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Supply and Demand

Identifying Populist Parties in Europe and Explaining their Electoral Performance

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
July, 2011

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

Contents

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List of Abbreviations[*]

AWS	Solidarity Electoral Action (Poland)
AWSP	Solidarity Electoral Action of the Right (AWSP)
BNP	British National Party
CBOS	Public Opinion Research Centre (Warsaw, Poland)
CD	Centre Democrats (the Netherlands)
CDA	Christian Democrats (the Netherlands)
CEEC	Central and Eastern European country
CP	Centre Party (the Netherlands)
D66	Democrats 66 (the Netherlands)
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
FPTP	First Past the Post
LN	Liveable Netherlands
LPF	List Pim Fortuyn (the Netherlands)
LPR	League of Polish Families
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NF	National Front (UK)
PC	Centre Agreement (Poland)
PiS	Law and Justice (Poland)
PO	Civic Platform (Poland)
PR	Proportional Representation
PSL	Polish Peasant Party
PvdA	Labour Party (the Netherlands)
PVN	Party for the Netherlands
PVV	Freedom Party (the Netherlands)
PZPR	Polish United Workers Party
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
SLD	Democratic Left Alliance (Poland)
SMP	Single Member Plurality
SNP	Scottish National Party

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[*] For the sake of brevity, this list does not include all the populist parties (and usual suspects or borderline cases) discussed in Chapter 2.

SO	Self Defence (Poland)
SP	Socialist Party (the Netherlands)
SSP	Scottish Socialist Party
TON	Proud of the Netherlands
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UP	Labour Union (Poland)
UW	Freedom Union (Poland)
VVD	Liberal Party (the Netherlands)

Acknowledgements

In the process of carrying out my research and writing up this dissertation I could rely on the invaluable support of a substantial amount of people. Without their comments and encouragement, this dissertation would not have taken its present form, if it had been written at all. First of all, I thank my supervisors Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart. Owing to their intensive guidance at the very early stages of the process I was able to promptly and confidently get the project underway. The meetings that followed always provided me with a clear sense of direction. I must thank my supervisors for the enjoyable and fruitful discussions, their invaluable comments and suggestions to improve my work, their encouragement, and also for unmistakably making clear when I was worrying too much about things not really worth worrying about. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with them.

I am also grateful to the course conveners I have worked with in the past three years: Paul Webb, Dan Hough, Tim Bale, James Hampshire, Mark Bennister and Paul Taggart. They have given me the opportunity to build up teaching experience and to develop the valuable skills related to it. I would also like to thank the other members of the Politics and Contemporary European Studies department and the Sussex European Institute for contributing to the friendly and collegial atmosphere I have been working in during the past four years. Special thanks go out to departmental coordinator Amanda Simms and my fellow research students (not in the last place for bearing with me during more stressful periods). Special special thanks go out to the ones part of the preceding 'generation' of DPhil students who have been present at the time of my arrival, and throughout most of my years at Sussex, for making me feel at home so quickly: John FitzGibbon, Martine Huberty and Dan Keith. I cherish the great moments I shared with my friends and colleagues, on and off campus.

A large number of people outside Sussex have also been instrumental to the substantive progress of my research. I am grateful to the many scholars listed in Appendix A who have been very helpful in analysing populist parties across Europe. The (anonymous) scholars who have shared their knowledge in the three conducted expert surveys have also been of great help. I am also indebted to the interviewees listed in Appendix C who took the time to speak with me and to share their insights. I would further like to thank Simona Guerra and Bartek Napieralski for their feedback on a draft of the Polish case study chapter and Sabina Avdagic, Emelie Lilliefeldt and Barbara Vis for their elaborate comments on provisional QCA analyses. In addition, I am grateful to Dan Keith, Nard and Jaco van Kessel and Saskia Hollander who have spent considerable time and effort proofreading the first draft of this dissertation and

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

STIJN THEODOOR VAN KESSEL

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SUPPLY AND DEMAND. IDENTIFYING POPULIST PARTIES IN EUROPE AND EXPLAINING THEIR ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE.

SUMMARY

The past decades have witnessed a surge in the scholarly use of the concept 'populism', especially where the European context is concerned. Populism is a problematic concept, however, as it is often ill-defined and haphazardly applied. The surge of populism is, nevertheless, important as it is considered to be an indicator for the state of representative democracy. This study has two main aims. The first is to relate the concept populism to political parties and to identify the populist parties that have recently managed to enter parliament in 31 European countries. In the European context, populism has predominantly been associated with extreme or radical right parties. This study broadens the scope by also considering populist parties that are not typical examples of this type of party. This dissertation further contributes to the scholarly literature by moving beyond Western Europe and studying populist parties across the whole of Europe. An important lesson of this dissertation is that scholars should be very careful when applying the concept populism to political parties to prevent further concept-stretching. The second aim of the study is to explain the electoral performance of populist parties in Europe. A relatively novel technique, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), is applied. This method is particularly geared at demonstrating causal complexity. The results of this analysis are triangulated with three in-depth qualitative case studies of populist parties in three countries: The Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom. The study explicitly focuses on the agency of political parties and the credibility of populist parties in particular. In addition to the presence of a conducive environment, this turns out to be a crucial factor in explaining the electoral performance of populist parties. Further comparative research should, therefore, not refrain from taking the agency of populist parties themselves into account.

1 **Introduction**

It's the people's will. I am their leader; I must follow them.

- James Hacker

1.1 Setting the Scene

The quote of fictional Minister James Hacker captures the essence of 'populism', at least how the term is used in this dissertation, quite well[1]. Populism is based on a notion of a, more or less unified, people whose values and interests should directly be translated into political decisions. The personal interests of politicians should not play any role. That is not to say that leaders are redundant. Since the people have something better to do with their lives than to be involved in politics, there ought to be a leader that speaks and acts in the name of the people. According to the populist logic, then, the leader essentially follows.

Although populist rhetoric can be applied by any (political) actor, this study seeks to apply the concept more specifically to political parties. Populist parties are parties that express the populist logic and that criticise the established parties for being unresponsive to the ideas and interests of the 'ordinary people'. The aim of this dissertation is, firstly, to identify the populist parties across Europe that have managed to enter national parliament in recent elections. Due to the conceptual problems surrounding the term 'populism', this is not a straightforward task, as will be discussed in Section 1.2 of this chapter. Apart from this conceptually oriented effort, the study tries to explain the electoral performance, success *and* failure, of these populist parties. The electoral performance of populist parties is an important matter, as it is considered to serve as an indicator for the (perceived or actual) responsiveness of the established political parties and the state of representative democracy more generally (see e.g. Mény and Surel 2002; Taggart 2002; Panizza 2005). This dissertation thus seeks to answer the questions which political parties in contemporary Europe can be identified as populist parties and how the electoral performance of these parties can be explained.

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[1] James Hacker is the fictional Minister of Administrative Affairs in BBC series 'Yes, Minister'. The quote is derived from: series two (1981), episode four: The Greasy Pole. Hacker's assertion is probably based on similar statements of historical politicians like Benjamin Disraeli and Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin.

In the European context, populism has predominantly been associated with the extreme or radical right and political parties that are perceived to belong to this ideological category. The advent of such parties, which are characterised by their discontent with the political establishment, nationalism, hostility towards immigration and an authoritarian stance with regard to law and order issues, attracted widespread scholarly attention from the early 1990s onwards (e.g. Ignazi 1992; Betz 1994; Kitschelt and McGann 1995). Populism, however, is not necessarily related to xenophobic politics or to any of the other characteristics of the radical right. Outside of the European context, populism is actually often associated with politicians, parties and movements of a very different kind (see Ionescu and Gellner 1969a; Canovan 1981; Taggart 2000). Although the focus of this study is on Europe only, this dissertation also considers populist parties that do not belong to the radical right.

Another feature of the literature on populism in Europe is that it, at least until fairly recently, predominantly deals with the Western part of the continent (e.g. Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008a). Since many Central and Eastern European countries were, until a few decades ago, governed by communist regimes, it was difficult to provide a meaningful comparison between the party systems of Western and Eastern European countries. Two decades have now passed since the post-communist countries' transition to democracy and many of these countries have even joined the European Union. While it would be wrong to disregard the still prevailing differences, it makes sense to start comparing parties and party systems across the whole of Europe. Cas Mudde (2007) set an example with his study on populist radical right parties across Europe. This study moves beyond the Western part of the continent as well. It considers populist parties in long established democracies as well as in many post-communist countries.

By taking this broad approach, including different types of populist parties and analysing them in a wide variety of countries, it can be expected that the research will involve parties that have little in common apart from their populism. This is in line with the notion that populist parties are 'chameleonic' in the sense that they adopt an ideological 'colour' and focus on issues relevant to their particular context (Taggart 2000). This study assesses whether, in spite of ideological differences, the electoral performance of populist parties is dependent on the same logic. In other words, the aim is to find out whether the same causal conditions are relevant in explaining the electoral success or failure of populist parties in general.

The explanatory framework concerning the electoral performance of populist parties developed in this research focuses on four explanatory variables: the electoral system, the availability of the electorate, the responsiveness of established parties

and the supply of credible populist parties. Whereas many comparative studies on the electoral performance of populist or other radical 'challenger' parties have focused on institutional variables and factors related to political opportunity structures, the role of the challenger parties themselves has often been overlooked (see Mudde 2007; 2010). This study explicitly concentrates on the populist parties' credibility. In addition to the presence of a conducive environment, this is believed to be a very important factor in explaining the electoral performance of populist parties. In other words, conditions related to both the demand for and the supply of populist parties are deemed to play a crucial role.

The explanatory framework will first be tested by means of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) techniques. QCA provides methods which are suitable for medium-N studies and which can demonstrate how different (combinations of) explanatory variables ('causal conditions') lead to the same outcome across various contexts. The QCA analysis aims to provide a general picture of how, and in which configurations, the causal conditions relate to the electoral performance of the European populist parties. The dissertation continues with three qualitative case studies, which identify populist parties in three countries and aim to explain their electoral performance. Two countries are selected which both have experienced the rise and fall of populist parties in recent years: the Netherlands and Poland. The final case study deals with the United Kingdom, a country in which populist parties have been unsuccessful in parliamentary elections. By providing an in-depth analysis of populist parties in these three countries, the study is able to drill down to the causal mechanisms at work, to take into account the specific issues relevant to the electoral performance of populist parties and to touch on the relationship between the explanatory variables.

In proceeding with the study as described above, this dissertation aims to contribute to the scholarly literature in the following ways:

- By identifying a circumscribed 'universe' of populist parties. It would be wrong to claim that this study provides an ultimate and undisputable list of populist parties in contemporary Europe. The dissertation primarily aims to contribute to the discussion about how to relate the concept of populism to political parties and to encourage a more accurate use of the term (see Section 1.2).
- By broadening the scope with regard to the study of populist parties in Europe by considering also non-Western European countries and non-radical right cases.
- By concentrating more explicitly on the agency of political actors in explaining the electoral performance of populist parties. The study particularly aims to contribute

by emphasising the importance of the credibility of populist parties themselves and proposing a way to assess this credibility.

- By applying a relatively new research technique (QCA) in explaining the electoral performance of populist parties, which is particularly geared at demonstrating causal complexity (see Section 1.5).
- By providing in-depth qualitative case studies, which systematically compare populist parties in three countries in different parts of Europe. As such, a broad analysis of the electoral performance of populist parties is complemented with in-depth case studies, which aim to drill down to expose the causal mechanisms at work.

The remainder of this chapter discusses the conceptual, theoretical and methodological starting points of this research. The following section provides an overview of the academic use of the concept 'populism'. Section 1.3 turns to the question how populist parties can be defined and identified. Section 1.4 presents the explanatory framework concerning the electoral performance of populist parties. Finally, Section 1.5 discusses the study's research design and methodology.

1.2 State of the Art: The Problems of Populism

The concept 'populism' has been in use for a long time, but its application in scholarly contributions has witnessed a surge in the past few decades, especially where the European context is concerned. This went hand in hand with the appearance of political parties in Western Europe which were often described as extreme- or radical right-wing, and also 'populist' (e.g. Ignazi 1992; Betz 1994; Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Taggart 1996). It is important to recognise that studies on populism in other parts of the world, such as the United States (e.g. Kazin 1998; Ware 2002) and Latin America (e.g. Weyland 2001; Roberts 2006), touch on political actors of a quite different kind. As this dissertation deals with populist parties in Europe, the conceptual discussion below particularly touches on the literature on populism in this part of the world. Although important accounts with a more global focus will also be discussed, the main aim of this literature review is to provide an overview of the main challenges that are faced when trying to define and empirically apply the concept in the European context. The lack of consensus about the essence of populism and a 'canon' of cases, the haphazard application of the term in both the vernacular and academic literature,

and the pejorative usage constitute the main 'problems of populism' (Taggart and Van Kessel 2009)[2].

Defining and applying populism

One of the earliest accounts in which populism is quite systematically described is not devoted to the concept as such. Edward Shils (1956) discusses populism in his book on American security policies and associates anti-Communist senator McCarthy with the term. Shils (1956: 101) argues that populism is "tinged by the belief that the people are not just the equal of their rulers; they are actually better than their rulers and better than the classes – the urban middle classes – associated with the ruling powers". The author asserts that populists are highly sceptical of bureaucracy and impatient with institutional procedures, which hinder the direct expression of the popular will in politics. Populism, in addition, puts forward the idea that legislatures should be reflective of the 'popular will', which makes politicians "at best errand boys with little right to judgement on their own behalf if that judgement seems to contradict popular sentiment" (Shils 1956: 103).

The groundbreaking volume edited by Ghiţa Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (1969a) shows that the use of the concept was by no means restricted to the American context[3]. The editors observe that populism is used to refer to actors from a wide ranging set of political ideologies and note that "some political scientists think that Maoism is a form of populism and Nazism another form" (Ionescu and Gellner 1969b: 3). In search for common elements the various contributions touch on a range of cases of populism including the 19th century movements in the US and Russia and 20th century populism in Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe. Some of these cases also recur in more recent contributions (Canovan 1981; Taggart 2000). Whereas the volume does not come to a straightforward conclusion or consensus about the meaning of concept, it does put a central problem related to the concept of populism on the agenda: populism is used for a set of incredibly diverse political phenomena across the globe.

Despite the lack of a clear consensus about the core features of populism, the various contributors do identify characteristics of populism which can still be found in the more contemporary literature. Peter Wiles (1969: 166), for instance, argues that populism is based on the premise that: "*virtue resides in the simple people, who are the overwhelming majority, and in their collective traditions*". Wiles subsequently

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[2] This literature review section largely builds on insights from a joint project with Paul Taggart on the use of populism in the academic sphere.
[3] See also the record of the conference that yielded this volume in *Government and Opposition* (Berlin et al. 1968).

composes a long list of populist characteristics. Populist movements are, for instance, deemed to be leader-centred, loosely organised, anti-intellectual, opposed to the establishment and nostalgic in their dislike of the present and their aim to "mould the further future in accordance with its vision of the past" (Wiles 1969: 170). Similarly, Angus Steward (1969: 193) emphasises the populist's dislike of the state in its present form, and parliamentary politics in particular. Steward also speaks of the 'charismatic' leadership of populist movements. Peter Worsley (1969: 244-6), in turn, argues that populists stress the supremacy of 'the will of the people' and the desirability of popular participation in the political process. Although similar elements and characteristics of populism are identified, the Ionescu and Gellner volume shows a reluctance to provide a clear-cut definition of the concept.

In her comprehensive study on populism, Margaret Canovan (1981) also refuses to devise a clear definition of the concept. After having described a broad range of historical and more contemporary populist movements and politicians across the globe, Canovan (1981: 133) argues that it is not possible "to unite all these movements into a single political phenomenon with a single ideology, program or socioenomic base". In later work, Canovan claims that a single (explanatory) theory on populism will be "either too wide-ranging to be clear or too restrictive to be persuasive" (Canovan 1982: 544; cf. Laclau 1977). It is, therefore, best to build a descriptive typology "which clarifies the ways in which the term is used while being spacious enough to do justice to the diversity of the movements and ideas concerned" (Canovan 1982: 550). Canovan (1981) distinguishes seven general categories of populism: farmers radicalism, revolutionary intellectual populism, peasant populism, populist dictatorship, populist democracy, reactionary populism and politicians' populism. This typology includes examples of more ideologically driven movements, such as the populist movements in the United States and Russia at the end of the 19th century, as well as populism in the sense of a style or strategy as applied by politicians like Juan Perón or Jimmy Carter.

Several authors have, more recently, been less reluctant to provide a clear definition of populism. In an attempt to construct an ideal type of populism, Paul Taggart (2000: 2) identifies six key themes. Accordingly, populism is hostile towards representative politics, identifies with an idealised 'heartland', lacks core values, is a reaction to a sense of crisis, is self-limiting and episodic, and has a 'chameleonic' character. Cas Mudde (2004: 543), in turn, 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* (general will) of the people". Daniele

Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell (2008b: 8) define populism as "an ideology which pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous 'others' who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice".

As is illustrated by the last two definitions, in recent years populism is often perceived as an ideology. More specifically, populism is regularly seen to be a 'thin' or 'thin-centred' ideology (Mudde 2004; Abts and Rummens 2007; Stanley 2008; see Freeden 1998). This means that populism in itself does not provide an all-encompassing framework of how society should function. As a result, parts of existing, more rooted ideologies can and should be added to the populist core. In the words of Ben Stanley (2008: 100), populism "is diffuse in its lack of a programmatic centre of gravity and open in its ability to cohabit with other, more comprehensive, ideologies". This is similar to Taggart's (2000) assertion that populism is chameleonic in adopting the ideological colour which resonates with the values of the 'heartland' that is represented. According to Canovan (1999: 4), this feature of populism actually makes it difficult to speak of a populist ideology; "attempts to define populism in terms of any such ideology fail, because in another context the anti-elitist mobilization concerned may be reacting to a different ideological environment." Proponents of the 'thin ideology' interpretation of populism have responded to this claim by arguing that populist parties may lack a united worldview, but still share a fundamental set of core traits. Thus, in the words of Stanley (2008: 100), "the lack of an acknowledged ideology is not the same as the lack of an ideology: the absence of a common history, programme and social base, whilst attesting to populism's 'thin' nature, does not warrant the conclusion that there is no coherence to the collection of concepts that comprise populist ideology". What follows from this notion of a thin-centred ideology is that constituencies of populist parties across contexts are likely to be quite diverse too. So, as Raymond Barr (2009: 40) notes with regard to this latter point: "social constituency, then, is not a core component of populism, but a secondary feature. Although it helps to distinguish one populist movement from another, it does not help distinguish populists from non-populists".

Not everyone considers populism to be an ideology. Writing about populism in Latin America, Kurt Weyland (2001: 14) argues that "populism is best defined as a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers". Hans-Georg Betz also asserts that one could view populism as a political strategy; a rhetoric "designed to tap feelings of *ressentiment* and exploit them politically" (Betz 2002: 198). Jagers and Walgrave (2007), in turn,

speak about populism as a 'communication style'. In this sense, the use of populism is not necessarily confined to a particular type of movement or party, as established politicians can use populist rhetoric as well. Cas Mudde (2004) actually argues that the emergence of the radical populist parties in Western Europe has led mainstream parties to use populist methods themselves as a response to the populist challenge, leading to the dawn of a populist *Zeitgeist*.

It seems reasonable to argue that populism can be expressed in various forms (e.g. strategy *and* ideology) and that the use of populist discourse is not confined to a particular set of political actors. In this sense, it is not necessarily problematic that scholars have a different approach on how populism is *expressed*, as long as there is basic agreement about what the core features of populism are. In describing the Italian case, Marco Tarchi (2008) has, for instance, convincingly used the term populism to refer to the character of the Northern League party as a whole, whilst, in the case of *Forza Italia*, saving it to refer to (the style of) party leader Berlusconi in particular. If it is accepted that populism can be expressed by any political actor, however, it does become more difficult to distinguish 'genuine' populist parties from essentially non-populist parties, which is the aim in this research.

Recent contributions have measured the 'degree' of populism in the rhetoric of political parties, for instance by considering party manifestos or party political broadcasts (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Hawkins 2009; Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009; Pauwels 2011a; De Lange and Rooduijn 2011). In doing so, the question whether populism is an ideology, strategy, communication style or something else, is not very important. It is still far from straightforward to determine how much populism a party should express in order to classify it as a 'full blown' populist party. What is more, some scholars deny that it is even useful to apply an 'in-or-out' type of classification in the first place (see Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009; Sikk 2009).

Due to these various takes on the concept, it becomes difficult to find consensus on a clearly circumscribed 'canon' of populist cases (Taggart 2000). Disagreement among academics is, nevertheless, unavoidable and can even be constructive. Most accounts mentioned above at least contribute to a well-informed debate. It is perhaps more problematic that the term populism is often used in an ill-defined way. In various accounts the term is used on an ad-hoc basis without a clear description of its alleged meaning. Populism is also regularly applied as a synonym for political opportunism. Following Paul Taggart (2000: 5), "often populist style is confused with a style that simply seeks to be popular – to appeal to a wide range of people". The problem with this usage is that it deprives the concept of most of its

more nuanced meaning. Equalling populism with opportunism leads, so to say, to a form of 'terminological waste' (Sartori 1984: 39).

In the vernacular sphere populism is often used to refer to vote-winning policy proposals or the attempt to pander to public opinion as well. This was one of the findings of the study on the use of 'populism' in British broadsheet newspapers, performed by Tim Bale, Paul Taggart and the author (Bale et al. 2011). The analysis also showed that populism was used for a wide range of individuals and political parties, ranging from Jacob Zuma to Gordon Brown and from the Scottish National Party to Barack Obama, which seemed to have little in common. The academic usage of the term can be assumed to be more structured than the vernacular use. It is, nevertheless, important that the use of populism in both spheres is consistent in order for the concept, or the academic debate about it, to be meaningful. It does, at least, not seem very fruitful if public and academic debates about a widely used term like populism are entirely disconnected from one another. The random use of the term in both the academic and vernacular spheres, moreover, makes it even harder to find a consensus about a universe of populist cases.

The pejorative use of populism and populism's relationship to democracy

Another finding from the abovementioned content analysis was that populism is often used as a pejorative term in British newspapers, applied to cast political opponents in a bad light (Bale et al. 2011). The pejorative usage is by no means restricted to the vernacular sphere; also academic accounts regularly treat populism as a negative phenomenon, or even as a threat to liberal democracy. Some scholars who treat populism as an (opportunistic) strategy render it automatically a negative phenomenon. Hans-Georg Betz (1994: 4), for instance, sees populism as means of political opportunism that is unscrupulous and exploitative of the anxieties of the electorate. As Cas Mudde (2004: 542) notes, the term is also regularly used in a different derogatory sense, to denote a "highly emotional and simplistic discourse that is directed at the 'gut feelings' of the people". In a similar vein, popular yet irresponsible policies are frequently denounced as being populist (Di Tella 1997: 188). In the European context the term populism is also regularly associated with politics that are xenophobic. It is safe to say that academics are not typically people who are attracted to xenophobic politics. It is actually more common in the academic literature to openly show disapproval of movements that are hostile towards minorities (e.g. Abts and Rummens 2007). If populism is associated with these movements, it is no wonder that the term tends to be used pejoratively.

Apart from the concept's association with perverse opportunism, demagoguery and xenophobia, the relationship between academics and populism is problematic in a more fundamental way. Populists present themselves as saviours of 'common sense' reasoning and can be hostile towards the 'academic elites' who are, like the political elite, out of touch with the ideas of the common people. This (unintentionally) places the scholar and the object of study in an antagonistic relationship (Taggart and Van Kessel 2009).

Not all scholars use the term pejoratively. Populism is, instead, often perceived as a phenomenon that indicates problems with regard to the state of representative democracy. Although not denying the risks of populist politics, some scholars stress that populism emerges when the political elite loses track of the popular will, or when the 'constitutional' or 'liberal', as opposed to the 'democratic' or 'popular' pillar of democracy, is seen to be too dominant (Mény and Surel 2002; Abts and Rummens 2007). Canovan (1999: 11) speaks of the tension between the 'pragmatic' and 'redemptive' faces of democracy and argues that:

> When too great a gap opens up between haloed democracy and the grubby business of politics, populists tend to move on to the vacant territory, promising in place of the dirty world of party manoeuvring the shining ideal of democracy renewed. Even from the point of view of pragmatic politics, the vital practices of contestation and accountability grow weak without the energy provided by democracy's inspirational, mobilizing, redemptive side.

In the same vein, Taggart (2002: 63) asserts that populism acts as a 'bellwether' for the health of representative politics. Mény and Surel (2002: 17), in turn, see populism as "a warning signal about the defects, limits and weaknesses of representative systems", and argue that "in spite of its often unpleasant tones, it may constitute an effective reminder that democracy is not a given, but is instead a constant enterprise of adjustment to the changing needs and values of society".

Still, populism is seldom seen as an unequivocally good thing. Francisco Panizza (2005: 30), in line with the accounts previously mentioned, describes populism as a "mirror in which democracy can contemplate itself", but also argues that "populism is neither the highest form of democracy nor its enemy". In the same volume, Benjamin Arditi (2005) argues that populism can appear in three possible modes: populism as a mode of representation, a symptom or an underside. The first mode is compatible with liberal-democratic politics, the second presents a disturbance of democracy, whereas the latter entails an actual interruption of democracy. Gianfranco Pasquino (2008: 28), in turn, argues that the appearance of populism is often a sign of a poorly functioning democratic regime, but that populism, for instance

due to its unrealisable promises, has a negative impact on the democratic framework itself. Abts and Rummens (2007) are more radical in claiming that populism is actually inherently incompatible with democracy, due to its suppression of diversity. This, in turn, goes directly against the argument of Ernesto Laclau that populism and democracy are essentially interchangeable terms and that "the end of populism coincides with the end of politics" (Laclau 2005: 48).

It is not the aim of this dissertation to engage in this debate about the relationship between populism and democracy. It is nevertheless important to point out that the fact that populism is sometimes perceived as a (potential) threat to democracy is likely to contribute to its pejorative use. This is not so much of a problem if one provides a careful argument as to why populism is a threat, but it is problematic if it further encourages the use of populism as a somewhat random term of abuse. This only contributes to more conceptual confusion. In the worst case – and this mainly applies to the European context - populism is simply used as a synonym for xenophobic right-wing extremism. Even if most xenophobic parties in Europe might be populist, it needs to be made clear what makes them 'populist' besides merely xenophobic.

Populism, all in all, is a problematic concept. There is no clear consensus about what the term entails. Moreover, even though several precise definitions have been developed which have been taken over by other scholars, it is still not apparent which cases constitute the 'canon' of populism. An important reason is that there is disagreement about whether it is useful to perceive populism as an ideological feature of a delineated set of cases, or whether populism is merely a rhetorical strategy which can be applied by any political actor. Even more problematic is that the term, both academically and vernacularly, tends to be used in an ill-defined and haphazard fashion, often with a pejorative undertone.

It is difficult to ban the use of populism, however, as the term is extensively used within and outside of academia. Attempting to ban the term would also be an undesirable thing to do. The concept, if carefully defined, describes an important political phenomenon. Scholars who perceive the emergence of populism as a signal indicating real problems in representative democracy make a plausible point. This study, furthermore, starts out from the assumption that it is possible to delineate a set of political parties that are essentially defined by their populist character. The following section touches on how these parties can be defined and identified in the European context.

1.3   Defining and Identifying Populist Parties

Defining populist parties

This dissertation seeks to identify a circumscribed set of populist parties in European countries. The term populism is thus used to denote more than a rhetorical strategy, which is arguably used by many political actors from time to time. Although it can, in some cases, be accurate to conceive of populism as such, the aim here is to identify populist parties which distinguish themselves from having this populism at the very core of their appeal. Populist parties *embody* resistance against the established system of representative politics and it would be impossible to characterise such parties without taking their populist anti-establishment appeal into account. The way populism is used here is in line with the accounts considering populism to be an ideology, albeit a 'thin-centred' one (e.g. Mudde 2004; Stanley 2008). Populism is 'chameleonic' in its ability and need to take on the ideological colours of its environment (Taggart 2000).

In order to identify the populist parties in Europe, this study seeks inspiration from the contributions that provided clear and influential definitions (Taggart 2000; Mudde 2004; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008b). In these accounts, as outlined above, several features recur (see also e.g. Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Canovan 1981). These are, broadly speaking: the separation of society into two antagonistic groups ('the people' and 'the elite'), populism's hostility towards the (political) elites and the glorification of the 'ordinary' people, who are supposedly betrayed, or at least not being taken seriously, by the elites.

Another regularly identified feature of populism is that it portrays 'the people' as a homogeneous entity (e.g. Mudde 2004; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008b; Abts and Rummens 2007). Taggart (2000: 92) also asserts that populists conceive of the people as fundamentally monolithic; "'The people' are portrayed as a unity. They are seen as a single entity devoid of fundamental divisions and unified and solidaristic". Although populists indeed speak of the people as if it were a clearly circumscribed and united group, this generally only happens in an *implicit* way. In their rhetoric populist actors do generally not explicitly state that they believe 'the people' is a homogeneous group. They, instead, simply tend to ignore the obvious differences. This 'the people as one' element is, therefore, not included in the definition of populist parties, as the definition serves as a tool for identifying populist parties on the basis of the message they convey.

Populist parties do sketch an exclusive community in which the 'ordinary people' reside. It is not self-evident who belong to these 'ordinary people' and populist

parties are often not very specific about their target audience. This is not only because it is difficult to precisely say who the ordinary people are, but to do so would also limit the populist appeal. In the words of Arditi (2005: 83):

> the populist 'us' remains conveniently vague. It is a deliberate vagueness, for it enables it to blur the contours of 'the people' sufficiently to encompass anyone with a grievance structured around a perceived exclusion from a public domain of interaction and decision hegemonised by economic, political or cultural elites.

Populist parties, in other words, profit from the elusiveness of their target constituency as it enables them to appeal to a broad, disgruntled, audience (see also Taggart 2002: 77).

That is not to say that the appeal to the ordinary people is entirely random. In the words of Taggart (2000), populists identify with an idealised and imagined 'heartland', the place where 'the people' reside. The features of the heartland are generally based on an idealised portrayal of the past and constitute the elements of the community worth defending (Taggart 2000: 95). Although populist actors do not normally explicitly refer to the term 'heartland' – which is the reason why the term is also not used in the definition employed here – it is a useful concept in making sense of the populists' portrayal of their constituency. By identifying the populist heartland in each case it namely becomes clear which notion the populist party has of 'the people'. As Taggart asserts: "The concept of the heartland allows us to see the commonality across different manifestations of populism, while at the same time allowing each instance of populism to construct its own particular version of the heartland" (Taggart 2000: 98).

Even if the heartland concept helps in making sense of who 'the people' are, populist parties are usually clearer about who does *not* belong to their portrayed community. The community of ordinary people is, then, typically constructed in a negative manner (Taggart 2000; Mudde 2004; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008b). Immigrants and ethnic or cultural minority groups are usual suspects to be branded as outsiders. Not all populists are necessarily xenophobic, however. The group of 'others' could, for instance, also consist of corporate elites, the media or intelligentsia whose ideas, values and interests are at odds with those of the 'silent majority' (Canovan 1999: 3). The enemy can, in other words, also come 'from within' (see Mudde 2007). Populist parties are, anyhow, essentially exclusivist in the sense that they appeal to only those who are perceived to belong to the community of ordinary people. Populism "excludes elements it sees as alien, corrupt or debased, and works on a distinction between the things which are wholesome and those which are not" (Taggart 2000: 3).

Populist parties are in any case opposed to the political powers that be. As Cas Mudde (2004: 544) argues, the *normative* distinction between 'the people' and 'the elite' is essential to the populist discourse. Residing in their ivory towers, the members of the political establishment have allegedly lost track of the everyday problems of the people. The populist parties' critique goes further than condemning a particular political party or government - all (opposition) parties do that from time to time. Populist parties criticise the whole established political system and those parties that are seen to be part of it. A new way of decision-making is required, one that is straightforward, transparent and effectively copes with the people's problems. After all, "straightforwardness, simplicity and clarity are the clarion calls for populism" (Taggart 2000: 96).

A final note is that populist parties do not necessarily intend to get their following directly involved in politics. Instead, they claim to speak in the name of the people. Populist parties maintain that they know what the ordinary people want and that they are the ones who truly represent their interests. Populist parties offer responsive leadership for people who actually do not want to be bothered with politics in daily life (Mudde 2004: 228).

All these issues considered, political parties are here classified as populist parties if they:

1) delineate an exclusive community of 'ordinary people';
2) appeal to these ordinary people, whose interests and opinions should be central in making political decisions;
3) are fundamentally hostile towards the (political) establishment, which allegedly does not act in the interest of the ordinary people.

This is a minimal definition, since it only includes the necessary and jointly sufficient defining properties, whilst excluding the attributes which are here considered to be 'accompanying properties' (Sartori 1984: 55-6). Populism is, then, treated as a 'classical concept' with clear boundaries; all three of the elements outlined above need to be present in order to speak of a populist party. This goes against the idea of 'family resemblance' and 'radial' concepts, which do not necessarily require the presence of all properties identified (Collier and Mahon 1993). These approaches are not considered to be appropriate as, due to their leniency, they risks further stretching of an already overstretched concept (Sartori 1970; see also Weyland 2001; Sikk 2009). The approach in this study is, then, different from studies treating populism as

an 'ideal type' (e.g. Zaslove 2008b) or that distinguish between 'thin' and 'thick' or 'soft' and hard' populism (Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Lang 2005).

Accompanying properties not included in the definition are personalistic ('charismatic') leadership and the lack of a developed party organisation. These features are often associated with populist parties, or even included in the definition of populism (e.g. Weyland 2001; Di Tella 1997). It can be argued that populist parties are underinstitutionalised and rely on a personalistic leader because of their quasi-religious message of salvation and their dislike of traditional parties and the way these are organised (Taggart 2000: 101-2). Although organisational features like centralised leadership are common to many populist parties, they are here not considered to constitute features of populism as such. This is in line with Mudde's (2004: 545) argument that: "While charismatic leadership and direct communication between the leader and 'the people' are common among populists, these features *facilitate* rather than define populism". The way populist parties organise, therefore, is here considered to be more of an empirical matter than a conceptual one. In theory, a party can be populist without complying with these typical organisational features. Because many populist parties are weakly institutionalised and built around their leader in practice, however, organisational features are likely to play a particularly important role as far as the electoral performance of populist parties is concerned. This will be further discussed in Section 1.4.

Another alleged feature of populist parties, or the phenomenon of populism more generally, is a self-limiting and 'episodic' character (Taggart 2000). As Mény and Surel (2002: 18) assert, a populist party's fate "is to be integrated into the mainstream, to disappear, or to remain permanently in opposition". Reasons for this are the populist party's inability to realise the democratic ideal it sketches, its problems with being part of a system it (previously) vehemently opposed and its overreliance on an often irreplaceable leader. This claim has been challenged by Albertazzi and McDonnell (2008b: 11; 2010), who assert that some populist parties have managed to survive a leadership change (the Austrian Freedom Party) and have been successful in preserving their populist credentials whilst in office (The Italian Northern League). This is one reason why the alleged episodic character of populist parties is not included in the minimal definition. More fundamentally, the assertion that populist parties are episodic is not very relevant when the definition is aimed at identifying the populist parties that are still operational.

A final important point to make is that this definition is primarily geared at identifying populist parties in the European context. The way in which populist movements are organised varies considerably across continents and populism

manifests itself in different ways across political systems around the world (Canovan 1981). Populism is, for instance, seen as an essential feature of US politics in general (Kazin 1998; Ware 2002). In Latin America populist movements have also been based on very different organisational structures than in Europe (see Roberts 2006). In the presidential systems of Latin America populism is, even more so than in Europe, generally associated with individuals rather than parties. Although is it useful to aim for a universally applicable definition of *populism*, the way it is expressed in political systems throughout the world seems too diverse to provide one for *populist parties*. The definition of populist parties in this research is, so to say, meant to capture a 'medium level of abstraction' concept (Sartori 1970). It is designed to be applied to the specific European context only.

Identifying populist parties

With the above definition, the identification of a clearly circumscribed set of populist parties in Europe is still not an uncomplicated task. A first challenge is that there is a lack of a clear populist archetype or another basis for identifying a canon of populist cases. Populism does not "adhere to a single foundational doctrine, political philosopher or intellectual tradition" (Zaslove 2009: 309). Moreover, actors and movements described as 'populist' rarely identify themselves as such. As Peter Worsley (1969: 218) observed, "Typically, there has never been a Populist International, and many movements which others have labelled 'populist' have never themselves used any such label to describe themselves". This clearly has to do with the pejorative connotation of the term populism. Even if some populist actors do not shy away from the term[4], it is still not straightforward to identify a 'family' of populist parties. It is, moreover, not even accurate to speak of a populist party family. Because populism is chameleonic, populist parties can come in various shapes and guises. Cas Mudde (2007: 29), for instance, identifies three main groups of populist parties: right-wing populists, neoliberal populists and social populists (see also March and Mudde 2005)[5]. That is not to say that populism has no distinct features of its own and that populism is not a useful concept for distinguishing between party families.

Still, populism has some resemblance to other ideologies. In some ways, for instance, populists are similar to fascists, communists and minority nationalists in

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[4] In an interview with the author Dutch politician Rita Verdonk, for instance, saw the term 'populist' as an honorary adjective: "*Populi* means the people, and I am there for the people. And there's nothing wrong with that" (The Hague, 18 December 2008).

[5] Mudde (2007) focuses on the populist radical right party family, of which populism is a constituent element. Whereas populist radical right parties, following Mudde (2007: 26), are essentially 'nativist' and right-wing – in that they believe in a natural order with inequalities – this is not necessarily the case for other party families for which populism is an essential feature.

resenting the existing political order and calling for change. The appeal to ordinary people is also not necessarily exclusive to populism. There are some crucial differences too, however. Fascists envision a totalitarian, hierarchically organised and organic state in which the people serve as mere parts of a larger whole (see e.g. Hayes 1973; Payne 1980; Griffin 1993). Populism glorifies the ordinary people within the community, not the state (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008b: 3). Fascism, like other forms of right-wing extremism, is also anti-democratic (Griffin 1993: 41). Populists are not and consider, or claim to consider, the will of the people as the ultimate source of legitimacy.

Communist parties allegedly envision a community of workers, the proletariat. The populist notion of the community (the heartland), however, is based on a shared identity which goes beyond class relationships (March and Mudde 2005: 35; March 2009: 127). In view of the global outlook of many communists ('workers of the world, unite!'), it would be even more inappropriate to speak of a proletarian heartland. Populism is also at odds with the notion of some Marxist theorists that members of the proletariat need to be made aware of their true interests by liberating them from their 'false consciousness' (see Eyerman 1981). Populists instead claim that the ordinary people are well aware of their interests and that the 'common sense' of the people should be at the heart of politics (Mudde 2004: 547).

Minority nationalists, finally, have a clear notion of a communal identity and share the populist resentment of the central state establishment. Unlike populist parties, however, they react against a political establishment which is seen as foreign and is portrayed as an enemy 'from outside'. Minority nationalists also represent a minority within a larger polity, whereas populists represent the interests of the "silent, oppressed majority" (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008b: 5). It is this silent majority that, according to populists, has the "claim to be heard over the clamouring minority" (Taggart 2000: 93)[6]. Minority nationalists do also not necessarily claim that the views of ordinary people should be central in making decisions. In the same way, nationalists more generally are not necessarily populist, since they may not be anti-elitist (Mudde 2007: 24). Populists are, in turn, not necessarily nationalist as they may

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[6] The situation becomes a bit more complicated when a country has devolved considerable amounts of power to sub-state regions or is a fully fledged federation. In this case, as can be argued, the state is essentially made up of various nations or ethno-cultural groups which often have considerable levels of sovereignty in their own regions, where they form the majority. For this reason, the regionalist parties Flemish Interest (*Vlaams Belang*) in Belgium and the League of Ticinesians (*Lega dei Ticines*) in Switzerland are still classified as populist parties. The Italian Northern League (*Lega Nord*) will be considered as a populist case too. This party appeals specifically to the ordinary people in the northern regions of Italy, but its programme goes well beyond this regionalist appeal and also explicitly focuses on nationwide issues related to crime and immigration (see Chapter 2).

"exclude those outside the nation", but do not "include all those in the nation" (Taggart 2000: 97).

In practice, the ideological lines between political parties may be blurred. It is, therefore, naive to assume it is straightforward to distinguish populist from non-populist parties. Another reason why this is difficult is that parties may adopt populist rhetoric to different degrees (as a strategy) or may change this rhetoric throughout time (see Mudde 2007: 40-1). Even though it is not always easy to distinguish strategy from ideology, this study aims to only select those cases for which populism is a defining feature, i.e. for parties that use populist rhetoric consistently throughout their programmes and throughout time. Parties that only resort to populist jargon sporadically or that lose all of their populism when entering government are not considered to be genuine populist parties. That is not to say that non-populist parties cannot turn themselves into populist parties over time (the Austrian Freedom Party or the Swiss People's Party are examples, see Chapter 2). Parties are here only considered to be truly populist, however, when their populism sticks with them for a longer period of time, at least for more than one parliamentary period.

Post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe pose a particular challenge when it comes to classification. Michael Minkenberg (2002: 361) stated that studying radical right parties in these countries "not only resembles shooting at a moving target but also shooting with clouded vision". After the fall of communism, the party systems in Central and Eastern Europe have been marked by the rise and fall of numerous new parties and the ideological appeal of these parties has often been changeable (see Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009). According to Mudde (2007: 41), moreover, various parties in these countries have gone through a populist radical right phase. After the transition to democracy post-communist countries were marked by a general anti-political mood, driven by the idea that the 'revolution' had been stolen by former communists (Mudde 2002a: 226-7, see also Minkenberg 2002). Economic and political crises further fertilised the breeding ground for populism. Kai-Olaf Lang (2005) and Peter Učeň (2007), correspondingly, apply the term to a wide range of political parties in Central and Eastern Europe. Lang distinguishes between 'soft' and 'hard' populists, while Učeň speaks of 'new' or 'centrist' populism as one form of populism which has emerged at the end of the 1990s. Even though these may be defendable approaches, they are not consistent with the aim in this dissertation to identify populist parties on the basis of a more stringent definition.

Without denying the challenge that post-communist countries pose for this research, there is reason to expect that over time party systems in many Central and Eastern European countries will stabilise and that European Union membership will

further promote 'homogenising effects' between Eastern and Western Europe (Mudde 2007: 3). The post-communist countries that aimed to become members of the EU, and NATO for that matter, have been forced to abide by the economic as well as the political norms of Western European countries (Mudde 2002a: 229). This is also the reason why this study selects only EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe, plus Croatia, which has been candidate member since 2004. Chapter 2 discusses whether there is indeed reason to be optimistic about the ability to delineate an unmistakable set of populist parties in these countries.

Having discussed the conceptual starting points of this study concerning populism and populist parties, Section 1.5, which deals with the research design and methodology, further discusses some more practical aspects related to the identification of populist parties. The next section, firstly, provides the explanatory framework that is used in order to explain the electoral performance of populist parties.

1.4   Explaining the Electoral Performance of Populist Parties

As previously mentioned, studies on the electoral performance of populist parties in Europe have tended to focus on the Western part of the continent (e.g. Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008a) and/or on radical right variants (e.g. Betz 1994; Mudde 2007). This study broadens the scope by considering the electoral performance of populist parties in Eastern and Western European countries and by also including cases that cannot be seen as typical examples of the radical right. This research is nevertheless largely inspired by and indebted to previous accounts, such as the studies of Cas Mudde (2007) on populist radical right parties across Europe and Elisabeth Carter (2005) on the extreme right in Western Europe. Hence, in order to look for explanations for the electoral performance of populist parties across Europe, this study makes use of literature dealing with the electoral fortunes of new or other, often radical right, non-mainstream parties[7].

These previous studies have regularly focused on structural factors and broad societal developments. In his groundbreaking study Hans-Georg Betz (1994) relates the rise of radical right-wing populism to socio-economic and socio-cultural transformations in Western Europe. Examples of these transformations are the

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[7] There is a considerable lack of conceptual clarity regarding parties that, broadly speaking, oppose immigration and take an authoritative stance on moral-cultural issues. These parties are variously called 'radical right', 'extreme right', 'anti-immigrant' and other terms along those lines. This study will not engage in the debate about this, but attempts to encourage a more consistent use of terminology are welcomed (See Ignazi 2003; Van Spanje 2011).

globalisation of markets and the decline of traditional (class) identities and the related individualisation of society (see also Ignazi 1992; 1996; Taggart 1996; Swank and Betz 2003; Zaslove 2008a). Such processes in the postindustrial Western societies have, as is argued, weakened party identification, caused anxieties among a particular part of the electorate, and fed into dissatisfaction with the established political systems. While these factors might explain the emergence of this *type* of party at a particular point in time, they do not explain the cross-national variation in electoral performance.

A more country-specific structural variable that has been considered in relation to extreme right party support is the level of immigration. Pia Knigge (1998), for instance, finds a positive relation between rising levels of immigration and latent support for right-wing extremist parties in six Western European countries. Golder (2003) similarly finds support for the hypothesis that higher levels of immigration stimulate support for populist extreme right parties in a larger number of Western European countries (see also Swank and Betz 2003; Arzheimer 2009). Lubbers et al. (2002), in turn, find a positive relationship between the number of non-EU citizens living in a country and the support for extreme right-wing parties. An analysis of 18 Western European countries also leads Jason Matthew Smith (2010) to conclude that immigration is positively related to populist right success, and that this effect is reinforced when crime levels are high. Anthony Messina (2007), on the other hand, finds no correlation between the size of the foreign born population and electoral support for anti-immigrant parties. Van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie (2005), similarly conclude that the number of asylum applications, in conjunction with other socio-structural variables, does not affect the support for the thirteen European anti-immigrant parties they consider (see also Arzheimer and Carter 2006). Mudde (2007) also finds no relationship between immigration levels, or the size of the ethnic minority population, and support for populist radical right parties across Europe. Studies with a similar focus have thus yielded mixed results.

Immigration related factors, in any case, do not seem directly relevant to this study, since the focus here is on populist parties in general. Even though many European populist parties may belong to the radical right subcategory, levels of immigration are not likely to be a driving factor behind the electoral performance of populist parties that do not have issues related to immigration at the core of their programme. This especially applies to the populist parties in Central and Eastern Europe where immigration levels are still low and where the issue is hardly salient (Mudde 2007). This study, therefore, refrains from taking into account immigration as an explanatory variable.

Economic variables, such as unemployment and inflation, have also repeatedly been considered in explaining the success of political outsiders. Golder (2003) actually links unemployment with the formerly discussed immigration variable and finds evidence supporting his hypothesis that unemployment increases the vote for populist extreme right parties when immigration is high (cf. Arzheimer 2009). On the basis of a study on radical right-wing populist (RRWP) parties in 16 West European countries between 1981 and 1998, Swank and Betz (2003), in turn, find that that the positive effect of immigration on RRWP party support is weakest in universal welfare states. Generous welfare states, as the scholars further find, dampen RRWP support themselves. This finding seems somewhat inconsistent with the (more recent) electoral success of such parties in Scandinavian countries, which are characterised by universal welfare systems (see Chapter 2).

More generally, economic hardship can be expected to lead to growing levels of dissatisfaction with the political establishment and might, therefore, be conducive to the success of anti-establishment parties. Studies considering economic indicators, however, have also led to mixed and even contradictory results. Jackman and Volpert (1996), who consider extreme right parties in 16 Western European countries, find that high levels of unemployment indeed facilitate extreme right electoral success. Knigge (1998), on the other hand, finds that higher levels of unemployment and inflation actually hinder latent right-wing extremist party support. Lubbers et al. (2002) and Arzheimer and Carter (2006) reach similar conclusions where the relation between unemployment and the actual electoral results for extreme right parties is concerned. Considering a possible reason for this negative relation, the latter scholars theorise that "people may turn (back) to the more established and experienced mainstream parties in times of economic uncertainty rather than to the parties of the extreme right that lack such experience" (Arzheimer and Carter 2006: 434).

With regard to the populist radical right in particular, it has been argued that the state of the economy is unlikely to be the main driver behind electoral success, since these parties are not primarily concerned with economic issues (see Mudde 2007; 2010; Bornschier 2010). Populist radical right parties are, therefore, unlikely to seize the ownership of economic issues when they become salient. Issues such as unemployment might be more central to the appeal of left-wing or social populist parties. Populist parties that do have economic issues at the core of their appeal are more likely to benefit from dire economic circumstances. Yet economic conditions are here not expected to relate to the electoral performance of all types of populist parties. In his study on the broad category of anti-political establishment (APE) parties in 19 advanced industrial democracies in Western Europe and beyond, Amir Abedi (2004)

also finds little evidence that economic indicators are related to APE party performance. In Abedi's bivariate analysis only unemployment is significantly (positively) related, but this significance vanishes in his multivariate analysis.

Studies have also considered various institutional factors in trying to explain the electoral performance of non-mainstream parties. Abedi (2004) and Carter (2005), for instance, find little evidence that the parties' requirements for ballot access, access to broadcast media and state subventions have had an impact on the vote for, respectively, anti-political establishment and extreme right parties (see also Harmel and Robertson 1985; Norris 2005; Bolin 2007). Several authors have also considered whether a federal state structure is conducive to new party success. A federal or decentralised structure may provide opportunities for new parties to enter legislatures on the sub-national level and to build regional strongholds. However, Harmel and Robertson (1985), who consider 19 West European and Anglo-American democracies between 1960 and 1980, find no relationship between federalism and the formation or success of new parties (see also Willey 1998). The analysis of Arzheimer and Carter (2005) similarly yields no significant relation between territorial decentralisation and the extreme right vote.

Much attention has also focused on the influence of electoral systems. With regard to this factor, the proportionality of the system is perceived to play a crucial role. New and small parties can be expected to stand a greater chance of entering the legislature under a proportional electoral system, which allows entry to parties with a relatively small vote share. This is not only due to the mechanical effect of electoral systems, as voters and political elites can be expected to anticipate this mechanical effect (Duverger 1959). This is the so-called psychological effect of the electoral system. When the electoral system is disproportional voters are less likely to opt for parties that are perceived to stand relatively little chance, as their vote is more likely to be 'wasted'. Electoral systems are, then, not only expected to influence the allocation of seats, but also the initial vote share of political parties. At the same time, parties may refrain from standing in elections if their prospective electoral chance of success is slim. Factors such as the district magnitude (the number of candidates to be elected per district) and the electoral threshold influence the proportionality of a system (see Carter 2005). A higher district magnitude tends to lead to an allocation of seats which reflects the distribution of votes more closely (see Rae 1971). A higher electoral threshold hampers the parliamentary representation of parties with only a limited share of the vote.

Once again, studies that considered the effect of the electoral system on the support for extreme right parties have yielded mixed results. Golder (2003) finds that

extreme right populist parties do better in electoral systems with a larger district magnitude and with more upper tier seats – which compensate for disproportionality caused by lower tier seat allocation. Jackman and Volpert (1996) conclude that higher electoral thresholds dampen extreme right party support in multi-party systems, but not when the effective number of parties is low. In his bivariate analysis, Abedi (2004) finds a relationship between anti-political establishment party support and the effective threshold (see Lijphart 1994), as well as the electoral system type (PR, two-ballot majority systems and Single Member Plurality). The relationship becomes insignificant in his multivariate analysis, however. Pippa Norris (2005), when considering a range of industrialised countries, comes to the conclusion that the electoral threshold and district magnitude do not influence the vote share of radical right parties, even though these factors do affect the number of seats the parties eventually get. Elisabeth Carter (2005), finally, finds that district magnitude and electoral thresholds are related to the right-wing extreme vote when proportional electoral systems are considered on their own, but that neither of these factors accounts for the differing levels of extreme right-wing success in Western European countries when all systems are considered (see also Carter 2002; 2004). She also finds no relationship between electoral formulae or the overall mechanical effects of electoral systems and the levels of extreme right-wing party support. In her multivariate regression analysis, moreover, none of the electoral system variables turn out to have predictive power. Carter (2005: 212) argues that the protest character of the right-wing extremist vote might be a reason for the lack of impact of the electoral rules. Extreme right voters may be less driven by the urge to see their party represented in parliament, which basically makes them immune to the psychological effects of the electoral system.

Since several studies on the electoral performance of new parties more generally have indicated that the electoral system does have an impact, the electoral system will be considered as a causal condition in this research. Harmel and Robertson (1985) find a relationship between the electoral system (PR vs. Majority and Single Member Plurality) and the electoral success of new parties. Joseph Willey (1998) and Margit Tavits (2006) consider a similar sample of countries and find that new parties are less likely to break through in countries with a low district magnitude. On the basis of an analysis which considers district magnitude and (effective) electoral thresholds in 18 Western European countries, Niklas Bolin (2007) also finds that proportional electoral systems are conducive to the chances of new parties being elected into parliament for the first time. Although the electoral system alone is unlikely to determine the electoral performance of populist parties, there is, all in all, sufficient

reason to assume that it can be an important factor in combination with other explanatory variables.

A second structural factor that is considered in this study is the availability of the electorate (see Bartolini and Mair 1990; Bartolini 1999). In order for a populist party to become electorally successful, there need to be sufficient voters who are willing to consider modifying their party choice (Bartolini 1999: 465). The availability of the electorate is, then, considered to be a precondition – but by no means a *sufficient* condition – for the electoral success of populist parties. The electorate's availability largely relates to the question whether traditional cleavages still keep the electorate in place and, more generally, to the extent to which voters have strong partisan commitments (see Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Although the decline of traditional political cleavages and party loyalties have affected Western European democracies in general (e.g. Betz 1994; Mair 2006), not all electorates are necessarily equally available. There is, for instance, considerable cross-national variation in the extent to which voters tend to switch their party choice between consecutive elections (electoral volatility). Electoral volatility can be seen as an important indicator of the electorate's availability. Voters would, after all, not change their preference if they were committed to a particular established party (see Dalton et al. 2000)[8].

In his study, Abedi (2004) considers the cross-national differences in the availability of the electorate and finds that weak partisan attachment – in terms of high levels of electoral volatility and a relatively low combined vote share for the two largest parties – is conducive to the success of anti-political establishment parties. As the political establishment in European countries is not always comprised of two parties, this study will not consider this indictor to gauge the availability of the electorate. Electoral volatility and, in the three qualitative case studies, the strength of party affiliation, will be taken into account. In view of the observed process of partisan dealignment in many countries, the availability of the electorate can be assumed to be particularly relevant when considering the electoral performance of populist parties throughout time. This notion will be considered in the three qualitative cases studies.

So far, only factors have been discussed which can be perceived to constitute the structures of party competition in a particular country. The electoral performance of populist parties cannot be understood without also considering the agency of political parties. Various studies have assessed the ideological placement and interactions of mainstream parties and their rivals in order to account for non-mainstream party performance. These studies have, for instance, pointed out that

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[8] Bartolini (1999: 467) rightly notes that aggregate electoral volatility levels underestimate the actual availability of the electorate, as voters may stick to their previous party choice even if they are potentially available. See Chapter 3 for a more elaborate discussion.

convergence between mainstream parties has proven to be beneficial for (radical/extreme right) challenger parties (e.g. Kitschelt and McGann 1995; Abedi 2004; Carter 2005; cf. Norris 2005; Veugelers and Magnan 2005). It is indeed plausible to assume that anti-establishment party sentiments among the electorate are stirred when mainstream parties resemble each other in terms of their policies. It is questionable, however, whether representing party distances on a single left-right dimension is sufficient in making sense of party system interactions (Bornschier 2010: 6). The fact that different issues are salient in different countries across Europe also makes it difficult to compare party convergence in a meaningful way when only one issue dimension is considered.

There may be ways around this problem, for instance by taking into account the policy dimension relevant to the appeal of the populist party under consideration (Meguid 2008: 49; Bornschier 2010). Instead of measuring party positions, however, this study focuses more concretely on the (perceived) responsiveness of established parties. Determining party positions or assessing the distance between parties mainly relates to the supply-side of politics. The responsiveness of established parties to the voters' demands relates both to the demand- and the supply-side. It can be expected that populist parties, which are partly defined by their anti-establishment appeal, are likely to thrive when established political parties are perceived to be unresponsive to the demands of the 'ordinary citizens'[9]. In addition to more substantive policy-related motivations, a vote for a populist party is assumed to be an expression of dissatisfaction with the political establishment (see Bélanger and Aarts 2006; Eatwell 2003: 51-2).

The QCA analysis in Chapter 3 will take general levels of satisfaction with democratic institutions into consideration as indicators for this responsiveness. The three qualitative case studies will concentrate more specifically on the issues raised by the populist parties. Following Mudde (2010), populist radical right performance can best be understood in terms of struggles over the saliency of issues and issue position ownership (see Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996)[10]. This is likely to apply to populist parties in general too. If many people feel that established parties do not recognise the salience of particular issues within society, or fail to represent a

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[9] Note that populist parties are here expected to do better when there is a *perception* that mainstream parties are unresponsive. Since this perception is assumed to have at least some grounds in reality most of the time, the responsiveness variable is still placed under the label of 'party agency'.

[10] Mudde (2010) prefers the term 'issue *position* ownership' over 'issue ownership' where non-valence issues are concerned. This makes sense, since the electorate is likely to be divided with regard to those issues. It is, therefore, more meaningful to assess which party owns a particular policy *position*. This is the party that is considered to be most competent in handling the issue by a particular likeminded *segment* of the electorate. The terms 'issue position ownership' and 'policy position ownership' are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

dominant position with regard to those, these parties are potentially vulnerable to the rise of new challengers (Hauss and Rayside 1978; Lucardie 2000; Hug 2001). Established parties are also likely to be susceptible to populist critique if they are associated with corruption scandals or patronage (Kitschelt and McGann 1995). It can be expected that this hampers the integrity of the established parties and their image of trustworthy representatives of the people.

Established parties, however, may hamper the development of populist parties by successfully retaining or seizing the ownership of the issue position taken in by the populist party (see Bale 2003; Meguid 2008; Bornschier 2010; Pauwels 2011b). Tim Bale (2003) speaks of the 'black widow effect' when the mainstream parties in office are able to seize the electoral support of their radical junior coalition partner by copying its policy positions. Bonnie Meguid (2008) similarly argues that an 'accommodative' strategy of a mainstream party can reduce niche party support, although whether this strategy succeeds also depends on the strategies of the other mainstream parties. While Meguid provides an interesting and plausible account, she largely ignores the role of the niche parties themselves. It is also questionable whether it is truly as easy for mainstream parties to quell niche party success as Meguid seems to assume. Meguid (2008: 15) argues that mainstream parties normally have the upper hand due to, for instance, their legislative experience, control over the media and preponderance of their party activists. At the same time, niche parties are likely to be vulnerable due to their fixation on one particular issue. Yet in assuming that niche party fortunes are merely the "by-products of competition between mainstream parties" (2008: 22), Meguid might overestimate the electorate's natural willingness to return to established mainstream parties when these adapt their positions, and underestimate a niche party's potential to hold on to its acquired electorate.

This study does explicitly consider the agency of populist parties themselves in explaining their electoral performance. This relates to the final explanatory variable identified in this study: the supply of credible populist parties. Even if the breeding ground for populism is present, there would be no populist party success without the supply of a credible populist political party (see Hauss and Rayside 1978; Betz 2002). The importance of party organisation and leadership in explaining new (populist) party success has been acknowledged (e.g. Betz 1998a; 2002; Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008b). In single case studies these factors are also regularly taken into consideration, but in comparative studies (of a quantitative nature) they have often been overlooked. Cas Mudde (2007: 275) asserts that, with regard to the populist radical right, few theoretical frameworks take into account the agency of these parties themselves in

order to explain their electoral performance. This is hardly justifiable, following Mudde's (2010) argument in more recent work, since the populist radical right parties' leadership, organisation, and campaigning appear to be vital in explaining their success or failure to break through and survive.

One of the accounts that does take internal supply-side factors into account is provided by Elisabeth Carter (2005). She finds that party organisation and leadership are particularly important in explaining the varying levels of support for extreme right parties in Europe (see also Lubbers et al. 2002; Givens 2005). Strongly organised and well-led extreme right parties have achieved more electoral success. This is very likely to apply to populist parties as well; populist parties have to present themselves as viable alternatives to the established parties in order to become successful. Especially with regard to populist parties, the nature of the party leadership is likely to play a crucial role. As previously discussed, in practice populist parties tend to be headed by a dominant leader. Carter also finds that the ideology of extreme right relates to electoral support; parties that are blatantly anti-democratic and adhere to classical racism are generally less successful.

On the basis of these insights, the credibility of populist parties will be determined by taking into account two indicators: appeal and organisation. The credibility of the populist appeal, in turn, is considered to rely on the following aspects: visibility and persuasiveness of the populist leadership and the populist party's ability to ward off an extremist image and to convincingly distance itself from the political mainstream[11]. First of all, it is expected that a populist party needs to be sufficiently persuasive in order to seize the ownership of the issue positions central to its appeal. The potential electorate of the populist party must be convinced that the party is better able to 'handle' the problems it identifies than its opponents (Petrocik 1996: 826). In order to do so, it is important that the populist party attracts sufficient media attention and that the party figurehead(s) make a strong impression during the election campaign (see Mazzoleni et al. 2003; Mazzoleni 2008)[12]. Secondly, when the

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[11] This study shies away from speaking about 'charismatic' leadership, as the meaning of this term is particularly vague (see Eatwell 2005; Van der Brug and Mughan 2007). Although 'persuasiveness' of a leader is difficult to measure in a rock-solid way too, it is here preferred as it is assumed that voters are attracted to a populist party when they are persuaded by its appeal, rather than 'enchanted' by the almost magical qualities of its leader. The risk of this latter view is that cognitive capabilities of a populist party's electorate are underestimated.

[12] The role of the media is considered to be important in the sense that populist parties rely on sufficient media exposure in order to increase their electoral appeal. The study refrains from assessing how media partisanship or 'bias' might affect electoral support for populist parties. It is problematic to assume that the media have an independent effect on public opinion. Media outlets can, for instance, be assumed to respond to prevailing public opinion and the demands of their core audience. Whether media coverage on populist parties is positive or negative might, moreover, not be directly relevant. Negative exposure can arguably also be beneficial to populist parties as it might enforce their political 'outsider' status. Irrespective of its tone,

largest part of the electorate is concerned, the credibility of a populist party is likely to wane when its rhetoric is too radical or when party members are associated with political extremism (see e.g. Rydgren 2005)[13]. Thirdly, the credibility of the populist anti-establishment message is considered. It can be particularly difficult for populist parties to convincingly stick to their anti-establishment appeal once they enter government, as they have to become part of the system they previously vehemently opposed (Taggart 2000; Mény and Surel 2002). Once populist parties have taken part in office they are not necessarily doomed to fail (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2010), but it becomes at least more of a challenge for them to still present themselves as 'outsiders' in a convincing way. Government participation, in other words, is the 'ultimate test' for populist parties (Betz 2002; Heinisch 2003).

Evaluating the populist parties' appeal in this way requires a fair bit of interpretation; it is not easy to measure the credibility of the populist appeal in a purely 'objective' way. There is no clear way around this, but to ignore the above factors in explaining the performance of populist parties – or to deny that they matter in the first place – would not make research outcomes any more valid.

The second indicator of credibility relates to party organisation, and particularly to organisational cohesion and stability. In line with Mudde's (2007: 275-6) assertion, leadership seems particularly important with regard to the breakthrough of populist parties, whereas the electoral persistence of the parties relies very much on their party organisation. After their breakthrough, populist parties are likely to lose their credibility as competent political actors if they fail to preserve internal discipline and cohesion (Norris 2005: 263). As mentioned above, since populist parties are generally leader-centred organisations, they are especially likely to fall apart when the leader departs or loses grip over the party (Betz 2002: 210; Heinisch 2003). Organisational stability is, then, considered to have a significant impact on the populist party's credibility. Other organisational factors, such as the degree of internal democracy or effective internal leadership (see Mudde 2007), are not considered in this study. Intra-party procedures are not directly visible to the electorate and are, therefore, unlikely to directly affect the party's image to the outside world. That is not to say that these factors do not have an indirect effect on the credibility of populist parties. Sound

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however, extensive media coverage may increase the salience of a particular issue (e.g. Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2007). This can, in turn, be beneficial for a populist party that politicises this issue. The way in which an issue becomes electorally salient, however, is a question which is not of direct relevance to this study.

[13] Whether a party is considered to be too extreme is, to some extent, dependent on political culture (Mudde 2007: 259; Eatwell 2003: 62-3). Radical anti-immigration parties in Germany, for instance, are especially prone to stigmatisation due to the legacy of the Second World War (e.g. Decker 2008). In some Central and Eastern European countries where xenopbhobic sentiments are widespread, on the other hand, political mainstream parties also voice extremist rhetoric against Jewish people and Roma (see Mudde 2005 and Chapter 2 of this dissertation).

internal leadership can, for instance, improve the longer-term organisational stability of a populist party or the ability to attract funding for campaigns in order to increase the party's visibility.

By considering the credibility of populist parties the explanatory model moves beyond the idea that populist parties only rely on uninformed protest votes (Eatwell 2003: 67). Even if these parties thrive on 'resentment' and 'disenchantment' there is likely to be more to the populist parties' electoral success than the presence of anti-political sentiments alone (Betz 1994: 63). Studies have, in fact, indicated that ideological convictions and policy preferences do play a crucial role with regard to the right-wing populist vote (e.g. Van der Brug et al. 2000; 2005; Ivarsflaten 2008; Arzheimer 2009). It is here expected that, in order to become successful, populist parties need to convince a substantial amount of the electorate that they can actually handle salient issues in a better way than the established parties. The populist parties, in other words, need to convince voters that they are a credible alternative to the established parties.

This study, all in all, identifies four explanatory variables which are deemed important in order to explain the electoral performance of populist parties: the electoral system, the availability of the electorate, responsiveness of the established parties and the supply of credible populist parties (see Figure 1.1). The electoral success of populist parties is expected to be stimulated by an electoral system leading to a proportional translation of votes into parliamentary seats, the presence of a substantial amount of voters willing to shift their political allegiance, unresponsiveness of established political parties and the presence of credible populist challengers. A disproportional electoral system, an unavailable electorate, a responsive political establishment and a lack of credible populist parties, on the other hand, are expected to be conducive to the failure of populist parties.

Figure 1.1: Explanatory model concerning the electoral performance of populist parties.

Structures of party competition   **Party agency**

| Electoral System | Responsiveness of established parties | → | **Populist Electoral Performance** |
| Availability of the electorate | Supply of credible populist parties | | |
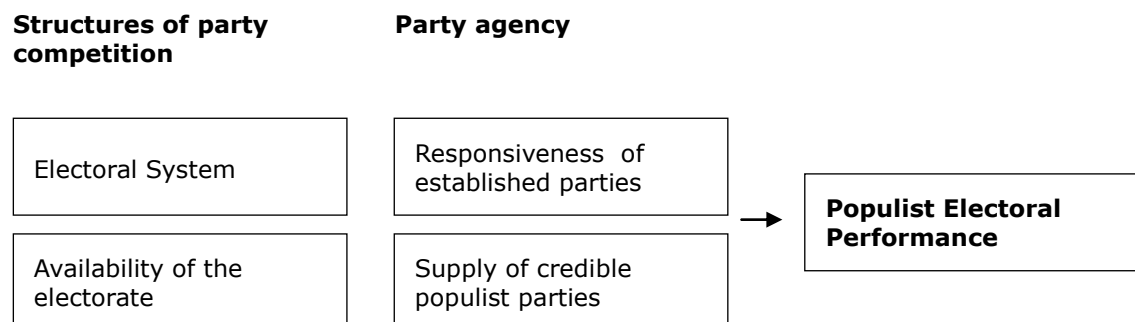
Similar variables can arguably be identified to study the electoral performance of new 'challenger' parties in general. Other non-populist parties that are critical of the establishment are equally likely to thrive when there is widespread dissatisfaction with mainstream parties (see e.g. Kitschelt (1988) and Müller-Rommel (1998) on left-libertarian parties and green parties, respectively). They are also likely to fail if they do not present themselves as credible alternatives. For populist parties, however, the perceived failure of the established parties is of particular importance, as they are defined by their anti-establishment appeal and their drive to transform politics in order to make it more responsive to the ideas and interests of the ordinary people. For this research, in addition, the concept of 'credibility' is operationalised in order to apply to populist parties in particular. Populist parties are more likely to rely on visible and persuasive leadership than on the loyalty of a group of core voters. They are, furthermore, credible insofar as they manage to voice a convincing, yet not overly extremist, anti-establishment appeal. Organisational stability, finally, is particularly relevant to populist parties, as these parties are prone to face internal turmoil, due to the fact that they are often weakly institutionalised. Voters' motives for casting their ballot for non-populist anti-establishment parties may, nonetheless, be similar to the motives of the populists' electorate. The study is, however, not primarily concerned with general dissatisfaction with politics in society or the breeding ground for anti-establishment parties, but with the electoral performance of populist parties in particular. That is, the model is primarily applied to explain the differences in the electoral performance of populist parties across Europe.

Another issue to raise is that the explanatory framework remains relatively abstract. With regard to the responsiveness of the established parties variable in particular, it leaves room for country-specific explanations for the electoral performance of populist parties (see Rydgren 2005: 415; Kitschelt 2002: 196). This is also required, because the study focuses on a wide variety of populist political parties. Since the populist parties are expected to vary considerably across the different countries with regard to their programmatic appeal, it seems, for instance, implausible to link the electoral performance of populist parties with one particular issue. It is, nonetheless, expected that the responsiveness of established parties plays a crucial role in understanding the electoral performance of all populist parties, even if the more specific political context has to be taken into account in order to fully grasp the performance of individual cases.

It is, finally, worth mentioning that the explanatory variables outlined above are not unrelated. A lack of established parties' responsiveness, for instance, may increase the availability of an electorate which has become disillusioned with its

political elite. Voters' loyalties are likely to decline if is there is a mismatch between the positions of parties and voters (Bornschier 2010: 9). Independence of the explanatory variables outlined is not so much a problem, as it is assumed that the electoral fortunes of populist parties rely on a *combination* of explanatory conditions (see the following section). How these explanatory conditions tend to interact will be discussed in the qualitative case studies.

1.5   Research Design and Methodology

The first aim of the study is to identify the populist parties in 31 European countries, which have recently managed to enter national parliament. In order to determine whether there were such populist parties in each country, secondary literature on the 'usual suspects' and more general country-specific party literature was studied[14]. Not for all cases there was an abundance of literature to rely on. When required, therefore, also primary party literature was examined. The Google Translate tool was used in order to make sense of texts in languages unfamiliar to the author. Furthermore, country experts were consulted – two in most cases, more if there was a considerable degree of doubt or lack of initial information – in order to validate the selection and description of cases and to fill in missing pieces of information[15]. The same sources of information were used in order to determine how credible the identified populist parties were. This assessment of credibility was required in order to operationalise the related explanatory variable and to proceed with the QCA analysis in Chapter 3. The next chapter discusses how credibility was measured in more detail. The list of country experts who have been consulted is provided in Appendix A. Appendix B provides an example of the document with questions that was sent to them[16]. Election results were derived from the website Parties and Elections in Europe (http://www.parties-and-elections.de).

The identification of populist parties in the three qualitative case studies (the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom) relied on more extensive research. Here, party documents, most notably party manifestos for general elections, were the main

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[14] The study particularly relied on election briefing papers from the European Parties Elections and Referendums Network (EPERN), which generally provide an overview and description of all competing political parties.

[15] Some unreferenced pieces of information in the party descriptions chapter 2 are based on country experts' insights.

[16] For some cases the list of questions was more tailored, if the aim was to collect specific information about populist parties in a particular country.

source of information[17]. Party manifestos reflect the core features of a party's ideology and the image that a party intends to convey to the electorate (see Mudde 2007: 38-9). In order to judge whether the appeal of the party was consistent with the definition of populism outlined above, particular attention went out to the preamble or introductory pages and the concluding section of the parties' manifestos. In these sections the 'grand vision' of the party, rather than its specific position on individual policies, is normally outlined. The identification of populist parties in the three case studies was further substantiated by means of elite interviews and expert surveys. These will be discussed in a bit more detail when this section turns to an outline of the qualitative case studies.

The second aim of this study is to explain the electoral performance of populist parties in Europe. In order to test whether this electoral performance can indeed be explained by means of the explanatory model presented in the previous section, the study combines a more quantitative approach with three qualitative case studies. This triangulation of methods allows for a broad assessment of the electoral performance of populist parties across 31 European countries, as well as a more precise in-depth appraisal of the causal mechanisms in specific contexts. The aim, in other words, is to *explain* the electoral performance of populist parties, by testing the model in a broad range of European countries, and to *understand* the workings of the causal mechanism by studying three cases in detail. A mixed-methods approach can, moreover, increase the validity of the research outcomes, as both parts of the study aim to answer the same research question (see Read and Marsh 2002). Quantitative and qualitative approaches can complement each other, as the former can be used to identify broad causal patterns, whereas in-depth case studies can assess the plausibility of these patterns by considering particular cases in detail (Lieberman 2005).

The first, more quantitative, part of the analysis touches on the electoral performance of populist parties in 31 European countries. These are all the member states of the European Union (EU-27), plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Croatia. The latter country has been an EU candidate member since 2004. As discussed, the party systems of the selected Central and Eastern European member states are assumed to have become sufficiently comparable to party systems in Western Europe. In this way, a pan-European analysis is possible. Since the party systems in many post-communist countries were still in flux in the years after the transition to democracy, this study only takes into account the last four elections in each of the countries. The period that is covered by selecting this time-span is roughly 15 years –

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[17] In view of the author's lack of command of the Polish language, the study frequently relied on Google's Translate tool and the help of native speakers in order to comprehend Polish texts.

even though it varies somewhat between countries – which means that the mid- to late-1990s are the starting point for the analysis. Around this time, most post-communist countries have had a few genuinely free elections, so that their party systems had some time to develop. This provides for a meaningful comparison between the post-communist and the long established liberal democracies in Europe.

Instead of using conventional statistical approaches, such as regression analysis, this study turns to Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) techniques for the first part of the study (see e.g. Ragin 1987; 2000; 2008)[18]. QCA is a method suitable for medium-N analysis and is geared to demonstrate causal complexity and, more precisely, 'multiple conjunctural causation'[19]. This means, firstly, that the QCA approach assumes that it is often a *combination* of causal conditions that leads to a particular outcome. Consequently, in QCA terminology the term 'causal condition' is used instead of 'independent variable', because QCA steps away from the 'additivity' assumption that single variables have their own independent impact on the outcome (Berg-Schlosser et al. 2009: 9). QCA, in addition, departs from the notion that a single causal condition has the same effect across contexts ('uniformity of causal effects'). The effect of one single condition instead depends on its conjunction with other causal conditions.

In relation to this, QCA is based on the assumption that different combinations of causal conditions may produce the same outcome. This is the notion of 'equifinality'; different causal paths may lead to the same outcome. Causality, moreover, is not assumed to be symmetrical. Different (combinations of) causal conditions may be relevant when explaining either the presence or the absence of a particular outcome. The ability to assess equifinality is an important reason for choosing QCA, since this study is particularly interested in considering the impact of the causal conditions in different contexts. It can, for instance, be expected that the electoral system is less relevant in countries with a highly unresponsive electorate – voters might be so dissatisfied that they cast their ballot for a populist party irrespective of institutional hurdles. Electoral rules might, at the same time, be more important in countries with a more responsive establishment, yet with an available electorate and credible populist parties. Whether all four variables outlined in Figure 1.1 were relevant in each of the individual countries was, then, left open to be discovered by the study.

The original version of the QCA technique is now referred to as 'crisp set QCA' (csQCA) (Ragin 1987). csQCA makes use of Boolean algebra, which is based on binary

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[18] QCA is not (yet) widely applied when research on party competition is concerned. Veugelers and Magnan (2005) provide one exception with their QCA analysis testing Kitschelt and McGann's (1995) theory related to New Radical Right party support.

[19] See e.g. Ragin 1987; 2000; 2008; Schneider and Wagemann 2007; Rihoux and Ragin 2009; Rihoux and Lobe 2009.

language. The data with regard to the causal conditions and outcome variable are, consequently, expressed in dichotomous values (1 or 0). After the construction of a truth table and a Boolean minimisation operation, the results indicate which (combinations of) causal conditions can be considered to be sufficient and/or necessary for the outcome to be either present or absent. csQCA is a straightforward technique, but one of its alleged shortcomings is that not all causal conditions can easily be expressed in dichotomous values. In more recent years, the so called 'fuzzy set QCA' (fsQCA) technique has been developed in order to deal with this limitation (Ragin 2000; 2008). In fsQCA the data can be expressed in values ranging in between 0 and 1. In Chapter 3 both techniques are applied and more attention will be spent on explaining the technical procedures.

Although the use of Fuzzy Set QCA removes the drawbacks of 'crude dichotomisation' of data, this technique still requires the researcher to set thresholds in order to determine the 'membership score' of a case with regard to each single causal condition. The researcher, for example, has to decide when a country can be considered to belong to the group of countries with either a less or a more proportional electoral system. Critics of QCA might argue that this comes down to manipulation of 'objective' data (see De Meur et al. 2009). Threshold setting, however, should never happen in an arbitrary way and must be based on theoretically or substantively informed choices (see Chapter 3). What is more, threshold setting forces the researcher to make sense of the data and the variation on the causal conditions prior to simply 'pushing the button' and, above all, considering the *outcomes* of the analysis.

Another critique on QCA is that it is a 'case sensitive' approach, in the sense that including or excluding a few cases may produce different outcomes. This is not necessarily a problem when the inclusion of more cases leads to additional causal paths explaining a particular outcome. This research, in any case, circumvents potential problems by taking a pan-European approach and including all 31 'comparable' European countries. A related issue is that applying QCA to small- and medium-N studies has a drawback; when more causal conditions are included, the number of possible causal configurations increases exponentially. It then becomes much less likely that all these configurations have empirical referents (i.e. cases that are 'covered' by a particular configuration). The problem of 'too many variables, too few cases', however, is not specific to QCA techniques. Using QCA simply forces the researcher to make well informed decisions when selecting explanatory variables (De Meur et al. 2009: 158).

In the QCA analysis, countries are taken as the unit of analysis. In some countries more than one populist party has managed to enter parliament after the past four elections, but some countries never experienced the breakthrough of a populist challenger. This would mean that some countries are actually ignored when parties are taken as the unit of analysis. Moreover, since three out of four causal conditions (electoral system, availability of the electorate and responsiveness of established political parties) are measured with country-level data, this would lead to a lack of variation across the cases (parties) from the same country. It can, in that case, be argued that cases are not truly independent from one another (see Gerring 2001: 178-181). A similar problem would occur if individual elections are considered as the unit of analysis. In most countries, the electoral system has not changed over the past four elections. The availability of the electorate in a particular country is also expected to vary only slightly during this time period. In addition, a more practical reason for not considering individual elections as cases is that it is difficult to find data that exactly correspond to the years in which each election is held[20]. The QCA analysis, therefore, has a 'synchronic', rather than a 'diachronic' character; it considers cross-national, but not cross-temporal variation (see Gerring 2001: 222-225).

The second part of the study is comprised of three qualitative case studies. This part of the dissertation does deal with cross-temporal variation by considering the within-case variation in the electoral performance of populist parties (see Lieberman 2005: 440). Rather than the country as a whole, the political parties become the main units of analysis. In order to discuss the electoral performance of populist parties in the three cases it is, evidently, necessary to identify which parties can be considered to be populist in the first place. The case studies, therefore, also provide a conceptual discussion. The chapters in this part of the study also consider which issues are central to the populist parties' appeal. This is in order to be able to assess whether these issues have been salient to many voters and whether the established parties have been responsive to these voters' concerns.

The cases that have been selected are the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom. The case selection is, first of all, based on the need to include both a Western European country and a former communist country from Central or Eastern Europe. In this way, the performance of populist parties can be compared across cases with a fundamentally different political background in which different issues are likely to rank high on the political agenda. The Netherlands and Poland are selected, because both countries provide an ideal 'laboratory' environment for learning about the electoral performance of populist parties. That is, both countries have witnessed

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[20] This particularly relates to the responsiveness of established parties condition (see Chapter 3).

the rise and fall of populist parties in recent years and in both the Netherlands and Poland populist parties have entered government. The Netherlands and Poland are thus cases in which successful and unsuccessful manifestations of populism can be compared. This makes the two cases particularly suitable in order to gain understanding of the electoral performance of populist parties more generally. The United Kingdom is selected as a third, 'negative', case. The UK is one of the countries in Europe which has lacked electoral success of populist parties in parliamentary elections. The British case is, in addition, marked by a disproportional Single Member Plurality electoral system which is used in general elections and a political establishment in which two parties have been particularly dominant throughout the past decades: the Conservatives and the Labour Party. The UK is, therefore, a suitable case in order to study the effect of the electoral system and the agency of two exceptionally dominant mainstream parties.

The case studies rely on a variety of methods and sources of information. In order to identify the populist parties and to learn about their ideological characteristics in the three cases, the study made use of qualitative content analysis of party manifestos and other party documents. In addition, several semi-structured interviews with country experts and politicians were carried out (see Appendix C for the list of interviewees). Apart from providing information about the characteristics of the various populist parties, these interviews also shed light on the factors relevant to their electoral performance. In addition, expert surveys were composed and sent out to country experts in the three selected countries (see Appendix D for an example of the survey). Findings from these surveys substantiated the identification of populist parties and were also used to validate the analysis of the populist parties' electoral performance. The study, finally, made use of existing opinion poll and election survey data, as well as insights from previous research.

Having outlined the conceptual, theoretical and methodological starting points of this research, the next chapter aims to identify the populist parties that have emerged within the 31 countries under consideration. The chapter provides a discussion about which populist parties can be identified and a description of the characteristics of each of these parties. In addition, the credibility of the populist parties is assessed and measured, in order to provide the data for the QCA analysis of the electoral performance of populist parties across Europe. Chapter 3 presents the results of the crisp set and a fuzzy set QCA analyses. The qualitative case studies on populist parties in the Netherlands, Poland and the UK are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, respectively. These chapters first discuss which parties are identified as populist parties and consider which issues are central to these parties' programmatic

appeal. The second part of each case study chapter aims to explain the electoral performance of the populist parties in the respective countries and is structured around the four explanatory variables outlined in the previous section. Chapter 7 discusses and reflects on the findings of the study and provides a comparative overview of the case study chapters. The chapter further touches on the implications of the findings and on avenues for further research.

2 Populist Parties and their Credibility in 31 European Countries

2.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, identifying a circumscribed set of populist parties is not a straightforward exercise. The concept of populism is contested and, even if scholars could agree on a definition, this does not lead us to an undisputed 'canon' of populist parties (Taggart 2000). This is partly due to the fact that some scholars use populism to denote a rhetorical strategy or communication style that can be used by any political actor, instead of a more encompassing ideology. This renders classifying parties as 'genuinely' populist rather useless (see Sikk 2009). As has been discussed in the previous chapter, however, it is here assumed that certain parties have populism at the very core of their appeal. These parties do not turn to populist rhetoric only when it seems electorally opportune, but these are parties that cannot be properly characterised without considering their populist nature. These populist parties (1) delineate an exclusive community of 'ordinary people', (2) appeal to these 'ordinary' people, whose interests and opinions should be central in making political decisions, (3) are fundamentally hostile towards the (political) establishment, which allegedly does not act in the interest of the ordinary people.

This chapter aims to identify the populist parties in Europe that have gained parliamentary representation at least once after the past four parliamentary elections. This is mainly done on the basis of secondary literature and the assistance of country experts (see Appendix A and B). As discussed in the previous chapter, only parties that clearly met the definition for more than one parliamentary term have been included in the list of populist parties in contemporary Europe. Countries in which no populist parties have managed to win seats in the past four parliamentary elections are disregarded in the following section of the chapter, unless borderline cases have surfaced that required discussion. The countries which are not discussed are Cyprus, Malta, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. The latter country, however, will be elaborately studied in Chapter 6.

Table 2.1 provides a list of the identified populist parties within the 31 countries under consideration. Note that not all 31 countries considered in this study are included in this table, since some of these countries have lacked a populist party which managed to enter national parliament during the past four elections. In the QCA

analysis presented in the next chapter all 31 countries are included. It should be borne in mind that Chapter 3, in which countries are the units of analysis, aims to explain the electoral success *and* failure of populist parties.

Table 2.1: Populist parties within the 31 European countries under consideration that managed to gain parliamentary representation at least once after the past four parliamentary elections.

Country	Party	Original Name
Austria	Freedom Party	*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ
	Alliance for the Future of Austria	*Bündnis Zukunft Österreich,* BZÖ
Belgium	Flemish Interest	*Vlaams Belang*, VB
	National Front	*Front National*, FN
	List Dedecker	*Lijst Dedecker*, LDD
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Business Block	*Balgarski Biznes Blok*, BBB
	Attack Party	*Partiya Ataka*
	Law, Order and Justice	*Red, Zakonnost i Spravedlivost*, RZS
Czech Rep.	Association for the Republic ...	SPR-RSČ
	Public Affairs	*Věci Veřejné,* VV
Denmark	Progress Party	*Fremskridtspartiet*, FRP
	Danish People's Party	*Dansk Folkeparti*, DF
Finland	True Finns	*Perussuomalaiset*, PS
France	National Front	*Front National*, FN
Germany	Party of Dem. Socialism/ The Left	*PDS/Die Linke*
Greece	Popular Orthodox Rally	*Laïkós Orthódoxos Synagermós*, LAOS
Hungary	Justice and Life Party	*Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*, MIÉP
	Movement for a Better Hungary	*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*
Iceland	Citizens' Movement	*Borgarahreyfingin*, BF
Ireland	We Ourselves	*Sinn Féin*, SF
Italy	Northern League	*Lega Nord*, LN
Latvia	All For Latvia!	*Visu Latvijai!*, VL
Lithuania	Order and Justice Party	*Tvarka ir teisingumas*, TT
Luxembourg	Alternative Dem. Reform Party	*Demokratesch Reformpartei*, ADR
Netherlands	List Pim Fortuyn	*Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, LPF
	Liveable Netherlands	*Leefbaar Nederland,* LN
	Freedom Party	*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV
Norway	Progress Party	*Fremskrittspartiet*, FRP
Poland	Self Defence	*Samoobrona*, SO
	Law and Justice	*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS
Romania	Greater Romania Party	*Partidul România Mare*, PRM
	Romanian National Unity Party	*Partidul Unităţii Naţ.Românilor*, PUNR
Slovakia	Slovak National Party	*Slovenská národná strana*, SNS
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	*Sverigedemokraterna,* SD
Switzerland	Swiss People's Party	*Schweizerische Volkspartei*, SVP
	Swiss Democrats	*Schweizer Demokraten,* SD
	The Freedom Party	*Freiheits-Partei,* FP
	League of Ticinesians	*Lega dei Ticinesi*, LdTi

The second aim of this chapter is to assess the 'credibility' of the identified populist parties. This exercise also relies on existing literature and the input from consulted country experts. As outlined in the previous chapter, in order to determine

whether a populist party is credible, its appeal and organisational stability are considered. The credibility of the populist parties' appeal, in turn, is determined by assessing the visibility and persuasiveness of the populist leadership and the populist party's ability to ward off an extremist image and to convincingly distance itself from the political establishment [1]. The second indicator of credibility relates to the organisational stability of populist parties. Populist parties are likely to lose their credibility if they fail to preserve organisational unity, for instance due to infighting or the departure of an all-important figurehead. This chapter applies this concept of credibility to the populist parties that have emerged in the 31 European countries under consideration. The supply of credible populist parties is, furthermore, one of the four explanatory variables in the model that is tested in this dissertation. The assessment of the parties' credibility in this chapter provides the data for the QCA analysis in the following chapter with regard to the corresponding causal condition.

For the QCA analysis, the data with regard to this credibility condition needs to be expressed in a quantitative way. The countries are, therefore, scored on the basis of the two key indicators: appeal and organisation. Individual populist parties receive a score with regard to both indicators; a score of 0 for a lack of electoral appeal or organisational disunity, a score of 1 for an effective appeal or organisational stability, or 0.5 as an intermediate score. The maximum credibility score of a party per election is thus 2 (see the tables in section 2.2 for examples of the computation). Since the unit of analysis in the following chapter is the country, the highest score is considered if there is more than one populist party in a single election. The overall credibility score of the country is determined by taking the average credibility score over the last four parliamentary elections. This exercise very much relied on judgements that required in depth-knowledge of each of the countries, which the author often lacked beforehand. With the help of the consulted country experts, however, the chapter aims to provide a list of parties which clearly comply with the given definition and an accurate assessment of their credibility[2].

A final note, as regards the assessment of credibility, is that in order to avoid tautological reasoning ('the parties that did not manage to win any seats must have lacked credibility'), the country experts have been asked whether there have been (reasonably) credible populist parties, which nevertheless lacked electoral success

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[1] This chapter does not discuss all the individual elements of the populist party's appeal for each individual case if they are not directly relevant. Some populist parties, for instance, have never come close to participating in government, so it has not been difficult for them to distance themselves from the political mainstream. Others have, in turn, never had significant problems in fending off an overly extremist image.

[2] Although this chapter could not have been written without the help of the experts, the author at times was so bold as to stick to his own judgements, even if these were at odds with the experts' comments.

(see the questionnaire in Appendix B). There were some cases that fit these criteria, but their credibility scores were never higher than the scores of their more successful populist counterparts[3]. Therefore, only the credibility of populist parties that managed to win seats in parliament is assessed in Section 2.2.

The remainder of this chapter describes the populist (borderline) cases identified, provides a rationale for the categorisation for each of these cases, and assesses the credibility of the populist parties. The concluding section touches on the challenges encountered during the identification process, as well as the pitfalls related to the attempt to create a 'canon' of populist cases more generally. These challenges, as will be argued, predominantly relate to the inevitable existence of borderline cases, the changing degrees to which political parties can apply populist rhetoric throughout time and the fluidity of party systems in former communist countries.

2.2 The Populist Parties and their Credibility

Austria

In the decades after the Second World War the Freedom Party (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ) was a relatively small liberal party. The party radicalised when Jörg Haider took over the leadership in 1986. Since then, as Reinhard Heinisch (2008) argues, the party underwent three subsequent stages. In the first, the 'political rebel phase' (1986-1991), the party aimed to "convince the public that Austrians were sustaining a corrupt and wasteful system that catered exclusively to the special interests of political insiders" (Heinisch 2008: 80; see also Müller 2002). From 1991 until 1996 the party entered its 'social populist' phase. The party reacted to anxieties related to economic liberalisation by launching xenophobic campaigns. In the third, 'anti-internationalist' phase (1996-2000), the FPÖ advocated Austrian patriotism, by emphasising the Austrian cultural heritage and departing from its former pan-Germanic outlook (Müller 2002).

The party became increasingly successful in the 1990s. At its height in 1999 it won 26.9% of the vote and entered government in coalition with the Christian democratic ÖVP. Resignation of FPÖ cabinet members led to the fall of the coalition, after which the party suffered badly in the following election of 2002, only receiving 10% of the vote. A new Christian Democrat-Freedom Party coalition was nevertheless formed, intensifying intra-party conflicts within the FPÖ (Fallend 2006). The party

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[3] The most notable cases in this regard are the National Republican Movement in France, Sovereignty in the Czech Republic, the Democrats in Norway and the New Generation Party-Christian Democrats in Romania. These cases are briefly discussed below.

eventually split in 2005 and the Alliance for the Future of Austria (*Bündnis Zukunft Österreich,* BZÖ) was formed, of which Haider became the initial leader. The party took over the old Freedom Party's position in the governing coalition.

The new Freedom Party, under the leadership of Heinz-Christian Strache, and the Alliance both competed in the following general election in 2006, both focusing on immigration and law and order issues. The Freedom Party managed to win 11.0% of the vote, the Alliance only just managed to cross the electoral threshold with a vote share of 4.1%. In the subsequent 2008 election the Freedom Party and the Alliance received 17.5% and 10.7% of the vote respectively.

Credibility of the Austrian populist parties
Prior to the successful election of 1999, the Freedom Party had become a centrally organised party in which party leader Haider exerted maximum control (Heinisch 2008; Carter 2005: 86). Haider managed to appeal to a large share of people with his stylish, unconventional, style of campaigning. In Heinisch's (2008: 80) words: "Haider's use of imagery, exaggeration and simplification was disarmingly effective". Internal conflict arose, however, after the Freedom Party joined the coalition government. Disagreements cropped up between pragmatists willing to promote an image of respectability and grassroot-hardliners, who included Haider, favouring the preservation of populist anti-establishment rhetoric (Heinisch 2008: 81; Carter 2005: 85-6; Fallend 2006). It also became difficult for the party to retain its anti-establishment appeal while being part of the governing coalition. The Freedom Party, furthermore, had to bear responsibility for unpopular cuts in public spending. Further credibility was lost when the party split in 2005. Nevertheless, on the road to the new election in 2006 the 'renewed' Freedom Party could return to "the successful formula of racial identity-oriented populism and all-out opposition" (Heinisch 2008: 83). After this election, internal cohesion was preserved and the Freedom Party could capitalise on the dissatisfaction with the grand coalition that was formed in 2006 between the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats.

Since it split from the Freedom Party, The Alliance for the Future of Austria did not build up an effective organisation on the ground (Fallend 2006: 8). Its ideological profile or distinctiveness from the Freedom Party also remained unclear. Prior to the 2006 election Peter Westenthaler was elected as national chairman of the party and some tensions arose between the national leaders and Haider's Carinthian branch of the party. Haider assumed national leadership again in 2008, managed to rally the party behind him and made some effective TV debate appearances (Fallend 2008: 6).

At the time of writing, the future of the BZÖ is very insecure. Haider died in a car crash shortly after the 2008 election, after which the party split.

Table 2.2: The credibility of populist parties in Austria.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Freedom Party (FPÖ)		
1999	1: Appealing leader.	1: Party united.
2002	0: Difficulties to retain populist appeal after joining coalition.	0: Conflict after joining coalition, leading to split.
2006	1: Revived anti-establishment appeal.	1: Party united.
2008	1: Revived anti-establishment appeal.	1: Party united.
Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ)		
2006	0: Programmatic distinctiveness unclear.	0.5: Modest internal disputes.
2008	0.5: Lack programmatic distinctiveness, but appealing leader.	1: Party united.
Country Score		
Max	1999: 1; 2002: 0; 2006-2008: 1	1999: 1; 2002: 0; 2006-2008: 1
Mean	0.75	0.75
Total Score: 1.50		

The Austrian case illustrates how a former liberal mainstream party can transform into a populist party. It also shows how government participation can damage the credibility of a populist party. The Freedom Party's credibility was also weakened after the decision to join the governing coalition led to internal divisions. The Freedom Party nevertheless survived and became an important force again in Austrian politics, together with the Alliance for the Future of Austria.

Belgium

The most successful populist party in Belgium is the Flemish Block (*Vlaams Blok*, VB), revamped as Flemish Interest (*Vlaams Belang*) in 2004 after the Belgian's Court verdict which indicted the party for violating the racism and xenophobia law. The party was founded in 1978, when various radical Flemish nationalist factions united. The party's predominant aim was Flemish independence. In the late 1980s the VB's electoral strategy shifted more towards opposing immigration and criticising the alleged corruption of the established parties (Swyngedouw 1998: 67). In the 1990s the national vote share of the VB rose steadily to 9.9% in 1999, while the party won 11.6% of the vote in 2003 and 12.0% in 2007[4]. However, up until today the party has

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[4] Since Belgium consists of two separate party systems (Flemish and Walloon), the actual strength of the parties in their respective regions is greater than national vote shares suggest.

always been subject to a *cordon sanitaire* erected by the mainstream parties, which has prevented the party from being able to enter office. In the 2010 general election the party suffered a loss, receiving 7.7% of the popular vote.

As opposed to Flemish Interest, the less successful National Front (*Front National*, FN) in Wallonia has been a proponent of a united Belgium. The sister party of the French National Front, however, has been driven more by xenophobia than the territorial issue (Mudde 2007: 42). In 2003 and 2007 the party's vote share was about 2%. The party disappeared from parliament in 2010 after receiving just 0.5% of the vote.

The general election of 2007 witnessed a populist newcomer: List Dedecker (*Lijst Dedecker*, LDD). This 'neo-liberal' populist party did not so much focus on issues related to immigration, but was more geared against big government, state intervention and the Belgian 'particracy', which supposedly denied citizens any influence in political decisions (Pauwels 2010: 1012). Dedecker won 4% of the vote in 2007 and 2.3% in 2010. The party was renamed Libertarian, Direct, Democratic (*Libertair, Direct, Democratisch*) at the beginning of 2011, preserving, like Flemish Interest, its original acronym.

A final, borderline, case is the largest winner of the 2010 national election on the Dutch-speaking side of the border: the New Flemish Alliance (Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie, N-VA). The party has favoured an independent Flemish state and criticised the, allegedly dominant, francophone elite. Although Teun Pauwels (2011b: 110) describes the N-VA's discourse as 'moderately populist' after having measured populist rhetoric in the party's literature, the N-VA will here not be considered as a populist party. Following Pauwel's findings, the level of populism in externally oriented party literature (i.e. its election manifesto) considerably lagged behind the populism levels of the Flemish Interest and List Dedecker.

Credibility of the Belgian populist parties
Carter (2005: 88) describes the Flemish Block/Interest as a well led and well organised party and asserts that, upon assuming leadership in 1989, Filip Dewinter improved the party organisation "until it became well structured and efficient". Due to its hierarchical party structure the party secured internal unity and effective action (Swyngedouw 1998). An indication of the strong internal discipline was that Frank Vanhecke, being the only candidate, was elected as the party's president with 94% of the vote in 2004 (Erk 2005: 498). Moreover, since the party has always been excluded from assuming office, it never had to compromise on its anti-establishment rhetoric and, thus, its credibility as a populist party. Furthermore, Dewinter has been

described as a 'charismatic' (Carter 2005: 88), and 'popular' politician (Van Assche 2003: 4)[5].

On the Walloon side of the border, the French speaking populist right has been organised much less well and the National Front has suffered from several splits throughout the years (Carter 2005: 75). Cas Mudde (2007: 42) adds that the party has lacked charismatic leadership.

Jean-Marie Dedecker, founder and leader of his own party, has been described as a charismatic leader, able to attract disappointed voters (Pauwels 2010: 1023). Moreover, Dedecker "is a powerful speaker, always provokes discussion and is also able to react in a sharp and humorous way" (Pauwels 2010: 16). As the party had just been founded, Dedecker had little time to build up a party organisation with the 2007 election approaching. Nevertheless, the party's campaign was relatively professional and "it had the advantage that it was embodied by a single well-known leader, which made it easy for voters to understand what the party stood for" (Pauwels 2010: 18). Prior to the election of 2010, however, the party failed to attract substantial media attention and several incidents divided the party. Dedecker was, for instance, accused of fraudulent practices with party money by the party's candidate chairman and various members left the party after a dispute on the regional level (Pauwels, forthcoming).

Table 2.3: The credibility of populist parties in Belgium.

	Party Appeal	**Party Organisation**
Flemish Block/Flemish Interest (VB)		
1999-2010	1: Appealing leader.	1: Party united.
National Front Belgium (FNb)		
1999-2010	0: Lack of appealing leadership.	0: Internal disputes.
List Dedecker (LDD)		
2007	1: Appealing leader.	1: Party united.
2010	0.5: Appealing leader, but decreased media attention.	0: Internal disputes and defections.
Country Score		
Max	1999-2003-2007-2010: 1	1999-2003-2007-2010: 1
Mean	1	1
Total Score: 2		

The Belgian case shows how an appealing and well organised populist party (Flemish Block/Interest) can remain an important political force for a considerable amount of time. Less credible populist parties in Belgium have played a much more

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[5] This study refrains from speaking about 'charismatic' leadership itself, but when other observers use the term for a particular party leader, this is here considered as an indication that this actor is visible and persuasive, hence 'appealing'.

modest role. The *cordon sanitaire* has enabled the Flemish Block/Interest to retain a credible anti-establishment appeal. In the long term, however, it might undermine the rationale for voting for this party, especially when parties like the New Flemish Alliance adopt similar policy positions (Pauwels 2011b).

Bulgaria[6]

The Bulgarian Business Block (*Balgarski Biznes Blok*, BBB), "a populist party of 'businessmen'" (Spirova 2008: 797), received just under 5% of the vote in 1994 and 1997. It disappeared from parliament in 2001. The party presented itself as a saviour of Bulgarian culture, opposing foreigners purchasing Bulgarian land, criticising the alleged loss of sovereignty to supranational organisations, whilst demanding to leave 'Bulgaria to the Bulgarians' (Savkova 2010).

Shortly after its foundation, the populist Attack Party (*Partiya Ataka*) received 8.1% of the vote in the general election of 2005. In 2009 the party improved this result with a vote share of 9.4%. Like many other populist parties in Central and Eastern Europe, *Ataka* has adhered to orthodox Christianity and has combined a nationalist message with anti-Semitic and anti-Roma rhetoric (Mudde 2007: 82, 85; Smrčková 2009). Socio-economically, the party has deployed a radical left-wing agenda (Ghodsee 2008). *Ataka* has been populist in its anti-establishment rhetoric and its appeal to the common Bulgarians. A 2005 campaign poster read "To take our Bulgaria back for the Bulgarians" and in his first parliamentary speech party leader Volen Siderov denounced previous governments as "national traitors complicit in a 'genocide' against the Bulgarian people" (Ghodsee 2008: 30; 32).

Among the populist borderline cases is the National Movement Simeon the Second (NDSV), built around its namesake: the former exiled Bulgarian tsar. In 2001 it won no less than 42.7% of the vote on the basis of a programme that promised to "quickly improve living standards and eliminate corruption" (Učeň 2007: 57). However, before the election the party made clear that it was happy to enter coalitions with the 'old' parties and presented itself as a (non-radical) catch-all party (Koinova 2001). The party, which disappeared from parliament in 2009, will therefore not be considered to be a populist party. The same applies to the party Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB), which became very successful in the 2009 election – receiving 39.7% of the vote – on the basis of a similar anti-corruption, but not so much populist, platform. The party also lacked a clear appeal to the 'ordinary people'.

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[6] I am particularly indebted to Lyubka Savkova as regards classifying and describing Bulgarian populist parties and assessing their credibility.

The Law, Order and Justice party (*Red, zakonnost i spravedlivost*, RZS) is a more clear-cut populist case. This party put forward an anti-corruption message too and also stressed "the huge differences between those in power and the ordinary Bulgarians" (Novinite 2009). The party entered the Bulgarian parliament with 4.1% of the vote and 10 seats in 2009.

Credibility of the Bulgarian populist parties
The Bulgarian Business Block managed to present itself as a credible alternative to the two mainstream parties that had dominated Bulgarian politics in the 1990s. With the help of affluent investors the party managed to attract a substantial amount of media attention and had an appealing leader in former fencing champion, actor and director George Ganchev. The party disintegrated in 1996 after the presidential elections when Ganchev reached the second round of the contest, but eventually lost.

Even though it received limited attention prior to the election of 2005, *Ataka* could present itself as the "new champion of anti-corruption populism" (Učeň 2007: 58). Hereby the party could rely on "the charismatic appeal of an outspoken and seemingly ubiquitous leader" (Ghodsee 2008: 36). This leader, Volen Siderov, would soon become a very well-known public figure. *Ataka* suffered from internal dissent, however, with half of its MPs leaving the fraction prior to the 2009 election (Smrčková 2009: 59). *Ataka's* extremist anti-Semitic and anti-Roma rhetoric cannot be considered to have hampered the credibility of the party, since this rhetoric has been quite consistent with widespread xenophobic sentiments in Bulgarian society (Ivanov and Ilieva 2005).

The Law, Order and Justice party, on the other hand, presented itself as a united party prior to the 2009 election. Party leader Yane Yanev, meanwhile, built up credibility as a prominent anti-corruption figure. After receiving seats in parliament, however, the party fell victim to internal disputes, rendering future success uncertain.

Table 2.4: The credibility of populist parties in Bulgaria.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Bulgarian Business Block (BBB)		
1997	1: Appealing leader.	0.5: Party disintegrating.
Attack Party (ATAKA)		
2005	0.5: Limited attention, yet appealing leader.	1: Underdeveloped, yet united organisation.
2009	1: Appealing leader.	0: Internal disputes and defections.
Law, Order and Justice party (RZS)		
2009	1: Appealing anti-corruption message.	1: Party united prior to election.
Country Score		
Max	1997: 1; 2001: 0; 2005: 0.5; 2009:1	1997: 0.5; 2001: 0; 2005-2009: 1
Mean	0.63	0.63
Total Score: 1.25		

The case of Bulgaria illustrates that it is not always straightforward to identify populist parties in party systems that are very fluid and in which many new political parties are founded in subsequent elections. Especially if the issue of corruption is of major importance in election campaigns, these new parties tend to adopt an anti-establishment discourse. It is, nevertheless, still possible to distinguish between anti-establishment parties and populist parties that also incorporate a clear appeal to the 'ordinary people'. The Bulgarian case also shows that extremist rhetoric does not necessarily impede electoral success, if this rhetoric is not at odds with widespread public sentiments.

Croatia

In Croatia, two populist borderline cases won seats in parliament after recent elections. The first is the Croatian Party of Rights (*Hrvatska stranka prava*, HSP). The party initially showed some extreme right characteristics, but moderated its tone after the turn of the 21st century (Mudde 2007: 43, Čular 2004: 44). In the 1990s and early 2000s the party had modest electoral success, receiving around 5-7% of the vote. Prior to the election of 2007, the party's leadership went further in its attempts to make the HSP an acceptable coalition partner (Henjak 2007: 6). The party only received a mere 3.4% of the vote, however. In view of its moderation and the fact that it is questionable whether the HSP can truly be seen as a populist anti-establishment party in the first place, the party will not be classified as a populist party here.

The conservative nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*, HDZ) is a somewhat ambiguous case as well. It is debatable whether the

Democratic Union could be classified as a populist radical right party under the leadership of the late president Franjo Tuđman (Mudde 2007: 54). In any case, after Tuđman's death in 1999 the party moderated its rhetoric substantially and turned into a centrist mainstream party.

Czech Republic

The Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (SPR-RSČ) has been the most successful populist party in the Czech Republic in the 1990s and received 8% of the vote in 1996. The party's programme was characterised by a stance against Roma, Germans and Communists (Čakl and Wollmann 2005), as well as eclectic socio-economic policy proposals including lowering taxes and supporting the socially weak (Mudde 2007: 134-5). The populist character of the party has predominantly been embodied by the anti-political appeal of chairman Miroslav Sládek (Čakl and Wollmann 2005: 32). The party disappeared from parliament in 1998, after only receiving 3.9% of the vote in the national election that year. In 2001 the party disbanded and in 2002 Sládek's new party Republicans of Miroslav Sládek (RMS) only received 1% of the vote.

The party Public Affairs (*Věci Veřejné*, VV) was founded in 2001, but remained active on the local level only, until it participated in the 2009 European Parliament Election. In 2010 it successfully participated in the national election, receiving 10.9% of the vote. Public Affairs' socio-economic programme has been eclectic as well, as it combined strict budgetary policies with a broad-minded social policy (Hloušek and Kaniok 2010: 5). Central issues to the party were also fighting corruption, improving transparency in politics and promoting direct democracy. Public Affairs employed ample populist rhetoric in the election campaign, promising to "whip out political dinosaurs" (quoted in Hloušek and Kaniok 2010: 5).

Another populist party, Sovereignty (*Suverenita*), led by former MEP and well known TV journalist Jana Bobošíková, failed to cross the electoral threshold in 2010. Even though Bobošíková was a popular figure, the parties' somewhat vague Eurosceptic message failed to attract voters and the party lacked any other well-known candidates.

Credibility of the Czech populist parties

The SPR-RSČ was marked by the dominant leadership of Miroslav Sládek. Sládek was also the party's main asset as it "profited from the profile and the antics of its chairman, whose populist and radical nature always ensured maximum media coverage" (Čakl and Wollmann 2005: 32). However, due to the party leader's

uncompromising attitude, competent members left the party and prior to the 1998 general election the party's name was besmirched by corruption scandals and self-enriching practices of Sládek (Mudde 2000: 20; Čakl and Wollmann 2005: 33).

Public Affairs' party organisation has remained quite underdeveloped since its foundation, but the party has not suffered from serious internal dissent. The party's fortunes further improved when the popular TV personality and investigative journalist Radek John became the public face of the party. John often reported about corruption and government malfunction and thus built up a credible image with regard to these issues (Hloušek and Kaniok 2010: 8).

Table 2.5: The credibility of populist parties in the Czech Republic.

	Party Appeal	**Party Organisation**
Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (SPR-RSČ)		
1998	0.5: Appealing leader, but party tainted by corruption scandal.	0: Internal disputes and defections.
Public Affairs (VV)		
2010	1: Appealing figurehead.	1: Party united.
Country Score		
Max	1998: 0.5; 2002-2006: 0; 2010: 1	1998-2002-2006: 0; 2010: 1
Mean	0.38	0.25
***Total Score:* 0.63**		

The Czech case shows that, also in Central and Eastern European countries, populist parties have surfaced which are not part of the populist radical right family. Whereas Miroslav Sládek's parties were marked by a stance against minorities and foreigners, the party Public Affairs did not convey an ethnic conception of the 'ordinary' Czech people and mainly focused on the political elite as the 'enemy within'.

Denmark

The Danish Progress Party (*Fremskridtspartiet*, FRP) is one of the Scandinavian populist anti-tax parties which achieved notable success in the 1970s. During this period, the Progress Party received between 10% and 15% of the vote in parliamentary elections. The party was founded in 1972 by tax lawyer Morgens Glistrup, who would later be imprisoned for tax fraud between 1984 and 1987. Apart from criticising the tax rates, the FRP predominantly stood for "cutting bureaucratic red tape, and clearing the jungle of law and regulations" (Svåsand 1998: 82). The party also conveyed a Eurosceptic message. During the 1980s, under the leadership of Pia Kjærsgaard, the party was electorally less successful, but became influential by supporting several non-socialist minority governments. By this time the party also began to focus on the immigration issue (Rydgren 2004). However, the party

gradually lost support over the years and disappeared from Danish Parliament in 2001.

In 1995 Kjærsgaard and a number of collaborators split from the FRP and founded the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*, DF). In the 1998 general election the People's Party immediately received more votes than the Progress Party (7.4% vs 2.4% of the vote). The party steadily grew, winning 12% of the vote in 2001, 13.3% in 2005 and 13.9% in 2007. From 2001 onwards, moreover, the party provided support for the three subsequent minority governments. By doing so, the DF has been able to influence government policy, most notably by inducing the implementation of stricter immigration laws (Rydgren 2010). Following Jens Rydgren, the DF can be seen as a radical right-wing populist party, which combines ethno-nationalist xenophobia and anti-political establishment populism at its core (Rydgren 2004).

Credibility of the Danish populist parties

As had been the case in the party's earlier years, the Progress Party suffered from internal struggles in the 1990s (Carter 2005: 72; Rydgren 2004: 480). After Glistrup's release from prison he failed to regain the influence over the party and was expelled in 1991. Party leader Kjærsgaard also had to deal with radical dissenting factions within the party. When Kjærsgaard and her associates left the party, the Progress Party lost its status of the prime populist anti-establishment party. Glistrup returned to the party in 1999, but due to its harsh rhetoric, most notably touching on the Muslim population, the party became too much of an extremist party to be electorally attractive to a larger audience (Rydgren 2004: 487-8). The party, moreover, fell victim to a further serious split in 1999.

The People's Party, in turn, managed to steer clear of obvious internal strife and Pia Kjærsgaard has proven to be an appealing, able and talented party leader (Carter 2005: 91; Widfeldt 2000: 490). Knudsen (2005: 3) describes her as a "charismatic party 'mother'", who became the second most popular politician in the 2005 general election in terms of the received personal votes. In dealing with potential rivals Kjærsgaard has been ruthless, so that "the party has not suffered as a result of internal battles" (Carter 2005: 91).

Table 2.6: The credibility of populist parties in Denmark.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Progress Party (FRP)		
1998-2001	0: Extremist image.	0: Internal disputes and defections.
People's Party (DF)		
1998-2007	1: Appealing leader.	1: Absence evident disputes.
Country Score		
Max	1998-2001-2005-2007: 1	1998-2001-2005-2007: 1
Mean	1	1
Total Score: 2		

The case of Denmark shows how a populist party which was initially primarily concerned with opposition to state interference transformed into an anti-immigration party, at a time when the immigration issue became more salient. Overt extremism and organisational disunity went hand in hand with the electoral decline of the Progress Party. Pia Kjærsgaard's People's Party, on the other hand, has seemed able to successfully keep 'one foot in and one foot out' of government after having supported three governing minority coalitions (see Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005).

Estonia

In Estonia, the party *Res Publica* has been labelled a 'new centrist populist' party by Peter Učeň (2007; see also Lang 2005), as it demanded political reforms and criticised traditional parties for being corrupt. However, the party did not so much refer to the 'common people' (Sikk 2009: 7), a core element of populism as it is defined here. Instead, *Res Publica* "made a serious effort to secure the support of specific circles of the business community who were, for different reasons, dissatisfied with their position vìs-à-vis the political and economic process" (Mikkel 2003: 4). After winning the parliamentary election in 2003, by receiving 24.6% of the vote, the party entered government. *Res Publica* was not able to fulfil the promised reforms and it lost its anti-establishment appeal (Taagepera 2006). The party merged with the Pro Patria Union in 2006, forming a mainstream conservative party. All things considered, Res Publica will not be classified as a populist party.

Finland

The party True Finns (*Perussuomalaiset*, PS) was founded in 1995 and can be seen as the successor of the agrarian populist Finnish Rural Party (*Suomen Maaseudun Puolue*, SMP). This latter party joined two governing coalitions in the 1980s and thereby sacrificed its populist credentials, before going bankrupt in 1995 (Arter 2007: 1155; Arter 2010: 485). True Finns has followed a nationalist, morally traditionalist,

Eurosceptic and socio-economically centrist course. Although the party increasingly applied an anti-immigration rhetoric throughout the years, the party has remained more moderate than some of its European populist counterparts (Arter 2010). The party is populist in that it has regularly agitated against 'old politics' and the consensual nature of politics in Finland in particular (Arter 2010: 487). Party leader Timo Soini "projects a form of 'responsible populism' directed at the 'small man' – the self-employed such as taxi-drivers and businesses employing a small workforce" (Arter 2007: 1155). True Finns did not make a great impression in the 1999 and 2003 general elections, but improved its vote share in 2007, receiving 4.1% of the vote. Partly on the basis of Soini's successful critique against the European bailout packages for Greece and Ireland during the European financial crisis, True Finns won no less than 19% of the vote in the 2011 parliamentary election (Jungar 2011).

Credibility of True Finns

Timo Soini, party leader since 1997, has been perceived to be a great asset for the party. David Arter (2010: 488) asserts that:

> It was Soini's performance as his party's candidate at the 2006 presidential election (…) that raised PS' profile, gave it electoral credibility and enabled it to recruit support away from the urban 'deep south' (…) Soini, who has attracted substantial media interest, has been the PS' 'trump card' ever since.

Similarly, Tapio Raunio (2007: 5) describes the True Finns leader as "a very charismatic figure with excellent debating skills".

Table 2.7: The credibility of populist parties in Finland.

	Party Unity	**Party Appeal**
True Finns (PS)		
1999, 2003	0.5: Appealing leader, but limited attention and geographical appeal.	1: Absence evident disputes.
2007-2011	1: Appealing leader, increased media attention.	1: Absence evident disputes.
Country Score		
Max	1999-2003: 0.5; 2007-2011: 1	1999-2003-2007-2011: 1
Mean	0.75	1
Total Score: 1.75		

The case of True Finns has shown how a populist party can extend its appeal when it reaches out beyond its traditional – in this case: agrarian – target audience by including new and resonant policies in its programme. The Finnish case also shows that 'events', such as the European financial crisis, can be very conducive to the electoral success of populist parties.

France

One of the oldest populist radical right parties in Western Europe is the French National Front (*Front National*, FN), which was founded in 1972. The ideology of the party, until the start of 2011 headed by Jean-Marie le Pen, has been somewhat 'elastic' throughout the decades (Hainsworth and Mitchell 2000: 446). The party shifted its emphasis from anti-communism in the 1970s to anti-immigration and preservation of French national identity in the 1980s and to anti-globalisation and anti-European integration in the 1990s. Ethno-nationalism has remained a core element of the party's appeal (Rydgren 2008a: 170). This is illustrated by the Front's aforementioned emphasis on immigration, the preservation of national identity and its 'welfare chauvinist' socio-economic policies. The party has been populist in vehemently criticising the political elites and identifying the rift between them and the French people.

The party attracted considerable electoral support from 1986 until 2002, at its height winning 14.9% of the vote in the first round of the 1997 parliamentary election. The support in the first round was never translated into more than one parliamentary seat (in 1988 and 1997), due to the winner-takes all principle in the second round of French parliamentary elections. The notable exception was the parliamentary election of 1986 when a Proportional Representation system was applied. That year the National Front won 35 seats. In 2002 Le Pen reached the second round of the French Presidential elections, having beaten Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin in the first round. The party's support in general elections declined in more recent years. The *Front National* only received 4.3% of the vote in the 2007 parliamentary election.

In 1999 former *Front National* member Bruno Mégret and allies founded their own party, eventually named National Republican Movement (*Mouvement National Républicain*, MNR). The party could not make an impact in the 2002 and 2007 general elections. The National Republican Movement has been classified as a well-structured party with a "strong collective leadership" (Carter 2005: 85). However, party leader Mégret, despite being a skilled politician, lacked the magnetism of Le Pen. In 2008 Mégret retired, leaving the future of the party uncertain.

Credibility of the French populist parties

Carter (2005: 83) classifies the Front National as a well-organised and well-led party; Le Pen being a strong charismatic leader who managed to rally the disjointed French radical right together. Although Le Pen's 'divide and rule' strategy was successful for a long time, by the end of the 1990s a leadership conflict materialised between Le Pen and de facto number two, Bruno Mégret, which split the party "from top to bottom"

(Hainsworth and Mitchell 2000: 452; Hainsworth 2000: 29-30). Despite this serious intra-party conflict and Mégret's departure the party managed to survive. According to Mudde, this had to do with the fact that the party was already older and well institutionalised so that it could overcome its split (Mudde 2007: 273). In more recent years, however, the FN became increasingly marginalised. One reason for this was the ageing Le Pen (born in 1928), who seemed increasingly ready for replacement (Marthaler 2007: 9). Le Pen's daughter Marine succeeded her father at the start of 2011 and seems an effective successor thus far. She came out on top of a poll which asked respondents about their favoured presidential candidate (Parisien 2011).

Table 2.8: The credibility of populist parties in France.

	Party Appeal	**Party Organisation**
National Front (FN)		
1993-1997	1: Appealing leader.	1: Party united.
2002	1: Appealing leader.	0.5: Party split in 1999, yet survived.
2007	0.5: Appealing, yet ageing leader.	1: Party united.
Country Score		
Max	1993-1997-2002: 1; 2007: 0.5	1993-1997: 1; 2002: 0.5; 2007: 1
Mean	0.88	0.88
Total Score: 1.75		

The French case illustrates that populist parties can be very resilient, despite difficult circumstances. The chances of the *Front National* to obtain seats in parliament under the disproportional electoral system have been slim, but the party has continued to attract a substantial amount of support. The party also survived a serious split. At the time of writing, furthermore, the National Front seems to have retained its appeal even after its undisputable leader Jean-Marie Le Pen stepped down.

Germany

In Germany the only populist party that managed to break through on the national level has a left-wing character. After the German unification the Party of Democratic Socialism (*Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus*, PDS) took up seats in the German federal parliament. In the 1990s its activities were centred in East Germany, as the party is the legal successor of the Socialist Unity Party, the official communist party of the former German Democratic Republic. Between 1994 and 2002 the party received between 4% and 5% the nationwide vote. In 2005 the party formed a coalition with the newly founded German Labour and Social Justice Party (WASG), which was partly formed by politicians that broke away from the Social Democratic Party (SPD). The alliance, named The Left Party.PDS (*Die Linkspartei.PDS*), could now also rely on

support in western Germany and won 8.7% of the overall vote in the parliamentary election of 2005. In 2009 the party, now called The Left (*Die Linke*) following the official merger of the two parties, extended its vote share to 11.9%. The PDS in the 1990s has already been described as a 'social-populist' party (March and Mudde 2005: 36). Patrick Moreau (2008: 69) touches on the populism of the alliance around 2005: "Elections were suggested to be chances to 'settle things' with 'those on top'. Protest parties in everyday life, they aired and ventilated the frustrations of the people". In more recent years, *Die Linke* can also be described as an "anti-capitalist, pacifist, protest party" (Hough 2010: 140). In the words of Hough and Koß (2009: 78), the party "regularly talks in the language of elites betraying the population at large, and it is frequently disdainful of the wider political process".

Credibility of the German populist parties

Before the alliance with the German Labour and Social Justice Party was formed, the appeal of the Party of Democratic Socialism was limited to the eastern part of Germany. In addition, front man Gregor Gysi, who was accused of Stasi collaboration, was a controversial figure, although popular among many supporters. At the same time, the party had always been internally divided – e.g. between more ideologically oriented '*fundis*' and pragmatic '*realos*' (Hough 2010) – although this did not lead to party struggles evidently visible to the outside world. When the alliance materialised the party representatives managed to create a "harmonious status quo" (Hough and Koß 2009: 77). Furthermore, in 2005 it was the "talismanic presence" of former Finance Minister and leader of the Social Democrats Oskar Lafontaine that facilitated the breakthrough of the party in western Germany (Hough 2005: 10; 2010: 139). In the words of Daniel Hough, Lafontaine's "anti-capitalist rhetoric appealed to disgruntled socialists and social democrats across the western states" (Hough 2005: 10). It remains to be seen whether *Die Linke* will retain its appeal after Lafontaine resigned in January 2010 due to health reasons.

Other German populist parties have had more problems in presenting themselves as credible challengers. The xenophobic populist parties The Republicans (*Republikaner*, REP) and the German People's Union (*Deutsche Volksunion*, DVU) also failed to break through on the federal level. The Republicans were haunted by internal dissent throughout the years (Carter 2005: 70-2; Decker 2008: 130; Backes and Mudde 2000: 460). The People's Union was more united, but lacked strong and authoritative leadership (Carter 2005: 79).

Table 2.9: The credibility of populist parties in Germany.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Party of Democratic Socialism/The Left (PDS/Linke)		
1998, 2002	0.5: Appeal geographically limited, Controversial yet appealing front man.	1: Different factions, but absence of evident disputes.
2005, 2009	1: Broadened geographical appeal, Appealing leader.	1: Different factions, but absence of evident disputes.
Country Score		
Max	1998-2002: 0.5; 2005-2009: 1	1998-2002-2005-2009: 1
Mean	0.75	1
Total Score: 1.75		

Germany presents us with a case of left-wing populism. The roots of *Die Linke* lie in the former East German communist party. The case illustrates how former communist parties can transform themselves by taking a populist direction (see March and Mudde 2005; March 2009). Unlike its less successful German xenophobic populist counterparts, *Die Linke* has argued that capitalist economic elites, instead of immigrants or minority groups, pose the main threat to the interests of the ordinary people.

Greece

The Popular Orthodox Rally (*Laïkós Orthódoxos Synagermós*, LAOS) entered the Greek parliament in 2007 with 3.8% of the vote. The party increased its vote share to 5.6% in 2009. The party was founded in 2000 by Georgios Karatzaferis, who had been expelled from the centre-right party New Democracy (ND) earlier that year. Karatzaferis voiced anti-immigration and Eurosceptic rhetoric and expressed irredentist desires (Dinas 2008: 605). In recent years the party shifted more to the socio-economic left (Gemenis and Dinas 2010: 188). LAOS is also a populist party – the abbreviation LAOS in fact means 'people' in Greek. Its leader presented "LAOS as an anti-establishment voice and himself as a man of the people, in contrast to the elites who allegedly dominated political life" (Verney 2004: 21).

The Greek Communist Party (*Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas,* KKE) has been associated with populism as well (Marantzidis 2008; Gemenis and Dinas 2010: 188), but since its ideology is foremostly rooted in Marxism, this party is not considered to be a populist party.

Credibility of the Popular Orthodox Rally

The Popular Orthodox Rally has been able to market itself effectively to the disaffected part of the electorate with its populist, nationalist and xenophobic rhetoric. LAOS could count on extensive media coverage, since party leader Karatzaferis has been the owner of a television channel and a newspaper in which the party received ample

exposure. The party also managed to place well-known TV-personalities and artists on its list. Although Karatzaferis faced some internal opposition in the run up to the local elections of 2010, his leadership has not truly been challenged, so that the party has not suffered from evident intra-party conflict.

Table 2.10: The credibility of populist parties in Greece.

	Party Appeal	**Party Organisation**
Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS)		
2004-2009	1: Appealing leader and candidates.	1: Absence evident disputes.
Country Score		
Max	2000: 0; 2004-2007-2009: 1	2000: 0; 2004-2007-2009: 1
Mean	0.75	0.75
Total Score: 1.5		

Greece shows that there are also borderline cases of populism on the left; the Greek Communist Party is a case in point. However, considering that the party, unlike *Die Linke* in Germany, has clearly clung to a Marxist ideology it would be incorrect to treat it as a populist party.

Hungary

The Justice and Life Party (*Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*, MIÉP) was founded in 1993 by István Csurka and collaborators, after being expelled from the Hungarian Democratic Forum. The party received 5.5% of the vote in 1998 and entered parliament. In 2002 the party lost parliamentary representation again, despite obtaining 4.4% of the vote. MIÉP championed the irredentist goal of a Greater Hungarian state and party leader Csurka is infamous for his anti-Semitic and anti-Roma discourse (Mudde 2007: 44; Bernáth et al. 2005: 82-3). Above all, the party emphasised "the defence of the Hungarian people from foreign, 'oppressing powers' and its own political elite" (Batory 2008: 59). After MIÉP disappeared from parliament Csurka voiced his frustrations by claiming that "a 'sozionist' (a combination of socialist and Zionist) government of traitors is ruling Hungary" (Bernáth et al. 2005: 84). In 2006, the party formed an electoral alliance with the Movement for a Better Hungary (*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*, Jobbik), received 2.2% of the vote and again failed to enter parliament.

The general election of 2010 marked the return of a xenophobic populist party. The radical Christian patriotic Jobbik party, founded in 2003 and now operating on its own, received 16.7% of the vote. Agnes Batory (2010: 6) suggests Jobbik's "anti-system protest rhetoric drew on all the themes one would expect, from hostility to European integration, globalisation, foreign capital and the market, and also included

(...) anti-Semitism and references to 'Gypsy crime'". Although Jobbik's main enemy was the incumbent Socialist Party (MSZP), the largest conservative party FIDESZ was also criticised. Jobbik claimed to be "the only party that 'genuinely' stands up for the interests of 'the people'" (Batory 2010: 6).

The main Hungarian conservative right-wing party FIDESZ itself has also been described as a populist party, especially in the election campaigns of 2006 and 2010 (Sitter and Batory 2006; Batory 2010). Following Mudde (2007: 55), however, the party will here be considered as an essentially non-populist national conservative party. Although the party harshly criticised the incumbent governments whilst in opposition (2002-2010) and urged to give the country "back to those people who believe in Hungary" (FIDESZ 2009), its appeal has been erratic and the party lacked an explicit exclusivist vision on the community it appeals to. FIDESZ has, for instance, not been explicitly wary of European integration (Batory 2010: 7).

The election campaign of 2010 was marked by a more general anti-politics mood born out of widespread dissatisfaction with the incumbent Socialist government (Batory 2010). The newly founded green party Politics Can Be Different (LMP), for instance, voiced anti-establishment rhetoric as well. In view of its calls for social inclusion and social diversity, however, this party is not classified as a populist party.

Credibility of the Hungarian populist parties

The Justice and Life Party profited from Csurka's visible leadership in the election of 1998. Once represented in parliament, however, the party tended to vote with the FIDESZ-led government (Batory 2002: 3), which did not do much good to its credibility as anti-establishment party. The party eventually fell apart due to internal divisions and defections, partly spurred by the creation of the Jobbik party. In 2006 the cooperation between MIÉP and Jobbik did not work out in a positive way and the alliance had little political room to manoeuvre due to the relatively successful attempts of FIDESZ to crowd out its right-wing competitors (Sitter and Batory 2006: 4). Similar to the Bulgarian case, the rather extremist rhetoric of the Hungarian populist parties has not hampered their credibility. Racist and extremist discourse has also been voiced by the political mainstream and anti-Semitic and anti-Roma sentiments have been widespread among the Hungarian population (Bernáth et al. 2005).

By 2010 Jobbik managed to build up a cohesive party organisation and ran a professional campaign for the general election in that year. Following Katalin Halasz (2009: 493):

> Through constructing an ideology that builds on the topics and elements propagated by MIEP (a blend of traditional irredentist and ethnic nationalism, xenophobia, racism and

anti-Semitism) and not shying away from provocative public actions and the use of autocratic symbols and snappy, easy to read slogans, and by recruiting young charismatic intellectuals as leaders, Jobbik could reach out to the segments of the Hungarian population that MIEP was not able to: the youth and the people living in the countryside.

Table 2.11: The credibility of populist parties in Hungary.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Justice and Life Party (MIÉP)		
1998	1: Appealing leader.	1: Party united.
2002	0.5: Appealing leader, but difficulties to retain populist appeal.	0: Internal disputes and defections.
2006	0.5: Appealing leader, yet little visibility in campaign.	0: Unsuccessful cooperation with Jobbik.
Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik)		
2010	1: Appealing leaders.	1: Party united.
Country Score		
Max	1998: 1; 2002-2006: 0.5; 2010: 1	1998: 1; 2002-2006: 0; 2010: 1
Mean	0.75	0.5
Total Score: 1.25		

As in the case of Bulgaria, there is a large conservative party in Hungary which has regularly been associated with populism. Although FIDESZ is not considered to be a populist party here, as its appeal has been too changeable throughout the years, the Hungarian case shows that a mainstream party can reduce the appeal of populist parties when it adopts a similar ideological position.

Iceland

For a long time, no populist party has emerged in Iceland. After the country had been hit particularly hard by the global financial crisis in the late 2000s, however, a party has surfaced voicing populist anti-establishment critique. According to this Citizens' Movement (*Borgarahreyfingin*, BF), "the system, politicians and banksters" have been responsible for the crisis, and MPs have failed the Icelandic people; "They were not thinking about us, but about protecting and maximizing their stake in 'the booming economy'" (Reykjavik Grapevine 2009). In an answer to a journalist's question, the party's general agenda was described as "Let's bring the people to Parliament" (Reykjavik Grapevine 2009). The party entered the Icelandic parliament in 2009 with 7.2% of the vote.

Credibility of the Citizens' Movement

The Citizens' Movement was founded not long before the 2009 general election and thus had little time to develop its party organisation. Internal peace was nevertheless preserved, largely due to the fact that the movement adhered to an anti-party

principle, which emphasised the right of individual members to follow their own conscience. The collectively led party also managed to convey an effective anti-establishment message in light of the financial crisis. After the election the party fell apart, however. Three MPs formed a new party called The Movement (*Hreyfingin)*.

Table 2.12: The credibility of populist parties in Iceland.

	Appeal	Organisation
Citizens' Movement (BF)		
2009	1: Appealing anti-establishment message.	1: Party united prior to election.
Country Score		
Max	1999-2003-2007: 0; 2009: 1	1999-2003-2007: 0; 2009: 1
Mean	0.25	0.25
Total Score: 0.5		

The case of Iceland illustrates, even more strongly than the Finnish case, how 'events' may suddenly increase the demand for (and supply of) populist parties. It is questionable whether the Citizens' Movement would have emerged without the financial crisis.

Ireland

The case of the party We Ourselves (*Sinn Féin*, SF) is a trifle complicated, as it has been active in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom. Here, only the former branch of the party will be taken into consideration. In 1997, winning 2.6% of the vote, the party entered the Irish parliament with one seat. Afterwards its vote share increased to 6.5% in 2002, 6.9% in 2007 and just under 10% in 2011. Founded in 1905, the most notable aim of *Sinn Féin* has been to create a single independent Irish State. The party also adopted a left-wing socio-economic position. *Sinn Féin*'s populist traits are described by Duncan McDonnell (2008: 204): "not only does SF already exploit discontent regarding mainstream parties, the economy, Irish sovereignty and the EU, but it explicitly puts itself forward as a 'clean', anti-Establishment party which is close to the common people in local communities". An element which makes *Sinn Féin* a bit of a borderline case is the party's endorsement of multiculturalism and social heterogeneity, which seems inconsistent with the populist notion of an exclusive community. The party is still considered as a populist party, however, as it has undoubtedly strived for Irish unity and has emphasised the distinctiveness of Irish culture. In this sense the party still identifies an exclusive community, even though this community is not based on ethnicity.

Credibility of Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin has been able to portray itself as the saviour of the poor in deprived rural and inner city areas. The party also retained and strengthened a credible anti-establishment appeal, since all three dominant Irish parties have refused to enter government with *Sinn Féin*. The large amount of dissatisfaction with the incumbent government prior to the 2011 election further enhanced the chances of the party. The appeal of *Sinn Féin*, nevertheless, has been somewhat limited, in the sense that the party is still associated with historical paramilitary action and terrorist attacks. Many people, for this reason, are unlikely to consider voting for *Sinn Féin*. The party organisation has been dominated by its Belfast-based leadership, which has to a great extent been responsible for selecting the candidates that run in the local constituencies. In more recent years, however, various party officials defected from the party due to dissatisfaction with the rigid party discipline.

Table 2.13: The credibility of populist parties in Ireland.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Sinn Féin (SF)		
1997-2002	0.5: Credible anti-establishment appeal, yet stigmatised.	1: Party united.
2007-2011	0.5: Credible anti-establishment appeal, yet stigmatised.	0.5: Some internal disputes and defections.
Country Score		
Max	1997-2002-2007-2011:0.5	1997-2002-2007: 0.5; 2011: 0.5
Mean	0.5	0.75
Total Score: 1.25		

When the 'branch' of *Sinn Féin* in the Republic of Ireland is considered, the party can be perceived as a populist party. The party's electoral appeal is somewhat limited due to its stigma of extremism. Other than some radical right-wing populist parties, this is not caused by an extremist position with regard to race and immigration related issues. It is instead related to *Sinn Féin*'s association with violent separatism.

Italy

The regionalist populist party Northern League (*Lega Nord*, LN) came into being as a result of the merger between the Lombard League and other regional movements in 1991. Its trademark aim has been an autonomous 'Padania' (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005; McDonnell 2006). This is an area without a historical referent consisting of the northern Italian provinces. According to the League, the central government in Rome has used these provinces as a 'milk cow' for the rest of Italy (Giordano 2000). Further characteristics of the party in more recent years have been its anti-immigration and

anti-Islam position, its tough line on law and order and its conservatism as regards moral-cultural issues. In terms of populism, the League has always appealed to the ordinary people and declared its "exaltation of the virtuous hard, working small entrepreneur and its defence of craftsmen and small tradesmen struggling against major supermarket chains and banks (that is, the powers-that-be who would strangle them)" (Tarchi 2008: 90-1). The party also used vehement anti-establishment rhetoric; "in public rallies and speeches, the *partitocrazia* (partyocracy) has continued to be a favourite target, with the power that parties still exercise over society condemned as a source of corruption" (Tarchi 2008: 91). The *Lega Nord* was relatively successful in the 1990s, receiving 10.1% of the vote at its high point in the 1996 general election. In 2001 the party only received 3.9% but it nevertheless entered the governing coalition. Afterwards it collected 4.6% of the vote in 2006 and 8.3% in 2008, upon which it again entered office.

A disputed case is Silvio Berlusconi's party Go Italy (*Forza Italia,* FI*)*, which Mudde classifies as a neo-liberal populist party (Mudde 2007: 47). Others have also attached the populist label to *Forza Italia* (e.g. Ignazi 2005; Raniolo 2006; Pasquino 2007; Ruzza and Fella 2009; 2011). Berlusconi, even while in office, is indeed known for his anti-establishment rhetoric and his appeal to "the ordinary public of shoppers and television viewers" (Tarchi 2008: 94, see also Ruzza and Fella 2009). Following Marco Tarchi (2008: 86), however, the party as a whole was not so much populist, as the expression of populism was "entirely delegated to the leader, who has made it a trademark of his political style, but not a source of ideological inspiration". Furthermore, even though Berlusconi has to a large extent dominated *Forza Italia*, anti-establishment passages in official party documents have waned after the turn of the 21st century (Ruzza and Fella 2009: 131). In March 2009, *Forza Italia* officially merged with other, non-populist, parties to form The People of Freedom party (*Il Popolo della Libertà,* PdL). This makes classifying Berlusconi's new party as 'populist' even more questionable. Even though Berlusconi was the central figure of the new party, the leader of its main partner, the National Alliance (*Alleanza Nazionale*, AN), "continued to reiterate the distinctive and less populist profile of the AN element" (Ruzza and Fella 2009: 40). All in all, while it is hard to deny that Berlusconi himself is a populist figure, his parties are excluded from this analysis.

Another, somewhat less, ambiguous case is the aforementioned National Alliance. However, the party rooted in neo-fascism turned itself into an essentially non-populist mainstream conservative party in more recent years (Mudde 2007: 56; Ruzza and Fella 2009: 181; 2011: 169). As mentioned, the AN merged into the People of Freedom party in 2009, although former AN party leader Gianfranco Fini left the

party in July 2010 after a disputes with PdL leader Berlusconi (Ruzza and Fella 2011: 158).

Credibility of the Lega Nord

For most of the time, *Lega Nord* leader Umberto Bossi has managed to retain the unity in his party by means of authoritarian leadership (Betz 1998b: 50-1; Carter 2005: 89; Mudde 2007: 263). Dissent has been contained, although the party suffered from several splits from the mid- until the late-1990s. Although the League has been part of governing coalitions, the party has been able to retain a credible populist anti-establishment appeal. After joining the coalition government in 1994 the party bitterly attacked Prime Minister Berlusconi and provoked the coalition's early fall (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005: 955-6; Ruzza and Fella 2009: 28). The second time, joining the second Berlusconi government in 2001, the party "succeeded in presenting itself simultaneously as both 'the opposition within government' and a driving force behind high-profile areas of government policy" and thus "successfully walked the populist tightrope of being seen to have 'one foot in and one foot out' of government" (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005: 953). In the most recent governing period the League has again been able to walk the tightrope, successfully justifying the concessions it had to make and portraying itself as the party that 'get things done' with regard to immigration and law and order issues and the federal reform of the state (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2010). The League's party leader Bossi has, moreover, been described as a charismatic person: "he is held to possess extraordinary personal qualities and a *fiuto politico* (political sixth sense) which put his actions and U-turns beyond reproach" (McDonnell 2006: 130).

Table 2.14: The credibility of populist parties in Italy.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Northern League (LN)		
1996, 2001	1: Appealing leader, Maintaining anti-establishment appeal.	0.5: Some internal disputes and defections.
2006, 2008	1: Appealing leader, Maintaining anti-establishment appeal.	1: Different factions, but absence of evident disputes.
Country Score		
Max	1996-2001-2006-2008: 1	1996-2001: 0.5; 2006-2008: 1
Mean	1	0.75
Total Score: 1.75		

The Italian case provides another example of a country in which large conservative parties have regularly been associated with populism. These are the parties (previously) led by Silvio Berlusconi: *Forza Italia* and The People of Freedom. As has been argued here, however, their populism has mainly been expressed by their

leader and not so much by the party as a whole (Tarchi 2008). Only the Northern League has been included as a populist party in this study. As this party has survived after being part of governing coalitions and has retained its populist appeal, the Italian case suggests that populist parties are not necessarily doomed to fail after assuming government responsibility (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005; 2010).

Latvia

Until recently, Latvia lacked a clear-cut populist case. After the Latvian legislative election of 2002 the newly established centre-right New Era (*Jaunais Laiks*, JL) entered parliament. This party voiced an anti-incumbency and anti-corruption message (Sikk 2009: 7) and won 24% of the vote and polled 16.4% in the subsequent 2006 election. While New Era could clearly be marked as an anti-establishment party, it will not be considered as a populist case as, similar to *Res Publica* in Estonia, it "failed to make prominent references to the 'common people'" (Sikk 2009: 7; cf. Lang 2005; Učeň 2007).

Cas Mudde (2007: 54, 306) further identifies For Fatherland and Freedom (*Tēvzemei un Brīvībai*, TB) as a radical right populist party, yet only in the period from 1993 to 1995. In 1995 the party merged with the Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK), entered government and moderated its tone. In 2010, this party, in turn, formed an alliance with the All For Latvia! (*Visu Latvijai!*, VL) party, named the National Alliance (*Nacionālā Apvienība*). All for Latvia is a nativist populist party, as it has aimed to protect (ethnic) Latvian national identity in ethnically heterogeneous Latvia, by restricting citizenship and reinforcing the status of the Latvian language (Auers 2010; Bogushevitch and Dimitrovs 2010: 79-80). Furthermore, it has taken a conservative position with regard to moral-cultural issues. In its campaign, the party often visited rural Latvian towns and villages - often by horse and cart - because this, rather than cosmopolitan Riga, supposedly was where the 'real' Latvians live (Auers 2010: 6). The All for Latvia! politicians, furthermore, claimed to be different from the other political actors by stressing their political integrity (as opposed to their opponents). All for Latvia! outperformed its partner in the National Alliance and, since then, has had the upper hand in the alliance. In the 2006 parliamentary election All for Latvia! still only received 1.5% of the vote, in 2010 The National Alliance as a whole won 7.7% of the vote.

Credibility of All for Latvia!

In 2006, All for Latvia! did not manage to play a visible role in the election campaign. This was different in 2010, however, when the party's candidates were very active and

ran a campaign which made ample use of new (social) media, even though the party represented idealised traditional values (Auers 2010: 6). The party has never suffered from internal dissent.

Table 2.15: The credibility of populist parties in Latvia.

	Party Appeal	**Party Organisation**
All for Latvia! (VL)		
2006	0: Lack of visibility in campaign.	1: Party united.
2010	1: Effective and visible campaign.	1: Party united.
Country Score		
Max	1998-2002-2006: 0; 2010: 1	1998-2002: 0; 2006-2010: 1
Mean	0.25	0.5
Total Score: 0.75		

Latvia is another country in which non-populist anti-establishment parties have surfaced. The party All for Latvia! is considered to be the only populist party that has emerged. It provides an example of a populist party which portrays a clear image of a heartland based on a shared culture and traditional values.

Lithuania

A vast amount of new parties has emerged (and disappeared) in post-communist Lithuanian politics. Several of those, such as the National Revivial Party (TPP) or New Union Party (NS) have applied anti-establishment and anti-corruption rhetoric, but fail to meet the other two definitional criteria of populist parties. The Labour Party (*Darbo Partija*, DP) is a borderline case of populism. In its original programme the party remained rather vague as regards substantive policy proposals, but it claimed to consist of "honest, hardworking, active people" (DP 2011). After it joined the governing coalition in 2004, however, the party became associated with financial scandals itself (Jurkynas 2009), and lost its populist credentials.

The only party in Lithuania that is here considered to be a populist party is the Order and Justice Party (*Tvarka ir teisingumas*, TT), formerly named the Liberal Democratic Party (*Liberalų Demokratų Partija*, LDP). The party was founded and has been headed by former Prime Minister Rolandas Paksas. In 2003, within a year of the party's foundation, Paksas managed to become elected as president. He was impeached in April 2004 after an illicit financial deal with a Russian businessman came to light (see Krupavicius 2004). The party, nevertheless, continues to convey an anti-establishment message. In the 2008 election campaign, for instance, the film 'The Pilot' was aired, in which the hero was modelled on Paksas and the enemies on other Lithuanian politicians (Mažylis and Unikaitė 2008: 7). It is a bit less straightforward to identify a clear appeal to the 'ordinary people' of Lithuania, although the party did

refer to the need to protect Lithuanian cultural heritage (TT 2010). Accordingly, globalisation or European integration ought not to eradicate national identity. The more substantive programme of the party has been quite vague and included liberal socio-economic policies, pledges to reduce poverty and tough law and order policies. Order and Justice managed to gain 11.4% of the total vote in 2004, improving this result slightly in 2008, with 12.7% of the vote.

Credibility of Order and Justice

At the time of the run-off stage of the presidential election in 2003 Paksas was able to win a majority of the vote in a climate of widespread political dissatisfaction (Krupavicius 2004: 1061). After his impeachment Paksas reputation was tainted, but he remained among the most popular politicians in the country (Krupavicius 2004: 1069). In the following years, the party has attempted to cleanse the image of Paksas, who became a Member of the European Parliament in 2009. No evident internal disputes have harmed the credibility of Order and Justice Party.

Table 2.16: The credibility of populist parties in Lithuania.

	Party Appeal	**Party Organisation**
Order and Justice (TT)		
2004-2008	0.5: Appealing leader, yet tainted by impeachment.	1: Absence evident disputes.
Country Score		
Max	1995-2000: 0; 2004-2008: 0.5	1995-2000: 0; 2004-2008: 1
Mean	0.25	0.5
Total Score: 0.75		

Similar to its Baltic neighbour Latvia, Lithuania has also witnessed the rise of several populist borderline cases. The Order and Justice Party of the controversial former President and Prime Minister Rolandas Paksas is considered to be the only genuine populist party.

Luxembourg

In Luxembourg the Alternative Democratic Reform Party (*Alternativ Demokratesch Reformpartei*, ADR), founded in 1987, can be considered as a populist party (Huberty 2009: 2). Being a former one-issue pensioner's party – the name of the party between 1992 and 2006 was Action Committee for Democracy and Pensions Justice – the ADR had to re-invent itself after the government implemented most of its desired policies (Dumont and Poirier 2005: 1102). The party subsequently developed an eclectic anti-establishment programme, including critical comments about European integration and public sector corruption. The party has appealed to the disillusioned 'ordinary'

citizens – the Luxembourg nationals in particular – who are supposedly disregarded by the traditional governing parties. The party received between 7% and 11% of the vote in recent parliamentary elections.

Credibility of the Alternative Democratic Reform Party

Throughout the years, the Alternative Democratic Reform Party has become the main protest force in Luxembourgish politics. Even though Luxembourgers have been overwhelmingly positive about European integration, the party has been the only party to voice a Eurosceptic and sovereignist rhetoric. The party received considerable media attention, has been visible with its confrontational stance in parliamentary debates and could count on the endorsement of local celebrities to boost its appeal. The party did not suffer from any notable internal disputes until the prominent MP Aly Jaerling left the party in 2006 out of disgruntlement with ADR's ideological course. As a result, the party also lost its entitlement to public funding, which hampered the party's visibility in the campaign of 2009.

Table 2.17: The credibility of populist parties in Luxembourg.

	Party Appeal	**Party Organisation**
Alternative Democratic Reform Party (ADR)		
1994-2004	1: Appealing anti-establishment appeal.	1: Absence evident disputes.
2009	0.5: Appealing anti-establishment appeal, yet decreased visibility.	0: Internal disputes and defection.
Country Score		
Max	1994-1999-2004: 1; 2009: 0.5	1994-1999-2004: 1; 2009: 0
Mean	0.88	0.75
Total Score: 1.63		

The Luxembourgish case indicates that there is room for a populist party, even if the electorate, on the whole, seems satisfied with the functioning of democratic institutions (see Appendix E.4). The Alternative Democratic Reform Party is a rather rare example of a pensioner's party which turned itself into a populist party, appealing to a wider electorate of dissatisfied voters.

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, populist parties have gained substantial support in the last four parliamentary elections, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. The List Pim Fortuyn (*Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, LPF) entered Dutch parliament in 2002 with 17% of the vote. The party's flamboyant leader Fortuyn was shot in the final days of the campaign, but his populist anti-establishment appeal and tough immigration and cultural integration rhetoric had, nonetheless, convinced many voters to cast their ballot for

his party. Fortuyn's former party, Liveable Netherlands (*Leefbaar Nederland*, LN), also crossed the threshold with 1.6% of the vote. The List Pim Fortuyn would suffer a heavy blow in the next general election of 2003; its vote share was reduced to 5.7%. 'Liveable' would disappear from parliament altogether.

In 2006 a new populist party entered Dutch parliament with 5.9% of the vote: Geert Wilders' Freedom Party (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV). Compared to Fortuyn, Wilders appealed to the ordinary people even more explicitly, voiced a harsher anti-establishment critique and took a tougher stance against Islam. In 2010 Wilders managed to build out his support, winning 15.5% of the vote.

The Socialist Party (*Socialistische Partij*, SP), a party with a Maoist past, is a borderline case of populism. It will not be considered in the QCA analysis, however, as the party has moderated its populist discourse to a large extent in more recent years (see Chapter 4).

Credibility of the Dutch populist parties

Pim Fortuyn received a significant amount of attention when he entered the political stage. This was largely due to his flamboyant character and confrontational style. Fortuyn was an eloquent speaker and formulated an effective anti-establishment rhetoric. The party largely lost its appeal due to Fortuyn's assassination. After the LPF entered the governing coalition, moreover, the party lost credibility due to the continuous infighting, while no new leader with the personal appeal of Fortuyn stood up. Liveable Netherlands also suffered from the departure of Fortuyn and fell victim to internal struggles too.

Geert Wilders', on the other hand, managed to preserve the unity in his Freedom Party and to position himself in the centre of the attention with his harsh populist anti-establishment rhetoric and anti-Islam statements.

Table 2.18: The credibility of populist parties in the Netherlands.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
The List Pim Fortuyn (LPF)		
2002	1: Appealing leader.	1: Underdeveloped, yet absence disputes.
2003	0: Lack of appealing leader.	0: Internal disputes and defections.
Liveable Netherlands (LN)		
02, 06	0: Lack of appealing leader.	0: Internal disputes and defections.
Freedom Party (PVV)		
2006, 2010	1: Appealing leader.	1: Party united.
Country Score		
Max	2002: 1; 2003: 0; 2006-2010: 1	2002: 1; 2003: 0; 2006-2010: 1
Mean	0.75	0.75
Total Score: 1.5		

The Netherlands is a case in which the sudden success of populist parties signified a true break with the past. The case also shows how a populist party can learn from the mistakes of its predecessor; Wilders' Freedom Party has been much more capable in preserving organisational cohesion that the List Pim Fortuyn. Chapter 4 explores the Dutch case in more detail.

Norway

As in Denmark, the Norwegian version of the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*, FRP) initially criticised state bureaucracy and the level of income tax. When it was founded in 1973, the party was officially named 'Anders Lange's Party for strong reductions of taxes, charges and government intervention'. In 1974 Lange died and the party was given its current name in 1977. Although the party still adhered to its original issues, the emphasis shifted towards an anti-immigration discourse in the mid-1980s (Svåsand 1998: 84; Hagelund 2005). The party is populist in presenting itself "as the party which speaks the ordinary people's case in ordinary people's language in opposition to a political establishment" (Hagelund 2005: 149-50). The initial electoral results of the party have been erratic, but in 1997 and 2001 the party polled around 15% of the vote and it became the second largest party in 2005 and 2009 with over 22% of the vote. The party remained outside of office, even though it endorsed the centre-right minority government that was formed in 2001, in exchange for the implementation of some of its favoured policies.

Credibility of the Progress Party

The Progress Party has been marked by conflicts between, most notably, liberal and more anti-immigration minded factions (Svåsand 1998: 81). The party, for instance, witnessed splits in 1994 and the early 2000s. In 2002 the breakaway party Democrats in Norway (DEM) was formed, but this party was never able to step out of the Progress Party's shadow. Despite these defections Carl I. Hagen, FRP party leader from 1978 to 2006, has been described as an appealing leader, able to limit the damage of internal strife (Carter 2005: 80-1; Hagelund 2005: 151). According to Anders Widfeldt (2000: 490-1):

> He is an effective media performer. Photogenic and articulate, he communicates directly to the 'common man' with a 'common sense' message. He has a strong and loyal personal following and has so far been able to control splits and outbreaks of discontent in the party.

After Hagen's departure in 2006, new party leader Siv Jensen, nicknamed the 'Norwegian Margaret Thatcher', has proven to be a worthy successor and the party

remained free from internal turmoil.

Table 2.19: The credibility of populist parties in Norway.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Progress Party (FRP)		
1997-2005	1: Appealing leader.	0.5: Some internal disputes and defections.
2009	1: Appealing leader.	1: Party united.
Country Score		
Max	1997-2001-2005-2009: 1	1997-2001-2005: 0.5; 2009: 1
Mean	1	0.63
Total Score: 1.63		

The Norwegian Progress Party has developed in a similar way as the Danish variant; it similarly moved beyond its core anti-state intervention appeal and adopted a critical stance regarding the issue of immigration. Despite its electoral success, however, the Norwegian Progress party has been less influential than the Danish People's Party in terms of policy implementation.

Poland

In Poland, two clear-cut populist parties have managed to break through in recent general elections, which will be more elaborately discussed in Chapter 5. The first of these, Self Defence (*Samoobrona*, SO), developed from a farmer's trade union and social movement into a populist political party with a rather vague, yet predominantly left-wing, programme. Its undisputable leader Andrzej Lepper clearly set out the party's course. The party entered Polish parliament in 2001 with just over 10% of the vote, slightly increased its vote share in 2005, but only received 1.5% in 2007. The party subsequently disappeared from parliament. Between 2005 and 2007 the party was part of the governing coalition.

The senior coalition partner of Samoobrona was the party Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS). The party, founded in 2001, foremostly focused on fighting crime and corruption. Although the party embraced some elements of populism before, it could be classified as a genuine populist party from the 2005 parliamentary election campaign onwards. The party had been in parliament since 2001, but extended its vote share to 27% in 2005 and 32% in 2007.

The League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin, LPR), the other junior coalition partner between 2005 and 2007, will not be considered as a populist party. Although the party can certainly be seen as an anti-establishment party, it did not claim to base its policy positions on the 'popular will' (see Chapter 5).

Credibility of the Polish populist parties

In the 1990s Self Defence was quite amateurishly organised, but in 2001 party leader Lepper "made an efficient transition from streetwise thug to persuasive spokesman for the poor and alienated" (Millard 2003: 78). As such, the party broadened its appeal beyond the most radical protest-voters, and went on to benefit from the general anti-establishment mood that had emerged at the time of the election. Once represented in parliament, the Self Defence MPs were regularly involved in scandals and many defected or were expelled from the parliamentary fraction. The party could retain its anti-establishment appeal, however, and profit from the public's general dissatisfaction with Polish politics. After taking part in the governing coalition in 2005, however, scandals continued and party officials were accused of corruption, tainting Self Defence's credibility.

The figureheads of Law and Justice, twin brothers Jarosław and, the late, Lech Kaczyński, successfully managed to present themselves as political outsiders, even though they had undeniably played important roles in Polish post-communist politics. The party was, from the outset, well organised and the party effectively claimed credit for implementing anti-corruption measures whilst in office.

Table 2.20: The credibility of populist parties in Poland.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Self Defence (SO)		
1997	0: Amateurish campaign.	0: Disjointed party organisation.
2001, 2005	1: Appealing leader.	0: Internal disputes and defections.
2007	0: Difficulties to retain populist appeal after joining coalition.	0: Internal disputes and defections.
Law and Justice (PiS)		
2005-2007	1: Appealing leaders, effective anti-corruption message.	1: Party united.
Country Score		
Max	1997: 0; 2001: 1; 2005: 1; 2007: 1	1997: 0; 2001: 0; 2005: 1; 2007:1
Mean	0.75	0.5
Total Score: 1.25		

In Poland, dissatisfaction with the governing parties in the 1990s and early 2000s and the salience of the issue of corruption have provided a conducive environment for anti-establishment parties. As will be further discussed in Chapter 6, only Self Defence and, from 2005 onwards, Law and Justice are considered to be populist parties. Law and Justice, as Chapter 6 will also show, successfully managed to win over much of the electorates of its less credible governing coalition partners between 2005 and 2007: Self Defence and the League of Polish Families.

Romania[7]

The most successful Romanian populist party has been the Greater Romania Party (*Partidul România Mare*, PRM), which was founded in 1991. Except for its anti-Hungarian, anti-Gypsy, anti-Semitic and irredentist appeals, the party of Vadim Tudor has also targeted the corrupt political establishment, using slogans as "Down with the Mafia, Up with the Motherland!" (Andreescu 2005: 189). According to Mudde (2007: 45), the PRM is one of the most extreme radical right populist cases: "Its discourse regularly crosses into the realm of antidemocracy and racism, even if the core ideology remains within (nominally) democratic boundaries". In 1996 the party received less than 5% of the vote in the parliamentary election, in 2000 it improved this result dramatically with 19.5%. In 2004 the party still received 13% of the vote, but in 2008 it failed to obtain any seats with a vote share of just over 3%.

Another Romanian populist party, the Romanian National Unity Party (*Partidul Unităţii Naţionale a Românilor*, PUNR), had a more narrow anti-Hungarian focus, but was equally concerned with the defence of the country against external interference (Soare 2010). PUNR entered parliament in 1996 with a vote share of 4.4%. The party disappeared from parliament in 2000, after its leader Gheorghe Funar and other party members had joined the Greater Romania Party two years earlier (Sum 2010: 21). The party was folded in the Conservative Party (PC) in 2006.

The governing Democratic Liberal Party (*Partidul Democrat-Liberal*, PDL) is also regularly associated with populism. Former leader and current Romanian president Traian Băsescu has made extensive use of anti-system and anti-corruption rhetoric. The PDL and its predecessor have been part of the governing coalition twice; between 2004 until 2007 and from 2008 to date. During these periods the party did not always apply a clear anti-establishment rhetoric. The PDL is, therefore, excluded from the analysis. Finally, the populist and xenophobic nationalist New Generation Party-Christian Democrats (PNG-CD), founded in 2000, never managed to enter Romanian parliament. Since 2004, the party leader is George 'Gigi' Becali, owner of Steaua Bucharest football club. Becali did manage to win a seat in the European Parliament as a PRM candidate (Sum 2010: 27; Maxfield 2009: 7). The prospects of the PNG-CD on the national level, however, do not look favourable.

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[7] I am particularly indebted to Sergiu Gherghina and Edward Maxfield as regards classifying and describing Romanian populist parties and assessing their credibility.

Credibility of the Romanian populist parties

Vadim Tudor, the leader of the Greater Romania Party, managed to end up as second in the 2000 presidential election with "effective and colourful anti-establishment rhetoric" (Pop-Eleches 2008: 472). Despite the later setback in the electoral support for his party, Tudor still maintained a loyal base of supporters (Sum 2010: 21). The party also remained united under Tudor's undisputed leadership, although some party members defected after 2005, when Tudor stepped down as a leader for a short period of time. During this period, Tudor attempted to moderate the course of the party, but failed to gain membership of the European People's Party group in the EP.

The Romanian National Unity Party had a high-profile leader too in Gheorghe Funar, who was major of the multi-ethnic city of Cluj-Napoca between 1992 and 2004. However, after he was expelled from the party and joined the Greater Romania Party, the electoral appeal of the National Unity Party soon waned. Extremist discourse has not damaged the credibility of either the PRM or PUNR; as in Bulgaria and Hungary, xenophobic attitudes have been widespread among the public and political mainstream parties alike (Andreescu 2005).

Table 2.21: The credibility of populist parties in Romania.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Greater Romania Party (PRM)		
1996-2004	1: Appealing leader.	1: Party united.
2008	1: Appealing leader.	0.5: Some internal disputes and defections.
Romanian National Unity Party (PUNR)		
1996	1: Appealing leader.	1: Party united.
2000	0: Lack of appealing leader.	0: Leadership crisis.
Country Score		
Max	1996-2000-2004-2008: 1	1996-2000-2004: 1; 2008: 0.5
Mean	1	0.88
Total Score: 1.88		

Romania is another case in which populist parties with an extremist discourse are not necessarily considered to be 'beyond the pale', due to widespread xenophobic convictions among the electorate. In Romania, furthermore, another large conservative party has been associated with populism: the Democratic Liberal Party. The party became successful with an anti-corruption appeal, but lost its anti-establishment credentials in office.

Slovakia

Slovakia is a case in which various parties appeared that have been associated with populism (Lang 2005; Učeň 2007; Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009). The Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (*Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko*, HZDS) is such a case, but Mudde (2007: 57) refuses to describe it as a populist radical right party, as the party "has always remained a diffuse and opportunistic alliance of various fractions". Several other parties formed that criticised the political elite for being unresponsive and corrupt, such as the Movement of Workers of Slovakia (ZRS), the Party of Civic Understanding (SOP), Alliance of the New Citizen (ANO) and Direction (*Smer*). However, as Deegan-Krause and Haughton (2009: 833) find, once entering office, "parties with anti-elite appeals appear to have found it necessary to reduce or modify those appeals, whereas parties out of power (which had previously exhibited lower levels of populist appeal) began to engage in a stronger anti-elite discourse". Hence, even though there is a good case for labelling these cases 'populist' during particular periods, the length of these periods has been short. Populism in Slovakia has seemingly materialised more in a strategic rather than an ideological sense. Therefore, the abovementioned parties will not be considered as populist parties here.

The only party that has, increasingly, used populist appeals over time is the Slovak National Party (*Slovenská národná strana*, SNS) (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009: 832). This supposed heir of the historical National Party claimed to defend the rights of native Slovaks and has been particularly concerned with opposing ethnic minority rights (Milo 2005: 213). In the early 1990s its discourse was mainly targeted against Czechs, Hungarians and Jews, but afterwards the party also became increasingly 'Romaphobe' (Mudde 2007: 87). The party's parliamentary election results have been quite erratic. In 1998 the party received 9.1% of the vote, to disappear from parliament in 2002. In 2006 the National Party made an impressive comeback with 11.7% of the vote, followed by a loss in 2010, with a vote share of 5.1% (see Henderson 2010). In the periods from 1994 to 1998 and 2006 to 2010 the party was also part of the governing coalition. Nevertheless, even during those periods the SNS politicians retained their anti-establishment and pro-ordinary people appeal, whilst "contrasting themselves favourably with the Bratislava intellectual elite" (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009: 830).

Credibility of the Slovak National Party

Under Ján Slota's leadership, which began in 1994, the Slovak National Party managed to stay united until 1998, when the party was relegated to the opposition (Mudde

2007: 46). Afterwards the party witnessed a leadership struggle and various splits, losing parliamentary representation in 2002. In 2003, however, the factions merged again and the party remained united. The SNS has managed to appeal to a considerable share of the nationalist Slovakian electorate. A substantial part of the Slovak population also holds negative attitudes about, in particular, the Roma minority (Milo 2005). The xenophobic message of the SNS has thus not hampered its electoral appeal. Its populist credentials were a bit shaken between 1994 and 1998, when the party was part of the governing coalition. In 2002, moreover, the party failed to campaign as a united front, but rejuvenated its populist appeal after the party re-united. During the second term in office SNS ministers were involved in corruption scandals, harming the credibility of the party.

Table 2.22: The credibility of populist parties in Slovakia.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Slovak National Party (SNS)		
1998	0.5: Some difficulties to retain populist appeal after joining coalition.	1: Party united.
2002	0: Disjointed electoral campaigns.	0: Leadership crisis and party split.
2006	1: Populist appeal rejuvenated.	1: Party united.
2010	0: Party tainted by corruption scandals.	1: Party united.
Country Score		
Max	1998: 0.5; 2002: 0; 2006: 1; 2010: 0	1998: 1; 2002: 0; 2006-2010: 1
Mean	0.38	0.75
Total Score: 1.13		

Research from Deegan-Krause and Haughton (2009) has indicated that populist discourse has been widely used in Slovakian politics. Whereas the populist rhetoric of most parties waned in the years after their foundation and/or after they entered office, the Slovak National Party has consistently voiced a populist anti-establishment message so far.

Slovenia

Slovenia has seen the emergence of a nationalist party with a name similar to the Slovakian version: the Slovenian National Party (*Slovenska Nacionalna Stranka*, SNS). The party was founded in 1991 and led by Zmago Jelinčič Plemeniti since. The party has voiced irredentist desires and, in the 1990s, took stance against immigrants from the other former Yugoslav republics that moved to Slovenia in the 1960s and 1970s (Trplan 2005: 245). The Slovenian Roma minority has been at the receiving end of unwelcoming remarks as well. The SNS received a considerable 10% of the vote in the 1992 general election, but only between 3.2% and 6.3% in the four subsequent elections. Although the Slovenian SNS has conveyed an exclusivist conception of the

Slovenian community, it can be debated whether the party is fundamentally hostile towards the political establishment. Especially in more recent years this is not a defining feature of the party. The party will, therefore, be excluded from the analysis.

Sweden

The xenophobic populist Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna,* SD) managed to cross the electoral threshold in the general election of 2010, winning 5.7% of the vote. In 2002 and 2006 its vote share was 1.4% and 2.9% respectively, too small for parliamentary representation. Before, the support levels of the party, which was founded in 1988, were even more marginal. The party's increasing vote share went hand in hand with the attempts to create a more respectable ideological image. This process started in the second half of the 1990s when the party gradually moved away from its neo-fascist roots (Rydgren 2008b: 146; Widfeldt 2008; Aylott 2010: 6). The Sweden Democrats were still staunchly opposed to immigration, which allegedly caused unemployment and threatened Swedish culture and the welfare state (Rydgren 2008b: 147). The party also condemned the processes of globalisation and (American) cultural imperialism. On moral and cultural issues the party has followed a traditionalist line and it has proposed tough law and order measures. The Sweden Democrats, in addition, have applied a populist anti-establishment rhetoric, especially targeting the purported left-wing elites, whilst claiming to 'say what the common people think' (Rydgren 2008b: 148).

Credibility of the Sweden Democrats

The calls for changing the ideological course of the party led to tensions within the Sweden Democrats, resulting in several defections and expulsions (Carter 2005: 74-5; Widfeldt 2008: 269-70). Despite its attempts to appear more respectable, the party remained stigmatised due to its fascist past (Rydgren 2008b: 149). Leading Swedish media outlets have, for instance, refused to publish and broadcast Sweden Democrats campaign adverts (Aylott 2002: 3). Gradually, however, the party's more moderate rhetoric started to pay off and since 2005 the party has benefited from having a young and dynamic new leader: Jimmie Åkesson. As Widfeldt (2008: 271) notes, "His smart appearance, his low-key but confident and reasoned style and his 'clean' background belied any accusations of extremism or quirkiness". At the same time, the unity within the party has been preserved and its visibility in the media increased (Rydgren 2008b: 150).

Table 2.23: The credibility of populist parties in Sweden.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Sweden Democrats (SD)		
1998, 2002	0: Stigmatised due to fascist origins.	0: Internal disputes and major split in 2001.
2006, 2010	0.5: More respectable image, dynamic new leader.	1: Party united.
Country Score		
Max	1998-2002: 0; 2006-2010: 0.5	1998-2002: 0; 2006-2010: 1
Mean	0.25	0.5
Total Score: 0.75		

The case of Sweden illustrates how a former neo-fascist party slowly but surely managed to create a more acceptable populist image. Even though the Sweden Democrats still have to fight the stigma of fascism, the party's breakthrough in 2010 indicates that an anti-immigration discourse can be conducive to electoral success as long as it is not based on (publicly conveyed) blatant racist convictions.

Switzerland

The case of Switzerland is somewhat complicated due to its federal state structure, which means that political parties are largely regionally organised. Various populist parties can, nonetheless, be said to have entered the Swiss federal legislature, the National Council, in recent years. The Swiss People's Party (in German: *Schweizerische Volkspartei*, SVP), also known as the Democratic Union of the Centre (in French: *Union Démocratique du Centre*, UDC), even became the largest party from 2003 onwards. The party, or its founding predecessors, consistently received around 11-12% of the vote in general elections in the decades after the Second World War. In more recent times, its vote share steadily expanded from 15% in 1995 to 29% in 2007. The growth of the SVP in the 1990s was accompanied by an ideological change of direction of the formerly agrarian-conservative party. The Zürich branch, under the leadership of Christoph Blocher, became dominant on national level, and steered the party into a more populist, xenophobic and Eurosceptic course (Mudde 2007: 58; Albertazzi 2008: 105; Bornschier 2010: 128). Thus, the party explicitly began to accuse the political class of conspiring behind the backs of the people and to warn for the negative side effects of immigration, whilst calling for the preservation of the unique Swiss culture (Albertazzi 2008: 105-6).

Several other, less successful, populist parties have managed to enter the Swiss National Council as well. The anti-immigrant Swiss Democrats aimed to secure the "well-being of the Swiss collectivity and not of the business community" (Gentile and Kriesi 1998: 131). The party long occupied a handful of seats prior to its gradual

decline starting in 1999, and disappeared from parliament in 2007. The Freedom Party (*Freiheits-Partei,* FP), formerly the Automobilist Party, reacted against the success of ecological and socialist parties and pledged for limited state intervention (Gentile and Kriesi 1998: 126; 131). It won 5.1% of the vote in 1991, 4% in 1995, but disappeared from parliament four years later. The regionalist populists of the League of Ticinesians (*Lega dei Ticinesi*, LdTi), which was founded in 1991, have criticised the established political system and its elite consociationalism (Albertazzi 2006; Gentile and Kriesi 1998: 126; Carter 2005: 49). Throughout its existence, the party has been represented in the National Council with one or two seats.

Credibility of the Swiss populist parties

Swiss People's Party leader Blocher was able to improve the communication strategies of the Zürich branch of the party and to professionalise its organisation, setting an example for the party on the national level (Albertazzi 2008: 116). At the same time, self-made businessman has Blocher personified "the allegedly 'Swiss' virtues of determination and hard work", whilst being able "to address people's concerns by using simple and media-friendly language" (Albertazzi 2008: 116). Despite this, not all of the party's members were happy with the radicalisation of the party and the SVP witnessed a split after the federal election of 2007 (Bornschier 2010: 133). The break away from more moderate dissenters, however, did reinforce the dominant position of Blocher on the national level. The party managed to survive well after it took part in the Swiss executive council; "Rather than revealing the hollowness of anti-establishment populism, government participation has allowed the populist right in Switzerland actually to fulfil some of its promises" (Bornschier 2010: 164).

Other Swiss populist parties have not attained similar levels of credibility. While both the Swiss Democrats and the Freedom Party have only suffered from internal disputes to a limited extent, the parties lacked an appealing leader and a well-developed party organisation (Gentile and Kriesi 1998: 132; Carter 2005: 78). The League of Ticinesians, on the other hand, did have popular figureheads, but suffered from internal rivalry in the 1990s. Tensions did ease afterwards when prominent party figure Flavio Maspoli was expelled after various fraudulent practices (Carter 2005: 90). In any case, the appeal of the League has been limited due to its regionalist character; the party is confined to the Italian speaking Ticino canton (Albertazzi 2008: 103). Although it has been very successful on the cantonal level, the party cannot – and has not been inclined to – build out its support base across the whole federation.

Table 2.24: The credibility of populist parties in Switzerland.

	Party Appeal	Party Organisation
Swiss People's Party (SVP)		
1995-2007	1: Appealing leader, anti-establishment appeal retained.	1: Absence evident disputes prior to 2007 election.
Swiss Democrats (SD)		
1995-2007	0: Lack of appealing leader.	1: Absence evident disputes.
Freedom Party (FP)		
1995-1999	0: Lack of appealing leader.	1: Absence evident disputes.
League of Ticinesians (LdT)		
1995-2007	0.5: Appealing leaders, but fraud scandals and limited geographical appeal.	0.5: Some internal disputes.
Country Score		
Max	1995-1999-2003-2007: 1	1995-1999-2003-2007: 1
Mean	1	1
Total Score: 2		

Switzerland has seen several populist parties entering the federal legislature after recent elections. The most successful has been the Swiss People's Party, which steadily increased its share of the vote after Blocher's Zürich branch came to dominate the party on the national level. Despite a split and government participation, the party has retained its credibility as a populist party.

2.3   Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to apply the term populism to political parties in a systematic way and to identify the populist parties in 31 European countries that have won at least one seat in the past four parliamentary elections in their country. It has, in addition, assessed the credibility of the identified parties prior to these elections. As the preceding pages have shown, it is not always straightforward to distinguish populist from non-populist parties. By means of this exercise it has become clear that there are several specific challenges when the aim is to identify a circumscribed universe of populist parties.

First of all, there are parties about which observers simply disagree, even if a clear definition is given. There are several borderline cases which are regularly associated with populism. Examples include Sivio Berlusconi's The People of Freedom (and previously *Forza Italia*), the New Flemish Alliance in Belgium and the Lithuanian Labour Party. Especially in Central and Eastern Europe, there are some large conservative parties, like the Democratic Liberal Party in Romania and FIDESZ in

Hungary, which are regularly described as populist. The previously mentioned parties are here not included in the list of populist parties. This is because it is questionable whether they, at least for more than one successive parliamentary period, have truly satisfied the three definitional criteria previously outlined. Alleged left-wing populist parties with communist roots, such as the Greek Communists, the Dutch Socialist Party and *Die Linke* in Germany, constitute an interesting subcategory of these borderline cases. With regard to those cases the question is whether they have shrugged off their communist legacies and replaced them with a populist, or some kind of other identity (see March 2009).

Secondly, as Deegan-Krause and Haughton (2009) have shown with the case of Slovakia, political parties may adopt populist rhetoric to different degrees over time and tend to lose much of their anti-establishment appeal once taking part in government. That said, populist parties in office do not necessarily lose their populist rhetoric, as the cases of the Swiss People's Party and the Italian *Lega Nord* have indicated. If populist parties succeed in keeping 'one foot in and one foot out' whilst in office, they may be able to retain a credible anti-establishment appeal (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005; 2010). In any case, even though the approach in this study is to exclude cases which apply populist rhetoric for only a limited period, it can be argued that it is still correct to describe such cases as populist if they comply with the definition, even if only for a short amount of time. This, however, would lead to a rather unstable canon of populist cases.

Thirdly, and related to the previous point, particularly in post-communist countries populist rhetoric is widely used across the party political spectrum. This is largely due to the fact that party systems in those countries are still relatively young and fluid, leading to shifting party ideologies and the coming and going of new political parties. These often present themselves as political outsiders and criticise the political elites. This is particularly the case in countries where the political establishment is accused of being corrupt, or unpopular because of other reasons (e.g. Bulgaria and Hungary). In these instances, it is not always easy to distinguish between populist and non-populist anti-establishment parties (see Chapter 5 on Poland).

Even if identifying a circumscribed set of populist parties is not a straightforward exercise, this chapter has provided a list of political parties which have used populist rhetoric consistently for a considerable period of time. These are parties that could not truly be characterised without taking their populist anti-establishment rhetoric into account. Many political actors may use populist rhetoric sporadically, but with regard to the parties listen in Table 2.1 populism can be considered to be part of their core identity. It would be wrong to claim this chapter has provided the ultimate

and undisputable universe of populist parties in contemporary Europe. Some scholars may disagree about individual cases. Borderline cases in the study of populist parties will always exist, but this is also the case as far as some other types of parties are concerned.

Apart from aiming to contribute to the academic debate about applying the concept 'populism' to political parties, this chapter provided the basis for the analysis of the electoral performance of populist parties across Europe. The central question is whether the electoral performance of the identified populist parties can be explained by considering the same explanatory variables. The following chapter, which provides a QCA analysis, engages with this question by looking for the causal paths leading to either the electoral success or failure of populist parties. Afterwards, the in-depth case studies in the three subsequent chapters drill down to the causal mechanisms at work and take into account the specific issues relevant to the electoral performance of populist parties in the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom.

3 Paths to Populist Electoral Success and Failure: QCA Analysis

3.1 Introduction

The explanatory model that is devised in this dissertation to analyse the electoral performance of populist parties in Europe includes four explanatory variables: the electoral system, the availability of the electorate, the responsiveness of established parties and the supply of credible populist parties. In order to assess this model, the study first turns to Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) techniques (see Ragin 1987; 2000; 2008). As outlined in Chapter 1, QCA is chosen as it provides suitable methods for medium-N analysis and because it can demonstrate how an outcome can be caused by different combinations of explanatory variables. Following this notion of 'equifinality', in other words, different causal paths can lead to the same outcome. Causality, moreover, is not assumed to be symmetrical. Different (combinations of) causal conditions may be relevant when explaining either the presence or the absence of a particular outcome. The QCA approach also follows the logic that it is often the *combination* of explanatory variables that leads to a particular outcome ('conjunctural causation'). Explanatory variables are, then, not assumed to affect the outcome independently. Instead of the term 'independent variable', therefore, the term 'causal condition' is preferred.

This chapter applies two variants of the QCA method: crisp set QCA (csQCA) and fuzzy set QCA (fsQCA). Whereas the former, initial, variant is parsimonious in its application, the latter allows for a more accurate operationalisation of the causal conditions, as it does not require dichotomisation of the data. Both methods are applied in order to crossvalidate the findings. The next section discusses the way in which the causal conditions are operationalised, touches on the data sources used and on how the data is calibrated for the QCA analyses. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 present the results from the csQCA and fsQCA analyses respectively.

3.2   Operationalisation of Causal Conditions

Raw Data

The outcome variable in this analysis is the electoral performance of populist parties. This variable is operationalised by calculating the average vote share of populist parties in the last four parliamentary elections in each country (see Appendix E.1). This means that if there is more than one populist party in one country, the average vote percentages of all the populist parties in this particular country are aggregated. As discussed in Chapter 1, the reason for the selected time-span (the last four national elections) has to do with the inclusion of former communist countries in the analysis. The period that is covered by selecting this time-span is roughly 15 years – even though it varies somewhat between countries. This means that the mid- to late-1990s are the starting point for the analysis. Around this time, most post-communist countries had had a few genuinely free elections, so that their party systems had some time to develop. This provides for a meaningful comparison between the post-communist and the long established liberal democracies in Europe. The data source used for the outcome variable is the website Parties and Elections in Europe (http://www.parties-and-elections.de).

The first causal condition relates to the electoral system in different countries. Instead of considering the specific electoral formula, district magnitude or thresholds in the various countries, this analysis uses the Least Squares Index as an indicator of the proportionality of the electoral system (see Gallagher 1991; 2011). This index reflects the actual disproportionality between the distribution of votes and seats[1]. As such, it provides a good measure for the combined mechanical effects of electoral rules in each country (see Carter 2005). For this analysis, the average figure of the last four parliamentary elections in each country is used (see Appendix E.2). Since a proportional electoral system is expected to be conducive to the electoral success of populist parties, the scores are inverted, allocating a 0 to the country with the highest average disproportionality over the past four elections (France).

Aggregate electoral volatility is taken as the indicator for the second causal condition: the availability of the electorate. If many voters change their party preference between elections, this can be taken as a sign that these voters are not attached to a particular party (Dalton et al. 2000; Abedi 2004). Following Bartolini (1999: 467), however, volatility does not equal availability; voters may stick to their

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[1] The Gallagher index is generally preferred over alternative indices as it is considered to provide the most accurate picture of disproportionality between vote share and seat share (see Lijphart 1994: 58-67; Carter 2005: 199).

previous party choice even if they are in principle willing to consider voting for another party. Volatility levels, therefore, underestimate the actual availability of the electorate. Aggregate volatility levels, in turn, underestimate individual level volatility, since individual vote shifts between two parties might cancel each other out on the aggregate level. Another setback of taking electoral volatility as an indicator for the electorate's availability is that volatility levels can be affected by the electoral performance of populist parties. This leads to the problem of endogeneity; the availability of the electorate is supposed to affect the electoral performance of populist parties, but electoral volatility, the indicator for the electorate's availability, partly depends on populist parties' electoral performance.

Irrespective of these setbacks, aggregate electoral volatility is still considered to be the most suitable proxy for the availability of the electorate. It would, arguably, be more appropriate to use data from election studies concerning the strength of respondents' party affiliation, but it is difficult to obtain (reliable) data covering all the 31 European countries under consideration[2]. Furthermore, although electoral volatility is not completely exogenous to the dependent variable, volatility levels are hardly solely caused by vote shifts towards or away from populist parties. In countries with high aggregate volatility levels, vote shares mainly shift between parties that are here not considered to be populist parties (e.g. Bulgaria, Slovakia, Lithuania). Although the case studies in the following chapters will also consider more precise indicators concerning levels of party affiliation, electoral volatility, despite the limitations, is chosen as the most appropriate indicator of the availability of the electorate in this part of the study. This type of volatility is measured as the cumulated aggregate gains in vote percentage of all winning parties in a given election (Pedersen 1979)[3]. The figures are based on the author's own calculations (see Appendix E.3).

For the responsiveness of established parties, the third causal condition, four sets of data are combined that, taken together, roughly cover the period of this study. The first three of these relate to the extent to which people are generally satisfied with political institutions in their country. With regard to this, data from the European Election Study (EES) and World Value Survey (WVS) are used. The two selected sets of data from the EES relate to the question about satisfaction with the functioning of

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[2] The European Election Study (EES) 2009 (Bartolini et al. 2009), for instance, does not include the four non-EU countries in this study. There is, nevertheless, a significant negative correlation between the volatility figures used here and EES data concerning respondents who felt 'very close' to a party in each country. The Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.522 and the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. This further indicates that electoral volatility is a valid indicator for the availability of the electorate.

[3] This generates the same results as calculating the cumulated (aggregate) electoral losses of all losing parties in the same election.

democracy in each country, and stems from 2004 and 2009. Here the percentage of respondents is considered that is 'not very' or 'not at all' satisfied with the functioning of democracy. The third set of (WVS) data deals with 'confidence in parliament' and predominantly stems from 1999. Here the percentage of respondents answering they had 'no confidence at all' in parliament is considered. A fourth and more specific indicator for established parties' (un)responsiveness is the perceived level of corruption in each country. Higher levels of perceived corruption are likely to indicate higher levels of perceived unresponsiveness. For this indicator, Transparency International (TI) data on perceived public sector corruption is used. TI places countries on a 0 to 10 scale as regards their perceived corruption levels. Data in the period 1995 until 2009 is considered and for each country the mean figure of this period (or the years available) is calculated. On the basis of these four sets of data, all countries are assigned an 'unresponsiveness score', 1 indicating a high level of unresponsiveness, 0 indicating the opposite (see Appendix E.4 for more detailed information about the computation).

The final causal condition relates to the supply of credible populist parties. The previous chapter has discussed how this condition is operationalised and provided the data for each country. Table 3.1 shows the raw data that is gathered and computed in order to proceed with the QCA analyses. The outcome variable, the electoral performance of populist parties (ELPERF), is placed in the final column.

Table 3.1: Raw data for the QCA analyses.

Countries	PR	AVAIL	UNRESP	CREDIB	ELPERF
Austria	16.97	13.3	0	1.5	20.1
Belgium	15.8	13.6	0.25	2	13.4
Bulgaria	13.94	42.6	1	1.25	6.6
Croatia	11.16	20.2	1	0	0
Cyprus	17.16	8.2	0.25	0	0
Czech Rep.	13.14	19.8	1	0.63	4.0
Denmark	18.5	11.1	0	2	12.4
Estonia	15.26	27.3	1	0	0
Finland	16.44	9.0	0	1.75	6.4
France	0	15.1	0.25	1.75	10.7
Germany	16.29	9.0	0.25	1.75	7.4
Greece	12.51	7.2	1	1.5	2.9
Hungary	10.65	23.0	1	1.25	7.2
Iceland	17.37	14.0	0	0.5	1.8
Ireland	12.64	13.6	0.25	1.25	6.5
Italy	13	14.1	0.75	1.75	6.7
Latvia	14.03	35.6	1	0.75	2.3
Lithuania	9.18	42.8	1	0.75	6.0
Luxembourg	15.75	8.5	0	1.63	9.1
Malta	18.02	2.8	0.33	0	0
Netherlands	18.68	22.4	0	1.5	11.5
Norway	16.51	14.7	0	1.63	18.7
Poland	12.47	33.0	0.75	1.25	20.6
Portugal	13.36	10.8	0.75	0	0
Romania	14.13	22.7	1	1.88	11.5
Slovakia	13.9	35.1	1	1.13	7.3
Slovenia	16.17	28.6	1	0	0
Spain	14.57	7.7	0.25	0	0
Sweden	17.87	13.6	0	0.75	2.6
Switzerland	16.48	7.9	0	2	26.8
UK	3.09	7.7	0.25	0	0

Note: s*ee Appendix E.1-E.4 and Chapter 2 for detailed calculation of scores.*

Threshold setting and calibration of data

In order to perform a crisp set QCA (csQCA) analysis the data in Table 3.1 need to be dichotomised. Thresholds are set in order to transform the values related to the conditions and outcome variable into dichotomised scores (1 and 0). In order to perform a fuzzy set (fsQCA) analysis, on the other hand, the raw data in Table 3.1 needs to be calibrated into fuzzy set membership scores, ranging anywhere in between 0 to 1. This is done by means of the direct method of calibration. Accordingly, three thresholds are set; one for full membership (1), one for full non-membership (0) and one indicating the crossover point (0.5). Subsequently, the FSQCA software calculates the cases' fuzzy set membership scores in each causal condition and the outcome variable by means of a logarithmic function. Table 3.2 present the thresholds

that are chosen for the csQCA and fsQCA analysis, respectively. Note that the crossover thresholds chosen for the fsQCA analysis are equal to the 'in-or-out' thresholds for the csQCA analysis.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, setting thresholds should not be done in an arbitrary way. The following paragraphs set out why certain thresholds were chosen. The choices were based on theoretical and substantive grounds, i.e. by making sense of the *meaning* of the values, and also by considering how the cases were distributed as regards the individual causal conditions.

Table 3.2: Thresholds for QCA analyses.

Conditions	Description	cs Thresholds	fs Thresholds
ELPERF	Average (combined) vote share of populist parties in last four parliamentary elections.	1 ≥ 5% 0 < 5%	1 = 15% 0.5 = 5% 0 = 0%
PR	Proportionality of electoral system. Higher values depict higher proportionality.	1 > 13.1 0 ≤ 13.1	1 = 18.68 0.5 = 13.1 0 = 0
AVAIL	Availability of the electorate. Indicator: levels of aggregate electoral volatility.	1 ≥ 12.0 0 < 12.0	1 = 25% 0.5 = 12% 0 = 3%
UNRESP	Perceived unresponsiveness of established parties. 0 = responsive; 1 = unresponsive	1 ≥ 0.5 0 < 0.5	1 = 1 0.5 = 0.5 0 = 0
CREDIB	Credibility of populist parties. 0 = lack of credibility; 2 = credible	1 > 1 0 ≤ 1	1 = 2 0.5 = 1 0 = 0

Electoral Performance (ELPERF).

A country is considered to obtain full membership within the electoral performance condition if populist parties have won at least 15% of the vote on average in the past four parliamentary elections. A vote share of 15% generally suffices to make a party a significant force in parliament. In many countries, the third largest party received around this percentage of the vote in the most recent parliamentary election (e.g. in Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, The Netherlands, Poland), and in some cases joined a coalition government. Several junior coalition partners in countries such as Denmark, Romania and Slovenia, have even gained less than 15% of the vote. Especially for, often newly formed, populist outsiders, such a result can normally be interpreted as a great electoral success. Moreover, an average vote of 15% over the last four general elections is a sign that there is stable support for populist parties in a particular country. There are countries, such as Austria and Switzerland, with an even higher average populist party vote share. The percentage points exceeding the upper limit, however, are considered as 'extraneous variation'. In view of the theoretical and

substantive reasons discussed, an average of 15% of the vote is already considered to be sufficient to classify the country as a full member in the electoral performance condition. The point at which a country reaches full non-membership is, straightforwardly, set at 0% of the average vote, indicating the virtual absence of support for populist parties[4].

The crossover point is set at 5% of the vote. An average vote of 5% or more in a country shows that there is a considerable share of the electorate that is appealed to by a populist message. In most countries, a vote share of 5% is enough - at least for a single party - to cross the electoral threshold and to become represented in parliament. Twelve of the European countries under consideration have actually applied a legal threshold of 5% for single parties in the most recent general election, either on the national or district level. In other countries that apply thresholds this percentage is lower. Considering that a vote share of less than 5% is often just too small to gain parliamentary representation, the 5% barrier is suitable as a crossover point.

Taking a look at the distribution of cases reveals that the Czech Republic and Lithuania (with average 'populist vote shares' of 4.0% and 6.0% respectively) are the cases closest to the crossover point (see Table 3.1). This means that in practice there is a reasonable gap of 2% between the cases on both sides of the divide and, thus, that there are no 'ambiguous' cases extremely close to the threshold itself. As a result of this calibration, 18 countries have higher than 0.5 membership in the electoral performance condition and 13 countries lower than 0.5 membership. In crisp set terms, populist parties have been relatively successful in 18 countries and relatively unsuccessful in 13 countries.

Proportional Representation (PR)
With regard to the PR condition, the determination of the full membership and full non-membership thresholds corresponds with the most extreme cases in the distribution. The upper threshold is set at 18.68, equalling the score of the Netherlands. With no artificial threshold and a district magnitude of 150, the electoral system in this country could hardly be more proportional. A party is only required to win 0.67% of the vote to receive a seat in parliament. The non-membership value is 0, equalling the score of France. This country has an even lower average proportionality figure than the UK, where a Single Member Plurality system is used in parliamentary

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[4] Note that only the electoral results for parties that have entered parliament at least once after the past four general elections have been recorded. For countries with populist parties that did not manage to cross the threshold the average combined vote share was never higher than 2.5 % (of UKIP and BNP in the UK).

elections. In the French two-tiered single-member majority system, only candidates who receive at least 12.5% of the first-round vote proceed to the second run-off round[5]. That is, if no candidate has already managed to win an absolute majority in the first round. As a result, particularly many votes cast in the first round are 'wasted'.

Figure 3.1: Proportionality of electoral results (vote share compared to seat share) in 31 European countries.
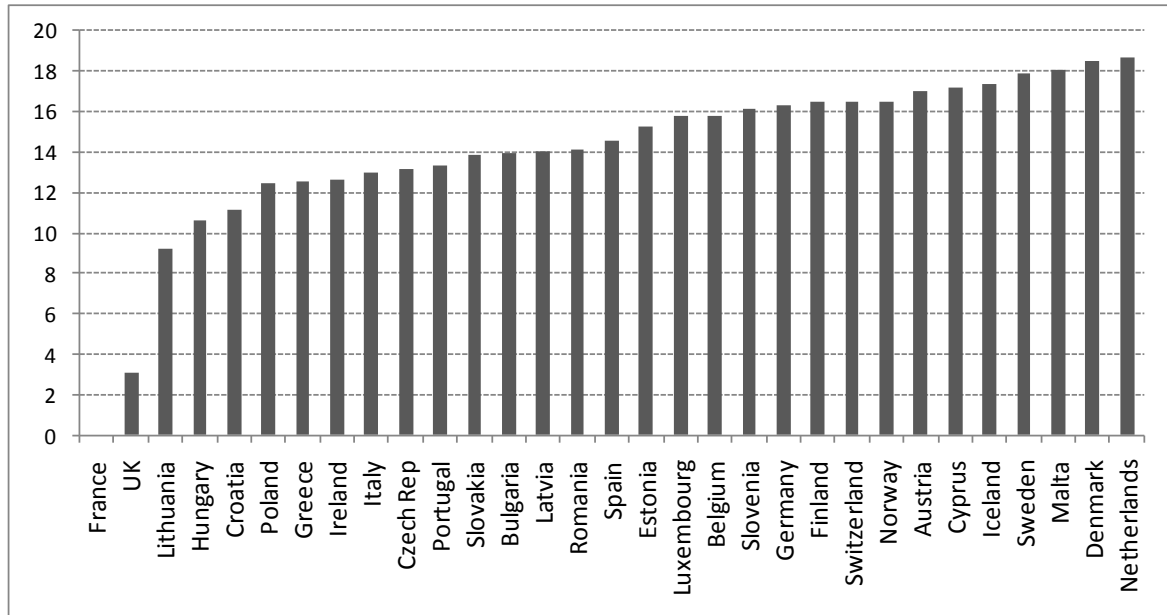
Notes: Calculated on the basis of Gallagher's (1991) Least Squares Index (see Appendix E.2)

The crossover point is set at 13.1 as this separates the countries with more proportional electoral systems from countries with electoral rules that are, in theory, less conducive to the success of new and smaller (populist) parties (see Figure 3.1). Germany, in which a Mixed Member PR system is used for federal elections, falls into the 'more proportional' category as well, in view of the relatively proportional translation of votes into seats after the past four elections. Closest to the threshold on the 'more proportional' side of the divide is the Czech Republic, with a score of 13.14. This country uses a considerable electoral threshold of 5%, but has a relatively high district magnitude. The number of elected representatives per district is 25, which leads to relatively high levels of proportionality. The country closest to the other side of the divide, Italy, only has a slightly lower score of 13.0. It nevertheless makes sense to put this case on the other side of the divide considering the formal rules of the Italian electoral system prior to 2006. Until this year a fairly disproportional Mixed Member electoral system was used (with 75% of the seats assigned through a Single Member Plurality system). The new electoral system has yielded far more proportional

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[5] In this analysis, the first-round vote share in French parliamentary elections is considered.

results, despite the majority bonus for electoral coalitions. Considering that two out of the four Italian general elections relevant for this analysis were held under the old system, the Italian case will be assigned a value below 0.5 here. An alternative analysis was performed in order to judge whether setting the crossover point slightly differently would have an effect on the research outcomes. Changing the crisp set and fuzzy set scores of Italy or the Czech Republic actually had no effect on the results of the QCA analyses. The position of the countries in the truth table changed (see Table 3.3), but the eventual outcomes (the casual paths) remained the same. This indicates that the results from the analysis are robust, since they do not change after a (slight) modification of the data calibration.

Other countries that fall under the 'less disproportional' category are marked by institutional features limiting proportionality. The electoral systems of the UK and France have been mentioned, Lithuania and Hungary have applied a rather disproportional mixed member systems, Poland has previously applied a system which was aimed to reduce the fragmentation in the party system (see Chapter 5), Greece has applied a sizeable winner bonus reducing the proportionality between vote- and seat share and Ireland has used a semi-proportional Single Transferable Vote system. Croatia is a somewhat odd case, as it has applied a fairly ordinary Proportional Representation system, like many countries above the crossover threshold. Croatia, nevertheless, has applied a sizeable 5% threshold at the constituency level. The fact that many, ultimately unsuccessful, minor parties and independents competed in national elections seems to have led to a relatively high amount of wasted votes. In any case, altering the value of Croatia with regard to this condition (i.e. allocating the country a score above the crossover threshold) had no effect on the eventual outcomes of the QCA analyses.

With this threshold of 13.1, there are clearly less cases receiving a 'less proportional' value (9 cases) than a 'more proportional' value (22 cases). This is a reflection of the fact that a clear majority of countries in Europe use a relatively proportional electoral system.

Availability of the Electorate (AVAIL)
The availability of the electorate is measured by considering the levels of aggregate electoral volatility in each country. The threshold for full-membership is set at 25.0, which roughly corresponds to the average figure of the Western European country with the highest level of aggregate volatility in recent years (the Netherlands). Note that several former communist countries have higher volatility levels (see Figure 3.2). This is a reflection of the fact that in many Central and Eastern European countries the

electorate is indeed marked by (extremely) low partisan allegiances. Similar to the judgement with regard to the electoral performance of populist parties, the variation above the upper threshold is considered to be extraneous. The threshold for non-membership is set at 3, close to the average figure of the country with lowest volatility levels in Europe, Malta. This value is also close to the lowest volatility measured in a European country outside of Malta. In the Portuguese parliamentary election of 1999 only 3.2% of the aggregate vote shifted from one party to another.

Figure 3.2: Aggregate electoral volatility in 31 countries (mean over last four parliamentary elections).
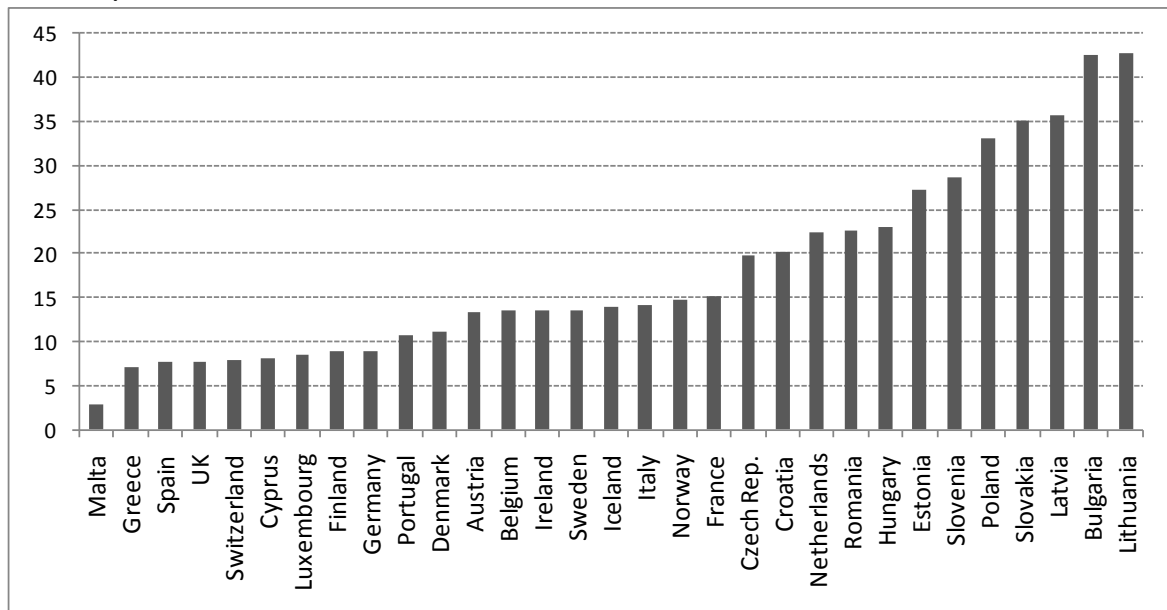
Peter Mair (2008) found that the mean volatility figure in 16 West European countries during the 1990s was 12.0. This value is used to indicate the crossover point. If the distribution of cases with regard to this causal condition is considered, a threshold of 12.0 also makes sense as it divides a cluster of countries with relatively low volatility and a cluster with somewhat higher electoral volatility. The two countries closest to the threshold on both sides are Denmark, with a value of 11.1 and Austria, with a value of 13.3. As a result, all post-communist countries fall in the category of 'more available' electorates. Post-communist countries are, in a sense, judged according to Western European standards in terms of the interpretation of the levels of electoral volatility. This is theoretically justifiable, since partisan dealignment and, consequently, the increased availability of electorates is regularly considered to be a feature of Western European democracies as well (see Dalton et al. 2000; Mair 2006). The data does indicate that there still is a clear divide between 'East' and 'West' where the *extent* to which the electorate is available is concerned.

Unresponsiveness of the established parties (UNRESP)

Compared to the previous conditions the threshold setting with regard to the *UNRESP* condition is somewhat more straightforward. In order to operationalise this condition an index has been created on the basis of several surveys (see Appendix E.4). As a result, the data that need to be calibrated for the QCA analyses are not continuous and, so to speak, less 'raw' than the data related to the previous conditions. Consistent with the operationalisation of this condition, countries with a score of 0 are considered to be full non-members, whereas countries with a score of 1 are considered to be full members in the unresponsiveness condition. The crossover point is set at 0.5, which means that countries need to score above the mean on two of the four unresponsiveness indicators in order to fall on the 'more unresponsive' side of the divide. As Table 3.1 illustrates, the countries are quite clearly grouped towards the two extremes of the scale; most countries have a score of 1 or 0.75 on the one hand and 0 or 0.25 on the other. There are no countries with a 0.5 score, which would otherwise have frustrated a clear separation of the cases.

Credibility of populist parties (CREDIB)

The final causal condition has also been operationalised in a way that provides for a rather straightforward calibration of the data. All countries received a score ranging from 0 to 2 concerning the supply of credible populist competitors in recent elections. The thresholds with regard to the final condition are consistent with this operationalisation. Countries with a score of 0 are considered to be full non-members, whereas countries with a score of 2 are considered to be full members. In order to calibrate the values into fuzzy set membership scores, these values are simply divided by two. The crossover value is 0.5 (equal to an initial raw score of 1). This score indicates that there has been a steady supply of reasonably credible populist challengers over the last four elections (i.e. there has been at least one populist party that scored moderately well on appeal and organisation throughout the period), or that there have been very credible populist challengers, but only for a part of this period. It can be argued that countries with a 'raw' score of just below 1 have witnessed the (steady) supply of populist parties with some degree of credibility. Taking a score of 1 as the very minimum to consider a country more 'in' than 'out' with regard to this condition, however, is based on the idea that parties are supposed to have a reasonably high score on both indicators of credibility (appeal and organisation) in order to be considered truly credible.

3.3 Crisp Set QCA Analysis

The first step of the csQCA analysis is to create a truth table (see Table 3.3). The truth table groups together the cases that share the same scores on the four causal conditions. Ideally, the cases that share the same configuration of causal conditions also share the same value on the outcome variable. However, as is apparent in the third row of Table 3.3, this truth table includes a 'contradictory configuration'. Croatia and Lithuania share the same configuration of causal conditions, but differ with regard to the electoral performance of populist parties. That is, in Croatia no successful populist parties have appeared, whereas in Lithuania the party now named Order and Justice has managed to enter parliament (see Chapter 2). This contradictory configuration is 'solved' by appointing a 1 score to Lithuania with regard to the credibility condition. The original credibility score of Lithuania is 0.75, which is relatively close to the threshold of 1. It therefore makes sense to assume that the causal configuration pr*AVAIL*UNRESP*credib normally leads to the absence of populist party success, as is the case in Croatia where no credible populist party competed in parliamentary elections[6].

Table 3.3: Truth table for csQCA analysis.

CASEID	PR	AVAIL	UNRESP	CREDIB	ELEPERF
AUS,BEL,NET,NOR	1	1	0	1	1
BUL,ROM,SLK	1	1	1	1	1
CRO, LIT	0	1	1	0	C
CYP, MAL,SPA	1	0	0	0	0
CZR,EST,LAT,SLV	1	1	1	0	0
DEN,FIN,GER, LUX, SWI	1	0	0	1	1
FRA, IRE	0	1	0	1	1
GRE	0	0	1	1	0
HUN,ITA,POL	0	1	1	1	1
ICE,SWE	1	1	0	0	0
POR	1	0	1	0	0
UK	0	0	0	0	0

After this modification the truth table is graphically presented in a Venn Diagram (see Figure 3.3). This diagram indicates that not every theoretically possible configuration of causal condition is empirically 'covered'. The white section at the bottom-left corner, for instance, represents the configuration pr*AVAIL*unresp*credib (meaning: the absence of a proportional electoral system combined with the presence

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[6] Upper case letters refer to the presence of a particular condition, lower case letters to its absence. The configuration thus entails: absence of a proportional electoral system, presence of an available electorate, presence of an unresponsive political establishment and absence of credible populist parties. In addition, in Boolean algebra * stands for 'logical AND', + for 'logical OR'.

of an available electorate and absence of unresponsiveness and credible populist parties). In reality, none of the 31 countries covered in this research comply with this configuration. This configuration is a so-called 'logical remainder'. In determining which (combinations of) causal conditions are sufficient or necessary for (the absence of) electoral success of populist parties, simplifying assumptions can be made about these logical remainders, in order to reach more parsimonious solutions. When making use of these simplifying assumptions, a hypothesised outcome is allocated to these configurations if this makes solutions more parsimonious.

Figure 3.3: Venn diagram representing csQCA outcome.
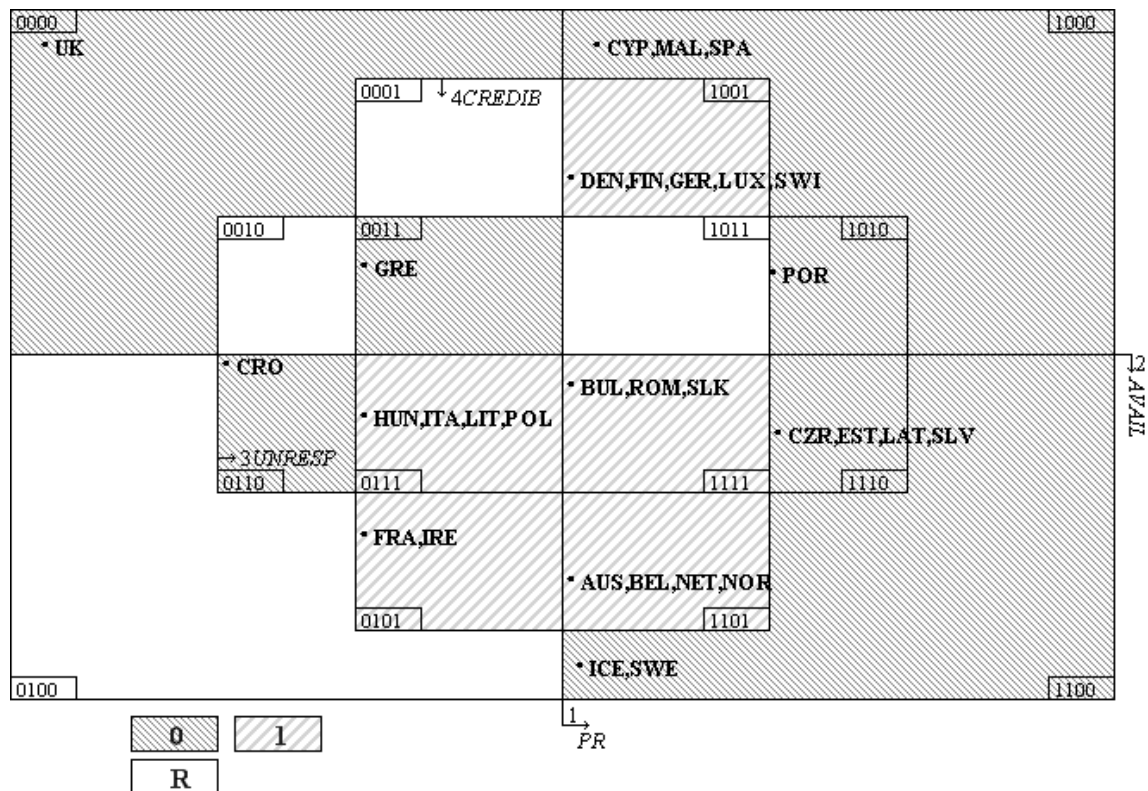
Minimisation of (1) configurations

The analysis first proceeds with 'minimising' the configurations with a positive outcome (populist party success), without taking into account the logical remainders. In this process Boolean logic is used to discard causal conditions in a particular configuration that are irrelevant for the outcome[7]. This leads to minimised causal configurations or 'prime implicants'. This process yields the following result:

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[7] This entails that if two configurations leading to the same outcome are similar except for one condition, this condition is seen as irrelevant. This single condition is removed in order to reach a more parsimonious outcome. For example: the solution with regard to the configurations ABC + ABc is AB, since the 'C' condition can be perceived to be superfluous.

AVAIL * CREDIB   +   PR * unresp * CREDIB   ⇨   ELPERF

Aus, Bel, Net, Nor;   Aus, Bel, Net, Nor;
Bul, Rom, Slk;   Den, Fin, Ger, Lux, Swi
Fra, Ire;
Hun, Ita, Lit, Pol

The result shows that there are two causal 'paths' leading to a (relatively) good electoral performance of populist parties. The first path is the presence of an available electorate combined with the supply of credible populist parties. The second path is the presence of a proportional electoral system combined with a lack of unresponsiveness of the established parties and the presence of credible populist parties. The countries sharing these two prime implicants are shown below the solution. Note that one group of cases which share the same configuration of causal conditions is covered by both causal paths. An analysis including the logical remainders did not yield a more parsimonious solution.

The second path appears to show a counterintuitive result. Indeed, it was hypothesised that the presence of credible of populist challengers and a proportional electoral system are conducive to a better performance of populist parties. However, it makes no logical sense that the *lack* of unresponsiveness (i.e. the presence of a responsive political establishment), in combination with the other causal conditions, would foster populist electoral success. It is possible that the responsiveness of established parties is not so much a crucial condition within this causal configuration. That is, perhaps populist parties can thrive irrespective of the responsiveness of established parties. The outcome, in any case, indicates that credible populist parties can be successful, even if the electorate is reasonably satisfied with the established political institutions. It might furthermore be the case that the indicators used for the responsiveness condition only tell one part of the story. As discussed in the introductory chapter, perceived unresponsiveness of established parties can be related to specific societal issues, instead of more general feelings of dissatisfaction with politics or democracy. It goes beyond the scope of this broad QCA analysis, however, to provide a more fine-grained measurement of the established parties' responsiveness.

In any case, the configurations of causal conditions shown above can be considered to be *sufficient* for the electoral success of populist parties. At the same time, there is one single condition that seems to be *necessary* for a positive outcome: the supply of credible populist parties. There is no country with successful, yet non-

credible, populist parties. Judging from Figure 3.3, the credibility condition turns out to be almost a sufficient condition by itself; only in Greece there has been a credible yet fairly unsuccessful populist party (The Popular Orthodox Rally, see Chapter 2). The diagram suggests that the relatively unavailable Greek electorate and the lack of a proportional electoral system – in Greece there is a sizeable winner-bonus incorporated in the electoral system – have hampered populist success. It should be noted, however, that in Ireland and Finland populist parties have only had little or moderate success prior to the latest parliamentary election in both countries, despite the fact that there was a supply of reasonably credible populist parties (*Sinn Féin* and True Finns, see Chapter 2). The supply of credible populist parties alone, therefore, does not seem to be quite sufficient for the electoral success of populist parties.

Minimisation of (0) configurations
The minimisation procedure with regard to the negative (0) outcomes (populist party failure) yields a rather unparsimonious result when the analysis does not take into account the logical remainders; four prime implicants are generated[8]. In three of these the absence of credible populist parties recurs, indicating that credibility also seems an important individual condition in explaining the absence of populist party success. When simplifying assumptions are made about the logical remainders, the following paths are generated:

credib	+	pr * avail	+	avail * UNRESP	⇨ elperf
Cro;		Gre;		Gre;	
Cyp, Mal, Spa;		UK		Por	
Czr, Est, Lat, Slv;					
Ice, Swe;					
Por;					
UK					

These results indicate that the lack of a supply of credible populist parties alone is sufficient for the absence of populist party success in many countries. As suggested before, in the case of Greece the combination of a disproportional electoral system and the lack of an available electorate seemed to have hampered the electoral success of populist parties. The UK is also covered by this configuration, but has also lacked credible populist parties (see Chapter 6). The third prime implicant (combining the lack of an available electorate and the presence of an unresponsive political establishment) is theoretically counterintuitive and is therefore not considered to be

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[8] PR*credib + AVAIL*UNRESP*credib + avail*unresp*credib + pr*avail*UNRESP*CREDIB.

the most likely combination of conditions leading to the electoral failure of populist parties in Greece and Portugal. Before moving to the implications of these findings, the explanatory model is first also tested by means of the fuzzy set variant of QCA.

3.4 Fuzzy Set QCA analysis

The procedure of fsQCA is more complicated, but it removes the drawbacks of having to express the data in dichotomous values. Figure 3.1 provides a good example of a causal condition (the proportionality of the electoral system) which is not easily dichotomised in a straightforward manner. With fsQCA the raw data is calibrated so that the values range in between 0 and 1. Appendix E.5 shows how the data from Table 3.1 translates into fuzzy set scores, on the basis of the thresholds outlined in Table 3.2.

Assessment of Necessity

First, an assessment can be made about the possible presence of necessary individual conditions. In this case, a necessary condition is a condition that needs to be present in order for the populist electoral success (or the lack of it) to occur. The presence of this condition alone, however, is not inevitably a guarantee for this outcome. In order to determine whether a particular condition is necessary for the outcome it is determined whether electoral performance is a 'subset' of this condition. In other words, the membership values of the cases with regard to the causal condition need to be equal to or higher than the corresponding values on the outcome variable. After all, the outcome should not be present if the necessary condition is also not, or to a lesser degree, present. To see whether this is the case, the degree to which a subset relation has been approximated is calculated by means of a 'set theoretic consistency' formula (Ragin 2006: 291)[9].

When taking the presence of populist electoral success as the outcome, the analysis yields the following consistency scores for each of the causal conditions:

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[9] The formula for set theoretic consistency for necessary conditions is $\Sigma(\min(X_i, Y_i))/\Sigma(Y_i)$. The 'min' indicates that for each case the lower of the two values (X_i or Y_i) needs to be selected. X_i is the membership score on the condition, Y_i is the membership score on the outcome variable. As follows, "if all Y values are less than or equal to their corresponding X values, the formula returns a score of 1.0" (Ragin 2009: 110). The formula is devised as such that it "gives credit for near misses and penalties for causal membership scores that exceed their mark" (Ragin 2006: 296).

	Consistency
CREDIB	0.919397
PR	0.804718
AVAIL	0.745085
UNRESP	0.427261

As the scores show, there is no perfect subset relation between either of the causal conditions and the outcome, as all consistency values are below 1. The supply of credible populist parties, however, is very close to being a necessary condition for the presence of populist electoral success. The consistency score with regard to this condition is 0.919. The relationship between the supply of credible populist parties and populist party electoral performance is portrayed in Figure 3.4. The fact that the consistency score is below 1 is due to the cases in which populist parties have been successful, even though these parties have not always been optimally credible (most notably Poland). These are the cases above the diagonal line, in the upper right-hand section in Figure 3.4. Even though no perfect subset relation exists, the supply of credible populist parties does seem to be a very important, if not necessary, condition for the electoral success of populist parties.

Figure 3.4: Plot of degree of cases' membership in electoral performance against their membership in the CREDIB condition.
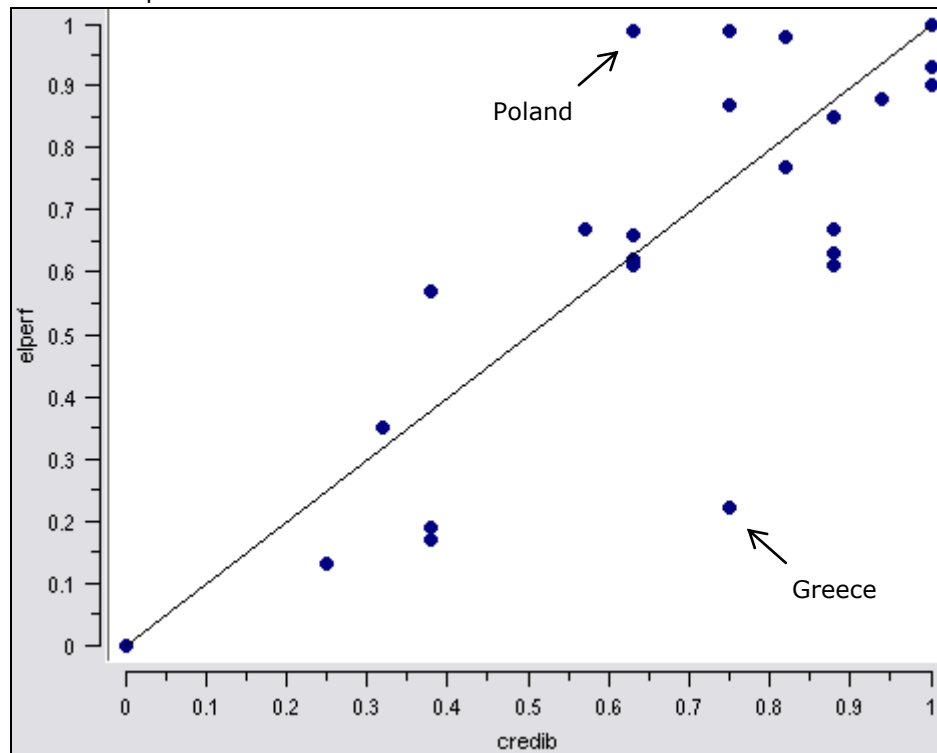
With regard to the assessment of necessity for the absence of populist electoral success, the credibility condition also comes close to being a necessary condition. That is, the absence of credible populist parties can almost be seen as a necessary precondition for the absence of electoral success for populist parties. The consistency score is, with 0.865, not far below 1. The main 'outlier' is Greece, in which a populist party had limited success, despite being credible.

As the crisp set analysis previously suggested, the supply of credible populist parties may be considered as a *necessary* condition for the presence of populist party success, but it is not quite a *sufficient* condition. As mentioned earlier, besides Greece, also in Ireland and Finland there was a supply of relatively credible populist parties, which formerly had only limited electoral success.

Assessment of Sufficiency with populist electoral success as the outcome

The next step in the analysis is to determine which combinations of causal conditions are *sufficient* for the presence (and absence) of populist electoral success. As fuzzy set QCA, different from the original crisp set variant, does not work with dichotomous values, it is not possible to build a conventional Boolean truth table. For each case it is possible, however, to determine in which causal configuration it has the highest membership. The membership score of each case in a particular causal configuration is determined by taking the lowest membership score on one of the component causal conditions, following a 'weakest link reasoning' (Ragin 2009: 96)[10].

After calculating the membership scores, the cases can be situated in a multidimensional vector space, each dimension representing a single causal condition. In this case the vector space has four dimensions, as there are four causal conditions. Each case has a particular vector space corner that is nearest to its location. That is, each case has a fuzzy set membership score of over 0.5 in only one causal configuration. Table 3.4 depicts a fuzzy set truth table for the sufficiency assessment of the presence of populist electoral success. The rows represent vector space corners, which can be compared to conventional truth table rows. The fifth column indicates how many cases are closest to the corresponding vector space corner.

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[10] The fuzzy set membership score of Belgium in the configuration AVAIL * PR * UNRESP * CREDIB is, for instance, 0.25, considering its membership is lowest in the UNRESP condition (see Appendix E.5).

Table 3.4: Fuzzy Set Truth Table for presence of electoral success, consistency threshold set at > 0.9.

pr	avail	unresp	credib	number	consist	elperf
0	0	0	1	0	1	**0**
0	1	0	1	2	1	**1**
1	1	1	1	3	0.958743	**1**
0	1	1	1	3	0.95723	**1**
1	1	0	1	4	0.94484	**1**
1	0	0	1	5	0.921095	**1**
1	0	1	1	0	0.871795	**0**
0	0	1	1	1	0.848781	**0**
0	1	0	0	0	0.693227	**0**
0	1	1	0	2	0.595486	**0**
1	1	0	0	2	0.569588	**0**
0	0	0	0	1	0.503356	**0**
1	1	1	0	4	0.467669	**0**
0	0	1	0	0	0.451219	**0**
1	0	1	0	1	0.385185	**0**
1	0	0	0	3	0.38055	**0**

The sixth column includes the consistency scores with regard to each of the causal configurations. This score indicates whether a subset relation has been approximated. Contrary to the consistency test for *necessary* conditions, however, the consistency test for *sufficient* causal configurations assesses whether the configurations are a subset of the outcome variable[11]. When a sufficient configuration is present, the outcome must also be present. The outcome can, however, also occur without the presence of this sufficient configuration. Accordingly, the membership values of the cases regarding the causal condition need to be equal to or lower than the corresponding values on the outcome variable. A high membership in the configuration, must, after all, also lead to a high membership in the outcome.

On the basis of the calculated consistency scores, it is determined which causal configurations are associated with a positive outcome: the presence of populist electoral success. For this analysis, the consistency level threshold is set at 0.9, a rather stringent value. The configurations that yield lower consistency scores, or which lack empirical referents, are not considered to be sufficient for populist electoral success (compare sixth and final column in Table 3.4). After the fuzzy set truth table has been created and the consistency threshold set, a Boolean minimisation process is carried out. The analysis yields three different results: a complex, parsimonious and intermediate solution. Regarding the latter two solutions, simplifying assumptions have been made about the configurations without empirical referents (the logical

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[11] The formula for testing sufficiency of causal configurations is, therefore, $\Sigma(\min(X_i,Y_i))/\Sigma(X_i)$. As follows, "when all of the Xi values are less than or equal to their corresponding Yi values, the consistency score is 1.00" (Ragin 2009: 108).

remainders). With regard to the parsimonious solution, a hypothetical outcome was allocated to the configurations without empirical referents if this led to a more parsimonious solution. For the intermediate solution only theoretically plausible simplifying assumptions were made[12]. Table 3.5 depicts the intermediate solution, which is both most parsimonious and theoretically plausible[13].

Table 3.5: Intermediate solution for presence of populist electoral success.

Prime Implicant	Raw Coverage	Unique Coverage	Consistency
CREDIB*AVAIL	0.690695	0.108126	0.948695
ROM (0.92,0.88), NET (0.75,0.87), FRA (0.67,0.85), NOR (0.65,0.98), BUL (0.63,0.62), HUN (0.63,0.66), POL (0.63,0.99), ITA (0.62,0.63), BEL (0.59,0.93), IRE (0.59,0.61), AUS (0.57,0.99), SLK (0.57,0.67).			
CREDIB*PR	0.780472	0.197903	0.902273
DEN (0.95,0.9), FIN (0.86,0.61), SWI (0.86,1), GER (0.85,0.67), NOR (0.82,0.98), BEL (0.81,0.93), LUX (0.81,0.77), AUS (0.75,0.99), NET (0.75,0.87), ROM (0.64,0.88), BUL (0.61,0.62), SLK (0.57,0.67).			
solution coverage: 0.888598 solution consistency: 0.910067			

Notes: The cases in the row below the solution have greater than 0.5 membership in the related configuration. The values indicate membership in causal configuration and outcome respectively.

Following the outcome of the analysis, the countries in which populist parties have been (reasonably) successful are marked by the supply of credible populist parties combined with an available electorate and/or a proportional electoral system. This outcome can be captured in the following formula: CREDIB * (AVAIL + PR) → ELPERF. The findings are graphically depicted in Figure 3.5. As is shown, with regard to both causal paths, most cases are situated above the diagonal line, leading to high consistency scores of 0.949 and 0.902. This indicates that the causal configurations are close to being subsets of the outcome variable.

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[12] The analysis for the intermediate solution only made use of logical remainders if the outcomes were consistent with the theoretical expectation that the presence of each of the four individual causal conditions is conducive to the electoral success of populist parties.

[13] The intermediate solution only differs from the complex solution with regard to one aspect. The complex solution is: CREDIB*AVAIL + CREDIB*unresp*PR, the same as the csQCA outcome. As it is theoretically implausible that the *absence* of unresponsiveness of the established parties is conducive to the presence of populist party success (second path), the intermediate solution is selected.

Figure 3.5: Plot of degree of cases' membership in electoral performance against their membership in the causal configuration CREDIB*AVAIL and CREDIB*PR.
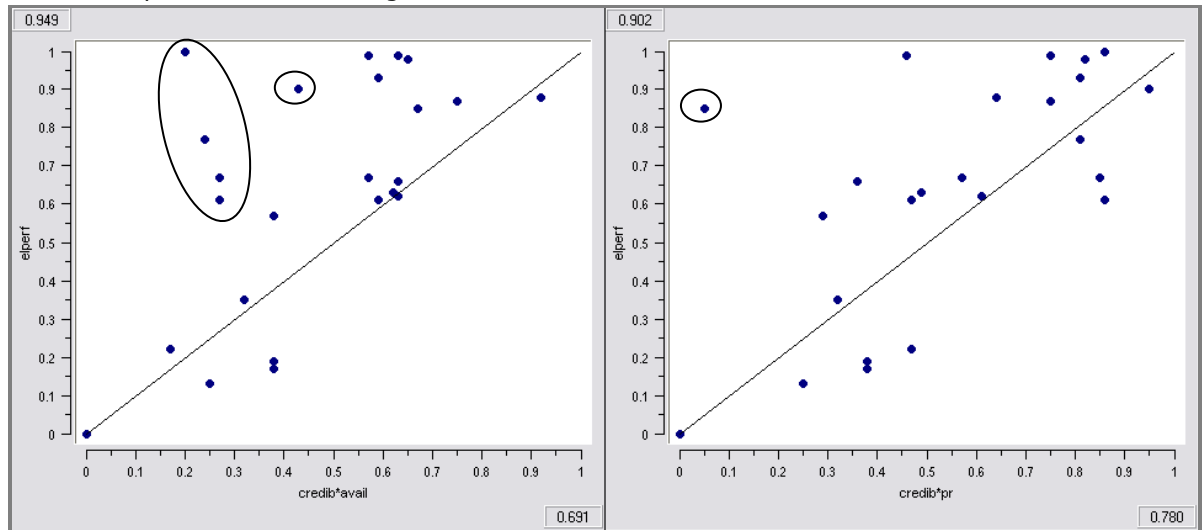
Many cases with successful populist parties are actually covered by both configurations, leading to relatively low unique coverage values for the two individual paths (see Table 3.5)[14]. The raw coverage figure, on the other hand, deals with the number of cases for which a single causal path has explanatory value. This figure, in other words, indicates the 'empirical relevance' of each single sufficient configuration (Ragin 2006)[15]. Five cases are, for instance, clearly not covered by the first causal path (CREDIB*AVAIL): Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland. These are the encircled cases above the diagonal line in Figure 3.5, with higher than 0.5 membership in the outcome, but lower than 0.5 membership in the configuration[16]. Especially due to these cases, the raw coverage figure (0.691) for the first causal path is well below 1. The relatively good electoral performance of populist parties in these five cases can better be understood by considering the second causal path, which combines the supply of credible populist parties with the presence of a proportional electoral system[17]. France is a case which is, on the other hand, clearly not covered by

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[14] In order to calculate the unique coverage, the solution coverage needs to be calculated first. Solution coverage is determined by calculating the coverage of the joined paths of the solution, or the 'union' of all sets, in this case CREDIB*AVAIL + CREDIB*PR. To determine the unique coverage of a particular path, the coverage of the union of all sets except for the path that is being assessed is subtracted from the solution coverage.

[15] The coverage figure decreases when cases are far removed from the diagonal line, as this indicates that the given causal configuration does not explain these cases' membership in the outcome variable; i.e. the solution does not 'cover' these cases' outcome. As follows, the formula for coverage is $\sum(\min(X_i, Y_i))/\sum(Y_i)$. This is equal to the consistency formula for necessary conditions, as for this assessment cases above the diagonal line are also 'punished'.

[16] Lithuania (CREDIB*AVAIL membership score: 0.38, outcome score: 0.57) is technically another case for which this applies. The country, however, is more a borderline case in view of its proximity to the diagonal line.

[17] Strictly speaking, Finland and Germany (and, to a much lesser extent, Luxembourg and Denmark) decrease the consistency of the solution CREDIB*PR, as their membership scores on

this second path (see encircled case in right-hand graph), considering its low membership score in this configuration (due to its disproportional electoral system).

Whereas populist parties thus turn out to be successful in countries in which the supply of credible populist parties is combined with either an available electorate and/or a proportional electoral system, responsiveness of the established parties does not recur in either of the prime implicants. This finding is consistent with the crisp set QCA analysis outcome. In countries where the electorate is relatively satisfied with the established political institutions, populist parties can be successful too. Yet, as mentioned before, the indicators used for the responsiveness of established parties in this QCA analysis only touch on general levels of satisfaction with political institutions. The three qualitative case studies might provide a more precise story with regard to the impact of this factor, as they also take into account the established parties' responsiveness with regard to specific issues.

Assessment of Sufficiency with populist electoral failure as the outcome

The final step of the analysis is to search for causal configurations that are sufficient for the *absence* of populist electoral success. The truth table that is constructed in order to proceed with this analysis shows similar values for each causal configuration as Table 3.4, except for the values in the consistency and outcome (~elperf) columns (see Table 3.6). After all, this part of the analysis assesses whether membership in each causal configuration is a subset of membership in the *absence* of electoral success outcome. The consistency threshold is set at 0.88, which slightly more lenient than in the previous analysis, as there are two configurations with empirical referents just below the 0.90 threshold.

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the causal configuration are higher than their scores on the outcome (see Table 3.5). The difference between the scores is not overwhelming, however, so that the cases are here still assumed to be covered by this second configuration.

Table 3.6: Fuzzy set truth table for absence of electoral success, consistency threshold set at > 0.88.

pr	avail	unresp	credib	number	consist	~elperf
1	0	1	0	1	1	**1**
0	0	1	0	0	1	**0**
1	1	1	0	4	0.92782	**1**
0	0	0	0	1	0.926174	**1**
1	0	0	0	3	0.915433	**1**
1	0	1	1	0	0.902564	**0**
0	1	1	0	2	0.888889	**1**
0	0	1	1	1	0.887805	**1**
0	1	0	0	0	0.816733	**0**
1	1	0	0	2	0.804124	**0**
0	0	0	1	0	0.706897	**0**
0	1	1	1	3	0.696538	**0**
1	1	1	1	3	0.654224	**0**
0	1	0	1	2	0.543046	**0**
1	1	0	1	4	0.432384	**0**
1	0	0	1	5	0.412238	**0**

Of the three solutions provided on the basis of this truth table, the intermediate solution again provides the most parsimonious result[18]. This result is depicted in Table 3.7[19]. The credibility condition plays a prominent role in the first two causal paths, combining the absence of credible populist parties with either a lack of an available electorate or the presence of an unresponsive political establishment. This latter path seems counterintuitive, as unresponsiveness of established parties was believed to increase the chances for populist parties. The result, nevertheless, indicates that populist party success is not guaranteed, even if a large part of the electorate is dissatisfied with political institutions. The third path combines an unavailable electorate with a disproportional electoral system. Both the United Kingdom and Greece are covered by this path, although the UK is also covered by the first configuration. Unlike the UK, Greece has witnessed the emergence of a credible populist party, but its success, as was also suggested by the crisp set analysis, is likely to have been hampered by the unavailable Greek electorate and the disproportional electoral system.

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[18] The complex solution is very complex indeed: avail*unresp*credib + AVAIL*UNRESP*credib + pr*avail*UNRESP*CREDIB + PR*avail*credib + PR*UNRESP*credib.

[19] For the intermediate solution, simplifying assumptions were now only made if outcomes were consistent with the theoretical expectation that the *absence* of each of the four individual causal conditions was conducive to the electoral failure of populist parties.

Table 3.7: Intermediate solution for absence of populist electoral success (threshold > 0.88).

Prime Implicant	Raw Coverage	Unique Coverage	Consistency
credib*avail	0.419949	0.148031	0.942939
MAL (0.96,1), SPA (0.81,1), UK (0.81,1), CYP (0.78,1), POR (0.6,1)			
credib*UNRESP	0.540025	0.349428	0.922910
CRO (1,1), EST (1,1), SLV (1,1), POR (0.75,1), CZR (0.68,0.65), LAT (0.62,0.83), LIT (0.62,0.43)			
avail*pr	0.287166	0.049555	0.867562
UK (0.81,1), GRE (0.53,0.78)			
solution coverage: 0.818933 solution consistency: 0.890809			

Notes: The cases in the row below the solution have greater than 0.5 membership in the related configuration. Numbers indicate membership in causal configuration and outcome respectively.

Two cases which have lacked electoral success of populist parties, Sweden and Iceland, are not covered by this solution. This is due to the lower consistency score of the configuration which is relevant for these two countries (0.804, see Table 3.6). In order to take these two cases into account a second analysis is performed with a lower consistency threshold of 0.8. The intermediate solution of this analysis is shown in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8: Intermediate solution for absence of populist electoral success (threshold > 0.80).

Prime Implicant	Raw Coverage	Unique Coverage	Consistency
credib	0.865311	0.627700	0.917172
CRO (1,1), CYP (1,1), EST (1,1), MAL (1,1), POR (1,1), SLV (1,1), SPA (1,1), UK (1,1), ICE (0.75,0.87), CZR (0.68,0.65), LAT (0.62,0.83), LIT (0.62,0.43), SWE (0.62,0.81).			
avail*pr	0.287166	0.049555	0.867562
UK (0.81,1), GRE (0.53,0.78)			
solution coverage: 0.914867 solution consistency: 0.894410			

Notes: The cases in the row below the solution have greater than 0.5 membership in the related configuration. The values indicate membership in causal configuration and outcome respectively.

Since the threshold is set at a lower level, the results of this second analysis need to be approached with some caution. It is, nonetheless, clear that credibility again comes out as an important condition. The findings suggest that in most cases the lack of a supply of credible populist parties alone is sufficient for the absence of electoral success for populist parties. This seems rather self-evident in the cases where no serious populist party was founded in the first place. In other cases where populist parties did aim to mobilise, however, the finding suggest that their failure to present themselves as credible alternatives also led to their failure to break through. This implication is tested in Chapter 6, which provides a study of unsuccessful populist parties in the United Kingdom.

3.5 Conclusion

The main finding from the crisp and fuzzy set QCA analyses, which yielded very similar results, is that the credibility of populist parties themselves is of vital importance to their electoral performance. Populist parties can thus, to a certain extent, create their own success or failure, although the analysis suggests that credibility alone is not quite enough. Many countries with (relatively) successful populist parties were marked by an available electorate (judging from high electoral volatility levels), as well as a supply of credible populist parties. In five other countries with a less available electorate (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland), the success of populist parties is likely to have been more dependent on a combination of the supply of credible populist parties and a relatively proportional electoral system. In these countries the proportional electoral systems seemed to 'make up' for the relatively unavailable electorates. At the same time, the findings suggest that the electoral system is not a relevant condition for the electoral success of populist parties in all cases. In countries like France and Hungary a (relatively) disproportional electoral system did not stop credible populist parties from receiving a substantial share of the vote[20].

With regard to the absence of populist party success, the credibility of populist parties also appears to be vital. It is evident that most countries that lacked electoral success for populist parties also lacked the supply of credible populist parties. Only in Greece a relatively credible populist party (The Popular Orthodox Rally) did not manage to achieve significant electoral success. Judging from the analysis, this is due to an unavailable electorate combined with an electoral system leading to a relatively disproportionate distribution of seats in parliament. Note, however, that until the most recent parliamentary election, populist parties in Ireland and Finland were also rather unsuccessful, even though the parties (*Sinn Féin* and the True Finns) had relatively high credibility scores (see Chapter 2).

There is reason to be cautious about these findings. In countries with credible populist parties, populist parties are successful most of the time, while in countries without credible populist parties, such parties have lacked electoral success. The question can be raised whether the research outcomes merely present a tautology. Moreover, even though the credibility of populist parties has been assessed independently of their electoral performance, (expert) judgements about the

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[20] Since the election in a French constituency is often only decided in the second round, the electoral system might actually not discourage voters from casting their ballot for a small (populist) party in the first round. Although it goes beyond the scope of this study to delve further into the specific French case, this is not unimportant to keep in mind when the electoral results of the *Front National* are considered.

credibility of populist parties might have been influenced by the parties' actual electoral results. This means that there is a potential endogeneity issue.

Still, the assessment of credibility has been performed with care and the results of the QCA analyses might simply demonstrate the vast importance of the credibility of populist parties, a factor which often has been overlooked in previous research. This is in line with Cas Mudde's (2010) argument regarding the populist radical right; leadership, organisation, and propaganda have been vital in explaining the success or failure of these parties to break through and/or survive. The findings from this analysis, furthermore, suggest that populist parties do not only rely on uninformed protest votes. Credibility of populist parties would otherwise not have been essential. Even if these parties appeal to dissatisfied voters, there is more to the parties' electoral success than the presence of anti-political sentiments alone (see Eatwell 2003; Van der Brug et al. 2000; 2005). In order to become successful, populist parties need to convince potential voters that they are a credible alternative to the established parties.

In combination with the credibility of populist parties, the electoral system and the availability of the electorate appear to be relevant with regard to the electoral performance of populist parties in some of the countries under consideration. The responsiveness of the established parties, on the other hand, did not feature prominently in the minimised causal paths. Where this condition was part of the prime implicants, the results seemed counterintuitive. That is, the *presence* of unresponsiveness was part of the causal path leading to the *absence* of populist party success, and vice versa. More parsimonious solutions discarded the responsiveness condition from the solutions altogether. These results imply that populist parties can also be successful in countries where general satisfaction or trust levels with regard to political institutions are high (e.g. Austria, Netherlands, Norway). At the same time, populist party success is not guaranteed, even if a large part of the electorate is dissatisfied with political institutions (e.g. in Croatia, Slovenia and Portugal).

This chapter has focused widely by aiming to explain the electoral performance of populist parties in 31 countries. The qualitative case studies in the following three chapters drill down to have a closer look at the causal mechanisms at work. In addition, besides more general feelings of (dis)satisfaction with democratic institutions, mainstream parties' responsiveness with regard to *specific issues* is considered to come to a more precise evaluation of the agency of established parties. The Netherlands is a case of particular interest in this regard, as Dutch populist parties have recently managed to become successful, despite high levels of overall trust and confidence in political institutions. The case studies also consider the agency of the

populist parties in more detail than was possible in the broad QCA analysis. By doing this, the finding that credibility of populist parties is a crucial condition in explaining their electoral performance can be crossvalidated.

4 Populist Parties in the Netherlands[1]

4.1 Introduction

The first case study in this dissertation covers the Netherlands. This chapter seeks to identify the populist parties that have appeared in contemporary Dutch politics, to describe their ideological characteristics and to explain their electoral performance on the basis of the explanatory model previously outlined. Whereas populist parties never achieved much success in Dutch politics in the decades after the Second World War, this radically changed after the turn of the 21st century. Two populist parties in particular have managed to obtain a considerable share of the vote in recent elections. After the rise of Pim Fortuyn in 2002 and the subsequent decline of his party, Dutch party politics has been rocked again by the Freedom Party of Geert Wilders. This party became the third largest party in Dutch parliament after the parliamentary election of June 2010. Various other populist parties have made less successful attempts. The Netherlands thus lends itself as a case in which successful and unsuccessful manifestations of populism can be compared, providing an ideal 'laboratory' environment for learning about the electoral performance of populist parties in general.

In assessing the electoral performance of the Dutch populist parties, the chapter will touch on each of the four causal conditions outlined in Chapter 1: the electoral system, the availability of the electorate, the responsiveness of the established parties and the supply of credible populist parties. As will be argued, the electoral success of the Dutch populist parties has been facilitated by the proportionality of the Dutch electoral system and the availability of the Dutch electorate, which has increasingly become detached from traditional political parties. To understand the actual breakthrough of populist parties and their subsequent success or failure to survive, however, the agency of political actors must also be considered. This relates, in the first place, to the responsiveness of established political parties. As will be shown, by the turn of the 21st century none of the mainstream parties sufficiently responded to the electorate's concerns related to immigration and cultural integration of, most notably, the Muslim minority population. This provided a favourable opportunity structure for the Dutch populist parties which had these issues at the core of their appeal. Secondly, the credibility of the populist

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[1] An earlier version of this chapter has been published in *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* (Van Kessel 2011).

parties themselves has proven to be crucial to their breakthrough and electoral persistence. Although Pim Fortuyn could generate ample media attention for his political project and build up substantial amounts of support, the party soon lost its credibility after Fortuyn was assassinated and no new leader with the same appeal stood up. The party, furthermore, fell victim to internal struggles. Geert Wilders has, afterwards, regained the populist electorate with his harsh anti-Islam appeal. Wilders has also been able to keep his Freedom Party united. Other populist parties were much less successful in presenting themselves as credible alternatives to the established parties, due to a lack of electoral appeal and organisational unity.

The following section provides an overview of the populist parties that have appeared on the Dutch political scene and touches in particular on the two most notable cases: the List Pim Fortuyn and the Freedom Party. Section 4.3 turns to the question how the electoral performance of populist parties in the Netherlands can be explained. The concluding section summarizes the findings and draws the implications of the Dutch case for the broader study.

4.2   Identifying the Populist Parties in the Netherlands[2]

During the 20th century populist parties have sporadically managed to enter the Dutch lower house (*Tweede Kamer*), although they never became successful for an extended period of time. The Farmer's Party (*Boerenpartij*) broke through in the 1960s, but would never receive more than 4.8% of the vote. The ethno-nationalist xenophobic parties led by Hans Janmaat in the 1980s and 1990s (the Centre Party and Centre Democrats), could only achieve limited and short-lived electoral success.   Another populist party that emerged was the left-wing Socialist Party (*Socialistische Partij*, SP). In the 1990s the party with Maoist roots could be described as a 'social-populist' party (March and Mudde 2005). However, the party softened its populist anti-establishment rhetoric throughout the years. This is indicated by the content analysis performed by De Lange and Rooduijn (2011); populist statements in SP manifestos have clearly become much less frequent after the 1990s. Voerman and Lucardie (2007) consider the SP to have turned into a social democratic party by this time. The party's real breakthrough in 2006, when it received over 16% of the vote, was thus not so much driven by its populism. The expert survey that was conducted for this study also confirmed the somewhat ambiguous nature of the Socialist Party when its populism is

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[2] All quotes from interviews, party documents and other literature in this section and beyond are translated from Dutch into English by the author.

concerned. Four out of the eight experts labelled the SP as a populist party, but one of those persons qualified this by adding 'to a lesser extent' and one added 'in the 1990s'[3]. Although this analysis will largely disregard the SP, the section on the populist parties' credibility briefly touches on the party in the 1990s (see Section 4.3).

It was only after the turn of the 21st century that a whole array of populist parties appeared on the Dutch political scene, even though not all of those came close to representation in the Dutch parliament. Two populist parties were clearly most electorally successful: the List Pim Fortuyn (*Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, LPF) – even if only for a short period of time – and Geert Wilders' Freedom Party (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV). These are the parties that receive most attention in this chapter, although other, less successful, populist cases are briefly discussed in the section covering the credibility of populist parties.

The rise and fall of the List Pim Fortuyn

The recent electoral success of Geert Wilders' Freedom Party (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV) can hardly be considered independently from the previous rise of another populist politician in 2002: Pim Fortuyn. In his anti-establishment discourse Fortuyn mainly reacted against the two 'Purple' coalition governments that had formed in 1994 and 1998. These coalitions consisted of the 'red' Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, PvdA), the 'blue' Liberal Party (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*, VVD) and the smaller progressive liberal Democrats 66 (*Democraten 66*). During this period, the Christian Democrats, since 1980s united in the Christian Democratic Appeal (*Christen Democratisch Appel*, CDA), were excluded from government for the first time since 1918.

Fortuyn, a columnist and former sociology professor, became leader of the party 'Liveable Netherlands' (*Leefbaar Nederland*, LN) towards the end of 2001. The party declared 'old politics' bankrupt and strived for the democratisation of the political order. In its manifesto from 2002 LN stated that it opposed old parties, which "preserve ideological cleavages that provide citizens with no political lucidity" and which "are not essentially occupied with their precious principles, but rather with safeguarding their positions" (LN 2002: 2). The party programme of 2002 was not very detailed with regard to more substantive policy positions, although LN was clear about its desire to cut bureaucracy and to promote small-scaled education and governance. The party's popularity steadily increased after Fortuyn became its leader.

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[3] Although not entirely surprising in view of the pejorative connotation of the term, Jan de Wit, MP for the SP, is also not very keen on applying the label 'populism' to the SP: "we have certain points of views, we have a certain analysis, and we will not put those aside because of what 'the people' may think" (Interview, The Hague, 23 June 2008).

In February 2002, however, Fortuyn was expelled from the party following controversial statements he made in a newspaper interview. One of Fortuyn's statements was that he considered Islam a backward culture, even though this quote was taken slightly out of context. With only a few months to go to the parliamentary election in May, Fortuyn founded his own party, List Pim Fortuyn (*Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, LPF). This party could immediately count on a substantial amount of support in the opinion polls, thereby eclipsing Fortuyn's old party Liveable Netherlands.

The experts consulted for this study were unanimous in considering the List Pim Fortuyn to be 'populist'. LPF immigration minister Hilbrand Nawijn also agreed with characterising his party as populist and refrained from seeing this as something negative, because "one gets involved in politics for the people" (Interview, Zoetermeer, 8 September 2008). Former Fortuyn spokesperson and party leader Mat Herben was much more reluctant to use the term to describe the LPF, and he considered it to be a term of abuse used by the party's political opponents (Interview, The Hague, 10 September 2008). In the scholarly sphere, however, there seems to be a broad consensus about the populist character of Pim Fortuyn and his party. Following Cas Mudde (2002b), for instance, Fortuyn can be classed as a populist, as "He consistently criticises 'the elite' for corrupting power and ignoring the 'real problems' of 'the people'".

In Fortuyn's and his party's literature the populist appeal is also apparent. In his book annex political programme 'The shambles of eight years Purple' Fortuyn stated that "The Netherlands should become a real lively democracy of and for the ordinary people, and depart from the elite party democracy we are currently acquainted with" (Fortuyn 2002: 186). According to Fortuyn, power had to be returned to the 'people in the country' (Lucardie 2008: 159). The number of managers and bureaucrats had to be reduced and responsibility would have to be returned to the 'real' experts: the nurses, teachers and police officers (LPF 2002). In the words of Mat Herben: "The teacher himself knows darn well how he has to teach. The nurse, the doctor know how to run their business too" (Interview, The Hague, 10 September 2008). In addition, as the earlier quote from Fortuyn's book already indicated, Fortuyn harshly criticised the political establishment, the incumbent 'Purple' government in particular. In the official election manifesto it was argued that 'Purple' has left the Netherlands with a rigid and self-satisfied political culture of appointed executives lacking creative or learning capacities (LPF 2002: 1).

Apart from the party's populist features, the LPF's more substantive political programme was rather eclectic (Mudde 2002b; Lucardie 2008). Fortuyn promoted a free-market economy, tough measures with regard to law and order issues and

stressed the need to cut red tape in the healthcare and education sectors. At the same time, however, his position on moral or cultural issues like drugs and traditional marriage was very liberal. Yet it was in his stance on immigration and cultural integration of minorities that Fortuyn attracted most controversy. According to the LPF manifesto, crowdedness in the Netherlands caused growing societal tensions (LPF 2002: 5). It was, therefore, necessary to resist immigration of more, often unemployed and unskilled, foreigners into the country. The programme also speaks of problems caused by the social-cultural backwardness of large groups in society and related problems like criminality and discrimination against women, especially in fundamentalist Islamic circles.

Fortuyn sought to protect the Dutch way of life against foreign cultural influences that clashed with Dutch liberal Enlightenment values (Akkerman 2005). His ideology was at odds with the idea of a diverse multicultural society in which liberal principles were put at risk. In this sense, Fortuyn portrayed an ostensibly liberal heartland, but was, so to say, intolerant of the intolerant. People from other cultures were required to integrate into Dutch society and, in the words of Hilbrand Nawijn, the "cuddle culture" towards non-native people was to be dismissed (Interview, Zoetermeer, 8 September 2008). Fortuyn's programme thus provided an interesting mix of liberalism and illiberalism. At the same time, his project could also be perceived as 'conservative', in the sense that it emphasised the need to be protective of Dutch liberal values.

Fortuyn would not witness the results of the 2002 parliamentary election; on May 6 he was murdered by an environmental activist. The campaign was officially cancelled, but the election went on. Despite the dramatic incident the remaining List Pim Fortuyn members decided to participate. On the 15th of May the LPF won 17% of the vote and 26 of the 150 seats in the Dutch parliament (see Table 4.1). This was an unprecedented result for a new party; the former 'record' for a newcomer being 8 seats for DS'70 in 1971. At the same time, the Purple coalition partners suffered an enormous defeat. After the election, the LPF joined a coalition government with the Christian Democrats and the Liberals. It proved to be the shortest incumbent government in Dutch history. After 87 days LPF's coalition partners brought it down after a period of severe LPF infighting.

A new parliamentary election was scheduled for January 2003. Under the leadership of Mat Herben, the LPF lost most its previous support, receiving 5.7% of the vote and 8 seats. At first sight the results of the 2003 election seemed to indicate a return to 'old' politics; the established parties recovered quite well from their electoral blow in 2002. No new parties managed to enter parliament.

Table 4.1: Dutch parliamentary election results 1998-2010.

Party	1998	2002	2003	2006	2010
Labour Party (PvdA)	29.0% (45)	15.1% (23)	27.3% (42)	21.2% (33)	19.6% (30)
Liberal Party (VVD)	24.7% (38)	15.4% (24)	17.9% (28)	14.6% (22)	20.4% (31)
Chr. Democrats (CDA)	18.4% (29)	27.9% (43)	28.6% (44)	26.5% (41)	13.7% (21)
Democrats 66 (D66)	9.0% (14)	5.1% (7)	4.1% (6)	2.0% (3)	6.9% (10)
GreenLeft (GL)	7.3% (11)	7.0% (10)	5.1% (8)	4.6% (7)	6.6% (10)
Socialist Party (SP)	3.5% (5)	5.9% (9)	6.3% (9)	16.6% (25)	9.9% (15)
Christian Union (CU)	3.2% (5)	2.5% (4)	2.1% (3)	4.0% (6)	3.3% (5)
List Pim Fortuyn (LPF)		17.0% (26)	5.7% (8)	0.2% (0)	
Liveable NL (LN)		1.6% (2)			
Freedom Party (PVV)				5.9% (9)	15.5% (24)
Others	4.9% (3)	2.5% (2)	2.9% (2)	4.4% (4)	4.1% (4)
Total	*100% (150)*	*100% (150)*	*100% (150)*	*100% (150)*	*100% (150)*

Note: Number between brackets represents number of allocated seats. The percentage for the Christian Union (CU) in 1998 is the combined percentage of the GPV and RPF, the parties that later merged into the CU. Data: http://www.parties-and-elections.de/netherlands.html

The rise of Geert Wilders

The subsequent parliamentary election of 2006 saw the return of a populist party. The Freedom Party of Geert Wilders received 5.9% of the vote and nine seats. Wilders was a former MP for the Liberal Party who broke with this party in September 2004. This happened after a conflict with the parliamentary leader over the issue of Turkish EU membership. Wilders was particularly critical of Turkish accession. Wilders refused to give up his seat in Parliament and formed his own one-man fraction 'Group Wilders', or Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV) as he later named it. The party will hereafter be referred to as Freedom Party.

The Freedom Party was considered to be a populist party by all the eight country experts who completed the survey for the Dutch case study. Wilders has indeed appealed to the 'ordinary people' even more explicitly and has criticised the established political elite more harshly than Fortuyn used to do. In his 'declaration of independence', written after his departure from the Liberals, Wilders (2005: 1) speaks of a "range of interlinked crises which flow from the incompetence of the political elite in Brussels and The Hague". Wilders (2005: 2) further declared: "I do not want this country to be hijacked by an elite of cowardly and frightened people (from whichever party) any longer. (…) I therefore intend to challenge this elite on all fronts. I want to return this country to its citizens". Wilders claimed to despise the self-sustaining political system which stands isolated from society; "politicians should no longer be deaf to the problems troubling ordinary people in every-day life" (Wilders 2005: 16).

In the manifesto for the parliamentary election of 2010, the Freedom Party's populist appeal did not wane. The document speaks of a great democratic crisis and asserts that: "With regard to many of the problems that haunt the Netherlands the

diagnosis is similar: the elites lost sense of reality and started to do things on their own which did not benefit ordinary people" (PVV 2010: 5). The manifesto further raises the questions: "Are we helpless? Do we passively have to watch how everything we care about is being ruined by a footloose elite?" (PVV 2010: 5). The Freedom Party claimed to consist of ordinary citizens who have come to The Hague (the seat of the Dutch political institutions) to make sure that the square kilometre in which the parliamentary buildings are located becomes part of the Netherlands again (PVV 2010: 6).

In terms of substantive policies, Wilders' initial appeal was similar to Fortuyn's, but more radical as regards immigration and integration (Keman and Pennings 2011). Islam is perceived as a violent 'ideology' and Dutch culture should be protected against the process of 'Islamisation' (Vossen 2010a). The manifesto of 2010 nevertheless argues that the PVV is not a single-issue party, as Islamisation allegedly touches on a range of other social issues: "Economically it is a disaster, it damages the quality of our education, it increases insecurity on the streets, causes an exodus out of our cities, drives out Jewish and gay people, and flushes the century-long emancipation of women down the toilet" (PVV 2010: 6). Similar to the appeal of Pim Fortuyn, as is clear from this example, the Freedom Party manifesto called for the preservation of Dutch liberal values.

Although Wilders has predominantly agitated against the 'left-wing' elites and their expensive 'left-wing hobbies' like foreign aid and art, the social-economic programme of the PVV in 2010 was eclectic and included various left-wing measures. Wilders had always been against raising the pension age, but before generally favoured a small state and a flexible labour market (Wilders 2005; PVV 2006). In 2010, however, the PVV called for the preservation of the welfare state and was against easing the rules for laying off employees, amending unemployment benefits and more marketisation in the health care sector. At the same time, the PVV was against abolishing the mortgage interest relief (favouring more affluent home owners) and in favour of tax cuts and deregulation for business entrepreneurs.

The parliamentary election results of June 2010 showed that Geert Wilders had managed to extend his support base significantly. With 15.5% of the vote Wilders came close to the support levels of the List Fortuyn in 2002. The Freedom Party became the third largest party in parliament. Another ex-Liberal politician voicing a populist discourse, Rita Verdonk, failed to cross the electoral threshold with her party 'Proud of the Netherlands' (*Trots op Nederland,* TON). Wilders eventually signed an agreement to support the minority coalition between the Liberals and the Christian Democrats. This cabinet was officially installed in October 2010. Although the

Netherlands has a long tradition of majority governments, the government formation resulted in a construction similar to the Danish case. Here, the populist anti-immigrant People's Party has supported minority coalitions since 2001 (see Chapter 2).

The remainder of this chapter deals with the question how the electoral performance of the List Pim Fortuyn and the Freedom Party, as well as the less successful populist parties, can be explained.

4.3 Explaining the Electoral Performance of the Dutch Populist Parties

Electoral system and availability of the electorate

The first two conditions which are considered in order to explain the electoral performance of populist parties in the Netherlands are the electoral system and the availability of the electorate. In this case, these two conditions are so intertwined that they are discussed together. The Dutch electoral system which has, in theory, always been very open to new political parties, due to its extreme proportionality. The whole of the Netherlands is one electoral district, providing for a district magnitude of 150, and an artificial electoral threshold is absent. In effect, parties are required to win a mere 0.67% of the vote in order to become represented in the Dutch parliament. This is evidently the lowest percentage in Western Europe (Carter 2002). Figure 4.1 depicts the disproportionality between votes and seats after the most recent parliamentary election in eight countries and shows that the Dutch electoral system led to particularly proportional results.

Figure 4.1: Disproportionality between votes and seats in parliamentary elections in eight European countries.
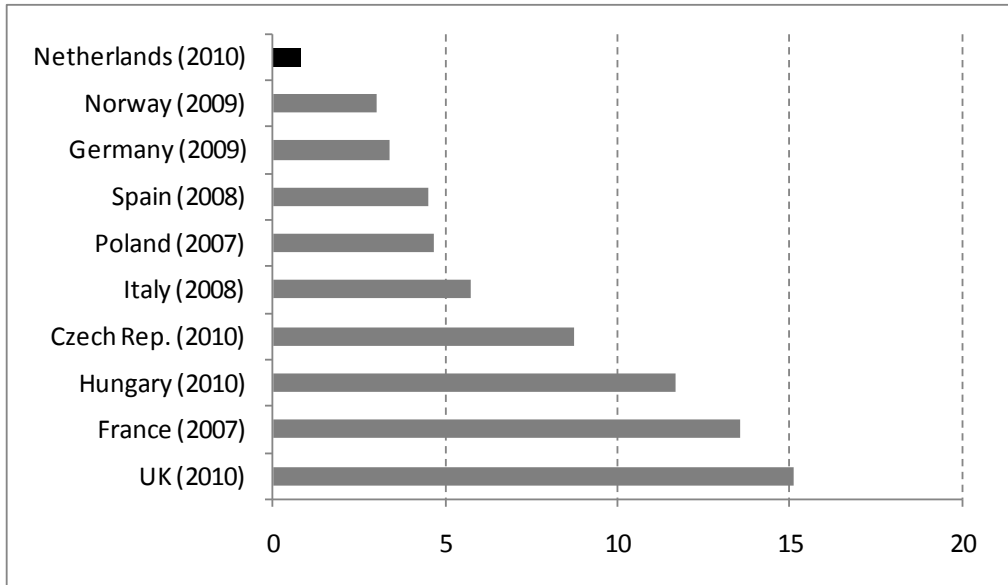
Note: Disproportionality calculated according to the Least Squares Index (Gallagher 1991), zero indicating a perfect match between percentage of votes and percentage of seats.
Data: Gallagher (2011), figure based on Bale (2008: 174).

The electoral system has practically been in effect since 1918 and was geared at securing proportional representation for each of the social groups that made up Dutch society (see Andeweg and Thomassen 2011). Due to this very social composition, the Dutch party system was remarkably stable, in spite of the low institutional hurdles for new parties. That is, the Dutch electorate was relatively unavailable in the decades after the Second World War because of the 'pillarised' structure of Dutch society. This meant that the major Dutch parties and the most significant religious and social groups, or 'pillars', were closely aligned (Lijphart 1975). The electorate thus largely voted along traditional cleavage lines of religion and social class. Most voters were represented by either the Christian Democratic parties, the Labour Party, representing the working class, or the Liberal Party, representing the secular middle class (e.g. Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003; Andeweg and Irwin 2002).

Table 4.2: Electoral choice according to social background 1956-2002 in %.

	'56	'68	'77	'86	'98	'02
Practising Catholic voting KVP/CDA	95	72	66	66	53	66
Practising Dutch Reformed voting ARP, CHU/CDA	63	55	52	58	44	53
Practising Calvinist voting ARP, CHU/CDA	93	78	75	58	44	43
Secular working class voting Labour Party (PvdA)	68	65	67	60	51	34
Secular middle class voting Liberal Party (VVD)	32	25	30	28	31	19
Total percentage of voters explained with the structured model of electoral behaviour	***72***	***60***	***54***	***44***	***38***	***28***

Source: Van Holsteyn and Irwin (2003: 50).

The dividing lines between the pillars gradually evaporated, largely due to the secularisation of society since the 1960s. People's sociological background still predicted voting behaviour quite well in the following decades, especially with regard to the religious pillars (see Table 4.2) (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003). By the turn of the 21st century, however, the explanatory power of social background had become very low. As Table 4.2 shows, the 'structural model' based on these traditional cleavages explained 72% of the total vote in 1956. This percentage gradually declined, and in 2002 only 28% of the vote could still be explained by this model. By this time voters' social background thus hardly predicted voting behaviour anymore. In other words, due to the decline of the pillarised social structure and the associated weakening of partisan alignments, the availability of the voters in the Netherlands gradually increased; "the closed political and electoral system opened up, the 'pillars' of Dutch society began to crumble, and voters finally began to choose" (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003: 48).

The increased availability of the electorate becomes apparent if one looks at the aggregate levels of electoral volatility; the vote share that shifts from one party to another between elections. If ties between parties and their traditional support bases have weakened one would expect voters to switch between parties to a greater extent (Dalton et al. 2000). Indeed, as Figure 4.1 shows, electoral volatility in the Netherlands has taken a vast flight from the election of 1989 onwards. The most recent volatility figures are even the highest in Western Europe (Mair 2008). This is likely to be related to the highly proportional Dutch electoral system, which has lacked any institutional safeguards for the position of the traditionally dominant parties. When the pillars had largely disappeared there was, so to say, no institutional 'anchoring devise' left to keep the electorate in place (Mair 2008: 242).

Figure 4.2: Aggregate electoral volatility in the Netherlands.
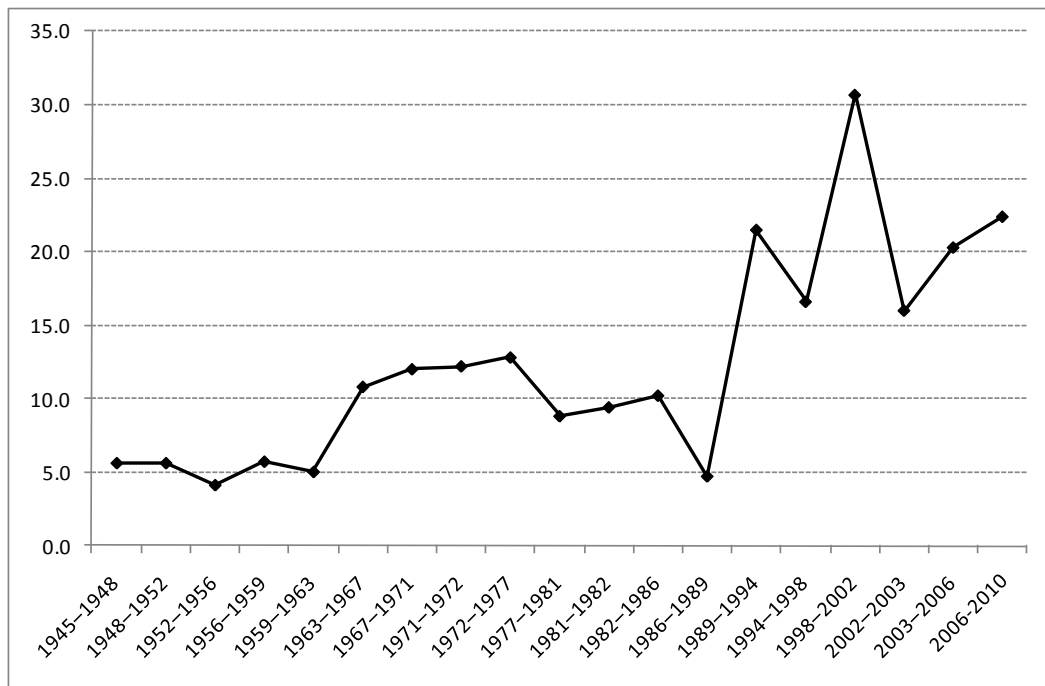
Note: Volatility calculated according to the Pedersen (1979) Index. Source: Mair (2008: 250). Figure for 2006-2010 based on own calculations.

The increased availability of the Dutch electorate had serious consequences for the fortunes of small and newly formed parties. These previously used to remain marginal in terms of size and influence, if they managed to enter the Dutch parliament at all (Krouwel and Lucardie 2008; Van Kessel and Krouwel 2011). Now that the electorate had become much more available, the opportunities for new and small (populist) parties significantly increased. In order to account for the electoral performance of individual populist parties, however, the agency of established and populist political parties needs to be considered.

Responsiveness of the established parties

For the QCA analysis, presented in the previous chapter, the responsiveness of the established parties was measured using data concerning general levels of trust and satisfaction with regard to political institutions and democracy. When the Dutch case is considered, little seems wrong with the levels of trust in political institutions. On the basis of *Eurobarometer* data, Bovens and Wille find that towards the end of the 20th century two-thirds of the Dutch thought that public authorities were functioning well and that 80% were satisfied with the government and the way democracy was functioning (Bovens and Wille 2011: 21; 29). These were, in the words of the authors, figures of almost North Korean or Cuban proportions. The Netherlands could be seen as a solid 'high-trust' country. From 2002 onwards, however, trust in public authorities

and government declined sharply. In 2004, about one-third of the respondents were satisfied with the functioning of public authorities and just under half of them were satisfied with the performance of the government (Bovens and Wille 2011: 21).

This decline in satisfaction levels more or less coincides with the rise of Pim Fortuyn in 2002. This could imply that Fortuyn has benefited from declining levels of public satisfaction with political institutions. In more recent years, however, trust levels have ascended and are almost back on the level of the 1990s (Bovens and Wille 2011: 29). When the past decades are considered, moreover, a positive trend can be discerned, regardless of short-term highs and lows. This trend seems at odds with the more recent popularity of Geert Wilders' Freedom Party, which has voiced discontent with established political institutions. The findings indicate that general levels of satisfaction and trust in political institutions are not necessarily related to the electoral performance of populist parties.

Irrespective of these general satisfaction and trust levels, some scholars already touched on the potential for populist parties in the Netherlands before the rise of Fortuyn. Rudy Andeweg (2001: 123), for instance, argued that the Dutch consensus democracy would provide fertile grounds for critique from the populist right, as consensus democracies are "strong on inclusiveness and weak on accountability". Jacques Thomassen (2000) also asserted that there were opportunities for the populist radical right, although he related it more specifically to the convergence of the mainstream parties towards the political centre. The findings of Pennings and Keman (2003), based on data from the Comparative Manifestos Project, indeed confirm that the mainstream parties in the Netherlands have converged. The authors also see this as one of the main reasons for Fortuyn's success. The public was not able to distinguish between mainstream parties anymore and Fortuyn was able to occupy the ideological space that had become vacant.

Figure 4.3 depicts the traditional mainstream parties' position on the specific issue of multiculturalism - one of the issues Fortuyn attracted most attention with - since 1981. The figure indicates whether the parties, on balance, made more positive or negative comments about multiculturalism in their manifestos. This included matters related to cultural integration and preservation of cultural and religious heritage (see Budge et al. 2001; Klingemann et al. 2006). The graph shows that the three parties did not refer to multiculturalism in a negative manner during the 1980s. In the 1990s only the Liberals were critical of multiculturalism. During these years, Liberal leader Bolkestein indeed voiced his concern that a lack of integration of minority groups would threaten (secular) Western liberal achievements (Prins 2002).

Figure 4.3: Positive versus negative references to multiculturalism in party manifestos.
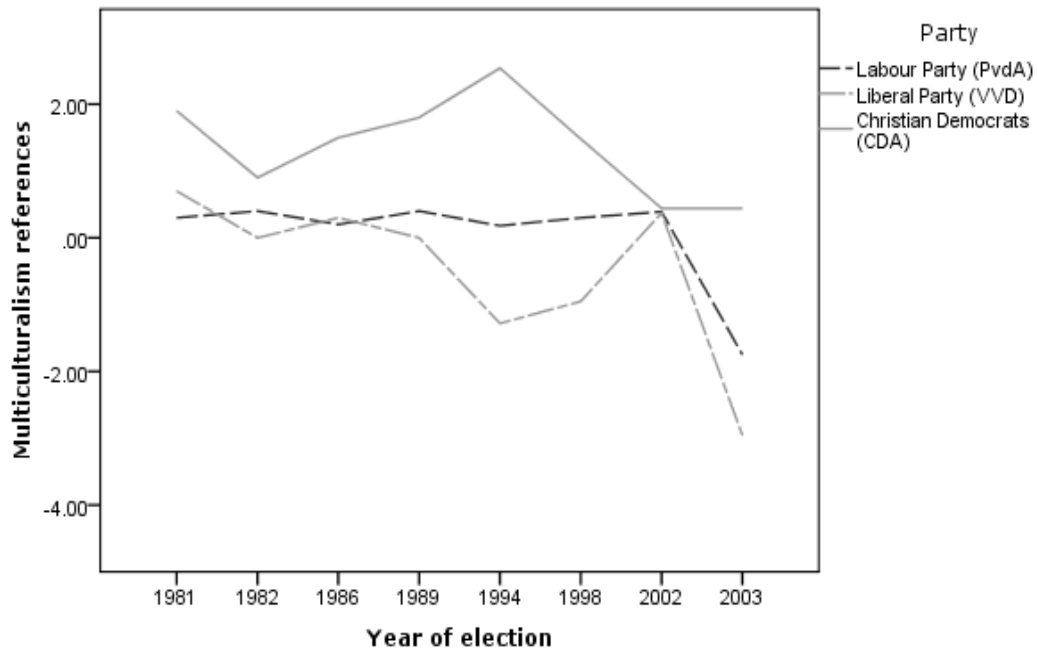
Data: Budge et al. (2001), Klingemann et al. (2006). The multiculturalism references scale is computed as: multiculturalism (positive references) minus multiculturalism (negative references).

By 2002, however, the Liberals had stopped pressing the issue of multiculturalism and little was separating the three mainstream parties on this issue. This gave Fortuyn the room to position himself as the main critic of multicultural society. In 2003 the Labour Party and the Liberals had shifted their positions towards multiculturalism quite dramatically (see Figure 4.3; Oosterwaal and Torenvlied 2010). In view of the more recent electoral success of Geert Wilders' Freedom Party, however, none of the mainstream parties has succeeded in (re)gaining issue position ownership where stricter measures with regard to immigration and integration are concerned. This will be further discussed when this section turns to the credibility of the Dutch populist parties.

Still, the fact that the mainstream parties did not politicise certain issues, or the fact that party programmes have converged throughout time, does not necessarily mean that parties have also been unresponsive to the electorate's demands. Perhaps the issue of multiculturalism was not perceived to be very important by the Dutch voters. This, however, was certainly not the case. As Pellikaan, De Lange and Van der Meer (2003; 2007) argue, the established parties failed to recognise that citizens actually *were* concerned about the perceived problems of immigration and the 'multicultural' character of society. Fortuyn managed to introduce a new 'cultural' line

of political conflict which "had been ignored by the political elite, but was highly salient to the electorate" (Pellikaan et al. 2007: 294).

On the basis of Dutch Parliamentary Election studies, Kees Aarts and Jacques Thomassen (2008: 217) indeed find that a considerable share of the electorate perceived problems related to minorities and refugees to be very important societal issues. As Figure 4.4 indicates, these issues became more important for many voters in the 1990s, while, most notably, unemployment became much less of a salient issue. The success of Fortuyn is, therefore, unlikely to be related to socio-economic conditions. This notion is further substantiated by taking into account the good economic record of the Purple governments (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003).

Figure 4.4: Most important issues as perceived by the Dutch electorate.
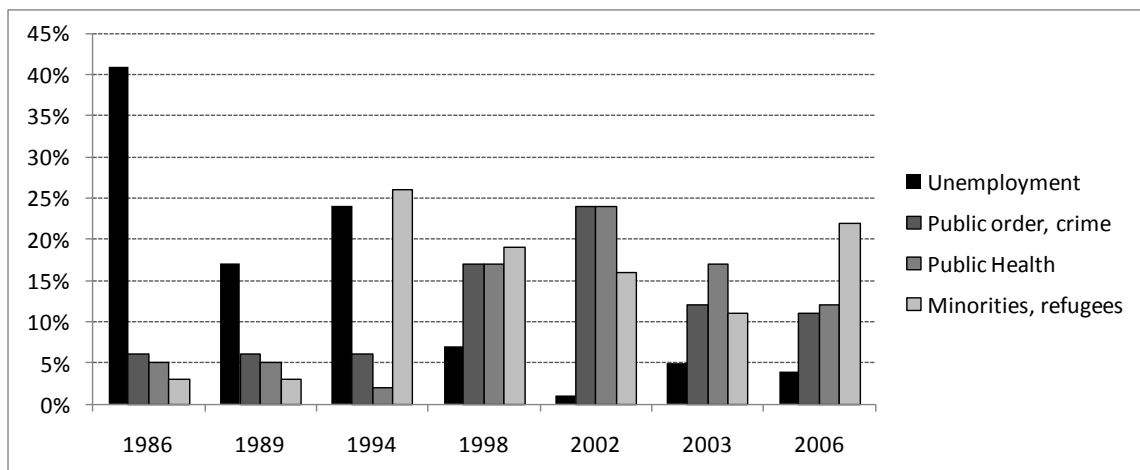
Source: Aarts and Thomassen (2008: 216).

As Aarts and Thomassen (2008) argue, none of the established political parties prioritised these newly emerged issues in their political programme in 2002. Furthermore, the perceived positions of the Christian Democrats and, especially, the Labour Party towards ethnic minorities and asylum seekers were quite different from the attitudes of the electorate. Similarly, Van Holsteyn, Irwin and Den Ridder (2003) argue that it was not so much the electorate that shifted to the 'right' at the 2002 parliamentary elections; the public merely reacted to the entrance of a credible newcomer which tapped into their pre-existing attitudes.

When the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study of 1998 (Aarts et al. 1999) is considered, it is indeed evident that already in 1998 a substantial amount of respondents favoured strict policies towards asylum seekers and ethnic minorities. Of all respondents, 11.6% preferred asylum seekers to be sent back (option 7 on a scale of 7), while 42.8% of the respondents gave an answer ranging from 5 to 7 (see Figure 4.5). On the other hand, a mere 3.7% favoured admitting more asylum seekers

(option 1) and 26% opted for an option ranging from 1 to 3. With regard to the integration of minorties a similar pattern can be observed; 16.1% of the respondents wanted minorities to adjust to Dutch culture completely, as opposed to 3.3% of the respondents who felt that minorities may preserve their national customs. Figure 4.5, moreover, suggests that the Dutch electorate had become less lenient towards the inflow of asylum seekers and the integration of minorities between 1998 and 2002.

Figure 4.5: Position of electorate on the issues of asylum seekers and ethnic minorities.
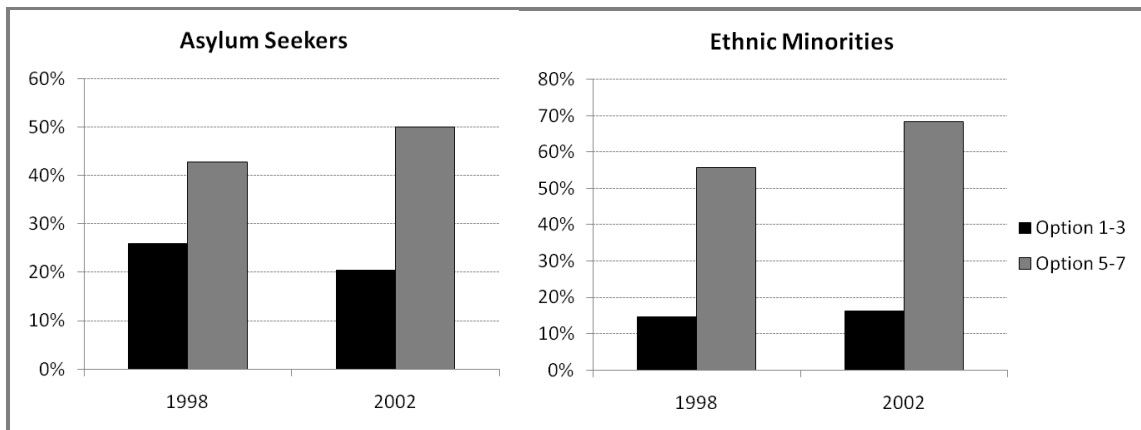
Note: Asylum seekers: 1= admit more; 7= send back as many as possible. Ethnic Minorities 1= may preserve customs of own culture; 7= should completely adjust to Dutch culture.
Data: Dutch Parliamentary Election Study 1998 (Aarts et al. 1999) and 2002-2003 (Irwin et al. 2003).

The List Pim Fortuyn can, then, indeed be considered to have been responsive to voters with clear reservations about immigration and the cultural integration of minorities. As Wouter van der Brug (2003) has shown, a vote for Fortuyn was also primarily driven by policy preferences. There was thus more to the support for the LPF than mere political apathy or cynicism. That is not to say that attitudes of discontent have not also contributed to the electoral victory of the List Pim Fortuyn (Bélanger and Aarts 2006). Judging from Figure 4.6, LPF voters were driven by the substance of Fortuyn's programme, but the LPF vote was also largely propelled by dissatisfaction with the Purple government or a feeling that Dutch politics needed to be shaken up.

Figure 4.6: Reasons for party choice in parliamentary election of 2002.
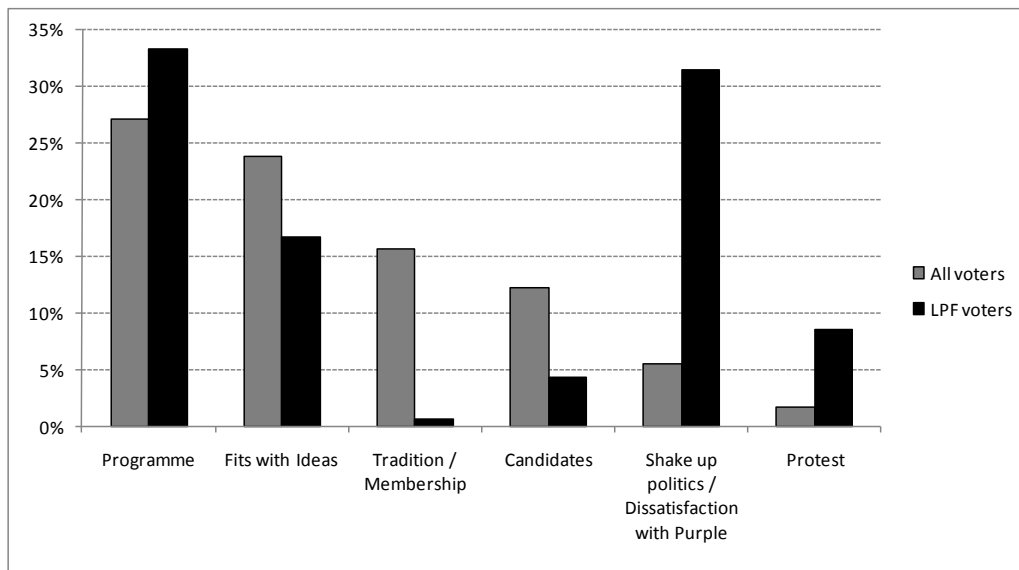
Data: Dutch Parliamentary Election Study 2002-2003 (Irwin et al. 2003).

Even if the mainstream parties adapted their positions after the elections of 2002, they did not seem to have regained the confidence of a considerable share of the dissatisfied electorate. General trust levels may have risen again after the advent of Pim Fortuyn, but the electorate of populist parties did not necessarily share this optimism. Preliminary data from the 2010 Dutch Parliamentary Election Study indicates that Freedom Party voters were clearly less satisfied with democratic institutions than other voters. Whereas over three quarters of the electorate as a whole was satisfied or very satisfied with democracy in the Netherlands, the figure for Wilders supporters was just under 50% (CBS et al. 2011)[4]. According to data from the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study from 2006, moreover, roughly two-thirds of the Freedom Party electorate agreed with the statement that 'MPs do not care about opinions of people like me', whereas about one-third of the non-Freedom Party voters agreed (see Figure 4.7). Judging from preliminary 2010 Election Study results, this general pattern did not change, even though voters on the whole seem to have become a bit more positive about MPs.

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[4] Data from this Election Study are preliminary and could be subject to modification.

Figure 4.7: Reaction to the statement: 'MPs do not care about opinions of people like me'.
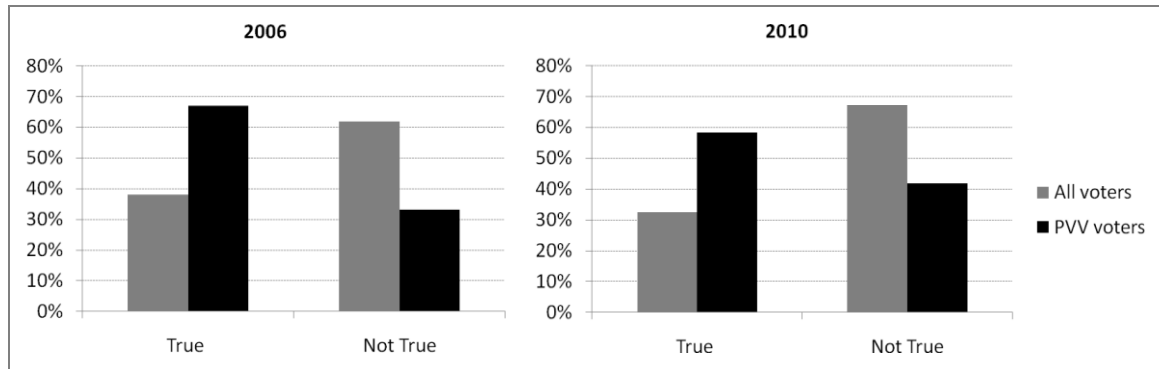
Data: Dutch Parliamentary Election Study 2006 (CBS et al. 2007) and 2010 (CBS et al. 2011).

A particular segment of the Dutch electorate, then, appeared to be dissatisfied with political institutions. As the case of the List Pim Fortuyn has indicated, however, populist parties are unlikely to thrive on dissatisfaction alone. Substantive policy proposals matter too. Wilders, in this regard, seemed to have made a sensible choice in writing a more left-wing manifesto (in terms of socio-economic issues) in 2010. Van der Brug and Van Spanje (2009) have shown that in Western Europe there is a substantial group of people who are left-leaning on socio-economic policies and right-leaning on immigration. Van der Brug, De Vries and Van Spanje (2011) find that also in the Netherlands many voters are in favour of reducing income differences and critical of multiculturalism at the same time. Like in most other Western European countries, however, there has been no party which truly represented this group of voters in recent years, even though most parties have shifted away from an overt pro-multiculturalism position.

Considering the ideological convictions of many voters, it appears to have been a sound (strategic) choice of Wilders to include various more left-leaning proposals in his 2010 programme. This was all the more sensible as the Dutch election campaign of 2010 focused more on socio-economic issues than on moral-cultural ones (Van Kessel 2010). Indeed, a post-election survey of research institute Synovate (2010) suggests that the Freedom Party managed to win over many former, presumably 'left-wing', Labour and Socialist Party supporters. Many former Liberal, Christian Democrat and non-voters cast their ballot for Wilders in 2010 as well, indicating that Wilders had become a true 'catch-all populist' (Van Kessel 2010: 13; see Kirchheimer 1966). This observation is further supported by provisional data from the 2010 Dutch Parliamentary Election Study. As Figure 4.8 indicates, many Freedom Party voters in 2010 voted for a range of other parties in the previous parliamentary election. Geert Wilders did not manage to win over many progressive liberal (D66) and green

(*GroenLinks*) voters. This is hardly surprising, since these latter parties can, in programmatic terms, be seen as the antitheses of Wilders' Freedom Party.

Figure 4.8: Parties voted for in 2006 by the 2010 Freedom Party electorate.
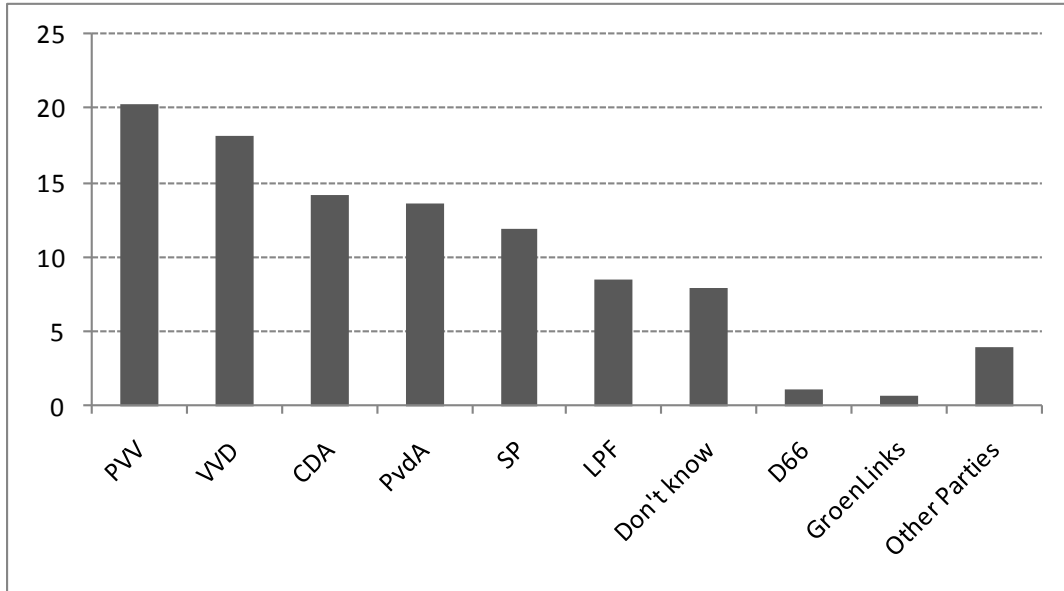
Data: Dutch Parliamentary Election Study 2010 (CBS et al. 2011).

If the breeding ground for populism was present since the beginning of the 21st century, how can the failure of other populist parties and the electorate's return to the established parties in 2003 be explained? To account for this, the agency of the populist parties themselves must be considered.

Supply of credible populist parties

As discussed in previous chapters, a populist party is assumed to be credible when it can rely on visible and persuasive leadership, is able to ward off an extremist image and manages to convincingly distance itself from the political mainstream. Especially after the populist party's breakthrough – and this relates more to the party's organisation – the party is likely to lose its credibility when it fails to preserve internal cohesion. With regard to the first indicators, related to electoral appeal, the success of populist parties is often related to personal 'charisma' of the party leader. This is no different in the case of Pim Fortuyn (e.g. Ellemers 2004). However, this 'charisma hypothesis', based on the notion that a vote for a populist party is mainly stimulated by the extraordinary endowments of the populist leader alone, has been rightly criticised (Van der Brug 2003; Van der Brug and Mughan 2007). Indeed, as has been shown above, people voting for populist parties are largely motivated by substantive concerns, just like supporters of any other parties. Judging from the findings from the

QCA analysis in the previous chapter, however, it is safe to assume that credible leadership is an important precondition for the electoral success of populist parties.

In the pre-Fortuyn era populist parties could not always rely on an extraordinary figurehead. The populist anti-immigrant Centre Party (*Centrumpartij*, CP) and Centre Democrats (*Centrum Democraten*, CD), led by the late Hans Janmaat, only achieved some very limited success in the 1980s and 1990s. Between 1994 and 1998 the Centre Democrats reached their peak with three seats, before disappearing from parliament in 1998. Janmaat was hardly an appealing leader. Whilst being a confident speaker, he was "not really eloquent and often too emotional to convince anyone but his own supporters" (Lucardie 1998: 116). Aside from its leadership, the CP and CD were considered to be extreme right parties, for which there was little electoral potential in the Netherlands (Mudde and Holsteyn 2000: 164-5). Finally, in terms of organisation, both the CP and CD were marked by internal disputes. Janmaat was actually expelled from the Centre Party in 1984 and founded the Centre Democrats afterwards. Besides, even if Janmaat could have presented his parties as credible challengers, the political opportunity structure did not seem overly encouraging. As Figure 4.4 has shown, immigration only really became a salient issue in the 1990s. During most of this decade Liberal leader Bolkestein managed to effectively voice discontent with the, allegedly too liberal, Dutch migration policies (Lucardie 1998: 122).

The Socialist Party, in turn, lacked sufficient nationwide visibility until the late 1990s (Van der Steen 1995; Voerman and Lucardie 2007). After the disappointing 1989 parliamentary election the party broadened the scope of its campaign efforts and the party became known for its telling campaign slogan 'Vote against, vote SP!' (*Stem tegen, stem SP!*). The Labour Party, meanwhile, received criticism due to the cuts in social benefits during its time in office. In 1994 the SP managed to win two seats and grew further in 1998, when it received five seats. Jan Marijnissen grew out to be an appealing, eloquent leader and the party remained well organised. In order to appeal to a wider audience, however, the party let go of its more radical policies and dropped references to its communist heritage (Voerman and Lucardie 2007). Moreover, also its populist rhetoric waned (De Lange and Rooduijn 2011). In 2002 the party's slogan, for instance, had remarkably changed into 'Vote *for*, vote SP' (Stem *voor*, stem SP!). The party now presented itself as a more leftist alternative to Labour, rather than a genuine populist anti-establishment party. This also showed in the motivations of its electorate. According to Dutch Parliamentary Election Study data, only 2.6% of the Socialist Party voting respondents gave 'to shake up the Netherlands, change or dissatisfaction with the Purple Cabinet' as a reason for voting SP in 2002 (Irwin et al.

2003). This compares to a figure of no less than 31.5% of LPF voting respondents (see Figure 4.6).

The influence of leadership most clearly showed in the election campaign in 2002, when the flamboyant Pim Fortuyn entered the political stage[5]. The support for 'Liveable Netherlands' in the polls only truly began to rise when Pim Fortuyn became the party leader. After the forced departure of Fortuyn in February 2002 it became even clearer that it was his personal appeal that really mattered; most Liveable supporters followed him to his new party (Rydgren and Van Holsteyn 2005: 58). Fortuyn dominated the campaign of 2002 and was also by far the most visible politician in the media. Of the media coverage devoted to individual politicians, no less than 24% went out to Fortuyn (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003: 86)[6]. With his outspoken performance he placed the established parties in a difficult position. The most notable occasion where this happened was the TV debate following the municipal elections in March 2002, in which established parties were heavily beaten. The broadcast showed the grumpy looking Labour and Liberal party leaders being unable, and seemingly unwilling, to respond to the triumphant monologues of Pim Fortuyn (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2003: 10-1).

Fortuyn's dominance in the campaign does not necessarily say something about his popularity. Koopmans and Muis (2009) do find, however, that the public visibility of Fortuyn, combined with the support from other actors in the public sphere, proved to be beneficial to Fortuyn's support in the opinion polls. Van Holsteyn and Irwin (2003) further show that, although Fortuyn was clearly perceived as the least sympathetic party leader on the whole, a large share of the voters that *did* evaluate Fortuyn favourably also cast a vote for him. Whereas Fortuyn and his ideas were thus controversial, he was seen as the right candidate by a substantial part of the electorate.

Once represented in parliament and government, however, Fortuyn's party failed to leave a good impression. It proved difficult, if not impossible, to replace Fortuyn with an equally appealing new party leader. The organisational disunity of the party after Fortuyn's assassination further undermined the LPF's credibility. Directly after Fortuyn was murdered, the internal turmoil began and the struggles continued after the List Pim Fortuyn became part of the governing coalition. It was without doubt the continuous infighting between LPF cabinet members – most notably the ministers Heinsbroek and Bomhoff - MPs and party officials that caused the breakdown of the

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[5] Fortuyn's character was far from colourless and he attracted attention with his sharp suits and his openness about his homosexuality. As Van Holsteyn and Irwin (2003: 44) further sum up Fortuyn's lifestyle: "Ferrari, Bentley with chauffeur, butler, two lap dogs, portraits of John F. Kennedy in his lavishly decorated Rotterdam home which he referred to as Palazzo di Pietro".

[6] The percentage related to the number two on the list was 7.3%.

government. Without Pim Fortuyn, the party organisation of the LPF proved to be very unstable. In the words of former party leader Mat Herben: "Not one organisation is able to function without (accepted) leadership, loyalty and discipline. After Pim Fortuyn had gone there was a lack of all three within the LPF" (Herben 2005: 25). In an interview with the author, Herben mentioned the "internal struggles and disunity" as the main reason for the decline of the LPF (Interview, The Hague, 10 September 2008). Former LPF Immigration Minister Hilbrand Nawijn shared this analysis about the (electoral) demise of the party: "the LPF consisted of a wide variety of people who, all of a sudden, wanted to go into politics. (…) No unity whatsoever" (Interview, Zoetermeer, 8 September 2008).

The results of the 2003 parliamentary election seemed to indicate a return to 'old' politics. Yet the fact that the LPF, despite the enormous organisational chaos, still managed to gain 5.7% of the vote, showed that some voters were reluctant to return to the mainstream parties. That populist parties did not do better in the 2003 parliamentary election is due to the fact that there was a lack of credible populist contenders. Liveable Netherlands was torn by leadership struggles. It was, strikingly, the inexperienced and unknown younger sister of former Fortuyn spin-doctor Kay van der Linde who eventually became the party leader. The person who missed out on LN leadership, the well known 'motivation trainer' Emile Ratelband, competed with his own list, but seemed too much of a clownish and, unlike Fortuyn, incapable candidate[7]. Neither Liveable, nor Ratelband received enough votes to become represented in parliament. With her new party, former LPF MP Winny de Jong also stood in the election, but she lacked media attention, and she was too much associated with the LPF skirmishes to secure seats.

In 2006 the situation was different. Several populist candidates competed with a certain political track record. Former List Pim Fortuyn Immigration Minister Hilbrand Nawijn formed the Party for the Netherlands (PVN). Marco Pastors, former alderman for Fortuyn's local party Liveable Rotterdam, and Joost Eerdmans, who had been a prominent List Pim Fortuyn MP, formed One NL (*EénNL*). Finally, List 5 Fortuyn more or less emerged out of the original LPF, although its leader Olaf Stuger was by far the most unknown party leader of the newly formed populist parties. The party's campaign was, moreover, quite poor[8]. It was Geert Wilders' Freedom Party that managed to collect most of the populist votes and to enter parliament.

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[7] Ratelband, who had become a famous TV personality, did not have any political experience. His motivational training methods included loudly exclaiming the catchword 'Tsjakka' and convincing people to walk over hot coals barefoot.

[8] In order to show how close List 5 Fortuyn allegedly was to the original ideas of Pim Fortuyn, the party's campaign video showed a man - face concealed yet smartly dressed like Fortuyn -

With just under 6% of the vote, Wilders' vote share was still quite modest. After the 2006 election, however, the populist politician received increasing media attention with strong anti-establishment statements and, in particular, with his controversial anti-Islam film *Fitna* from 2008 (Vossen 2010a). Even though Wilders was certainly more radical than Fortuyn in this respect, he has been able to fend off widespread allegations of extremism. Similar to Fortuyn, Wilders framed his anti-Islam rhetoric in terms of defending libertarian values, for instance related to the emancipation of women and homosexuals. In this way, Wilders managed to dissociate his party from narrow minded xenophobia and rancour, which are normally associated with the extreme right in the Netherlands (Vossen 2010b; Rydgren and Van Holsteyn 2005: 58). That is not to say that Wilders did not attract widespread controversy with his harsh anti-Islam statements – Wilders actually had to stand trial for inciting hatred against Muslims, but was cleared of all charges in June 2011. The Freedom Party, however, did not bear the extremist stigma that previously hampered the success of Janmaat's parties.

The Freedom Party has, moreover, clearly been able to seize and retain the ownership of the anti-immigration and anti-Islam policy positions. This shows when the opinions of the Freedom Party electorate are considered. According to preliminary 2010 Dutch Parliamentary Election Study data, two-thirds of the Freedom Party voting respondents (fully) agreed with the statement that the immigration of Muslims should be stopped (CBS et al. 2011). This compares to a figure of one-third of all respondents and a figure of 28% of the respondents who opted for the Liberal Party, which, after the Freedom Party, is ostensibly the party with the strictest immigration policies. Even though immigration and Islam were not the prime issues in the campaign of 2010 – socio-economic issues were more prominent in election debates – Wilders could make a strong impression by presenting himself as a defender of the economic interests of ordinary hard working men and women (Van Kessel 2010)[9].

Having learned from the mistakes of the List Pim Fortuyn, moreover, Wilders managed to keep the ranks of his party closed. Wilders was, for instance, very clear about his aim to avoid 'LPF-like situations' when deciding to only stand in two municipalities in the local election in March 2010, due to the lack of qualified candidates. Wilders' ultimate control over his party is further illustrated by his refusal to allow anyone else to become a member of his party. A first crack in the party organisation seemed to materialise prior to the 2010 parliamentary election, when

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being parachuted from the skies, landing in the midst of the Dutch parliamentary buildings. The man turns out not to be Fortuyn, but Olaf Stuger.

[9] Wilders actually started to use the 'commonplace' Dutch names *Henk* and *Ingrid* in order to personify these people.

Freedom Party MP Hero Brinkman openly dissented with the opinion of Wilders regarding the terms of government participation. Wilders, however, reacted calmly in his public appearance the next day and effectively managed to hush up the rumour.

The other right-wing populist party which participated in the 2010 parliamentary election, Rita Verdonk's Proud of the Netherlands, was a much less powerful contender. Opinion polls indicated that the former Liberal Immigration Minister could rely on a substantial amount of support just after the launch of her 'movement' (Vossen 2010a). Verdonk struggled to retain media attention in the following years, however. During the 2010 campaign she hardly played a visible role. Unlike Wilders, she was not invited to the debates involving the supposed main contenders of the election. In organisational terms, Verdonk also failed to leave a good impression. In 2008 she had to break with two of her closest trustees: Kay Verlinden – after his negative remarks about the party leaked out – and Ed Sinke – after a vicious personal conflict.

After its electoral victory in 2010, the Freedom party of Geert Wilders agreed to lend support a governing minority coalition, formed by the Liberals and Christian Democrats. At the time of writing, this situation appears to be very advantageous for Wilders. Through the support agreement the Freedom Party has been able to influence government policy, but can still blame the government – in which it is not officially taking part – for taking less popular measures. This has indeed happened concerning, for instance, the bailout plans for Greece in 2011 in light of the European financial crisis. As follows, Wilders might be able to continue distancing himself from the established parties in a convincing way. It is, therefore, questionable whether the Liberals and the Christian Democrats will be able to gobble up the electoral support of their radical junior coalition partner by copying its policies – the 'black widow effect' as described by Tim Bale (2003).

Whether Wilders will be able to keep his party united, however, remains to be seen. As early as November 2010, the Dutch media widely reported about the missteps various Freedom Party MPs had made in the past[10]. These scandals, however, did not damage the popularity of the Freedom Party and during the first half of 2011 no further notable scandals reached the news. The parliamentary fraction of the Freedom Party, moreover, has remained intact since the 2010 election. If incidents occur again in the future, however, it remains to be seen whether Wilders can fend off 'LPF-like situations'.

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[10] The most prominent scandal involved MP Eric Lucassen who, apart from being alleged to howl unwelcome remarks at neighbours, was convicted during his time in the army for engaging in an affair with a person of a lower rank. Despite this, Lucassen remained seated in parliament for the Freedom Party.

4.4 Conclusion

Compared to several other European countries, identifying populist parties in contemporary Dutch politics has been relatively straightforward. The only borderline case is the Socialist Party. As has been argued in this chapter, however, after the turn of the 21st century this former Maoist party has lost too much of its populist anti-establishment discourse in order to be considered as a genuine populist party. The only populist parties that have been elected into Dutch parliament in recent years are the List Pim Fortuyn, Liveable Netherlands – although its role in Dutch politics was quite insignificant – and the Freedom Party of Geert Wilders. Other parties clearly do not comply with the definition of populist parties used in this dissertation.

Apart from their populist anti-establishment rhetoric, the List Pim Fortuyn and the Freedom Party attracted most attention with their tough stance on issues related to immigration and the cultural integration of minorities, especially Muslims. Compared to Fortuyn, Geert Wilders has been more exclusively occupied with these matters. His rhetoric has also been harsher and more confrontational. Similar to many, if not most, other populist party figureheads, Fortuyn and Wilders have been clearer about who does *not* belong to the 'heartland' they represent, than who does. The main outsiders are intolerant Muslims – even though Wilders has tended to refer more abstractly to the threat of Islam in general, rather than to individuals – who allegedly threaten Dutch culture, including its liberal enlightenment values. The most prominent populist parties in the Netherlands, then, have been liberal and illiberal at the same time. They have been liberal by being protective of individual freedom rights. The Dutch populist parties can, at the same time, be perceived as illiberal, as they refused to tolerate allegedly intolerant minority religions.

With regard to the electoral performance of populist parties in the Netherlands, the structures of party competition appeared to play an important role. These, as has been shown, have become highly favourable to the electoral success of (new) populist parties. The electorate has become increasingly available after the demise of the Dutch pillarised cleavage structure, which meant that, in more recent years, new parties were fully able to profit from the highly proportional Dutch electoral system. To fully understand the electoral performance of populist parties, however, the agency of political parties must also be considered. Political mainstream parties were, with some justification, perceived to be unresponsive to the demands of a substantial part of the electorate. The most important issues at stake were immigration and cultural integration of minorities, the issues central to the appeal of several populist parties that were recently founded. Taking into consideration the proportional electoral

system, the availability of the electorate and the unresponsiveness of the established parties, the breeding ground for these populist parties was, then, very fertile.

In order to explain the variation in the electoral performance of individual populist parties, the chapter has shown that the credibility of these parties proved to be crucial. Pim Fortuyn could win over many dissatisfied voters by attracting ample amounts of media attention and eloquently voicing his anti-establishment critique. Fortuyn was murdered prior to the parliamentary election of 2002 and, although his party won a landslide victory, proved to be irreplaceable as party leader. The credibility of the List Pim Fortuyn was further damaged due to continuous infighting. Whereas most other populist contenders lacked electoral appeal, Geert Wilders managed to capture most of the populist vote in the post-Fortuyn era. Wilders built up a united party organisation under his own firm leadership and continuously reached the centre of attention with his provocative statements. The Freedom Party became the third largest party in Dutch Parliament after the election of 2010 and has been providing support for the minority government which was subsequently formed.

An important implication from the Dutch case is that high general levels of trust in political institutions do not necessarily hamper the electoral success of populist parties. General trust and satisfaction levels were used as the main indicators for the responsiveness of the established parties in the QCA analysis in Chapter 3. The Dutch case shows that responsiveness with regard to *specific issues* might be more relevant in order to assess the electoral performance of populist parties. Nevertheless, even though the Netherlands can be perceived as a 'high trust' country, this chapter has shown that populist parties do draw support from a particular dissatisfied *segment* of society. Policy preferences, however, also appear to be crucial to the electoral support of populist parties. Thus, the dissatisfaction of the 'populist voter' is, in turn, likely to be driven by concerns related to real societal developments and substantive policies (Eatwell 2003: 51-2).

The Dutch case also suggests that mainstream parties do not automatically win back the support they lost to the populist parties if they become more responsive. Immigration and cultural integration are now important issues to most political parties in the Netherlands, but this does not seem to hamper Geert Wilders' success. This suggests that if a populist party manages to retain its credibility after seizing policy position ownership with regard to a salient issue, it can ward off competition from its mainstream rivals (cf. Meguid 2008). What is more, as the Freedom Party is now not officially part of the governing coalition it remains to be seen whether a 'black-widow effect' will materialise (Bale 2003). This happens when mainstream parties seize the electoral support of the radical junior coalition partner by copying its policies. The

Freedom Party can, instead, claim credit for tougher immigration and integration measures, whilst blaming the government for less electorally appealing decisions. The Danish People's party, which has incrementally extended its support during the past decade, serves as a good example. Keeping, so to speak, 'one foot in and one foot out' is likely to be easier in this support construction than in a situation where a populist party has to bear the full responsibility of taking part in government (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005).

5 Populist Parties in Poland

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with populist parties in a long established Western European democracy. This chapter moves beyond this part of the continent, which is extensively covered by existing literature, and provides an analysis of populist parties in Poland. As became clear in Chapter 2, post-communist Central and Eastern European countries often provide a challenge when the aim is to determine which parties are populist, and which are not. This is, as will be discussed, certainly the case in Poland. The chapter will nevertheless convey the argument that, in recent years, two parties emerged that can be identified as genuine populist parties: Self Defence and, since 2005, Law and Justice. The League of Polish Families, often considered to be a populist party as well, does not quite fit the definition of populist parties outlined in this dissertation.

As in the Netherlands, Poland has witnessed the rise and fall of populist parties in recent years and also in Poland populist parties did manage to take part in coalition governments. Poland thus also provides a case in which successful and unsuccessful populist parties can be compared throughout time. The part of the chapter which deals with the electoral performance of the Polish populist parties will again be structured around the four causal conditions central to this dissertation: the electoral system, the availability of the electorate, the responsiveness of established parties and the supply of credible populist parties. As will be argued, the Polish populist parties could benefit from a reasonably open electoral system and, especially, from a markedly available electorate. Moving to the agency of the Polish political parties, after the transition to democracy, the dominant Polish mainstream parties have not genuinely been responsive with regard to socio-economic concerns of the more leftist voters. The use of cronyism and involvement in corruption scandals further undermined their trustworthiness. Self Defence, the party most clearly appealing to the Polish 'transition losers', was able to profit from this. After its shift towards a more explicit populist discourse, however, Law and Justice became the most credible party voicing a populist anti-establishment critique. The party could rely on a particularly strong anti-corruption image. After Law and Justice entered government in 2005, it largely 'devoured' the support of its junior coalition partners, Self Defence and the League of Polish Families.

The following section first provides a brief overview of the developments in the Polish party system after the transition to democracy. These developments need be understood in order to be able to identify the populist parties that have emerged after the turn of the 21st century. Section 5.3 turns to the electoral performance of the identified populist parties in Poland. The concluding section summarizes the findings and draws implications from the Polish case.

5.2 Identifying the Populist Parties in Poland

1989-2001: A fluid party political landscape

Towards the end of the communist period a mass opposition force was able to develop, embodied by the trade union federation Solidarity (*Solidarność*). In 1989 the 'Round-Table negotiations' between Solidarity and the Communist government led to semi-open elections. Solidarity's overwhelming victory in these elections marked the beginning of the end for the communist party (Polish United Worker's Party, *Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*, PZPR). Its position was severely weakened and the election results led to a 'negotiated retreat' of the PZPR from the political scene (Millard 1999: 9).

The following decade in democratic Poland was typified by the instability of the party system. Various parties emerged from the Solidarity movement and the first truly free parliamentary elections in 1991 resulted in an extremely fragmented Lower House (*Sejm*). No less than 29 parties or electoral committees occupied the 460 seats (Sanford 1999: 36). Within this parliamentary period three short-lived governments followed each other up rapidly. Party discipline was lacking, resulting in clashes between parliament and the governments. The governments, moreover, were also marked by internal divisions. The relationship between the cabinets and President Lech Wałęsa, the former chairman of the Solidarity trade union who was elected as President in 1990, was often difficult as well.

In 1993 a new parliamentary election was held under a new, less proportional, electoral system. This change proved detrimental to the divided 'post-Solidarity' camp, as many, relatively small, centre-right parties that emerged from the Solidarity Trade Union failed to cross the threshold. Strikingly, no less than 34.5% of the votes were 'wasted' (Sanford 1999: 41). At the same time, the pragmatic and much better organised social democrats of the Democratic Left Alliance (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*, SLD), which emerged out of the communist party, profited from the electoral system. This party alliance eventually formed a coalition government with

the Polish Peasant Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, PSL). The social democrat Aleksander Kwaśniewski was elected as president in 1995, which meant that both executive branches were now dominated by former communist politicians. Nevertheless, within this parliamentary period, the lifespan of the three SLD-PSL governments that were consecutively formed was relatively short.

The post-Solidarity camp only managed to unite in a new alliance in June 1996: Solidarity Electoral Action (*Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność,* AWS). In the words of Frances Millard (2010: 84), AWS at last "appeared to bring unity to the pullulating, fractious, narcissistic right-wing groupings". The unification of the centre-right proved to be successful as the party won the parliamentary election of 1997 with 33.8% of the vote (see Table 5.1). AWS was thus able to 'mop up' the previously wasted votes of people who voted for the smaller centre right parties in the election of 1993 (Szczerbiak 2004: 63). The post-Solidarity alliance formed a coalition government with the liberals of the Freedom Union (*Unia Wolności*, UW). AWS Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek headed the government.

The government turned out to be very unpopular. The coalition was, moreover, internally divided over the reforms and the liberal economic policies pursued by Freedom Union Finance Minister Balcerowicz. In 2000 the coalition broke down, after which Buzek headed a minority government. Less than a year later, several groupings began to split from AWS. In January 2001 the Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*, PO) was founded. The Civic Platform consisted of liberal-conservative elements of AWS and leading Liberal figures from the Freedom Union, among whom was Donald Tusk. The party pursued liberal socio-economic policies, such as flexibilisation of the labour market and the introduction of a flat-rate tax. The most notable other grouping that split from Solidarity Electoral Action was the party Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS). Law and Justice was headed by Jarosław Kaczyński and supported by his twin brother Lech, who was still the politically independent Justice Minister in the AWS government. The programme of PiS mainly focused on law and order issues and combating corruption in public office. With regard to these issues, Law and Justice could thrive on the popularity of Minister Lech Kaczyński who built up a strong crime-fighting image. Finally, some other former Solidarity Electoral Action members and a range of individual groupings formed the radical Catholic nationalist League of Polish Families (*Liga Polskich Rodzin,* LPR). The remainder of AWS rebranded itself as Solidarity Electoral Action of the Right (AWSP).

In the Polish parliamentary election of 2001 the unpopularity of the Buzek government was translated in an electoral punishment for the AWS, or what was left of it (see Table 5.1). The new AWSP electoral coalition would not return in the *Sejm*.

The two new centre-right parties, the Civic Platform and Law and Justice, received 12.7% and 9.5% of the vote respectively. The largest victors in 2001, however, were the social democrats of the Democratic Left Alliance. The social democrats had formed an alliance with the smaller Labour Union (*Unia Pracy,* UP) and won no less than 41.0% of the vote. The Democratic Left Alliance successfully managed to present itself as a stable and pragmatic alternative to the disjointed Buzek government (Szczerbiak 2002: 51). The social democrats formed a coalition government with the Peasant Party and Leszek Miller became Prime Minister.

Table 5.1: Parliamentary election results in Poland since 1997.

Party	'97 % (Seats)	'01 % (Seats)	'05 % (Seats)	'07 % (Seats)
Solid. Electoral Action (AWS)	33.8% (201)	5.6% (0)		
Democratic Left Alliance (SLD)	27.1% (164)	41.0% (216)	11.3% (55)	13.2% (53)
Freedom Union (UW)	13.4% (60)	3.1% (0)	2.5% (0)	
Polish Peasant Party (PSL)	7.3% (27)	9.0% (42)	7.0% (25)	8.9% (31)
Civic Platform (PO)		12.7% (65)	24.1% (133)	41.5% (209)
Law and Justice (PiS)		9.5% (44)	27.0% (155)	32.1% (166)
Self Defence (Samoobrona)		10.2% (53)	11.4% (56)	1.5% (0)
League of Polish Families (LPR)		7.9% (38)	8.0% (34)	1.3% (0)
Others	18.4% (8)	1.0% (2)	8.7% (2)	1.5% (1)
Total	*100% (460)*	*100% (460)*	*100% (460)*	*100% (460)*

Notes: In 2001 the SLD – now a unified party rather than a party federation - formed an electoral alliance with the Labour Union (UP). In 2005 the Freedom Union (UW) figure stands for the vote share of the Democrats which emerged out of the UW. The percentage for the SLD in 2007 reflects the vote share of the centre-left Left and Democrats alliance. Data: http://www.parties-and-elections.de/poland.html

After the parliamentary election of 2001 the Polish party political landscape would become much more stable than before. It is also from this election onwards that the electoral performance of populist parties will be considered, even though various (short-lived) parties that used overt populist rhetoric had emerged already in the 1990s. One example is Stanisław Tymiński's Party X, which was one of the parties that won a few seats in the 1991 parliamentary election (see Wysocka 2010). In order to provide for a meaningful comparison between long established European democracies and the Polish case, however, only the populist parties that emerged after the relative stabilisation of the Polish party system are studied here. That is, in the 1990s the party political situation was so fluid and the lifespan of parties so short that it was hard to speak of a truly developed party system in the first place. During this period it is, then, also difficult to identify a political establishment and 'new' parties that challenged the established mainstream parties. By the turn of the 21st century, however, two camps had developed that could reasonably be perceived to make up the political establishment in the newly developed Polish democracy: the 'communist successor' camp and the 'post-Solidarity' camp. While the former communists

managed to organise themselves quite successfully in the Democratic Left Alliance, the loosely defined post-Solidarity camp was much more disjointed. Several governments in the 1990s were, nevertheless, comprised of parties and politicians from this latter camp.

It was also after the parliamentary election of 2001 that two radical anti-establishment parties managed to enter parliament: Self Defence of the Republic of Poland (*Samoobrona Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej*) and the aforementioned League of Polish Families. Neither of these parties affiliated themselves with either the post-communist or the post-Solidarity heritage (Stanley 2010: 86). Together with the Law and Justice party, these are the parties that are also habitually branded 'populist'. Judging from the expert survey conducted for this study, Self Defence is the most clear-cut populist case. Twelve out of the fourteen respondents regarded the party as a populist party, compared to seven mentioning the League of Polish Families and Law and Justice. Two respondents added that Law and Justice had been populist since 2005. In the remainder of this section, it is explained why this latter interpretation is followed and why the League of Polish Families is not considered to be a genuine populist party. Identifying the populist parties in Poland still is a less straightforward task than in the Dutch case. This is mainly due to the somewhat ambiguous nature of both the League of Polish Families and Law and Justice, as well as the more general anti-establishment mood that has been prevalent in election campaigns after the turn of the 21st century.

2001: Enter Self Defence and the League of Polish Families

Whereas the social democrats' return to power in 2001 came as no great surprise, the entrance of two radical forces in the Polish Parliament was less expected. The first of these was Self Defence, which received 10.2% of the vote. Rather than a political party in the conventional sense, Self Defence was a social movement born out of a farmers' trade union in the early 1990s, which evolved around its indisputable leader Andrzej Lepper. As a political organisation, Self Defence can clearly be classified as a populist party, due to its anti-establishment character and its appeal to a heartland of ordinary Polish people. Lepper himself has not been afraid to label Self Defence as populist if, as he stated, "populism means an uncompromising struggle against a corrupt establishment in defence of ordinary people and national interests" (quoted in Jasiewicz 2008: 14). In his rhetoric Lepper has clearly portrayed an antagonistic relationship between the elite and the common people. According to Lepper, "the authorities in Poland can be called 'them'. They rule, they make laws, the give, they take, they permit – or not – others to live" (quoted in Stanley 2008: 103). In its Social

and Economic Programme from 2003, Self Defence, on the other hand, claimed to be "the only one in Poland, which speaks in the name of all people" with the aim to "defend pure and unemployed people, honest and enterprising, but disadvantaged by the economic system" (quoted in Kucharczyk and Wysocka 2008: 77). In its pre-parliamentary period the organisation was notorious for the demonstrations and roadblocks it organised, but it did not lose much of its radical anti-establishment character once it was represented in parliament (Jasiewicz 2008: 14; Stanley 2010: 195-6). Once seated in parliament, Lepper abrasively accused the political establishment of corruption and also targeted the allegedly unresponsive national media (Wysocka 2010: 142-3).

Self Defence is perhaps a populist party *pur sang*. That is, its more substantial political programme has been highly ambiguous throughout the years (Millard 2010: 105; Pankowski 2010: 136, 140). Its stance on socio-economic issues, however, has been clearly left-wing. Different from left-wing parties with a more internationalist outlook, Self Defence has presented itself as a 'patriotic' party with the aim of protecting the national economy, in particular the agricultural sector (Wysocka 2010: 158). Self Defence appealed to the 'losers' of the transition from communism to a free-market economy. Its anti-establishment rhetoric has thus foremostly been targeted against "successive 'liberal elites' who had destroyed Poland and their 'theft' of national assets in the privatisation process" (Millard 2006: 1016). A party document written by the former official party spokesman Mateusz Piskorski furthermore states that "Self Defense has strongly expressed the voice of people and all social classes, which - due to the reforms of the 90-ies - have been standing on the edge of poverty and hopelessness" (Piskorski 2004). Even so, Self Defence's self-definition, even with regard to socio-economic issues, has changed somewhat over time. The party, for instance, shifted from seeking a 'third way' between capitalism and socialism to declaring itself as an anti-liberal party, while using the label 'socio-liberal' after the elections of 2005 (Kucharczyk and Wysocka 2008: 78).

The second radical party that entered the *Sejm* after the 2001 parliamentary election was the Catholic nationalist League of Polish Families, which received 7.9% of the vote. In the scholarly literature the League is, like Self Defence, regularly described as a populist party (e.g. Jasiewicz 2008; Kucharczyk and Wysocka 2008; De Lange and Guerra 2009; Pankowski 2010). Indeed, the LPR expressed harsh criticism of the Round-Table settlement from 1989 and the political parties that had emerged from it (Wysocka 2010: 195). In an interview with the author former presidential candidate and MEP for the party Maciej Giertych asserted that the Round-Table settlement allowed communists to remain represented in public office (Interview,

Brussels, 9 September 2008). Moreover, Giertych considered the so-called right-wing parties to be "also post-communist, but of an earlier vintage", and stated that the League's aim was to "get rid of all the socialist thinking". The party also vehemently opposed the political consensus as regards EU accession. EU membership was considered to pose a threat to the Polish national (Catholic) identity and the sovereignty of the Polish state (Jasiewicz 2008; De Lange and Guerra 2009). The League clearly portrayed itself as defender of national traditions and called for the preservation of Catholic values in Polish society (Wysocka 2010: 195). The party, in other words, conveyed a clear notion of a distinct Polish Catholic heartland. Finally, in socio-economic terms the party can be described as welfare chauvinist and critical of full-fledged capitalism. Although state involvement in the economy was not explicitly encouraged, the state was supposed to protect the national market and key industries from foreign competition (Wysocka 2010: 195).

While two populist elements – the heartland notion and the anti-establishment critique – are thus clearly present in the discourse of the League, the populist claim to represent the will of the 'ordinary people' is harder to distinguish. Instead of following the popular will, the League's conservative position on issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage was inspired by an adherence to Catholic values. According to Maciej Giertych, the League "would like to see the state functioning according to the ethical principles as defined by the Catholic Church" (Interview, Brussels 9 September 2008). People, according to Giertych, want politicians to be moral although they themselves are often privately in conflict with the Church and "are aware of the fact they are not very good Catholics". The ordinary people are, in other words, not portrayed as essentially virtuous and it is not so much the common sense of the ordinary people that should be at the basis of political decision-making. Although the League can thus certainly be seen as an anti-establishment party, it not a clear-cut populist party.

2005: The 'transformation' of Law and Justice

The Miller government that assumed office in 2001 had become the most unpopular administration in post-communist Poland (Szczerbiak 2007: 207) and this showed in the 2005 general election results. The Democratic Left Alliance only received 11.3% of the vote – a loss of almost 30 percentage points compared to the previous election. The support for Self Defence and the League of Polish Families stabilised compared to four years earlier. The large winners were the two centre-right parties Civic Platform and Law and Justice, which received 24.1% and 27.0% of the vote, respectively. For the first time in post-communist Poland the *Sejm* was composed of the same parties

as in the previous parliamentary period, despite the large shift in votes and seats between the elections of 2001 and 2005.

While the Civic Platform was the leading party in the pre-election polls for a long time, Law and Justice drew ahead when the elections were imminent. Since the Democratic Left Alliance was unlikely to become a notable electoral opponent, the centre-right parties began to target each other in the campaign. The Platform had broadened its appeal beyond the relatively small group of liberal voters by re-profiling itself as more socially conservative and by applying "a stronger national-patriotic discourse" (Szczerbiak 2007: 206). During the final stages of the campaign, Law and Justice, on the other hand, "re-framed the election as a choice between the Civic Platform's vision of a 'liberal' Poland, which they argued would benefit the better off and 'winners' primarily, and their more egalitarian concept of a 'social' or 'solidaristic' Poland" (Szczerbiak 2007: 211)[1]. Radoslaw Markowski (2008: 820) even speaks of the 'spectacular change' of Law and Justice from a "fairly typical conservative party" into a "radical nationalist, and visibly populist-socialist one".

Although it is more accurate to speak of a shift in emphasis rather than a 'spectacular change' (Millard 2010: 135-6), it is justifiable to apply the populist label to Law and Justice, particularly since the 2005 election campaign. Apart from their more pronounced 'solidaristic' image, which appealed to the many Poles who favoured state intervention in the economy (Szczerbiak 2007: 211), Law and Justice continued to express tough anti-establishment rhetoric. A lot of this rhetoric evolved around the term *układ*. Millard (2010: 147) defines this as the "putative shady network of business oligarchs, politicians, and the security services that formed the webs of corruption, cronyism, intrigue, and informal relations between 'liberals' and ex-communists' that had effectively ruled Poland after 1989". In this way Law and Justice linked corruption, which was the major campaign theme in 2005, with the issues of de-communisation and lustration (the cleansing of public office from former communists) which were salient themes in the 1990s (Millard 2006). The party also referred to a Polish 'Fourth Republic' in its 2005 manifesto title. By doing so, the party expressed the need to (symbolically) bring an end to the Third Polish Republic, which was established in 1991, and to start a new era of clean and moral government[2].

Moreover, although Olga Wysocka (2010: 221) already observed the Kaczyńskis' attempt to connect to the 'ordinary people' during the campaign of 2001, the party's populist appeal strengthened in the following years. As Kucharczyk and

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[1] Law and Justice for instance promised to end the alleged scandal of 'hungry children' and broadcast a television ad which "featured a child's teddy bear, whose price would rise if the heartless PO imposed its flat tax" (Millard 2006: 1023).

[2] That is not to say that Law and Justice's main rival in 2005, the Civic Platform, did not also employ explicit anti-establishment rhetoric. This will be discussed further along in this chapter.

Wysocka (2008: 79) argue, the party changed from an elitist party into a populist party and began "to speak in the name of 'the people'". In the 2006 local elections campaign Law and Justice, for instance, employed the slogan 'Close to the People' (*Bliżej ludzi*). The party further promised "a closer engagement in things common to everyday people", declared "a construction of a citizens' society" and spoke of the Fourth Republic bringing law and order, "because this is in the interests of ordinary Polish citizens. And Law and Justice is a party of ordinary Polish citizens" (quoted in Kucharczyk and Wysocka 2008: 79). Ben Stanley (2010: 185) similarly argues that Law and Justice's populist credentials "would be sharpened substantially" in the years after its foundation. The use of this sharpened populist rhetoric "identified PiS as representative of an ordinary, authentic, legitimate 'people' against an illegitimate and usurping elite" (Stanley 2010: 235). Thus, apart from its already prevalent anti-establishment critique, marked by the aim to fight corruption and push for further decommunisation and lustration, the party now also appealed more explicitly to the needs of the 'ordinary people'. Following Millard (2010: 135), in the campaign of 2005 "PiS hammered home its new central theme: for well over a decade liberal reforms had wreaked havoc on the fortunes of ordinary folk". In this way, the Kaczyński brothers steered the party in a more full blown populist direction in the election campaign of 2005.

2005-2007: Populist parties in power

The presidential election of 2005 was held one month after the parliamentary election, which meant that both election campaigns were effectively intertwined. While Civic Platform candidate Donald Tusk won most votes in the first ballot, he was beaten in the second, decisive, round by Law and Justice candidate Lech Kaczyński. Both elections were thus won by the Law and Justice party, and the Civic Platform would also remain outside of government after coalition negotiations with Law and Justice broke down. Although before the election it was widely expected that the two centre-right parties would form a coalition, the relationship between the parties had deteriorated after the fierce campaign battles (Szczerbiak 2007: 224-5).

Law and Justice instead formed a minority government headed by Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, with the support of Self Defence and the League of Polish Families. In May 2006 the three parties signed an official coalition agreement and the two radical parties officially became part of the government. In July Prime Minister Marcinkiewicz, who had become a popular politician, was replaced by Jarosław Kaczyński. Previously, Kaczyński had stated that he was unavailable for the Prime Ministerial post in order for his twin brother Lech to stand a greater chance in the

presidential election. After Jarosław's U-turn the Kaczyński twins thus headed both branches of the Polish executive. Self Defence leader Lepper became Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Prime Minister. He shared the latter post with the League's leader Roman Giertych – Maciej Giertych's son – who also became Minister for Education.

The government of Jarosław Kaczyński proved to be unstable, with the two junior coalition parties repeatedly quarrelling with Law and Justice (Szczerbiak 2008). Self Defence was even temporarily expelled from the coalition in September 2006, after Lepper expressed ever more outspoken criticism of Law and Justice. Lepper's party took part in the government again, however, after coalition negotiations between Law and Justice and the Peasant Party broke down. Scandals, most notably involving Self Defence politicians, would continue to occur. In December 2006, for instance, Self Defence functionaries were accused of offering women jobs in return for sexual activities. The coalition would eventually tumble in the summer of 2007, shortly after Minister Lepper was accused of taking bribes, and subsequently dismissed. Prime Minister Kaczyński gambled and called for new elections. As a result, an end came to "two years of ceaseless turmoil, culminating in an orgy of political lunacy for much of 2007" (Millard 2010: 143).

Kaczyński's gamble did not pay off as the Civic Platform, with 41.5% of the vote, ended well ahead of Law and Justice in the parliamentary election of September 2007. The vote share of the Kaczyński twins' party was 32.1%, which was higher than the 27.0% in the previous election, but the party failed to mop up all the votes of the former League of Polish Families and Self Defence supporters. These latter two parties disappeared from the *Sejm*, after receiving only 1.3% and 1.5% of the vote, respectively. The social democrats, now in a new alliance named 'Left and Democrats', failed to leave a great impression and received 13.2% of the vote. After the election, the Civic Platform formed a coalition government with the Polish Peasant Party. Donald Tusk became Prime Minister.

The following section of this chapter focuses on explaining the electoral performance of the populist parties in Poland: Self Defence and, since 2005, Law and Justice. The performance of the borderline case League of Polish Families will be analysed as well. This is in order to determine whether the electoral performance of this, essentially non-populist, party rests on a different logic compared to the more clear-cut populist parties.

5.3 Explaining the Electoral Performance of the Polish Populist Parties

Electoral system

Due to various electoral reforms, the proportionality of the Polish electoral system has varied considerably over the years. As mentioned, no less than 29 parties or electoral committees gained representation in the *Sejm* after the first genuinely free parliamentary election in 1991. The entrance of all these parties was certainly not hindered by the almost pure PR electoral system, which was marked by the absence of entry thresholds and fairly large electoral districts (Markowski 2006: 814). The following parliamentary election of 1993 was held under a much less proportional system. The new system introduced a 5% threshold for parties and an 8% threshold for electoral coalitions. It also included a second tier national list for parties that received more than 7% of the nationwide vote. The number of electoral districts was, furthermore, increased. This lowered the district magnitude and, consequently, the proportionality between vote- and seat shares. Indeed, as Figure 5.1 indicates, the disproportionality between votes and seats took a serious flight after the 1993 election. This, as discussed, most notably harmed the divided post-Solidarity camp.

Figure 5.1: Disproportionality between votes and seats in Polish parliamentary elections.
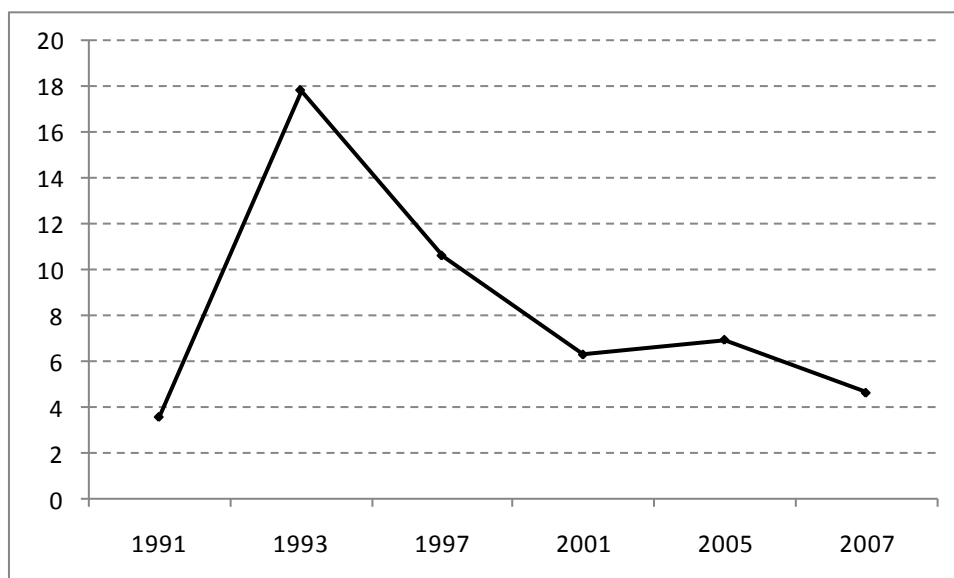
Note: Disproportionality according to the Least Squares Index (Gallagher 1991); zero indicating a perfect match between percentage of votes and percentage of seats. Data: Gallagher (2011).

The parliamentary election of 1997 was held under the same institutional rules, although the unification of the centre-right under the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) banner accounted for a much lower amount of wasted votes. When the AWS-led coalition was heading for an electoral defeat in the 2001 general election, a new

electoral system was introduced which would be less beneficial to larger parties, and thus to AWS' main rival, the Democratic Left Alliance (Millard 2003). The d'Hondt electoral formula was replaced by the Sainte Laguë formula (which favours medium-sized rather than large parties) the district magnitude was increased and the second tier national list was removed. The new electoral system of 2001 thus denoted a move back to more proportionality, although it was still much less proportional than the system of 1991. The system applied in 2005 only saw the reintroduction of the d'Hondt electoral formula and no changes were made in 2007. Compared to other European countries, the level of disproportionality between votes and seats in the latest Polish general election is quite typical for a country applying PR (see Figure 5.2). The system is less proportional than the extreme case of the Netherlands, but is clearly far more proportional than the majoritarian and plurality systems of, respectively, France and the UK.

Figure 5.2: Disproportionality between votes and seats in parliamentary elections in eight European countries.
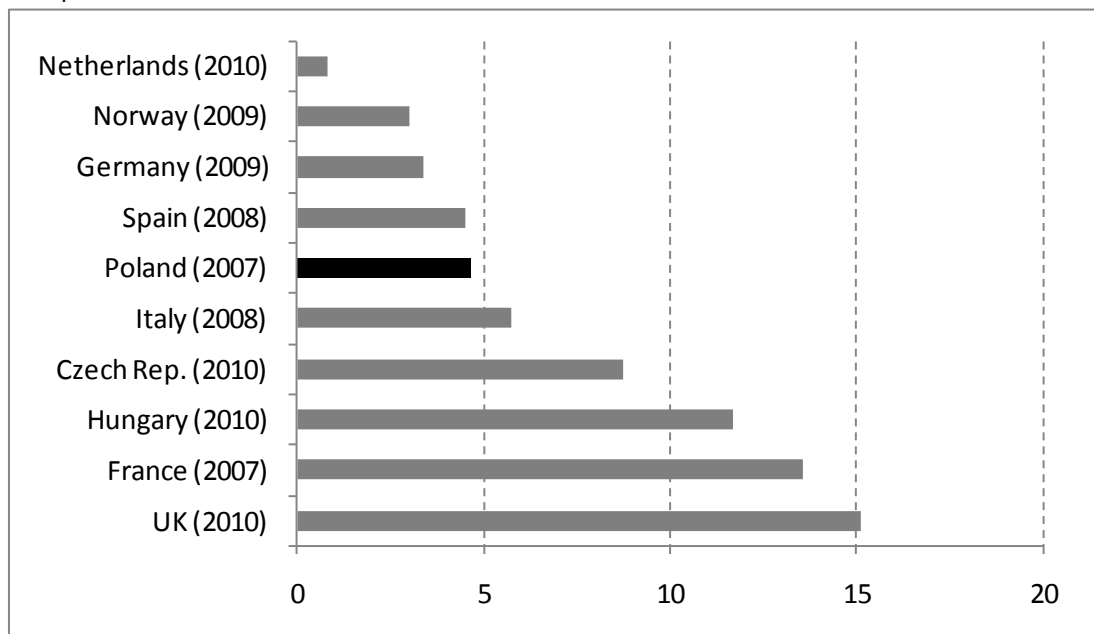
Note: Disproportionality according to the Least Squares Index (see note Figure 5.1).
Data: Gallagher (2011), figure based on Bale (2008: 174).

All in all, since the parliamentary election of 2001, the electoral system in Poland has been fairly proportional again. 2001 was also the year in which both Self Defence and the League of Polish Families managed to enter the *Sejm*. Although the 5% threshold for single parties and the 8% threshold for alliances might be a sizeable hurdle to take for new parties, these thresholds are not exceptionally high compared to other countries that apply a PR system. Since the last two elections, nevertheless, no new parties entered parliament and in the 2007 parliamentary election only four

parties managed to cross the electoral threshold. To explain the electoral performance of individual populist parties, therefore, also other factors have to be taken into account.

Availability of the Electorate

Populist parties are also assumed to stand a greater chance in elections if a large share of the electorate is willing to vote for non-established parties. The first semi-free election result in 1989 showed that very few Polish voters felt attached to the only truly established party, the communist Polish United Worker's Party. When the first genuinely free parliamentary election was held in 1991, the Polish electorate was, then, inevitably very available to any newly developed political parties. After the 1991 election party membership in Poland remained low and no strong party allegiances developed (Millard 1999: 105). Although the number of parties elected into the *Sejm* gradually decreased after subsequent elections, this did not so much signify a stabilisation of voters' preferences or the development of strong levels of party identification among the Polish electorate. In 2000, approximately 326,500 Poles were member of a political party, representing a mere 1.15% of the electorate (Mair and Van Biezen 2001). This is a very low percentage compared to other European democracies (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: Party membership as a percentage of the electorate in 20 European countries.
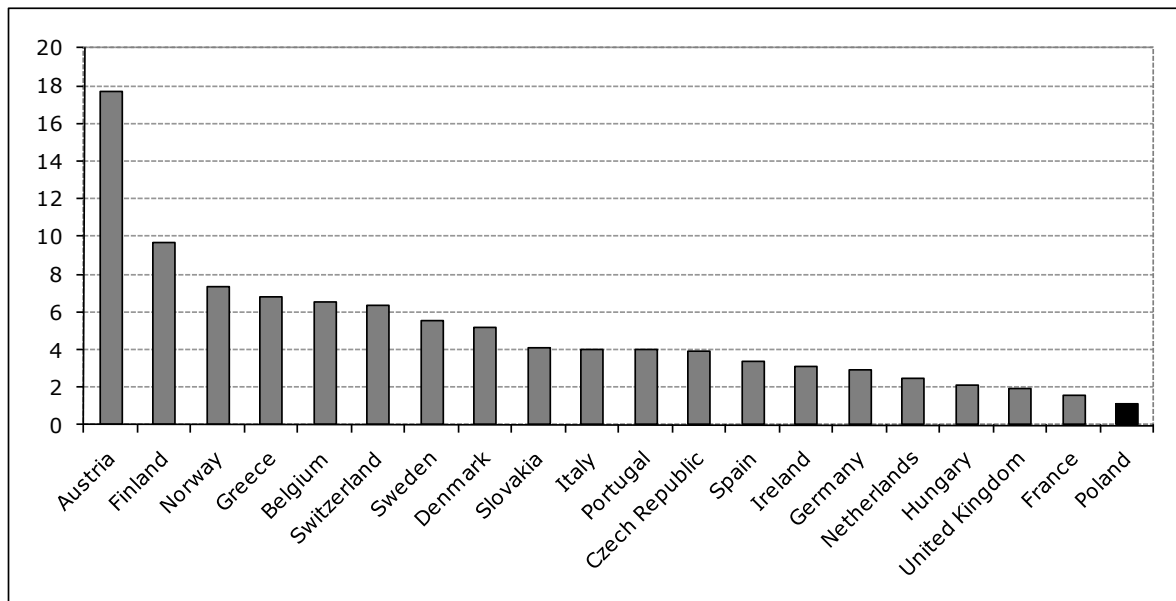
Source: Mair and van Biezen (2001). The party membership data stems from the end of the 1990s or the year 2000.

While party membership is perhaps a rather crude way of measuring the levels of party identification – party membership levels are quite low across many European

countries – other indicators confirm the lack of developed ties between the electorate and political parties. Data from the Polish Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS, *Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej*) show that in December 2000 58% of the Polish voters did not identify with a political party (CBOS 2000: 3). When the Poles were asked about their self-identification with different social groups in 2008, 81.2% of the respondents answered that they did not identify themselves with a political party at all (CBOS 2008: 4). According to Aleks Szczerbiak (2002: 55), the lack of partisan alignment was a sign that "most Poles felt that public life was excessively 'partified' and alienated from what they saw as distant, inward-looking and oligarchic party elites".

The weak levels of party affiliation were translated into extremely high electoral volatility figures between Polish parliamentary elections (see Figure 5.4). A remarkably high proportion of the voters have altered their party choice over successive elections. Following Radoslaw Markowski (2006: 816), the electoral volatility in Poland exceeded the volatility levels in Greece, Portugal and Spain in the years after the democratic transition in these countries and comes close to the volatility in the 'notoriously unstable' party systems in Latin America. Note, however, that electoral volatility has also largely been stimulated by the party splits and mergers, especially during the 1990s. Voters often had little choice but to change their party preference. Nevertheless, although the aggregate levels of volatility in the last three parliamentary elections dropped from 49.3 in 2001 to 24.6 in 2007, this figure is still high. This can be illustrated by considering the most volatile elections in Western Europe between 1950 and 2006, which were all held during a tumultuous political period. Italy ranks first with a figure of 36.7 in 1994, The Netherlands second with 30.7 in 2002 and France third with 26.7 in 1958 (Mair 2008: 239)[3].

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[3] In the early 1990s the party system in Italy was shaken up by corruption scandals and the related collapse of the ruling Christian Democratic party. The Netherlands witnessed the rise and assassination of the populist politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 (see Chapter 4). In 1958 the French Fifth Republic was established, after the fall of the Fourth.

Figure 5.4: Aggregate electoral volatility in Poland.
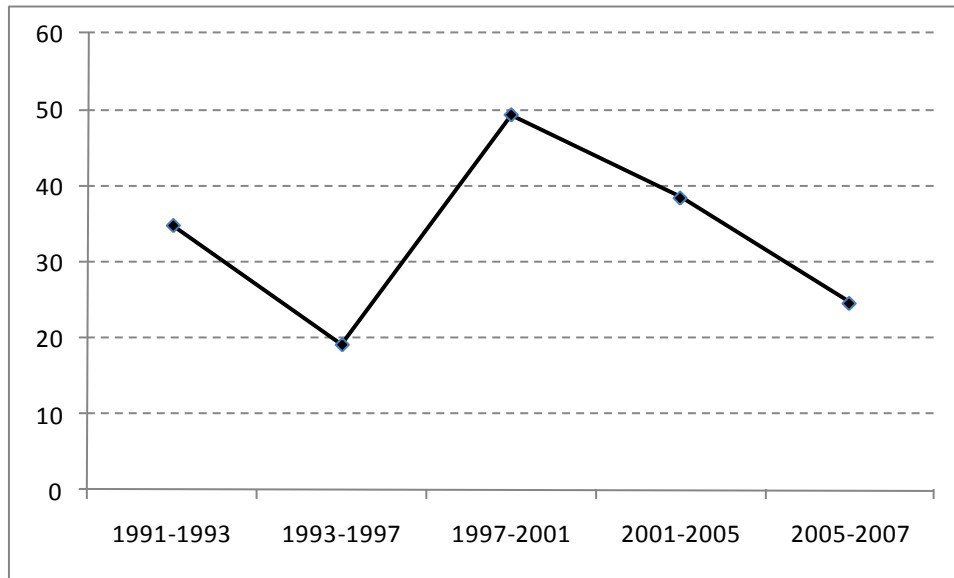
Note: Volatility calculated according to the Pedersen (1979) Index. Source: Markowski (2008: 1059).

A final indicator of partisan alignment, or political efficacy more generally, is the turnout level in parliamentary elections. Compared to other European democracies, including Central and Eastern European countries, this turnout has been remarkably low. The average post-war turnout in Western European countries was about 80%, the average turnout in CEECs after the transition to democracy was about 70% (Markowski 2006: 816). The highest turnout in Poland was only 53.9%, recorded in the 2007 parliamentary election. The lowest turnout was measured in 2005, when only 40.6% of the eligible voters showed up.

Low levels of partisan alignment and electoral turnout and high levels of electoral volatility indicate that, also after the most recent parliamentary election of 2007, the Polish electorate has remained very available (Szczerbiak 2008: 431). The reason for this can be traced back to the former communist regime in Poland, which has fed into widespread anti-party sentiments (Rose 1995; Rose and Mishler 1998). In the words of Richard Rose (1995: 550), the dictatorial party-state has led many citizens in communist countries to become "apathetic, ritualistic subjects or actively anti-party". In the following paragraphs, which touch on the responsiveness and integrity of Polish mainstream parties, it becomes clear that politicians in post-communist Poland did not do much to change the public's negative attitudes towards political parties. This, as a result, made the breeding ground for populist parties very fertile.

Responsiveness of the established parties

As discussed, it is hard to speak of a political 'establishment' in Poland in the early years after the transition to democracy. By the turn of the 21st century, however, it was possible to distinguish two dominant political camps: the communist successor camp, represented by the Democratic Left Alliance, and the post-Solidarity camp, which was much more disjointed prior to the establishment of Solidarity Electoral Action in 1997. Taken together, these camps made up the political establishment which the radical anti-establishment parties opposed. The following analysis suggests that it was the unresponsiveness of the political establishment with regard to socio-economic issues, as well as the lack of integrity of the mainstream parties, that lay at the roots of the electoral success of populist parties.

The relevant issues in Polish politics

With regard to socio-economic policies, the tone was set by Finance Minister Balcerowicz in the first government after the semi-free election in 1989. Balcerowicz was a fervent advocate of free-market capitalism and fiscal austerity. His controversial 'big bang' or 'shock' policies were meant to establish a swift retreat from the state's role in the economy (Millard 1999: 144-5). Although Balcerowicz was replaced after the parliamentary election of 1991, the subsequent governments maintained a commitment to the free market economy. This was consistent with the programmes of most political parties, even though there was, at the same time, consensus about the need to develop a fully-fledged welfare state (Millard 2010: 69, 85). After the election of 1993, when the centre-left came back to power, the general move towards privatisation was maintained. What is more, the proposed welfare policies, including a move towards marketisation of health care and pension provision, could hardly be labelled as distinctively 'social democratic' (Millard 1999: 156). With regard to foreign policy a broad consensus existed among the political parties as well. Polish foreign policy was generally oriented towards the West and most parties favoured NATO and EU accession. All in all, Millard (1999: 100) observed that the ideological spectrum of Polish politics in the 1990s was rather narrow: "All the parliamentary parties professed commitment to continuing economic reform, including further privatization. All stressed the need for reform of state health, education and welfare provision. All favoured accession to NATO and the European Union".

What *did* divide the Polish centre-left and the centre-right parties more clearly was, firstly, their attitudes towards the communist past. The post-Solidarity centre-right parties were much more committed to de-communisation and lustration than the post-communist centre-left. The 'historic division', related to these attitudes towards

the communist past, materialised most notably after the presidential election battle in 1995 between former Solidarity frontman Wałesa and the, ultimately victorious, social democrat Kwasniewski. The latter had been a minister in the communist government in the 1980s. The campaign polarised the Polish political scene on the basis of the historic division and emphasised the distinctions between the post-Solidarity and the communist successor camps (Sczcerbiak 2004: 62). Secondly, the parties diverged on moral and cultural issues, and the role of the Church in public life in particular (Sczcerbiak 2004: 60; Castle and Taras 2002: 113-5). With regard to this, the centre-left adopted a more secular position

The fact that mainstream party competition was driven by the historic divide and moral-cultural issues, while there was a general consensus about foreign policy and socio-economic issues, raises the question whether the political establishment offered the electorate a genuine choice with regard to important policy areas. Concerning foreign policy there was not much of a disparity between the political mainstream and most of the voters. The wider Polish public generally approved of the internationalist orientation of the political elite, although foreign policy issues were far from salient in the eyes of the electorate anyhow (Millard 1999: 20). EU membership would also never become a hot topic in electoral campaigns or in terms of general public interest (Szczerbiak and Bil 2009). Support levels for EU accession had always been relatively high and the Eurosceptic sentiments that did exist, for instance among farmers, largely faded after the benefits of EU membership materialised (De Lange and Guerra 2009; FitzGibbon and Guerra 2010: 286-7). It is, therefore, unlikely that a Eurosceptic party as the League of Polish Families would have been able to win a lot of votes on the basis of this issue alone, save for European Parliament elections[4].

The story as regards socio-economic issues is different. In the 1990s most voters based their party choice mainly on their position with regard to moral-cultural and religious issues (Jasiewicz 2003; 2008: 10). That is not to say that socio-economic issues, like unemployment, privatisation and social security, were not considered to be important by many Polish voters (Markowski 2006: 817; Millard 2010: 62). These issues, however, only became more electorally salient when economic growth slowed down and unemployment rose by the turn of the 21st century. According to data from the 2001 Polish National Election Study, 57.4% of the voters considered unemployment to be the most important issue facing Poland (McManus-Czubinska et al. 2004). A CBOS survey in the summer of 2001 indicated that Poles

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[4] In the 2004 European Parliament election, the League of Polish Families became the second largest party behind the Civic Platform, with 15.9% of the vote. Self Defence, voicing a more ambiguous message about European integration, became the fourth largest party with a vote share of 10.8%. In this election only about one fifth of the eligible voters showed up. In the subsequent 2009 election both parties disappeared from the EP.

were highly dissatisfied with the economic circumstances; 71% of the respondents considered the economic situation to be 'bad' (CBOS 2001a: 4). To put this figure into context, respondents in the Czech Republic and Hungary were much less dissatisfied (with equivalent figures of 40% and 35% respectively). Romanians (with 67%) evaluated their economy slightly less negatively. From 1999 onwards, moreover, the number of Poles who thought that privatisation was bad for the Polish economy started to exceed the number of respondents with a positive judgement about privatisation (CBOS 2001b: 2).

In this light, it it is understandable that Self Defence – a party that from the outset opposed privatisation policies (Kucharczyk and Wysocka 2008: 74) – managed to do well in the 2001 parliamentary election. Although rural areas remained the main locations in terms of the party's support base (Wysocka 2010: 157), in these dire economic circumstances party leader Lepper was also able to appeal to some of the (unemployed) 'transition losers' in more urban areas (Szczerbiak 2002: 57; Millard 2010: 113). The Democratic Left Alliance, on the other hand, still did not pursue economic policies that were unequivocally left-wing. This was exemplified by the austerity measures they presented prior to the election. This further increased the opportunity for Lepper to capture the left-wing electorate, as there was not another mainstream party that truly represented the economically leftist voters.

In 2001 also the League of Polish Families won 7.9% of the vote. As, according to Kucharczyk and Wysocka (2008: 74), the League "prominently emphasized privatisation as an anti−national act", it might well have benefited from the economic circumstances as well. The League's stance against privatisation did not so much stem from a left-wing position on economic issues, however, and was more framed in terms of fears for foreign investments which would harm Polish cultural- and economic independence. Perhaps more importantly, the League was able to gather a substantial amount of support by appealing to a core of conservative religious right-wing voters that became available after the disintegration of the Solidarity Electoral Action alliance (Szczerbiak 2002: 62). Indeed, compared to the rest of the Polish voters, the League's electorate was more strongly opposed to matters as abortion and favoured a larger role of the Church in public life (CBOS 2001c: 19-20). The electorate of the League, all in all, seemed to be driven more by ideological motivations than by dissatisfaction with the economic policies of the previous government (Szczerbiak 2002: 61).

Integrity of the established parties

Apart from mainstream parties' unresponsiveness with regard to socio-economic issues, explanations for the electoral success of the radical parties in 2001 can be

sought in the integrity, or the lack of it, of the dominant parties that formed the governments in the 1990s. The Democratic Left Alliance-Peasant Party coalition that was formed after the election of 1993, for instance, was marked by the use of clientelism; party supporters were given key positions in various local administrations and economic institutions (Millard 1999: 23; Szczerbiak 2004: 71; Castle and Taras 2002: 128). In the run up to the 1997 election the newly formed Solidarity Electoral Action made pledges to 'clean up' government. Once in power, however, the lack of unity within the centre-right alliance led the governing politicians to "adopt an increasingly clientelistic style of politics in order to keep the grouping together, and this, in turn, contributed to the image of a government that was corrupt and engaged in the 'partification' of the state" (Szczerbiak 2004: 71). In 2001, furthermore, corruption allegations forced two ministers in the Buzek government to resign (Millard 2006: 1011).

The salience of the corruption issue was growing among the Polish population. Whereas in 1991 one-third of the Poles believed that corruption in public life was a 'very big' problem, ten years later this figure was two-thirds, with a sharp increase in the year before the 2001 parliamentary election (CBOS 2001a: 5-6). According to 2001 Polish National Election Study data, 84.6% of the voters thought that corruption was very or quite widespread among politicians (McManus-Czubinska et al. 2004). This figure was even slightly higher among Self Defence and Law and Justice voters. In the opinion polls, meanwhile, the centre-right Buzek government had lower levels of support and "evoked more criticism than any of the previous governments" (CBOS 2001b: 2). The Democratic Left Alliance victory in the 2001 parliamentary election came as no great surprise. The centre-left post-communists managed present themselves as a stable and competent alternative to the unpopular and distrusted Buzek administration (Szczerbiak 2002: 51).

The support for Law and Justice, Self Defence and the League of Polish families in this election was probably largely based on their stance against political corruption. Figure 5.5 shows data from the Comparative Manifesto Project, indicating the amount of attention the political parties spent on anti-corruption measures in their manifestos. Although the 2001 campaign was marked by a general anti-establishment mood (Szczerbiak 2002) – also the Civic Platform played on the electorate's dissatisfaction with parties (Millard 2010: 100) – Self Defence and Law and Justice were the parties that stressed the issue of corruption most clearly in their programmes. Distrust in the political establishment was a central feature of the populist Self Defence. For Law and Justice, corruption was one of the most prominent issues and the party could capitalise on the popularity of former Justice Minister Lech Kaczyński. According to a

CBOS poll of July 2001, the respondents who voted PiS indicated that their main motivations were the lack of ties between Law and Justice and other parties (44%), the party's stance on the issues of crime and safety (43%) and the fact that its politicians appeared to be honest and uncorrupted (34%) (CBOS 2001d; Szczerbiak 2002: 59)[5]. The anti-corruption rhetoric of the League of Polish Families could, remarkably enough, not be traced back in its 2001 electoral manifesto. The anti-establishment critique and the need to fight corruption were, however, key themes for the League in both its official programme from 2003 and its manifesto for the parliamentary election of 2005 (Wysocka 2010: 195; Millard 2010: 131).

Figure 5.5: Anti-corruption references in party manifestos.
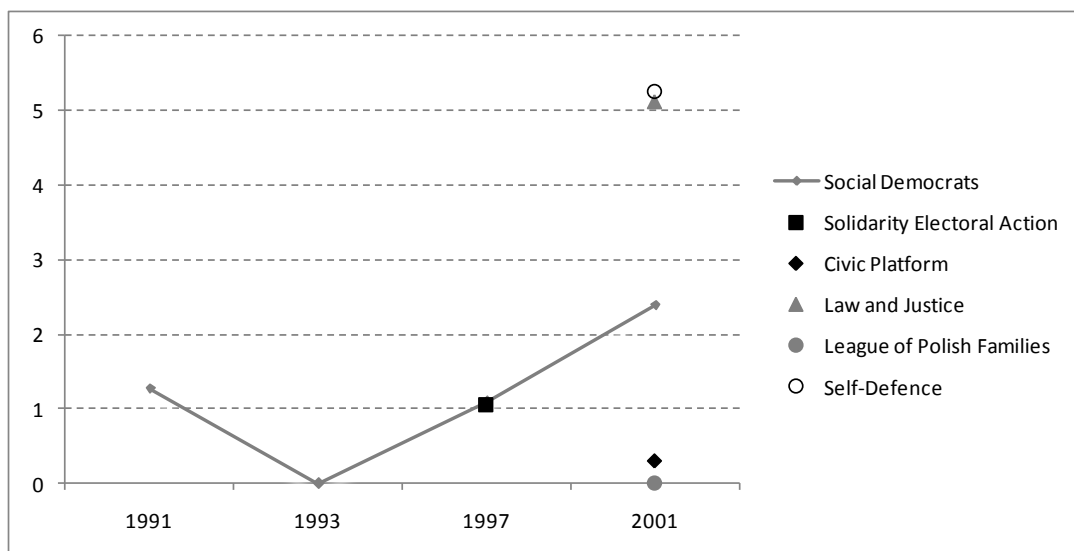
Data: Klingemann et al. (2006).

In terms of dubious political practices, the period under the Democratic Left Alliance-Peasant Party coalition did not prove to be a break with the past. The Miller government lost popularity soon after the election of 2001 (Millard 2006: 1008-9). The economy was in a bad shape, unemployment was on the rise, the government's reform policies seemed ineffective and the coalition was marked by internal struggles (Szczerbiak 2007: 204-5). The Social Democrats, moreover, became tainted by a series of corruption allegations. Following Markowski (2006: 818), the "whole four year term was marked by serious scandals and accusations of corruption". One notable example of this is the 'Rywin affair', a corruption scandal involving bribes to alter a media bill. Various social democratic politicians, including Prime Minister Miller, were allegedly involved in this affair.

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[5] Unfortunately, figures for Self Defence and the League of Polish Families are not available.

The Miller administration became the most unpopular government of the post-1989 Polish politics (Szczerbiak 2007: 207). In the first few months of 2003 the Miller government rapidly began to lose public support. In the CBOS survey of May 2003, 18% of the respondents indicated that they saw "widespread corruption and scandals" as the most important failure of the government (CBOS 2003a: 2-3). Only unemployment and the lack of progress in fighting it were perceived as a greater failure (by 34% of the respondents). The successful EU accession negotiations were seen as the only clear achievement of the government (by 26%).

In more general terms, the Poles did not seem to think that the Polish political elite were getting any more 'clean'. In a CBOS survey from June 2003 a great majority of respondents thought that politicians were dishonest (77%), unreliable (78%) and that they simply cared for their own interests (87%) (CBOS 2003b: 4). A mere 6% of the respondents answered that politicians were first and foremostly occupied with doing something in the interest of the people – in 1993 this percentage was still 22%. 52% of the respondents thought that politicians were people who simply wanted to have a lot of money. Figure 5.6 shows that, also in comparative terms, the Polish public was still highly distrustful of political parties. In 2005, a mere 7% of the Poles had a great deal or quite a lot of trust in parties, a figure lower than that of any of the other European countries included in the survey. Clearly, then, with the general election of 2005 in sight, there was still a lot to be gained concerning the issue of corruption and the integrity of politicians.

Figure 5.6: Confidence in political parties in 15 European countries.
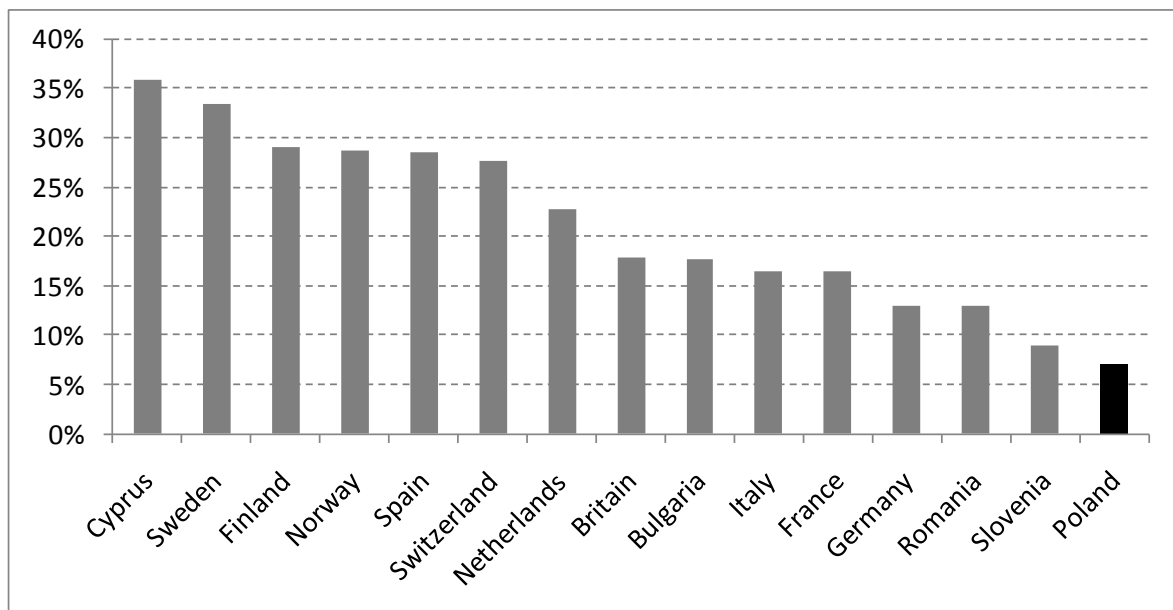
Data: World Values Survey (WVS 2009). The bars represent the percentage of respondents answering they had 'a great deal or 'quite a lot' of confidence in political parties, as opposed to 'not much or 'none at all'.

The prevailing anti-establishment mood in the 2005 parliamentary election

In the 2005 electoral campaign the issues of probity in public life and corruption indeed played a major role (Szczerbiak 2007; Millard 2006). Not only Law and Justice, Self Defence and the League of Polish Families focused strongly on these issues; also the Civic Platform was clearly swept up in the prevalent anti-establishment mood. The Platform, too, promised a radical break with the past and declared that public life needed to be cleansed (Wysocka 2010: 268-9). The Platform's main rival, Law and Justice, however, could lay a greater claim on the ownership of those issues, as fighting corruption had from the outset been at the core of its programme (Szczerbiak 2007: 212; Stanley 2010: 214).

Probity in public life and corruption were also central issues driving the electorate's party preferences. Following a September CBOS research report, the most important reason for the Poles to vote for a particular party related to the honesty and reliability of the party (CBOS 2005: 2-3). Of all the respondents 38% stated this reason, while 36% answered that their vote was based on the fact that their preferred party best understood the problems of ordinary people. These two reasons might represent two sides of the same coin, because, as Frances Millard (2006: 1012-3) argued: "Corruption fed perceptions of a divide between the corrupt political elite on the one hand and ordinary people on the other". Whereas, following the September 2005 CBOS report, the belief in honesty and reliability of politicians played a major role for both Law and Justice (52%) and Civic Platform (46%) supporters, the more populist 'ordinary people' motive was more evident among the supporters of Self Defence and the League of Polish Families (CBOS 2005: 2-3). Among Self Defence voters 61% stated that their party choice was related to the belief that their preferred party understood the problems of ordinary people and would take care of them. Half of the League of Polish Families voting respondents gave this answer as well. However, unlike Self Defence voters, the Church and religious values were also mentioned by 47% of the League supporters, indicating that League voters were not exclusively driven by anti-establishment attitudes. After all, all Polish centre-right parties, not least Law and Justice, were strongly conservative with regard to moral-cultural issues (Millard 2006: 1017; 2010: 69). It was, therefore, hard to blame them for being unresponsive as far as these issues were concerned.

The economy was another dominant campaign theme, with the handling of unemployment being perceived as one of the government's major failures. As Millard (2006: 1015) argued, there was a case "for seeing a gulf between the enthusiasts for modernisation and those, many in rural areas and small towns, who still perceived change with suspicion and anxiety". Where the liberal Civic Platform could be seen as

the main representative of the first group, Self Defence portrayed itself as the main defender of the anxious voters. Lepper's party, after all, appealed most strongly to the Polish 'transition losers', who were often based in the rural areas and small towns (Millard 2010: 113). As previously discussed, however, in 2005 also Law and Justice presented itself as a party favouring a more egalitarian 'solidaristic Poland', taking care of the Poles that became the victims of the rigorous liberalisation policies (Markowski 2006: 821). It was especially this strategy that proved to be effective to beat the Civic Platform in the 2005 election. Law and Justice was, in this way, able to "capitalize on most Poles' broad sympathy to state intervention in the economy and economic redistribution" (Szczerbiak 2007: 211).

In view of the prevailing anti-establishment mood, the election results of Self Defence (11.4% of the vote) and the League of Polish Families (8% of the vote) proved to be somewhat disappointing. One important reason for the stagnating support for the two radical parties is the appeal of the victor of the 2005 parliamentary election: Law and Justice. In order to explain more precisely why Law and Justice was able to steal much of the thunder of the two radical parties, the credibility of these parties has to be considered.

Supply of credible populist parties

As previously outlined, the credibility of populist parties is here considered to be dependent on the populist party's appeal (leadership, convincing anti-establishment message and dissociation from extremist image) and organisational unity. With regard to Self Defence, there can be no doubt that the leadership factor is of crucial importance. The party can be seen as a personal vehicle of Andrzej Lepper. Lepper and his party had little electoral success in presidential and parliamentary elections in the 1990s. The party lacked media attention and only fielded candidates for parliamentary election in a limited amount of constituencies (Millard 2010: 102-3). The year 1999 proved to be a turning point, when Self Defence received notable attention with more high profile protests related to a pork meat crisis. The events attracted considerable media attention and the protests were supported many citizens (Wysocka 2010: 139-40). As a result, Lepper developed "a martyr's reputation for his challenges on behalf of the 'little folk' against the police and the bureaucracy" (Millard 2010: 103).

The campaign of Self Defence for the 2001 parliamentary election was also run in a more professional way than before. Lepper, with the help of a media consultant,

presented himself as a more serious candidate (Szczerbiak 2002: 58)[6]. In the words of Frances Millard (2003: 78), "Lepper made an efficient transition from streetwise thug to persuasive spokesman for the poor and alienated". As such, the party broadened its appeal beyond the most radical protest-voters, and could benefit from the general anti-establishment mood that had emerged at the time of the election. In the words of Szczerbiak (2002: 58), "Lepper was able to develop a distinctive and attractive electoral appeal as a 'man of the people' who was articulate and determined enough to take on the Warsaw elites". Moreover, since both politicians from the post-Solidarity and communist successor camps had been represented in government for a substantial amount of time during the 1990s, "2001 was the first election at which Lepper's competitors could not easily refute his insistence that 'they have had their turn'" (Stanley 2010: 332).

After Self Defence had been elected into the *Sejm*, the party became known for its disruptive behaviour within parliament. Self Defence MPs, for instance, brought in their own loudspeakers in order to outshout their opponents after their official speaking time ran out (Jasiewicz 2008: 14). Whereas this probably only reinforced the party's anti-establishment status, it was ostensibly problematic for the party that internal conflicts arose. Various MPs came into conflict with Lepper as they did not accept his autocratic style of leadership (Wysocka 2010: 151). By August 2003, nearly half of the deputies were expelled or defected from the party. Several Self Defence politicians also suffered reputational damage. Lepper himself had in the past already been accused of several criminal offences, among which "planned assassination, assaults, lies, extortion, tax evasion, public order offences, and bribe taking" (Millard 2003: 83). Besides Lepper, other Self Defence politicians also attracted controversy. Several MPs were, for instance, accused of falsifying documents and being in touch with criminals (Wysocka 2010: 152-3).

Strikingly, however, neither the organisational problems nor the controversies surrounding Self Defence politicians seemed to have a negative impact on the popularity of the party (Szczerbiak 2007: 206-7). The party could still profit from the vast unpopularity of the centre-left Miller government, so that the personal Self Defence controversies "seemed to be small problems compared to the state affairs, where the debts concerned millions of zlotys of public money" (Wysocka 2010: 153). What is more, in view of earlier opinion polls, the general election results of 2005 proved to be somewhat disappointing for Lepper's party.

In 2001 the newly founded League of Polish Families relied much less on a high profile leader (Marek Kotlinowski). Instead, the electoral support of the League is

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[6] Millard (2010: 109) goes as far as stating that Lepper "could sound very convincing so long as one did not listen too attentively".

often attributed to the backing of the fundamentalist Catholic radio station *Radio Maryja* (Szczerbiak 2002: 62; Millard 2010: 109). This radio station, spearheaded by the controversial Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, can count on a loyal share of conservative listeners[7]. Rydzyk previously supported Solidarity Electoral Action, but after its disintegration he shifted his allegiance to the League, which enabled the party to reach out to the religious right electorate (Szczerbiak 2002: 61; 2004: 67).

Upon entering parliament, the League also suffered from various breakaways from the parliamentary fraction (Wysocka 2010: 182). The new leader Roman Giertych, on the other hand, did manage to raise the profile of the party in the Polish media (Millard 2010: 126; Szczerbiak 2007: 206). Prior to the 2005 election, however, a major setback occurred: *Radio Maryja* shifted its support to Law and Justice. Although the League, thanks to its unmistakable anti-European position, had become the second largest party in the 2004 European Parliament election, the party failed to appeal to as many voters in the parliamentary election of 2005. Its support levels were roughly equal to the previous 2001 election.

As suggested, the changed discourse of Law and Justice in 2005 was one of the main reasons behind the stagnating support for Self Defence and the League of Polish Families. The Kaczyński brothers successfully managed to present themselves as political outsiders and "launched a campaign as if they had been absent from the Polish politics of the past decade and a half" (Markowski 2006: 821). In reality, both brothers had been closely involved in Polish politics in the years after the transition to democracy. Both were, for instance, close trustees of Lech Wałęsa – before relations soured – and Lech Kaczyński had been Major of Warsaw and Justice Minister in the Solidarity Electoral Action dominated Buzek government. Jarosław Kaczyński's former party Centre Agreement (*Porozumienie Centrum*, PC) also took part in this government. The Kaczyńskis, however, successfully denied that Law and Justice was an elitist party (Millard 2010: 122) and could particularly thrive on the popularity of Lech.

Particularly when the topic of corruption was concerned, Law and Justice was the most credible party for many dissatisfied voters. According to the CBOS research report of September 2005, Law and Justice supporters mainly voted for the party because they believed its politicians were honest and reliable (this was the answer of 52% of the PiS voting respondents) (CBOS 2005: 2). This motive was also stated by 37% of the League of Polish Family voters and 32% of the Self Defence voters. Law and Justice, however, was able to convey a 'clean' image in particular (Szczerbiak

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[7] Millard (1999: 120) argued that the radio station "reached about 40 per cent of the population by 1997 with a faithful audience of some 5 million".

2007: 212). The party, after all, entered the *Sejm* on this anti-corruption ticket and "had the better claim to issue ownership in this field" (Stanley 2010: 214).

As mentioned, prior to the election of 2005 Law and Justice also managed to receive the support of Father Rydzyk's *Radio Maryja*. This further improved the party's appeal to the religious right electorate, at the electoral cost of the League of Polish Families. Whereas Law and Justice had been rather quiet about Christian principles in 2001 (Szczerbiak 2002: 58-8; Millard 2010: 104), the teachings of the Church were much more central to its campaign in 2005 (Markowski 2006: 827; Millard 2010: 140). In terms of foreign policy, in addition, Law and Justice adopted a more 'hardline' stance and became more explicitly Eurosceptic (Wysocka 2010: 282).

Law and Justice had thus expanded its appeal to former League of Polish Families voters, but also aimed to win over the Self Defence electorate by emphasising its 'solidaristic' character. Former spokesperson for Self Defence Mateusz Piskorski indeed saw the programmatic development of Law and Justice as one of the main reasons behind the somewhat disappointing election results of Self Defence in 2005; "if you look at the programmes of the parties (…) you will very easily find many similarities between the programme of Self Defence with regard to social issues, and the programme of PiS from 2005" (Interview, Warsaw, 22 September 2008).

Both Self Defence and the League of Polish Families would lose parliamentary representation after having taken part in the Law and Justice dominated coalition government. Undoubtedly, the actual participation in government contributed to their electoral defeat. Roman Giertych, the League's education minister, was criticised for running his ministry in a chaotic way (Stanley 2010: 249). At the same time, Self Defence could not live up to the expectations and became entangled in practices of patronage and corruption (Stanley 2010: 255-6). The League was accused of patronage too and the incompetence of both junior coalition partners was highlighted by the Polish media (Millard 2010: 146). Even Piskorski admitted that "if we would find a kind of method to estimate the degree of programme realisation (…) it would be very small in the case of Self Defence, after two years of coalition. Very small" (Interview, Warsaw, 22 September 2008). Both parties, moreover, continued to suffer from defections. For the two radical parties it thus proved very difficult to remain credible after taking governmental responsibility, especially since the government turned out to be unpopular. An August 2006 CBOS research report shows that, after the appointment of Jarosław Kaczyński as Prime Minister, the government had more opponents (36%) than supporters (28%) (CBOS 2006a: 1-2).

Law and Justice, however, remained popular among a significant section of the electorate. The party refrained from radical austerity measures, unemployment was

falling and the government received credit for its anti-corruption measures (Szczerbiak 2008: 418)[8]. This was important, as reducing unemployment and fighting corruption were seen to be very important problems for the government to solve by respondents of a CBOS poll at the end of 2006 (CBOS 2006b: 4). Law and Justice could claim credit for these achievements, while the junior coalition partners failed to play a visible role in the 2007 election campaign and to differentiate themselves from their governing partner in a positive way. Thus, in the words of Stanley (2010: 260):

> It was PiS, rather than SO or LPR, which made the concept of the *układ* the salient point of political reference (...) It was PiS which effectively and memorably derided the liberal elite as the 'mendacious elite', the 'front for the defence of criminals', or as 'pseudo-intellectuals' [*wykształciuchy*].

In this way, Law and Justice, being more cohesive and well-resourced than the League and Self Defence, could absorb "the *raison d'être* of its smaller coalition parties" (Stanley 2010: 18). In more colloquial terms, the Self Defence and the League served as "'appetisers' for PiS to swallow" (Markowski 2008: 1064).

Although Law and Justice received more votes in 2007 than in the preceding parliamentary election, its electoral growth was not as great as the losses of its former coalition partners. By no means did all former Self Defence and League voters decided to vote for Law and Justice in 2007 (Markowski 2008). Civic Platform became the largest party and Law and Justice was forced to take place in the opposition. A further major setback for the latter party came on the 10th of April 2010, when President Lech Kaczyński, along with other members of the Polish (political) elite, died in a plane crash. It remains to be seen what effect this tragic incident will have on the future of Polish party competition and the course of Law and Justice in particular. Jarosław Kaczyński, in any case, failed to obtain the presidency in the early presidential elections in July, receiving fewer votes than Civic Platform-allied candidate Bronisław Komorowski. It remains to be seen which strategies Jarosław Kaczyński's party will employ in the upcoming parliamentary election campaign, which is scheduled for the end of 2011.

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[8] An example of such measures was the establishment of a Central Anticorruption Bureau (CBA). The CBA was not uncontroversial, however, as it was accused of being a vehicle of the Law and Justice party (Stanley 2010: 241-2). Moreover, Law and Justice, just like previous parties in government, made no less use of patronage in appointing personnel for state institutions like the Central Bank and the Constitutional Court (Kucharczyk and Wysocka 2008: 89). This was justified by stating that these actions were necessary to get rid of the *układ*, formerly dominating those institutions.

5.4   Conclusion

This chapter first aimed to identify the populist parties that have emerged in Poland since the turn of the 21st century. By this time the party system stabilised to a certain extent and two main camps had formed that could be perceived to form the political establishment after the transition to democracy: the post-Solidarity camp and the communist successor camp. It was this establishment that was criticised by two radical anti-establishment parties, Self Defence and the League of Polish Families, which entered parliament after the parliamentary election of 2001. As has been argued, only the former can be considered as a genuine populist party. The League of Polish Families is a more ambiguous case, as it based its policy aims primarily on the values of the Catholic Church, instead of the 'common sense' of the ordinary people. Law and Justice, the newly formed party of the Kaczyński brothers which also entered parliament in 2001, is another ambiguous case. In agreement with various observers, this party is here considered to be a populist party from 2005 onwards. 2005 was the year in which the party began to voice a more explicit populist discourse.

The identification of populist parties in Poland has been less straightforward than in the Dutch case. Due to the relative youth of the Polish party system it is less straightforward to distinguish between an unmistakable political establishment, and populist newcomers challenging it. The widespread anti-political establishment mood has also made it more of a challenge to distinguish a clearly demarcated set of populist parties. Fighting corruption and calls for change have, after all, been high up the agenda of non-populist parties like the Civic Platform as well. Taking the definition of populist parties used in this dissertation as a starting point, however, Self Defence and, since 2005, Law and Justice are the parties that most evidently fulfil all three criteria.

The borders of the 'heartland' these Polish populist parties appealed to correspond very well with the geographical borders of Poland. Both Self Defence and Law and Justice – just as the League of Polish Families for that matter – have been nationalist and protective of Polish interests. For Law and Justice, Catholic values have played a more explicit role in defining the shared identity of the Poles than for Self Defence. For the latter party, socio-economic relationships are more essential to its appeal, as Self Defence has primarily claimed to defend the ordinary people who have been exploited by the liberal elites. The enemy, according to the Polish populist parties, comes mainly 'from within'. It consists of liberal and corrupt elites or, in the words of Law and Justice (and the League), the *układ*. The main enemies 'from outside' are embodied by foreign investors who allegedly threaten Polish economic interests and

traditional values. The process of European integration has been followed with suspicion as well, although neither Self Defence nor Law and Justice have been as Europhobe as the League of Polish Families.

The second aim of the chapter was to explain the electoral performance of the identified populist parties in Poland. With regard to this, the populist parties in Poland did not face an insurmountable hurdle as far as the electoral system since 2001 was concerned. The Polish electorate has, furthermore, been very available to newly formed populist parties, as ties between voters and parties have been extremely weak. The agency of the established political parties further contributed to a conducive environment for populist parties. While many Poles were favourable to economic state intervention, none of the mainstream parties occupied a clear leftist socio-economic position when economic issues became more electorally salient. Andrzej Lepper's Self Defence was able to fill an electoral niche by appealing to the Polish 'transition losers'. Besides, the parties from both the post-Solidarity and communist successor camp lost trustworthiness in office due to their practices of cronyism and full-blown corruption. An anti-corruption message was most forcefully voiced by Law and Justice.

Finally, the credibility of the Polish populist parties themselves has been key to their individual performance. In 2001 Lepper presented himself and his party as a less outlandish alternative to the mainstream parties and was able to benefit from the anti-establishment mood that had materialised. This mood also partly explains the breakthrough of the essentially non-populist League of Polish Families – and the Civic Platform and Law and Justice for that matter. However, the League also relied on a pool of more ideologically motivated religious right-wing voters that became available after the demise of Solidarity Electoral Action. Law and Justice managed to gradually seize a large share of the Self Defence and League electorate by employing a more explicit populist discourse, by retaining a credible anti-corruption image and by presenting itself as the most trustworthy agent of 'solidaristic' Poland. Law and Justice, moreover, was better able to preserve organisational unity than both Self Defence and the League of Polish Families. The latter parties were plagued by defections and scandals and lost their trustworthiness after entering a coalition government with Law and Justice in 2005.

Three important observations can be made on the basis of the Polish case. First, it is not always possible to clearly distinguish between the motives of the electorates of populist and non-populist parties. When there is widespread dissatisfaction with the political establishment, as has certainly been the case in Poland, non-populist mainstream parties are also likely to express anti-establishment critiques. In Poland, and other post-communist countries, issues such as corruption have been high up the

general political agenda. When comparing the genuinely populist party Self Defence with the borderline case of the League of the Polish families, however, it does become clear that the electorate of the latter party seemed more ideologically driven than Self Defence voters. Self Defence voters were more explicitly driven by the conviction that their preferred party understood the problems of ordinary people best, rather than by an adherence to Catholic moral values.

Secondly, the Polish case shows that it is possible for populist parties to survive for a time, even when they apparently lose credibility due to organisational disunity and personal scandals. Self Defence faced numerous splits and scandals after it entered parliament in 2001. Lepper's party nevertheless managed to survive and to retain its vote share in the subsequent parliamentary election. This could suggest that if the disgruntlement with the establishment is large enough, populist parties can afford some negative exposure. The Polish case also suggests, however, that once taking part in government, the electorate becomes less forgiving. When the populist party in office continues to show its inability to remain united and when it becomes tainted by involvement in practices of cronyism and corruption itself, its credibility is likely to become damaged too gravely in order to be able to retain electoral appeal.

The third, and related, observation is that it is possible for a mainstream party to steal the electoral thunder of radical populist parties if it manages to seize their issue (position) ownership. Law and Justice managed to win over many potential, or former, Self Defence and League of Polish Family voters, after it resorted to a more explicit populist discourse and moved towards their ideological grounds. The reason that Law and Justice was successful in doing this is likely to be related to the aforementioned credibility of the two radical parties, which was seriously tainted during their period in office. People may prefer the radical original over mainstream copy, as has been evident in the Dutch case, but this is likely to change when the original discredits itself too much.

6 Populist Parties in the United Kingdom

6.1 Introduction

Whereas the previous two chapters dealt with countries in which populist parties have received considerable levels of support in parliamentary elections, this chapter provides a study of a country where populist parties have failed to make an impact on the national level: the United Kingdom. This is to determine whether the same conditions that seem crucial to the electoral success of populist parties are also essential in explaining their electoral failure. Populist parties in the UK have failed to achieve success in elections for the British Lower House[1]. On the local level populist parties have only had moderate success, while only European Parliament elections have proven to be forums conducive to significant levels of populist party support. Particularly the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party fared well. The main focus of this chapter, however, is on the national level and elections for the House of Commons in Westminster.

The chapter first aims to identify the populist parties in Britain. Even though Britain provides another challenging case in this regard, it is argued that two parties can be classified as unequivocally populist: the British National Party (BNP) and the UK Independence Party (UKIP). Moving to the electoral performance of these two parties, the chapter again focuses on the four explanatory conditions central to this research: the electoral system, the availability of the electorate, the responsiveness of established parties and the supply of credible populist parties. As will be argued, the Single Member Plurality electoral system in British general elections has thrown up a hurdle for new or small (populist) parties. Even though ties between the established parties and the British electorate have weakened throughout the past decades, the structures of party competition for populist parties have remained relatively unfavourable. British populist parties have also been unsuccessful in general elections because the Conservative Party in particular has been responsive to voters concerned about immigration and European integration, the issues central to the British populist parties' appeal. European integration, moreover, is not a salient issue in British general elections in the first place. This particularly reduces the electoral opportunities

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[1] The terms 'Britain' and 'British' are here used to refer to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

of the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party. What is more, BNP and UKIP have failed to present themselves as credible alternatives to the established parties. The formerly neo-fascist BNP remains stigmatised and is still situated at the ideological extreme of the political spectrum, despite its attempts to forge a more acceptable image. UKIP, in turn, has failed to present itself as an electorally appealing party, lacking visible and persuasive leadership. Moreover, both parties have been tainted by numerous internal conflicts and defections.

The following section discusses which political parties in the UK can be classified as populist parties and identifies the issues central to their appeal. This requires quite a bit of space, as populism seems an inherent feature of British party political discourse. This makes identifying the genuine populist parties less straightforward. Section 6.3 turns to the electoral performance of the populist parties in the UK. The final section concludes and draws the implications from the British case study.

6.2   Identifying the Populist Parties in the United Kingdom

Most academic accounts on radical politics in Britain tend to focus on fascism (e.g. Copsey 1996) or the extreme right (e.g. Eatwell and Goodwin 2010), instead of populism (See Fella 2008 for an exception). The latter term has, nevertheless, regularly been used to refer to individual politicians. Two Conservative politicians in particular have been associated with populism: Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher (Fry 1998). In the case of Powell this often relates to the politician's infamous 'rivers of blood' speech from 1968, in which he expressed concern with immigration and racial violence (see e.g. Canovan 1981). Thatcher's alleged populism is often associated with her appeal to the common 'middle England' people, her emphasis on the decline of Britain and her crusade against socialism, Thatcher's main enemy 'from within' (Fella 2008: 188). Whether these features are all undeniably 'populist' is a moot point. In any case, as the central aim here is to identify populist parties instead of individual politicians, the question whether it is justifiable to label these political figures as populist is not directly relevant.

Until the general election of 2010, governments in post-Second World War Britain have always been formed by a single party; either by the centre-right Conservatives (the 'Tories') or the centre-left Labour Party. The reason for the continuing dominance of these two parties is related to the disproportional Single Member Plurality (or 'First Past the Post') electoral system, as will be discussed in

Section 6.3. Due to the dominance of two parties, it is seemingly easier to pin down which parties belong to the political 'establishment' in the UK, than in countries more acquainted with coalition governments of varying compositions. In this sense, it has been quite straightforward for populist parties to identify the source of political evil. In the UK, however, *all* parties which have traditionally been part of the opposition – populist or not – have focused their critique on this political establishment. The 'majoritarian' character of British democracy can therefore be expected to make differentiating between populist and non-populist opposition parties a challenging task (see Lijphart 1999)[2]. Particularly the lack of coalition governments for most of the post-war era might have given British politics a distinctive adversarial character.

In an attempt to identify the British populist parties one can first turn to the various regionalist parties which managed to enter the House of Commons from the 1970s onwards. These are the regionalist parties in Scotland (the Scottish National Party) and Wales (*Plaid Cymru*) and several Northern Irish parties, which have either promoted British Unionism (Ulster Unionist Party and Democratic Unionist Party) or Irish Republicanism (Social Democratic and Labour Party and *Sinn Féin*). In their campaigns many of these regionalist parties have tended to apply anti-establishment rhetoric directed both at the Tories and Labour. According to the 2010 general election manifesto of the Welsh nationalists, for instance, "Labour has slavishly followed Tory policies for 13 years and [Conservative Party leader] Cameron has modelled himself and his politics on Tony Blair" (Plaid Cymru 2010: 4). The Scottish Nationalists applied a similar rhetoric: "The London parties are part of the same metropolitan political machine – a machine that leaves the ordinary men and women of our country on the outside" (SNP 2010: 7).

It is hard to deny that this latter passage is a populist statement. The main distinction between these regionalist parties and the parties that are considered to be populist parties in this study, however, is that the latter criticise the political establishment *within* their nation, whereas the regionalists attack a 'foreign' establishment, in this case the 'Westminster' political elite. The critique of the regionalist parties has been driven by an aversion against the central government which supposedly does not represent the interests of the people in their specific region, rather than the country as a whole. Another reason why the regionalist parties are different from the populist parties in this research is that their personality is, so to say, split between the national and the regional level. On the national level, they may have

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[2] A content analysis on the use of populism in the British print media hardly sheds light on the matter, as especially Conservative and Labour politicians are associated with populist statements or behaviour (Bale et al. 2011).

operated under the guise of anti-establishment parties, but all regionalist parties in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have taken part in their regional executives. In other words, on the regional level, these parties have very much been part of the political establishment[3]. In the regional elections of May 2011, the Scottish National Party even won an outright majority of the seats in the Scottish Parliament. All in all, while it is again apparent that lines between populist and non-populist parties are not always easy to draw, these regionalist parties will not be considered to be populist parties.

Another regionalist and separatist party from Scotland, the Scottish Socialist Party, comes closer to being a genuine populist party. In the scholarly literature, the party has indeed been referred to as 'social-populist' (March and Mudde 2005: 35-6) or 'populist socialist' (March 2009: 127). The party proclaimed it "has a well-earned reputation as the party that stands up for ordinary people, whether it be offering solidarity to striking workers, campaigning against the injustice of the Council Tax or taking to the streets in opposition to Blair's illegal war on Iraq" (SSP 2005: 2). In its 2005 general election manifesto the party further argued that "the mainstream political parties offer no more choice than the competing burger fast food chains or pizza parlours" (SSP 2005: 2). Different from the Scottish National Party, the Scottish Socialist Party also targeted the political establishment in Scotland itself: "We reject the gravy trains of both Westminster and Holyrood" (SSP 2005: 12)[4]. Even though this party voiced a more explicit populist discourse, it still only appealed to the ordinary *Scottish* people, instead of the ordinary people across the whole of Britain. Moreover, the party has played a very marginal role in general elections; it only fielded candidates in ten constituencies in 2010, without any success. Since the focus in this dissertation is on the performance of populist parties on the nation-wide level, this chapter will not further consider the SSP.

Moving beyond the parties which strictly operate on a regional basis, the Green Party, in 2010 elected into parliament in the Brighton Pavilion constituency, had quite a damning analysis about the state of British politics as well. Its 2010 manifesto starts with: "Business as usual, brought to you by the main political parties, has given us a series of linked economic, environmental and social crises" (Green Party 2010: 2). The party did not refer to 'ordinary people', however, and, although one of its aims was to 'bring government to the people' (Green Party 2010: 32), it never stated that politicians should categorically follow these people's opinions and wishes.

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[3] The Northern Ireland Executive is even comprised of all regionalist parties, due to a consociationalist power-sharing agreement.

[4] 'Holyrood' refers to the Scottish Parliament, which is located in the Holyrood area, Edinburgh.

The radical left-wing party Respect, on the other hand, can be classified as a populist party. In 2005 the party won a Lower House seat on the basis of an anti-Iraq war platform (which it would lose again in 2010). The party argued that Britain's 'huge' wealth "remains largely in the hands of a tiny elite (...) There is no longer any significant difference between the major parties on these issues. They all subscribe to the same basic economic model, of privatisation and the freedom of the market" (Respect 2005: 18). Other than most populist parties in Western Europe, Respect has actually conveyed an 'inclusive' vision of the ideal British society when immigration and multiculturalism are concerned. The party even argued that "Britain's diversity is its strength" (2010: 5). Respect did identify enemies 'from within', however, as it argued that Britain's diversity "is under threat by those who would rather ordinary people turn against one another than come together to confront the real culprits – big business and the mainstream politicians who do its bidding" (Respect 2005: 13). Yet since Respect, like the Scottish Socialist Party, has only played a very marginal role in national-level British politics, it will be excluded from the analysis. The party's electoral potential in Westminster elections has inherently been limited due to its modest supply of candidates. The party only fielded eleven candidates in 2010.

As has been shown so far, at least one of the elements of populism, the anti-establishment critique, has been widely shared by the whole political opposition. What is more, the use of (populist) anti-establishment rhetoric has not been limited to smaller fringe parties. The Liberal Democrats, the junior partner of the Conservatives in the coalition government formed in 2010, also emphasised the unresponsiveness of the two main parties in their 2010 manifesto: "We've had 65 years of Labour and the Conservatives: the same parties taking turns and making the same mistakes, letting you down" (Liberal Democrats 2010: 4). The party promised to "do things differently, because we believe that power should be in the hands of people, not politicians" (Liberal Democrats 2010: 87). In the 2010 general election campaign even the Conservative Party criticised the established political system and stated that "our political system has betrayed the people" (Conservative Party 2010: iii) – a strong statement for a party which has so frequently dominated British government in the past few centuries. Peter Mair (2002), finally, discusses the rhetoric used by Tony Blair's (New) Labour Party and asserts that "populist language has now become acceptable within what has long been perceived as a decidedly non-populist political culture" (Mair 2002: 92)[5].

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[5] More generally, Mair (2002) notes a shift from 'party democracy' to 'populist democracy'. Mair uses the concept 'populist democracy' to refer to a form of governing in which the people have

Populism may thus be a typical feature of contemporary British party politics in general. This is, as discussed before, arguably related to the majoritarian character of British democracy. Following the definition applied in this dissertation, however, it would be incorrect to claim that Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats are populist parties. The latter party has not conveyed an exclusivist vision of British society, which can for instance be illustrated by its generally pro-European stance, and has not identified clear non-political 'enemies of the people'. Particularly the two dominant parties in Britain are clearly not fundamentally opposed to the existing political establishment as it has developed throughout the decades. Labour and the Conservatives have actually embodied this very establishment. Apart from being associated with populism, Tony Blair's New Labour has, for instance, also been portrayed as "part of an out-of-touch cosmopolitan 'politically correct' liberal Establishment" (Fella 2008: 191). Even if the parties have sporadically used populist statements, it can hardly be claimed that Labour and the Conservatives have populism at the core of their appeal. Anti-establishment, or even populist, rhetoric might be applied when in opposition, but it is not a central or constant feature of the two parties.

This is also shown in the content analysis performed by Matthijs Rooduijn and Teun Pauwels (2011). Whereas the authors find that the Conservative Manifesto of 2001 and the Liberal Democrat manifesto of 2005 contained relatively many populist statements compared to other European mainstream parties, the parties still clearly lagged behind two more usual suspects: the British National Party (BNP) and the UK Independence Party (UKIP)[6]. The results of the expert survey conducted for this case study also provides support for classifying only these two parties as 'populist'. Both the BNP and UKIP where considered to be populist parties by ten out of the fifteen respondents. Respect was mentioned four times, whereas none of the respondents included Labour, the Conservatives or the Liberal Democrats. Consequently, the remainder of this chapter will focus on the electoral performance of the BNP and UKIP.

The British National Party

The British National Party was founded in 1982 by the extreme right hardliner John Tyndall. Two years earlier Tyndall was ousted from the National Front (NF), a party which is normally defined as (neo) fascist (see e.g. Eatwell 1996; Copsey 1996). The

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become undifferentiated and in which the role of political parties has decreased. This is quite disconnected from how the term 'populism' is applied in this research.

[6] In this content analysis, paragraphs in manifestos were coded as 'populist' when statements including people-centrism and anti-elitism were made (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011)

NF was founded in 1967 and managed to build up some electoral support in the 1970s on the basis of its xenophobic appeal. In a 1973 West Bromwich (Birmingham) by-election, for instance, a NF candidate managed to win 16% of the vote. After disappointing results in the 1979 general election, however, the party suffered from internal dissent and never played a considerable electoral role anymore.

Under the leadership of Tyndall the course of the BNP was largely similar to that of the NF. The party still "clung rigidly to the core pillars of biological racism, radical xenophobia and anti-democratic appeals" (Goodwin 2011: 37). In the first decade of its existence the party was more concerned with participating in 'rights for whites' marches than in fighting elections. The only electoral achievement of the BNP was to win a local borough council seat in East London in 1993, which the party lost again a year later. By this time, the party had begun to apply a new strategy which involved "sinking local community roots through 'public-spirited' activity" (Copsey 1996: 130). The BNP sought to gain political legitimacy and to shrug off its extremist neo-Nazi image by focusing on the grievances of local white residents (Copsey 2008; Goodwin 2011).

Real programmatic reforms were pushed through when Nick Griffin replaced John Tyndall after a leadership battle in 1999, even though Griffin himself had previously not been the main 'moderniser' at all (Eatwell 2004; Copsey 2008: 74-5). The party took inspiration from the more successful radical right-wing parties on mainland Europe, most notably the Front National in France (Goodwin 2011), and now explicitly rejected a political and economic system of fascist totalitarianism. The party also dropped its commitment to compulsory repatriation of immigrants. At the same time the party adopted a 'differentialist' line on race (Eatwell 2004). The BNP now claimed that, although no race is superior to another, mixing people from different ethnic backgrounds threatens cultural identity and social cohesion. Especially since the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, the BNP emphasised the cultural threat of Islam in this regard (Copsey 2008). The BNP also continued to pursue its 'local community' strategy (Goodwin 2007; 2008; Rhodes 2009). In order to further cultivate a 'legitimate' image, the BNP moved away from a narrow focus on immigration and targeted more commonplace local issues "such as crime, antisocial behaviour, rubbish collection and pressures on social housing" (Goodwin 2008: 356).

It can be debated how much the BNP has truly changed. According to Nigel Copsey (2007: 61), "ideological renewal under Griffin constitutes a recalibration of fascism rather than a fundamental break in ideological continuity", meaning that the BNP's long term objective still is "a post-liberal, regenerated national community" (Copsey 2007: 79). Copsey still perceives the BNP to be neo-fascist, rather than

'national-populist', as the party does not truly commit to liberal democracy. The ideological modernisation can, according to Copsey (2008: 164-5), better be perceived as an opportune 'change of clothing' instead of a real break with the past. In this study the BNP is, nonetheless, considered to be a populist party. Many BNP insiders may indeed still be driven by fascist and biological racist convictions (Goodwin 2010: 179), but the BNP is here classified based on how it portrays itself to the wider electorate. In recent years, the BNP explicitly aimed to present itself as a democratic party. The manifesto for the 2005 general election – titled 'Rebuilding British Democracy' – actually warns against too much power in the hand of the central state. This has, as argued, previously led to the "excesses and horrors of totalitarianism on mainland Europe throughout the 20th century" (BNP 2005: 9). In the party's 2010 general election manifesto, named 'Democracy, Freedom, Culture and Identity', Griffin even stated that "The word 'democracy' appears in the title of our manifesto for good reason. It represents our desire to preserve this great institution" (BNP 2010a: 12).

It furthermore seems appropriate to apply the label populism to the present-day BNP, as the party has combined a strong anti-establishment rhetoric with an explicit appeal to "ordinary British folk" (BNP 2005: 53; see also Fella 2008). The party, for instance, claimed that

> It is the 'average' man and woman who suffers from the failings of our politicians to grasp the issue and restore genuine democracy (...) The British National Party exists to put an end to this injustice. We will return power to the men and women of Britain, the taxpayers, pensioners, mums and dads and workers" (BNP 2005: 3).

On the BNP's website, Nick Griffin voiced some further populist anti-establishment rhetoric: "While we struggle to pay the bills and live in fear of losing our jobs, the crooked politicians are fiddling their expenses and stealing taxpayers' money" (BNP 2010b). The established parties, moreover, have allegedly neglected the national British interest: "The Lab/Lib/Con alliance long ago abandoned any attempt to run the British economy for the benefit of the nation and have surrendered it to the dead hand of EU regulation and a rootless, amorphous globalist philosophy" (BNP 2010a: 69). In contrast, "The BNP is a patriotic, democratic alternative to the old parties that have wrecked our great country" (BNP 2010b).

The more 'moderate' and populist course of the BNP has lead to some limited electoral success, most notably on the local level in areas with a relatively large ethnic minority populations. In 2002 the party managed to win three local council seats and this number steadily grew to 55 in May 2009 (Tetteh 2009: 5). To put things in perspective, however, there are in total more than 20,000 principal local authority seats

(Webb 2005: 772). After 2009 the party lost a fair share of its council seats. In European Parliament elections, the BNP also made a modest impact. In 1999, when the European elections were held under a Proportional Representation electoral system for the first time, the party still received no more than 1.1% of the vote. In 2004 the BNP's vote share increased to 4.9%, but the party won no seats. In 2009, the BNP did succeed in winning two seats – Griffin taking up one of them – with a vote share of 6.2%.

The BNP never managed to win a seat in the House of Commons. In the general election of 2001, the 33 BNP candidates received 3.9% of the vote on average in the constituencies where the party stood. In Oldham West & Royton (Greater Manchester) the BNP candidate managed to win 16.4% of the vote. In 2005 the party fielded 119 candidates and polled just under 193,000 votes. This was an average vote share of 4.3% in the contested constituencies and 0.7% of the total national vote. This time the Barking (London) candidate managed to secure the best BNP result with 17% of the vote. In 2010 the party again extended its number of candidates significantly. The 339 BNP candidates received about 564,000 votes, 1.9% of the total vote. The best result was recorded in Barking once more. Party Leader Griffin won 14.6% of the vote in this constituency and finished third. Even though the BNP vote has thus significantly increased throughout the years, the party has failed to come even close to winning in key battle grounds. The party met the 2010 general election results with disappointment.

The UK Independence Party

The UK Independence Party (UKIP) was founded in 1993 by historian Alan Sked. UKIP was the successor of the Anti-Federalist League, which was founded in 1991. From the outset, the main aim of UKIP has been to end British European Union membership. The anti-establishment appeal of UKIP also mainly relates to the 'Brussels bureaucracy', which is deemed to be costly, ineffective, corrupt, undemocratic and harmful to British sovereignty. In the words of Sked: "Normal people should run their own affairs and we didn't want to be run by a Committee of unelected bureaucrats" (Interview, London, 10 July 2010). The 'Interim Manifesto' of 1994 reads: "The European Union represents government by decree, and the bureaucratic waste over which it presides feeds immeasurable graft and corruption. Its symbol is the gravy train. It constitutes institutionalised fraud" (UKIP 1994: 2).

In Britain itself, the political establishment has been accused of mischievously talking the British people into EU membership: "In the UK, the electorate has been lied to (...) and MPs have been blackmailed and manhandled into the government

lobby" (UKIP 1994: 9). UKIP's anti-establishment appeal has clearly not waned over the years. According to UKIP MEP Godfrey Bloom, "there aren't any policy differences between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party, on anything. So it doesn't matter whether it's fiscal policy, social policy, welfare reform, the NHS, EU, it doesn't matter. You couldn't put a cigarette paper between the two parties" (Interview, Brussels, 9 September 2008). The Liberal Democrats are also on the receiving end of Bloom's criticism: "The Liberal Party in England is supposed to be the nice people. (...) They're not very bright, but they're nice. And they lie and cheat just like everybody else".

Although the party did not refer to the 'ordinary' people very specifically in its 1994 Interim Manifesto, it did promote sovereignty for the 'British people': "UKIP demands that the people of the United Kingdom be allowed to govern themselves, so that they may be themselves" (UKIP 1994: 3). The conclusion, furthermore, touched on the British people's virtues:

> The UKIP looks at a country badly led for 40 years, deeply depressed in a mood of hopelessness in which cancers breed, trapped in a feeling of being helpless to prevent national decline. But we believe in the only national resource that ultimately matters, the innate character and abilities of the British people (UKIP 1994: 11).

Sked was ousted from the party in 1997 and various leadership changes followed, but the UKIP remained committed to its anti-European message. Thus, in its 2005 general election manifesto named 'We want our country back' the party claimed that "Only outside the EU will it be possible to begin rebuilding a Britain which is run for British people, not for career politicians and bureaucrats (UKIP 2005)". In the 2010 manifesto titled 'Empowering the People' the party argued that "The MP expenses scandal has shown that the British system of government is in serious disarray. Bureaucracy overrules democracy at every level, from Brussels to Whitehall to the town hall. UKIP will give meaningful power back to the British people" (UKIP 2010: 13).

The decision to take up seats in the European Parliament did signify a break with the past. Under Sked's leadership the party's position had been different: "We wouldn't take up our seats. I couldn't see any reason for us to be in the European Parliament. We didn't want to legitimise it by being there" (Sked, Interview, London, 10 July 2009). After Sked's departure, in the words of former UKIP leader Jeffrey Titford, the party sought to use the European Parliament's funding in "attacking the system" (Interview, Brighton, 6 April 2009).

Perhaps more importantly, UKIP also amended its stance and emphasis on immigration related issues. The 1994 interim manifesto still advocated to promote

acceptance of 'multiracialism' and stated that "The UKIP cannot repeat too often that it totally rejects racist views and desires that all British citizens, whatever their origin, should live in harmony" (UKIP 1994: 9). After the turn of the century, however, the party took a different position on the issue of immigration (Gardner 2006). In 2010, under the leadership of Lord Pearson of Rannoch, UKIP's manifesto even urged to "End mass, uncontrolled immigration", and the party called for "an immediate five-year freeze on immigration for permanent settlement" (UKIP 2010: 5). The party also proposed to make it easier to deport "dangerous Imams" and to "End the active promotion of the doctrine of multiculturalism by local and national government and all publicly funded bodies" (UKIP 2010: 6). Pearson, furthermore, invited Dutch Freedom Party leader Geert Wilders to show the anti-Islam film *Fitna* in the House of Lords in February 2009.

By starting to press issues related to immigration and Islam in recent years, UKIP can be perceived to have moved closer to BNP's territory. Both the BNP's and UKIP's manifestos for the 2010 general election noted the alleged confession of former Labour staff that the Labour government had deliberately stimulated immigration in order to "water down the British identity and buy votes" (UKIP 2010: 5; see BNP 2010: 19). Both parties also intended to counter environmental problems by controlling immigration, as it supposedly caused overpopulation (BNP 2010: 24) or an increased building demand (UKIP 2010: 11). On the whole, however, the immigration related statements of the BNP were more numerous and radical. UKIP (2010: 13) also stressed that it "believes in civic nationalism, which is open and inclusive to anyone who wishes to identify with Britain, regardless of ethnic or religious background" and that it rejected "the "blood and soil" ethnic nationalism of extremist parties". As former leader Titford phrased it: "We have come down to the fact that it's space, not race" (Interview, Brighton, 6 April 2009). Association with the BNP is in any case not appreciated by UKIP politicians. In the words of MEP Bloom: "the racist thing is lazy journalism and political opportunism" (Interview, Brussels, 9 September 2008).

There have also been differences with regard to other policy areas. Concerning law and order issues the BNP was, again, more radical than UKIP. Whereas UKIP promoted a robust zero tolerance approach in 2010, the BNP favoured reintroducing capital punishment for grave offenses. On economic issues UKIP has traditionally favoured the free-market, promoting free trade and tax cuts, cutting down government bureaucracy and reforming the welfare system. The BNP, on the other hand, has taken a more 'welfare chauvinist' position, being critical of globalisation and emphasising the need to defend British economic interests. The BNP, unlike UKIP, also wished to "halt the handout of benefits, housing, education and pensions to foreigners

who have not paid into the system" (BNP 2010: 5). Both parties, nevertheless, have shared an appeal to a heartland of ordinary people who are defined by their 'Britishness', whether this is ethnically or racially defined or not.

In terms of electoral performance, UKIP has made some impact in local elections and, just as the BNP, managed to win a modest amount of local council seats. UKIP has been much more successful in European Parliament Elections. In 1994 UKIP could not make a great impact, but in 1999, with the PR system in effect, the party managed to win 7% of the vote and three seats. In 2004 the party improved its result and received 16% of the vote and 12 seats in the European Parliament, which made it the third largest party in this election. The European election of 2010 was even a greater success for UKIP; the party finished second behind the Conservatives with 16.5% of the vote, winning 13 seats.

In general elections, however, UKIP has been much less successful. In 1992 its predecessor, the Anti-Federalist League, failed to make any impact. In 1997, the party was overshadowed by the Referendum Party, a project of Eurosceptic millionaire James Goldsmith. Goldsmith died shortly after the general election, however, and several people from his party joined UKIP afterwards. In 2001 UKIP fielded over 400 candidates and received 1.5% of the nationwide vote. Four years later, with almost 500 candidates, the party won 2.3% of the vote. None of the candidates came close to winning a seat. The best results were third places in Boston & Skegness (Lincolnshire) and Totness (Devon), the constituency of the then party leader Roger Knapman. In these constituencies, the party received 9.6% and 7.7% of the vote, respectively. MEP and future leader Nigel Farage received a disappointing 5% of the vote in the Thanet South constituency (Kent). In 2010 UKIP again failed to win any seats in the House of Commons, although it increased its vote share to 3.1%; over 900,000 people voted for UKIP. In UKIP's main target constituency, Buckingham, candidate Farage – after having survived a crash with his small campaign aeroplane – obtained 17.4% of the vote and finished third. In North Cornwall, North Devon & Torridge and West Devon the party also finished third. This indicates that UKIP has mainly relied on support in Tory and Liberal Democrat strongholds, whereas the BNP has been strongest in urban areas traditionally dominated by the Labour Party (Copsey 2008: 193).

Compared to the populist parties in the Netherlands, Poland and various other European countries, the electoral performance of the BNP and UKIP in parliamentary elections can safely be described as marginal. Neither of the parties came close to winning even a single seat in the House of Commons. The remainder of this chapter turns to the explanations for the meagre electoral performance of the British populist parties.

6.3 Explaining the Electoral Performance of the British Populist Parties

Electoral system and availability of the electorate

As in the case of the Netherlands, the two structural variables considered in this research – the electoral system and the availability of the electorate – can best be discussed simultaneously in the British case. While ties between voters and parties in Britain have significantly weakened throughout the past decades, the disproportional electoral system applied in UK general elections is likely to be an important reason as to why most voters still opt for either the Conservatives or the Labour Party. However, as will be discussed, just how much the electoral system influences the voting behaviour of the British electorate is hard to measure.

Starting with the electorate's availability; in the 20th century political preferences were initially largely driven by social class. The Labour Party, which replaced the Liberals as one of the two main political forces after the First World War, represented the traditional working class, the Conservatives the more affluent middle class. Party competition, in this way, clearly evolved around a single socio-economic left-right dimension. The traditional class cleavage, however, increasingly became more diffuse in the decades after the Second World War. Other issues, such as regional origin or stance on 'postmaterialist' issues, started to play a more prominent role in the construction of people's identities (Webb 2000: 10). These developments went hand in hand with a weakening of partisan identification[7]. As Paul Webb (2000: 51) shows, where in 1964 82% of the electorate had a very or fairly strong partisan identity, in 1997 this figure had dropped to 58%. Data from the British Election Study of 2005 show a similar percentage: 57% (Sanders et al. 2005). An Ipsos MORI poll from 2010 further showed that only a small majority (57%) of the voters knew what they were going to vote prior to the start of the election campaign (Ipsos MORI 2010a). A substantial 24% decided in the final week before the election. Half of these people, moreover, only decided within the last 24 hours.

The European Election Study of 2004 shows that, in recent years, party affiliation in the UK has also become relatively weak compared to other European countries. According to this study, a mere 38.3% of the respondents felt close to a particular party (see Table 6.1). Whereas this figure might provide a somewhat crude indication of party affiliation, the weak ties between voters and parties also become

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[7] It has been debated to what extent a process of *class dealignment* has also materialised (see e.g. Heath et al. 1985; 1987; Crewe 1986), although Webb (2000: 53-5) shows substantial evidence indicating that it has.

evident when the more precise question is asked *how* close people felt to a party, if they felt close to a party in the first place. Only 16.8% of the British respondents (of the initial 38.3%) felt 'very close' to this party.

Table 6.1: Party affiliation in 15 European countries.

Country	Close to a Party?		Degree of party affiliation (if close to a party)		
	Yes	*No*	*Very Close*	*Fairly Close*	*Merely a Sympathiser*
Estonia	98.2%	1.8%	4.2%	16.9%	78.9%
Italy	94.9%	5.1%	17.7%	39.5%	42.8%
The Netherlands	86.9%	13.1%	6.0%	23.6%	70.3%
Sweden	83.7%	16.3%	17.8%	27.6%	54.5%
Portugal	73.7%	26.3%	8.4%	15.3%	76.2%
Spain	68.4%	31.6%	7.7%	35.2%	57.1%
Greece	67.6%	32.4%	36.5%	39.0%	24.5%
Czech Republic	66.9%	33.1%	17.3%	34.4%	48.3%
Austria	57.2%	42.8%	36.0%	17.2%	46.8%
Denmark	54.5%	45.5%	11.8%	28.5%	59.7%
Poland	53.9%	46.1%	7.2%	40.3%	52.5%
France	51.2%	48.8%	13.0%	53.1%	34.0%
Germany	49.3%	50.7%	11.6%	21.7%	66.8%
Hungary	38.3%	61.7%	20.3%	43.6%	36.1%
Great Britain	***38.3%***	***61.7%***	***16.8%***	***50.7%***	***32.4%***

Data: European Election Study 2004 (Schmitt and Loveless 2004). Only the respondents giving a (valid) answer are taken into account, i.e. the table excludes the respondents who replied 'don't know' or who gave no or an invalid answer.

Many British voters thus seemed to have become more available to be won over by third parties. Throughout the past decades, more and more voters indeed began to opt for parties other than Labour or the Conservatives. Until 1970 these two dominant parties jointly received about 90% of the vote in general elections (see Figure 6.1). The political system in Britain could thus justifiably be described as a two-party system. After 1970 the combined vote share of the Tories and Labour decreased to about 75% (see Crewe et al. 1977: 130; Webb 2005: 757). In 1974 particularly the third largest party, the Liberals, managed to increase its vote share significantly. In this year some of the regionalist parties also managed to enter the House of Commons. The Liberals bolstered their status as the third electoral force after forming an alliance with the Social Democratic Party, which split from Labour in 1981. In 1988 the two parties merged into the Liberal Democrats. In the parliamentary elections in 2005 and 2010 the 'LibDems' managed to win over 20% of the vote, while the combined vote share of the Conservatives and Labour was only about 65% of the vote.

Figure 6.1: General election results (vote- and seat share) of the three main parties, 1964-2010.
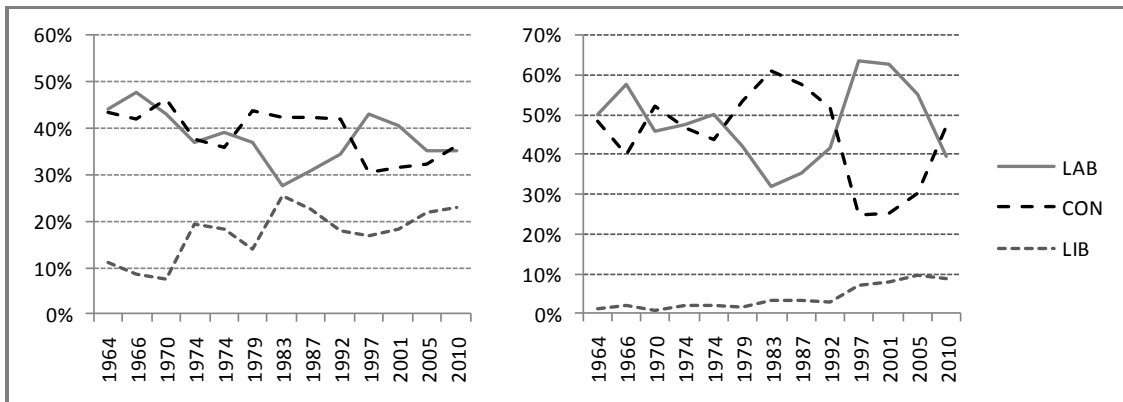
Notes: Vote share is depicted in left-hand graph, seat share in the right-hand graph. The LIB line indicates the vote- and seat share for the Liberals (1945-1979), the Social Democratic Party-Liberal Party Alliance (1983-1987) and the Liberal Democrats (1992-present).

In terms of the seat distribution in the House of Commons, however, the Tories and Labour largely retained their dominant position (see Figure 6.1). The parties still occupied more than 85% of the seats after the last two elections. The Liberal Democrats, on the other hand, occupy less than 9% of the seats with a vote share of 23% after the 2010 general election. It had been worse for them; in 1983 the Social Democratic Party-Liberal Party Alliance only took up 3.5% of the seats with a vote share of 25.4%. This disproportionality between votes and seats is due to the Single Member Plurality (SMP), or 'First Past the Post' (FPTP), electoral system which is applied in UK general elections[8]. The UK is divided into constituencies - 650 in 2010 – and each of those constituencies elects one representative to the House of Commons. A candidate needs a simple plurality of the vote in order to become a Member of Parliament, while the votes for the other, less successful, candidates are practically 'wasted'. This leads to a considerable disproportionality between the votes cast and the distribution of seats in Parliament (See Figure 6.2).

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[8] Electoral reforms are off the political agenda for the time being, after the referendum on electoral system change, held on 5 May 2011, resulted in a vote against reform. It is uncertain whether the introduction of the 'Alternative Vote' system would significantly have affected future general election results in the first place (see Sanders et al. 2011).

Figure 6.2: Disproportionality between votes and seats in parliamentary elections in eight European countries.
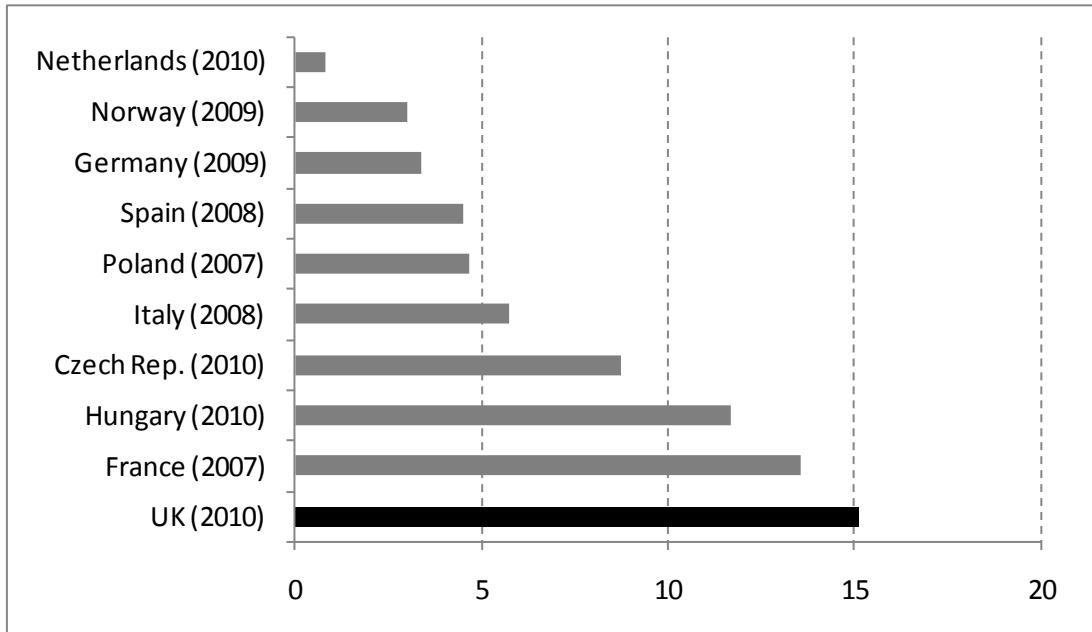
Note: Disproportionality according to the Least Squares Index (Gallagher 1991); zero indicating a perfect match between percentage of votes and percentage of seats.
Data from Gallagher (2011), figure based on Bale (2008: 174).

For smaller or new parties that do not have abundant resources or a large number of candidates it is difficult to stand in a considerable amount of constituencies. Parties with a specific regional concentration of support, like the Welsh and Scottish nationalists, have a larger chance of being successful, although their success is invariably limited due to this very regional appeal. As Maurice Duverger (1959) suggested, the SMP electoral system is likely to produce a two-party system. This is not only due to the 'mechanics' of the plurality system, but also because of the psychological effects it generates. As people know the system hampers the success of smaller parties, they are likely to refrain from casting a vote for them, even if they are attracted by their appeal. At the same time, political entrepreneurs are less likely form a new political party with an eye on the unpermissive electoral system. The electoral system, then, may not only affect how votes are translated into seats, but is likely to have an impact on the initial distribution of the vote as well.

Data from the British Election Study of 2010 indeed shows that a significant share of the electorate did not vote for the party which was really preferred. Of all respondents 8.1% stated they voted for another party because their preferred party stood no chance of winning in their constituency (Clarke et al. 2010). Another 8.9% of the respondents indicated that they voted tactically. For about two-thirds of these two groups of voters, however, the party actually preferred was one of three major parties,

instead of a more marginal outsider. On the other hand, 15% of these respondents stated the party they preferred was UKIP and 6.4% gave the BNP as an answer. If these latter respondents would have cast their vote for these two parties, the impact in terms of the overall vote share of UKIP and BNP would not have been great.

To assess what the results of the general election would have been if a more proportional electoral system had been used, however, largely remains a matter of counterfactual speculation. The dynamics in national-level election campaigns are likely to change considerably under a radically different electoral system. Rather than individual candidates representing local constituency needs, for instance, the focus would probably shift (even) more to party leaders. It is, furthermore, clear that both the BNP and UKIP suffer from the mechanical effect of 'Duverger's Law'. Under a purely proportional system, like the one used in the Netherlands, both parties would have won seats in the 2010 general election. Being represented in parliament could have increased the parties' exposure and opportunities for further development. Yet just how much the electoral system hampers the (long term) electoral prospects of these parties remains difficult to gauge.

Irrespective of the (alleged) effects of the electoral system, the strength of the two dominant parties has gradually eroded. This is, as shown, more evident when the distribution of votes, rather than the distribution of seats, is considered. In the words of Paul Webb, "In effect, there is now a two-and-a-half party system in the national legislative arena, but a clear multi-party system in the national electorate" (Webb 2005: 758). The fact that neither the Conservatives nor Labour could win a majority of seats in the 2010 general election is perhaps a further indicator of the decline of the two-party system. For the first time since the Second World War a coalition government was formed, consisting of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats.

The decline of the two-party system becomes even more apparent in other elections in the UK, in which different electoral systems are applied. Since 1999, European Parliament elections in Great Britain are held under a system of Closed List Proportional Representation in eleven electoral regions. As mentioned, UKIP in particular, and to a lesser extent the BNP, manage to profit from this. That is not to say that the populist success in these European elections can be subscribed only to the amended electoral system. As will be discussed below, also the 'second-order character' of the EP elections is likely to have played a significant role (see Rallings and Thrasher 2009). It is, nevertheless, unlikely that UKIP and the BNP would have accomplished the same results under the traditional SMP electoral system.

When the devolved regional assemblies are taken into account, Labour and the Conservatives are also clearly less dominant (Lynch and Garner 2005; Dunleavy 2005;

Lynch 2007). The elections for the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Parliament are held under a Mixed Member PR system. The Northern Ireland Assembly, in addition, is elected on the basis of Single Transferable Vote. Both systems clearly yield more proportional results than the Single Member Plurality system used for Westminster elections. The fact that neither UKIP, nor the BNP have been successful in these elections can be attributed to the fact that neither party is supportive of Scottish and Welsh nationalism. Northern Irish politics, in addition, have a *sui generis* character where the religious cleavage is of prime importance[9]. UKIP has never supported devolving powers away from Westminster, whereas the BNP has actually favoured devolving powers to a more local level, in order to revive "county council government" (BNP 2010a: 39). What is more, as Copsey (2007: 78) argues, "Although the BNP is not Anglo-fundamentalist, in order to inspire the rebirth of the rest of the British 'family' of nations, that is to say, Wales, Scotland, Cornwall, Northern Ireland and Ireland, it does privilege the rebirth of the English nation". The BNP, as well as UKIP, thus largely remain 'Anglocentric' parties.

Regional elections, in any case, show that a more permissive electoral system does not guarantee the electoral success of populist parties. It is, at the same time, too simple to address the failure of populist parties on the national level to the First Past the Post electoral system alone. In order to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the electoral failure of British populist parties, the chapter now turns to the agency of both established and populist parties.

Responsiveness of the established parties

Two issues have been central to the populist parties in Britain: immigration and European integration. As will be argued here, the failure of populist parties to gain significant levels of support on the basis of these issues is largely due to the responsiveness of the established parties and the fact that European integration has never been a salient issue in general election campaigns.

Immigration

Although the failure of (fascist) anti-immigration parties in Britain has regularly been attributed to the tolerant British political culture, this explanation might be a bit too simplistic and, moreover, invalid (see Cronin 1996). As David Lewis (1987: 261) stated in a more outspoken manner: "Certainly there were differences in the historical development of individual nations, but to suggest that there were any unique

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[9] Labour and the Conservatives are also not represented in the Northern Irish Assembly.

elements within British society, which made it immune to the threat of fascism, is to illustrate an extraordinary complacency founded upon misplaced arrogance".

John and Margetts (2009) actually point at the growing resentment against immigration among the British population. On the basis of opinion poll research, they show that since the end of the 1990s a growing amount of British people perceive immigration as the most important societal issue (see also Ford 2010). Figure 6.3, showing data from Ipsos MORI, reveals this trend. From 2003 onwards, more than 25% of the respondents considered issues related race relations, immigration and immigrants as the most important issues facing Britain. The average figure in 2007 was even 38.2%. This attitudinal change coincides with the more liberal immigration policies of the Labour government, the rise in asylum applications and the accession of new Central and Eastern European states to the EU in 2004 and 2007 (Goodwin 2011: 56). Immigration and related issues have thus clearly become very salient in the eye of many British voters. Another series of Ipsos MORI polls confirms this. In 2001 around 25% of the respondents answered that the issues of asylum or immigration were very important to them in deciding which party to vote for. This percentage rose above 35% in the following years, and to over 45% in 2006 and 2007 (Ipsos MORI 2010b).

Figure 6.3: % Respondents who perceive race relations/immigration/immigrants to be 'the most important issues facing Britain today'.
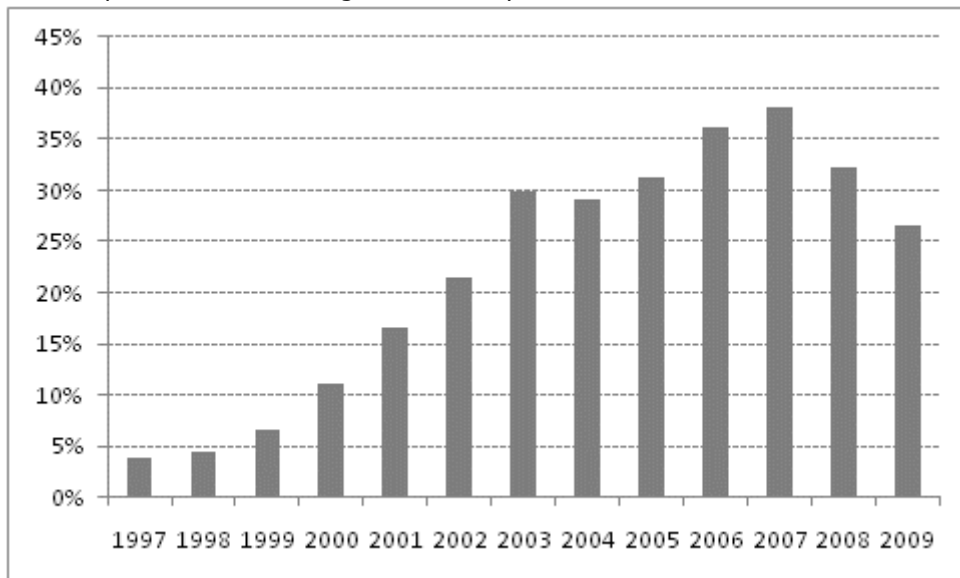
Source: Ipsos MORI (2009). Yearly percentages are calculated as the mean of the available monthly percentages in the corresponding year.

John and Margetts (2009: 500) also show data from the State of the Nation poll of 2006, which indicates that the immigration issue is especially salient among

BNP and Conservative voters (ICM 2006). Respectively, 62.5% and 46.1% of these voters indicated that they found immigration the most important issue. Just over 32% of Labour and Liberal Democrat voters gave the same answers. For the UKIP electorate the figure was 29.2%. This indicates that the immigration issue was, at this time, not the main concern for UKIP voters. The study, however, contained relatively few UKIP voters (24), which might have influenced the reliability of these results.

Data from research institute YouGov indicate that many British people do not only find immigration an important issue, but also consider the inflow of foreigners to be a negative affair. In March 2010, 78% of all respondents, and 92% of the Conservative voting ones, perceived the level of immigration to be too high (YouGov 2010a). What is more, most respondents disapproved of the way the Labour government handled immigration since 1997. 21% thought Labour's immigration policy had been very or fairly good for the country, 69% fairly or very bad. Conservative supporters were most critical; 6% approving of Labour's policy, 90% disapproving of it. Labour supporters were also hardly enthusiastic, with 45% of them approving and 44% disapproving.

Finally, public opinion towards the specific subject of Islam has also appeared to be quite negative in recent years. In a May 2010 YouGov survey, 58% of the respondents answered they associated 'Islam' with the word 'extremism', 50% with 'terrorism' and 33% with 'violence' (YouGov 2010b). On the other hand, a mere 13% of the respondents associated the religion with 'peace', 6% of them with 'justice'. Furthermore, while 19% of the respondents tended to agree or strongly agreed with the statement that Muslims have a positive impact on British society, 41% tended to disagree or strongly disagreed.

All these indicators suggest that there is space for a party with a critical stance on immigration related issues in British politics. Unfortunately for the BNP and UKIP, however, the established parties have not completely ignored these issues. In the past decades, immigration has been a divisive issue for both the Labour Party and the Conservatives (Eatwell 2000). This can largely be related to the electoral balancing act of trying to retain support from minority groups and liberal-minded voters as well as the more immigration-sceptical part of the electorate. It was, nevertheless, the Conservative Party that voiced anti-immigration rhetoric most clearly throughout the past decades, even though also individual Labour politicians have recently voiced concern about immigration and cultural integration (Goodwin 2011: 57). Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown himself was, for instance, criticised for his promise to provide 'British jobs for British workers'.

Back in the late 1970s, it was the Conservative Party under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher that profiled itself most clearly with regard to the immigration issue. Thatcher infamously expressed sympathy for people who felt 'swamped' by people from a different culture (Durham 1996: 82; Goodwin 2011: 34). Since the end of the 1970s, then, the opportunity structure for BNP's predecessor, the National Front, became unfavourable. In the words of Martin Durham (1996: 84):

> In revitalizing a party that the NF sought to supplant, in popularizing a form of right-wing politics that emphasized the individual and the free market, and in taking stands, particularly on immigration and on Britain's role in the world, that appealed to potential NF voters, Thatcherism was to play a crucial role in the failure of the National Front.

For the newly-founded BNP matters did not get easier, due to the continuing dominance of the Thatcher-led Conservative Party in the 1980s (Eatwell 2004). Under John Major's leadership (1990-1997) the Conservatives played down the issue of immigration (Eatwell 1998: 151; 2010: 220). In view of the very low electoral salience of the issue during most of the 1990s, however, this hardly provided an opportunity for the BNP (Goodwin 2011: 42). When the issue salience rose after the turn of the century, the Conservatives toughened their stance again and played the anti-immigration card in the election campaigns of 2001 and 2005 (Eatwell 2010: 219; Copsey 2008: 117-9). Especially Tory leader Michael Howard has been associated with anti-immigration politics during the latter campaign (Goodwin 2011: 57). Even though the Conservatives under David Cameron's leadership are perceived to have moderated their tone again, the Tory manifesto for the 2010 election stated that immigration levels are too high (Conservative Party 2010: 21). The party proposed to set an annual limit to immigration and to limit access "only to those who will bring the most value to the British economy" (Conservative Party 2010: 21).

By means of this discourse, the Conservatives managed to retain their issue position ownership with regard to the issues of asylum and immigration. According to a YouGov poll, carried out shortly before to general election of 2010, 38% of the respondents thought the Tories would handle these 'problems' best, compared to 24% who opted for Labour and 14% who answered that the Liberal Democrats would be most capable (YouGov 2010c). Another 9% of the respondents gave 'other party' as a response. With regard to law and order problems, also prominent issues in the BNP and UKIP manifestos, a plurality of respondents (38%) had most confidence in the Conservatives too. A poll prior to the general election five years earlier yielded similar results. Here, the Conservatives were considered to be the best party to handle the problem of immigration and asylum by 39% of the respondents, compared to 16%

who opted for Labour and 12% who opted for the LibDems (YouGov 2005). Again, the Conservatives were also seen to be most capable with regard to law and order problems (by 36%).

It is possible to qualify this evidence. As Goodwin (2011: 65) shows, on the basis of similar opinion poll data, at the end of the 1970s the percentage of people that thought the Conservatives had the best policies on immigration or asylum tended to be somewhat higher. In the past decade, moreover, there has been a significant amount of people that thought none of the parties had particularly good policies related to these issues. Then again, these people did not think that the BNP or UKIP were the parties with the best policies either. Of all parties the Conservatives remained the party with the best record on immigration and asylum. Following Goodwin's observation, however, it is fair to say that the Conservatives' policy position ownership is not guaranteed. The fact that neither of the populist parties was able to win over many voters on the basis of an anti-immigration platform is, then, likely to be related to their own agency too. This will be discussed later in this section.

European Union

'Europe' has been the central issue of the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party. The BNP has voiced discontent concerning European integration as well. Their position seemed consistent with the stance of many British voters, who have also held negative attitudes towards the EU. A series of Ipsos MORI surveys asked the British people how they would vote in a referendum on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the (forerunners of the) European Union (see Figure 6.4). The results varied over the decades. In the late 1970s and early 1980s clearly more people opted to leave the 'Common Market'. In the late 1980s the respondents were more positive and from the 1990s onwards the gap between the yea- and nay-sayers was relatively narrow. All the same, the data indicates that a significant amount of British people – nearly half of them in recent years – favoured getting Britain out of the EU.

Figure 6.4: Response to the question: 'If there were a referendum now on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the European Union, how would you vote?'
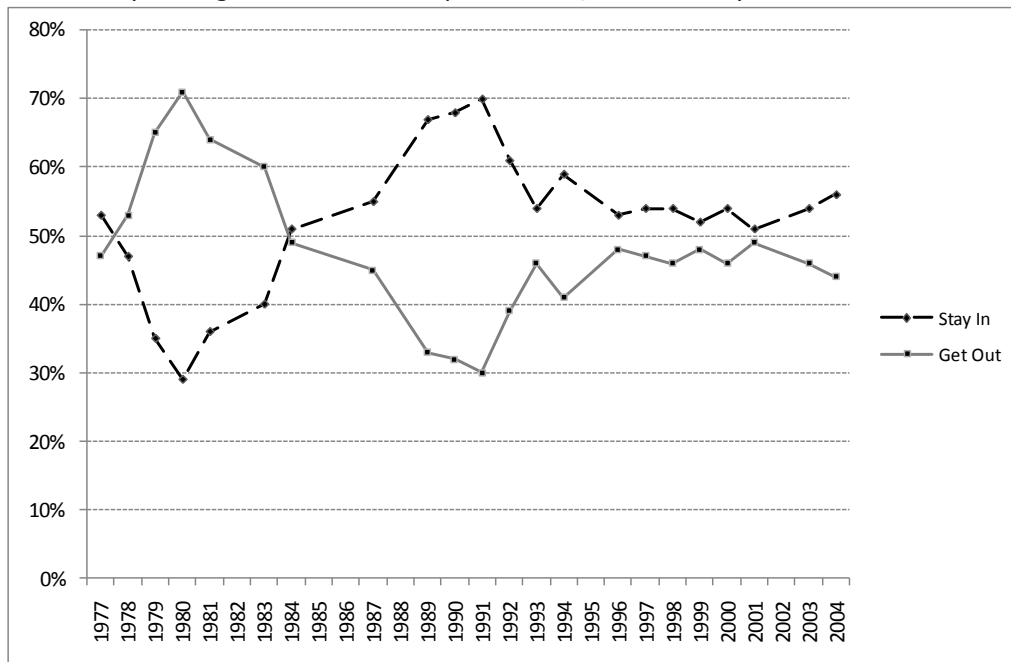
Source: Ipsos MORI (2007). In years where the survey was held multiple times the mean of the percentages was taken. The graph excludes respondents who answered 'don't know', never consisting of more than a fifth of the sample.

Figure 6.5: Support for EU membership in the UK 1981-2004.
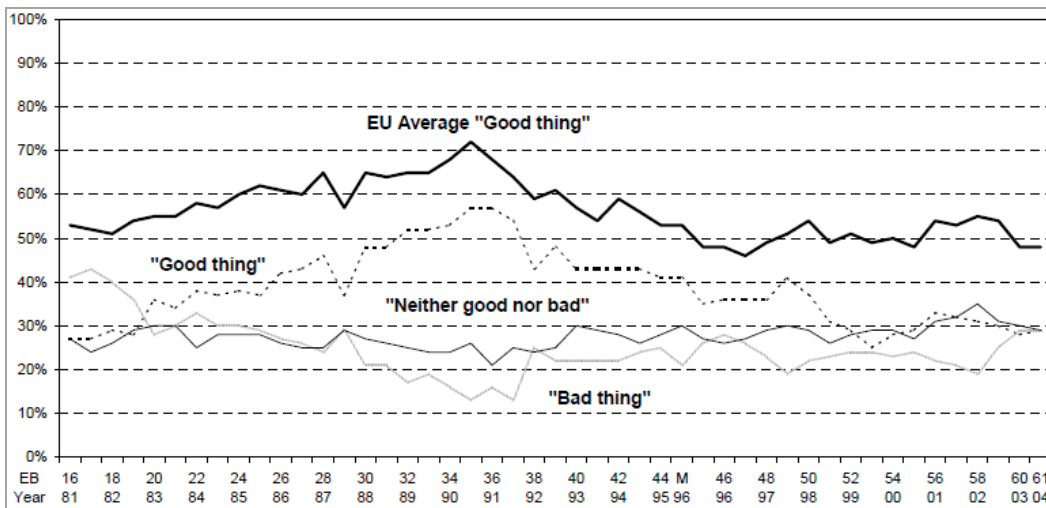
Source: European Commission (2004: B.51)

As Figure 6.5 indicates, the British have traditionally also been more Eurosceptic than the 'average European'. According to Eurobarometer surveys, the British have been far less inclined to perceive EU membership as a 'good thing' compared to other member states' populations. Consistent with the data in Figure 6.4, most people were supportive at the end of the 1980s and the start of the 1990s, but

even then only a small majority of respondents had a positive opinion about EU membership. By 2003 less than 30% of the respondents thought EU membership was a good thing and they were outnumbered by the respondents giving a negative verdict. Figure 6.6 also clearly shows that the UK can be seen as a Eurosceptic country. In 2009, only 28% of the respondents thought that EU membership was a good thing, well below the mean EU-27 percentage of 53%. Only in Latvia the percentage was lower.

Figure 6.6: Agreement with the statement 'EU membership is a good thing'.
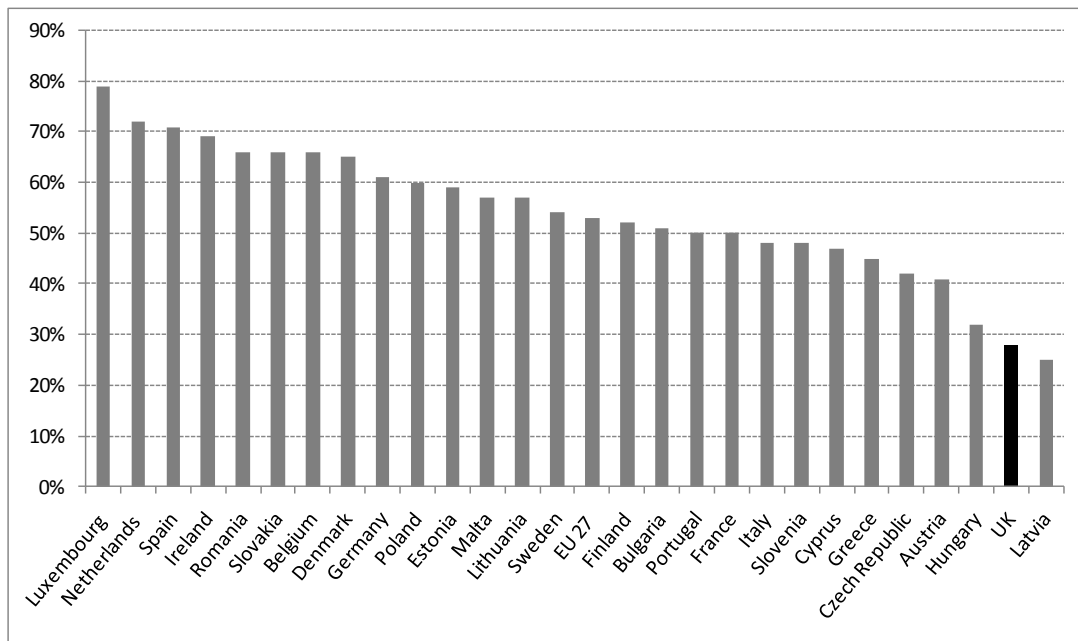
Source: European Commission (2009: 93).

A large part of the British electorate has evidently shown little enthusiasm about European integration. The problem for UKIP and the BNP has been that it remained hard to win elections on the basis of a Eurosceptic platform. 'Europe' has from the outset not been a salient issue for the British electorate. Baker et al. (2008: 105) suggest that:

> for the majority of the post-war period a 'permissive consensus' existed in which a compliant British electorate regarded Europe as a second-order issue and happily accepted the parties' presentation of European integration as an esoteric process best dealt with by technocratic and bureaucratic expertise.

British people's dislike of Europe was thus perhaps exceeded by their apathy in relation to the issue. This implies that it has been difficult for Eurosceptic parties to motivate people to vote for them on the basis of this individual issue. Baker *et al.*

(2008: 107) nevertheless argue that public concern with Europe has increased since the late 1980s. According to a series of Ipsos MORI (2010b) polls, about 25% of the respondents said that 'Europe' was very important to them in deciding which party to vote for in the second half of the 1990s. This percentage remained quite stable until 2005. In September 2006 the percentage dropped to 13%, however, a year later to 11%. In any case, according to the same data, issues such as health care, education, law and order, pensions, unemployment and immigration carried much more weight over the whole period. In the 2006 State of the Nation poll, furthermore, only 3.2% of the respondents answered that the European Union was the most important issue facing Britain (ICM 2006; see John and Margretts 2009: 499). A February 2010 YouGov poll also suggested that Europe was not a very salient issue; 10% of the respondents (who could select three issues in total) indicated that 'Europe' was an important issue for them in deciding which party to support in the upcoming general election (YouGov 2010d). In comparison, 56% of them selected 'the economy' and 43% selected 'immigration and asylum'.

On the whole, European integration has thus been an issue of relatively minor importance to the British voter. For the mainstream parties, in turn, 'Europe' was above all an issue accentuating internal divisions (Baker et al. 2008). In general terms, however, Labour, from the outset the more Eurosceptic Party, became more pro-European by the end of the 1980s (see Webb 2008). The party started to recognise the value of European integration in the promotion of social policies. Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party, on the other hand, only grew when political integration accelerated. The 'Bruges speech' of Margaret Thatcher in 1988, in which she voiced her concern about the alleged federalist direction in which the European Community was heading, was a case in point. Baker et al. even go as far as to claim that "within a decade Euroscepticism would become the defining characteristic of the Conservative Party's identity and enshrined in its policies" (Baker et al. 2008: 97).

Under the leaderships of William Hague, Ian Duncan Smith and Michael Howard the Conservative Party adopted an increasingly Eurosceptic position (Gifford 2006), even though the latter two leaders 'turned down the volume' on Europe in order to avoid unnecessary attention to the party's internal divisions with regard to the issue (Baker *et al.* 2008: 109). Then again, as research by Paul Webb (2008) has shown, internal divisions within the Conservative parliamentary party had actually significantly decreased by 2005. Most Tory MPs were clearly Eurosceptic by this time. Under Cameron's leadership (which started in 2005) the course of the party did not change. This is illustrated by the Conservatives' decision to pull out of the European People Party-European Democrats (EPP-ED) group in the European Parliament after the 2009

EP election. Cameron's party went on to form a new group (the European Conservatives and Reformists, ECR) together with Eurosceptic parties from mainland Europe. During the 2010 general election campaign the Eurosceptic position of the Tories was also apparent. Cameron promised to take on the alleged pro-European 'Lib-Lab' consensus and asserted that "What the British people want is Britain in Europe but not run by Europe. They do not want a state called Europe" (quoted in Bale 2010: 8).

Thus, even if European integration would be electorally salient, one can hardly speak of unresponsiveness on the side of the Conservative Party in recent years. Using 'Europe' as the main campaigning issue in general elections then seems a poor strategy for British populist parties. Only in the 'second-order' European Parliament elections Eurosceptic parties like UKIP can truly flourish (see Reif and Schmitt 1980). In these elections the issue of European integration plays a more central role. Perhaps more importantly, voters in these elections are more willing to cast a ballot for smaller non-mainstream parties, as they feel there is less at stake. Former MEP for UKIP Graham Booth sees this second-order character as one of the main reasons for his party's success in 2004: "people were prepared to give us a chance because they had nothing much to lose" (Interview, Brussels, 9 September 2008). Dissatisfied voters tend to use European elections to send off a warning signal to the established parties. In the words of Paul Taggart (2004: 11), European elections are predominantly "seen by voters as a useful stick to beat incumbents with and an arena to award the protest forces of politics".

In the 2009 EP election in June the British populist parties particularly seemed to benefit from the high profile news about the 'expenses scandal'. The scandal involved the misuse of allowances and claimed expenses by MPs from all three major parties. These scandals have certainly not been conducive to the public's trust in politicians and the political system. According to Ipsos MORI survey data, in May 2009 about three in four respondents actually believed that the present system of governing in Britain needed quite a lot or a great deal of improvement (Ipsos MORI 2011). This figure decreased somewhat in more recent polls, but a clear majority still saw room for improvement.

If the motivations of UKIP and BNP voters are considered, dissatisfaction with the political establishment is a recurring feature. Judging from 2010 British Election Study data, the largest group of UKIP and BNP voters opted for the parties because of their policies (55.2% and 48.6%, respectively) (Clarke et al. 2010). This compares to a figure of 57.4% when all respondents are considered. Of the UKIP and BNP voters that stated their vote was driven by other reasons (25.5% and 26.8%, respectively),

dissatisfaction with the political establishment was often provided as a motivation. Statements from UKIP voters for instance include: "All the main parties are rife with corruption, greed, sleaze and lies. UKIP would be a step closer to democracy that is sadly lacking", or: "Best of a bad bunch, they are all out of touch with the British public & all are untrustworthy". BNP voters tended to refer more specifically to immigration, but many also state reasons such as: "None of the usual suspects actually listen to we plebs [sic]".

Although the anti-politics mood in British society may be less deep-seated than in countries like Poland – this for instance shows when perceived levels of public sector corruption are considered, which are relatively low in the UK (see Appendix E.4) – there has been considerable dissatisfaction with the British political system (Ford 2010). However, since policy preferences also matter when it comes to voting for populist parties, it is unlikely that a populist party can win support in general elections on the basis of a 'hollow' anti-establishment appeal alone. It is fair to assume that British populist parties are potentially able to win over voters if they *both* tap into this dissatisfaction *and* provide resonant substantive policy proposals. In the 2010 general election the Liberal Democrats instead seem to have been quite successful in doing this. 2010 British Election Study data indicates that many LibDem voters were, at least partly, motivated by discontent. Respondents' answers included, for instance, "Change from the two usual parties" and "Didn't like ANY of the parties and lib-dem were the most credible and least evil" (Clarke et al. 2010). The failure of the BNP and UKIP to become the main option for dissatisfied voters is likely to be related to the credibility of the populist parties themselves (Goodwin 2011). The final part of this section is devoted to this matter.

Supply of credible populist parties

As discussed, the credibility of populist parties is considered to rely on the populist party's appeal (leadership, convincing anti-establishment message and dissociation from extremism) and organisational unity. Although both the BNP and UKIP have had no problems in convincingly distancing themselves from the political establishment, both parties lacked visible and persuasive leadership for most of the time and failed to preserve organisational unity. Following John and Margretts (2009: 501): "Both the BNP and the UKIP have experienced infighting and continual organisational problems which jeopardise their electoral chances". The British National Party, moreover, has found it hard to build up an image as an 'acceptable' political party.

To begin with this later issue, the British National Party, as previously discussed, toned down its most extremist rhetoric in more recent years. The party

employed a strategy of 'community politics' and adopted a discourse based on 'cultural differentialism', instead of a biological racism. The National Front, BNP's predecessor, had previously failed, partly because the party was associated with extremism, violence and Nazism (Eatwell 2000). The BNP's new community strategy, implemented from the late 1990s onwards, focused more on everyday local concerns and was meant "to cultivate an image of electoral credibility and legitimacy in local arenas" (Goodwin 2008: 350). Different from its predecessors, the BNP also managed to run its campaigns in a more professional manner, paying more attention to the party's website, organised canvassing and employing full-time officials (Eatwell 2004: 70).

Although support levels for the BNP have increased, the party still had difficulties to get rid of its extremist stigma (Goodwin 2011). Despite the attempts of Griffin to portray the BNP as a non-racist party, it has been hard for the BNP leader to refute his actions from the past. On various occasions in the past, Griffin has stated his doubts about the occurrence of the Holocaust and during the 1990s the future BNP leader published a series of anti-Semitic articles (Goodwin 2010: 173). What is more, even though the BNP has worded its references to race more carefully throughout the years, the 2010 general election manifesto still includes statements with a fascist taint. The party, for instance, argued that "British people may take pride from knowing that the blood of an immense column of nation-building, civilisation-creating heroes and heroines runs through their veins" and that being British runs far deeper than possessing a passport; "it is to belong to a special chain of unique people who have the natural law right to remain a majority in their ancestral homeland" (BNP 2010: 23).

Whereas it is clear that many Britons have been concerned about immigration in recent years, it is questionable whether these people also approved of the BNP's convictions on race. Judging from British Social Attitudes data, for instance, only a relatively small group of British people (15%) perceived being white as one of the key features of national identity (Ford 2010: 150). A YouGov poll from May-June 2009, moreover, indicated that most people had a negative attitude towards the BNP (YouGov 2009a). 72% of the respondents felt negative about the party, of which 62% very negative. 11% felt fairly or very positive. British Election Study data from 2010 also illustrates the general dislike of the BNP (Clarke et al. 2010). On a scale from 0 (strongly dislike) to 10 (strongly like), a clear majority (58.2%) of the respondents who answered the question chose 0. 88.9% gave an answer between 0 and 5 and only 1.5% of the respondents strongly liked the BNP (value 10).

Whereas most people thus clearly disliked the BNP with a passion, it can still be argued that there is a small, yet not inconsiderable, group of voters that was less unsympathetic towards the party. The party was, moreover, able to reach out to more

than eight million people when Griffin appeared on the popular political programme *Question Time* in October 2009 (Goodwin 2011: 37). The BNP leader faced a very hostile audience and panel, but in a YouGov poll held after the broadcast 22% of the respondents answered that they might consider voting for the party (YouGov 2009b). However, most of these people answered, rather lukewarmly, 'yes, possibly' (15% of the total sample). 3% answered 'yes, probably' and 4% 'yes, definitely'. On the other hand, 66% of the respondents answered that they would 'under no circumstances' consider voting for the BNP.

It has thus seemed difficult for the BNP to appeal to a considerable amount of more 'mainstream' voters. Commentators seem to agree, moreover, that the BNP's leadership has not been particularly conducive to a breakthrough. According to Goodwin (2011: 77), Griffin and other BNP leaders "have lacked charismatic appeal". Eatwell (2010: 222) touches on the lack of Griffin's personal-image skills and argues that "Griffin does not exude the wider 'centripetal' charismatic appeal which helps to broaden extreme right support by presenting a multi-faceted appeal, especially to those not normally interested in party politics". Like its predecessors, moreover, the BNP has hardly been free from internal dissent. This, for instance, showed when dozens of senior members rebelled against party leader Griffin in December 2007, setting up a 'Real BNP' faction. In the run-up to the 2010 election there were signs of disunity within the party as well. The BNP's candidate for Stoke-on-Trent, one of the main target constituencies, decided to stand as an independent candidate, claiming to distance himself from the Holocaust-denying vein within the party. After the disappointing election result, further (grassroot) discontent surfaced and Griffin promised to stand down as party leader in 2013, in order fend off a direct leadership challenge (Goodwin 2011: 165-6).

In terms of intra-party conflict, the UK Independence Party did not fare much better. Founder Alan Sked resigned in 1997 under pressure from fellow party members after a schism over his leadership had developed within the party (see Gardner 2006; Daniel 2005). The subsequent leader, Michael Holmes, underwent the same fate in 2000. Only under the following leader, Jeffrey Titford, the party sailed into calmer waters[10]. In 2002 former Conservative MP Roger Knapman became UKIP's leader after the party's first non-conflictual leadership change. When Robert Kilroy-Silk, former Labour MP and BBC chat show host, joined the party in 2004, however, the

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[10] Titford revealed: "I didn't really want to be leader. I had to be a leader of bringing people back into the party, because they had been so upset by internal politics. I was the one who the poured oil on troubled waters and brought them all back in" (Interview, Brighton, 6 April 2009).

calm would quickly vanish. The BBC had sacked 'Kilroy' in January 2004 after he had made controversial statements about Muslims. In the European Parliament Elections in June 2004 Kilroy was elected as MEP. Soon after, Kilroy would criticise Knapman's leadership and openly expressed his ambitions to replace him as the new party leader. The party was heavily divided about this affair, but in the end Knapman's position was secured (Gardner 2006; Daniel 2005). Kilroy resigned from the party in January 2005 and went on to form his own party *Veritas*, from which he also resigned half a year later after disappointing results in the 2005 general election.

UKIP, in addition, had to expel several politicians who were associated with unlawful behaviour. In July 2004, for instance, UKIP withdrew the party whip from Ashley Mote MEP after he had failed to inform the party that he had been committed for trial earlier in the year. Mote was charged for unlawfully claiming income support and housing benefits, and was convicted in 2007. In 2007 – Nigel Farage had become party leader by this time – UKIP suspended Tom Wise MEP after he was similarly charged for embezzlement, for which he was eventually convicted in 2009. The suspension of Wise, in turn, led to some turmoil within the party as MEPs Knapman and Nattrass objected to the decision. After the European election of 2009, UKIP could not preserve the unity in its fraction either; Nikki Sinclaire MEP was expelled from the party after she refused to sit in meetings with UKIP's foreign allies in Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) group.

Internal party disputes have certainly not contributed to the credibility of the British National Party and UKIP. As has been discussed in the first chapter, however, internal disputes are particularly likely to harm a populist party *after* its breakthrough (Mudde 2007). The case of Self Defence in Poland even suggests that defections and scandals do not have to be electorally fatal as long as a populist party does not enter office. Populist parties which have not broken through on the national level at all may suffer even less from internal disputes where negative media coverage is concerned[11]. Due to its limited exposure, people may not even know about the internal troubles of an unsuccessful party in the first place.

Moving beyond organisational malaise, UKIP's attempts to be seen as a credible alternative to the mainstream parties have not so much been hampered by an extremist image. UKIP's lack of popularity had probably more to do with the relative ambiguity of UKIP's appeal. In the words of Simon Usherwood (2009: 260), "the

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[11] That is not to say that internal disputes are unproblematic for unsuccessful populist parties. It probably hampers their ability to build up a sound organisation and to run successful election campaigns. In terms of direct electoral appeal, however, internal disputes may not have much of a negative impact on the image of parties that find it hard to get media attention in the first place.

party's core ideological identity is placed around a negative definition; there is no clear agreement on why the party is opposed to the EU, less as to what should be the response to this opposition, and less still as to any other policy preferences". Even though UKIP adopted a more outspoken position on immigration related issues, the party's profile with regard to matters not directly related to European integration remained rather indistinct.

In terms of visibility and leadership the party has also failed to impress. In the words of former MEP Graham Booth: "Our problem is: we are all unknowns, nobody knows who the hell we are" (Interview, Brussels, 9 September 2008). The only truly high-pofile and visible leader was Kilroy-Silk, but he proved to be a highly divisive figure (Abedi and Lundberg 2009). Following Stefano Fella (2008: 196), for most of the time UKIP has lacked an "instantly recognizable and charismatic leader with considerable media skills" and current leader Nigel Farage "does not come across as a 'man of the people' and lacks a 'common touch'"[12]. Between November 2009 and September 2010, UKIP's leader was Lord Pearson of Rannoch, a former Conservative peer in the House of Lords. Prior to the 2010 general election, Pearson did not make a great impression when he failed to recollect points from his party's manifesto in an interview with the BBC television programme *The Campaign Show*. After resigning his leadership, Pearson even admitted: "I have learnt that I am not much good at party politics, which I do not enjoy" (Guardian 2010).

Even if the issue of immigration had become highly salient and even if there is general public dissatisfaction with the established political system in the UK, populist parties in the UK have failed to present themselves as credible alternatives to the dominant parties. Both the BNP and UKIP have been plagued by leadership struggles and controversies surrounding party figures. These problems, however, might not have been (directly) crucial to the electoral appeal of the parties, as many controversies have not received widespread attention. In the case of the BNP, the failure to downplay its political extremism and to become 'destigmatised' has been the more fundamental reason for the party's lack of credibility. For UKIP, the main problems were a lack of a clear ideological profile beyond mere Euroscepticism and, throughout most of its existence, a lack of a visible and convincing leadership.

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[12] Farage has been UKIP leader between September 2006 and November 2009 and from November 2010 to date.

6.4   Conclusion

Populist parties in the UK have failed to make an impact in elections for the House of Commons. That is, if the British National Party and the UK Independence Party are considered to be the only genuine populist cases. Other opposition parties in Britain, such as the regionalist parties, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens have also tended to apply anti-establishment rhetoric, sometimes with a populist element. This has even been apparent in the discourse of the Conservative Party prior to the 2010 general election. The fact that anti-establishment, or even populist, rhetoric is used so widely in UK politics may have to do with the majoritarian nature of British democracy. Due to the facts that single party government has been the rule and that two parties were dominant in post-1945 Britain, it has been relatively straightforward to point out who made up the political establishment and who was to blame if things were supposedly going wrong. This chapter, nevertheless, argued that the BNP and UKIP are the only parties that have been truly defined by their populist character. In Westminster elections the regionalist parties have essentially criticised an establishment from 'abroad' and these parties have clearly been (dominant) mainstream parties in their own devolved assemblies. At the same time, little was left of the populist appeal of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats after they joined forces in a coalition government in 2010. Parties with a nationwide appeal other than the BNP and UKIP, moreover, simply use populist rhetoric too sporadically to be considered as genuine populist parties.

In terms of the ideological characteristics of the BNP and UKIP, both parties have clearly appealed to a heartland of ordinary *British* people. In doing so, they have more or less ignored the various nationalist sentiments which are present across the British Isles. In effect, the parties mainly drew support from English voters. According to the populist parties, the British heartland is threatened by European integration, which waters down British sovereignty and identity, as well as immigration and the rise of Islam. Whereas European integration has more clearly been the signature issue of UKIP, issues related to immigration and race have always been at the core of the BNP's programme.

This chapter has also assessed the electoral performance of the populist parties in the UK. In elections for the House of Commons the populist parties in the UK have been facing an electoral system which is ostensibly unfavourable to their success. Even though ties between British voters and established parties have weakened, populist parties have been unable to win the plurality of votes in any of the

constituencies throughout the country. It is evident that the Single Member Plurality system has made it more difficult for the BNP and UKIP to win seats, as they have lacked a particularly strong regional base of support. It is, however, not entirely clear how much the electoral system has actually influenced the willingness of people to vote for the parties in the first place. European Parliament elections, held under a system of Proportional Representation, have proven to be more conducive to populist party success. The electoral success of most notably UKIP, however, cannot be understood without taking the second-order character of these elections into account. The lack of electoral success for populist parties under the Mixed Member Proportional systems used in regional elections, at the same time, has to do with their lack of appeal in devolved regions. The electoral system is, thus, only part of the story at best.

Reasons for the limited support for populist parties should also be sought in the responsiveness of the established parties with regard to the BNP's and UKIP's core issues: immigration and European integration. Where the past decades are concerned, the Conservatives have been able to obtain policy position ownership with regard to the issue of immigration by adopting a tough stance when the electoral salience of this issue increased. Opinion poll figures, nonetheless, suggest that the Conservatives' policy position ownership is not guaranteed. In recent times, the Conservatives have also been the mainstream party with the strongest Eurosceptic message, although this issue has been of minor importance in general elections. Irrespective of these specific issues, however, there has been widespread dissatisfaction among the British public with regard to the general political process. This is likely to have been further fuelled by the expenses scandal in 2009, involving MPs from all three largest parties. The populist parties have only been able to attract a limited amount of votes on the basis of this dissatisfaction. It is likely that their failure to seize the policy position ownership of an electorally salient issue is related to this; populist parties stand little chance if they cannot successfully convey that they add resonant policy proposals to their thin core of populist anti-establishment critique.

The main reason for the BNP's and UKIP's failure to do so can be assumed to relate to their lack of credibility. Both these parties have been riven by internal conflict, reducing their trustworthiness as competent political actors. This would, however, probably have been more harmful for the parties if they had actually broken through on the national level and, consequently, had been under closer public scrutiny. The BNP's lack of electoral success has been mainly due to its extremist image. Even though party leader Nick Griffin has aimed to give the BNP a more respectable image by moving away from overt biological racism, the party is still considered to be 'beyond the pale' by more moderate British voters. Besides its problem that 'Europe' is

simply not much of an issue in general elections, UKIP, in turn, has lacked visible and persuasive leadership for most of the time.

An observation from the British case is that, as was the case in Poland, many essentially non-populist opposition parties use fierce (populist) anti-establishment rhetoric as well. As suggested, the majoritarian character of British democracy may have something to do with this. Most opposition parties have never shared government responsibility and can, therefore, convincingly distance themselves from Labour and the Conservatives. The fact that, until 2010, post-war Britain has not experienced coalition government might further have fuelled a more adversarial political climate. In addition, nationalist sentiments play an important role in the anti-establishment appeal of, for instance, the Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties. The regionalist parties tend to blame the Westminster establishment for not listening to the ordinary people, primarily referring to the people of their own nations. Opposition parties that have presented themselves as more credible alternatives than the BNP and UKIP are, then, likely to have capitalised on public dissatisfaction more successfully than the two populist parties. This can, not in the last place, be assumed to apply to the Liberal Democrats. As the Liberal Democrats have entered a coalition government after the 2010 general election, it supposedly becomes more difficult for the party to convincingly cling to its anti-establishment critique in the near future.

In terms of the electoral performance of populist parties, the British case has shown that a disproportional electoral system and a responsive political establishment can limit the opportunities for populist parties. The institutional environment has, at least, not been conducive to the success of smaller parties. That said, the fact that the populist parties have been unable to seize policy position ownership with regard to a salient issue, such as immigration, and to capitalise on the anti-establishment mood is largely due to their own lack of credibility. The British case has thus again indicated that the credibility of populist parties themselves is of crucial importance to their electoral performance. Paul Webb (2005: 774) has argued that "The long-term erosion of traditional party loyalties, the emergence of new social fault-lines, and disillusionment with the major parties are all factors which can be expected to facilitate the growth of protest voting and minor party support". With regard to populist parties in particular, this claim may well be substantiated if public dissatisfaction with politics remains prevalent and if these parties can present themselves as more credible alternatives in the future.

7   Conclusions and Implications

7.1   Introduction

Populism is an important concept in the study of politics. The surge of populism can be considered to serve as a warning signal that the legitimacy of a political establishment is under pressure. Populism, in other words, serves as an indicator for the state of representative democracy (see Mény and Surel 2002; Taggart 2002; Panizza 2005). At the same time, however, populism is an ambiguous concept. The term tends to be used widely and unsystematically and often denotes a term of abuse. Populism is, often rather implicitly, habitually associated with political extremism, opportunism or demagogy (Taggart 2000; Mudde 2004; Taggart and Van Kessel 2009).

Both in the scholarly and vernacular spheres the concept is frequently yet, again, inconsistently used in referring to the actions or characteristics of political parties (Bale et al. 2011). In order to encourage a more accurate use of the term, this study has aimed to apply the concept of populism to political parties in a more systematic way. The first aim of the study was to identify populist parties in 31 European countries on the basis of a minimal definition. Political parties were considered to be populist parties if they (1) delineate an exclusive community of 'ordinary people' (2) appeal to these ordinary people, whose interests and opinions should be central in making political decisions and (3) are fundamentally hostile towards the (political) establishment, which allegedly does not act in the interest of the ordinary people. This dissertation, furthermore, broadened the scope with regard to the study of populist parties in Europe by considering also non-Western countries and non-radical right cases.

As the rise of populist parties is considered to be an important signal for the functioning of representative democracy, the second aim of the study was to explain the performance of populist parties in Europe in recent parliamentary elections. Having sought inspiration from existing literature on related topics, the study considered the impact of four explanatory variables on the electoral performance of populist parties: the electoral system, the availability of the electorate, the responsiveness of established parties and the supply of credible populist parties. The electoral success of populist parties was expected to be stimulated by an electoral system leading to a proportional translation of votes into parliamentary seats, the presence of a substantial amount of voters willing to shift their political allegiance,

unresponsiveness of established political parties and the presence of credible populist challengers. A disproportional electoral system, an unavailable electorate, a responsive political establishment and a lack of credible populist parties, on the other hand, were expected to be conducive to the failure of populist parties. Whether all four variables were relevant in each of the individual countries was left open to be discovered by the study.

The latter variable concerning the credibility of populist parties was particularly assumed to be important. Previous comparative studies have often overlooked the agency of radical challenger parties themselves (Mudde 2007; 2010). This study instead started out from the assumption that besides the *demand* for, also the *supply* of credible populist parties is crucial to make sense of the electoral performance of such parties. In order to assess whether populist parties were credible, their electoral appeal and organisational stability were considered (see Carter 2005; Mudde 2007). The credibility of a populist party's appeal, in turn, was determined by assessing the visibility and persuasiveness of the populist leadership and the party's ability to ward off an extremist image and to convincingly distance itself from the political establishment. The second indicator of credibility related to the organisational stability of populist parties. Populist parties were assumed to lose their credibility if they fail to preserve organisational unity, for instance due to infighting or the departure of an all-important figurehead.

In order to analyse the electoral performance of populist parties, this study has applied a mix-methods approach. First, a relatively novel method, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), was used to study the performance of populist parties in all 31 European countries. This part of the research sought to identify the general causal patterns underlying the electoral performance of populist parties in Europe. QCA was chosen as it provides techniques particularly suitable for medium-N analysis and because it is geared to show how different configurations of causal conditions ('paths') may lead to the same outcome. This was deemed to be important, in view of the variety of cases under consideration (long established democracies as well as post-communist countries).

The broad QCA analysis was complemented with three in-depth qualitative case studies on populist parties in the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom. The case studies discussed in detail which parties could be classified as populist parties and aimed to drill down to the causal mechanisms underlying the electoral performance of these populist parties. In doing so, this dissertation aimed to *explain* the electoral performance of populist parties, by testing the model across a broad range of European countries, and to *understand* the workings of the causal mechanism

by studying three cases in detail. By triangulating the methods, moreover, the case studies assessed the plausibility of the findings from the QCA analysis (see Lieberman 2005).

This concluding chapter discusses and reflects on the findings of the study. The following section focuses on all the 31 countries considered in the dissertation and touches on the findings from Chapter 2, which identified the populist parties in these countries, and Chapter 3, which provided the QCA analysis. Section 7.3 contains a comparative overview of the three case studies, revisiting the ideological characteristics of the populist parties in the three countries and the impact of the four causal conditions on their electoral performance. A key finding is that the agency of political parties is crucial to the success or failure of populist parties. Established parties can create the demand for populist parties if they fail to be responsive with regard to salient societal issues. Populist parties, however, only break through and sustain their success if they present themselves as a credible alternative to the political establishment and if voters feel they can handle their signature issues better than the established parties. The final section discusses the implications of the study's findings and identifies avenues for further research.

7.2   Populist Parties in 31 European Countries

Identifying populist parties

Chapter 2 of this dissertation has identified the populist parties in 31 European countries which have managed to enter parliament at least once after the four most recent parliamentary elections. This was primarily done on the basis of scholarly literature and the consultation of country experts (see Appendix A). The chapter also discussed several borderline cases and argued why certain cases were omitted from the universe of contemporary European populist parties.

Whereas identifying populist parties in some countries was a rather straightforward exercise, some other cases provided more of a challenge. First of all, due to the ambiguity of the concept 'populism' no ready-to-use canon of populist cases exists. Even when a clear definition of populist parties is provided, some scholars still disagree about individual cases. What was also evident from Chapter 2 was that parties can change the degree to which they apply populist rhetoric throughout time. This is especially apparent in former communist countries with fluid party systems, where new political parties are often characterised by an anti-

establishment appeal (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009; Sikk 2009). This appeal tends to vanish when these new parties take government responsibility.

In some cases, therefore, it makes sense to perceive of populism as a discourse or a rhetorical strategy which can be applied by any political actor and to different degrees over time. As has been argued, however, some political parties could be identified which have populism at the very core of their appeal. It would, in other words, not be possible to characterise these parties without taking their populist anti-establishment discourse into account. Table 2.1 has provided a list of these populist parties.

QCA analysis

Chapter 3 shifted the focus to the electoral performance of the identified populist parties in 31 European countries. The results of the QCA analysis in this chapter showed that populist parties were electorally successful in countries with a supply of credible populist parties, combined with an available electorate and/or a proportional electoral system. Unlike the credibility condition, the other two conditions were not relevant in all cases. In some countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland) the proportionality of the electoral systems seemed to 'make up' for the relatively unavailable electorates. At the same time, the findings suggest that the electoral system is not a relevant condition for the electoral success of populist parties in all cases. In countries like France and Hungary a (relatively) disproportional electoral system did not stop credible populist parties from receiving a substantial share of the vote.

The credibility of populist challengers also turned out to be crucial to the absence of populist party success. That is, most countries that lacked electoral success of populist parties also lacked the supply of credible populist parties. Only in Greece did a relatively credible populist party (The Popular Orthodox Rally) not manage to achieve significant electoral success. Judging from the analysis, this was due to a relatively unavailable electorate, combined with an electoral system leading to a disproportional translation of votes into seats. Until recently, relatively credible populist parties in Ireland (*Sinn Féin*) and Finland (True Finns) have also only had limited electoral success (see Chapter 2). Credibility of populist parties can, then, be considered to be a necessary condition for the electoral success of populist parties, but not quite a sufficient one. The findings, nevertheless, suggest that the supply of credible populist parties, as a single causal condition, is of vital importance. This implies that populist parties do not only rely on uninformed protest votes, as the

credibility of populist parties would otherwise not have been this essential (see Eatwell 2003; Van der Brug et al. 2000; 2005).

The QCA analysis has also shown that general levels of trust and satisfaction with regard to political institutions are not essential to the electoral performance of populist parties. These trust and satisfaction levels were used as indicators for the responsiveness of the established parties. This condition did not feature prominently in the minimised causal paths. Where it did, the results seemed counterintuitive. The *presence* of unresponsiveness was part of a causal path leading to the *absence* of populist party success, and vice versa. More parsimonious solutions, however, discarded the responsiveness condition from the solutions altogether. These findings, in any case, imply that populist parties can also be successful in countries where general satisfaction or trust levels with regard to political institutions are high (e.g. Austria, the Netherlands, Norway). At the same time, populist party success is not guaranteed, even if a large part of the electorate is dissatisfied with political institutions (e.g. in Croatia, Slovenia and Portugal). Due to its breadth, it lay beyond the scope of the QCA analysis to also consider the responsiveness of established parties with regard to specific issues. The qualitative case studies did explicitly focus on this matter by considering the responsiveness of the established parties with regard to the issues central to the populist parties' appeal.

When the results of the QCA analysis are considered, questions can be raised about the exogeneity of the final causal condition: the supply of credible populist parties. Judgements about the credibility of populist parties may have (subconsciously) been influenced by the parties' electoral performance. It is hard to get around this problem, but the study has aimed to assess the credibility of populist parties in Europe as accurately as possible, on the basis of existing literature and the judgement of country experts (see Chapter 2). The credibility of populist parties was considered to be a crucial factor in explaining their electoral performance. Ignoring this condition because it is simply too difficult to operationalise (in a quantitative way) would have been a grave mistake. The credibility of populist parties has been assessed in greater detail in the case studies, which allowed for crossvalidation of the finding that this supply-side factor is a crucial factor in explaining the electoral performance of populist parties. The next section turns to the findings of these case studies.

7.3   Comparing the Populist Parties and their Electoral Performance in the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom

With regard to the identification of populist parties in the three countries under consideration, the Netherlands has been the most clear-cut case. Only the left-wing Socialist Party could be seen as a borderline case. As argued in Chapter 4, however, the party moderated its populist anti-establishment rhetoric after the turn of the 21st century and could better be perceived as a, somewhat radical, social democratic party since (see Voerman and Lucardie 2007; De Lange and Rooduijn 2011). The main populist forces that have appeared in the Netherlands since the parliamentary election of 2002 are the List Pim Fortuyn and the Freedom Party of Geert Wilders. In 2002, Pim Fortuyn gained most attention by placing issues related to immigration and the social integration of (Muslim) minorities on the political agenda. Afterwards, Geert Wilders applied an even harsher rhetoric against the political establishment and the perceived threats of 'Islamisation'.

In Poland the identification of populist parties was somewhat less straightforward, also when the party system stabilised after the turn of the 21st century. A main borderline case was the Catholic-nationalist League of Polish Families. As has been argued in Chapter 5, however, the League sought more inspiration from Catholic teachings than from the will of the 'ordinary people'. A complicating factor in identifying Polish populist parties is the general anti-establishment mood which prevailed during the 2001 and, particularly, the 2005 parliamentary elections. All opposition parties, consequently, voiced dissatisfaction with the political establishment. As has been argued, however, there were only two parties that truly comply with all three criteria of the definition: Self Defence and, since 2005, Law and Justice. Self Defence presented itself most clearly as the defender of the interests of the Polish 'transition losers', whereas Law and Justice was particularly defined by its promise to fight corruption in public office.

The UK, too, proved to be a challenging case as far as the identification of populist parties is concerned. Populist rhetoric has been applied widely across the political spectrum, not in the last place by the regionalist parties in Scotland and Wales. Since these parties primarily represent their clearly circumscribed nations, instead of the 'silent majority' within the whole country, and since the establishment they criticise is essentially an establishment from 'outside', these parties were not considered to be populist parties. The Green Party and the Liberal Democrats, as well as the most unusual suspects, the Labour Party and the Conservatives, were excluded

as well. Although it was possible to find populist statements in these parties' discourse, their use of populist rhetoric remained limited compared to the two genuine populist parties: The UK Independence Party and the British National Party (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011). Since its foundation, the former party has been mainly defined by its Eurosceptic character, while the latter party has always had immigration and race at the core of its appeal. As argued in the previous chapter, the reason why populist rhetoric has been applied so widely in British politics may have to do with the dominance of two mainstream parties and the fact that one-party government used to be the norm in post-Second World War Britain. It has, as a result, been relatively straightforward to point out who made up the political establishment and who was to blame if things were supposedly going wrong. The absence of coalition governments during most of the post-war era, moreover, may have given British politics a distinctive adversarial character.

As has been shown in the previous three chapters, the ideological characteristics of the populist parties and the issues central to their appeal varied considerably across the three cases, illustrating the chameleonic character of populism (Taggart 2000). Populist parties focus on issues that are relevant to their particular political context and adopt an ideological colour that is consistent with the perceived needs of the 'ordinary people' within their portrayed 'heartlands'. That, unlike in the Netherlands and the UK, immigration has hardly played a role for Polish populist parties is, in this sense, understandable. Poland has thus far been a very homogeneous country with a negative immigration rate. The case studies have assessed whether the electoral performance of these various populist parties can, nevertheless, be explained by considering the same explanatory variables: the electoral system, the availability of the electorate, the responsiveness of established parties and the supply of credible populist parties.

The Electoral System
Of the three countries, the Netherlands applies the electoral system which has (in theory) been most conducive to the electoral success of new or small (populist) parties. The very proportional electoral system has, at least, not provided the Dutch populist parties with much of an institutional hurdle. A party only requires 0.67% of the vote in order to become represented in Dutch Parliament. Potential voters were, in effect, unlikely to be discouraged by the electoral rules (see Duverger 1959). In Poland, the electoral system has repeatedly been changed since the first genuinely free election of 1991. The last three parliamentary elections of 2001, 2005 and 2007 have been held under a fairly proportional system. 2001 was also the year in which both Self Defence

and the League of Polish Families, the populist borderline case, managed to enter the *Sejm*. In the UK, no populist parties have managed to win seats in the House of Commons. It has proven hard for the BNP and UKIP to build up enough support to come even close to winning the plurality of votes in a single constituency. In European Parliament elections, held under a PR system, these parties have been more successful. The results of these 'second-order' elections can, however, not be taken as solid indicators for the potential support for the populists in general elections. This is because European Parliament elections are likely to stimulate the vote for anti-establishment parties (see Reif and Schmitt 1980).

It is safe to state that the electoral system has been a constraining or enabling factor for populist parties to cross the electoral threshold. Under the Dutch PR system both UKIP and the BNP would have entered parliament with their modest 2010 general election vote shares (3.1% and 1.9% respectively). Lacking representation in parliament, in turn, might hamper further growth of the party if this is, for instance, translated into less media exposure. Apart from purely 'mechanical' effects, an electoral system can also be expected to generate 'psychological' effects, as voters are likely to take into account the workings of the electoral rules (Duverger 1959). Just how much populist party voters anticipate the effects of electoral rules, however, remains difficult to gauge. A favourable electoral system alone is, anyway, not a sufficient condition for the success of populist parties. This is most clearly illustrated by the Dutch case in which the performance of populist parties has been modest prior to, and erratic after the turn of the 21st century. A proportional electoral system may, in other words, contribute to populist electoral success only when other conditions are also favourable. The QCA analysis has indicated that especially the supply of credible populist parties is important in this regard. This factor will be discussed later in this section.

Availability of the Electorate

As the case studies have shown, both in the Netherlands and the UK traditional ties between the electorate and political parties have gradually weakened in the decades after the Second World War. In the Netherlands, the social 'pillars', representing different social and religious groups within Dutch society, gradually crumbled and traditional parties lost their dominant position (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003). Britain, at the same time, witnessed the increased importance of new post-materialist and regional cleavages as well as a decline in partisan alignment (Webb 2000). In Poland, on the other hand, partisan alignment has been markedly weak ever since the transition to democracy at the end of the 1980s (Szczerbiak 2008; Millard 2010). The

communist era has fed into widespread distrust of political parties (Rose 1995). The parties in power after the transition to democracy have done little to counter these negative sentiments. That is, Polish voters are unlikely to have developed enduring loyalty to parties that have repeatedly been associated with cronyism and corruption. This, in turn, relates to the third explanatory variable in this research, the responsiveness of the established parties, which will be further discussed below.

In the past few decades, then, the electorate in all three countries has been marked by relatively weak levels of party affiliation. In that sense, there is not much variation between the three cases. Partisan dealignment, moreover, is a process which has affected most West-European democracies and partisan affiliation in most post-communist countries tends to be low. The availability of the electorate nevertheless appears to be an important factor in explaining the electoral fortunes of populist parties in Western European countries throughout time. The Netherlands, where these parties have only truly secured impressive results in recent elections, is a case in point. In the decades after the Second World War most Dutch voters were unavailable, due to their loyalty towards the parties representing their social and religious 'pillars' (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003).

Responsiveness of the established parties

The first of the two agency-related conditions this study has considered is the responsiveness of the established political parties. In Poland and the Netherlands this factor has proven to be important concerning the breakthrough of populist parties. In both countries the populists benefited from the perceived unresponsiveness of the political establishment. In the Netherlands, after eight years of 'Purple' government, neither of the established parties voiced clear concerns about the salient issues of immigration and cultural integration of minorities (e.g. Aarts and Thomassen 2008). In Poland, the political mainstream generally agreed on a move towards the free-market and state deregulation in the 1990s. When economic conditions soured at the end of the 1990s, there was a growing resentment against such policies among the Polish 'transition losers', as has been shown in Chapter 5. Moreover, the trustworthiness of Polish mainstream parties suffered enormously due to ongoing practices of cronyism and corruption scandals.

As Chapters 4 and 5 have shown, in both the Netherlands and Poland the support for populist parties was based on dissatisfaction with the political establishment and the feeling that it was necessary to shake up or purify politics. Consistent with the findings from the QCA analysis, the Dutch case has shown that populist parties can nevertheless do well in countries with high *overall* levels of

confidence and satisfaction with regard to political institutions (Bovens and Wille 2011). Populist parties in the Netherlands relied on the support of a particular dissatisfied *segment* of society. The Dutch case also indicated that, besides disgruntlement, voters for populist parties are motivated by more substantive policy considerations (see Van der Brug 2003). This suggests that it can be the responsiveness of established parties with regard to *specific issues* that matters in explaining the electoral performance of populist parties. In Poland, the vote for populist parties seemed particularly driven by more general dissatisfaction with the political system. This is no surprise, since probity in public life and corruption were highly salient issues during the 2001 and 2005 parliamentary election campaigns (Szczerbiak 2007; Millard 2010).

In the UK, on the other hand, the political establishment has not quite disregarded public concerns with regard to the issues central to the populist parties: immigration and European integration. Voters with negative attitudes about these issues could turn to the Conservative Party in particular. Despite internal divisions, this party has taken a relatively hard line with regard to both immigration and European integration throughout the past decades (Eatwell 2000; Goodwin 2011). As Chapter 6 has shown, the Conservative Party was also seen as the party best capable to 'handle' the issue of immigration prior to the recent 2005 and 2010 general elections. The BNP and UKIP did not, therefore, occupy a vacant niche where these issues are concerned. These parties were also unable to seize issue position ownership with regard to 'Europe' and immigration. What is more, European integration, the flagship issue of UKIP, has hardly been a salient issue in general elections, even if Britain has a very Eurosceptic electorate (see Chapter 6). The populist parties have also been unable to capitalise on the more general dissatisfaction with British political institutions. It is likely that the populist parties' failure to seize the policy position ownership concerning an electorally salient issue is related to this. Since substantive policies seem to matter to the populist party electorate, these parties can be assumed to stand little chance if they rely only on their anti-establishment appeal without being able to convince voters with resonant policy proposals. The failure of the British populist parties to have done so is very likely to be related to their own credibility. This will be further discussed below.

The case of the Netherlands has shown that, after the breakthrough of a populist party, the responsiveness of the established parties is not necessarily crucial anymore. Dutch mainstream parties adapted their stance with regard to immigration and integration after 2002, arguably becoming more responsive to the voters concerned about these issues (Oosterwaal and Torenvlied 2010). This, however, did not stop Geert Wilders from achieving considerable success in the 2010 parliamentary

election. This indicates that established parties, even when being responsive, do not automatically regain the confidence of voters who were previously appealed by a populist party. Whether the populist party can maintain electoral support is, then, more matter of its own ability to preserve policy position ownership concerning its key issues. This is also related to the credibility of populist parties, to which the discussion now turns.

Supply of Credible Populist Parties

Consistent with the findings from the QCA analysis, the case studies have also indicated that the credibility of the populist parties has been crucial to their electoral breakthrough and persistence. As has been described in Chapter 4, in the Netherlands many voters were convinced by the strong and visible appeal of Pim Fortuyn in the parliamentary election of 2002. After his assassination he proved to be irreplaceable as a leader and his party's credibility further waned due to continuing internal strife. Afterwards, Geert Wilders' Freedom Party gradually became the most important populist force in Dutch politics. Wilders managed to win over a substantial amount of voters with his harsh anti-Islam and anti-establishment rhetoric. Wilders was, moreover, able to keep his party's ranks closed and to dissociate himself from political extremism (Vossen 2010b). Even though issues related to immigration and cultural integration became more prominent in the programmes of other Dutch political parties, Wilders managed to seize and maintain policy position ownership with regard to these issues.

In Poland, the party Self Defence of the controversial Andrzej Lepper managed to run a more professional campaign at the time of the 2001 general election (Szczerbiak 2002; Millard 2010). As a result, "Lepper was able to develop a distinctive and attractive electoral appeal as a 'man of the people' who was articulate and determined enough to take on the Warsaw elites" (Szczerbiak 2002: 58). Even though the party suffered from a large number of defections after it entered parliament, it could sustain its electoral support in the following election of 2005. Once in office, however, more defections followed and the party was hit by corruption allegations. In 2007, Self Defence, just like its fellow coalition partner League of Polish Families, which faced similar problems, did not manage to win enough votes to be represented in the *Sejm*. After it had adopted a more full-blown populist discourse, Law and Justice could steal the electoral thunder of the two radical parties, as it was able to remain well organised, to retain a credible anti-corruption image and to present itself as the most trustworthy agent of 'solidaristic' Poland (Stanley 2010). Law and Justice suffered from the death of president Lech Kaczyński and several defections of

prominent politicians, but seems to have consolidated itself as one of the two main forces in Polish politics.

The British populist parties, lastly, have never been able to present themselves as credible alternatives to the political establishment. In recent years, the British National Party moderated its race-related discourse and shifted its emphasis to local community needs (Goodwin 2008). However, at the time of writing, it still remains hard for the BNP to appeal to a large pool of more moderate voters (Goodwin 2011). This is due to the neo-fascist legacy of the BNP and to the fact that the party still takes in an extreme position where issues like immigration and race are concerned. The BNP, furthermore, continued to suffer from internal conflicts and pressure on Griffin was growing after disappointing general election results in 2010. Internal strife has also been plaguing the UK Independence Party. The most notable conflict erupted after maverick politician Robert Kilroy-Silk joined UKIP in 2004. As was argued in Chapter 6, a more important reason for the lack of electoral appeal of UKIP has supposedly been the failure of the party to put forward visible and convincing leaders. Due to this lack of visibility, most members of the public were probably unaware of all the organisational problems UKIP faced.

Having persuasive and visible figureheads, as well as the related ability to seize the policy position ownership of a salient issue, seem to be prerequisites for populist parties to break through. The case of the BNP in the UK has shown that an extremist image, on the other hand, may hamper the outreach of a populist party towards a broader audience. Otherwise, it can prove to be difficult for a populist party to maintain a credible anti-establishment appeal, or to fulfil the raised expectations, once it enters office (Taggart 2000; Mény and Surel 2002; cf. Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005; 2008). The List Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands and Self Defence in Poland are cases in point. The Dutch Freedom Party, in this sense, is in a better position. After the parliamentary election of 2010 Geert Wilders' party agreed to provide support for a minority government, which enabled it to push through some of its policies and to criticise the government for less popular measures at the same time. Law and Justice in Poland, in turn, could even retain its populist appeal whilst taking full government responsibility. This was particularly due to its ability to uphold a credible corruption-fighting image by still criticising the corrupt political system which it was claiming to fight in office. The party thus provides another example of a populist party able to 'keep one foot in and one foot out' of government (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005).

Organisational stability seems a particularly important factor as far as the longevity of a populist party is concerned (Mudde 2007; 2010). The List Pim Fortuyn and Self Defence were parties marked by several intra-party conflicts, hampering their

image as responsible alternatives to the political establishment. For the latter party, however, this was not fatal during its first parliamentary period in opposition. The party was able to maintain its vote share in the subsequent election. After a short period in power the Polish electorate proved to be less forgiving. The Polish case, then, indicates that organisational instability might not be lethal for populist parties if they have not yet taken government responsibility. Organisational problems have also been troubling populist parties in the UK. As argued, however, internal disputes are less likely to have a direct impact on the electoral appeal of parties that have not managed to break through, due to their limited media exposure. That is not to say that internal disputes are irrelevant when considering the more long term electoral fortunes of (populist) parties, as it may hamper their ability to put themselves forward as credible alternatives to the established political parties.

Having touched on the main findings from this study, the final section of this chapter turns to the implications of these findings for the study of populist parties, and party politics more generally. It also discusses several avenues for further research.

7.4   Implications and Avenues for Further Research

The findings of this research have several implications for the study of populism, populist parties, and the study of party competition in general. A first implication of a conceptual nature relates to the study's aim to identify a clearly circumscribed universe of populist parties in contemporary Europe. The study has identified some challenges with regard to this, most prominently related to the observation that parties can apply a populist discourse to different degrees across time. This particularly happens in the fluid party systems in Central and Eastern Europe (Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009; Sikk 2009). This implies that populism can, at least in some cases, better be perceived as a rhetorical strategy or communication style than as a more deep-rooted ideology (e.g. Betz 2002; Jagers and Walgrave 2007). Bearing this in mind, there is certainly room for further research into the use of populism by politicians and parties beyond the 'usual populist suspects'. Interesting questions, for instance, are under what circumstances mainstream parties tend to apply populist rhetoric, whether populist discourse is normally applied for clear opportunistic purposes and whether populist discourse necessarily wanes in office.

This study took a different approach and identified the 'genuine' populist parties in contemporary Europe. Populism, as is the line of reasoning followed here,

can be more than a rhetoric which is sporadically used for opportunistic purposes. There are parties that embody resistance against the established system of representative politics and that could not be characterised without taking their populist appeal into account. Some observers may disagree about several borderline cases which have been excluded, or included, in this study. By providing a clear-cut list of populist parties, however, the dissertation has, at the very least, aimed to contribute to the discussion about how to relate the concept of populism to political parties and to encourage a more accurate use of the term. Researchers aiming to identify a circumscribed set of populist parties should, anyway, select cases with care. In view of the outlined classification challenges it is inadequate to simply include parties which are habitually referred to as 'populist' without much substantiation.

In order to come closer to a more definite universe of populist cases, future research could take the form of a collaborative research project, involving experts from a range of different countries. This study has relied on the in-depth knowledge of scholars with expertise about party politics in particular countries. If such scholars would become involved in a joint project, a less tentative list of populist parties can be created. Another potentially fruitful way to identify populist parties, which relies a bit less on in-depth knowledge, is to perform a quantitative content analysis of party documents or other sources in which party characteristics are captured (see Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Hawkins 2009; Deegan-Krause and Haughton 2009; Pauwels 2011b; De Lange and Rooduijn 2011). Such a method also makes it possible to gauge the *extent* to which a party is populist. The analysis would have to be performed with caution. It is important that the source studied provides a valid reflection of the characteristics of the party under consideration. Crude measurement might, moreover, lead to a disregard for the actual or deeper meaning of the studied content. When the aim is not only to measure populism, but also to assess in a dichotomous fashion which parties are populist or not, another challenge is to determine how much populist rhetoric is necessary for a party to be considered as a genuine populist party.

A related, more general, point can be made about the classification of different types of political parties. This study has aimed to identify the populist parties on the basis of the message they conveyed. Particularly with regard to populist parties this seems the most appropriate approach, due to, for instance, the reluctance of parties to identify themselves as populist. More specifically, the study sought to uncover the *core* characteristics of political parties in order to judge whether they were populist or not (see Mair and Mudde 1998). There is no straightforward method to determine what the 'core' of a party's identity is. What is more, a genuine theoretical debate about this is lacking. Although this dissertation has not provided a definitive answer in

this regard, it has proposed that preambles and concluding sections of party manifestos illustrate the general message a party aims to convey to the electorate particularly well. Then again, some scholars may be more interested in discovering the true motives of a particular party, rather than characterising a party on the basis of how it tries to 'sell' itself to its potential voters. As has been discussed in Chapter 6, for instance, it can be debated whether the British National Party truly underwent an ideological transformation, or whether it has been more of a cosmetic affair in the attempt to increase its electoral chances (Copsey 2008). In any case, the question how to identify the 'core' identity of a particular party is of particular importance if it is assumed that parties in contemporary Europe become less attached to firmly rooted ideologies than before and take more the shape of 'catch-all' or 'business-firm' parties (Kirchheimer 1966; Hopkin and Paolucci 1999; Krouwel 2006). Parties can now less easily be classified on the basis of a fixed set of ideological principles or a traditional support base. Therefore, a discussion about how to uncover the 'core' characteristics of political parties is welcome, in order to make sense of different types of parties in contemporary politics.

Moving away from conceptual questions and towards implications of this study related to the electoral performance of populist parties, this study has, above all, indicated that the agency of political parties is crucial. Institutional conditions, like disproportional electoral systems, may provide populist outsiders with a hurdle. Even if these hurdles are absent, however, the success of populist parties stands or falls with the agency of political parties. Established parties pave the way for populist parties if they fail to be responsive with regard to salient societal issues. This is consistent with the more theoretical argument of various scholars who have linked the rise of populism with the apparent neglect of popular sovereignty in representative liberal democracies (Canovan 1999; Mény and Surel 2002; Taggart 2002). It is, however, too simple to perceive a vote for a populist party as a simple protest vote. The electorate of populist parties turns out to be concerned with concrete policy issues as well (see Eatwell 2003; Van der Brug et al. 2000; 2005).

Furthermore, as was implied by both the QCA analysis and the qualitative case studies, populist parties themselves can only break through and sustain their success if they present themselves as a credible alternative to the political establishment. It is, in other words, about the supply of, as much as the demand for populist parties. The importance of the agency of radical political outsiders has been stressed in earlier accounts (Betz 1998; Carter 2005; Mudde 2007; 2010). As this research has indicated, populist parties are indeed not 'hapless victims' (Berman 1997: 102), but are to a certain extent the masters of their own destiny. Further comparative research

concerning the electoral performance of populist parties should, therefore, not refrain from taking these parties' own agency into account. Larger scale quantitative studies, in particular, overlooked this factor too often. This is understandable, as credibility is difficult to operationalise and an assessment of credibility requires in-depth knowledge about individual cases. Scholars may even argue that credibility cannot be objectively measured in the first place. These are not valid excuses, however, for disregarding a factor of such great importance. Again, collaboration of various country specialists might be a way to come to a more rigorous assessment of the credibility of populist parties – or any kind of other parties for that matter – in multiple countries. On the basis of previous accounts (Carter 2005; Mudde 2007), this study has aimed to make a contribution by proposing a way to assess the credibility of populist parties. By doing so, this dissertation hopes to inspire researchers to systematically study the agency of populist parties, or at least to contribute to the debate about how this can best be done.

The dissertation further aimed to broaden the scope of the study of populist parties by comparing countries from both Eastern and Western Europe. Differences are still prevalent between (the stability of) party systems in long established democracies and post-communist countries. Findings from this study have nonetheless indicated that the performance of populist parties in both parts of Europe is, at least in broad terms, based on the same logic. All three case studies have shown that populist voters were partly driven by dissatisfaction with the established parties and that the credibility of populist parties themselves has been crucial to explain their electoral performance. If the electoral performance of populist parties in Eastern and Western Europe relies on the same broad logic, this invites further research with a pan-European focus. This is especially the case if the assumed 'homogenising effects' of European integration will continue and if party systems in post-communist countries will become less fluid (Mudde 2007: 255). This would also make the identification of populist parties more straightforward in the first place. Pan-European research does, of course, not have to be limited to the study of populist parties only. In the field of party politics in general there is room for studies considering countries across the whole continent.

What also became clear from the study is that the logic behind the performance of populist parties does not have to be radically different from the logic concerning other political parties. Other parties in opposition can also profit from a widespread feeling that the establishment is unresponsive to the demands of the electorate. The Polish case has, for instance, shown that many dissatisfied voters turned to the essentially non-populist League of Polish Families. The British Liberal

Democrats also seem to have attracted voters who were, at least partly, driven by dissatisfaction. More generally, all political parties are likely to do better if their politicians come across as credible representatives of the people. Particularly in contemporary Europe, where political parties often cannot automatically rely on a loyal base of support (anymore), the need to convince voters with a credible appeal seems crucial in order to achieve electoral success. Electorates across Western Europe have become much more 'available' due to the weakening ties between parties and voters. This has, for instance, translated into increased electoral volatility and a drop in party membership (Mair 2006). Due to the communist legacy in many Central and Eastern European countries, voters in this part of Europe have never built up strong party commitments in the first place.

In this sense, traditional parties and populist parties, or other newcomers, compete on very similar terms. General theories about party competition, for instance related to the concept of issue (position) ownership, are very much applicable to populist parties as well (see Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996; Mudde 2010). In this sense, it seems inappropriate to make a fundamental distinction between mainstream and populist, or other 'niche' parties, in studying general patterns of party competition. It certainly does not seem to be a fruitful approach to treat newly formed parties as mere "by-products of competition between mainstream parties" (Meguid 2008: 22). It is, in other words, required that populist parties and other types of 'challenger' parties are treated as equals when their electoral performance is studied.

It would go too far to claim that there are no differences at all in the logic behind the electoral performance of different types of parties. What this research has attempted to do is to identify the factors that are likely to be of particular relevance to populist party performance. As populist parties have anti-establishment critique at the core of their appeal, perceived unresponsiveness of the established parties is of particular importance to their performance. In this research, furthermore, the term 'credibility' has been operationalised specifically for populist parties. Populist parties are more likely to rely on visible and persuasive leadership, rather than on the loyalty of a group of core voters. They are, moreover, credible insofar as they manage to voice a convincing, yet not overly extremist, anti-establishment appeal. In terms of organisation, they are more prone to face internal turmoil due to the fact that they are often weakly institutionalised. Even though populist parties, for these latter reasons, can be considered to be quite vulnerable, several parties have managed to survive, even after taking government responsibility (e.g. the Italian *Lega Nord*, the Swiss People's Party and Law and Justice in Poland). The question why some parties are able

to succeed in credibly remaining populist in office is another interesting question to be explored in more detail (see Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005; 2010).

Several implications and avenues for further research have been identified in this section. With regard to future research on populism and populist parties it has been suggested that there is room for studies on the use of populist discourse by political actors in general, for collaborative or other systematic comparative research in order to identify populist parties and for studies tackling the question when and how populist parties can survive in government. Populist parties have become an important political force in many European democracies and are unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future. Whether or not populism is in some forms also a *threat* to democracy is a question which has not directly been tackled by this dissertation, but which certainly deserves further attention (see Canovan 1999; Abts and Rummens 2007). In any case, if it is indeed assumed that populism fulfils an important function in serving as an indicator for the health of representative democracy, it is important to come to an even closer understanding of the use of populist discourse and the reasons behind the rise and fall of populist parties. Particularly the agency of the populist parties themselves should not be overlooked in this regard. Concerning the study of political parties and party competition in general, it has been suggested that it is desirable to proceed with a discussion about how to identify the 'core' identity of political parties, that there is room for further research with a pan-European focus and that it is required to treat populist and other 'challenger' parties as equals in the field of electoral politics.

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Appendix A   List of Consulted Country Experts (Chapter 2)

Country	Experts
Austria	Franz Fallend, Wolfgang Müller
Belgium	Marc Swyngedouw, Teun Pauwels
Bulgaria	Lyubka Savkova, Kirsten Ghodsee, Markéta Smrčková
Croatia	Andrija Henjak, Marko Stojic, Goran Čular, Anđelko Milardović, Višeslav Raos
Cyprus	Giorgos Charalambous
Czech Republic	Vit Hloušek, Petr Kaniok
Denmark	Lars Svåsand, Jens Rydgren
Estonia	Allan Sikk, Rein Taagepera
Finland	Tapio Raunio, David Arter
France	Sally Marthaler
Germany	Dan Hough, Michael Koss
Greece	Susannah Verney, Elias Dinas, Kostas Geminis, Lefteris Zenerian
Hungary	Agnes Batory, Nick Sitter, Andras Inotai
Iceland	Gunnar Helgi, Hulda Þórisdóttir
Ireland	John FitzGibbon, Duncan McDonnell
Italy	Simona Guerra, Emanuelle Massetti, Carlo Ruzza, Stefano Fella, Duncan McDonnell, Daniele Albertazzi
Latvia	Allan Sikk; Daunis Auers; Tatyana Bogushevitch; Aleksejs Dimitrovs
Lithuania	Allan Sikk; Algis Krupavicius; Mindaugas Jurkynas
Luxembourg	Martine Huberty, Patrick Dumont.
Malta	Roderick Pace
The Netherlands	*Anonymous Expert Survey (see appendix D)*
Norway	Anniken Hagelund, Anders Widfeldt
Poland	*Anonymous Expert Survey (see appendix D)*
Portugal	Madalena Resende, Thomas Davis
Romania	Sergiu Gherghina, Edward Maxfield, Paul Sum
Slovakia	Tim Haughton, Kevin Deegan-Krause, Karen Henderson
Slovenia	Alenka Krašovec
Spain	Ariadna Ripoll Servent, Luis Ramiro, Thomas Davis
Sweden	Jens Rydgren, Nicholas Aylott
Switzerland	Daniele Albertazzi, Simon Bornschier
United Kingdom	*Anonymous Expert Survey (see appendix D)*

Appendix B Country Expert Questionnaire (Chapter 2)

Populist Parties

Populist parties are defined as parties that…

(1) delineate an exclusive community of 'ordinary people', which is normally rhetorically constructed in a negative manner, i.e. by identifying those groups that do not belong to the community.
(2) appeal to these 'ordinary' people, whose interests and opinions should be central in making political decisions.
(3) are fundamentally hostile towards the political establishment, which allegedly does not act in the interest of the ordinary people.

All three conditions need to be satisfied.

Measurement of credibility

The 'credibility' of the populist parties before subsequent elections is measured using two indicators:

1) **Party Appeal** of the party. Persuasiveness of the populist leaders, sufficient media attention in election campaign, strong impression in debates, convincing anti-establishment message, avoidance overly extremist rhetoric.
2) **Party Organisation**: internal stability. Absence of leadership challenges and conflicts in the preceding parliamentary period.

I score the parties on both indicators:
- **1** for an effective appeal/sound party organisation
- **0.5** as an intermediate score
- **0** for a lack of an effective appeal/lack of sound party organisation

Questions

1. Is the description of the cases identified and the assessment of their credibility accurate?
2. Are there any other populist parties that I have not included, which have gathered at least one seat in national parliament in the last four elections?
3. Are there any unsuccessful populist parties that I have not mentioned, which were nevertheless characterised by a sound party organisation and an appealing leader (i.e. parties that were credible yet unsuccessful)?

Draft text on populist parties in Country X

Description of populist parties in country X and assessment of their credibility.

Appendix C   List of Interviewees (Case Studies)

Interviewee	**Function**	**Place and Date**
The Netherlands		
Politicians		
Jan de Wit	Socialist Party MP	The Hague, 23-06-08
Hilbrand Nawijn	Former LPF Immigration Minister and PVN party leader	Zoetermeer, 08-09-08
Mat Herben	Former Pim Fortuyn spokesperson and LPF party leader	The Hague, 10-09-08
Rita Verdonk	TON Party Leader and former VVD Immigration Minister	The Hague, 18-12-08
Scholars / Researchers / Journalists		
Paul Lucardie	Scholar, Groningen University	Groningen, 19-06-08
René Cuperus	Researcher PvdA Think Tank (Wiardi Beckman Stichting)	Amsterdam, 04-09-08
Poland		
Politicians		
Maciej Giertych	LPR MEP, former presidential candidate	Brussels, 09-09-08
Mateusz Piskorski	Former SO MP and spokesperson	Warsaw, 21-09-08
Konrad Bonisławski	All Polish Youth member	Warsaw, 22-09-08
Scholars / Researchers / Journalists		
Mikolaj Czesnik	Scholar, Inst. for Political Studies	Warsaw, 18-09-08
Miroslawa Grabowska	Researcher, CBOS	Warsaw, 19-09-08
Ewa Nalewajko	Scholar, Inst. for Political Studies	Warsaw, 22-09-08
Wawrzyniec Smoczyński	Journalist, *Polityka*	Warsaw, 22-09-08
United Kingdom		
Politicians		
Graham Booth	UKIP MEP	Brussels, 09-09-08
Godfrey Bloom	UKIP MEP	Brussels, 09-09-08
Jeffrey Titford	Former UKIP Leader and MEP	Brighton, 06-04-09
Alan Sked	Founder AFL and UKIP, Former party leader	London, 10-07-09
Colin & Bernadette Bullen	Former AFL and UKIP politicians	Brighton, 17-09-09
Scholars / Researchers / Journalists		
Simon Usherwood	Scholar, University of Surrey	Guildford, 03-11-08

Appendix D Expert Survey (Case Studies)

Notes:
The questionnaire was slightly tailored for each of the three case studies (Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom). Fields are here reduced in size for reasons of space. The survey was completed online: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZVSTL9X (UK case)

This survey focuses on new political parties that try to portray themselves as political 'outsiders', whilst systematically challenging the dominant parties for being unresponsive towards the electorate.

1. Since the early 1990s, did any such parties from your country manage to enter the national parliament or the European Parliament?
    - If 'yes', please proceed to question 2.
    - If 'no', please proceed to question 10 at the end of this survey.

2. What is the name of these parties?

Name Party 1	
Name Party 2…etc.	

3. How do these parties define themselves, do they employ a particular ideological label (e.g. liberal, conservative, socialist)?

    (Please let the number of the parties correspond to the parties listed at question 2)

Self-Definition Party 1	
Self-Definition Party 2…etc.	

4. Do these parties define themselves in terms of being left or right, or not?

Party 1	
Party 2…etc.	

5. Do any of these parties claim to represent the 'will of the people' rather than a specific ideology?

    - No
    - Yes (please indicate which party/parties by filling in the corresponding number(s))

6. According to you, what are the most important policy issues for these parties? Are there particular issues the parties attempt to 'own' (e.g. crime, immigration, tax and spending issues)?

Party 1	
Party 2…etc.	

7. Please select a value in each of the menus. On a scale from 1 to 10, which position would you say these parties have with regard to…

- Socio-economic issues (1 = left-wing, 10 = right-wing
- Moral/cultural issues like euthanasia, abortion and same-sex marriage (1 = liberal, 10 = conservative)
- Issues related to immigration and integration of foreigners or minority groups (1 = permissive, 10 = restrictive)
- European integration (1 = Europhile, 10 = Eurosceptic)

P	Socio-Eco	Moral/Cult	Foreig/Minor	Europe
1				
2				

8. What are the main reasons for A. the breakthrough and B. the possible demise of these new parties in your view?

A. Reasons Breakthrough Party 1	
A. Reasons Breakthrough Party 2	
B. Reasons Demise Party 1 (if applicable)	
B. Reasons Demise Party 2 (if applicable)	

9. A. Would you label any of the parties listed above as 'populist'? If so, please fill in the corresponding party number(s) below.
   B. Are any of the parties listed above often called 'populist' by others (e.g. in the media, by politicians or academics)? If so, please fill in the corresponding party number(s) below.

10. Would you like to add any information to this questionnaire?

Thank you very much!!

Stijn van Kessel

Appendix E QCA Analysis Data

E.1: Electoral results of populist parties

Country	Years of general elections	Party accronyms	Average (comb.) vote
Austria	08; 06; 02; 99	FPÖ; BZÖ	20.1
Belgium	10; 07; 03; 99	VB; FN; LDD	13.4
Bulgaria	09; 05; 01; 97	BBB; ATAKA; RZS	6.6
Croatia	07; 03; 00; 95	-	0
Cyprus	11; 06; 01; 96	-	0
Czech Republic	10; 06; 02; 98	SPR-RSČ; VV	4.0
Denmark	07; 05; 01; 98	FRP; DF	12.4
Estonia	11; 07; 03; 99	-	0
Finland	11; 07; 03; 99	PS	6.4
France	07; 02; 97; 93	FN	10.7
Germany	09; 05; 02; 98	PDS/LINKE	7.4
Greece	09; 07; 04; 00	LAOS	2.9
Hungary	10; 06; 02; 98	MIÉP; JOBBIK	7.2
Iceland	09; 07; 03; 99	BF	1.8
Ireland	11; 07; 02; 97	SF	6.5
Italy	08; 06; 01; 96	LN	6.7
Latvia	10; 06; 02; 98	VL	2.3
Lithuania	08; 04; 00; 96	LDP/TT	6.0
Luxembourg	09; 04; 99; 94	-	9.1
Malta	08; 03; 98; 96	-	0
The Netherlands	10; 06; 03; 02	LPF; LN; PVV	11.5
Norway	09; 05; 01; 97	FRP	18.7
Poland	07; 05; 01; 97	SO; PiS	20.6
Portugal	11; 09; 05; 02	-	0
Romania	08; 04; 00; 96	PRM; PUNR	11.5
Slovakia	10; 06; 02; 98	SNS	7.3
Slovenia	08; 04; 00; 96	-	0
Spain	08; 04; 00; 96	-	0
Sweden	10; 06; 02; 98	SD	2.6
Switzerland	07; 03; 99; 95	SVP; SD; FD; LdT	26.8
United Kingdom	10; 05; 01; 97	-	0

Source: http://www.parties-and-elections.de. *Note: Only the electoral results for parties that have entered parliament at least once after the past four general elections have been recorded. For countries with populist parties that did not manage to cross the threshold the average combined voteshare is never higher than 2.5 % (of UKIP and BNP in the UK).*

E.2: Proportionality of electoral system

Country	Disprop 1	Disprop 2	Disprop 3	Disprop 4	Average	PR
Austria	2.92	2.8	1.33	3.53	2.65	**16.97**
Belgium	3.77	3.37	5.16	2.99	3.82	**15.8**
Bulgaria	7	3.97	7.82	3.94	5.68	**13.94**
Croatia	7.58	9.6	5.65	10.99	8.46	**11.16**
Cyprus	2.07	2.42	1.59	3.76	2.46	**17.16**
Czech R.	8.76	5.72	5.73	5.7	6.48	**13.14**
Denmark	0.72	1.76	1.58	0.42	1.12	**18.5**
Estonia	5.95	3.43	3.5	4.57	4.36	**15.26**
Finland	3.11	3.2	3.16	3.24	3.18	**16.44**
France	13.58	21.95	17.69	25.25	19.62	**0**
Germany	3.4	2.16	4.61	3.15	3.33	**16.29**
Greece	7.29	6.99	7.37	6.78	7.11	**12.51**
Hungary	11.67	5.13	8.2	10.88	8.97	**10.65**
Iceland	2.58	3.49	1.85	1.06	2.25	**17.37**
Ireland	8.88	5.85	6.62	6.55	6.98	**12.64**
Italy	5.73	3.61	10.22	6.91	6.62	**13**
Latvia	5.66	4.77	7.28	4.66	5.59	**14.03**
Lithuania	11.14	5.03	10.42	15.17	10.44	**9.18**
Luxembrg.	4.22	3.36	3.22	4.67	3.87	**15.75**
Malta	1.44	1.81	1.77	1.37	1.6	**18.02**
Netherlds.	0.81	1.03	1.05	0.88	0.94	**18.68**
Norway	3.01	2.67	3.31	3.44	3.11	**16.51**
Poland	4.67	6.97	6.33	10.63	7.15	**12.47**
Portugal	9.03	5.63	5.75	4.64	6.26	**13.36**
Romania	3.32	3.74	8.56	6.34	5.49	**14.13**
Slovakia	7.46	5.53	6.97	2.9	5.72	**13.9**
Slovenia	3.89	4.79	1.51	3.59	3.45	**16.17**
Spain	4.49	4.25	6.1	5.36	5.05	**14.57**
Sweden	1.47	3.02	1.52	0.97	1.75	**17.87**
Switz.	2.56	2.47	3.17	4.37	3.14	**16.48**
UK	15.1	16.73	17.76	16.51	16.53	**3.09**

Notes: Disprop 1-4 corresponds to the four most recent elections. Disproportionality is measured according to the least squares (LSq) index, which measures disproportionality between the distributions of votes and of seats (see Gallagher 1991; 2011). The scores are calculated by 1) squaring the difference between vote- and seatshares for each party; 2) adding these figures; 3) dividing the total by two; 4) taking the square root of this figure. PR (final column) inverts the scores, taking France (highest average disproportionality) as a base. Data from Gallagher (2011), except for data for the parliamentary elections in 2010/2011 in Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Portugal and Sweden, which are based on own calculations.

E.3: Aggregate electoral volatility figures

Country	Election 1	Election 2	Election 3	Election 4	Mean
Austria	15	9.2	20.9	8.1	**13.3**
Belgium	15.8	11.7	15.9	10.8	**13.6**
Bulgaria	46.8	38.9	48.5	36.0	**42.6**
Croatia	13.6	33.8	23.5	9.7	**20.2**
Cyprus	5.8	10.5	7.9	8.5	**8.2**
Czech Rep.	33.5	16.8	11.5	17.2	**19.8**
Denmark	11.1	7.9	13.3	11.9	**11.1**
Estonia	11.1	22.1	34.1	41.9	**27.3**
Finland	14.9	6.8	6.3	8.1	**9.0**
France	12.9	12.6	13.3	21.7	**15.1**
Germany	12.6	9.1	6.6	7.8	**9.0**
Greece	9.4	6.7	5.8	6.9	**7.2**
Hungary	32.7	8.2	19.6	31.5	**23.0**
Iceland	20.7	10.3	8.1	16.9	**14.0**
Ireland	29.8	6.2	8.8	9.5	**13.6**
Italy	11.4	7.6	24.5	12.7	**14.1**
Latvia	29.4	27.5	39.9	45.7	**35.6**
Lithuania	38.5	47.7	48.8	36.1	**42.8**
Luxembourg	5.7	10.5	11.1	6.5	**8.5**
Malta	2.5	0.5	4.0	4.2	**2.8**
Netherlands	22.6	20.3	16.0	30.7	**22.4**
Norway	6.6	19.3	16.2	16.6	**14.7**
Poland	24.9	38.4	49.3	19.2	**33.0**
Portugal	13.1	8.5	12.9	8.7	**10.8**
Romania	20.2	18.0	36.9	15.8	**22.7**
Slovakia	27.1	27.8	61.6	23.7	**35.1**
Slovenia	33.4	22.3	27.4	31.3	**28.6**
Spain	4.7	10.5	9.7	5.7	**7.7**
Sweden	8.8	15.8	14.2	15.6	**13.6**
Switzerland	6.7	7.8	8.9	8.3	**7.9**
UK	7.0	6.4	5.2	12.3	**7.7**

Notes: Volatility calculated according to the Pedersen (1979) Index. Aggregate electoral volatility is measured as the cumulated aggregate gains in vote percentage of all winning parties in a given election. Election 1 is the most recent parliamentary election, election 2 the second most recent, etc.

E.4: Unresponsiveness Scores

Country	Dissat 04	Dissat 09	Noconf	Corrupt	UNRESP
Austria	33.20	35.2	9.4	2.1	**0**
Belgium	36.80	34	21.4	3.28	**0.25**
Bulgaria	-	80.1	26.2	6.24	**1**
Croatia	-	-	21.6	6.3	**1**
Cyprus	25.40	38.1	15.6	4.13	**0.25**
Czech Rep.	71.60	50.3	31.7	5.4	**1**
Denmark	5.90	8	6.7	0.44	**0**
Estonia	58.60	50.7	18.9	3.95	**1**
Finland	19.30	25.1	9.4	0.5	**0**
France	38.00	38.6	23.4	3.09	**0.25**
Germany	46.10	33.5	15.9	2.09	**0.25**
Greece	43.60	71.6	27.6	5.47	**1**
Hungary	51.70	77.7	22.1	5	**1**
Iceland	-	-	2.8	0.72	**0**
Ireland	38.20	32.3	19.2	2.28	**0.25**
Italy	57.20	52.1	16.8	5.31	**0.75**
Latvia	63.80	79.8	27.3	6.03	**1**
Lithuania	-	68.6	27.7	5.39	**1**
Luxembourg	11.80	12.3	8.4	1.55	**0**
Malta	-	39	14.8	3.9	**0.33**
Netherlands	28.30	21.5	4.9	1.14	**0**
Norway	-	-	2.1	1.26	**0**
Poland	62.70	27.6	21.9	5.74	**0.75**
Portugal	65.00	68.1	13.4	3.62	**0.75**
Romania	-	71.2	39.6	6.84	**1**
Slovakia	72.70	54.4	18.6	5.87	**1**
Slovenia	68.30	63.4	21.8	3.9	**1**
Spain	12.20	39.4	11.6	3.64	**0.25**
Sweden	19.10	19.3	6.2	0.76	**0**
Switzerland	-	-	13.7	1.16	**0**
UK	62.30	43	15.2	1.56	**0.25**
Mean	*43.12*	*45.74*	*17.29*	*3.51*	

Notes: For each of the four indicators (rows) it is assessed whether the country scores above or below the mean. Per indicator the country receives a score of 0.25 if it has a value higher than the mean, leading to an overall unresponsiveness score (final column). If data is missing with regard to certain indicators only the available data is taken into consideration and alternative scores per indicator are given (0.33 if data on one indicator is missing or 0.5 when data on two indicators is missing).

Data:
Dissat 04: % of respondents not very or not at all satisfied with democracy in their country (Data: European Election Survey 2004, Q27 (Schmitt and Loveless 2004))

Dissat 09: % of respondents not very or not at all satisfied with democracy in their country (Data: European Election Survey 2009, Q84 (Bartolini et al. 2009)).

Noconf: % of the people who have 'none at all' confidence in Parliament. (Data: World Values Survey 1999, variable E 75 (WVS 2009)). For Switzerland and Norway data stems from 1996, for Cyprus data stems from 2006.

Corrupt: Perceived public sector corruption (Data: Transparency International, years: 1995-2009 (TI 2011)). The average from the available years per country is calculated. Original data is reversed: 10 now means corrupt, 0 means clean.

E.5: Calibrated Scores for fsQCA Analysis

CASEID	PR	AVAIL	UNRESP	CREDIB	ELPERF
AUS	0.89	0.57	0	0.75	0.99
BEL	0.81	0.59	0.25	1	0.93
BUL	0.61	1	1	0.63	0.62
CRO	0.39	0.87	1	0	0
CYP	0.9	0.22	0.25	0	0
CZR	0.51	0.86	1	0.32	0.35
DEN	0.95	0.43	0	1	0.9
EST	0.76	0.97	1	0	0
FIN	0.86	0.27	0	0.88	0.61
FRA	0.05	0.67	0.25	0.88	0.85
GER	0.85	0.27	0.25	0.88	0.67
GRE	0.47	0.17	1	0.75	0.22
HUN	0.36	0.93	1	0.63	0.66
ICE	0.91	0.61	0	0.25	0.13
IRE	0.47	0.59	0.25	0.63	0.61
ITA	0.49	0.62	0.75	0.88	0.63
LAT	0.62	1	1	0.38	0.17
LIT	0.29	1	1	0.38	0.57
LUX	0.81	0.24	0	0.82	0.77
MAL	0.93	0.04	0.33	0	0
NET	0.95	0.92	0	0.75	0.87
NOR	0.86	0.65	0	0.82	0.98
POL	0.46	0.99	0.75	0.63	0.99
POR	0.53	0.4	0.75	0	0
ROM	0.64	0.92	1	0.94	0.88
SLK	0.61	1	1	0.57	0.67
SLV	0.84	0.98	1	0	0
SPA	0.69	0.19	0.25	0	0
SWE	0.93	0.59	0	0.38	0.19
SWI	0.86	0.2	0	1	1
UK	0.09	0.19	0.25	0	0