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Populism in the Leave campaign

Thematic analysis of the populist performance of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage during the 2016 referendum campaign

Master's thesis

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Master's thesis in Cultural history
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Abstract

Even though euroscepticism had been present in Britain for decades, the outcome of the 2016 referendum campaign came as a surprised to many. In an effort to understand the vote, scholars and the media have categorised Brexit as a populist phenomena. It is therefore interesting to investigate populism in the Brexit campaign, and especially on the winning side; the Leave side of the campaign.

Through thematic analysis based on the theoretical framework of Benjamin Moffitt, who conceptualizes populism as a political style, this thesis will investigate the populism of the two key figures in the Leave campaign; Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. Furthermore, this thesis will compare the populist political style of the two politicians in an effort to broaden the understanding of populism in the two Leave camps; Vote Leave and Leave.EU. The analysis of this thesis reveals that, compared to each other, both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage were the same amount of populists in their performances during the campaign period. Moreover, the analysis shows that the populism of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage were surprisingly similar. The most dominant difference being what crisis they focused on during their performance; Farage's focus on immigration while Johnson focused on the democratic deficit of the EU.

Acknowledgements

There are several people who I would like to thank for helping me and supporting me while I have been writing this thesis.

My son has been my biggest motivation since the day he was born. After long hours of work and studies, he has always been able to bring joy to my days. To finish my education and to be able to provide for the two of us have motivated me greatly. I would also like to thank my parents who have been my biggest supporters through this process. Especially when the pandemic broke out and I found myself working and studying from home while my son was at home, my parents babysat whenever I needed proper working conditions.

A big 'thank you' to my friends who have supported me and also been able to distract me from work and studies at times, which has been greately needed.

Finally, I would like to send the biggest thanks to my two supervisors; Astrid Rasch and Anna Bil-Jaruzelska. Thank you Astrid for always being supportive and helpful when I felt lost in my writing process. You made me believe that I could get through this. Thank you Anna for guiding me through the writing process, I really appreciate all the feedback, the suggestions and your helpful nature. I could not have asked for better supervisors.

Julie Skevik
Trondheim, June 2020

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1. Introduction

Once the result of the 2016 EU referendum came in, shock waves spread through the continent. Even though euroscepticism and and the longing for more sovereignty had been prevalent in Britain for decades[1], the fact that Britain was now going to leave the European Union still came as a surprise to many. The question of how this could happen was on everyone's minds, and it did not take long before Brexit, more precisely; the Leave side of the campaign, was associated with populism[2]. Scholars have studied and analysed the campaign leading up to the referendum to try to form a picture of how the public was influenced to vote to leave the European Union. Populism has often been placed side by side with the Leave side of the campaign in an effort to explain the outcome of the vote.

The leave side of the referendum campaign was dominated by two key figures; Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson. Farage as the leader of UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the head figure of UKIP's own leave campaign; Leave.EU, and Johnson as one of the key players in the official Vote Leave campaign. The leave side of the campaign, with both the official and the unofficial campaign, have been described as populist by scholars and the media. The unofficial campaign; Leave.EU is considered more populist[3], however, is that still the case if we analyse material from the two campaigns and measure the populist features of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage against each other?

Populism has been a part of the political landscape for more than a 100 years, but during the last few decades it has flourished[4]. This has resulted in a vast amount of academic research investigating what populism is and how it should be analysed. This thesis will use Benjamin Moffitt's conceptualization of populism as a political style in the pursuit of an answer to the research questions. Moffitt argues that populism should be considered a political style rather than an ideology, a discourse or a strategy. This conceptualization of populism allows the researcher to measure populism[5]. Instead of considering actors to be placed along a binary line where populism is an either or question, Moffitt's conceptualisation allows the researcher to focus on the populist features and therefore determine the extent of populism within one's political style. For the purpose of this thesis, being able to measure populism is essential, as it allows to investigate and determine to what extent populism was present in the Leave campaign. The three main populist features in Moffitt's view on populism is 'the people', 'bad manners', and 'a sense of crisis'[6]. The presence and the extent of these three features in the performance of a political actor indicate how populist he or she is.

One of the aims of this thesis is to investigate how populist the Vote Leave and Leave.EU campaigns were based on the presence and extent of the three mentioned populist features in the performance of Johnson and Farage. However, the thesis' main aim is to analyse the differences in the populist political style between the official Vote Leave campaign and the unofficial Leave.EU campaign, on the bases of the two key figures. It is interesting to look into populism in the Leave campaign because of how Brexit, British exit from the EU, has been classified as a populist phenomena or movement[7]. Due to the global rise of populism, it is important to investigate it in an

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[1] Baldini, Bressanelli & Gianfreda, 2020, 'Taking back control? Brexit, sovereignism and populism in Westminster (2015-17)', European Politics and Society, 220

[2] Iakhnis, Rathbun, Reifler & Scotto, Populist referendum: Was 'Brexit' an expression of nativist and anti-elitist sentiment?, Research and Politics April - June 2018: 1-7, 1

[3] Ahmed, 2017, Brexit: The mainstreaming of right-wing populist discourse, IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2016, Baden-Baden 2017, pp. 93-105, 105

[4] Moffitt, 2016, 'The Global Rise of Populism' Stanford University Press, 1-2

[5] Ibid, 48

[6] Ibid, 43-45

[7] Iakhnis, Rathbun, Reifler & Scotto, Populist referendum: Was 'Brexit' an expression of nativist and anti-elitist sentiment?, Research and Politics April - June 2018: 1-7, 5

effort to create more understanding about a phenomenon that is affecting more and more countries. Nigel Farage, UKIP and Leave.EU have been labeled populist by the media and the opposition mainly based on face value. This is probably due to the large focus they have had on immigration, which is a typical populist sentiment. However, one cannot base such accusations on face value, they need to be backed by populist theory.

Hence, this thesis will analyse selected interviews and speeches of both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage at different times during the referendum campaign. By using thematic analysis I will be able to determine whether or not and which features of populism are present in the source material, and the extent of it. More importantly, the analysis will indicate what differences there are between the two camps. This thesis will aim to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How populist was the rhetoric of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage compared to each other during the Brexit referendum campaign?
RQ2: What were the differences between the populism of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage?

To answer the research questions of this thesis I have selected source material from both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. There are eight materials in total, four speeches and four interviews. These texts will be coded and analysed to extract the necessary data that is needed to locate patterns and frequencies of populist features. The coding of the data will be done on the basis of the theoretical framework of Moffitt (2016) who conceptualizes populism as a political style. According to Moffitt (2016), populism can be measured and politicians can be more or less populist at different times[8]. This approach to populism will form the groundwork to this thesis. Moffitt's theory of populism as a political style states that there are several style features that are typical for a populist. Hence, these features will work as themes in the thematic analysis. By systematically analysing the material through the thematic method, I will be able to determine the extent of populism in each politician's communication. This will make it possible to indicate the general trends in the campaigns, and investigate the differences between the populism of Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson.

This thesis consists of six chapters. This chapter, chapter 1, will continue with the sub-chapter 1.1 that will provide the historical background prior to Brexit and a literature review of the existing research on populism in the Leave campaign. Chapter 2, theory, will provide the theoretical backbone of the thesis. This chapter will present a brief overview of different theories and conceptualizations of populism, however, the main focus will be on Moffitt's conceptualization of populism as a political style. Chapter 3, methodology, will present thematic analysis, which is the chosen method used in coding and analysing the selected material. Chapter 4, the analysis, will systematically present the findings of the analysis. Chapter 5, the discussion, will link the findings from the analysis with both the theory and the historical context. Chapter 6, the conclusion, will summarise the main findings.

1.1 Historical context

The historical context relevant to the events leading up to the 2016 EU Referendum paints a picture of a complicated relationship between Britain and the European Union[9]. The European Union was created as a result of a long period of conflict within the European continent itself. Two world wars had been fought and the need for a common community between the European countries was great. It was believed that countries that traded together were less likely to go to war against each other[10]. However, The UK

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[8] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 46

[9] Reynolds, 2013, Britannia overruled: British Policy and World Powers in the 20th Century, Routledge, 276

[10] Cini & Borragan, 2016, European Union Politics, Oxford University Press, 2

decided to stay outside of the ECSC (predecessor to the EEC) and also outside of the EEC (predecessor to the EU) when it was created in 1957. The UK did not join until 1973[11].

1.1.1 The UK and euroscepticism

There are multiple reasons as to why the UK did not join the Union until 1973. Firstly, France vetoed Britain's application in 1961 and in 1967, refusing them membership both times. However, prior to this, in the aftermath of the second world war, the UK was more invested in the creation of the Commonwealth. The UK was unwilling to let go of their status as an Empire and struggled to accept their new position in the world. This might be due to the fact that Britain was never invaded like most other continental European countries during the war, and therefore did not feel the same need to create a common community to preserve the peace[12]. However, the most important reason as to why the UK did not join might have been due to the UK's belief in itself as a world power[13]. Britain's Foreign Secretary at the time, Ernest Bevin, refused to believe that the UK was no longer a world power and is quoted as saying *"We regard ourselves as one of the Powers most vital to the peace of the world."*[14]. Prior to the Great war, the British Empire represented 25% of both the total land area and population of the world. However, after the Second World War Britain was no longer considered an Empire by most[15]. Some critics of the EU have argued that joining the EU put an end to a thousand years of history[16], pointing to the fact that Britain had been a world power for a thousand years up until they stepped down, and became a member of the EEC.

Britain was reluctant to step down and join the EEC, but after a few years, Britain saw no other choice than to apply. The main reason was that the economy of the member states of the EEC was growing and peaked in the 1960, however, Britain did not ride the same wave and did not experience the same economic growth. This made an EEC membership seem profitable. Britain has shown more of a transactional relationship with the EU than that of an ideological relationship[17]. In other words, Britain's main goal as a member state is to profit financially from the agreement, not to take part in an European integration process. Britain's prime minister at the time, Edward Heath, took the UK into the EEC in 1973[18].

From that time up until 2020, Britain was a member state of the European Union. During this period of time, the EEC experienced ups and downs which Britain was pulled into. During the mid- and late 70's, Britain and the EEC experienced an economic crisis. Unemployment ran high and inflation increased[19]. Since Britain had joined the EEC mainly for its own benefits, not to increase European integration[20], the economic crisis had large effects on people's opinions concerning British membership. In other words,

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[11]Reynolds, 2013, Britannia overruled: British Policy and World Powers in the 20th Century, Routledge, 224

[12]Startin, 2015, Have we reached a tipping point? The mainstreaming of Euroscepticism in the UK. *International Political Science Review*, *36*(3), 311–323, 313

[13] Ibid, 148

[14] Ibid

[15] Elsayed, 2018, Make Great Britain Great Again: Populism And Nationalism In Brexit, Volume 36 - The United Kingdom On The Brink Of Brexit, 95

[16] Menon & Salter, 2016, Brexit: initial reflections, International Affairs, 92: 1297-1318, 1301

[17] Ahmed, 2017, Brexit: The mainstreaming of right-wing populist discourse, IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2016, Baden-Baden 2017, pp. 93-105, 94

[18] Ford & Goodwin, 2017, Britain After Brexit: A Nation Divided, Journal of Democracy 28: 17–30, 20

[19] Reynolds, 2013, Britannia overruled: British Policy and World Powers in the 20th Century, Routledge, 235

[20] Ibid, 205

Brits were already sceptical about joining the EEC, and once they did join, the EEC often became the scapegoat during struggles such as the economic crises. Even though it was not the EEC's fault, merly bad timing, the situation gave those who were already sceptical towards the EEC an even better reason to be.

As mentioned above, scepticism towards the EU was present within the British public at the very beginning, however, there have been several events leading up to Brexit that have increased the scepticism. Arguably the issue that has sparked euroscepticism the most is the issue of sovereignty. Attachment to the EU and euroscepticism overlap in the context of Britain due to the fact that *"sovereignist claims are often made in opposition to EU membership"*[21]. Britons were already sceptical towards an EEC membership while the community was mainly focused on a free market. Once the EEC evolved more into the supranational entity that it is today with judicial powers, euroscepticism increased[22]. The treaty of Maastricht from 1992 represents a turning point for both the EU and euroscepticism[23]. The absolute sovereignty of parliament in Britain has made it difficult for Britons to accept the fact that the EU was given more political power over its member states. The common-law tradition and majoritarian traits of Britain collide with the over-constitutionalization of the EU[24]. It became clear that the EU no longer was purely a trading union. During the referendum campaign, sovereignty became one of the most important issues for Leave voters, the slogan "take back control" represents this perfectly.

The EU has been accused of being undemocratic seeing as those in power are not elected by EU citizens. Hence, the term 'democratic deficit' is often linked with the EU. This is due to the fact that the commission of the EU, the executive power within the EU, is made up of members who are not directly elected but in fact appointed by national governments[25].

Even though euroscepticism played a major role in the process leading up the the referendum, there were other factors that affected the eventual referendum as well. The economic crisis in 2008 and the 2004 "big bang" enlargement of the EU sparked the debate even more[26]. The EU enlargement in 2004 saw ten new states as members of the EU, followed by Bulgaria and Romania in 2007[27]. This development gave eurosceptics, and especially UKIP, reason to discuss EU membership. The Freedom of Movement Act became more and more relevant as more countries joined the EU, and reached a peak during the 2015 refugee crisis. After the financial crisis of 2008, the Euro struggled a great deal. This gave eurosceptics reason to portray the Euro as a failing currency, and the EU as a union with financial and political shortcomings[28].

Once the financial advantages of an EEC membership overshadowed Britain's unwillingness to give up their sovereignty, Britain chose to join the European integration project. However, once the change from community to union happened and *"the assumption that the EU was solely a trading block of like-minded nations built around*

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[21] Baldini, Bressanelli & Gianfreda, 2020, Taking back control? Brexit, sovereignism and populism in Westminster, 221

[22] Schmidt, 2020, No match made in heaven. Parliamentary sovereignty, EU over-constitutionalization and Brexit, Journal of European Public Policy, 27:5, 779-794, 781

[23] Baldini, Bressanelli & Gianfreda, 2020, Taking back control? Brexit, sovereignism and populism in Westminster, 222

[24] Schmidt, 2020, No match made in heaven. Parliamentary sovereignty, EU over-constitutionalization and Brexit, Journal of European Public Policy, 27:5, 779-794, 790

[25] Jarco, 2019, Democracy deficit in the European Union: what can be done to reduce it?, 6

[26] Startin, 2015, Have we reached a tipping point? The mainstreaming of Euroscepticism in the UK. *International Political Science Review*, *36*(3), 311–323, 312

[27] Ibid, 315

[28] Ibid

the notion of a Single European Market"[29] was challenged in the 1990s, euroscepticism grew in the UK. Adding in the growing number of members with free access to movement within the EU, a refugee crisis and a currency that at times struggles, you have the perfect mix for a storm with the name Brexit.

1.1.2 The rise of UKIP and populism

Ever since membership became an option for the UK, national politicians and even political parties within the UK have been divided on the issue[30]. Labour was originally the more eurosceptic party, but ever since Margaret Thatcher, parts of the Conservatives have been eurosceptic as well and consequently became the most anti-EU party in Britain. During the late 1980's, the EEC was turning more into a union that included labour and social regulations, not only free trade regulations[31]. Since then, British politicians have been divided on the issue, and the Conservatives have not been able to stand united one the issue of membership. As euroscepticism grew and the issue of immigration became more and more relevant, the public felt as though neither Labour nor the Conservatives were able to soothe their concerns. This gave room for another political party; UKIP.

The UK Independence Party (UKIP) was formed in 1993 as a one issue party to fight against EU membership. It was not until UKIP took "ownership" of the immigration issue and linked both immigration and sovereignty to their one issue politics, that their popularity rose[32]. UKIP's victory in the European Parliament elections of 2014 showed that political parties other than Labour and Conservative are in the race during elections. UKIP's rise to popularity among the British public forced Labour and Conservative to take issues such as immigration and EU membership more seriously[33]. In other words, a big part of the British public felt as though the two main parties did not deliver on the immigration issue, resulting in UKIP gaining support[34]. The rise of UKIP indicated that a significant part of the public was unhappy with the two main parties and their ability to handle both the immigration issue and EU membership.

The displeasure towards the established political parties could be seen in other countries across Europe around 2014. Right wing populist parties gained much support during this period. Cas Mudde argues that this is due to events during the period around 2014 that left people scared and unsure about their future, such as the refugee crisis and terrorist attacks in Europe[35]. To add to the issue, a deeper integration process within the EU resulted in power being taken away from individual states in favour of the supranational body that is the EU. This can be seen as an extremely threatening situation for member states' sovereignty[36].

The growing support for UKIP pressured the other political parties to focus more on immigration and EU membership in order to win back voters. It was clear that the people wanted these issues to be dealt with. Prime Minister at the time, David Cameron, promised the public a referendum on UK membership in the EU if the Conservatives were to win a majority at the 2015 general election. He did this in an effort to win back some of the support that was slipping due to the issue of EU membership and immigration and

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[29] Ibid, 314

[30] Ahmed, 2017, Brexit: The mainstreaming of right-wing populist discourse, IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2016, Baden-Baden 2017, pp. 93-105, 94

[31] Ibid

[32] Ibid, 95

[33] Ibid

[34] Ford & Goodwin, 2017, Britain After Brexit: A Nation Divided, Journal of Democracy 28: 17–30, 23

[35] Ahmed, 2017, Brexit: The mainstreaming of right-wing populist discourse, IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2016, Baden-Baden 2017, pp. 93-105, 96

[36] Ibid

also to please the members of the Conservative party who were Eurosceptical[37]. They did win and the referendum had to be held as promised.

1.1.3 The two sides in the Brexit referendum campaign: Remain and Leave

Once the Conservatives had won their majority in the 2015 general election, the referendum was on everyone's minds. David Cameron announced in February 2016 that the vote would be held on the 23rd of June the same year. This marked the beginning of a race between the two sides; Remain and Leave.

The Remain side of the campaign was mainly a united front with David Cameron as the campaign leader of the official Stronger in Europe campaign[38]. The major political parties in Parliament were in favour of staying in the EU, even the opposition; Labour. However, the governing party; the Conservatives, were openly divided on the issue[39]. The main issue that the Remain side focused on during the campaign was the economy. More specifically; the "threat of economic disaster in the case of Brexit vote"[40]. Remain focused heavily on the financial risk that would follow if the UK were to leave the EU.

The Leave side of the campaign was not as united as the Remain side. The campaign was dominated by two Leave camps, the official and the unofficial. The official Vote Leave campaign was lead by several prominent Conservative politicians such as Boris Johnson and Michael Grove, as well as the majority of Labour MPs[41]. The unofficial campaign, Leave.EU, was lead by UKIP's leader Nigel Farage. Both Leave campaigns portrayed the referendum as a once in a lifetime opportunity for the people to restore control over their own country[42]. Even though the two Leave camps had the same main goal, for Britain to leave the EU, they did not walk the same path. Nigel Farage chose to distance himself and his campaign from 'the elite', the established politicians[43]. Whilst Vote Leave chose to focus on sovereignty as their number one issue, Leave.EU focused hard on immigration. However; as the vote was coming closer, Vote Leave chose to also focus on immigration. Nigel Farage's campaign, Leave.EU, has been accused of putting out false information about migrants and the Remain campaign[44] during the referendum campaign period. Even though the official campaign, Vote Leave, were accused of using misleading sums in regards to the cost of EU membership, Leave.EU have been linked to much more inaccuracies.

1.2 Literature review

Several articles and books on Brexit have been published since the 2016 referendum and the majority of these try to comprehend the reasons behind the result of the vote. Populism is one of the main elements that have been given a vast amount of credit for the somewhat surprising outcome of the vote. Both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage have

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[37] Hobolt, 2016, The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent, Journal of European Public Policy, 23:9, 1259-1277, 1261

[38] Ahmed, 2017, Brexit: The mainstreaming of right-wing populist discourse, IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2016, Baden-Baden 2017, pp. 93-105, 97

[39] Hobolt, 2016, The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent, Journal of European Public Policy, 23:9, 1259-1277, 1261

[40] Ibid, 1262

[41] Ahmed, 2017, Brexit: The mainstreaming of right-wing populist discourse, IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2016, Baden-Baden 2017, pp. 93-105, 98

[42] Hobolt, 2016, The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent, Journal of European Public Policy, 23:9, 1259-1277, 1262

[43] Ibid

[44] Elsayed, 2018, Make Great Britain Great Again: Populism And Nationalism In Brexit, Volume 36 - The United Kingdom On The Brink Of Brexit, 3, 96

been associated with populism, Nigel Farage more than Boris Johnson. This chapter will highlight the existing literature on the topic of populism and the Leave campaign and by doing this; bring to light what elements within this topic that have not been researched.

An analysis done of the "*parliamentary speeches on EU issues delivered by representatives of the Conservative and Labour parties in the House of Commons from 2015 to October 2017*"[45] showed that populism has become an important feature amongst the Conservative party. The study showed that the theme of sovereignty in relation to the EU was heavily linked with populism due to politicians way of presenting themselves as the "true popular voice"[46] of the people.

Ahmed (2017) portrays an image of Conservative politicians, such as Boris Johnson, as established politicians who have "*adopted elements of right wing populist discourse*"[47] into their performance. Ahmed argues that established politicians used inflammatory rhetoric and talked down immigrants in an effort to win the referendum. In other words, Boris Johnson, and other established Leave politicians, were not populists but adopted populist features during the campaign.

Most studies done after the 2016 EU referendum argue that Brexit was a populist movement of some kind due to the nature of the decision making process. One of the main features of populism is 'the will of the people', and a referendum is a prime example of direct democracy (will of the people). Power is normally in the hands of the people's representatives, however, a referendum lets the people themselves make decisions. Elsayed (2018) writes that Farage (and UKIP) is populist because he fights for 'the people' and their sovereignty against 'the elite' and the threat they pose. The threat is the 'dangerous other', EU immigrants[48]. Browning (2019) links the Leave campaign to populism due to its promises of a "full and stable identity"[49] where he focuses more on the nostalgic elements of nationalism than that of danger and threat from 'a dangerous other'.

Most studies done on populism and Brexit either focus on whether or not Brexit can be categorised as a populist movement, or whether or not politicians were populist in their performance. Nigel Farage has been singled out as the number one populist during the referendum campaign, however, Boris Johnson has also been linked with populism. There is however, lacking a study on the difference in populism between Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson. In other words, the populist style of the two has not been compared.

The main difference between the previous research done on populism during the EU referendum and this thesis, is the theoretical framework used. There is lacking a study on populism and Brexit that understands populism as a political style. Furthermore, the two Leave camps have not been compared against each other in regards to their populist style. Due to this, the existing research does not compare the extent of populism, it mainly sees it as an "either or" issue. As mentioned above, Ahmed considers Nigel Farage as populist in his article, whilst even though he recognises populist rhetoric in Boris Johnson's performance, he is unwilling to label him a populist. Instead he states that Boris Johnson "*adopted elements of right wing populist discourse*"[50].

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[45] Baldini, Bressanelli & Gianfreda, 2020, 'Taking back control? Brexit, sovereignism and populism in Westminster (2015-17)', European Politics and Society, 232

[46] Ibid

[47]Ahmed, 2017, Brexit: The mainstreaming of right-wing populist discourse, IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2016, Baden-Baden 2017, pp. 93-105, 105

[48] Elsayed, 2018, Make Great Britain Great Again: Populism And Nationalism In Brexit, Volume 36 - The United Kingdom On The Brink Of Brexit, 3, 98

[49] Browning, 2019, Brexit populism and fantasies of fulfilment, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 32:3, 222-244, 239

[50] Ahmed, 2017, Brexit: The mainstreaming of right-wing populist discourse, IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook 2016, Baden-Baden 2017, pp. 93-105, 105

This thesis will therefore bring to light how populism can be performed on different levels, to different extents. Hence, there will not be a 'yes' or 'no' answer to whether or not Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson are populist. Instead, this thesis will assess the degree of populism performed by the two politicians campared against one another. Thus making it possible to compare the populist style of the two. Furthermore, this comparison will make it possible to discuss the differences and similarities between the two Leave campaigns.

2. Theory

Investigating populism has become more and more prominent within social and political life over the last few decades, and academic and popular interest reached an all time high after the 2016 presidential election in the US and the EU membership referendum in the UK during the same year[51]. However, movements, politicians and political parties have been called populists for many years prior to these events. Cas Mudde (2004) wrote in the early 2000s that populism was on the rise across Europe[52], which indicates that populism and its role in society have been relevant for some time prior to Trump and Brexit. However, it is probably due to the surprising result of both the presidential election and the referendum in Britain that populism once again has become such a relevant issue. Multiple articles and political theorists have been linking both Trump's victory and Brexit to populism[53]. The truth is that populism has been a widely discussed issue amongst political theorists for decades due to populism's changing nature[54]. There is no agreement on a definition of populism[55]. The term 'populism' is an extremely vague term and there are different conceptualizations. Populism can be conceptualized as an ideology, a style of communication, a discourse or a political style[56]. Despite the differences it is possible to agree upon core features of populism that are similar whatever conceptualization follow; 'the people', 'anti-elitism' and ostracizing the others[57].

This chapter will give an overview of populism and the different conceptualizations of the term, before focusing on Benjamin Moffitt's conceptualization of populism as a political style. This thesis will consider populism as a political style due to its ability to measure populism[58]. Furthermore, this chapter will explain the core features of populism as a political style which make up the theoretical backbone of this thesis and as a guide in the analysis.

2.1 Defining and conceptualizing populism

This subchapter will present the most common conceptualizations of populism and the core features of populism. It will then move on to presenting populism as a political style, which will form the theoretical background for this thesis.

There are multiple ways of understanding populism; as an ideology, a style of communication, a discourse or a political style[59]. Populism is often referred to or thought of as some kind of an ideology[60], however, there is disagreement amongst political theorists whether or not populism can be categorised as an ideology. Perhaps the most commonly used definition of populism, is the definition outlined by Cas Mudde (2004). He defines populism as "*an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale*

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[51] Wilson, 2017, Brexit, Trump and the special relationship. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *19*(3), 543

[52] Mudde, 2004, The Populist Zeitgeist, Blackwell Publishing, 541

[53] Wilson, 2017, Brexit, Trump and the special relationship. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *19*(3), 544.

[54] Taggart, 2004, *Populism and representative politics in contemporary Europe.* Journal of Political Ideologies, 9 (3). pp. 269-288, 275

[55] Mudde, 2004, The Populist Zeitgeist, Blackwell Publishing, 541

[56] Moffitt, 2016, The Global rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 7

[57] Ibid

[58] Ibid, 47

[59] Ibid, 17

[60] Ibid, 18

(general will) of the people"[61]. In other words; he describes populism in two parts. Firstly; one as an ideology where society is looked upon as one part that is divided in two groups of people; 'the pure people' and the 'corrupt elite'. These groups are described as homogeneous groups, groups of people that are of "the same kind" or "a like"; one pure and good, and one evil. The second part of the definition relates to politics. Populists think that politics should focus on the 'will of the people', that political decisions should be mirroring what "the people" want. The element of 'the people' is linked to the first part of the definition where 'the people' is the one part of society that is pure and good. Mudde's definition is a valid starting point when it comes to understanding populism.

Those who do classify populism as an ideology still do not fully agree to what extent populism can be named an ideology similarly to socialism and capitalism. Aslanidis (2016) and Stanley (2008) classify populism as a thin ideology due to its changing nature depending on context[62][63]. They both argue that populism does not tick all the boxes needed to fall within the category of a full ideology. The main reason for this debate is how populism seems to change and adopt and even attach itself to other existing ideologies for survival. It is this habit of changing its face that might be one of the main reasons as to why there is so much disagreement as to what populism is.

Those who consider populism as an ideology, a strategy or a discourse will find themselves having to deal with the 'either or' view on populism. In other words, determining if someone is populist is a yes or no question. Jagers' and Walgrave's (2007) conceptualization of populism as a political communicative style allows the researcher to place politicians at different levels of populism[64]. In other words, politicians can find themselves within the thin or the thick definition of populism. According to Jagers and Walgrave, politicians who only appeal to the people can be placed within the thin category of populism, whilst those who appeal to the people, have an anti-elitism approach and consider those outside of 'the people' as 'others', can be placed within the thick definition of populism[65].

Similar to Jagers' and Walgrave's conceptualisation of populism, Moffitt's (2016) conceptualization also allows the researcher to measure populism. This thesis is using Moffitt's (2016) conceptualization of populism as a *political style* as theoretical background. Populism is defined as *"a political style that features an appeal to 'the people' versus 'the elite', 'bad manners' and the performance of crisis, breakdown or threat"*[66]. Populism as a political style is slightly underused according to Moffitt[67]. This fact in itself makes the political style approach intriguing for this thesis. Mudde himself argues that populism does not tick all the boxes regarding being an ideology. Instead of thinking of populism as a thin ideology, this thesis will rather view populism as a political style. An ideological or discourse approach to populism will try to determine whether or not someone or something is populistic.

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[61] Mudde, 2004, The Populist Zeitgeist, Blackwell Publishing, 543

[62] Aslanidis, 2016, Is Populism an Ideology? A Refutation and a New Perspective, *Political Studies*, *64*(1_suppl), 88–104

[63] Stanley, 2008, The thin ideology of populism, Journal of Political Ideologies, 13:1, 95-110.

[64] Jagers & Walgrave, 2007, Populism as political communication style: An empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium, European Journal of Political Research, 46: 319-345, 323

[65] Ibid, 322

[66] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 45

[67] Ibid, 28-29

2.2 Populism as a political style

This thesis will be using Moffitt's conceptualization of populism as a political style as the main theory. This understanding of populism focuses on the performed populism, 'the appeal' to the people, the 'bad manners' of the performer of populism, and 'the sense' of crisis that the populist performer creates. In other words, populism as a political style highlights what populism is doing more than what it is[68]. There are three main elements that Moffitt argues are populist elements. These are "the people", "bad manners" and "a sense of crisis"[69]. These features of populism will be elaborated on further in the subchapters below.

2.2.1 'The people' vs 'the elite'

Moffitt's first element to populism is 'the people', usually in relation to 'the elite'[70]. Even though there are multiple definitions, most definitions of populism consist of one similar element; the distinction between "the people" and "the elite". This means that within the academic community, this element of populism is a common reference[71]. Mudde defines "the people" as the core concept of populism[72], and Canovan (2004) points out that the main focus of recent studies done on populism is the populist discourse and its appeal to "the people"[73]. Moffitt (2016) writes that "the people" is the central audience of populism[74], stressing how *the appeal* to "the people" is an important aspect of "the people" in populism. This further underlines the importance of "the people" within populism, both due to the agreement within the academic community and the focus it has had in recent studies.

"The people" is a vague term and can be understood in different ways depending on the context. Are we talking about the people of a nation, or the people of a community? Who the people are and who is not invited to be in the warm circle is an important question to ask when looking into populism. Freeden (2017) writes that populism "'*processes and ideologies the "people" as a stylized entity."* He further argues that populism tends to portray "the people" as the whole population of a nation or place even though it in reality only is a part of the whole population[75]. Either way, "the people" is never everyone even though it might be portrayed as such by populist actors.

Taggart (2004) describes "the people" as the pure, the good, the native, the workingman and the protector of the motherland[76]. These descriptions fit well with what others have noted on the subject. The common people are those who are not a part of the elite, only those who consider themselves good, native and defenders of their nation, qualify as "the people". What sets Taggart apart of most other scholars is his view on the so-called heartland[77]. He argues that a heartland is more relevant in relation to populism than "the people" due to how de-individualising the term is. The heartland represents an idealised community or nation where "the people" live and work. Taggart (2004) writes that "the people" are nothing but the populace of the heartland and for anyone to truly

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[68] Ibid, 29

[69] Ibid, 45

[70] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 43

[71] Mudde, 2004, The Populist Zeitgeist, Blackwell Publishing, 543

[72] Ibid, 544

[73] Canovan, 2004, Populism for Political theorists?, Journal of Political Ideologies, 9:3, 244

[74] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 43

[75] Freeden, 2017, After the Brexit referendum: revisiting populism as an ideology, Journal of Political Ideologies, 22:1, 1-11, 7

[76] Taggart, 2004, *Populism and representative politics in contemporary Europe.* Journal of Political Ideologies, 9 (3). pp. 269-288, 274

[77] Ibid

understand what "the people" means, one has to understand what the heartland is[78]. The heartland is a vision of what society used to look and feel like, a place that "the people" would like to go back to. In a way, one could argue that the heartland is not imagined seeing as it is mostly a sense of a place, or a feeling of a place that once was a reality. The different elements from this heartland might not be entirely factual and historical, however, the sense of the heartland is a reality[79]. It is due to this longing to what used to be that populists often consider immigration and globalisation a threat. Everything new and different from the original and native differs from what the vision of the heartland looks like. Moffitt mentioned Taggart and his idea of a heartland in his book as another way of portraying "the people"[80]. It seems as though Moffitt's understanding of "the people" is bigger than what many other scholars' is. He argues that "the people" can be anything from the native population of a country, the mainstream or the heartland[81]. Again, this view on "the people" fits the changing nature of populism. Seeing as populism seems to adapt to its situation, the core elements of populism will surely also have an adoptive nature.

It might seem as though it is important to find the one true definition of what and who "the people" is, however, this might not be the case. The concept of "the people" in populism is layered due to how populism tend to have a changing nature. However, the style of populism does not change if one is to consider Moffitt's theory. The concept of "the people" has to be present in political style for it to be considered populist, however, the concept of "the people" is not black and white. "The people" is the part of a population, a community or any other grouping, that for some reason see themselves as "the people" of a place.

2.2.2 'Bad manners'

The second core feature of populism as a political style is "bad manners"[82]. Bad manners should be understood as a mode of rhetoric that differs from the more traditional ways of speaking, but also in regards of performance and aesthetics. Both Canovan (1999) and Ostiguy (2009) write of populist actors who use a different "style" when talking or performing compared to other politicians. Examples of such "bad manners" are the use of slang, swear words, being politically incorrect, colourful, dressing untraditionally, and being more playful[83].

This core feature of populist style should be seen in relation with the first core feature: "the people" vs "the elite". Since populist actors perform to create a divide between "the people" and "the elite", they also have to make sure that they themselves are not looked upon as a part of "the elite". Seeing as "the elite" are often regarded as people of power, populist actors might in many ways also fall within "the elite" category. However, populist actors distance themselves away from the traditional politicians by having "bad manners". Furthermore, these so-called "bad manners" are manners of "the people". Ordinary people do use slang, use the occasional swear word, do not tend to dress smart at any given time. Having "bad manners" as populist actors removes them away from the elite and closer to a part of "the people", making them even more suitable for speaking on behalf of "the people".

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[78] Ibid

[79] Ibid

[80] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 41

[81] Ibid

[82] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 45

[83] Ibid, 44

2.2.3 'A sense of crisis'

The third feature of populism as a political style, is *the sense of a crisis*[84]. A crisis, or better referred to as *a sense of crisis*, has been linked to populism in much of the literature on the topic. However, there seems to be various views on how central the feature is in populism, and more importantly, whether crisis is an *external* or *internal* feature[85]. This thesis views "a sense of crisis" as an internal feature of populism due to the fact that the feature should be thought of as something populist actors use instead of an outside situation that triggers populism to occur.

Moffitt argues that we should think of crisis not only as a trigger for populism, but how "populism attempts to act as a trigger for crisis"[86]. In other words, populism, or populist actors, perform in a way that enhances the sense of crisis in the audience. Seeing as a crisis is neither neutral nor objective but can be felt differently for different communities and people, an external crisis do not automatically result in a populist uprising[87]. However, populism as a political style uses "a sense of crisis" as a core feature to make "the people" aware of a crisis that either is occurring or is on the verge of happening. Moffitt even argues that "if we do not have the performance of crisis, we do not have populism"[88].

A good example of a global crisis that is upon humans today, is the climate change crisis. Even though an overwhelming percentage of experts and scientists agree upon the fact that this is a crisis, not all people feel as though it is a crisis. "The sense of crisis" often has to be performed for the audience to feel as though there is a crisis at all. There does not even have to be an actual crisis happening for "a sense of crisis" to be felt. As long as people feel as though there is a crisis or that a crisis will soon be upon them, the crisis phenomena is real[89].

"The sense of crisis" is a central feature of populism as a political style because it can be used by populist actors to create the divide between "the people" and "the elite"[90]. By performing the crisis for "the people", populist leaders create a narrative where the representative powers that should protect "the people" are failing to do so. Hence, "the people" feel let down by their representatives ("the elite") and instead lean towards the populists as a better leader of the people.

2.2.4 The performance

Who performs populism and who is on the receiving end?[91]. Earlier in this theory chapter, the receiver of populism has been made clear; the receiver is "the people". Concerning the first part of the question; who performs?, most scholars agree that the populist leader is the one performing[92]. However, there is an issue in relation to the leader. During presidential elections, it is easier to pinpoint who is performing the political style, it is most likely the presidential candidate. However, during a referendum like Brexit, there can be more than one leader who performs populism. Moffitt (2016) argues that a populist leader is a leader who manages to bring together "the people" against "the elite" and creates "a sense of crisis"[93].

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[84] Ibid, 113

[85] Ibid, 114

[86] Ibid

[87] Ibid, 118

[88] Ibid, 114

[89] Ibid, 118

[90] Ibid

[91] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 51

[92] Ibid, 69

[93] Ibid, 68

To fully understand and be able to analyse populism, it is essential to be aware of the performance of the populist, not only the content of the appeal. As mentioned earlier in regard to "the people", the populist performer has to represent "the people" and therefore be a part of "the people". By using "bad manners" and distancing him or herself away from "the elite", the performer of populism can truly become a representative on behalf of "the people"[94]. However, there is a fine line between lowering yourself down to an ordinary level where "the people" see themselves, and being too low. If the performer falls too low and performs in a way where the "bad manner" becomes too bad, "the people" might not see the performer as capable to lead on behalf of them[95].

In regards to this thesis, the performance of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage will be seen through their 'appeal' to the people, their 'bad manner' and in 'creating a sense' of crisis. All of these elements need to be performed. The analysis of this thesis will therefore investigate how both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage *perform* the core features of populism, this will form the backbone of the qualitative analysis.

To sum up, populism can be conceptualized in different ways; as an ideology, a style of communication, a discourse or a political style. However, this thesis will use the conceptualization of Benjamin Moffitt; populism as a political style, as the backbone for this thesis. Populism as a political style focuses on the core features that are present within populism regardless of conceptualisation; the 'people vs the elite' and 'the others'. However, populism as a political style focuses more on the *doing* of populism, not only the content. In other words; in the analysis, the focus will be on *how* Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage perform 'the appeal' to the people, the 'bad manners' of a populist, and the 'sense of' crisis[96]. Lastly, by using this conceptualization that does not view populism as a black and white phenomena, I am able to measure populism within both Boris Johnson's and Nigel Farage's performances during the referendum campaign.

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[94] Ibid, 69

[95] Ibid

[96] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 40

3. Methodology

This chapter will present the methodological choices; firstly it will introduce thematic analysis, explain why I have chosen this method, and outline the challenges and limitations of the said method. Secondly, this chapter will present the sources of data and explain the reasons for selecting this particular material. Lastly; the chapter will describe how I have coded the source data based on the theoretical background. To answer the research question of this paper, I have chosen to conceptualize populism as a political style. By using this conceptualization there are several rhetorical features that must be taken into account; 'the people', 'the elite', 'bad manner' and 'a sense of crisis'. These must be identified and analysed in order to identify populist style and investigate to what extent Johnson's and Farage's rhetoric during the Brexit referendum campaign can be considered populist, and what differences there are between the two.

3.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a method used to identify and categorise codes within text[97]. Codes, the smallest units of text that still contain interesting meaning[98], are placed within a suitable theme. This is done to extract meaning or patterns from the chosen data. The main idea is to reduce the data into key ideas that are related to the thesis' area of investigation. A theme is a common and recurring concept in which the codes can be placed within. For example, one of the themes in my analysis is 'The people', which is classified as a common theme in the analysis. 'Native', 'belief in the people', 'closeness to the people' and 'speaking on behalf of the people' are codes within the theme. The first part of the analysis, the part that is centered around codes and frequencies of codes, is a quantitative thematic analysis. The following steps of the analysis are qualitative, hence they deal with extracting meaning from the codes and themes in order to investigate the research questions. Hence, these steps will analyse how the populist features have been performed by both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage, and therefore make it possible to compare the two populist styles.

The analysis will start with the quantitative steps, which will allow me to anser the first research question about the extent of populism. The second part of the analysis will consist of the qualitative part. Extracting and interpreting meaning from the categorized data is done through the creation of reports. I will create four reports, one for each theme. In other words; there will be one report concerning each of the themes in the analysis. These reports will investigate the differences between the populist style of Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson.

Thematic analysis benefits this thesis because it suits the selected conceptualization of populism. The method allows me to take a theoretically guided approach to the analysis, focusing only on relevant concepts. The features of populism as a political style, as described in chapter 2, are well suited as themes in the thematic analysis. Furthermore, the description of the key features of populism, work well as codes. As seen in the examples above, the key feature 'the people' is a theme, whilst the different descriptions such as 'native' and 'belief in the people' are codes. Hence thematic analysis works well with an analysis that is as theory driven as this one. King (2004) argues that thematic analysis works well in relation to *"summarizing key features of a large data set"*[99] seeing as it forces the researcher to be well organised and structured in handling the data and therefore producing a clear final report[100].

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[97] Clarke & Braun, 2017, Thematic analysis, The Journal of Positive Psychology, 297

[98] Ibid

[99] Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017, Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*

[100] King, 2004, Using templates in the thematic analysis of text. In Cassell, C., Symon, G. (Eds.), Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research (pp. 257–270). London, UK: Sage

By having pre chosen themes, in other words a thematic framework, the analysis falls within the theory driven approach[101]. Extracting data from the chosen material and categorising these findings into the natural themes mentioned above, the method will give clear indications as to what extent populism is occurring.

Since this thesis is heavily linked to theory, especially to Moffitt's conceptualization of populism, it is natural to bring the theoretical framework into the method. This is why a theory driven approach with pre chosen themes and codes based on the theoretical framework of the thesis is suitable. By applying this approach, I am able to measure to what extent the different features of populism occur in the data compated to each other. In other words, I will be able to measure populism. According to Moffitt, populism as a political style can be measured and is not a question of whether or not it exists, but to what extent it is present[102].

The qualitative phase of the analysis is also suitable to this thesis. This is the phase where the actual meaning of the codes is extracted and analysed, and connections are made between the data, theory and the historical context. Nowell describes the quaitative part of thematic analysis as "… a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set"[103]. Hence, this phase lets the researcher subjectively link findings from the source material to existing theory and the 'bigger picture' of the situation. In other words, the thematic analysis makes it possible for the researcher to use existing literature to strengthen the findings collected in the analysis.

3.2 Challenges with this method

All research methods come with challenges and limitations, and thematic analysis is not exception. Firstly, the selection of material can always be questioned. Whether there is enough material or whether the selection is suitable for answering the research questions. To justify the choices made, the selected material will be explained and justified in the following sub-chapter.

Secondly, the analysis itself can never be purely objective in a thematic analysis. Even though the codes and themes are based on theory, the organization of the data (text) into codes and themes is dependent on interpretation by the researcher. Furthermore, extracting and interpreting meaning from the data can only be done on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the theoretical framework. Hence, the subjectivity or bias of the researcher have to be present for the meaning of the data to be extracted. In other words, to detect meaning from text, subjectivity has to be added into the equation. However, the use of systematic coding based on a theoretical framework, and the researcher's knowledge of the theory while extracting meaning from the data, will make sure that the analysis is credible.

3.3 Themes

The theory-driven approach indicated the need for a plan or a checklist prior to analysing data. In this case, I have constructed a codebook containing the main features (themes) of populism and the different shapes they can occur in (codes).

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[101]Aguinaldo, 2012, Qualitative Analysis in Gay Men's Health Research: Comparing Thematic, Critical Discourse, and Conversation Analysis, Journal of Homosexuality, 769.

[102] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 46.

[103] Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017, Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*

Themes	'The people'	'The elite'	'Bad manners'	'A sense of crisis'
Codes	Belief in the people	National politicians	Interrupting	Breakdown between the people and their representatives
	Closeness to the people	The establishment	Questioning science or statistics	Immigration
	Speaking on behalf of the people	The EU	Playfulness	Economic difficulties
	Native		Political incorrectness	Perceived injustice
				Military threat
				Social change

Table 1

These themes and codes are based on Moffit's theory of populism as a political style. The three main features of Moffit's theory is 'the people', 'bad manners' and 'a sense of crisis'. However, I have chosen to add a fourth theme to the codebook; 'the elite'. There are three main reasons behind this choice. Firstly, even though Moffitt has excluded 'the elite' form the list of the main components of populism, 'the elite' still has a dominant place within his theory. Secondly; the concept of 'the people' in Moffit's theory relies on the fact that there is another group that 'the people' are standing up against. Lastly; anti-elitism is a central element of populism according to different conceptualizations[104]. This is why I have chosen to bring in the forth theme of 'the elite' into my codebook and therefore my analysis.

3.3.1 'The people'

The theme of 'the people' has five codes, these are all examples of ways in which the speaker appeals to 'the people'. The codes chosen for the analysis are not exhaustive, but they are arguably the most central to the theme, based on the theory of Moffitt. The chosen codes are chosen to avoid too much overlap between the codes, in other words; there should be no codes too similar, this could result in text material being suitable for multiple codes within a theme. Furthermore, the chosen codes have been revised during the beginning phase of analysis. This has been done in an effort to eliminate codes that are not relevant for the selected material.

'Closeness to the people' is the first code. Seeing as populist leaders or speakers tend to focus on the divide between 'the people' and 'the elite', they need to stress that they themselves are not a part of 'the elite' but a part of 'the people'. This is often done by expression a closeness to 'the people' and distancing themselves away from 'the elite' and therefore other politicians. The second code is 'speaking on behalf of the people'. This code is closely linked to the second code. Being a part of 'the people' and not 'the elite', the populist leaders know what is in the best interest of 'the people' and can therefore speak on their behalf. The third code is 'native'. This code refers to mentions of 'the people' as the native citizens of the country or as a clear division between native Britons and immigrants. Even though many theorists argue that there are two groupings

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[104] Jagers & Walgrave, 2007, Populism as political communication style: An empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium, European Journal of Political Research, 46: 319-345

within populism; 'the people' and 'the elite', not everyone fits into one of the two. Immigrants or minorities are often excluded from 'the people' even though they do not qualify as 'the elite'. The fourth and final code is 'belief in the people'. This code refers to the abilities of 'the people' and the fact that 'the people' knows best and can run their own country[105].

3.3.2 'The elite'

The theme of 'the elite' consists of three codes; 'national politicians' 'the establishment' and 'the EU'. The code 'national politicians' refers to politicians who are not members of 'the people'. Populist leaders and politicians in their circle do not fall within this code seeing as they see themselves as a part of 'the people'. 'The establishment' refers to people in power, usually those with money and influence. National politicians could also be referred to as 'the establishment'. 'The EU' is arguably the biggest elite in this context. 'The EU' is portrayed as as far away from 'the people' as can be. This being due to the fact that they are both people in power, but also that they are not even part of the 'national group'.

3.3.3 'Bad manners'

The theme of 'bad manners' consists of four codes; 'interrupting', 'political incorrectness', 'playfulness', and 'questioning science and statistics'. The reason as to why there are several codes within this theme is because 'bad manners' is hard to define with only a few descriptions. 'Bad manners' can be defined as 'acting differently from what the average politician would', to actually being rude. However, the four codes chosen for this thematic analysis incorporate the different versions of 'bad manners' into one theme. As described in the theory chapter, 'bad manners' is a way for populist leaders to distance themselves from other politicians (the elite) and portray themselves as 'close to the people'[106].

3.3.4 'A sense of crisis'

The theme of 'a sense of crisis' consists of six codes; 'breakdown between the people and their representatives', 'immigration', 'economical difficulties', 'perceived injustice', 'military threat', and 'social change'. The code of 'breakdown between the people and their representatives' indicates that the national politicians who run the country have not acted according to what 'the people' want. Thus, there is a break between what should be done and what is actually being done. 'Immigration' as a code within this theme means that immigration and the movement of non-British people into Britain is seen as a threat or crisis. The third code is 'economical difficulties', which refers to the creation of a sense of economical crisis. The fourth code; 'perceived injustice' refers to the feeling of something being unfair or not done correctly. The fifth code, 'military threat' refers to any threat that can be linked to the use of military power or weapons. Lastly, 'social change' refers to the fear of something changing within your country or local community, a threat of the heartland.

However, simply talking of or mentioning immigration or the economy does not automatically qualify as creating 'a sense of crisis'. The context is important. The clue is in the wording of the theme; '*a sense of* crisis'. The theme is not simply 'a crisis'. The essential element to this theme is that *the feeling of* or *the sense of* a crisis or a threat is present. It does not have to be an actual crisis taking place, however, as long as the audience senses that there might be a crisis, the populist leader has succeeded[107].

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[105] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 44

[106] Ibid

[107] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 114

3.3.5 Writing up a report

After the initial quantitative phase of coding the material and categorizing the codes into themes, the qualitative phase starts. At this point of the analysis I already have data indicating what themes (populist features) are present, and to what extent each theme occurs within each source material. However, to be able to answer the second research question of this thesis, I need to analyse the data further.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the analysis will be structured with a total of four reports, one for each theme. In addition to demonstrating/discussing to what extent the theme is present, the report will also deal with the nature of each theme. For instance; the report for 'bad manners' will not only identify to what extent 'bad manners' is present in each source material, the report will also describe how 'bad manners' is depicted in the performance of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. In other words, the report will describe in detail what kind of 'bad manners' is present. The theory of populism as a political style can be linked with the different codes from the source material and therefore determine whether or not they classify as populist features. This will make it possible to find differences of populism between the eight source materials and between Johnson and Farage. Evidence, examples from the source material, will also be included in the analysis to validate the findings.

Hence, the reports will bring to light the nature of each theme for both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. This will make it possible for me to compare the political style of the two.

3.4 Chosen material

The chosen material selected for this thesis consists of a variety of different source material. The materials are all spoken communication of the two main figures on the Leave side of the campaign; Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. As described in chapter 1, historical context, Johnson and Farage are considered the two most influential key figures on the Leave side of the campaign. Johnson as one of the main figures in the official Vote Leave campaign, and Farage as the leader of the unofficial Leave.EU campaign. Their performance during the referendum campaign were therefore important seeing as they, as key figures, represent the general trends of the two campaigns.

The timeframe of the source material is from the day Boris Johnson announced that he would support Vote Leave, on the 21st of February 2016. This period is also known as the unofficial start of the campaign seeing as David Cameron announced the date of the vote on the 20th of February. The end date for the source material is the end of the campaign, more specifically; 22nd of June, the day before the vote. The material is spread out during this period, from the beginning stages of the campaign up until the final day before it was all decided. This has been done in an effort to try to capture the general trends throughout the campaign period.

There are a total of eight source materials, four interviews and four speeches. Two interviews and two speeches done by each actor. Looking at the material in chronological order, the first one is an interview of Boris Johnson where he announces his choice of rallying on the Leave side. The second source material is an interview of Nigel Farage on the same day. He is interviewed on Sky News on why he is campaigning alongside his former "enemy" George Galloway. Both of these interviews give information about where the two key figures stand and how they are presenting themselves at the very beginning of the race.

The third and fourth source materials are speeches, one of Johnson and one of Farage. Johnson's speech was held in mid-March, whilst Farage's speech was held in late April. Both can be classified as speeches held in the middle of the campaign period. Johnson's speech, held in a warehouse in Kent, focuses on how leaving the EU will boost economic growth. In Farage's speech, held in Westminster, he's main message is that Vote Leave, the official campaign, has to focus more on immigration. Both speeches are relatively short and precise, making them useful for this analysis. Speeches themselves

are interesting seeing as they are staged and practiced and aim to deliver a message without being interrupted by others. Compared to an interview, speeches let the person deliver their message without much limitation.

The final four source materials are dated to the month of June, the month of the vote. One speech and one interview by Johnson, and one speech and one interview by Farage. The reason for choosing these sources is that these materials, retrieved only a few weeks or days prior to the vote, emphasize political issues and rhetoric that appeal to voters and that will mobilize them.

Analysing speeches makes it possible to extract meaning from a carefully planned performance, while analysing interviews lets the researcher extract meaning from a performance that is less stanged. Hence, the variety in the materials lets the researcher investigate the performance of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage, not just at different times during the campaign, but also in different settings. The amount of materials, even when small, does provide information about general trends within the performance of the two politicians if patterns can be detected. That is why the selected source materials are sufficient and suitable when investigating the research questions.

4. Populism of Boris Johnson (Vote Leave) and Nigel Farage (Leave.EU): Findings and analysis.

This chapter will explore the source material of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage through the thematic analysis in an effort to locate populist features and to compare the political style of the two. To investigate the frequency of populist features in the source material, and to investigate how these features are being used by Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage in their performance, the analysis will look at both the quantitative data and the qualitative analysis. The material has been analysed systematically through several steps, as outlined in the methodology chapter, for this analysis to be able to determine to what extent and which elements of populist style are present. Furthermore, the qualitative phase will investigate *how* Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage use the populist features in their performance. The source material has been analysed through the four main themes as outlined in the methodology chapter; the people, the elite, bad manners, and a sense of crisis, and through the codes within these themes.

The analysis will present the findings of the thematic analysis, both the quantitative and the qualitative. The frequency of themes for both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage will be presented to give an indication of the extent of populism in their rhetoric. The qualitative analysis will extract the meaning of the data and try to answer how the codes and themes are being performed. The findings of both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage will be compared to find similarities and differences and hence investigate the main part of the research question.

4.1 The quantitative findings

The quantitative findings will give an indication as to which populist features were the most prominent within both Boris Johnson's and Nigel Farage's performance during the campaign. In other words, the data will give an overview of the populist style of the two. Furthermore, the findings from the quantitative analysis will make it possible to measure populism and therefore indicate the extent of populism in both politicians' performances compared to each other.

However, the amount of source material is not big enough to draw conclusions on to what extent the Leave side of the referendum campaign was populist. Nevertheless, the result gives an indication to the extent of populism and represents the general trends in the Leave campaign.

	Frequency of a theme appearing in the source material	
Themes	Boris Johnson	Nigel Farage
'The people'	6	8
'The elite'	9	10
'Bad manners'	5	4
'A sense of crisis'	10	13
Total amount of codes	30	35

Table 2

Table 2 presents the frequency in which the different populist themes were detected in the performance of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. Looking only at the quantitative data result, there seems to be no significant difference between Johnson and Farage in terms of the frequency of populist features in their performances. They both present a high frequency of codes related to 'the people', 'the elite' and 'a sense of crisis', while only a minor presence of 'bad manners' could be detected. Hence, compared to each other, their performances contained approximately the same amount of populist features. Thus indicating that their political styles were equally populist.

However, to analyse *how* someone performs populism, how someone uses the populist features, it is necessary to look beyond the quantitative dataset and move more towards the qualitative analysis.

4.2 Boris Johnson

The previous sub chapter presented the general overview of the materials and their patterns, as well as the extent of the different populist features in the performance of both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. This subchapter will move on to the qualitative analysis where the patterns will be analysed further in an effort to answer the second research question concerning what differences can be found in the populism of the two politicians. Hence, in an effort to investigate the difference in political style between Johnson and Farage, the populist features of the two will be analysed in detail.

4.2.1 Boris Johnson and the populist features in his performance

Moffitt argues that it is *the appeal* to the people that is relevant to populism as a political style[108]. 'The people' themselves can be classified as the native population of a nation, a heartland, or the working class. However, to investigate the specific details in a political style is, one has to look into *the appeal* to 'the people'. How do the speakers talk to their audience?

There are several ways in which the speaker can appeal to 'the people'. In this analysis I have focused on the four main ways of addressing 'the people' and used these as codes; 'closeness to the people', 'speaking on behalf of the people', 'native', and 'belief in the people'. These elements are different varieties of the appeal to 'the people' and will give information about how the speaker reaches out to their audience. In turn, this information will create knowledge about the differences between Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage and how they appeal to the people.

According to Moffitt, 'the people' are the true holders of sovereignty[109]. One could argue that a nation is not truly sovereign if 'the people' are not sovereign. Johnson says in his interview as he announces that he will support Vote Leave that: "*... when people talk about sovereignty, this is not something that is possessed by politicians. Sovereignty is people's ability, the ability of the public to control their lives.[110]*" This utterance falls within the code of 'belief in the people' due to Johnson's belief that 'the people' are able to control their own lives and make decisions of their own. During his speech on March 11th, Johnson said: "*We could strike free trade deals with America, with China, with the great economies around the world. With OUR officials, with UK officials.[111]*" This evidence shows how Johnson has belief in 'the people' to run their own country. However, in this example, UK officials are classified as 'the people', whilst at

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[108]Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 43

[109] Ibid

[110] Sky News, Boris Johnson Announces He Will Campaign For Britain To Leave The EU, Sky News, 21 February 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRjl4biSmZ4

[111] The Guardian, Boris Johnson backs Brexit in Dartford speech, The Guardian, 11 March 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/video/2016/mar/11/boris-johnson-backs-brexit-in-dartford-speech-video

other times, people in power are seen as 'the elite'. The reason why 'UK officials' can be classified as 'the people' is because they are compared to EU officials. Compared to foreign, supranational powers, UK officials can be seen as 'native' and therefore a form of 'the people'.

Johnson is appealing to 'the people' by giving them his absolute trust. Through his speeches and interviews he puts his trust in the people to run their own country. During his speech only days before the vote he said: "*They say we have no choice but to bow down to Brussels, we say they are woefully underestimating this country and what it can do.*"[112] Once again, he is putting his trust in the British people and their ability to run their own country. Seeing as the campaign is for a referendum, a situation where 'the people' actually do have power, the 'belief in the people' can refer to two scenarios; believing that 'the people' can make the decision about staying or leaving the EU, and believing that 'the people' can run their own country without the EU.

These findings indicate that Boris Johnson's appeal to 'the people' is focused on him putting his trust in their hands. He makes it clear through his performance that he wants 'the people' to run their own country and not be controlled by a foreign entity. The next few paragraphs will analyse how Boris Johnson portrays 'the elite'. This will give further information about the populist style of Boris Johnson.

The populist feature 'the elite' is closely linked with the feature of 'the people'. In the vast majority of theories on populism, 'the elite' is the enemy of 'the people', and 'the people' need to stand up against 'the elite' to achieve the will of the people[113]. This group of people can be anyone in power, people with money, people with a lot of influence. In other words, 'the elite' is not the average person with a regular job, living an ordinary life. In this analysis I have chosen three codes to categorise the theme of 'the elite'; 'national politicians', 'the establishment' and 'the EU'.

The EU was the entity that a majority of the people in the UK wanted to seperate from, making it natural for Johnson to bring the EU up as the enemy; 'the elite'. One could argue that Johnson's view of the EU was that of 'the biggest enemy' of 'the people' in the campaign. During his speech on 11th of March, he said: "*And if we burst out of the shackles of Brussels we would be able to begin immediately with those long neglected free trade opportunities.*"[114] He portrayed the EU as something that is keeping the UK away from economic opportunities. In other words, 'the people' would benefit from setting themselves free from 'the shackles of Brussels'. 'The elite' is often portrayed as the entity that has left 'the people' ripped off, rendered powerless or badly governed[115], this is exactly what Johnsons was trying to portray the EU as. During his interview in June 2016, he also went after the EU and portrayed it as an organisation that controls the economy of Britain, and controls it in a "dodgy way":

> … Because that is the figure that we cannot control. Some of it is spent on this country by Brussel's bureaucrats, some of it comes back as part of the rebate. But that is at the discretion of the EU. And most of it, some of it, half of it, we never see again. It just vanishes. And it is spent in a way that's extremely dodgy. And very often, as you know, it is the subject of corruption.[116]

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[112] RealClear Politics, Brexit: Boris Johnson Declares That June 23 Could Be British "Independence Day", RealClear Politics, 21 June 2016, https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2016/06/21/boris_johnson_declares_june_23_could_be_british_independence_day.html

[113] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 44

[114] The Guardian, Boris Johnson backs Brexit in Dartford speech, The Guardian, 11 March 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/video/2016/mar/11/boris-johnson-backs-brexit-in-dartford-speech-video

[115] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 44

[116] Good Morning Britain, Boris Johnson On Being Called A Liar And The Brexit Campaign | Good Morning Britain, ITV News, 22 June 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vp2jUbNtNVA

By analysing the material by Johnson, it becomes clear who the enemy, 'the elite', of his campaign really is; the EU. The EU is portrayed by Johnson as a foreign entity that does not benefit 'the people'. He is portraying the EU as 'the elite' by portraying it as an enemy to 'the people'. He does this by focusing on how the EU has control over Britain's economy and that the EU does not favour British interests. In other words, Boris Johnson paints a picture of an EU that is holding Britain back from its financial potential.

The third theme of this analysis is 'bad manners'. Moffitt's theory of populism as a political style defines 'bad manner' as a tool that populists use in an effort to place themselves closer to 'the ordinary person' and further away from 'the elite' or more established politicians[117]. Politicians do try to show off their ordinary side from time to time, such as showing their love for sports. However, populists take it to the extreme[118]. This could be by making fun of other politicians who are highly educated or drinking beer alongside ordinary people.

The source material of Boris Johnson does not contain many codes of 'bad manners', only one of the four materials contains 'bad manners'. This source is the TV interview that Boris Johnson did in June where the main topic was the economy. This source contains two different codes; 'interrupting' and 'playfulness'.

Boris Johnson shows off his playful side as he is asked whether or not he is a 'big fat liar'. To that he answers; *"I can't, eh, say much about my weight at the moment..."*[119]. By being playful he distances himself away from the political elements of the conversation and demonstrates his more 'human' side, placing himself amongst 'the people'. Moffitt argues that these tactics are used to distance oneself away from the political elite[120]. By being playful he signals that he is not like the other established politicians, he is a normal guy. In other words, he can be seen as relatable to ordinary people when he employs these 'bad manners'.

'Bad manners' can not be detected on a large scale through the use of thematic analysis. In contrast to the other populist features, 'bad manners' can only be found in a minority of the source material. However, the codes that were present in Boris Johnson's source material indicates that Boris Johnson did use 'bad manners' in a way to distance himself away from 'the elite' and to get closer to 'the people'.

The fourth theme of this analysis is 'a sense of crisis'. This is also one of the core features of populism as a political style[121]. Moffitt defines this feature as a performance by the populist where he or she creates a sense of a crisis that is either happening or will happen soon[122]. By setting the stage for a crisis, 'the people' are made to feel as though 'the elite' is to blame for letting the crisis happen or that 'the elite' is creating the crisis. Furthermore, this sense of crisis makes 'the people' turn to the populist for a solution rather than 'the elite' who are to blame[123].

In the interview that Boris Johnson gave as he announced that he was to support Vote Leave, he said *"... I now think [the EU] is in real danger of getting out of proper democratic control"*[124]. This can be classified as 'a breakdown between the people and their representatives' seeing as 'the people' are being let down by 'the elite' now that a membership equals a lack of democracy. This statement by Boris Johnson can also be seen in light of theory on populism as a political style; he is setting the stage and

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[117] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 57

[118] Ibid

[119] Ibid

[120] Ibid, 58

[121] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 45

[122] Ibid, 121

[123] Ibid, 131

[124] Sky News, Boris Johnson Announces He Will Campaign For Britain To Leave The EU, Sky News, 21 February 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRjl4biSmZ4

performing a crisis where the people feel as though they are being let down by their representatives[125].

In Boris Johnson's speech two days prior to the vote, he said "*If we stand up for democracy, we will be speaking up for hundreds of millions of [European Union citizens] who agree with us but currently have no voice.*"[126] He is creating a sense of injustice for all European Union citizens by portraying them as powerless in an unfair situation. At the same time, Boris Johnson is making it clear that 'the people' of Britain can mobilize and change the situation. In other words, Johnson is performing a 'sense of crisis' and at the same time serving the people a solution to the crisis.

In both examples presented above, the sense of crisis is directly linked with the EU and a lack of democracy. Boris Johnson is creating a scenario where 'the people' have to act immediately if they are to save the situation. He does this by pointing out that the EU is not democratic, in other words; not letting 'the people' choose for themselves. To avoid the crisis, 'the people' have to vote to leave the problem itself, leave the EU. To summarise, Boris Johnson created a sense of crisis where the crisis is the lack of democracy and the blame should be put on the EU.

4.3 Nigel Farage

As the populist style of Boris Johnson has been analysed in detail, this subchapter will investigate the populist style of Nigel Farage. This information will make it possible to compare the two politicians and their populist style and hence make it possible to investigate the second research question.

4.3.1 Nigel Farage and the populist features

Moffitt writes about different ways in which a populist can appeal to 'the people'. One of the ways is by distancing oneself away from 'the elite' to prove a closeness to the people[127]. By proving a closeness to 'the people', the speaker can use this as reason as to why he or she knows what 'the people' want. In other words, seeing as the speaker is a part of 'the people', she or he can speak on their behalf. By analysing Farage's speeches and interviews, one can clearly find evidence of such behaviour. During his interview in February 2016, he was asked by the interviewer: "*They (the Conservatives) don't want anything to do with you, do they?*" and Farage answered: "*... lord no! I'm beneath them, I'm far too common to have anything to do with them*."[128] This answer has been coded as 'closeness to the people' seeing as he is clearly distancing himself from the more established politicians and pointing out that he is more 'common'. During his speech in April he said: "*... unlimited number of people from EU countries settling in this country and enjoying the same rights and privileges as all the rest of us.*"[129] including himself in the last word. Once again putting himself in the position of 'everyone else'.

Similarly to Johnson, Farage also appealed to 'the people' by 'speaking on behalf of the people' and by having 'belief in the people'. However, Farage's material includes

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[125] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 131

[126] RealClear Politics, Brexit: Boris Johnson Declares That June 23 Could Be British "Independence Day", RealClear Politics, 21 June 2016, https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2016/06/21/boris_johnson_declares_june_23_could_be_british_independence_day.html

[127] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 44

[128] Sky News, Nigel Farage Explains Why He's Campaigning Alongside George Galloway To Leave The EU, Sky News, 21 February 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7OpwNHm6i5E

[129] BBC News, EU referendum: Nigel Farage tells Leave campaigners to focus on migration, BBC News, 29 April 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36167329

codes of 'native'. One example being; "*... open door migration and the effect that it's had on the lives of ordinary Britons.*"[130] Farage makes it clear that 'the people' does not include immigrants, only "ordinary" Britons.

By analysing Nigel Farage and his appeal to 'the people', there are two patterns that appears. Firstly, Nigel Farage often places himself amongst 'the people', creating a sense of closeness to the people. This closeness is portrayed in a way that can make 'the people' trust him more seeing as he is one of them. Secondly, Nigel Farage includes the element of 'native' in his appeal to 'the people'. He does this by including words such as "Britons" to point out who is actually included in 'the people'.

Nigel Farage makes it clear throughout his performance that he is distancing himself away from 'the elite'. During his speech in late April 2016, he said: "*We gotta start attacking the enemy's goal, and where the enemy is at their absolute weakest is on this whole question of open door migration...*"[131] He is referring to the Remain side of the campaign, in other words; national politicians. By directly attacking other politicians he is once again positioning himself away from 'other politicians' and placing himself amongst 'the people'. He is not afraid to "pick a fight" with 'the elite' and to make enemies. He is, in other words, willing to step on people's toes to win the campaign.

The source material of Nigel Farage also contain elements of 'bad manners'. However, there are only a total of four codes of 'bad manners' in the material. One of the codes is 'questioning science and statistics'. To question science and statistics is often linked with populism seeing as science is often associated with 'the elite' and those with a higher education[132]. 'Ordinary people' do not need fancy science, they just need action and change. Nigel Farage said during his speech in late April that net migration numbers had been running at record levels "*and that's if you believe the official figures which seem to be corrected by the week*"[133]. He indicates that the numbers are too high and needs to be lower, and that he suspects that the numbers might be even higher seeing as he does not trust the official numbers. Utterances such as this are examples of 'bad manner' since Farage is questioning statistics, creating an even bigger gap between 'the people' and those in power who are in change of publishing these numbers. In other words, he is once again creating a bigger gap between 'the people', himself included, and 'the elite'.

As mentioned above, 'immigration' was the most frequent code within the 'a sense of crisis' theme in the material of Nigel Farage. This is not surprising seeing as immigration was the number one issue for the Leave.EU campaign. However; talking about immigration does not qualify as a code within the theme of 'a sense of crisis', Nigel Farage has to create a sense of crisis associated with immigration for it to be classified as a code. He does create this 'sense of crisis' during his speech in late April when he says: "*When Theresa May says that it is difficult to control immigration as a member of the European Union, she's wrong. It isn't difficult, it's impossible!*"[134] He focuses on how immigration is impossible to control as a member state, making it seem as though Britain has to leave the union to be able to control immigration. He is being very direct and to the point in his rhetoric. He creates a feeling of crisis by portraying the immigration issue as black and white. By using the word "impossible" he makes it seem as though Britain has no other choice than to leave the EU.

At the end of the same speech, Farage performs a sense of crisis again as he says "*... there is nothing we can do to stop unlimited numbers of people from EU countries settling in this country and enjoying the same rights and privileges as all the rest of*

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[130] Ibid

[131] Ibid

[132] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 58

[133] BBC News, EU referendum: Nigel Farage tells Leave campaigners to focus on migration, BBC News, 29 April 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36167329

[134] Ibid

us."[135] This is classified as a code within 'a sense of crisis' because of how Farage creates a feeling of hopelessness unless changes are made. According to his performance, there is a crisis happening at that moment that needs to be fixed.

Similarly to the examples above, Farage creates a sense of crisis when it comes to the economy as well. However, in this example he creates a sense of a crisis that will be upon the British people in the future instead of at that exact moment. According to Moffitt, 'a sense of crisis' can be created of a situation taking place in the moment or in the future[136]. During an interview in late June Farage said

> If we wish to take part of a political union whose currency has pushed millions into poverty, and whose open door migration policy has led to massive political change across the north of Europe… These are serious issues, I don't want us to be part of a failing EU.[137]

In his statement Farage is portraying crises in other EU member states and drawing conclusions that Britain will soon find itself in the same situation due to their EU membership.

The recurring pattern within Nigel Farage's performance of 'a sense of crisis' is that he is very assertive in his rhetoric. He portrays the situation as an 'either or' issue where there is either membership and no control, or no membership and full control. Nigel Farage presents only one solution to the crisis, to leave the EU.

4.4 Comparing Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage

This section will present the differences and similarities between the findings in Boris Johnson's and Nigel Farage's source material. By comparing the two sets of analysis, this section will investigate the different populist styles of the two in an effort to answer the research question. The next subchapter will look at the differences between the quantitative findings and investigate the first research question. The following subchapter will investigate the qualitative findings and identify the similarities and differences within the populism of the two politicians. Hence, this section will investigate the second research question.

4.4.1 Comparing Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage, the quantitative findings

The quantitative analysis was able to give an indication as to the level of populist style that could be detected in the source material. The four themes, 'the people', 'the elite', 'bad manners' and 'a sense of crisis' were all present for both Johnson and Farage. However, whilst 'the people', 'the elite' and 'a sense of crisis' had a relatively high frequency of appearances, 'bad manners' was less present in the source material. 'Bad manners' could only be detected in three out of the eight materials. Judging only on the quantitative analysis, 'bad manners' did not seem to be a dominant feature in the political style of Johnson and Farage.

By looking at the amount of codes for each theme for both Johnson and Farage, the findings indicate that the four themes' frequency within both politician's material were quite similar. The findings indicate that both Nigel Farage's and Boris Johnson's political style contained the populist features of 'the people', 'the elite' and 'a sense of crisis', and at times they had 'bad manners'. In other words, the quantitative findings indicate that both politicians had a populist style during the referendum campaign, and that there were no significant difference in the level of populism between the two.

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[135] Ibid

[136] Moffitt, 2016, The Global Rise of Populism, Stanford University Press, 45

[137] Peston, Nigel Farage Interviewed by Robert Peston - 19th June 2016, ITV, 19 June 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdOEcDUkU6o

4.4.2 Comparing Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage, the qualitative findings

The previous section provided an overview of the main themes of populism as a political style in the performance of both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. The overview indicates that both politicians performed the four features in different ways. This section will compare the findings from the qualitative analysis in an effort to investigate these differences and similarities between the two. The purpose of this comparison is to be able to distinguish between how Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson perform populism.

The codes within the theme of 'the people' found in the material of Johnson and Farage were different. While Johnson's appeal to 'the people' is centered around his belief and trust in 'the people' and their decision making, Farage focused more on including himself within 'the people' to make his own arguments that of 'the people'. Hence, he was speaking on behalf of the people. This can be seen whenever Johnson talked about 'the people' as he was most likely to express his trust and belief in the people. On the other hand, Farage was most likely to place himself among 'the people' during his performances.

The second theme; 'the elite' can also be detected in most of the source materials for both Johnson and Farage. However, whilst Johnson portrayed the EU as the true enemy, Farage was more likely to classify other national politicians as 'the elite' as well as the EU. These findings indicates that 'the elite' are two different groups of people depending on whether you listen to Johnson or Farage. In other words, according to Johnson, the true enemy of 'the people', 'the elite', is considered to be the EU. Contrarily, according to Farage, 'the elite' is anyone other than 'the people' who has any sort of power or influence.

The third theme, 'bad manners' was also similar within the performance of Johnson and Farage. However, as mentioned earlier, this theme was the only one that was not detected on a larger scale. Seeing as there were a lack of codes from the 'bad manners' theme detected in the source material, it is difficult to gather any information from these codes. Based on the codes detected in the analysis, neither Johnson nor Farage were performing 'bad manners' to any significant extent.

The final theme, 'a sense of crisis' was the most frequently detected theme in the performance of both Johnson and Farage. The most striking difference was what crisis they emphasised; Johnson focused on democracy and the economical disadvantages of an EU membership and the economical advantages of leaving the EU. Farage, on the other hand, had his eye on immigration. Farage created a sense of crises concerning the level of immigration coming into Britain today, and also what these levels of immigration can cause. However, while analysing how Farage was creating 'a sense of crisis', it became clear that Farage was performing different from Johnson. Farage focused more on the immediate danger of staying in the EU and how the only option was to leave the EU.

These findings have shown that the performance of Boris Johnson during the referendum campaign included the features of 'the people', 'the elite' and 'a sense of crisis', and a smaller amount of 'bad manners'. These features are the core features of Moffitt's populism as a political style. In other words, Boris Johnson had a populist political style during the referendum campaign. Seeing as all of the core features were detected, one can argue that Johnson was indeed populist during the referendum campaign. The exact same can be said for Nigel Farage and his political style during the same period. However, there are multiple differences within their populism.

One difference is *who* they consider 'the elite' to be; Johnson portraying the EU as the enemy, while Farage also classifies national politicians as the enemy of the people. Another difference between the two is how they appeal to the people. While Johnson expresses his belief in the people and their ability to both decide for themselves and to run their own country, Farage focuses more on placing himself within 'the people'. Lastly, what crisis Johnson and Farage focus on is different; Johnson expresses concern for the economy while Farage is focusing on immigration.

5. Discussion

While working on this thesis I have investigated the research questions; How populist was the rhetoric of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage compared to each other during the Brexit referendum campaign? And what were the differences between the populism of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage? The findings in the analysis will provide further knowledge about populism during the referendum campaign as well as bringing light to the differences that can occur within populism as a political style. This chapter will discuss the level of populism in the performance of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage during the referendum campaign in comparison to each other. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss the differences found within the two politicians' performances. This will be done in an effort to answer the research questions.

The quantitative findings of the analysis indicate to what extent the performance of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage were populist compared to one another. Seeing as both politicians' source material contained codes within the themes 'the people', 'the elite', 'bad manners' and 'a sense of crisis', I argue that their styles were populist and that they seem to be the same amount of populist. However, seeing as 'bad manners' was present within both politicians' performances but only in a minority of the material, one can argue that neither one performed populism to the highest degree. As an answer to the first research question, the quantitative findings indicate that compared to each other, Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage were approximately the same amount of populist, only difference being that the material of Farage contained five more codes than the material of Johnson[138], indicating that Farage was slightly more populist in his political style.

The divided front of the Leave side of the campaign was perhaps more united than one would think at first glance. Even though they at times focused on different issues, the findings of my analysis show that the two key figures of the two campaigns on the Leave side were surprisingly similar. Both in the level of populist style, and also in their performance of populism. These results do not paint a picture of a divided front on the Leave side. On the contrary, these findings indicate that Vote Leave and Leave.EU, with their front figures as representatives, were pulling in the same direction.

Arguably the biggest difference between Johnson and Farage was their performance of 'a sense of crisis'. As described in the analysis, Farage focused on immigration as the greatest crisis and he created a sense of crisis by portraying immigration as a problem. Being negative towards immigrants and immigration in general, is considered taboo by many. However, as a representative for Leave.EU and UKIP, Farage is well known for his political fight to reduce immigration into the UK. Hence, it does not come as a surprise that immigration served as one of the main issues of his referendum campaign as well. UKIP's voters, Farage's voters, are used to the negative framing of immigration, hence, focusing on immigration as a problem during the referendum campaign will most likely not scare voters away from UKIP in a later election. Therefore, the risk of losing support by fronting a taboo issue is relatively small, and Farage can therefore use immigration as his focus point in the creation of a sense of crisis.

Boris Johnson, on the other hand, does not focus his attention on immigration to the same extent. Instead, he focuses on the lack of democracy as a member state in the EU. Furthermore, when he does mention immigration, he stresses how immigration in itself is good, but not when it is not controlled. He comes across as more careful in his rhetoric about immigrants and tends to turn the focus towards the EU as the root problem, not the immigrants themselves. Hence, Boris Johnson focused more on 'the elite' when he performed 'a sense of crisis', in other words; the ones who are to blame for the crisis. Ever since Margaret Thatcher was prime minister, the Conservatives have become more and more eurosceptic. As a member of the Conservatives, it seems as though Boris Johnson is sticking to his party's views by associating the EU as 'the elite' and with 'a sense of crisis'.

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[138] See Table 1

However, the two politicians do perform 'a sense of crisis' in a similar fashion. Even though they focus on separate crisis, Farage on immigration and Johnson on the democratic deficit of the EU, they both perform 'the sense of' their separate crisis similarly. They both focus on the loss of control, and the need for taking back control, creating a sense of urgency. These tactics create the feeling of having to act immediately to either solve the problem or to avoid a problem from occurring. Moffitt argues that it is not *what* is performed that determines whether or not someone is a populist, but *how* the issue is performed to create a sense of crisis.

This information is interesting because Farage is often thought of as more populist than Johnson mainly due to his focus on immigration. Immigration has long been associated with populism, however, one cannot prove populism off of face value. Someone might seem populist due to the issues they discuss, however, there needs to be theory driven research done to be able to make such claims. The findings in this thesis indicate that Farage and Johnson perform the populist feature of 'a sense of crisis' in a similar fashion. They both created a 'sense of crisis' by framing an issue as a problem that needed immediate action to take place in an effort to solve it. Based on Moffitt's conceptualization of populism, these findings indicate that both politicians were performing populism.

In an effort to answer the second research question of 'what were the differences between the populism of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage?', this thesis has compared the findings of the two politicians. These findings and the comparison indicate that even though there are significant differences in the content of their rhetoric, their performed political styles were quite similar. They both appealed to 'the people', performed an 'anti-elite' sentiment, had traces of 'bad manner' in their performances, and created a 'sense of crisis'. However, there are three main differences between the two; firstly, while Johnson appealed to 'the people' by showing his belief in them, Farage placed himself within 'the people' and spoke on their behalf. Secondly, Johnson portrayed the EU as 'the elite', while Farage classified anyone in power or with influence as 'the elite'. And lastly, the 'sense of crisis' was centered around immigration in the performance of Farage, while Johnson focused on the democratic deficit of the EU.

One can assume that Nigel Farage and his unofficial Leave.EU campaign has been labelled populist mostly off of face value due to the typical populist sentiments that he focused on during the referendum campaign. This might also be the reason as to why Boris Johnson and the official Vote Leave campaign is more rarely classified as populist. My findings show that Johnson did not focus his attention towards typical populist sentiments such as immigration. However, these populist sentiments do not define a political style. Simply discussing immigration does not classify as a populist feature. However, framing immigration, or any other issue, as a problem that needs immediate attention, is a populist feature. I therefore argue that the political style of both Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson were populist during the referendum campaign.

Previous research has argued that Brexit itself was a populist movement due to the focus on 'the people' against 'the elite' and the presence of a 'threat'. Other studies have argued that Nigel Farage is a populist. These findings fit well with my findings in this thesis. However, I did not focus on labeling Brexit itself, but rather the performance of the key figures. Nevertheless, my research points to the same general trends that previous research has shown; that populism was present in the Brexit referendum. However, the findings of this paper adds to the existing research due to its focus on the populist style of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. My findings indicate that the face value of someone's political style can be misleading. This is due to my findings indicating that Boris Johnson's populist political style was surprisingly similar to that of Nigel Farage who is considered to be more populist off of face value.

5.1 Limitations and recommendations for future research

The result of my research is an important step towards a better understanding of populism in the Leave campaign, especially in relation to Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. By using the thematic analysis I was able to measure the level of populism in the

performances of both politicians compared to each other, as well as extract meaning from the populist features detected in their rhetoric. However, there are limitations to my research that have to be mentioned. Firstly, the sample size is not extensive enough to conclude on the level of populism amongst the Leave side throughout the campaign period, nor is it large enough to conclude on all aspects of Boris Johnson's and Nigel Farage's political style. Nevertheless, my findings do present an indication to the general patterns of populism in the Leave campaign and are therefore representative of the overall trends within Vote Leave and Leave.EU. Secondly, even though the methodological choice of this thesis has made it possible to measure populism and extract meaning from the rhetoric, thematic analysis made it difficult to detect features such as 'bad manners' which are more aesthetic than rhetorical.

Hence, if I had more time and space I would like to have analysed the aesthetic features of the performances of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. This would have given an even better overall understanding of how populism as a political style was present during the 2016 referendum campaign. Moreover, for further research I would recommend to analyse the performance of key figures on the Remain side of the campaign as well. This would create an even better understanding of how the two sides operated, their similarities and their differences in regards to their political style.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to answer the research questions 'how populist was the rhetoric of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage compared to each other during the Brexit referendum campaign?' and 'what were the differences between the populism of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage?'. This has been done in an effort to better understand populism on the Leave side in the referendum campaign. The performance of the two key figures on the Leave side, Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson, have been analysed to try to answer the research questions. I have used thematic analysis to analyse source material of both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. Two speeches and two interviews from both of them, a total of eight materials, have been analysed. These have been analysed through the theoretical framework of Benjamin Moffitt who conceptualizes populism as a political style.

Moffitt's conceptualisation explains populism as a political style with four core features; the appeal to 'the people', 'the elite', 'bad manner' and 'a sense of crisis'. By using these core features as the theory behind the analysis, I was able to use the features as themes in the thematic analysis. Based on the findings from my analysis I argue that both Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage were populist during the referendum campaign. Judging from the frequency of the themes in the source material, Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage were equally populist in their performance.

Based on the qualitative analysis I argue that the answer to the second research question is as follows; the populism of Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage were surprisingly similar during the referendum campaign seeing as they performed the four core features in a similar fashion. However, there were a few differences in their performance. Boris Johnson expressed his belief in 'the British people', portrayed the EU as the ultimate enemy, and created a sense of crisis surrounding the democratic deficit of the EU. Nigel Farage, on the other hand, spoke on behalf of 'the people', portrayed people in power as 'the elite', and created a sense of crisis surrounding immigration.

This thesis has resulted in new insight into populist performances during the referendum campaign because it has compared the two key figures on the Leave side of the campaign. Nigel Farage has been considered the most populist during the campaign by the vast majority of articles, studies and by the media. However, many of these assumptions have been made based on face value due to the typical populist sentiments that Farage focus on, such as immigration. The findings in this thesis indicate that Boris Johnson was similarly populist in his performance. Hence, basing assumptions about populism off of face value can be misleading.

As populism is on the rise in Europe and other countries around the world, it is essential to understand populism seeing as it is a significant part of the political landscape. Being able to detect populism, even the populist who do not seem populist off of face value, is therefore important if one is to understand populism and politics.

The fact that my analysis indicates that the populist performances of Boris Johnson was similar to that of Nigel Farage is interesting. These findings indicate that populism can be performed without the typical populist sentiments. Hence, further research into populism as a political style and into other political actors should be persued.

7. Literature

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8. Appendix

This section of this paper will explore the relevance of my thesis in my profession as a teacher.

As a teacher I am qualified to teach English, social science and religion. This master's thesis is mainly relevant for the English classroom, however, it has also given me insight into the political landscape and into rhetoric used in political settings, and it is therefore relevant while teaching social science as well.

However, it is most noticeably relevant to my career as an English teacher. I am obliged to follow the English subject curriculum while teaching English. A part of the new curriculum focuses on interdisciplinary topics, one of these is the topic 'democracy and citizenship'. This topic is a part of the English curriculum to teach students about culture and how their worldview is largely affected by the culture they grew up in[139]. Using my knowledge about Brexit and the UK can therefore be highly useful while educating students. I can use the information to create conversations and discussions concerning culture and people's view on the world, and why British worldviews might be different from Norwegians' worldview.

There are several competence aims that I need to focus on during my teaching as an English teacher, one of them being "explore and reflect on the diversity and social conditions of the English-speaking world based on historical contexts"[140]. This competence aim instructs me to introduce my students to current situations in English speaking countries, and to connect these with historical contexts. Euroscepticism and populism are great examples of current phenomenons in an English speaking country that can be connected to a larger historical context. Hence, my master's thesis is of great value when teaching on the basis of this competence aim.

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[139] Utdanningsdirektoratet, "Tverrfaglige teamer" 2020, https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04/om-faget/tverrfaglige-temaer

[140] "utforske og reflektere over mangfold og samfunnsforhold i den engelskspråklige verden ut fra historiske sammenhenger" (my translation), Utdanningsdirektoratet, Kompetansemål og vurdering, 2020, https://www.udir.no/lk20/eng01-04/kompetansemaal-og-vurdering/kv6