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Populist Discourse in Britain: The Cases of the UKIP, Brexit Party, and Reform UK Party in the Brexit and Post-Brexit Period

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Abstract:

The present paper deals with the topic of the populist discourse in Britain during Brexit and Post-Brexit referendum of 2016. It sheds light on aspects of populist discourse through the cases of the UK Independence Party, Brexit Party, and Reform UK party. The guiding idea is to examine the phenomenon of populism by focusing more on language. Three representative speeches from Nigel Farage, the leader of the three parties at a certain point, are examined. The question leading the study is whether there are any thematic and stylistic continuities between the discourse of each party and how do these continuities unfold. Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is adopted to conduct the analysis of the context and texts. The main idea advanced is that behind the apparent differences in the name and organization of each party, there lies common discursive traits that lead to classifying them under the same right-wing populist umbrella

Keywords: Populist discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis, UK Independence Party, Brexit Party, UK Reform Party

المخلص:

تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية موضوع الخطاب الشعبوي في بريطانيا خلال فترة خروجها من الاتحاد الأوروبي عقب استفتاء عام 2016. وتُسلط الضوء على جوانب من هذا الخطاب من خلال دراسة حالة حزب استقلال المملكة المتحدة، وحزب بريكست، وحزب إصلاح المملكة المتحدة. وتتمثل الفكرة المحورية في دراسة ظاهرة الشعبوية بالتركيز على اللغة. وتُحلل الورقة ثلاثة خطابات نموذجية لنيجل فاراج، زعيم الأحزاب الثلاثة في فترة معينة. ويتمحور السؤال الرئيسي للدراسة حول ما إذا كانت هناك أي استمرارية موضوعية وأسلوبية بين خطاب كل حزب، وكيف تتجلى هذه الاستمرارية. وقد تم اعتماد نموذج نورمان فايركلو ثلاثي الأبعاد لتحليل الخطاب النقدي لإجراء تحليل السياق والنصوص. تتمثل الفكرة الرئيسية المطروحة في أنه وراء الاختلافات الظاهرة في اسم كل حزب وتنظيمه، تكمن سمات خطابية مشتركة تؤدي إلى تصنيفها تحت مظلة الشعبوية اليمينية نفسها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخطاب الشعبوي، تحليل الخطاب النقدي، حزب استقلال المملكة المتحدة، حزب بريكست، حزب الإصلاح البريطاني.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the early 2010s, populism as a resurgent political phenomenon, began to attract increasing attention from scholars and political analysts alike. It is usually associated with Britain's Brexit referendum of 2016, the US presidential election of the same year and many other events in the West that are evocative of the same pattern of thought and the same political discourse. In the UK, the populist trend is generally linked to the figure of Nigel Farage, who since 2016, has been the leader of three different political parties. Considering the impact populism is credited with in these recent times, and particularly in the UK, many questions about its goals and coherence arise. For a better understanding

of this phenomenon, a study of some political speeches by Nigel Farage, in terms of themes and style, were selected from when he was the leader of three different political parties, the UK Independence party (UKIP), the Brexit Party, and the Reform UK party. The approach adopted to tackle this topic is centred mainly around the discursive aspects of populism.

In the wider sense, studies about populism are abundant, ranging from seminal works such as "Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics" (1969), edited by Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, to more up-to-date works such as that of Mudde Cas, Kaltwasser Cristóbal Rovira, "Populism: A Very Short Introduction" (2017), or Moffitt Benjamin's,

“The Global Rise of Populism” (2016). Works concerned with populism in Brexit and post-Brexit Britain do not generally treat this topic through the lens of discourse. For instance, works such as Steve Buckledee’s “The Language of Brexit” (2018) treats the event of Brexit on a more linguistic level, without according much importance to populism. Some recent studies such as that of Karine Tournier-Sol, “The 2024 General Election and its Aftermath: Reform UK as a Disruptive Force in British Politics” (2024), or Oliver Heath, et al, “The 2024 General Election and the Rise of Reform UK” (2025) do provide valuable insights about populism in post-Covid19 Britain by focusing mainly on the Reform UK party, the point that seems to be missing, nevertheless, is a study of the development of this phenomenon with a focus on a certain case, especially in regard to tracing the development of the discursive aspect.

Following this line, a question seems to invite itself upon the observer of populism in Britain which is: are there any discursive and ideological continuities between UKIP as a populist party, the Brexit party, and the Reform UK party? And if this was the case, how do these continuities unfold in their political discourse? In order to better illustrate these points, the case of Nigel Farage, as one of the supporters of Brexit and a champion of populism, will be put under examination. The development of his discourse from the UKIP, to the Brexit party, to the Reform UK party will be traced. The idea that this study is based on is that, there are discursive and ideological continuities between the populist discourse of the three parties. It is the same discourse and ideology under the disguise of different parties. The objective is to demonstrate that populists aim to achieve their goals through the imposition of certain understandings or conceptions of reality. Political speeches might be the perfect political item examined to research this point in that, they are widely used as means of political communication, and are easily transmitted to the electorate or split into short clips to be spread on the net.

The method followed is Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model (1989, 1992, 1995). This model, so widespread in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), views discourse as a three-level construction. First is the text, which is based on the view that it could be either written or spoken (1995, pp. 96-97). In the present study, the textual element or the corpus corresponds to the three speeches. The second level is discourse practice which concerns text production and interpretation. According to Fairclough, “Analysis of a particular discourse as a piece of discursive practice focuses upon processes of text production, distribution and consumption. All of these are social and require reference to the particular economic, political and institutional settings within which discourse is generated” (1992, p. 71). In the context of this study, this level concerns mainly the means by which the speeches were communicated to the general public and how they were received by them in broad terms.

The third level of discourse is that of the socio-cultural practice which is concerned with, “the level of the social situation, or the immediate social environment in which the discourse occurs; the level of the social institution which constitutes a wider matrix for the discourse; and the level of the society as a whole.” (1989, p. 25). The third level relates then to the wider contextual elements surrounding the text. The general contextual elements surrounding the three speeches could be categorised into temporal and spatial ones. First, the temporal elements are a delineation of the timeframe together with the main events and ideological currents shaping the period. Second, for the spatial elements, it would be important to delimit the area in which the phenomenon is located, for example in the context of this paper, populism in the UK is not the same as populism in Latin America or Africa.

Based on this model, the body of this paper is structured as follows: first, the contextual survey part which is divided into two sections. The first one deals with the

general context of Europe and the UK in the 2010s and early 2020s. The second section introduces a definition of populism and some aspects of the means of political communication. The second part, concerned with the textual analysis, itself comprises two sections: the first one tackles the thematic continuities of the populist discourse in the UK, and the second one the stylistic continuities. Any limitations surrounding this work might arise from the fact that it only deals with a limited corpus, of only one politician, examining only one type of political communication, i.e., the speech. Better insights could be gathered by broadening the scope of the said areas or by focusing entirely on other cases, even if in studies of limited range, or by conducting a different type of analysis.

2. Contextual Survey

2.1. The 2010s and the Rise of the Populist Wave in Britain

The period of the 2010s and early 2020s was one of dramatic changes and rapid shifts across the world. It was first marked by the political upheavals in the Middle-East that came to be known as the Arab Spring. These political upheavals gave rise to an unprecedented immigration crisis that affected the whole region of North Africa and Europe. Sources point out that the total number of immigrants coming from non-EU countries who entered the EU in 2015 was 2.4 million (IMS 2017). Of these, it was estimated that the number of irregular immigrants who reached Europe during that year was almost 1 million, of predominantly Syrian, North African, or South Asian origins (IOM UN Migration, 2015). From a European perspective, these immigrants constituted a threat at all levels considering their huge numbers, and the cultural differences that exist between the Western and Oriental cultures. On the other hand, they also constituted an unavowed economic and demographic benefit for the aging European population.

The number of immigrants in Europe and the UK increased dramatically during this period. It was estimated that the net

migration, that is the difference between the number of people coming to the UK for at least a year and those leaving, has reached very high levels especially in 2015. According to the Office for National Statistics ONS, net migration has reached 333000 in the UK in 2015 (BBC News, 2016). Post Brexit and post-Covid Britain has experienced even higher levels of net migration. It was reported that the years 2023 and 2024 recorded 906,000 and 431,000 respectively, which is much higher than in the pre-Brexit period (Brindle, 2025). The huge increase in the number of immigrants has different reasons, but they all lead to the conclusion that politicians did not meet their pre-Brexit promises of controlling the borders.

The increase in the number of immigrants can be attributed to several policies followed by the UK, related either to student visas, humanitarian considerations, and other work-shortage related visas (Brindle, 2025). However, what was most publicized, especially by right wing media, is the story of irregular immigrants crossing the English Channel on boats from France, particularly after 2018, which constituted a visual and a more concrete threat of the idea of invasion that is usually associated with immigrants. More negative publicity for immigrants was spread after stories of crimes and wrongly referenced statistics were reported by some politicians designating foreigners as being more likely to commit crimes than British people (Dunford, 2025) (Courea, Bychawski, & Elgot, 2025). On the whole, the idea of the immigrant threat contributed to increasing the fear of non-Western foreigners and gave an impetus to the populist movement in elections.

In the 2010s, Europe in general and Britain in particular were still undergoing the repercussions of the 2008 economic recession as the 'austerity' measures persisted. The influx of a large number of immigrants was not well received by public opinion. In 2023 public opinion polls showed that 32 per cent of the surveyed

population considered that immigration was something negative without precisising any reasons and 52 per cent considered that the number of immigrants should be brought down (Richards, Fernández-Reino, & Blinder, 2025). The received ideas about immigration regardless of their veracity accentuated the cultural antagonisms between immigrants and the natives. All of these changes took place in a Western world that was showing more tolerance for immigrants and more relaxation of traditional social values on another level, an element that could be considered as a factor that helped polarize Western societies.

These crises brought to the fore the hidden fears of British society that were hitherto dormant and facilitated the rise of the populist parties across the West. In Britain particularly, before 2010, populism could be said to have been mainly embodied in the insignificant UKIP. However, after the acute immigrant crisis and its accompanying threats were coupled with the subsequent economic hardships of the 2008 recession, this party started gaining more influence by capitalizing on the fears and dissatisfaction of the electorate to advance their main cause, withdrawal from the European Union or as it came to be known later, Brexit. As a right-wing party, UKIP was founded in 1993 principally on the sole basis of taking Britain out of the EU. It was relegated to the margin of politics after the goal of winning in the referendum was achieved and Nigel Farage stepped down from party leadership.

After the victory of the 'leave' camp in the 2016 referendum, Britain entered a period of push-pull with the EU in order to ensure the best possible exit deal for Britain. This process coincided with the bitter rivalry between political parties in the UK which led to inconclusive ends concerning the Brexit agreement. In 2018, there emerged another party committed to securing the best deal for Britain with the EU, the Brexit party. The Brexit party was led by Nigel Farage and continued to operate almost in the same line as that of the UKIP, and just before the 2019 general election, the leader

of the Brexit party Nigel Farage announced that the party would change its name to Reform UK, and promised with this change a new range of policies (BBC 2019). The complete withdrawal of the UK from the EU was achieved in January 2020 under the premiership of Boris Johnson.

The period in which the Reform UK party operates is mainly the post-Covid19 period, that is, after 2022. Among the characteristics of this period there can be noted that the post-Covid19 and post Brexit years in Britain witnessed a huge increase in the number of irregular immigrants crossing the English Channel which helped increase public outrage and search for alternatives. In addition, 2024 was also the year in which Donald Trump was campaigning for the US presidency for a second time, a fact that acted like a force of attraction and gave a push to the Reform UK party in the General elections of July 2024 to win some seats. In fact, in a letter posted on X, May 23rd, 2024¹, Nigel Farage expressed his intentions to help the "grassroots campaign in the USA" since the presidential election there has "huge global significance", a thing that attests to the interplay of elements of the general global context with events taking place in the UK.

2.2. Populism and Means of Communication

UKIP, together with the other two parties, could be characterized as typically populist according to many factors. The UKIP party for instance, generally defines reality and approaches issues based on the "us" and "them" dichotomy. In this sense, it seems to accord well with the definition of populism as provided by Kaltwasser and Mudde (2017), "a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic camps, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté Générale*

¹

https://x.com/Nigel_Farage/status/1793554758923588029?lang=en

(general will) of the people” (p. 6). Another important notion is that of the ‘people’ as mentioned in the definition, who are usually viewed as uncorrupted and virtuous. A clear definition of the notion of the ‘people’, which has a wide appeal with audiences in general, might be somehow tricky since it is often left in the open for everyone to mold and interpret it according to their orientations. In the context of right-wing populism as is the case of UKIP and the other two parties, this definition would often include disguised ethnic elements to determine the real people. It often demonstrates in the form of rejection of non-western immigrants and of other cultures as a whole.

Among the characteristics of populism is the xenophobic sentiments expressed by politicians often under the guise of fear of ‘dangerous’, irregular immigrants, which is related to the aforementioned element of defining the notion of people. Furthermore, inherent in populist discourse is the idea of longing for a glorified past as is usually found in the discourse of populist politicians who, “promise to return to an idealized image of the past characterized by its ethnic homogeneity and social cohesion” (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2018, p. 8). Regardless of the ideas composing populism, there is the workings and organization of populist parties in general, which often revolve around a charismatic leader. Taggart (2000), explains that, “populists have been likely to rely not only on personalized leadership but also on leadership that requires a particular type of personality: a charismatic leader” (p. 101).

The most common oral communicative medium of politicians to address the people in general is the ‘speech’, a means shared by all politicians not just populists. A political speech could be defined as a long piece of oral communication that is delivered to a certain audience in the goal of convincing them of certain ideas or informing them of events. It can be delivered in person or it can be

recorded and delivered through other means such as television or the net. A key factor related to ‘the notion of delivering a speech’ is the audience. It is important to note that before the 1960s, the direct audiences, that is, present at the moment of delivery, to political speeches were invited without paying attention to their political affiliation; there was always the worry about being shouted at or interrupted when delivering the speech (Beard, 2000, p. 37). Nowadays, as is the case with the three speeches, the immediate audience receiving the speech are of the same political affiliation as that of the deliverer, so instead of heckling there is assent and support. However, the indirect audience receives the speeches with the laughter and appreciative applause of the immediate audience expressing assent. Consequently, the effects on the indirect audience receiving the speech at a second hand is often marred by these details, especially of supposing that everybody is in agreement.

Therefore, the circumstances surrounding the delivery, distribution, and reception of the speeches would lead to distinguish between two categories of audiences. The first category concerns the people who were present at the moment of the delivery of the speech and received it directly with all the accompanying factors, such as the presence of the politician, other sound and visual effects, ability to interact even if indirectly with the politician. The second category, which is the largest, concerns the indirect audience who receives the speech through different media outlets such as TV channels, Internet clips, the whole speech through YouTube channels, newspapers, or other means. The opinion this second group forms of the speech would certainly be different from that of the first group since these media would play a role in reshaping the message.

One important feature of the period is the widespread use of social media and electronic devices that facilitated the spread of information and changed greatly the modes of political communication. Social

media and the use of advanced electronic devices such as smart phones are considered as democratizing tools, which is not to be taken necessarily as a positive attribute. Smart phones and social media platforms gave voice to marginalized categories in society and sometimes magnified the voices of some parts at the expense of others. For politicians, social media platforms became a crucial field to conquer considering the potential they offer for connecting with the voters. A social media presence became necessary for both old and new generation politicians as it would ensure visibility and proximity with the electorate who are increasingly turning to these platforms as a space to express their aspirations and thoughts.

3. Textual Analysis

3.1. Populist Thematic Continuities: Globalization, Immigrants, and Polarization of Society

Taking into account that the speeches were delivered by the same person, it would seem natural that they would bear the same traces both thematic and stylistic. However, what might cause some intrigue is that the speeches were the product of different circumstances and under the banner of different parties, two factors that would normally lead to different kinds of speeches and a different discourse. The focus on textual analysis will help disentangle the ideas and visions conveyed in a text, far more than just listening to it and accepting what the text carries at face value without further considerations.

The first thematic element that runs through the three speeches is the fear of globalization. This idea is exemplified in the first speech from the UKIP by the fact of having as a mission the withdrawal from the European Union. The rejection of globalization is perceived from the general purpose of the text as a whole and not just by explicit linguistic means. In this regard, it is noted that the language adopted by Nigel Farage seems to be polished and well selected so as not to offend or shock the audience. Nevertheless, the rejection of

globalization is expressed somehow more openly in the Brexit Party speech in the EU parliament, after it was clear that Britain will leave the EU, Nigel Farage stated that: "Indeed, there's an historic battle going on now across the West: in Europe, America and elsewhere. It is globalism against populism".

The apparent reason behind the aversion to globalization in general and of being part of the EU in particular is that it is controlled by unelected officials, and therefore 'undemocratic' since it: "gives people power without accountability – people who cannot be held to account by the electorate", as Nigel Farage explains in the Brexit Party speech. Another argument is that they overtake the national governments, and their laws, in this case the EU becomes more powerful than the national government which means according this logic to be governed from abroad or to lose independence altogether. In fact, the "I" in UKIP stands for independence, which is a strong statement in itself. In the UKIP speech, Farage explains: "we've had enough of our political class giving away our birthright to control and run our own country", and then he complains that: "we are lumbered by 100 of the regulations that come from Brussels".

The second point, which could be subsumed under the large category of populism versus globalism, is the opposition of people against the elites. This opposition is a recurrent theme in populist discourse and it is usually through this dualistic vision that western societies are experiencing the process of polarization in recent decades. According to the categorization drawn from Nigel Farage speeches', the elites are often associated with instances of globalization, with world institutions and companies that encourage this process, and are usually rich. They are often the object of ridicule and accusations in his speeches. For instance, in the UKIP speech where the harshest criticism is found, he declares that, "it is the political class against the ordinary decent men and women of this country it's the

people versus the politicians and you know they say they say never trust a politician". In the Reform UK speech, the criticism is not as straight forward since he does not mention terms like "the political class" or "the elites", however he did mention the "establishment" on two occasions.

In order to present the idea of the people in the most favourable light, Nigel Farage resorts to a strategy of image-construction, which is more beneficial as a technique than just attacking the other camp. The image of the people he constructs throughout his speeches is often associated with positive qualities such as decency, hard work and risk-taking. For example, in the UKIP speech, "the people" are, "the rest of us it's those of us that are taxpayers it's those of us that are running businesses that are suffering so grievously", "it is the political class against the ordinary decent men and women of this country". In the Reform UK "the people" are again associated with the same qualities, he explains that, "because we represent the silent, decent majority of this great country". Sometimes he builds the image through contrasting the qualities of "the people" and "the elite":

one of them thinks that having worked in McDonald's for a week makes them working class, one of them appears to have had a damascene conversion from being part of the establishment and the established view to suddenly saying things that many of us in this room would agree with.

Based on this, it seems that working in a low-paying job and being part of the working class is a reserved quality in the populist ethos. He does mention another typical term in populist discourse in the former quote which is "the silent majority". The phrase "silent majority" suggests through the word 'silent' to ideas of wisdom and calmness. The whole could be put under the large title of 'morality', which is one of the important themes in the populist discourse.

The third thematic continuity is fear and rejection of immigration. Immigration is an important topic for populists in general

and for Nigel Farage in particular. However, the reference to this topic is not straightforward but rather goes through processes of mentioning it indirectly by referring to some of its supposed consequences such as the suggestion that immigrants are an economic burden and a security threat. For example, in the UKIP speech, he talks about: "the free movement of people across Europe", which is one of the principles of the EU, and of being able: "to control our own borders", then he mentions this in a suggestive juxtaposition to the Australian point system and the criminal character of those who used to be accepted in Australia.

In the Reform UK speech, the idea of immigration comes again as Nigel Farage mentions the "mass uncontrolled immigration" and just after that he talks of "massive public borrowing". This juxtaposition suggests that the second idea is a consequence of the first, a deduction that would certainly increase public anger at migrants. Another aspect that usually fuels the fear of migrants is that of the cultural threat. In this respect, Farage declares that the fundamental culture in his country is "Judeo-Christian" which suggests that he is not really welcoming other cultures and that he does not want his culture to be modified, altered or challenged. By preserving the culture, he is preserving the nation, and this accords with the populist goal and vision of reshaping the present to match an idyllically-imagined past.

3.2. Populist Stylistic Continuities: Storytelling, Conversationalization, and Ridicule

The first aspect of similarity concerning the stylistic continuities between the speeches is the aspect of framing the whole speech as a story, a success story. Usually, the story that is weaved throughout the speech has different stages, which do not come always in the same order. The first stage is an exposition of the dire situation and a highlight of the sense of emergency. During this step, Nigel Farage sometimes refers to how he has retreated from politics, and was

well-off and then returned to politics on popular demand. He applies this same narrative to his notable colleagues in order to stress the idea that they are not entering politics for their own personal interests but on moral and noble grounds, i.e., to help the people. This idea is better demonstrated in the Reform UK speech:

...So, I was doing well, making money, no pressure, no stress, no abuse from the Press, life couldn't have been better...I stood aside in that 2019 general election because we wanted to get Brexit over the line...I went down to Dover for a day I went and joined Richard up in Skegness, Lee in his constituency of Ashfield and I began to have people in the street walking up to me speaking to me as if almost I was letting them down by not giving up my lovely life!

Another example from the same speech is when he was talking about one of his colleagues in the Reform UK party, "...somebody of exceptional talent who I'd met over a decade ago reappeared during the campaign on the scene he's a young man in his middle late 30s who's done rather well in life who is really rather patriotic...". The description here combines youth, financial success, and patriotism, all traits necessary to a leader in the populist mind.

The next stage in the process of his storytelling and speech delivery is that he lists the difficulties that they encountered and are overcoming, as in the Reform UK speech, "I'm used to being on impossible political journeys...we ... did it against the entirety of the British establishment". Later, he turns to attacking the opposition and ridiculing them, and usually ends up by painting an optimistic outcome of the whole endeavor under their leadership as in the UKIP speech, "together we can take back our country and we can make June 23rd 2016 UK independence day", or as in the Reform UK speech, "we believe in

meritocracy, we believe that a society looks after its weak but encourages everybody...".

The second stylistic aspect is the use of mainly informal conversational language. The benefits of using what could be described as 'informal language' for politicians is that it is accessible to a large audience; it is more appealing because it is related to the everyday reality and more familiar to the mind. Another characteristic of this language is that it is not pretentious and 'elitists', it is rather the language of the people who did not attend prestigious schools, more like the working class. Among the characteristics of this language, there can be noticed the use of short sentences to keep the meaning clear and direct, and to express simple ideas which can easily cling to the mind as opposed to long convoluted sentences explaining complex ideas.

Part of using conversational language is the use of informal words, typically used in everyday parlance. The apparently positive facet of this is that it makes the association between the ideas and promises of the politician and the realities of the audience more tangible than just using formal or complex words which are not part of the daily routine of the listener. An important mark for informality is the subjectivity characterizing the speeches of Farage through the excessive use of the personal pronouns, "I" and "we". In this regard, some scholars define indicators of subjectivity as, "words, groups of words or punctuation marks that signal the presence of the author's opinion in the text" (Escoufflaire, Descampe, & Fairon, 2024, p. 4) . It follows from this definition that the presence of the author's opinion means a lesser space for objectivity and reasoned judgments or arguments.

In the case of Nigel Farage, first there is the personal pronoun "we", which is used mainly in an "inclusive" manner, that is, to put himself on a par with the audience. Together with this pronoun, there can be found the possessive adjective "our" and the object pronoun "us". All of these three deictic words are used to construct the

image of “our/we/us/ the people”, and to infuse a sense of togetherness and belongingness between himself and the audience. The second deictic word group that expresses more subjectivity is the use of the pronoun “I” and the related words “me” and “my”, particularly in the Reform UK speech where one can find sentences like, “my life was going pretty well”, “I was letting them down by not giving up my lovely life!”, or as in the Brexit party speech, “My mother and father signed up to a common market”, “the summit of my own political ambitions”. This apparent personal implication of the politician in the speech reduces to some extent the degree of credibility of the politician as a whole, and lowers it to the level of a plain conversation, regardless of the impact it may have on the audience.

The ‘informalization’ of the political language in the speeches of Nigel Farage be considered as part of the process that Norman Fairclough calls conversationalization and which he defines as:

the colonization of institutions in the public domain by types of discourse which emanate from the private domain. This tendency could be called the ‘conversationalization of institutional discourse. Conversationalization entails greater interaction which a person to person quality in contrast with the interaction between roles or statuses which characterize more traditional discourse. (1995, pp. 100-101)

Other aspects that seem to confirm the idea of conversationalization is the fact that the speeches are not well-structured, they do not appear to be organized in paragraph forms but rather in spontaneous lines and sometimes contain questions that seem to necessitate a response or reaction from the audience as in the ending of the Reform UK speech, “is that what we’re going to fight for? Can we sow the seeds?”, a tactic designed to draw the audience to react and become more implicated rather than just receive and accept the speech, and thus more conversational.

The last stylistic characteristic common in the three speeches is the aspect of mockery and ridicule of the opposition, adopted in order to cast them in the most unfavorable image possible. In fact, the whole speech in general, looks more like a stand-up comedy show, starting usually with an anecdote or a funny name calling which sets the tone for the whole speech, such as in the UKIP speech, “see those that wish to remain or should we call them perhaps the remainians it always gets me in trouble that one”, and paced by comedic references either to himself or to other politicians. In the Brexit party speech for instance, he directly refers to another rival politician after a long series of “no more...” in mocking terms, “no more Guy Verhofstadt. I mean, what’s not to like?”. The idea of inventing names and tags for political opponents reflects the unforgiving discursive tactics used by populists to achieve their goals.

4. CONCLUSION

The names of political parties in the UK do usually refer to an ideological orientation suggestive of an intellectual background and a social class or category such as the Liberals (Liberalism), the Conservatives (Conservatism) the Labour party (the working classes). The case with the relatively recent populist parties of the UKIP, Brexit Party, then UK Reform Party is different. They do not suggest an ideological orientation but rather a sense of mission to be accomplished or action to be done. For the UKIP, there is the idea of independence from the EU. For the Brexit Party, there is the same idea, only it was more strongly advocated and defended. Lastly, with the Reform UK Party there is the idea of reform.

Proposing that the titles of the parties do not refer to a clear ideological background does not mean that they do not have one. Similarities on the voting pattern level are confirmed by studies such as that of (Heath, Prosser, Southall, & Aucott, 2025, p. 96) affirming that, “there is also a strong relationship between the places that backed

Leave in 2016 and the places that support Reform in 2024”, which suggest that the same people who were in favour of Brexit then are also in favour of Reform UK in the present. And based on what has been gathered from the speeches, the three parties tilt more to the radical end of right wing of politics, ideologically. They do share the same populist discourse, which revolves around a distinct combination of stylistic and thematic elements. These elements constitute the continuities that bind together the direction of their policies. They exemplify the new trend in Western politics, populist discourse at the façade and right-wing ideology at the core.

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