



Populism and New Patterns of Political Competition in Western Europe

Edited by Daniele Albertazzi and Davide Vampa

Extremism and Democracy

ROUTLEDGE

‘Contemporary populist parties present a unique challenge to liberal democracies. They have increasingly exerted pressure on the established parties, forcing them to react in various ways. With its innovative analytical approach and wealth of empirical evidence, this is the best book to date to unravel the mutual interactions between the populist challengers, the political establishment, and each other.’

Hans-Georg Betz, *Adjunct Professor of Political Science at the University of Zurich, Switzerland*

‘In this book Albertazzi and Vampa and their contributors have provided an important new contribution to the study of populism and contemporary party politics. The book deals with populism in the round, by addressing populism in all its forms and by looking at its effects on politics and party systems in Western Europe. Through concepts, cases studies and comparative contributions, this book will shape the study of populism in Western Europe.’

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POPULISM AND NEW PATTERNS OF POLITICAL COMPETITION IN WESTERN EUROPE

This book analyses how party competition has adjusted to the success of populism in Western Europe, whether this is non-populists dealing with their populist competitors, or populists interacting with each other.

The volume focuses on Western Europe in the period 2007–2018 and considers both right-wing and left-wing populist parties. It critically assesses the concept and rise of populism, and includes case studies on Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, the United Kingdom, Greece, and Italy. The authors apply an original typology of party strategic responses to political competitors, which allows them to map interactions between populist and non-populist parties in different countries. They also assess the links between ideology and policy, the goals of different populist parties, and how achieving power affects these parties. The volume provides important lessons for the study of political competition, particularly in the aftermath of a crisis and, as such, its framework can inform future research in the post-Covid-19 era.

This wide-ranging study will appeal to students and scholars of political science interested in populism and political competition; and will appeal to policy makers and politicians from across the political spectrum.

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Edited by Daniele Albertazzi and Davide Vampa

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Original party name</i>	<i>English party name</i>
AfD	Alternative für Deutschland	Alternative for Germany
ANEL	Anexartitoi Ellines	The Independent Greeks
BNP	British National Party	
BZÖ	Bündnis Zukunft Österreich	Alliance for the Future of Austria
CDA	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Christian Democratic Appeal (Netherlands)
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Christian Democratic Union of Germany
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern	Christian Social Union of Bavaria
CVP	Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei der Schweiz	Christian Democratic People's Party of Switzerland
DF	Dansk Folkeparti	Danish People's Party
FI	Forza Italia	Come on, Italy!
FN/RN	Front National/ Rassemblement National	National Front/National Rally (France)
FPÖ	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	Austrian Freedom Party
FvD	Forum voor Democratie	Forum for Democracy (Netherlands)
FDP	FDP - Die Liberalen	FDP - The Liberals
K	Det Konservative Folkeparti	Conservative Party (Denmark)
KESK	Suomen Keskusta	Centre Party of Finland
KOK	Kansallinen Kokoomus	National Coalition Party (Finland)

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<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Original party name</i>	<i>English party name</i>
LFI	La France insoumise	France Unbowed
LN – Lega	Lega Nord – Lega	Northern League – League (Italy)
LR	Les Républicains	The Republicans (France)
LREM	La République En Marche	The Republic on the Move (France)
M5S	Movimento 5 Stelle	Five Star Movement (Italy)
ND	Nea Dimokratia	New Democracy (Greece)
ÖVP	Österreichische Volkspartei	Austrian People’s Party
PASOK	Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima	Panhellenic Socialist Movement
PD	Partito Democratico	Democratic Party (Italy)
PS (Finland)	Perussuomalaiset	Finns Party
PS (France)	Parti Socialiste	Socialist Party
PVdA	Partij van de Arbeid	Labour Party (Netherlands)
PVV	Partij voor de Vrijheid	Party for Freedom (Netherlands)
RV	Radikale Venstre	Social Liberals (Denmark)
SD	Socialdemokratiet	Social Democrats (Denmark)
SIN	Sininen tulevaisuus	Blue Reform (Finland)
SP (Netherlands)	Socialistische Partij	Socialist Party
SP (Switzerland)	Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz	Social Democratic Party of Switzerland
SDP	Suomen sosialidemokraattinen puolue	Social Democratic Party of Finland
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Social Democratic Party of Germany
SPÖ	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs	Social Democratic Party of Austria
SVP	Schweizerische Volkspartei	Swiss People’s Party
SYRIZA	Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás	Coalition of the Radical Left (Greece)
TS	Team Stronach	Team Stronach (Austria)
V	Venstre	Liberal Party (Denmark)
VVD	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (Netherlands)
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party	

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INTRODUCTION

*Daniele Albertazzi, Donatella Bonansinga,
and Davide Vampa*

Introduction

Pointing at the growing impact of populist parties in twenty-first-century Europe has become a cliché, following the Great Recession of 2007–2008. However, a combination of favourable opportunity structures and astute agency has meant that the ‘populist cat’ was set loose among the ‘moderate pigeons’ well before then (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008), with populists and non-populists having had to co-exist in an increasing number of countries since the turn of the century, sometimes even as governing partners (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015). The key aim of this book is to analyse the responses of non-populist parties to the emergence and/or success of populists, and how the latter, in turn, adapt and react once the political environment they operate in changes as a consequence of their very presence (and, sometimes, success). However, while we are interested in responses to populist parties by non-populists, we also consider how different populist forces coexisting in the same political environment have interacted with each other.

As parties compete for votes, influence and the spoils of government, their opponents of today can become their closest allies of tomorrow – or act as both friends and foes at different levels of competition (e.g. local vs national). In this complex (and ever-changing) web of interactions, European populist parties have set in motion new dynamics. The aim of this volume is to explore these, by analysing how parties relate to each other in a selection of countries and assess what this teaches us about party competition more generally.

One case where the study of these interactions becomes especially fruitful is France, where the radical right-wing populism of Marine Le Pen has shaken the established party system, by forcing other actors to confront her claims on the existence of a detached political elite, and on the alleged damage done to the country by monetary union (EMU). Arguably, Le Pen’s strategic campaigns have

contributed to what is ultimately a centrist response by Emmanuel Macron (despite his posturing as an anti-establishment actor), but also the rise of a populism on the Left represented by Jean-Luc Mélenchon. As Chapter 5 shows, the latter's strategy presents interesting similarities with that of his populist right-wing competitor on issues such as globalization and the EU, and may even be said to have adopted elements of her style in recent campaigns.

Another interesting case study in this respect is, of course, Italy, where two-thirds of voters chose a populist party at the 2018 general election. The largest among them, the *Lega* (League) of Matteo Salvini and the *Movimento 5 Stelle* (M5S – Five Star Movement) of Luigi Di Maio, focused their attacks mainly on the same actor during that campaign: the centre-left *Partito Democratico* (PD – Democratic Party). The League and the M5S formed a government together after the 2018 election, which ended in acrimony in the summer of 2019, as Salvini tried to cash in on his increased popularity by trying to force an early election which could have crowned him as Prime Minister (but did not come to pass). After the dust had settled, the PD turned into the M5S's ally in government, accepting some of the M5S's priorities on corruption and the welfare state in the process. Both the French and Italian cases hence provide evidence of the increasing importance of competition and collaboration between populist actors, but also of the inevitability of a reassessment of relations between populists and non-populists, given the growing relevance of the former, usually at the expense of the latter.

This introductory chapter will set the stage for our theoretical and empirical contributions. In the sections that follow, we will first justify the adoption of the 'ideational approach' to defining populism in our study. Then, we will mention a new typology of party competition which will be explained in more detail in Chapter 3, providing a novel theoretical contribution to the study of interaction dynamics between political parties. Throughout the book, this typology will provide a framework to investigate the competition between populist parties and their main non-populist counterparts, but also between different populist actors. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a clarification of the geographical scope of our case-specific contributions and by providing an outline for the book.

Definitions

The scholarly literature on populism has highlighted that the term tends to be used with a variety of different meanings, including as a synonym for 'popular', 'demagogic' or 'extreme' (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008). It is also associated to a high number of different actors and issues (Bale, van Kessel, and Taggart 2011). Moreover, scholars conceive of populism differently: for some it is a strategy to gain and retain power (Weyland 2017, 50; Weyland 2001), while others see it as a political style (Moffitt and Tormey 2014), a discourse (Laclau 2005; Panizza 2005; Wodak 2015), or an ideology (Mudde 2007). Despite this apparent lack of consensus, however, students of populism have also reached 'a fair degree of agreement' (Moffitt 2020, 10) on what constitutes its *core*: 'a central division between "the people" and

“the elite” (2020). In other words, it is widely accepted that there is no populism without the promise ‘to make democracy work’ (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008, 2), by allegedly giving *back* to the people the power that rightfully resides with them, and which a set of (economic, cultural, or financial) elites are said to have stolen.

As the focus of this volume is what populist parties *do* in competition with others, what distinguishes the different approaches cited above is not of great relevance to us, even more so since there is fundamental agreement among experts as to *which* parties and leaders should be regarded as populists (Moffitt 2020, 10). We therefore justify our choice to adopt the ‘ideational’ approach to populism below, but soon enough move on to introduce the main focus of the book: party competition.

Populism: our approach

The studies collected in this volume adopt Cas Mudde’s (2007, 23) widely cited definition of populism as:

a thin-centered 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.

Of course, a plethora of meanings can be, and have been, attached to the ‘ultimately fictional’ (Müller 2016, 19) people of populist discourse (see Canovan 1984). Hence populists have appealed to citizens’ democratic, socio-economic or ethnic status to construct *their* people, depending on the context in which they operate (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013b). The elites have similarly been categorized in different ways, according to economic, political, and cultural factors, and again depending on context. What never changes, however, is the identification of a fundamental *moral* opposition between the people, on the one hand, and the elites on the other (Müller 2016, 19–20). Hence the elites are depicted by populists as self-serving and corrupt, while the people can only ever be conceived as homogenous, virtuous, and honest. In this context, the *will* of the people is not only said to exist, but to self-evidently require implementation *without mediations*, something the elites are said to resist to hang on to their privileges (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2013b). Populists ‘invoke a sense of crisis and the idea that “soon it will be too late”’ (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008, 5), offering themselves as the last hope for returning the sceptre of full sovereignty to its rightful owner – the people. Since populism revolves around a very narrow range of concepts, however, it has often been defined as a ‘thin ideology’ that does not provide voters with a fully developed vision about how society should change (Stanley 2008). Therefore, even those who conceive it as an ideology always add that it inevitably needs to ‘walk’ hand in hand with other ideologies: for instance, nationalism and socialism.

The ideational approach has many strengths. As Mudde (2017) puts it, it allows us to *distinguish* what ‘counts’ as populism, set clear boundaries to detect negative cases (i.e. non-populists), and *categorize* varieties of populism into logical taxonomies. In other words, by accepting Giovanni Sartori’s (1976) invitation to adopt dichotomous concepts (here: populist vs non-populist) we are able to identify subtypes in the empirical part of the book, as our contributors consider party interaction and competition in different national contexts.¹ The ideational approach has the added advantage of not being temporally or geographically specific, hence ensuring its *travelability* across cases. Finally, it is also *versatile*, which makes it applicable to different actors, levels of analysis and research designs.

Conceptualizing populism along an ideological dimension allows us to work with an ideal-type of populist party, which puts forward a combination of people-centrist and anti-elitist messages, with an emphasis on popular sovereignty. However, in the empirical world populist actors can hardly be identified in their ideal-type form; moreover, as already mentioned, as a thin ideology populism comes attached to other ideologies. While left-right ideological distinctions between different populist parties have been made based on Norberto Bobbio’s (1996) classic definition (e.g. Kriesi 2014), Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser (2013a) draw a line between *inclusionary* and *exclusionary* populists (see also Chapter 2). Their typology pinpoints whether a populist party includes or excludes specific subgroups from what constitutes ‘the people’, with reference to three fundamental dimensions: symbolic, material, and political. While inclusionary populists are more encompassing when it comes to defining who belongs to the people, who should benefit from state resources and who should participate in the political process, exclusionary populists actively target groups that are said not to belong to the community, thus arguing for their exclusion at the symbolic or political levels, or from the redistribution of resources. In the Western European context, radical left populist parties have (so far) usually adopted an ‘inclusionary’ approach, while radical right ones have been on the ‘exclusionary’ side.

Actions and reactions: who competes with populist parties?

The present volume looks at two types of party interaction (Figure 1.1). First, we are interested in the relationship *between populist parties and their main non-populist counterparts*, which are conventionally defined in the literature as ‘mainstream’ or ‘established’ parties. The volume analyses, in particular, how the latter have responded to the emergence and, in many cases, the strengthening of the former in their political systems. However, we are also interested in a second type of interaction: *between populists*. In some countries inclusionary and exclusionary forms of populism coexist and our typology allows us to assess how they relate to each other. Even more interesting is the relationship between *older* and *newer* populists (Figure 1.1), which may in fact sometimes be on the same side of the inclusionary-exclusionary divide. The volume will therefore also analyse how more established populist parties react to the emergence of new populist competitors and respond to

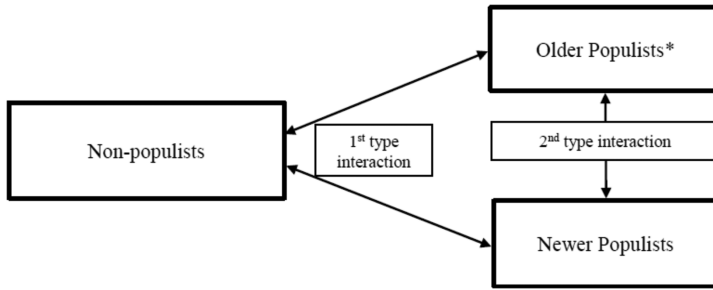


FIGURE 1.1 The interactions between populists and non-populists

* In some countries the interaction between older and newer populists might coexist with, or might be less relevant than, competition between populists with different ideological characteristics (i.e. ‘inclusionary’ vs ‘exclusionary’).

them, providing a novel contribution on a dynamic that has only recently increased in importance and is hardly covered in the literature.

Ultimately our work challenges the extant scholarship that commonly defines non-populist actors as ‘mainstream/established’ parties, while bestowing populists with the status of ‘challengers’. As this volume will show, using these categories is in fact reductive, as it neglects how, in some cases, populist parties have gradually evolved and are more and more recognized as established actors that are in turn challenged by populist newcomers. While most of our contributors have chosen to stick to the ‘mainstream vs populist’ dichotomy in their chapters, we offer an extended discussion of this issue in our Conclusion (see Chapter 14), and prefer to speak of a ‘populist vs non-populist’ dynamic, as we have done in this Introduction.

Strategies of party competition: a new typology

While the response of established parties to their competitors has drawn attention from a variety of scholars, the latter have been conceptualized differently. Although often adopting terms such as ‘extremist’, ‘niche’ or ‘radical’ to define these parties, the common denominator of extant scholarship has in fact been a focus on populists. Scholars have scrutinized their interactions with non-populist actors from a variety of angles to broadly understand their emergence, development, and success. For instance, Steven Wolinetz and Andrej Zaslove (2018) have studied party competition for votes and for government to assess the impact of populist parties on European party systems. Pontus Odmalm and Eve Hepburn (2017) have investigated how non-populist parties’ positional changes on immigration affect the overall success of the populist radical right. And finally, Tjitske Akkerman, Sarah de Lange, and Matthijs Rooduijn (2016) have examined to what extent the pursuit of party goals has produced what they see as a ‘mainstreaming’ of exclusionary populism.

While all these studies entail a more or less explicit focus on non-populist vs populist interactions, they still leave some important questions unanswered. What

happens when non-populist parties engage with populists on issues that go beyond the usual ones (e.g. immigration and ‘Europe’)? Is political competition purely based on ‘issues’ and ‘policies’ or is it increasingly influenced by personality struggles and communication strategies? How do we account for these transformations? Can we apply categories used to assess non-populists’ responses to populists to the analysis of competing populisms? And, even more crucially, how can we systematically capture such interactions?

To address these gaps, the present volume introduces a new typology of party competition (see Chapter 3). While grounded on existing literature, this provides a novel and more sophisticated tool to capture the variety of strategic actions that characterize the response of any party to another. More specifically, the typology builds on the work of Bonnie Meguid (2005), who identified three broad categories to capture the competition dynamics between mainstream and niche parties. According to the author, such interactions could be described by three strategies, as mainstream parties can either ignore their competitors (*dismissive strategy*), converge towards their proposals (*accommodative strategy*) or oppose them (*adversarial strategy*). While we acknowledge the analytical value of these categories in capturing how parties relate to each other and are inspired by them, we also depart from Meguid’s work in some important ways. First and foremost, we see a broader potential of applicability for these categories that goes beyond niche parties and can contribute to analysing how *any* actor responds to another; our typology thus extends the applicability of Meguid’s original categorizations. Second, we introduce a horizontal distinction that discerns whether strategic action targets the competitor as an *actor*, or else targets its *policies*. While Meguid’s typology only captures interactions revolving around policies, we suggest that – in addition to it – looking at how parties also relate to each other *as actors* increases the analytical power of the categories under discussion and allows us to develop a more comprehensive understanding of party interactions. Finally, we introduce a vertical distinction to Meguid’s typology by adding a set of *subcategories*, which better specify the different strategic forms that dismissive, accommodative, and adversarial behaviour can actually assume.

Our typology thus builds upon, but also extends, Meguid’s work, contributing to the sophistication of the analysis of interaction dynamics between parties of *any kind*. As mentioned, it maintains the analytical focus on three main competition strategies – dismissive, accommodative, and adversarial – while adding five new subcategories (co-optation, clashing, marginalization, cooperation, and fusion). Most importantly for us here, this new typology has guided the analyses conducted by our contributors who, in Part II of the book, examine competition dynamics in a wide variety of contexts in Western Europe. The typology thus serves as a framework to facilitate and ground their comparative empirical work.

Case selection: countries and parties

This book analyses party interactions in ten European countries. While the overview provided in Chapter 2 also includes Visegrad countries (Hungary, Poland,

Czech Republic, and Slovakia), our case-specific chapters focus on Western Europe. We chose to narrow down the geographical scope of our investigation in order to maximize the comparability of our case studies. Indeed, given the legacy of state socialism (Minkenberg 2002; Pirro 2014), party competition for most of the past decades has been structured differently in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) compared to Western Europe. As stated by Peter Mair (1997, 192), CEE countries seem to lack political ‘systemness’, in the sense of ‘patterned *interactions*’ between parties (*italics added*). Zsolt Enyedi and Fernando Casal Bértoa (2018, 447) have more recently shown that ‘the consolidation of party politics in the region remained partial’. Particularly, ‘the number of new parties with more than 0.5 per cent of the votes is more than twice as large in the East ... as in the West’ (2018, 431). This also makes the identification of relevant non-populist and populist actors less straightforward and more controversial. Of course, this does not prevent future research from engaging with the challenge of assessing parties’ competition strategies in post-communist party systems, which, after 30 years, seem to be slowly moving towards maturation and stabilization.

We also acknowledge the fact that even Western Europe cannot be considered as a ‘homogenous’ area. Indeed, the ten countries selected for this book belong to different political ‘macro-areas’ within the region. Ultimately, we accept the distinction made by Swen Hutter and Hanspeter Kriesi (2019) between Southern and North-Western European countries. Whereas the socio-economic divide between Left and Right has structured political competition in both macro-areas, scholars have stressed that, particularly after 2008, the socio-cultural dimension has been more politicized in North-Western Europe than in Southern Europe, where, instead, issues linked to democratic renewal and reform (in a context of high corruption and low transparency) have been more salient and polarizing. North-Western Europe can in turn be divided into two groups: ‘Core Continental’ and ‘Northern’ European countries. Yet this distinction is more based on geography than politics, since the second group includes not only the so-called Nordic/Scandinavian countries but also two ‘insular’ countries: the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland. While the last two are politically quite distinctive, the Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland) do share important institutional features: proportionalism, consensualism, corporatism, and balanced legislative-executive relations (Arter 2004). Their political debates and discourses have also been significantly affected by the legacy of ‘social democratic’ welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990; Kuisma 2017).

Table 1.1 shows the list of cases we have selected. Core Continental Europe includes Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. Northern Europe includes Denmark and Finland. As mentioned above, the UK is also included in this group but mainly due to its geographical position, since it is politically quite different from the other two countries (but also from the rest of continental Europe). Lastly, Greece and Italy are the two cases we selected in Southern Europe.

Both theoretical and pragmatic reasons guided our country selection. We have excluded small states (or ‘micro-states’, as they are also known) such as Luxembourg,

TABLE 1.1 List of cases

<i>Core Continental Europe</i>		
<i>Country</i>	<i>Populist parties</i>	<i>Non-populist parties</i>
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)	Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)
	Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ)	Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ)
France	Team Stronach (TS)	Republicans (LR)
	National Front/National Rally (FN/RN)	Socialist Party (PS)
Germany	France Unbowed (LFI)	The Republic on the Move (LREM)
	Alternative for Germany (AfD)	Christian Democratic Union (CDU)
	The Left	Christian Social Union (CSU)
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV)	Greens
	Socialist Party (SP)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD)
	Forum for Democracy (FvD)	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA)
	Swiss People's Party (SVP)	Labour Party (PvdA)
Switzerland	Swiss People's Party (SVP)	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)
		Christian Democrats (CVP)
		Liberals (FDP)
		Social Democrats (SP)
<i>Northern Europe</i>		
<i>Country</i>	<i>Populist parties</i>	<i>Non-populist parties</i>
Denmark	Danish People's Party (DF)	Conservative Party (K)
		Liberal Party (V)
		Social Democrats (SD)
Finland	Finns party (PS)	Social Liberals (RV)
	Blue Reform (SIN)	Centre party (KESK)
		Conservative party (KOK)
UK	United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)	Social Democratic party (SDP)
	British National Party (BNP)	Conservative Party
		Labour Party
		Liberal Democrats
<i>Southern Europe</i>		
<i>Country</i>	<i>Populist parties</i>	<i>Non-populist parties</i>
Greece	Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA)	New Democracy (ND)
	Independent Greeks (ANEL)	Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)*

TABLE 1.1 (Cont.)

<i>Southern Europe</i>		
<i>Country</i>	<i>Populist parties</i>	<i>Non-populist parties</i>
Italy	League (Formerly Northern League, LN) Five Star Movement (M5S) Forza Italia (FI)	Democratic Party (PD)

* As explained in Chapter 12, since the mid-1990s it is no longer appropriate to consider PASOK as a populist party.

Malta, Cyprus, and Iceland, since political dynamics in these contexts tend to be very peculiar (Eccardt 2005). Moreover, no relevant populist parties exist in Portugal – hence there are no interactions of the kind we are interested in here to assess in this country. Ireland is in a similar position, although Sinn Féin is regarded by some scholars as a populist left-wing party (O'Malley 2008; Suiter 2017). In any case, unstructured patterns of party competition set this country apart from the rest of Western Europe, especially from other North-Western European countries (Hutter and Malet 2019). All Scandinavian countries offer interesting examples of established populist parties that have been competing with non-populists for decades (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008). In this sense, the cases of Sweden and Norway would have been equally relevant to our discussion, but have been excluded for pragmatic reasons, since we had to consider the country expertise of our contributors and keep the length of the edited book within manageable limits. For the same reasons, Belgium and Spain have also been excluded, although references to the latter – mentioning recent ‘cooperation’ between the centre-left *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE – Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party) and the populist *Podemos* (We Can!) – are in the Conclusion and are linked to the discussion of how left-wing non-populists respond to populists. Overall, however, our range of cases is sufficiently broad to represent different areas of Western Europe and allow for meaningful comparisons and generalizations.

Alongside the countries considered in the book, Table 1.1 also shows the list of the main populist and non-populist parties to be discussed. In the latter group we have included all main established centre-left and centre-right parties in each country. In most cases, however, we focus on more than two ‘non-populist’ parties. This is because even political competition between non-populist parties has become more fragmented and unstable (Dinas and Riera 2018; Chiamonte and Emanuele 2019), although in some contexts, such as the Netherlands and Finland, this is not a new phenomenon.

The populist parties selected are of different ideological orientation on the left-right spectrum. The majority are populist radical right parties, reflecting the balance of forces between different varieties of populism in Western Europe:

Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (Austrian Freedom Party – FPÖ), *Bündnis Zukunft Österreich* (Alliance for the Future of Austria – BZÖ), *Team Stronach* (TS), *Front National/Rassemblement National* (National Front/National Rally – FN/RN), *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany – AfD), *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom – PVV), *Forum voor Democratie* (Forum for Democracy – FvD), *Schweizerische Volkspartei* (Swiss People’s Party – SVP), *Dansk Folkeparti* (Danish People’s Party – DF), *Perussuomalaiset* (Finns Party – PS), *Sininen tulevaisuus* (Blue Reform – SIN), United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), British National Party (BNP), *Anexartitoi Ellines* (Independent Greeks – ANEL) and *Lega* (League, formerly Northern League – LN).² Our selected countries also include a smaller group of significant radical left populist parties: *La France Insoumise* (LFI – France Unbowed), *Die Linke* (The Left), *Socialistische Partij* (SP – Socialist Party) and *Synaspismós Rizospastikís Aristerás* (SYRIZA – Coalition of the Radical Left). Two populist parties, both in Italy, cannot be classified as either radical right or radical left. *Forza Italia* (FI), the party founded by the media entrepreneur Silvio Berlusconi, has often been defined as ‘neo-liberal’ populist. As argued by Mudde (2007, 47), ‘the core ideology of neoliberal populism ... is the combination of primarily economic liberalism with populism’ (see Chapter 2). However, the analysis of Forza Italia’s manifestoes shows that it ‘moved steadily away from the neo-Liberal positions of the 1990s towards professions of support for a “social market economy”’ (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2015, 27). Moreover, as the dominant party of government for much of the 2000s, it consistently shied away from introducing any neo-liberal reforms. This being the case, FI is best classified as ‘centre-right’. The *Movimento 5 Stelle* (M5S – Five Star Movement), the party-movement founded by comedian and activist Beppe Grillo, can be regarded as an example of ‘valence populism’ (Zulianello 2019) due to its eclecticism in borrowing from both right and left. Indeed it has been able ‘to push the “thin-centered” nature of the populist ideology to its zenith by being able to detach itself from any particular ideology, and/or to attach itself to diverging but coexisting ideologies’ (Pirro 2018, 445).

All the populist parties mentioned above have enjoyed electoral relevance in the post-crisis period, and have all won more than 4 per cent of the national vote in at least one general/European election since 2007. The only exception is Blue Reform in Finland, which received less than one per cent of the vote in the only national election it contested (in 2019). Yet following its split from the True Finns in June 2017, this party was an important parliamentary and governmental player until June 2019. For this reason, we decided to include it in our analysis of the Finnish case, despite the fact that it does not meet the threshold.

As shown in Figure 1.2, the populist parties considered in this book are not all ‘new’. Some have existed for decades, well before the recent political and economic crises.³ Overall, while ten parties included in the sample were founded before 2000, 11 were founded in the new millennium (and seven after the crisis). Some older parties, such as the FPÖ and the SVP, were not populist from the beginning but underwent a radical transformation towards the end of the twentieth century. Looking in more detail at the time distribution of the parties, it can be noted that

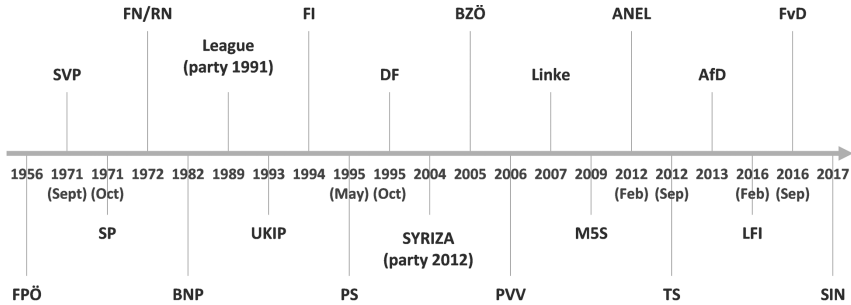


FIGURE 1.2 Year of foundation of the populist parties analysed in this book

they reflect the different waves of political change occurred in Europe. Parties such as the FN and the SP represent important cultural shifts occurring in the 1970s and 1980s and the emergence of a libertarian–authoritarian political dimension (Kitschelt 1994). One element that UK, Finland, and Denmark have in common is the rise of populist parties in the 1990s, when the process of European integration started to accelerate (Kriesi 2007). The rise of the League and FI in Italy can also be linked to this particular period, which, in fact, can be extended until the mid-2000s, when a number of new populist parties emerged in Western Europe. The financial crisis which started in the aftermath of the fall of Lehman Brothers in autumn 2008 produced a set of economic and political transformations that boosted the final populist wave. This has been much more intense and ‘disruptive’ than the previous ones and, unsurprisingly, has attracted unprecedented scholarly attention.

We observe variation not only *across* but also *within* countries. For instance, in Austria we have the more established FPÖ competing with the BZÖ (emerged after splitting from the FPÖ) and (briefly) with TS. In this case we can look at interactions between older and newer exclusionary parties. A similar case is the Finnish one mentioned above, where Blue Reform’s competitive relationship with the Finns party provides an important opportunity to assess interactions between populists. In France, dynamics between older and newer populists intersect with the left vs right dichotomy, since the more established FN/RN, an archetypal populist radical right party, has competed with *La France Insoumise*, which was founded in recent years and is clearly positioned on the left. In the Netherlands we have the opposite situation, with a more established left-wing populist party (SP), coexisting with newer right-wing populists (PVV and, more recently, FvD). In Italy we have two older populists, the League and Forza Italia, competing with a newer populist challenger, the M5S.⁴ Also in this case, it is not just age that differentiates these parties but also their ideological/programmatic profiles.

The outline of the book

This book is structured in an introduction, two main parts, and a concluding chapter. Part I starts with Chapter 2, which reflects on different forms of populism