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Cover Page Footnote

This paper would not have been possible without the support and guidance of Dr. Eva-Maria Maggi. In addition to providing me feedback and direction, the passion and enthusiasm she displayed throughout the courses I took with her served as an inspiration for me when writing this paper.

5

Populism Across the Atlantic: The Popular Retort to Globalism and Modernization in the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the recent rise in populism on both sides of the Atlantic by looking at three cases where populism has been successful including in the election of Donald Trump, the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, and the rise of the Alternative for Deutschland in German elections. While populism is not a new phenomenon to Europe or America, these recent success cases lead us to wonder whether populism is on the rise and if this is perhaps part of a popular backlash to the effects of globalization and modernization. This paper will examine the common themes of these populist movements and suggest that perhaps the real motivator of transatlantic populism lies beyond the White House, 10 Downing Street, or the German Chancellery.

KEYWORDS

populism, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Donald Trump

INTRODUCTION

A specter of right-wing populism is haunting the West, from Washington to Brussels. The 2016 Presidential election in the United States gave rise to a populist candidate who many thought could not be elected in a Western democracy, yet that candidate not only trumped the odds, but now sits in the Oval Office. And for the first time in European history, British voters chose to leave the European Union (EU), marking a turning point in the EU's history, raising increased concern about future effects of populism on the European project. In fact, throughout Europe, right-wing populism is starting to gain traction. Right-wing political parties in Spain, Italy, Greece, and the Netherlands are growing in influence, and the populist National Front of France has a presidential candidate for the 2017 elections that might actually have a chance of making it past the first round of elections. Even in Germany, where right-wing populism seems to have been unable to gain a substantial foothold, the recent success of the Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) is proving otherwise and while it may not win the Chancellorship or create a government, any victory by the AfD would prove even Germany is no longer immune to right-wing populism.

What is causing this recent rise in populism? How is right-wing populism making such a comeback in industrialized Western democracies, especially after the role it played in causing World War II? To analyze this growing trend, this paper examines three recent cases involving the rise of right-wing populism on both sides of the Atlantic. First, it analyzes the 2016 Presidential election in the United States, in which Donald Trump, a populist candidate, pulled off an unprecedented victory and now occupies the White House. Second, this paper turns to a similar populist revolt across the Atlantic in the United Kingdom where over seventeen million British voters chose to reject European integration and leave the EU, providing proof that right-wing populism is a real danger to the European project. Third, this paper examines the rise of the AfD in Germany, an insurgent political party in what many consider to be a nation inoculated against right-wing populism. In observing these three cases, this paper asks the question of why right-wing populism has been on the rise in recent years. The beginning of the twenty-first century has been marked by many great accomplishments and achievements, but perhaps some have felt threatened by this new era. Is the recent widespread popularity of populism a retort to forces of globalization and modernization or are there other factors playing into this clear rejection of a more cosmopolitan society? These are questions this paper seeks to answer.

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS OF POPULISM

To properly analyze these three cases, one must first define what we mean by "populism." In their 2008 book entitled *Twenty First Century Populism*, Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell created a working definition of populism,

An ideology which pits a virtuous and homogenous people against a set of elites and dangerous "others" who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity, and voice. (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 3)

Populism presents itself as an ideology of redemption rather than pragmatism, arguing that radical changes are for the better and that populism exists, not as a threat to

democracy, but as a savior of democracy (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 1–2). Populism often thrives in democracies because it doesn’t attack the idea of democracy itself, but instead aims its criticism at institutions of government, often taking advantage of a growing public mistrust (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 217). Take, for example, the Congress of the United States. From 2004 to present, public opinion polls released by Gallup rated Congress with an approval rating consistently below 40% and since 2009, Congress’s approval rating has fluctuated from 10% to 20% (2017). Meanwhile, the President of the United States has not fared much better, with an approval rating of 36% according to Gallup (2016).

Looking at the Europe, we see a similar trend in growing public mistrust of government. Trust in the EU as well as national institutions like the parliament and the government have generally been on the decline with recent statistics showing the EU at 33%, national governments at 28% and national parliaments at 27% (European Commission, 2016). Throughout the EU, only Malta, Netherlands, and Luxembourg have a majority of their citizens supporting their parliaments. The approval ratings of the parliament in Germany is 39%, in the United Kingdom is 34%, in France is 14% and is the lowest in Greece at 11% (European Commission, 2016). Public trust in national governments paints a similar picture although slightly less negatively. In Germany, approval of the government is at 41% while in the United Kingdom, government approval is 35% (European Commission, 2016). The institution to receive the worst approval ratings is the political parties. In Germany, only 22% actually trust political parties with 17% of the British trusting their political parties (European Commission, 2016).

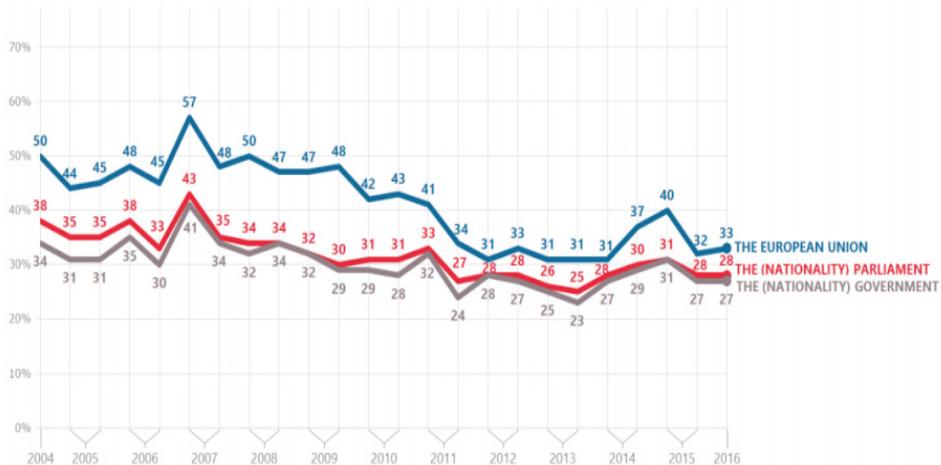


Figure 1. Percent of Public Trust in EU and National Government Institutions. Source: European Commission (2016)

The above statistics clearly demonstrate a generally negative view of government and political institutions on both sides of the Atlantic, and as Albertazzi and McDonnell suggest, this plays directly into the hands of populists. Populists specifically target main-

stream political parties by claiming they tend to move closer together and further away from their citizens (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 220). Thus, populists reveal a representation gap while portraying themselves as the true voice of the people. But the appeal of populism goes beyond simple dissatisfaction with the government and political parties. Populists invoke a sense of crisis and urgency while casting themselves as saviors of the people and the ones with all the solutions (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 5). One doesn't have to look far to see examples of this in our case studies. For example, during Trump's inauguration speech, he gave a dark dystopian view of America, describing an "American carnage" with chaos, crime, and disorder (Lind, 2017). Even the AfD, in their campaign posters, makes concerning statements that the Germany family is in danger of disappearing and that Germany's survival as a nation is threatened due to failing economic programs (Berbair, Lewandowsky, & Siri, 2015, p. 166).

Populists stress that the people are inherently good, that the people are sovereign, and that their culture and way of life are of paramount value (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 6) while stressing that the government is corrupt, that elites and others are to blame for the current state of society, and that the only solution is to restore power to the people and their populist leader (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 4-5). Populists place targets on the backs of the elite (government, wealthy individuals, corporations, ect.) and "others" (immigrants, refugees, the poor, minorities, etc.) as the enemies of the people, accusing them of conspiring to subvert democracy (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 5). Populists attempt to appeal to nostalgia as well, presenting an return to the "good old days", examples being Trump's theme of "making America great again" (Giroux & Bhattacharya, 2016, p. 6) and claims by pro-Brexit campaigners that "Britain is in decline" (Fella, 2008, p. 196).

Populists attempt to be seen as defenders of culture and tradition against the threat of an ever-encroaching brand of globalization and modernization. Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, in a research paper, propose that the cultural shifts of the twenty-first century have caused a counter-revolutionary backlash from an older, Anglo, and less educated generation that reject the progressive values for their own traditional norms (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 3). Inglehart and Norris stress that populism emphasizes the importance of patriotism and nationhood, favoring uniformity and solidarity over multiculturalism and diversity as well as national determination and self-interest over international cooperation and multilateralism (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 7). They point to one argument that theorized the recent rise in inequality and economic vulnerability caused by modernization and post-industrialization has led to the disenfranchisement of some, causing the losers in this process to direct their fear and anger on others like immigrants, refugees, as well as on austerity policies and the governments that created them (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 10-11). Additionally, they point to another argument that says populist movements are usually fueled by negative reactions from older traditionalists who feel like their way of life, traditions, and values are being threatened (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 10-11).

POPULISM IN THE UNITED STATES: THE ELECTION OF DONALD TRUMP

Clearly, the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States is the pinnacle of populism on the American side of the Atlantic. Populism is not new to the United States, per se, but has usually enjoyed very limited successes. However, under the previous President, pushback from conservatives and right-wing constituencies created the rise of

groups like the Tea Party, which exerted more pressure on the Republicans in Congress to move further right (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 9). As Republican voters became discouraged by their party's perceived lack of meaningful opposition to President Obama, the 2012 elections and mid-term elections led to more right-wing conservatives getting elected. The biggest result of this is the creation of the House Freedom Caucus in which a faction of more extreme right-wing Republicans were emboldened and began picking fights with the moderate Republican leadership, even trying to oust Speaker John Boehner from power in 2015 (Lizza, 2015).

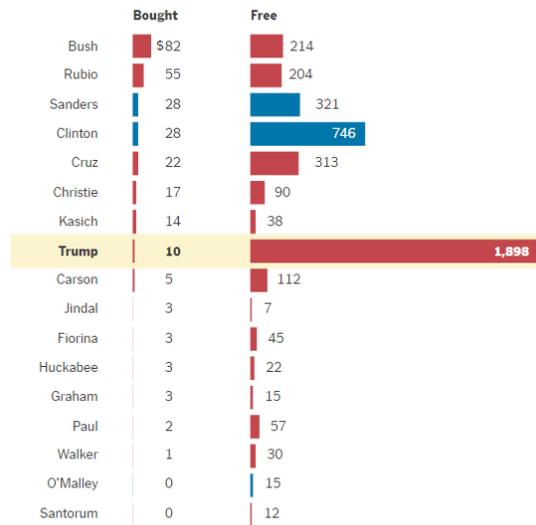
Then, the 2016 primaries for the Republicans became a chaotic with a total of seventeen candidates vying for the party nomination (Bialik, 2016). When the party insiders failed to "anoint" a standard bearer for their party and with multiple mainstream candidates, voters began to look for an alternative and Donald Trump emerged as a serious contender. As Trump first entered the primary, mainstream party figures like former Governor Jeb Bush, Governor Scott Walker, and Senator Marco Rubio led in the polls. But although originally dismissed as joke candidate and an distraction, Trump soon began to take the lead in poll averages and after the New Hampshire primary, he took the lead in delegate counts as well (MacWilliams, 2016, pg. 716), winning the majority of the delegates by May (PBS, 2016).

When analyzing Trump's victory in securing the Republican nomination and later, winning the Presidency, it is clear he took advantage of his outsider status, using a unique style of rhetoric that was simple, anti-elite, and nationalistic (Oliver and Rahn, 2016, p. 190). In "Populism and the Media", Gianpietro Mazzoleni describes six common strategies used by populists to build their support and ultimately win: playing the underdog, using professional expertise, holding rallies, utilizing free media and publicity, staging events, and conducting attacks against the press (Mazzoleni, 2008, p. 55-56). Trump utilized all of these strategies in his campaign. From the beginning, he touted his status as an underdog and even after winning, he continues to talk about his "amazing victory." During a press conference on February 16, 2017, Trump said, "[I] Got 306 Electoral College votes. I wasn't supposed to get 222. They said there's no way to get 222; 230 is impossible. Two hundred and seventy, which you need, that was laughable. We got 306 because people came out and voted like they've never seen before" (CSPAN, 2017).

Trump always touted his expertise, portraying himself as a successful businessman and a great dealmaker, claiming he could solve America's problems through his negotiation skills (Bennett, 2017). And he was known for his massive rallies, often exaggerating the size of them, and lashing out at those who doubted his very generous crowd estimates (Sullivan & Johnson, 2016). Trump constantly staged events at his rallies and often used supporters often as props, while generating drama through his controversial statements and getting constant free coverage from the media. In fact, *The New York Times* estimates if Trump paid for all of his campaign media coverage, it would've cost \$2 billion (Confessore & Yourish, 2016) and during the primary, he got double the free media coverage of his opponents (Confessore & Yourish, 2016) despite paying less than half of the advertising costs of his opponents (Confessore & Yourish, 2016). During the general election, Hillary Clinton raised \$1.4 billion compared to Trump's \$957.6 million, but by the end, Clinton only had \$323.3 thousand left while Trump still had a reserve of \$7.6 million (Washington Post, 2016).

Bought Versus Free Media

In millions.

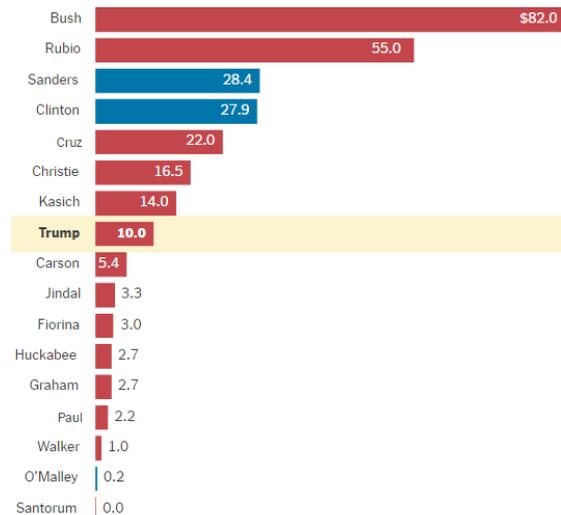


Sources: mediaQuant, SMG Delta

By The New York Times

2016 Presidential Ad Spending

Through February, in millions.



Source: SMG Delta

By The New York Times

Figure 2. Bought Versus Free Media and Ad Spending Amounts of 2016 Presidential Campaigns.

Source: The New York Times (2016)

The last time a US Presidential candidate won the election without spending the most money was when Jimmy Carter beat Gerald Ford in 1976, but the margin by which he was outspent by Ford was nowhere near the amount Clinton outspent Trump (Metrocosm, 2016). Lastly, Trump has been well known for his attacks against the media and press, branding them as “fake news”, calling them dishonest, and referring to them as the “enemy of the American people” (Jackson, 2017).

What exactly caused the rise of a populist like Trump, other than a simple representation gap? Trump constantly used well-recognized populist rhetoric, targeting political elites and foreigners alike, while referring to his base as a homogenous group pitted against the evils of globalism (Oliver & Rahn, 2016, p. 193). Oliver and Rahn both presume, as we will also see in Europe, that globalization causes certain groups (especially the less educated) to be insecure about their employment prospects and their status in society (Oliver & Rahn, 2016, p. 192). To this end, Trump campaigned on the promise of bringing relief to these constituencies, with slogans like “America First” as well as advocating for trade barriers and tariffs (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 11). This message most clearly resonated in areas along the nation’s industrial belt due to concerns that modernization would lead to technological advances cutting the need for certain types of blue collar labor, coupled with the concern that free trade deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement allow American jobs to be outsourced to countries like Mexico where the labor costs would be cheaper. The support of Trump from this demographic is further evidenced by his victory in the industrial belt states of Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania (Sarewitz, 2016). These states, usually won by Democrats, were vital to Trump’s victory and without his populist protectionist rhetoric, he likely would not have won them or the White House (Spangler, 2017).

Trump’s victory can also be attributed to a cultural and political backlash to progressive values. In particular, older Anglo males, who felt their privileges slipping away as their traditional values were challenged by notions of political correctness, may have felt threatened. This threat that they viewed coming from both politicians, immigrants from Mexico, and refugees from the Middle East, may have been a tipping point for them and spurred them to support a politically incorrect individual like Trump (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 29). This demographic supports the defense of traditional cultural values and patriotism, leading them to reject mainstream parties and embrace charismatic populists (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 30). Trump is constantly holding himself to this standard, preferring to focus his efforts on Americans who are killed by illegal immigrants (Gallagher, 2017) or wanting to jail people who burn the American flag (Wright, 2016), spurring a sense of victimization among his supporters. His rejection of protocol, formality, and decorum gives his supporters the illusion of authenticity, allowing them to distinguish him as different from other mainstream politicians and when he faces criticism from institutions like the mainstream media, it only serves to strengthen the bond between him and his supporters (Oliver & Rahn, 2016, p. 191).

In conclusion, Trump is a successful populist in the United States that harnessed the support of a working class concerned with the threats of globalization and modernization on their ways of life, as well as that of older Americans who felt their cultural and traditional values were coming under attack. Trump’s undisguised disgust for international organizations, multilateralism, free trade, and political norms led many to believe he was a

reformer who would bring the kind of populist revolution they believe is necessary. They looked beyond his flaws at what they thought was a charismatic authoritarian leader who would unite the US, return America's former glory as an undisputed superpower, and put America first again.

POPULISM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: THE BREXIT

Almost six months before Trump won the Presidential election in 2016, right-wing populism in the United Kingdom had a major victory when the British people chose to reject European integration and exit the EU. The British decision to leave the EU carried an impressive mandate with a 72.2% turnout ("EU Referendum Results," 2016). By European standards, the average turnout in European elections (elections to the EU Parliament) is 42.5% while the average turnout for European elections in the United Kingdom is even lower at 35.6% (Eurostat, 2014). The decision to leave was surprising to many, as polls predicted it would be a close win for the "Remain" side (Saiidi, 2016). The forces of right-wing populism are much stronger in the United Kingdom than previously realized and this victory has bolstered the efforts of right-wing groups throughout Europe, even causing right-wing Presidential candidate Marine Le Pen of the National Front in France to promise, if she wins the presidency, that she will call for a French referendum on remaining in the EU (Reuters, 2016).

On the surface, the United Kingdom doesn't seem to be a very populist country. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which is the country's chief euroskeptic and right-wing populist party, only has one seat in Parliament as of the last election in 2015 (McIntyre, 2015). But this is mostly due to the fact that the United Kingdom's first-past-the-post electoral system makes it much more difficult for third parties to have any real electoral success (Fella, 2008, p. 182). Furthermore, the Conservative Party has also absorbed some populist sentiment even though it is a more established party, often neutering new movements. At the beginning, the Conservative Party was viewed as a pro-Europe party in the 1960s (Fella, 2008, p. 186) and at the time, the British saw European integration as a process through which they could both retain and grow their influence (Bachmann & Sidaway, 2016, p. 49). But proposals for deeper integration and the euro clashed with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's own economic policies and, although by the 1990s she was removed from power, the Conservative Party retained some her euroskeptic views (Fella, 2008, p. 186).

Thatcher had embraced a more populist form of politics, pushing the Conservative Party to identify more with the common people or "middle England" instead of the elites and British establishment while propagating the belief that Britain was in decline (Fella, 2008, p. 188). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Britain saw a rise in asylum seekers and immigrants, sparking a backlash among populist media outlets that began to spin the narrative that Britain was being swamped by these foreigners (Fella, 2008, 185-186). It is here that the main forces behind globalists and populists begin to clash. The immigration of foreigners and Muslims, especially to the United Kingdom, started cultural concerns as populists feared their own culture, norms, traditions, and heritage were being threatened. Rather than see this opportunity as a chance for inclusion and diversity like globalists did, populists saw this as encroachment on British values, culture, and their way of life (Haidt, 2016). Problems with the euro and the Eurozone crisis further raised British concerns about

their own sovereignty, although the crisis didn't affect them as badly as it did the rest of Europe, but nonetheless, it undermined the United Kingdom's fading support for the EU (Bachmann & Sidaway, 2016, p. 49).

Pressure from within the Conservative Party by euroskeptical members as well as external pressures from populist newspapers and UKIP resulted in Prime Minister David Cameron calling for a referendum (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 6). However, the rising euroskepticism in the United Kingdom is isn't solely because of groups like UKIP stirring up the people. British politicians over the years had deflected most of the public's anger or resentment towards their policies or policy failures on Brussels and had successfully convinced many that the decline of Britain was the result of external policies enacted by the EU (Bachmann & Sidaway, 2016, p. 49).

Much like how Trump played upon the Americans' nostalgia of making the America great again, pro-Brexit forces campaigned on the lost glory of a Britain that was supposedly fading away. They channeled resentment harbored much by an older population, who felt disenfranchised and disempowered by elites, at the EU and furthered the idea that if the United Kingdom left, they could once again prove to be a dominant and prosperous force on the world stage (Bachmann & Sidaway, 2016, p. 50). The "Britain in decline" sensation coupled with a perceived loss of national identity was fertile ground for the pro-Brexit campaigners to exploit (Fella, 2008, p. 196). In fact, according to data analysis done by *The Guardian*, the demographic group that voted to "leave" during the Brexit was less educated, less wealthy, and much older than the group that voted to stay (Guardian, 2016). Again, this paints a similar picture to the demographic groups that supported Trump, representing older traditionalists and blue collar workers who felt their values and way of life were being threatened, this time by European integration.

In conclusion, right-wing populist movements in the United Kingdom have struggled to get elected to the national government due to both electoral hurdles and the lack of a charismatic leader to constantly lead the movements. But they won a pivotal victory in Brexit as they were able to convince British voters, especially older or blue collar ones, that their values were under attack and their jobs were diminishing due to policies and agendas spearheaded by external forces in Brussels. They appealed to the nostalgia of Britain's past and the industrial age, painting a picture of Britain in decline as a result of European integration. This message was received by a significant portion of the United Kingdom, raising concerns for future integration in the EU and emboldening euroskeptics across Europe.

POPULISM IN GERMANY: THE RISE OF THE ALTERNATIVE FOR DEUTSCHLAND (AFD)

Like the United States and United Kingdom, Germany is no stranger to right-wing populism but Germany is also a unique case as right-wing populist movements have very negative connotations, making it harder for right-wing populism to win elections in modern Germany. The biggest barrier to right-wing populism in Germany is its past connection to Nazism. Certainly, right-wing populism played a key role in the rise of Hitler and transformation of Germany into a fascist authoritarian state, ultimately resulting in Germany's defeat and division (Decker, 2008, p.125). But the repression of right-wing populism goes beyond simply the fact that many Germans have an aversion to it. In Germany, parties have actually been challenged and disbanded by the Constitutional Court for being violat-

ing Germany's constitutional values and being ideologically comparable to unconstitutional regimes of the past (Decker, 2008, p. 125). This would explain why a political party or movement that identifies with any form of right-wing populism is doomed, and contributes to the notion that Germany should be immune to right-wing populism.

Furthermore, Germany's mainstream political parties also play a role in decreasing the viability of right-wing populist parties. Both major parties, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democrats (SPD) constantly utilize target oriented reforms, allowing them to adapt to crises and, at times, present a somewhat populist view (Decker, 2008, p. 125). Their ability to engage and bring in various groups from within their political spectrums doesn't leave available very many constituencies for a right-wing populist movement. But that said, in recent years as polling shows, Germany is not immune to the rise in popular dissatisfaction with political parties, especially the mainstream ones like the CDU or SPD (European Commission, 2016).

While refugees and immigration usually provide material for right-wing populists to organize against, in Germany, it has not been exactly the same. Despite the fact that Germany has one of the highest immigrant populations in Europe, the German government has constantly assured its citizens that they are not a country of immigrants and continues to enforce strict immigration policies (Decker, 2008, p. 127). The CDU and their coalition partners, the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU) are fairly conservative and have recently adopted initiatives like banning burqas (Taylor, 2016), a move that many would attribute to a more right-wing populist party. Still, some movements have formed in Germany against immigration, most recently, being Pegida. Pegida, an abbreviation for "Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West", is a movement that originally formed as a grassroots protest movement. Founded in Dresden, the movement quickly escalated with large numbers of citizens participating in weekly street rallies. In October of 2014, their rallies included 350 protestors but by January of 2015, they had 25,000 participants. Soon after, Pegida fell apart and its rallies decreased as fast as they had increased (Dostal, 2015, p. 524).

The group depicted themselves as an anti-fascist, anti-communist, anti-Islamist group, claiming they were the true representatives of conservatives and ordinary people in Germany, as opposed to the established CDU/CSU (Dostal, 2015, p. 524). The movement ultimately failed though because while it had large shows of support for a few months in Dresden, it failed to take root in the rest of Germany (Dostal, 2015, p. 526). Many of Pegida's proposals were in line with populist ones as they supported greater democracy, advocated for a more controlled migration system, and bashed elite members of society for not being in touch with the people of Germany. And much like Trump, they held to the standard that the mainstream media were liars and constantly referred to the media as the "lying press" (Dostal, 2015, p. 525).

About two-thirds of Pegida's supporters were considered moderate right-wing while one third belonged to the far right, a group that was also younger and less economically established. A majority of the supporters came from the AfD with some coming from the CDU, but almost none came from moderate left parties like the SPD or the Greens. And surveys done of Pegida members showed that over 90% believed they were not being represented by the existing government and political parties (Dostal, 2015, p. 528). This profile depicts a more moderate centrist group than one would figure and would be

the perfect audience for an anti-establishment populist like Trump to rally. The ultimate decline of Pegida is suspected to involve multiple factors, including some associating them to Nazism and issues after their leadership broke up (Dostal, 2015, p. 526).

But perhaps most prominent is the recent rise of the AfD as a contender in German elections. Unlike Pegida and past right-wing populist movements in Germany, the AfD's origins come from much more moderate roots. The party was originally founded in 2012 as a political action group by three frustrated former CDU members who were upset with Chancellor Angela Merkel and her response to the Eurozone crisis (Wolf, 2016, p. 150). After failing to win votes in a coalition with another group, they formed a political party and ended up gathering 4.7% of the vote. They had missed the electoral threshold but for a first-time party, it was an impressive performance and they officially gained access to state funds as a result (Arzheimer, 2015, p. 541). Bernd Lucke, one of the three founders of the AfD, did not want to have a party that was either right or left wing but that was a new political party type (Wolf, 2016, p. 151).

As a party, the AfD has a rather rebellious appearance and is profoundly different from other mainstream German parties in that it is euroskeptic. Germany is unique in that even its constitution calls for the support of European integration and German politicians from all mainstream political parties usually support European integration, the only exception being the Die Linke which constantly has voted against the ratification of many of the EU's treaties (Arzheimer, 2015, p. 539-510). The AfD stands in stark contrast to the typical German view on Europe, embracing both an anti-establishment and anti-euro position (Berbuir et al., 2015, p. 155). In its 2013 party manifesto, the AfD called for a debt cut for nations like Greece, dissolving the Eurozone, and re-establishing national sovereignty by cancelling European treaties (Berbuir et al., 2015, p. 162). The AfD's strength came from the fact that many consider there to be little difference now between the CDU/CSU and the SPD, with Lucke describing established parties as ones that ignore real problems of society, using their power to enrich and help only their own members (Berbuir et al., 2015, p. 163).

Like Trump and the pro-Brexiteers, the AfD also paints an impending crisis that must be averted immediately, claiming that the German family is facing extinction and demanding classical education rather than multicultural reeducation, appealing to a sense of national unity rather than multiculturalism (Berbuir et al., 2015, p. 165). The AfD's supporters are overwhelmingly male and the largest age group that supports them is adults aged 25-35 years. Roughly half of the AfD holds university degrees while only 5% have no degree at all and most members of politically active and engaged (Berbuir et al., 2015, p. 168). Around 47% of the members surveyed said they were dissatisfied with the status quo in Germany while another 25% said they were only partially satisfied. Forty six percent supported a German exit from the EU and not only do most members reject the Euro, but many accuse the EU of being too centralist and elitist (Berbuir et al., 2015, p. 169-170).

But while the AfD was originally moderate, it soon began to shift further to the right and after Lucke left the party, the AfD did shift further right as they adopted many of the platforms of Pegida and began to echo their attacks against the "lying press." As Frauke Petry has gained control of the AfD's leadership, the AfD has also officially taken on an anti-Islamic platform, declaring Islam has no place in Germany, and spreading beliefs that mass immigration and crime threaten to destroy Germany despite there being little or no

evidence to back-up those claims (BBC, September 2016).

In the most recent polls, support for the AfD has declined somewhat, especially after one of their spokespersons called the Berlin Holocaust Memorial a monument of shame (Dick, 2017). Despite the party's quick condemnation of these comments, this incident provides yet more opportunities for the AfD's opponents to connect them to Nazism. But while current polls will probably continue to fluctuate from now until the election, aggregate polling data shows the AfD is polling roughly around 10–15% on average, putting it in the position to not only get seats in the German Parliament but also putting it even higher than the Greens or Die Linke (Pollytix, 2017). Even if the worst possible happens to the AfD and they completely fall off the charts, the fact that they were able to poll so high in Germany at any time already shows that there is a right-wing populist constituency there. The AfD of course has some serious problems, one of them being its party organization. According to Paul Taggart, a strong charismatic leader is not just an ingredient of a populist movement, but an essential requirement (Taggart, 1996, p. 37–38). The AfD currently does not have someone who can really be classified as a charismatic leader who could dominate the German media and command mass amounts of attention that Trump did, but if they did or one day do, they could possibly have a real shot at power in Germany.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND CONCLUSION

From America to the United Kingdom to Germany, it is clear that right-wing populism is a steadily growing force. While right-wing populism faces significant structural and cultural barriers in many Western countries, it has still been able to manifest itself. A common theme however is that in each circumstance, populism takes advantage of a growing disenfranchisement with elitism and government in general. Economic progress has not improved the lives of everyone and increasing inequality is starting to threaten the livelihood of the middle class. Gaps in representation allow populist movements, from charismatic figures like Trump to upstart parties like the AfD, to step in and point to multiculturalism, multilateralism, globalization, and modernization as the reasons for this perceived decline. While such claims not only distract from the real issues and causes, they also allow anti-political groups to rise to power.

Inherent in each of these movements is a general disregard for the mainstream press as an agent of the establishment and a preference for statistical indicators like polls and referendums rather than checks and balances from a wide range of institutions. Technically, all of these movements advocate a simpler form of democracy that stresses grassroots power, not centralized power. Ironically, populist leaders that take control become authoritarian centers of power and it can be argued that they see direct democracy as the easiest form of appealing to the masses and dominating through a form of mob rule. Ultimately, these forces gain their momentum from popular reactions to globalism and an increasingly changing modern society, as a last-ditch attempt to defend traditional values from a new set of progressive cosmopolitan values. This of course would explain how on both sides of Atlantic and in different countries, similar movements can rise at the same time, feeding off of the very level of connectivity and modernization that they intend to erase. In conclusion, it does seem that modernization and globalization are one of the root causes for these different cases of populism. But it is important to recognize that populism is also thriving off a third element that we introduced, and that is a growing public mistrust of government. The

future of Europe and America is hinged, not upon how we can eliminate populist parties, but how to deal with the root causes of them, namely how to delicately balance reforms and modernization without marginalizing certain groups and finding ways to restore public trust and confidence in their governments.

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