [...] It was going to go bad, and then we opened up with the regulation cuts and all of the other things we've done, including the big tax cut” (The White House, 2019). Here, Trump highlights the actions of his administration after he

took over from the Obama administration. This use of “we” is contrasted with the use of “you” to refer to those that are in the audience – this pronoun is used throughout his remarks. He says “What you’re doing has been more incredible. You stuck it out and now you’ve got one of the most successful military plants in the world” (2019).

The we/you separation in this context demonstrates that Donald Trump does not precisely fit into the standard model for building a rhetoric of inclusivity with the vehicle of select pronoun usage. There’s a particular passage, however, in which Trump breaks from this formula and demonstrates almost perfectly a paradox of inclusivity when he says, “But nobody has done the job that we’ve done. And I say ‘we’ because you’ve been on our side. Your union leaders aren’t on my side, by the way [...] But the unions – the people that work there are on our side [...] Nice guys, but they’re democrats no matter what” (2019). The American bipartisan political system creates an obvious “other” for republicans with the democrats functioning as this other. Trump’s usage of “we” and “our” here, is meant to include the Trump administration and his audience in Ohio together, but is very blatantly exclusionary of democrats and union leaders (of whom he claims that they are all democrats).

On the establishment: President Trump started out his speech with remarks that, presumably, were positioned to slight the preceding US presidential administration. While not directly calling it by name, Trump uses “they” as his means of referring to his predecessors. As an opening statement, Trump declares to a cheering crowd, “Well, you better love me; I kept this place open, that I can tell you. (Applause) They said, ‘We’re closing it.’ And I said, ‘No, we’re not.’” (2019). While not only using a language of othering in the usage of “they”, Trump indicates here that the prior establishment in place had tried to implement a decision that would close the factory that he would ultimately save. The quote “We took over a mess” (2019) as used previously, also points

to Trump's clear and public discontent with the operations of the US federal government during the Obama administration and the years before, although that information cannot be derived from this particular text. He does however, later on in the speech, move to call out President Obama directly and say, "Four straight years, the number of US tanks that were budgeted for upgrades was zero. Does anybody remember that? Raise your hands. Do you remember that? Zero. That was under your great President Obama. Our military readiness declined and your workforce was slashed by 60 percent" (2019).

On the elite: Comments on corruption can be identified quite easily. Trump takes the opportunity to make his thoughts known on another opposition group, and his version of the "corrupt elite" – the media. He states, "I have the fake news hounding me all the time. [...] The fake and phony and corrupt. It's fake. It's corrupt" (2019). While this remark is not difficult to decipher, it is interesting to point out here that he brings up the "corrupt elite" entirely unprompted. This speech to the Ohio factory workers was one intended to praise the contributions the workers have made towards national security and defense. Not a campaign rally, nor a State of the Union address by any means, but he still managed to make the point to let his audience know where "corruption" is truly deriving from within the United States.

On anti-globalism: On the topic of national security and the value of production and manufacturing in the US, Trump brings up the US's global position amongst competitor nations for oil production. He says, "Think of that, beating out Saudi Arabia and Russia. They're pretty good producers, right? Guess What? We do more than they do" (2019). He uses more pro-American rhetoric further on in his speech, with statements such as "Buy American and hire American" (2019). Trump fits the model of an anti-globalist in economic terms. Trump makes it very clear to his audience that an economy supported by American investments and job creation

is what has made the changes for the US economy since his term began. His rhetoric on American car manufacturing in the US, along with oil production, and hardline trade deals with other countries like China shows how Trump is turning his back on embracing a global society, contributing to the discourse on the renewed sense of an isolationist America.

On liberal democracy: Trump's actions in relation to the liberal democratic order have proven that he clearly challenges the system. The hiring of his own family members as well as the repeal of important pieces of minority legislation from previous administrations (such as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), shows this, for example. This narrative in particular does not give clear indications of his thoughts about a liberal democracy or its components- he does not use this term outright. The absence of any mention of minority rights in his speech, therefore, shows how Trump, instead of championing minorities, places focus within his narrative strategies on rewarding his constituencies. This is an example of the “what politicians say” versus “what politicians do” complex and the implications of this will be discussed in the analysis.

3.3: BERNIE SANDERS (UNITED STATES)

Senator from Vermont, Bernie Sanders, a self-proclaimed democratic socialist, has been associated left-wing populism in the United States, though has been criticized within the scholarship as to whether he matches the true identity of a left-wing populist. Left-wing populism, as has been noted, is most predominantly associated with the politicians of Latin America today (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). The presence of a left-wing populist in American political culture today, while not unprecedented, is a change from the more prevalent right-wing populist narratives seen today, particularly in Europe. Senator Sanders ran for the democratic nomination for the US Presidency in 2016 but was beaten for the Democratic nomination by

Hillary Clinton. Despite the loss in 2016, Sanders has been in the running for the Democratic candidate for the 2020 election, though announced the suspension of his campaign several months ahead of the election. Early on at the stages of his announcement to run, he engaged in an interview with CBS News to talk about his campaign platforms.

Inclusivity paradox: For Bernie Sanders, “the people” are quite literally, nearly everyone. First born out of the Occupy Wallstreet, the idea of the 99% of the American people versus the 1% of Americans that own most of the wealth has become a major theme of the Sanders campaign (Judis, 2016). This is the base for many of Sanders’s campaign points. Throughout this interview, Senator Sanders makes statements that detail he is trying to be a voice for all those who do not have a voice. When asked about the state of wealth concentration in America, he says, “You have three people who own more wealth than the bottom half of American society. [...] we got veterans sleeping out on the street; we have kids who can’t afford to go to college; you got 30 million people who have no health care” (CBS This Morning, 2019). Sanders’s people are not just his own constituents, nor simply the middle class. He defines the true American people in terms of the wealth distribution in the US and aims to exclude the very few, yet very wealthy “morally wrong” (2019) individuals from that group.

On the establishment & the elite: Bernie makes obvious who are the corrupt elite of the United States, from his perspective, within his rhetoric, much like Donald Trump, although their definitions differ. In Bernie Sanders’s interview, he answers a question from his interviewer on the power of the grassroots movement and says,

Look John, we are the only major country on Earth not to guarantee health care to all, and the reason for that is the power of the insurance companies. We pay by far the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. That's the power of the pharmaceutical-- industry. We have a corrupt political system in which billionaires can contribute unlimited

sums of money. That's the power of the top 1% and the billionaire class, and on and on it goes” (2019).

We can unpack a lot of detail about Sanders’ views from this quote. He clearly criticizes the financial establishment and condemns the current political establishment, that, while he obviously refers to the current administration under President Trump, could also mean the system as it has existed for years, even under past democratic administrations. Therefore, his criticism of the establishments goes beyond party lines.

On anti-globalism: The concept of being an anti-globalist in the context of populism could have several implications. While Sanders has been known to approach this ideal from the perspective of international trade and the global economy (“Bernie Sanders on the Issues”, 2019), this interview brought in his perspective on foreign relations from the perspective of defense. When briefly talking on foreign policy and his take on the current engagement of US military troops overseas, Sanders said “I—I think—the idea that we are gonna withdraw troops—from—Syria or from Afghanistan—is—is the right thing, but it has to be done not through a tweet” (CBS This Morning, 2019). While this was Sanders’s only comment made in terms of foreign policy within this interview, it is indicative of two points. 1. Sanders maintains an anti-globalist perspective in his rhetoric in terms of becoming less engaged in overseas wars. 2. The last comment in the quote was directed towards the Twitter-savvy Donald Trump, who has been known to often bring calls-to-action via Twitter and was a follow up to the remark that Trump and he actually have similar goals when it comes to international engagement – a point of cohesion for the opposed populist leaders.

On liberal democracy: Where Bernie Sanders perhaps departs from the populist leader checklist, is in his narrative on liberal democracy. Sanders has campaigned on a strong platform

towards the strengthening of social programs for Americans. He detailed this aspect of his campaign in the interview, saying

You will recall—you may recall that in 2016 many of the ideas that I talked about-- Medicare for all, raising the minimum wage – to \$15 an hour – making public colleges and universities tuition free – spending at least \$1 trillion and rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure—criminal justice reform—all of those ideas people would say, “Oh Bernie, they’re so radical” (CBS This Morning, 2019).

Campaigning so clearly for specific programs that build up the concept of liberal democracy gives Sanders a side to his narrative that does not quite align with the working definition given here for the modern populist. Though, perhaps this points to the differences between left- and -right wing populism, or even the “thicker” ideology that Sanders attached to his brand of populism as a democratic socialist.

3.4: MARINE LE PEN (FRANCE)

Marine Le Pen, daughter of the founder of the ultra-right-wing party, *Front Nationale*, or *Rassemblement national*, as she has rebranded it, ran for the French Presidency in 2017 versus Emmanuel Macron, and she was defeated. Le Pen embodies the “strongwoman” populist leader. She gave a campaign speech just several months before the 2017 election in Lyon, France. This speech actually kicked off her campaign for the election, meaning that it was aggressive towards her opponents, and a loud display of her ideologies (Vinocur, 2017).

Inclusivity Paradox: In this speech, Le Pen addresses her audience in an inclusive manner, just as the narratives discussed thus far have. She uses the pronoun “us” to define who “the people” she represents are. While vague, the staunch nationalist gives insight into who the true people of France are, saying “From [the election’s] outcome, will depend the continuity of France as a free nation and for those who like us feel above all French, our existence as a people”

(Rassemblement National, 2017). Ultimately, Le Pen's inclusivity, as defined through the rest of her speech, is contingent on the level of nationalism the people feel for France and the value they place on the French identity above all else. She closes her speech by saying

“This cleavage no longer opposes the right and the left, but the patriots to the globalists. In this presidential election, we represent the camp of the patriots... We urge all patriots from right or left to join us. Elected or ordinary citizens, wherever you come from, whatever your commitments may have been, you have your place at our side. Patriots, you are welcome!” (2017).

While this statement is still very broad on who embodies the “us”, she clearly designates a “them” – the globalists of France and of Europe as a whole. The division of “patriots” versus “globalists” is a trend now backed by Le Pen and Orbán. The similarities in the content of their speeches in terms of narrative strategies determining who are meant to be included and not included as members of the “true people” in their respective countries are clearly there.

On the establishment, the elite, & anti- globalism: Le Pen makes her feelings of opposition against all three of these concepts very clear, somehow in one breath. She opens her speech by saying, “I say it with gravity: the choice we will have to make in this election is a choice of civilization. Our leaders chose deregulated globalization, they wanted it to be a happy thing, it turned out awful” (2017). Within this remark alone, she criticizes the policies of France's political establishment (though the use of “our” in this case diverges from the “us versus them” ideology between the people and the elite) specifically because of the pro-globalization policies that she and the National Rally outright condemn. She moves forward with her remarks on globalization, saying

“Jihadist globalism that undermines our vital interests abroad, but also that is implanted on our national territory in certain neighborhoods, in certain places, in some weak minds. And

both of them work for the disappearance of our nation, that is, of France in which we live, which we love, which is why the French have a feeling of dispossession” (2017).

These anti-globalist sentiments, therefore, are promoted by Le Pen using the rationale of preserving the French identity and ridding it of the “Islamic fundamentalism” and “financialization” (2017) of the French economy. By this, she refers the attack of globalization on the French economy from all sides, essentially, taking the forms of mass immigration “from below” and international finance “from above” (Bamat, 2017). This example takes on Judis’s theory of the triadic nature of the right-wing populists: The true French people versus the financialized, corrupt elite (that happens to be a part of the establishment) versus the immigrants who are bringing the religion and culture of Islam into France.

Le Pen also, like Orbán, is a textbook Eurosceptic, as she laments on the failures of the EU. She says,

“By refusing to free themselves [the past/current political establishment in France] from the straitjacket of the European Union which is the decisionmaker on these subjects, they refrain themselves from any inflection even minor. Worse, staying in the euro, they plague our economy, maintain mass unemployment and give the European Union the means of pressure to impose its views, its inane directives, its millions of migrants. Everyone agrees, the European Union is a failure” (2017)

Therefore, Le Pen’s rhetoric is critical of not just the national political system of France, but also the European Union – and specifically, the euro, in this narrative.

On liberal democracy: The contents of the right-wing narratives, as we have seen thus far are hard to analyze when looking for evidence of challenging liberal democracies. However, Le Pen’s laments of the supposed dangers of Islam within the French borders gives potential insight to the type of democratic order that would be in place, should she have won the election in 2017, or if

she steps into national power in the future. There is a clear rejection of minority rights within her rhetoric, with statements like “The places of Islamic preaching will be closed and the sowers of hatred condemned and expelled” (2017). While just one component of what constitutes a liberal democracy, this example can easily be extrapolated to other themes that could degrade the country into an illiberal democracy, as in Hungary.

3.5: GEERT WILDERS (THE NETHERLANDS)

Geert Wilders, the leader of the Netherlands’ *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom) in the Dutch House of Representatives since 2006, has been one of the prominent examples of European populism since he began speaking out against the EU and Islam as his main campaigning points. Wilders is an interesting example as a European populist, which makes him, therefore, an interesting addition to this research. He is an outlier in the sect of right-wing populism due to the nature the Dutch’s socially progressive ideals. While the right-wing populists seen on the international stage today are typically fighting for Christian, heteronormative ideals, Wilders has used his more progressive social stances as ammunition within his populist rhetoric. While the Dutch and Wilders have strong beliefs in LGBTQ+ rights, Wilders weaves this into his Islamophobic rhetoric as a means of saying conservative Muslim refugees would not fit into the progressive Dutch society (Damhuis, 2019). The narrative I will be analyzing is a speech he gave to the Abrosetti conference in Italy back in 2017. While this speech is not being given to an audience of Dutch nationals, instead to the members of the “European establishment” (Kruis, 2017), Wilders still shares the main themes of his campaign rhetoric without restraint.

Inclusivity paradox, the elite, and the establishment: Considering Wilders’ two major themes in his rhetoric, his narrative portrays “the people” as simply the nationals of any EU country who are being disenfranchised by elite EU bureaucrats (2017). Dutch nationalism and the

preservation of his perspective on their values, is what “the people” are embracing, as opposed to those who support the EU and its interventions in sovereign member states. Wilders states, “Unfortunately most of our governments have transferred ever more powers to the EU, undermining many important things we Dutch have achieved over the past centuries and hold very dear” (2017). What makes Wilders different, however, is that unlike his right-wing counterparts in other European countries, he has supported legislation that promotes LGBTQ+ rights as well as other socially progressive initiatives that are not otherwise seen amongst more conservative right-wing populists. He criticizes the Dutch government for willingly giving the powers of the sovereign nation-state away to the even more flawed politicians of the EU. He goes on to further refine his version of the elite – pegging the EU bureaucrats as threats to Dutch patriots as well as patriots of singular national sovereignties across the EU.

On anti-globalism: Wilders passionately defends the ideology of nationalism and the concept of anti-globalism throughout his speech to the EU affiliates. He states,

“Our forefathers have fought for a democratic Netherlands. That is a Netherlands where the Dutch electorate and nobody else decides on Dutch matters. Democracy means that a people can decide its own legislation. Democracy equals home rule. But owing to the transfer by our governments of powers to Brussels, the EU institutions and other countries are now deciding on issues which are vital to our nation state: our immigration policy, our monetary policy, our trade policy and many other issues.” (2017)

Without detailing the Dutch economy and international trade agreements and Dutch job creation as in the narratives of Trump and Orbán, Wilders clearly wants total divestment of the Netherlands from the EU, at the very least.

On liberal democracy: Once more, evidence found within this narrative, as with the narratives of the other European populists in this research, is that challenges to liberal democracy are based in the rejection of a pluralistic society. This is exemplified by Wilders’s rejection of a Dutch

society, as well as a Europe all-together, where the EU is allowed to “force upon us the bitter fruit of their cosmopolitan immigration policy” (2017). Here, Wilders quoted Viktor Orbán, a champion of illiberal democracy, with whom he expressed he shares mirrored sentiments regarding a “Europe [of] Christian, free and independent nations” (2017). This is not to say, though, that Wilders and Orbán, nor Wilders and Le Pen, are aligned in all of their ideals and opinions. As I will show in the coming analysis, these politicians, though populists, nonetheless, diverge from one another on several very key social issues that create divisions for European populists and show the diversity of populism today.

3.6: VIKTOR ORBÁN (HUNGARY)

Viktor Orbán is perhaps one of the most infamous politicians associated with the right-wing populist resurgence in Europe. Orbán has been one of the loudest voices, speaking with strong nationalist, anti-immigration, and Eurosceptic rhetoric as the leader of an ultra-right-wing political party, Fidesz, as well as of the Hungarian state. In 2018, the Prime Minister was elected into his fourth term, and he gave an acceptance speech to his fellow Hungarians that I have chosen to analyze here.

Inclusivity Paradox: Prime Minister Orbán opened his address to the Hungarian people just after his oath of office with the words, “Thank you to everyone who voted in the election for the National Assembly – whichever candidate they voted for. I especially thank those who voted for us, the civic, national, and Christian forces” (Visegrad Post, 2018). While addressing all of Hungary, Orbán makes a point of identifying “the people” that he truly values as Hungarian citizens: his fellow nationalists and Christians. This naturally speaks to Orbán’s nationalist ideology. Therefore, he uses his power to speak for the “true Hungarians that are presumed to share the same core values of Hungarian society as he does; those values become clear

throughout his address. And while he does use “othering” to separate those who do not adhere to the values of “true” Hungarians, he still includes them in his welcome, thus illustrating the strategic inclusivity paradox.

On the establishment & the elite: Euroscepticism is one of the defining features of European populism today, with Orbán’s voice being one of the loudest amongst the ranks. As a politician who is nearly a decade in power in Hungary, he has created his own establishment on the national level. Thus, he has moved to criticize the establishment on the supranational level, as his right-wing peers from other EU member states tend to do as well. He speaks of the EU quite clearly in his address, saying,

“The European Union must return to reality. As a first step, it must change its thinking on migration, mass population movement and immigration. In Brussels nowadays people believe that it is unfair if one is not born in the country where one would like to live. They believe that it is fair to give people the right to move to wherever they would like to live. In Brussels nowadays there are thousands of paid activists, bureaucrats and politicians working to have migration declared a fundamental human right. Therefore they want to deprive us of the right to decide for ourselves who we let in to the country and who we refuse entry to” (2018).

Though still supportive of the EU, Orbán sees one of the fundamental freedoms of the EU, the freedom of movement, as a threat to Hungarian sovereignty. He makes a point of distancing himself from the EU leadership in Brussel by using the pronoun “they”, as to remind his audience that the EU is not a keeper of Hungarian values or interests in this context. Migration has become a central issue for European populism and Orbán’s criticism of the EU’s management of immigration and asylum seekers is stated loud and clear within his narrative.

On anti-globalism: Within Orbán’s victory speech, he naturally focuses much of his rhetoric inwards on the state and the future of Hungary. He builds on an anti-globalist rhetoric throughout

his speech, not only in his condemnation of immigration, but also by expanding on this ideal.

Orbán states,

“This is why we undertake to halt demographic decline – indeed we will succeed in returning Hungary to an upward trend [...] At present six hundred multinational companies are responsible for 80 percent of world export trade. This is why we must bring investments to Hungary which produce high added value and higher wages. In this respect we want to be among the ten best countries in the world. Alongside all this, we will increase Hungarian-owned companies’ share in exports from Hungary to 50 per cent of the total.” (2018)

As part of Orbán’s nationalist rhetoric, he, in this speech, makes a call to his audience that Hungary should and will be “among the five best countries in the European Union in which to live and work” (2018) and he perceives that goal only achievable if Hungary focuses purely on its domestic, as well as regional economy, in order to become a better exporter. What we can gather from this excerpt as well, is that the Prime Minister is wanting to instead make globalization work for the Hungarian nation and add themselves to the list of powerful players in international markets.

This concept does seem a bit paradoxical as well and seems to take on different shapes for the Prime Minister. It is not difficult to find cases where Orbán has dismissed globalism outright. In a speech given later in 2018, he says “Let us choose independence and the cooperation of nations over global governance and supervision. Let us reject the ideology of globalism, and instead support the culture of patriotism” (Visegrad Post, 2018). Just based on these excerpts, it is clear that, economically speaking, Orbán wants to strengthen the Hungarian economy through their manufacturing and exports so that they are able to play the game of economic globalization – a game in which they are currently barely even a player. In terms of governance, politics, and culture, Orbán is very outspoken about anti-globalism. This takes shape via his Euroscepticism, when he says that Hungarian voters should be voting against Brussels, representing the establishment and

functioning as a symbol for global governance to Orbán (in the context of the May 2019 European Parliament Elections). He champions the Hungarian people by fighting for cultural independence and autonomy over legislation that would threaten their nationalistic ideologies.

Liberal democracy: Not only does Orbán challenge the liberal democratic order within his narrative, he blatantly rejects the notion of it. He proclaimed passionately in his speech,

“In my view, a contribution to the results we have achieved so far has been made by our open declaration that the age of liberal democracy is at an end. Liberal democracy is no longer able to protect people’s dignity, provide freedom, guarantee physical security or maintain Christian culture [...]. Our response to this changed world, the Hungarian people’s response, has been to replace the shipwreck of liberal democracy by building 21st-century Christian democracy. This guarantees human dignity, freedom and security, protects equality between men and women and the traditional family model, suppresses anti-Semitism, defends our Christian culture and offers our nation the chance of survival and growth. We are Christian democrats, and we want Christian democracy. (2018)

With such a direct call against liberal democracy, this piece of the narrative is a perfect example of why the criterion for the challenges of liberal democracy was included in the working definition of populism. Additionally, this aspect matches up well because of Orbán’s experience in power for such a long time. He is a populist leader who has already changed the establishment within Hungary and has thus been on a path that has led to democratic backsliding for years, while other populists in Europe not in a head-of-state position have not been in a position to do so. While Orbán is insistent on his ideal form of democracy, a Christian democracy, there is a sense of tension in these words. This is an example of a sort of “say versus do” of the populist politician. Though in the excerpt given here, Orbán vows to protect the equality of men and women, for example, Hungary actually ranks 27th in the EU on the Gender Equality Index, scoring very low on the scale

and progressing much slower than the EU average toward gender equality (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019).

CHAPTER 4: POPULIST NARRATIVES IN CONTEXT

4.1: POPULISM WITHIN EUROPE: ELECTIONS AND POPULAR OPINION

Within this narratological analysis, I have found myself saying “so what?” to these speeches and the populists. Among my case studies, I have individuals who have won their national elections, but also some who have lost these, and those that are still vying for a spot in the executive office. I argue that the narratives of these populists contain specific narrative strategies and highly intentional verbiage that is made to resonate with a certain audience—an audience of the presumably “true people” of a country or region.

The goal of this section is just to pull away from the transatlantic perspective analysis briefly and focus just on Europe. In the twenty-first century, Europe, or more specifically, the EU has endured two separate crises – the financial crises that rocked the eurozone starting in 2008 and the “refugee crises” that surged in 2015. Each crisis had major effects on several EU countries in particular, like Greece, Italy, Portugal, Ireland, and Spain concerning the financial crisis and countries with external EU borders, like Greece and Italy as far as the refugee crisis is concerned. These countries may have received major setbacks, but all EU countries were impacted in some way or another with EU crisis management policies, such as a sharing of the financial burden and refugee distribution (Collett & Le Coz, 2018).

The rise of the populist right has lasted long enough that it is possible for us as researchers to analyze the effects it has had within and outside of EU countries. We say that words are powerful. How powerful are they? For the scale and scope of this research, I thought it best to utilize data that has been collected by the European Union to bring the real perspective on the presence of a persistent message from the populist right in comparison to a country where no message like that has existed. Taking a comparative approach within the context of the

European Union, we are able to see differences based on a number of variables. This is in particular clear if we direct our attention towards two countries that lend themselves to a “most different” approach for this comparison: Hungary, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, is a full-fledged right-wing populist country under the leadership of populist strongman, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán; and Ireland, with which with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has kept political distance from the populist wave and has left researchers question if and when it will ever succumb.

The previous section contained a detailed breakdown of Viktor Orbán’s narrative and its relation to populism as a whole; however, in this section, I dig deeper into not just the narrative, also the discourse on migration in both countries. With this information, I will compare the general discourse and the way the migrant crisis is framed by the two country’s leaders, Orbán and Varadkar as well as the elections results from the election years following the migration crisis.

Migration Discourse in Hungary

Nationalist, right wing populism came to Hungary with its current leader, Viktor Orbán. In terms of populism’s definers, Orbán and his party, Fidesz, is the whole kit and caboodle in this country. So, just how did Orbán become the powerhouse of this populist wave? As many researchers will tell you, populists are strategic. They capitalize on societal frictions and crises and use the power of an emotional, and well-crafted narrative to wrangle the support of their people. Orbán is leading the fight against multiculturalism within his own state and the EU as a whole, flanked by other post-Communist EU member states like Poland, Czechia, and Slovakia (a regional bloc known as the Visegrad Four). The concept of the populist “strongman” is central in populist theory. What makes a populist party or a populist message successful? The politician

(Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). The passionate leader who vows to be the voice of the “true people” and represent them to the very end, protecting them from whatever, or more significantly in the context of this research, *whoever*, threatens their way of life.

Orbán himself, is the model of the modern-day populist leader, used as an example by many researchers of populist theory and is reported about by popular international media nearly every day for his controversial words and actions. Narratives are an exceptionally important tool for populists. The relationship between the populist leader and the people are integral for the success of a populist campaign. The speeches they give and the promises they make for their respective societies, are what propel them ever-forward as influential parties and voices that gain political legitimacy. Quickly, islamophobic rhetoric and words slandering multiculturalism flooded in from Viktor Orbán, who protested the proposed quota system of redistribution, citing Hungary’s history as a predominantly white, Christian nation (Orbán, 2019). Those words stuck, and support for the Prime Minister has remained steadfast.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán gave a speech on the 170th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, and demonstrates (a somewhat tame, in this example) case of how he and his regime view immigration and the entry of non-Europeans (specifically, non-Christian, non-white Europeans) into Hungarian borders.

The situation, Dear Friends, is that there are those who want to take our country from us. Not with the stroke of a pen, has happened one hundred years ago at Trianon; now they want us to voluntarily hand our country over to others, over a period of a few decades. They want us to hand it over to foreigners coming from other continents, who do not speak our language, and who do not respect our culture, our laws or our way of life: people who want to replace what is ours with what is theirs. What they want is that henceforward it will increasingly not be we and our descendants who live here, but others. There is no exaggeration in what I have just said. Day by day we see the great European countries and nations losing their countries: little by little, from district to district and from city to city. The situation is that those who do not halt immigration at their borders are lost: slowly but

surely they are consumed. External forces and international powers want to force all this upon us, with the help of their allies here in our country. And they see our upcoming election as a good opportunity for this (Orbán, 2018).

Orbán has delivered blatantly unwelcoming messages like this to the citizens of Hungary, Europe, and the rest of the world. He uses strong words that paint the migrant as the enemy of the Hungarians, in a somewhat eloquent way in this official speech. However, he is not so withdrawn in statements made in more “informal” settings and interviews. In an article compiled by DeutscheWelle entitled “Viktor Orbán's most controversial migration comments”, for example, they cited his quote from an interview where he said,

We don't see these people as Muslim refugees. We see them as Muslim invaders, Orbán said in a recent interview with German daily Bild newspaper. The 54-year-old prime minister of Hungary added: We believe that a large number of Muslims inevitably leads to parallel societies, because Christian and Muslim society will never unite. Multiculturalism, he said, is only an illusion. (Pearson, 2018)

These crass statements so very obviously are heard by Hungarians, looking to their leader to “protect” them for those who “threaten” their society. One of the fundamental traits of populism is scapegoating and creating an enemy group to instill fear in a society, and Orbán has perfected this strategy so much so that he has been able to change not just minds, but policies on migration with these words (Goździak, 2019).

Response from “the people”

But of course, the words of the Prime Minister do not truly speak to the overall discourse on immigration in Hungary, where actual citizens are concerned. Just to get an overall gist of how Hungarians feel, Eurobarometer provides great insight. Figure 2.0 shows the overall response from the 28 EU member states in June 2019 while Figure 3.0 isolates the Hungarian response. When asked in 2019 if “Immigration of people from outside the EU evoked a positive or negative emotion”, 35% of Hungarians had a “very negative” feeling, with another 35% having a “fairly

negative” feeling, totaling in 70% of Hungarians (who participated in the poll) with animosity toward non-EU immigrants (European Commission, 2019). A study analyzing Hungary’s federally sponsored public questionnaire titled “National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism”, concluded that “an overwhelming majority of respondents supported the government’s position”, that “Hungarians do not want illegal immigrants and do not want to take part in the intellectual amuck of the European Left” (Bocskor, 2018).

Figure 2. European Commission Public Opinion Poll (EU-28)

“Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you: Immigration of people from outside of the EU (06/2019)” (European Commission, 2019)

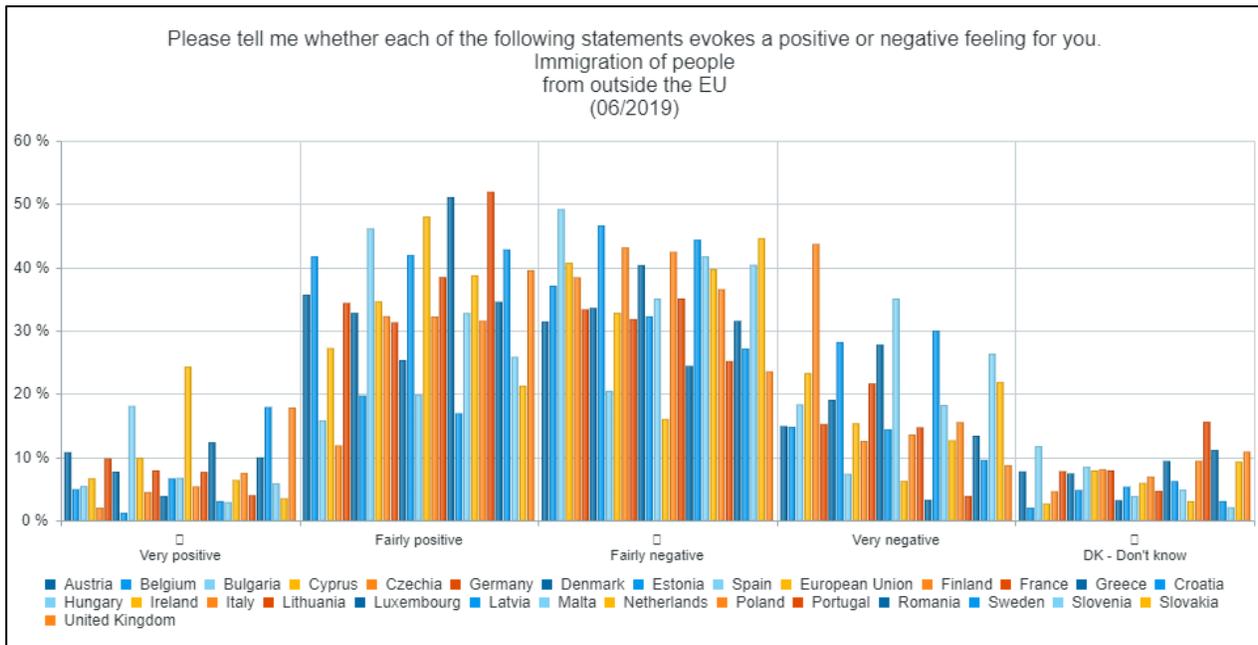
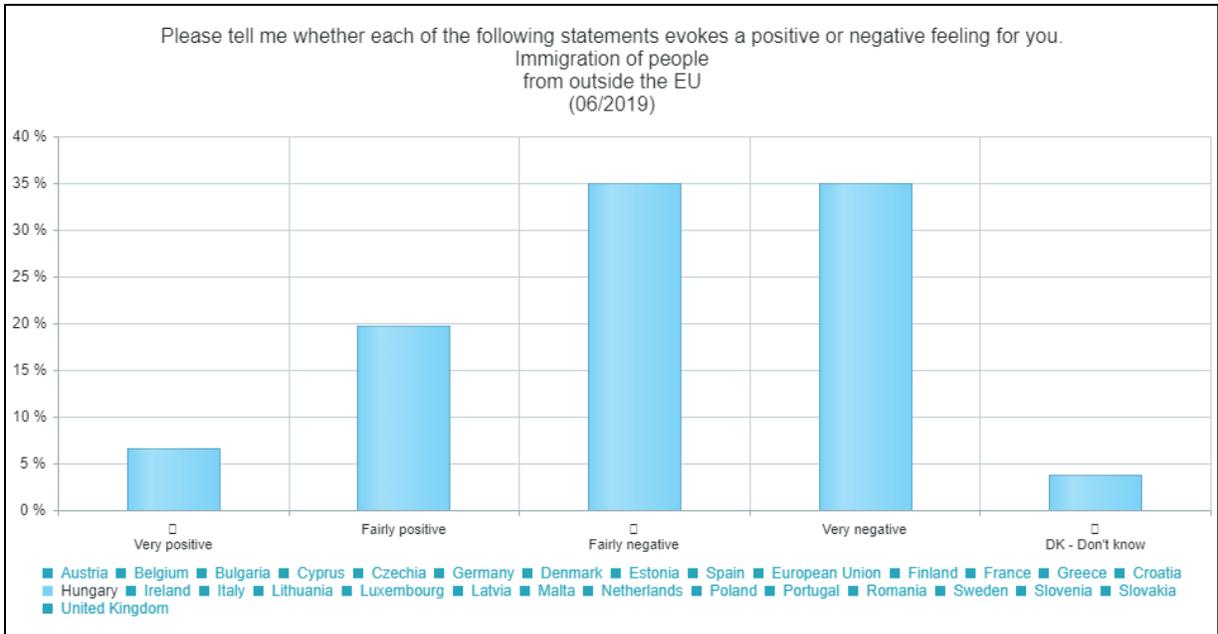


Figure 3. European Commission Public Opinion Poll (Hungary)
“Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you: Immigration of people from outside of the EU (06/2019)” (European Commission, 2019)



Migration Discourse in Ireland

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar is not regarded as a populist. He was elected leader of Fine Gael (Family of the Irish), a liberal conservatist/ Christian democratic party, in June of 2017 (Murray, 2017), as Europe was still in the midst of handling the settlement and resettlement of the millions of asylum seekers within EU borders. In comparison with some other leaders in the EU, Varadkar does not get the same kind of spotlight that others like Orbán do. Ireland has been brought back into the spotlight, however, with the Irish question being a problem for Brexit, but in terms of its dealings with the EU, Ireland tends to conform to the EU position rather than battle it (Murphy & O’Brennan, 2019), therefore making their relationship generally drama-free, outside of the financial crisis.

Not only is Ireland’s leader not a right-wing nationalist populist, but there is not a nationalist populist party of substance in Ireland that has been able to gain a foothold in Irish

politics (Killoran, 2018). Islamophobic rhetoric, anti-immigration sentiments and words condemning multi-culturalism are not heard on the national level like that of Hungary. When Ireland's leadership does speak out on immigration into Ireland, the words paint a different story. In an address to the Immigrant Council of Ireland Conference in 2019, Varadkar said,

The message we need to articulate – is that migration is a good thing for Ireland and enriches our society. We all benefit from diversity and together we will be stronger for it. Migration makes our economy stronger, our public services sustainable and our culture and society richer. [...] Diversity in Ireland is a reality and it is one of our greatest strengths. It is a strength that we are now one of the most diverse countries in the EU, with 17% of the population born outside Ireland. It is a strength that our workforce is the third most international in Europe. It is a strength that we are a place where people want to live and work.

I share your vision of a society that respects human rights and diversity, and believes that everyone, including people from a migrant background, should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential (Varadkar, 2019).

This message of inclusion rather than exclusion and fearmongering is therefore the message Varadkar is sending to his state and nation of Irishmen and its immigrants. Instead of vilifying the immigrants entering Ireland as a burden that will disrupt the unity of the Irish nation, he acknowledges the multifaceted benefits a multicultural society can have.

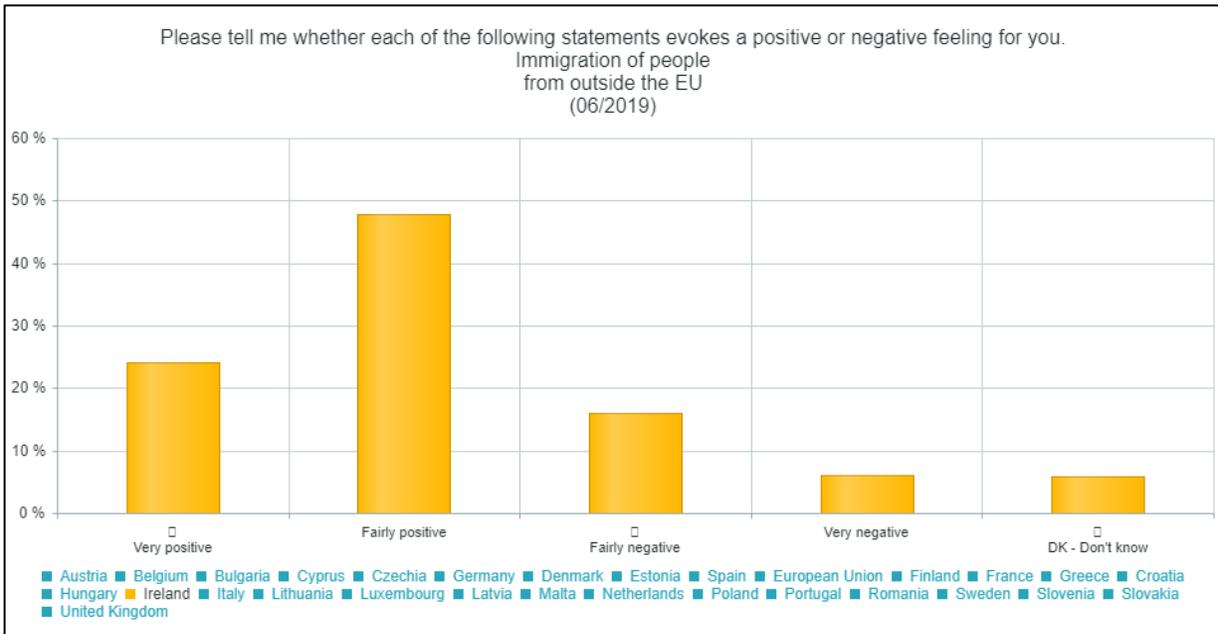
Response from “the people”

An important note from this excerpt as well, is Varadkar's mention of the 17% non-Irish population of Ireland. One in about every six persons, then, is a non-native of the country. With diversity already part of Irish society, the rhetoric surrounding immigration and multiculturalism is inherently different from that of Hungary. Migrant discourse that encourages tolerance is a sentiment held by not just the Prime Minister, but a majority of the Irish public as well, as shown in Figure 4.0. A Eurobarometer survey taken in June of 2019, for example, shows that 72% of Irish have a “positive” (either fairly or very) take on “Immigration of people from outside the EU” (European Commission, 2019). Despite this, there is indeed a minority that throws a wrench

in the positive migrant discourse in Ireland. According to the chief executive officer of the Immigrant Council of Ireland, there is a faction of the Irish society that utilize “language of fear to create the impression that people who were not born in [Ireland] are a threat to [their] way of life” (Killoran, 2018).

In a world where we can connect across oceans and continents in a matter of seconds, it would be naïve and reductionist to simply say that the anti-immigration sentiments that thrive elsewhere have not made their way to Ireland. However, the difference is that they are not *thriving* or picking up traction in Ireland. Right-wing populism, as it exists is Hungary through

Figure 4. European Commission Public Opinion Poll (Ireland)
“Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you: Immigration of people from outside of the EU (06/2019)” (European Commission, 2019)



Viktor Orbán, for example, is not seen there. Instead, scholars theorize that, if this is indeed possible, a *different type* of populism exists in Ireland (Suiter, 2017).

Hungary versus Ireland: Status of Democracy & National Election Results

Another difference in the comparison of Hungary and Ireland is clear if we look toward the state of their democracies. Democratic backsliding and the rise of increasingly illiberal democratic regimes is a component of contemporary (right-wing) populism that has become of particular concern for populist scholars. If we look at election results data from both countries, we see considerable differences.

In Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's party, Fidesz, has maintained a strong grip on the Hungarian political system. From the 2014 national election to the 2018 election, Fidesz increased their electorate by 4.4% – this is not a lot, however, it got them to nearly 50% (49.3%) of the population's vote in 2018. The runner-up party, Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt (KDNP), only received 20% of the vote (Parties and Election in Europe, 2019). While Hungary still has elections, the democratic nature of them is highly questionable. Along with their populist reputation, they are also an example of democratic backsliding in Europe (Sedelmeir, 2017). According to Freedom House, Hungary's democratic status has experienced “one of the most dramatic declines ever charted by Freedom House within the European Union” (Freedom House, 2019), due to the abuse of his “party's supermajority to impose restrictions on or assert control over the opposition, the media, religious groups, academia, NGOs, the courts, asylum seekers, and the private sector since 2010” (2019). Nationalist right-wing populism is surviving and thriving in Hungary, along with its narratives, right now because Hungarians really have not had the option via a liberal democracy to stand against their “strong man” leader and Prime Minister.

Orbán has made it nearly impossible for any non-populist opposition to arise, therefore, attributing and furthering the democratic decline and increase of hostilities in Hungary.

Ireland, on the other hand, offers a different picture. While the Freedom House data shows that many of the world's democracies are in decline Ireland has actually managed to increase their levels of free-ness since the last measure in 2018 (Freedom House, 2019). On the Freedom House scale of freedom, Ireland is marked as "free" and is ranked as the 10th most-free country in the world whereas Hungary is only "partly free" and ranked toward the middle-bottom of the list of European countries for democratic rankings (2019). In terms of national elections, Ireland experienced more variance. From 2011 to 2016, the majority party, Fine Gael, actually lost a little over 10% of their votes and Sinn Féin increased their presence by about 4% (Parties and Elections in Europe, 2019). This data is more significant in assessing the influence of populism on the Irish because unlike Hungary whose democratic outcomes in elections should not be taken at face value given the severe democratic backsliding taking place within the country, we know the Irish people are actually given a say in the elections within their liberal democratic order. The autonomy of the citizen is particularly important in the scholarship on populism because we gain insight into the actual effect of the populist message, or narrative, on "the people". In Ireland's case, though we see a marginal increase in support for the "populist" party, Sinn Fein, from these election results, we ultimately can deduce that populism truly has not made sweeping political upsets, even in times of economic and social distress and full-on crises that have impacted other parts of Europe in significantly different ways.

“Populism” in Ireland?

Given this information on Ireland regarding the population’s reactions and generally positive sentiments on immigration in what is such a largely contested issue within the EU now, the question is, why is Ireland an outlier? The Republic *should* be the ideal breeding grounds for discontented, populist-minded politicians, given their contentious history and their experience with the 2008 financial crisis (Murphy & O’Brennan, 2019). European populists tend to fulfill the “anti-establishment”/ “anti-elitist” via Euroscepticism and general distrust of the European Union’s politicians in Brussels. Ireland has had an interesting relationship with the EU since its accession in 1973. It has often been regarded as an exemplary model for smaller member states and the opinion of the EU in Ireland was generally positive due to the success of the Irish economy once it entered the Eurozone (Murphy & O’Brennan, 2019). The 2008 crisis, however put into question the good graces the Irish kept the EU under. The crisis hit Ireland hard – resulting in a €40 billion bill owed to the European Central Bank by November 2008 and a 14.7% unemployment rate by 2011 (Murphy & O’Brennan, 2019). What followed for Ireland in terms of austerity plans from 2008 from the EU was nothing short of a headache for the Irish government and the Irish people, with heavy criticism of the actions of the Irish government and the EU’s help, or lack thereof, in getting Ireland’s economy back in shape.

During this tumultuous time in Ireland, the national elections that took place in 2011 made way for the coming to power of Fine Gael, the opposition party to Fianna Fáil. According to scholars, other political fractioning did occur, but by and large, it did not shake the political system all that much (2019). According to populist research for Ireland, Sinn Féin has emerged as the party that brought the Eurosceptic, populist narrative to the Republic after 2008 (Suiter, 2017). Sinn Féin has been criticized and has even to a degree, painted itself as a nationalist,

populist party; though in this case, instead of your standard run-of-the-mill right-wing nationalist group, Sinn Féin is instead, a left-wing party. But this is where understandings and definitions of populism get skewed.

There is scholarship that suggests all types of theories for populism in Ireland ranging from “complete populism” to “empty populism” (Suiter, 2017). One of the lingering questions that has not been necessarily answered, though, is if populism can still be called “populism” without all of the components that have been attributed to it by the leading scholars in the field. Sinn Féin, for example, does not espouse the component of populism that demonizes immigrants, which, as seen, is a major component in the nationalist right-wing narrative. More than that, other scholarship suggests that another reason why other populist groups have not formed and been taken up in Ireland is because of the presence of Sinn Féin itself – leaving no room for another populist party in the system – acting as a “bulwark against others” as it were (Suiter, 2017).

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS & CONCLUSION

5.1: ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

To unpack the findings from my study, I will utilize the research questions I listed at the beginning of my project. Given the scope of this specific project, I will stick to keeping remarks contained to answering those question as well as reviewing the outcomes of the hypotheses. The case studies chosen for this project, are intended to represent the acknowledged populist leaders across Europe and the US today as well as a non-populist example that acts as a counter-case study. While the politicians themselves were carefully chosen, their narratives that were analyzed were chosen with some degree of randomness in terms of the content. I did not want to “cherry-pick”, so to say, the speeches or interviews, because I did not want my influence of what I thought was a “good” or “bad” narrative content to have any effect on the findings. Thus, the narratives were, to a degree, randomized. Therefore, the content or topics included in every narrative did not necessarily match that of the others, requiring a bit of creativity to analyze the content with the criteria of the working definition. I also acknowledge that the extent of the topics covered in these narratives does not encompass the entirety of the politicians’ rhetoric and political, social, or economic viewpoints. When and if this project’s scale is increased, I would look to employ more narratives per case study, and/or pick fewer case studies with a greater amount of content.

In terms of the findings presented here, though, the use of an abridged narratology, or attempting to break down the speeches in a way that looks into the deeper meaning and strategy behind the words via the criteria system proved to show very interesting findings that we can apply to greater questions of not just populism within Europe and the United States by

themselves, but also to the transatlantic relationship. First, I set out to find the major themes of populism between the EU and the US

European Populism

In choosing narratives from more or less the same timeframe for Le Pen, Orbán, and Wilders, I am not surprised that there were really just a few themes that dominated. Immigration, the protection of national values and national sovereignty, the condemnation and/or outright rejection of the European Union and its leaders were all common themes amongst them. In the US however, the issues were more diverse between left- and right-wing representatives of populism. The left-wing narrative from Sanders centered on the wealth inequality in the US, and on the corruption of the financial elite in the US. The right-wing narrative from Trump, however, mostly included pointing out the corrupt elite and the “failures” of the political establishments prior to his. Interestingly, though, Sanders and Trump have been proven to share similar ideas regarding anti-globalism.

One of the shortcomings I find with this research design – and with this specific comparison – is the lack of mention of anything related to immigration from the US case studies. While simply not a component of these narratives presented here, the current US political landscape and major themes in Trump’s rhetoric are centered on immigration. In fact, that would be the theme that the right-wing populists of both Europe and the US have most in common today: the assertion of anti-immigration policies in order to protect national identities. The absence of this theme in the US narrative from the right and left in this study obviously does not mean it is absent in US populism, as is the case for other topics not covered within these narratives.

This notion feeds into several other questions I set out to answer within this research on the viability of a specific populist definition as well as the effectiveness of the narratological method as I have approached it. As a reminder, my first hypothesis is:

HI: Using narratology to compare populist rhetoric will show how the guiding concepts of populism can manifest themselves in very different ways across the political spectrum, national borders, continents.

From the findings delivered here, this assertion can be confirmed. For example, the definitions of each populist's version of "the people" and "the elite" changed from person to person. Having their raw verbiage to dissect allowed me to dig deeper into their words and find who, with the contexts of the narrative, each populist molded the "us versus them" ideology to fit their distinct political platforms and ideologies. However, the success of this is contingent on prior background knowledge of who the politician is. Each isolated narrative from a politician that was chosen does not exist in isolation. For clarification, having a general knowledge of these politicians and their policies was extremely helpful in the narratological process.

This methodology of dissecting the narratives was not only clarifying what is said by these leaders, but also what is not said, and what content is instead chosen to be left out. I would like to exempt the case of Geert Wilders of the Netherlands. Although he is regarded as one of most prominent the right-wing populist leader of the Netherlands, he diverges from the path of the cookie-cutter nationalist populist in the area of social policies, framing him as a sort of left-wing populists when we base our perspective on these policies. There is no doubt that Wilders fits the bill of a nationalist, Islamophobic, anti-immigration populist leader. But the comparison between a populist such as wilders and the Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán shows the fissures in our political definitions and sheds light on the basic national differences that influence the formation of the populist leader country to country.

This notion came about in discussion of the differences in social policy structures across Europe. One prime example lies in the legality of same-sex marriage. The Netherlands was the first country in the world to legalize marriage of same-sex couples back in 2001 (Government of the Netherlands, 2020), and this right, non-traditional but with Christian roots, has now been embedded within the infrastructure of Dutch identity for 19 years. In Hungary, however, homophobic attitudes have, to date, been on the rise and have been exacerbated by Prime Minister Orbán, who revised the Hungarian Constitution to say that marriage is strictly that union of a man and a woman (Arato, 2019). Therefore, in terms of the political spectrum within Europe, Wilders may be perceived as a more “progressive” populist through the lens of a politician who does not agree with those kinds of social policies, and it is interesting that both are by-and-large labeled as right-wing populists, when the spectrum is more blurred in the European context. This example is by no means meant to make excuses for one politician or another on their political stances when it comes to the treatment of minorities. This discussion is meant to clarify that (right-wing) populism is a loaded term that may ignore more nuanced understandings of the reality of political differences that make European countries, their politicians, and political systems quite different from one another.

H2: Populism is still inherently, by nature paradoxical but there are constants that can be isolated from narratives that give it a loose binding.

My second hypothesis pertains to the effectiveness of the working definition for populism that I used throughout my data collection. The criteria I used were a collection of commonly seen themes in populism, as detailed in recent scholarship. No scholar, though, offered a definition for explaining populism beyond the fundamental distinction between “the people” and “the elite”. I would still classify this as proven by the findings. All of the narratives within this study could be analyzed through the lens of the constants I assembled. Though, there are shortcomings in the

working definition. The concept of “challenging liberal democracy” for example, is something best analyzed through the *actions* of populists in power, such as Viktor Orbán. Tying this criterion of populism to Le Pen and Wilders, though, was harder to achieve because they have never held a national leadership position such as President or Prime Minister and I had to rely on hypothetical scenarios and the calls to action they themselves made in their speeches. However, their speeches on the topic of immigration specifically show that they are uninterested in a pluralistic society that focuses on giving and maintaining the rights of certain minorities – more specifically, in this case, Muslim immigrants who have been entering their countries at a high rates since the 2015 refugee crisis.

It is interesting to entertain the notion that challenging liberal democracy is part of the right-wing populist narrative, not necessarily exclusively, but predominantly, as liberal democracy is an ideology that is promoted by Sanders, the lead example for leftist- populism in this study, as well as by Leo Varadker (though not a populist at all in these terms). However, the lack of a truly defined left-wing populist narrative from Europe in this research limits me from making such a claim. In the future, I would look to add a narrative from more left-leaning populists, such as Emmanuel Macron of France, or from the Greek political party Syriza. Even if we look at Geert Wilders once more, in spite of the fact that he opposes a pluralistic society and the rights of minority immigrants within the Netherlands, he does defend the rights of certain minority groups, such as the LGBTQ+ community who are able to maintain certain rights that are simply unavailable in other countries where right-wing populism rules. Populism is an inherently paradoxical, contradictory, and yet also nuanced phenomenon, making populism as a concept so difficult to truly grasp.

The same goes for populism in the context of the United States and its “populist” politicians. In the case studies I chose for this project, Bernie Sanders is the only self-identifying left-wing populist. With the flood of right-wing populists today, it is hard to see past the ties of populism to nationalism, and the two terms are sometimes mistakenly used interchangeably because of their close association. But in such examples as Bernie Sanders, we must remember that populism itself is not an ideology; it is a political modality that is linked to other ideologies. For many in Europe and for Donald Trump in the US, that does happen to be right-wing nationalism. But, for Sanders, the ideology he is interested in is democratic socialism (Judt, 2016).

The model that we have for populists does not entirely fit the message that Sanders is conveying in his speeches. Sanders checks off several categories in the working definition that largely mirror the sentiments of the Occupy Wall Street movement. In the United States, there is no supranational establishment like that of the European Union to criticize, but, only the national government itself or, for Sanders, big business and the “1%” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). “The people” according to Sanders’s narrative are ultimately the working class, framed as “the 99%” (2017). The heavy hitters in defining what “makes” a populist are present in Sanders’s speech; however, his embedded rhetoric stemming from the Occupy Movement is what is steering him away from us being able to consider him a full-fledged populist. While Sanders and Trump are intertwined within the conversation for left and right-wing populism in the US and are the default politicians, a leading populist scholar in the 21st century, Cas Mudde, in a 2016 interview went on record to say “I believe neither Trump nor Sanders is a populist” because Trump really only speaks for *himself*, rather than the people, and Sanders does not have a “normative discourse” (Manucci, 2016). While the goal of my project is not meant to upset current scholars’

work on populism in the slightest, it is, however, meant to shed light on the ways in which academia is using the term populist, and if the way we understand it stands true to what politicians are actually saying and doing. Thereby, this research shows that if we understand populism as something that is paradoxical and ever-changing to a nation's sensitivities, an argument could be made that Sanders is indeed a populist in the frame of the United States, just as Geert Wilders is a right-wing populist in the Netherlands, but perhaps seen as more left-leaning in places like Hungary.

And finally, there are other constants that could have been added, or perhaps been taken away from the working definition. One example would be the addition of "the populist leader" and analyzing what type of leader (i.e., the entrepreneur, the strongman/woman, the ethnic leader, as Mudde & Kaltwasser define them) each populist is – and seeing if that is a defining trait of populism today. Populism adapts to society and its sensitivities to the world around it. The constants given in this research to test the populist narratives may pertain to populism today, but perhaps populism will change in the future, as it has up until this point in history.

H3: The themes within contemporary populism are able to transcend borders and domestic politics, thus being influential in political culture of both the United States and Europe.

Taking into consideration the considerable congruence among the themes of European populists' narratives, I would argue that trends in populism spread quickly across borders and over oceans nowadays. The usage of media and technology to communicate these ideas is so intense that it is nearly impossible to not be exposed to the politics of another political party, another politician or of another nation today. Populism in the past used to be short-lived and not very successful in terms of winning elections. Today though, populist leaders and parties have stuck around for many years and are continuously, slowly but still steadily, gaining influence within their respective governments – whether that be through winning seats in a parliament or

even the leadership of a country in its entirety, as we have seen with the election of Donald Trump and the successive reelections of Viktor Orbán. And if we think about the transatlantic relationship between the EU and the US today, both have enormous influence on their mutual economies and cultures. With this analysis, it seems as though there is now a new type of political influence that spreads via populism between the EU and the US that has not existed before.

Through the lens of this narratological approach, we are able to see a bit deeper into the nuances of contemporary populism in the United States and Europe. Though populism has existed in both regions for over a century, their paths never truly converged until the twenty-first century. By comparing the narratives of prominent US and European populist leaders today, we now have a better understanding of the contents and themes of the contemporary populist leaders' narratives. When we look at populism from a transatlantic perspective, however, it we should mention the attempts at aligning the US and European populist movements by Steve Bannon in recent years.

In an effort to create some sort of global infrastructure for populism, former advisor to Donald Trump, Steve Bannon, created what he called "The Movement" in 2017 (Nossiter & Horowitz, 2019). This Brussels-based movement has been described as a "club" of sorts for European populist parties and politicians to unite and strategize ways of making sweeping gains in the 2019 European Parliaments elections (De La Baume & Borelli, 2019). Members and potential members of this group have included notable populist leaders and political figures such as Nigel Farage, former leader of the United Kingdom's Brexit Party, Matteo Salvini of Italy's party Lega/Lega Nord, as well as the son of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro (Jacobs, 2020; De La Baume & Borelli, 2019). However, doing a simple search on the internet today will tell you

how this scheme has played out for Bannon over the past few years. Not well. European populists like Marine Le Pen are keeping Bannon and “The Movement” at arms-length or turning away from him completely, saying that they “don’t need him” (Nossiter & Horowitz, 2019).

Bannon’s attempts to bring power to Eurosceptics and unify the European populist front was unsuccessful. The populists he tried to appeal to were not sold on allowing an American puppeteer in European affairs and were not interested in the brand of populism he was trying to sell (2019). What Bannon failed to understand is something that is well known across the different populist parties of Europe: while they share certain views on current topics such as immigration and the actions of the European Union, they ultimately have different goals and motivations that makes them believe a united front of populists would not be helpful to them (Serhan, 2019; De La Baume & Borelli, 2019).

While the Transatlantic relationship has been bolstered over the years through economic and stronger ideological ties, the relationship between European and American populism overall is simply not something that is or is even in the process of becoming well-developed. Through the narrative approach used to dissect US and European populist speeches show overarching and connecting themes, the attempts at bringing the US’s version of populism (through Bannon himself) into Europe have fallen flat.

H4: The influence of populists and the populist narrative are highly contextual and based on a country’s political sensitivities.

The basis this research offers to address this hypothesis comes from the section comparing a populist-led country, Hungary, with a country that has not been experiencing the waves of populism, Ireland. If we collect data from the European Commission via

Eurobarometer, and also track national election outcomes in the years following the European migration crisis, when political narratives regarding migration were at an all-time high, it is clear that there is an impact of a leading populist politician's words and framing of national crises on a voting population.

While analyzing these data in relation to two countries in particular, though, there are several variables that need to be considered before solidifying any conclusions on the quantifiable influence of the populist narrative. One variable isolated here was the amount of *freedom* a country had and the status of its democracy. One plausible reason, given the success of Viktor Orbán and his party, Fidesz, are the measures he has taken to scale back liberal democratic freedoms, making his country considerably “less free” even in recent years.

The term “free” itself is a loaded term, which I hope to clarify a bit with examples. There is a difference between these two countries, for example, in who controls the media within the state: is it privately or nationally owned? The analysis throughout this research has relied heavily on the influence of words and how politicians can manipulate voters. It is important to think about what kind of messages the general public receives through news media on a daily basis, who is delivering the message, and what their motives are in framing a story. For the sake of continuity in data acquisition, using Freedom House to look at *media* freedom can help give a basic understanding of this concept. While the Hungarian constitution does protect freedom of the press, Orbán had created loopholes to make it so that the media in Hungary is exceptionally pro-government and working to amplify the message from the Prime Minister. Because of this, the spread of Orbán's “xenophobic rhetoric hamper[s] voters' ability to make informed choices” (Freedom House, 2020). Ireland, however, is reported by Freedom House to have free and independent media. This signals that the voice of and the choices by Ireland's general public in

an election, for example, are made without the kind of manipulation constricting democracy that is happening in Hungary (Freedom House, 2020).

The framing of the migrant crisis has been particularly important in this analysis as well, making the contextualization of the migrant crises very different between Hungary and Ireland. The speech used from the Taoiseach shows that he and the Irish majority have framed the crisis as a human rights issue, whereas the Hungarian Prime Minister has framed it as a national security issue that threatens the Hungarian way of life of the “real people”. While there are more variables that could have been utilized in this analysis to form a more nuanced understanding of the differences in reactions to the migrant crisis, the research I have provided shows a clear message of how important contextualization is for the presence and influence of populism.

5.2: CONCLUSION

The arrival of populism in the twenty-first century is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored. Looking at the European Union and the United States, the past 20 years alone have created fertile ground for populist movements to take root and grow out of the fear and discontent from the global economic crisis of 2008 and the migrant crisis that peaked in 2015. The goal of this research was to take a deeper look into not only *who* the populists in Europe and the US are today, but to look into *why* they have been called populists by scholarship and news media and try to gain an understanding of how populism manifested itself within these regions independently and in relation to with one another through narratives.

While there are many avenues this research could have taken, the use of narratology and the dissection of a populist’s narrative is an approach that is unique to my contribution to this field of research. Creating and utilizing a working definition for twenty-first century populism,

comparing populists with one another in terms of the speeches and the messages they deliver proved to be helpful for my research. This method showed that populism itself is not an ideology, but instead a political *mode* that attaches itself to the ideology of a populist politician. It is a way of playing politics strategically to use the political sensitivities of a nation, a region, or globally, to create the idea of “the true people” against “the establishment”/“the elite”, or the triadic idea of “the people” versus “the elite” versus “the outsider”. This is why populism is able to take hold on both the right and the left of the political spectrum. Although, as is seen nowadays, right-wing populism fueled by nationalist ideologies has been more successful than left-wing populism.

I wish to acknowledge the shortcomings of this research and its methodology. In embarking on this journey with populism, all of the different avenues of potential methodologies for this research became apparent. If this project were to expand, for example, I would move to include more narrative examples for each case study in the form of official speeches, as well as analyze their presence on social media and how they utilize platforms such as Twitter to amplify their messages. Additionally, the scope of this research limited the number of case studies for analysis as well as the level of governance. This study, for example, looked at populists who were popular, national level political actors (along with their parties). A notable drawback of this approach is the absence of other populist politicians and parties that have been on the rise over the past several years alone, such as Germany’s right-wing populist party, Alternative für Deutschland, and Thierry Baudet and his Forum for Democracy party from the Netherlands. I believe the addition of a multi-level governance approach will work to strengthen the arguments made in this project in particular regarding twenty-first century populism.

While historically, populism has been a relatively short-lived phenomenon, I argue that the type of populism that is present today is different, since it has remained a part of the political cultures within the US and the EU for over a decade now. Populism cannot mobilize without a supply for it to, and the two, now three international crises (including the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic) in the twenty-first century have created quite a bit of discontent and many political frictions that explain populism's continued relevance in politics. This research has revealed that while populism can be given perhaps a skeleton definition, its manifestation and the ways it can behave vary largely when we bring in each country's political sensitivities. As research in this discipline continues to proliferate, I look forward to using this analysis to better understand what is to come for Europe and the United States, with their respective populist movements.

REFERENCES

- Arato, L. (2019). "Homophobia is on the rise in Hungary". European Data Journalism Network. Retrieved from <https://www.europeandatajournalism.eu/eng/News/Data-news/Homophobia-is-on-the-rise-in-Hungary>
- Bamat, J. (2017). "Far-right leader Le Pen urges French voters to follow Brexit, Trump example". *France 24*. Retrieved from <https://www.france24.com/en/20170205-france-marine-le-pen-far-right-speech-brexit-trump-immigration-lyon>
- Bernie Sanders on the Issues. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.ontheissues.org/Bernie_Sanders.htm
- Bocskor, Á. (2018). Anti-Immigration Discourses in Hungary during the 'Crisis' Year: The Orbán Government's 'National Consultation' Campaign of 2015. *Sociology*, 52(3), 551–568. <https://doi-org.proxy2.library.illinois.edu/10.1177/0038038518762081>
- Brattberg, E., Whineray, D. (2020). "How Europe Views Transatlantic Relations Ahead of the 2020 US Election". Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Brattberg_Whineray_2020_EU.pdf.
- CBS This Morning (2019, February 19). Bernie Sanders announces 2020 run: Extended interview. Interview by J. Dickerson in *CBS This Morning*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bernie-sanders-2020-running-for-president-announcement-full-transcript-today-2019-02-19/>
- Collett, E., Le Coz, C. (2018). "After the Storm: Learning from the EU Response to the Migration Crisis". *Migration Policy Institute*. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/after-storm-eu-response-migration-crisis>
- Damhuis, K. (2019). "The biggest problem in the Netherlands": Understanding the Party for Freedom's politicization of Islam". *The Brookings Institution*. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-biggest-problem-in-the-netherlands-understanding-the-party-for-freedoms-politicization-of-islam/>
- De La Baume, M., Sciorilli Borrelli, S. (2019). "Welcome to Europe's 'club' for populists" *Politico*. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/euroskeptics-steven-bannon-mischael-modrikamenwelcome-to-europes-first-populist-club/>
- Der Spiegel Staff (2019). The Year of Populism Europe's Right Wing Takes Aim at the EU. Retrieved from <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/right-wing-populists-seek-to-flex-muscles-in-the-eu-a-1246433.html>
- Elabdi, F. (2019). "Anti-immigrant left' wins election as Danes reject far-right". *Aljazeera*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/06/left-wins-danes-reject-190606155819541.html>

- European Commission (2019). Public Opinion. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/59/groupKy/279>
- European Commission. (2016). “Refugee crisis in Europe - European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations”. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis>
- European Institute for Gender Equality (2019). “Gender Equality Index 2019: Hungary”. Retrieved from <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-hungary>
- European Parliament (2019). “2019 European election results”. Retrieved from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/tools/comparative-tool/>
- EUR-Lex (2020). “Accession Criteria (Copenhagen Criteria)”. Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/accession_criteria_copenhagen.html
- Freedom House (2019). “Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat”. Retrieved from https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Feb2019_FH_FITW_2019_Report_ForWeb-compressed.pdf
- Freedom House (2020). “Freedom in the World 2020: Hungary”. Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/freedom-world/2020>
- Freedom House (2020). “Freedom in the World 2020: Ireland”. Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/country/ireland/freedom-world/2020>
- Genette, G. Lewin, J.E., & Culler, J. (1980). *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Cornell University Press. Ithica, NY.
- Gjovalin, M. & Nicolaïdis, K. (2014). "Beyond ‘one voice’? Global Europe's Engagement with its own diversity," *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 21, No. 7, pp. 1067-83
- Government of the Netherlands (2020). *Same-sex marriage*. Retrieved from <https://www.government.nl/topics/family-law/same-sex-marriage>
- Goździak, Elżbieta M. (2019). “Using Fear of the “Other,” Orbán Reshapes Migration Policy in a Hungary Built on Cultural Diversity”. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/Orbán-reshapes-migration-policy-hungary>.
- Jacobs, J. (2020). “Steve Bannon Hosts a Dinner of International Populist Leaders”. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-02-28/steve-bannon-hosts-a-dinner-of-international-populist-leaders>
- Judis, JB. (2016). *The Populist Explosion*. New York. Print.
- Judt, T. (1996). *A Grand Illusion? An Essay on Europe*. New York University Press. New York. Print.

- Killoran, B. (2018). “We are right to welcome and not fear migrants”. *Irish Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/we-are-right-to-welcome-and-not-fear-migrants-1.3735288>
- Krastev, I. (2017). *After Europe*. University of Pennsylvania Press. Philadelphia. Print.
- Kruis, S. (2017). “The Europe We Want”. Retrieved from <https://www.geertwilders.nl/in-de-media-mainmenu-74/nieuws-mainmenu-114/94-english/2066-speech-geert-wilders-the-europe-we-want>
- Manners, I. (2002). “Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 235-258
- Manucci, L. (2016). “Interview #7 – A Talk with Cas Mudde on American and European Populism”. *Political Observer on Populism*. Retrieved from <https://populismobserver.com/2016/05/30/interview-7-a-talk-with-cas-mudde-on-american-populism/>
- Monbiot, G. (2017). *The Politics of Belonging*. Brooklyn, NY. Print.
- Mouffe, C. (2019) *Chantal Mouffe, defiant political thinker: “Don't simply dismiss populism”*. Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. Leuven, Belgium. Retrieved from <https://libguides.ecu.edu/c.php?g=542497&p=4037191>
- Mudde, C. (2004). “The Populist Zeitgeist” Retrieved from <http://content.ebscohost.com/ContentServer.asp?EbscoContent=dGJyMNHX8kSep684y9f3OLCmr1Gep7VSSaa4SLOWxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMPGut1C3rLZNuePfgex43zx1%2B6B&T=P&P=AN&S=R&D=bsu&K=14527075>
- Mudde, C, and Kaltwasser, CR. (2017). *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York. Print.
- Müller, J. (2016). “Trump, Erdoğan, Farage: The attractions of populism for politicians, the dangers for democracy”. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/sep/02/trump-erdogan-farage-the-attractions-of-populism-for-politicians-the-dangers-for-democracy>.
- Müller, J. (2016). *What is Populism?* University of Philadelphia Press. Philadelphia.
- Murphy, M. & O’ Brennan, J. (2019) Ireland and crisis governance: continuity and change in the shadow of the financial crisis and Brexit, *Irish Political Studies*, 34:4, 471-489, DOI: [10.1080/07907184.2019.1687621](https://doi.org/10.1080/07907184.2019.1687621)
- Murray, K. (2017). “Leo Varadkar elected Irish prime minister”. Politico.eu. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/leo-varadkar-elected-irish-prime-minister/>
- Nossiter, A. & Horowitz, J. (2019). “Bannon’s Populists, Once a ‘Movement,’ Keep Him at Arm’s Length”. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/24/world/europe/steve-bannon-european-elections-paris.html>
- Orbán, V. (2018). “Orbán Viktor’s ceremonial speech on the 170th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848”. Retrieved from <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the>

- [prime-minister-s-speeches/Orbán-viktor-s-ceremonial-speech-on-the-170th-anniversary-of-the-hungarian-revolution-of-1848](#)
- Orbán, V. (2019). “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s “State of the Nation” address”. Retrieved from <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-Orbán-s-state-of-the-nation-address-2019>.
- “Parties and Elections in Europe” (2019). *Hungary*. Retrieved from <http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/hungary.html>
- “Parties and Elections in Europe” (2019). *Ireland*. Retrieved from <http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/ireland.html>
- Pearson, A. (2018). “Viktor Orbán's most controversial migration comments”. DeutscheWelle. Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/overlay/media/en/viktor-Orbán-s-most-controversial-migration-comments/42086054/42876628>
- Rassemblement National (2017). “Assises présidentielles de Lyon : Discours de Marine Le Pen”. (2017). Retrieved from <https://rassemblementnational.fr/videos/assises-presidentielles-de-lyon-discours-de-marine-le-pen/>
- Sedelmeier, U. (2017). Political safeguards against democratic backsliding in the EU: the limits of material sanctions and the scope of social pressure, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24:3, 337-35
- Serhan, Y. (2019). “Why Doesn’t Steve Bannon Matter in Europe?” *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/10/why-doesnt-steve-bannon-matter-in-europe/599917/>
- Smith, M., and Steffenson, R. (2017). “The European Union and the USA,” Chapter 17 in *International Relations and the European Union*, pp. 389-417
- Soules, M. (2015). *Media, Persuasion, and Propaganda*. Edinburgh University Press. Edinburgh. Print.
- Staab, A. (2011). *The European Union Explained*. (2nd edition). Indiana University Press. Bloomington, IN. Print.
- Suiter, J. (2017). The Rise of Populism on the Left and Among Independents. In T Aalberg, F. Esser, C. Reinemann, J. Strömbäck, & C.H. de Vreese (Eds.), *Populist Political Communication in Europe*. New York, NY. Routledge.
- The White House (2019). “Remarks by President Trump at Lima Army Tank Plant”. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-lima-army-tank-plant/>
- Tyson, A., & Maniam, S. (2016). Behind Trump's victory: Divisions by race, gender and education. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/behind-trumps-victory-divisions-by-race-gender-education/>
- Varadkar, L. (2019). “Speech of An Taoiseach, Immigrant Council of Ireland Conference”. Department of the Taoiseach. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.ie/en/speech/6a225f-speech-of-an-taoiseach-immigrant-council-of-ireland-conference/>

- Vinocur, N. (2017). “Marine Le Pen makes globalization the enemy”. *Politico*. Retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/marine-le-pen-globalization-campaign-launch-french-politics-news-lyon-islam/>
- Visegrad Post (2018). “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s speech on the 62nd anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight”. Retrieved from <https://visegradpost.com/en/2018/10/24/viktor-Orbán-confronts-globalism-and-brussels-in-view-of-upcoming-european-parliament-elections-full-speech/>
- Visegrad Post (2018). “Viktor Orbán’s full speech for the beginning of his fourth mandate”. Retrieved from <https://visegradpost.com/en/2018/05/12/viktor-Orbán-s-full-speech-for-the-beginning-of-his-fourth-mandate/>