

Populism, Populist or Personality?

What is actually gaining in support and how to test it.

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Paper prepared for the Australian Political Studies Association (APSA) Conference

Melbourne, 25-27 September 2017

Abstract

Surprise election results around the world - surprising largely due to polls being unable to accurately grasp the mood of the electorate - are fuelling debates such as the supposed rise of populist movements. But what exactly is it that is on the rise? Is it populism – the movement intractably associated with right wing nationalism, hatred and bigotry? Is it populist campaigning, a framing tactic of posing the candidate standing as one with the ordinary people, in opposition to a (stylised) undemocratic and self-serving elite, irrespective of ideology or partisan leaning? Or is it the rise of the personality or celebrity candidate, who appeals personally to voters more than and differently to party or ideology or any message? Election results are not always clear, as a particular candidate may attract voters for all these or other reasons, so trying to interpret meaning from vote data is ambiguous at best. To truly know what is on the rise, we must determine vote causality. This paper will look at the difference between Populism, Populist campaigns, and Personality candidates, examine whether there has been a rise by comparing 2013 and 2016 federal election Senate results, and discuss the best methodological approaches for testing what is driving voters towards these political forces.

Keywords: Populism; campaigning; elections; candidates

Introduction

The cascade of electoral results that political professionals, commentators and election polls failed to predict, from Brexit (Curtice 2016; Hobolt 2016; Hübner 2016); to Trump (Azari 2016; Loukissas & Pollock 2017; Lusinchi 2017); to the 2015 British General election (Curtice 2015; Sturgis et al. 2016; Wring & Ward 2015); the 2015 Israeli election (Navot, Rubin & Ghanem 2017; Peters & Pinfeld 2015; Rahat, Hazan & Ben-Nun

Bloom 2016); and even the Greek bailout referendum (Silver 2015; Tsatsanis & Teperoglou 2016) have led to intense conjecture as to whether or not a fundamental shift has occurred in an assortment of political landscapes, and whether or not these shifts amount to a reconfiguration of politics (See, for example, Inglehart & Norris 2016; Parvu 2016; Schmidt 2017; Zakaria 2016). For some, a rise in populism – linked to unhappy, disempowered electorates eager to blame *inter alia* immigration and globalisation for their woes, with a corresponding uptick in nationalist, hate-filled rhetoric – is a reasonable theoretical conclusion (See, for example, Altman 2017; Inglehart & Norris 2016; McDougall 2016; Mols & Jetten 2016; Zakaria 2016). There is certainly evidence there is something going on here, but what, exactly, is going on? In this paper I will look at three approaches to examining populism: first, what I am labelling as an ideological approach; second, a political communication approach looking at populist campaigning; third, a psephological approach, looking at the electoral performance of personality candidates. I will then compare the Australian 2013 and 2016 Senate election results of micro parties (that is, excluding Labor, Liberal, National and Greens) to see if it is possible to discern if there is evidence for populism, populist campaigning, or personality candidates attracting increased support from voters.

The ideological approach - populism

Populism has numerous contested definitions; it has been referred to as an ideology, a style, a discourse, a worldview, a movement and a syndrome (Barr 2009; Moffitt & Tormey 2013; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, pp. 2, 5). Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser (2017, p. 6) define populism as '**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 general will of the people**'. Thin-centred ideologies such as populism rarely appear in a pure form, and by itself, populism simply lacks the complexity to answer the political questions of modern society (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, pp. 6-7; Stanley 2008). Importantly, populism is neither left nor right, and can attach itself to an ideology anywhere on the ideological spectrum (Abts & Rummens 2007; Albertazzi & McDonnell 2008; Bakker, Rooduijn & Schumacher 2016; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, p. 8). Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser

(2017, p. 14) also contend that nationalism is a thin ideology, and often prone to completely merge with populism. The opposites of populism according to this account are defined as elitism and pluralism: elitism holds the same dualistic worldview but contends that the people are the destructive force to be opposed, instead of the elite; pluralism is the direct opposite of the dualistic view holding that society is divided into a variety of partly overlapping social groups, seeing diversity as a strength rather than a weakness (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, p. 8; see also Schoor 2017).

This widely cited view of populism as a thin centred ideology is arguably the current dominant theoretical paradigm, but has numerous critiques (see, for example, Aslanidis 2015; Canovan 1999; Moffitt & Tormey 2013; van Kessel 2014). If we broadly accept (if only for the sake of argument) this view of populism as ideology, there are two pure populist parties in Australia: first, Online Direct Democracy (ODD; previously called Senator Online); second, Flux. Both propose the same solution to the problem of the elite: give the people complete control by allowing them to vote on every piece of legislation. Both these political parties have no policies of any kind; the major differences are that ODD is a relatively long-lived organisation, registered with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) in August of 2007, and its voting system is a simple website and app (Online Direct Democracy 2017); Flux was new at the 2016 election, their preferred method of political decision-making is based on a 'blockchain' system where unused votes can be traded with other members for credits, enabling those who care more about certain issues to have a greater say on them (Flux 2017; Lander & Cooper 2017).

Defining the other micro parties as having an ideology of populism - as distinct from nationalism, protectionism, or any other ideology combined with some other populist aspect - is quite a challenge and rightly cause for debate. For instance, having a populist *leader* is not a necessary component for a party to be a proponent of populism; nor is populist *campaigning* denotive of populism (Abts & Rummens 2007; Inglehart & Norris 2016; Weyland 2001). Moreover, populism can be 'top down', i.e., formed around a personality; or 'bottom up', i.e., formed around a movement; or both, formed around a party (De La Torre 2016; Inglehart & Norris 2016; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, p. 42).

Analysing primarily the party manifesto, supplemented by their website (archived versions where those parties no longer exist), and where available, campaign materials, policies, first speeches and press coverage quoting leaders, I have applied three tests:

- The first test seeks *defined language* using the three core ideas in populism – ‘the people’, ‘the elite’ and ‘the general will’ (or equivalents) - as rhetorical devices;
- The second test examines *political strategies* that seek to undermine societal norms by attacking whatever is defined as the ‘other’ to unite the ‘people’ to their cause; and,
- The third test searches for *a clear anti-establishment or anti-elite narrative*, as indicated by regular attacks on the entire political system or all other political players, or alternatively big business, and/or cultured or educated people or their institutions, and/or the media.

The parties that fit all three tests of language, strategy, and narrative are listed in Table 1 with examples of their rhetoric. Examining Table 1, we can see that in all the examples listed the rhetoric matches the tests applied. For example the Australia First Party (row 1) refers to the ‘people’ as Australians or men and women; the elite and their other are labelled as the ‘traitor class’; and they call upon those men and women to unite to their ‘general will’ of ‘regime change’. Their anti-elite narrative is clear as is their attacks on big business. Similarly, Katter’s Australian Party (row 7) refers to the people as ‘fellow Australians’; the elite and their other to be opposed as ‘foreign owned corporations’, ‘big business’ and ‘monopolistic companies’, as well as naming a number of them and the Chinese; and implore the people to ‘wake up and stand up’ to join the (less clearly defined) general will of protecting Australian jobs and stop major parties from ‘selling out your country from underneath you’. And, the Socialist Alliance (row 12) refers to the people as ‘ordinary’ or ‘working people’; pitched against the ‘ruling’ and ‘capitalist elite’; uniting for a clear ‘general will’ of ‘a democratic society run by and for working people’; consistent in their attacks on the entire current political system and big business (called ‘union bashers’ in the quote). The Socialist Alliance had the most consistent presentation of populism using these tests, with almost every post, page, and press release clearly using the language of the people against the ruling elite, with little use of vague phrasing.

Table 1: AEC registered parties with observed populism characteristics that contested the 2013 or 2016 federal elections

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Australia First Party | <i>... what the prevailing traitor class advocates is against the interests of Australians, and is undermining our civilisation. Their globalist doctrines will see the Australian People perish. The Australia First Party is committed to a regime change from this traitor class, and offers a beacon for men and women to step forward, and to join in this challenge. (Australia First Party 2017)</i> |
| 2. Australian Liberty Alliance | <i>As civic-minded Australians we cannot remain passive while damage is done to our nation, our communities and our families... There is no place for big government, racism, political correctness, moral relativism, divisive multiculturalism or tolerance for the intolerant... Australian Liberty Alliance is inclusive and seeks to unite individuals and groups for a common cause. (Australian Liberty Alliance 2017)</i> |
| 3. Australian Protectionist Party | <i>Australia's way of life needs protecting from the destructiveness of Multiculturalism and Political Correctness... APP is a party for ordinary Australians seeking to defend the Australian way of life... an alternative to the Establishment's internationalist policies, and aims to protect Australia's national interests. (Australian Protectionist Party 2017)</i> |
| 4. Citizens Electoral Council | <i>For 28 years the CEC has fought as an independent political party for the principles of the common good and national sovereignty... We have fought to free Australia from the Crown-City of London-Wall Street apparatus of banks and multinational corporations, which seized control of our economy under the policies of deregulation and privatisation that the Hawke-Keating ALP started, and the Liberals continued. (Citizens Electoral Council 2016)</i> <i>The presently ruling policies of globalisation, privatisation, deregulation and free trade, together with the enforcement of "environmentalist" policies so radical that they are best described as "green fascism", are plunging the vast majority of Australians—along with most of the rest of the world—into poverty and misery; destroying our once-great nation; and eliminating any meaningful future for our children (Citizens Electoral Council 2012)</i> |
| 5. Health Australia Party | <i>The Health Australia Party (HAP) will create a new paradigm, a middle ground where Australians can come together... The left/right polarisation, perceived dishonesty, the litany of broken promises, accusations, abuse and the general tone of the political debate has created a 'trust deficit' which has further alienated many Australians (Health Australia Party 2017)</i> <i>To promote the political, social, and economic order of a democratic national community, free from the powerful national and international vested interests of big business and big unions. (Health Australia Party 2015)</i> |
| 6. John Madigan's Manufacturing and Farming Party ¹ | <i>This is a party to unite all Australians behind that which has and will continue to make this country great. (John Madigan's Manufacturing and Farming Party 2016)</i> <i>At a time of increasing anger and disillusionment with politics and political parties we say "Don't get mad. Get Madigan!" So if you're tired of Turnbull, sick of Shorten or browned off with the Greens - then help us out. (Madigan 2016)</i> |
| 7. Katter's Australian Party | <i>It is clear that foreign owned corporations and big business have a capacity and will to undermine Australian pay and conditions... KAP will pursue policies that increase demand for Australian products and support Australian jobs and that will aggressively wind back the market share and/or market power of monopolistic companies that control access to markets for Australian small business, like Coles, Woolworths, Graincorp, Glencore and CBH (Katter's Australian Party 2016b)</i> <i>Please... fellow Australians wake up and stand up. The LNP and ALP are selling out your country from underneath you. You will have no resources that can earn you any money and you will be under the iron fist of Chinese corporations, almost all of who are controlled by the Chinese Government. (Katter's Australian Party 2016a)</i> |

¹ No longer exists, was always a vanity party only for John Madigan's re-election, who has since joined the Australian Country Party (Australian Country Party 2016)

| | |
|--|--|
| 8. Nick Xenophon Team | <p><i>Every couple of years the major political parties have expected us to walk into a polling booth and put a number one in the box of the political party we dislike the least. Voters are sick of parties that promise one thing before an election and do the opposite afterwards... Politicians should listen to the people instead of walking all over them. And they should respect the fact that they are here to serve, not to rule. (Xenophon 2014)</i></p> <p><i>Politicians must be open and up front with the Australian people. And governments should deliver value-for-money for the services you deserve. Australians who speak out against corrupt practices deserve to be protected. Corporations - particularly multi-nationals - must pay their fair share of taxes. (Nick Xenophon Team 2017)</i></p> |
| 9. Palmer United Party ² | <p><i>The main issue facing Australia today is not just balancing our budget, but what Australians can do to regain Australia's status as the lucky country. Sadly, the Liberal and Labor parties are devoid of ideas... We are all on Struggle Street together, but it's our country and it's our responsibility to do all we can to make the lives of all our citizens better than it is today. (Palmer 2015, p. 4)</i></p> <p><i>How long can parliament remain indifferent to the needs of all Australians? How long can government be deaf to the everyday struggles of all Australians? They must be on top of the national agenda. (Palmer 2015, p. 18)</i></p> |
| 10. Pauline Hanson's One Nation (additional quotes in text) | <p><i>We believe that our country's future wealth and the prosperity of all Australians can be assured only through listening and then caring enough to openly address the problems that Liberal-Labor-Nationals-Greens created politically and continue to make... One Nation opposes acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the preamble to the Australian Constitution, as One Nation believes that all Australians are owners and custodians of this land and should work toward unification, not segregation, under the one law for all. (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017h)</i></p> <p><i>There is only One Nation left to oppose them, a party that is not funded by and subservient to the multinationals; but instead represents the farmers and the hopes of the Australian people. (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017e)</i></p> |
| 11. Rise Up Australia | <p><i>Rather than uniting the country under one flag, multiculturalism has had the completely opposite effect. Australia is a multi-ethnic country comprising, many races, many skin colours – but one culture – Australian! (Rise Up Australia 2017b)</i></p> <p><i>The goal of Rise Up Australia is to limit and reduce foreign ownership of our assets (including the media), to repay our foreign debt and to reduce the influence of overseas organisations... Foreign ownership and external influences may not always have the best interests of the Australian people at heart, so Rise Up Australia will work to ensure these issues are not detrimental to the wellbeing of our citizens. (Rise Up Australia 2017a)</i></p> |
| 12. Socialist Alliance | <p><i>The Socialist Alliance stands for socialism — a democratic society run by and for working people, not the greedy, destructive capitalist elite that now rules... in order to bring about such a society, we have to replace the institutions that protect and defend this ruling elite (such as parliament, government administration, police and the military) with institutions under the democratic control of ordinary people... The Socialist Alliance is made up of people who, like millions of others, are sick of being ruled by the warmongers, racists, union-bashers, and capitalist politicians. (Socialist Alliance 2017)</i></p> |
| 13. Uniting Australia Party ³ | <p><i>Our aim is to bring back some common sense into politics. It is about real people and the real issues facing everyday Australians. It is about listening, hearing, and acting on what real Australians need. It is about putting Australians first. (Uniting Australia Party 2013)</i></p> |

² No longer exists, voluntarily deregistered on 5 May 2017 (AEC 2017b; Silva 2017).

³ No longer exists, deregistered for failing to respond 23 July 2015 (AEC 2015). There is very little remaining of the Uniting Australia Party, some of the best resources are social media commentary and individual voter's reviews of the party, such as this YouTube video <https://youtu.be/s6fFX23snB8>

However, not all the parties that passed the test were as consistent or as clear in their adherence to populist ideology. Despite Pauline Hanson herself being cited as being an exemplar of a populist leader (see for example Denmark & Bowler 2002; Mason 2010; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, pp. 69-70), Pauline Hanson's One Nation (PHON), the political party, is a challenging case study. They did pass the three tests, but their stated 'general will' was inconsistent; the strategy certainly attacks their 'others' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people, immigrants and Islam, but the 'uniting the people' factor is not always evident as part of those attacks; and the anti-establishment or anti-elite narrative is not as consistent in the party content as it is on Hanson's personal platforms, especially on her Facebook page (Hanson 2017). As an organisation, it can be argued that PHON has weak underlying foundations with a number of contradictory statements in its manifesto. In particular, the top six points of: 'Australian values', 'Federalism', 'Honesty and Integrity', 'Fairness', 'Freedom' and 'Human Progress' are both supported and contradicted by the 31 numbered 'Principles and objectives' (listed on the same webpage) which, for example, imply that 'Freedom' is a pleasure only for law abiding, Christian, Australian citizens, who are prepared to give up some of that freedom to measures such as an Australian Identity Card to access government services (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017h).

The picture becomes more confusing if one delves into the published policies of PHON. For example, principle and objective number 6, "To actively pursue and promote treaties, investment and development as deemed appropriate and in the national interest and repeal those that are not in our best interests" is somewhat complicated by point 15's commitment to repeal United Nations (UN) treaties that are detrimental to Australia (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017h). This 'actively pursue' principle is then contradicted by the Manufacturing and Primary Industry policies which state strong opposition to globalisation, free trade, a commitment to withdraw from all trade agreements, impose tariffs and protectionist measures, ban certain imports and goes so far as to state: "Australia is capable of producing any agriculture product needed for use or consumption by its people" (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017d, 2017e). Picking up the anti-UN thread, the Economics and Tax policy proposes to exit the UN entirely and "Investigate 7,000 foreign treaties and

commitments signed by Liberal-Labor-Nationals governments with a view to revoking all but those beneficial to Australia and Australians” (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017b).

There are also inconsistencies among the same policy, for example, within the anti-Islamic policy. Principle and objective 21 says:

To stop the teaching and infiltration of Islam and its totalitarian ideology, that opposes our democracy, way of life and laws. To ban the Burqa in public places, government buildings and schools. To make genital mutilation of young girls a criminal offence, carrying heavy sentences. To stop islamists (sic) and their families from receiving welfare benefits; we are a Christian country, only one marriage is recognised. Ban the building of any more Mosques. (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017h)

This point is complemented by number 22 which opposes the introduction of Sharia Law, number 24 includes a commitment to “stop the practice of Halal Certification on all products, service, and machinery in Australia, other than for export”, and 25 which states Australia should only take Christian refugees (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017h). The policy on Islam expands on these principles and objectives, stating at the top that the religious aspect of Islam is a fraud: “it is rather a totalitarian political system, including legal, economic, social and military components, masquerading as a religion”; before proposing the specific measures of:

- *Call for an inquiry or Royal Commission to determine if Islam is a religion or political ideology*
- *Stop further Muslim Immigration and the intake of Muslim refugees until we can assure the safety of Australians*
- *Ban the Burqa and Niquab in public places*
- *Driver’s licence cannot be obtained without showing the full face and having photo ID on driver’s licence*
- *Surveillance cameras to be installed in all Mosques and schools. Mosques to be open to the public during all opening hours*
- *No more mosques to be built until the inquiry is held*
- *Oppose the introduction of Sharia Law*
- *Investigate welfare payments paid to Muslims who may be in multiple marriages, having multiple children*
- *Ban Halal certification. Halal certified food not to be provided in prisons or the armed services. Companies may comply for export but no monies must be paid*
- *Call for a referendum to change Section 116 of the Australian Constitution*

- *Muslims will not be allowed to be sworn in to Parliament under the Qur'an*
- *Female genital mutilation to carry lengthy jail term*(Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017c)

Note this policy language changes the 'stopping of welfare' to 'investigating welfare recipients'; adds new measures of security cameras and mosques to be open to the public, drivers licence restrictions and that Muslim members of parliament cannot be sworn in on the Qur'an; changes the Halal certification ban to include a ban on export companies paying a fee and the provision of certified food in prisons or the armed services (which arguably also contradicts principle statement 13 which commits the party to 'supporting our defence forces and personnel'); introduces a halt to immigration of Muslim people and implies Muslim refugees (blocked under the Christian requirement of principle 25) might be let in if safety can be assured, and proposes a referendum change which would be necessary to implement most of this policy – Section 116 of the *Australian Constitution* prohibits any law that limits the free exercise of any religion. The 2016 campaign flyer differed again taking a softer line than the policy on some items (see figure 1): banning the burqa in public and government buildings as opposed to public places; implying Halal certification would be allowed just the fee would be banned, and interestingly adding Islamic schools in to the proposed ban mix, which is not in either the policy or the principle statement (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2016).



Figure 1: Halal certification and Islam section of the PHON 2016 campaign flyer (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2016)

Possibly the most viewed campaign item on the issue was graphic shared on Pauline Hanson's personal Facebook page (see figure 2) which gave a simplified version of the policy, and became a news story in itself (see 'Pauline Hanson's Facebook Post on Muslims Gains Support' 2015). It would be an interesting research

question to determine what proportion of Hanson supporters had based to their decision to support the party on the various sources of content given the demonstrable contradictions and inconsistencies. PHON also does not hide their history of internal disruption, with references to 'dissidents' and Pauline Hanson's absence from the party noted on multiple pages, and a section on the party 'History' page actually titled 'Internal disputes' (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017a, 2017f, 2017g). Given that Hanson was absent from the party for some 13 years (Pauline Hanson's One Nation 2017g), these inconsistencies in language style and content are arguably not surprising, and may resolve over time.

Pauline Hanson's Please Explain is with Jeshurun Rajadurai and 9 others.
6 October 2015 · 🌐

A vote for me at the next Federal Election will be your insurance, the major parties will have absolute opposition to any more Mosques, Sharia Law, Halal Certification & Muslim Refugees. NO MORE!
Share if you agree.
#PaulineHanson #OneNation #FedUp #Islam #AusPol

NO MORE

- 👉 **MOSQUES**
- 👉 **SHARIA LAW**
- 👉 **HALAL CERTIFICATION**
- 👉 **MUSLIM REFUGEES**

QLD SENATE CANDIDATE

PAULINE HANSON'S **one** NATION

👉 Share

Figure 2: 'No More' Facebook post on Pauline Hanson's Please Explain page (Hanson 2015)

Borderline parties that did not meet the three populism tests were the Glenn Lazarus Team, Jacqui Lambie Network, Renewable Energy Party, and Australian Defence Veterans Party who do use ‘people versus elite’ rhetorical devices intermittently, but not the ‘general will’ concept, and lack the strategic structure necessary to clearly categorise them as proponents of populism. This is sometimes referred to as ‘empty populism’ (Jagers & Walgrave 2007). Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party (arguably a vanity party with no real purpose other than the election of Senator Hinch) has a clearly defined anti-establishment narrative around his very narrow anti-paedophile, anti-criminal, anti-bail platform, attacking the judiciary and bureaucracy for their repeated failures to keep bad people out of the community, but not police who are also victims, for example:

*“The courts gambled on Gargasoulos and Monis and Price, against police advice, and the community lost”.*⁴ (Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party 2016)

*“For this disgusting crime, almost incomprehensible to normal people, he was sentenced in Canberra to only three years and three months imprisonment, with a non-parole period of 20 months—20 bleeping months—and that is a sick judicial joke. The offender was born in El Salvador, and if he is not an Australian citizen I believe he should be deported the minute he finishes his paltry sentence.”*⁵(Australia 2016)

Hinch personally sticks to his single issue brief, expending most of his rhetorical energy on declaring a particular crime outrageous, disgusting, tragic, abhorrent, or his favoured turn of phrase a ‘sick joke’; however, there is little evidence of the structural ideology of populism, with the message and strategy lacking the ‘general will’ or even regular appeals to the ‘people’. Christian parties such as Fred Nile’s Christian Democratic Party and Australian Christians have a clear ‘general will’ as ‘advancing the glory of God’, however they also lacked the other elements of populism and thus did not pass the stated tests.

⁴ This quote refers to some of Australia’s most notorious and violent crimes, all committed by individuals who were released on bail at the time. Dimitri Gargasoulas drove his car in to crowds in Bourke Street Melbourne on 20 January 2017, killing 6 people <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-23/bourke-st-rampage-prompts-bail-law-review-in-victoria/8202300>. Man Haron Monis held 17 staff and customers hostage at gunpoint inside the Lindt café in Martin Place in December 2014 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-16/iranian-man-haron-monis-named-as-man-behind-sydney-siege/5969246>. Sean Prince raped and murdered Melbourne schoolgirl Masa Vukotic in March 2015 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-27/masa-vukotic-killer-sean-price-pleads-guilty-to-rape/6728610>.

⁵ Derryn Hinch made a campaign pledge to use the protection of parliamentary privilege to name convicted paedophiles in parliament <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/derryn-hinch-names-sex-abusers-in-maiden-speech/news-story/1fe53c2079c5643bf400aff4a74566d3>. The quote is referring to a Canberra man convicted for a sex offence against a two year old girl.

The political communication approach – populist campaigning

From a political communication approach, populism is a communication frame that appeals to and identifies with the people, and claims to speak in their name (Block & Negrine 2017; Canovan 1999; Jagers & Walgrave 2007). This correlates with Laclau's conceptualisation of populism as a discursive frame or the 'political style' understanding of populism (Aslanidis 2015; Canovan 1982; Laclau 1977, 2005; Moffitt & Tormey 2013; Weyland 2001). Populism as a communication frame is commonly denoted by simplistic solutions to complex problems communicated in very direct language, appealing to the 'common sense' of the people, while attacking the established elites (Abts & Rummens 2007). The populist frame is one frequently deployed by political strategists; for example, Rick Ridder of RBI Strategies, who worked with the Australian Democrats in the 1990s and the NSW Labor party from 1998 to 2008, argues that straight-talking candidates who can simplify policy and avoid 'process-speak' are successful because they come across as "a genuine person with whom most voters can relate" (Ridder 2016, p. 131). On this account, populist *campaigning* is not a strategy just for proponents of populism; it is a strategy for anyone that wants to win.

Grabe & Bucy (2011) define the 'populist campaigner' frame used by political strategists in similar terms to those theorists who define populism as an ideology; that is the idea that the ordinary people stand in opposition the self-serving elite. The cues deployed by the populist campaigner have two main qualities: mass-appeal and ordinariness. Mass appeal⁶ is achieved through the visuals of the candidate amongst large, adoring crowds and celebrities transferring their popular appeal through endorsements. Ordinariness⁷ is achieved through appearances with 'regular folks', displays of athletic ability (in 'ordinary' sports), and the quintessential appearances without jacket and tie, shirt sleeves rolled up. Language style is an essential component for effective execution of the populist campaign; conversing with audiences in simple and often fragmented sentences. Bill Clinton, widely regarded as the best natural campaigner in American politics, excelled in the populist style of campaigning (Grabe & Bucy 2009, 2011; Napolitan 2003).

⁶ The visual frame coding set used for mass appeal is: celebrities; large audiences; approving audiences; interaction with crowds.

⁷ The visual frame coding set used for ordinariness is: informal attire; casual dress; athletic clothing; ordinary people; physical activity.

Where the (thin-centred) ideology of populism is defined against its opposites of elitism and pluralism, the populist campaigner frame is defined against the ‘ideal candidate’ and the ‘sure loser’. The ideal candidate frame is based on research that shows voters have an idea of what they expect a politician to be – physical appeal, the right personality and background, leadership abilities, honesty, intelligence and a principled stance on issues that aligned with the voter’s attitudes. Additionally, voters will assess job performance using cues on decisiveness, competence and speaking style. From all this, there are two traits that dominate: statesmanship and compassion. Statesmanship⁸ is effectively represented through projecting power and control: speaking from the podium backed by flags or other symbolic backdrop (such as a parliament house), appearing surrounded with high ranking peers (as opposed to the populist’s adoring ordinary people). Almost always dressed in suit and tie, in contrast to the casual dress of the populist; speaking in reassuring but authoritative tones, that is speaking ‘to’ an audience in contrast to the common language speaking ‘with’ conversational tone of the populist. Compassion⁹ is often conveyed through interaction with children, or other strategies to show the candidates ‘softer side’ – the kissing of a supporter’s baby being the most clichéd construction of compassion on the campaign trail. Surrounding the candidate with children (their own or others), particularly during economic hard times, can also signal messages of ‘father’ of the nation (Grabe & Bucy 2011).

The ‘sure loser’; is the Stephen Bradbury¹⁰ of elections – someone who gets to the finish line through the missteps and poor judgement of otherwise leading candidates. Sure loser¹¹ framing is applied by others, rather than a deliberate strategy, and is often associated with unfavourable news coverage because of some problem with the candidate’s position, profile, reputation or character that causes them not to fit the ‘ideal candidate’ standard, and thus makes them an easy target for attack. More commonly, it is generated from the inability of the candidate to connect with the voters, poor polling, and repeated calls for the candidate to stop

⁸ The visual frame coding set for statesmanship is: elected officials and other influentials; patriotic symbols; symbols of progress; identifiable entourage; campaign paraphernalia; political hoopla; formal attire.

⁹ The compassion framing set includes four visual and three behavioural measures: children; family associations; admiring women; religious symbols; and affinity gestures; interaction with individuals; physical embraces.

¹⁰ Steven Bradbury was an Australian ice skater who won an ‘accidental’ gold medal in the 1000m short-track speed skating final at the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Games after his four rivals all collided and sprawled around the ice, leaving him to skate alone past the finish line (Gordon 2003). The term ‘doing a Bradbury’ has since entered the Australian lexicon to mean ‘become the unlikely winner’ (Gwynn 2014).

¹¹ The sure loser coding set is: small crowds; disapproving audiences; displays of weakness; defiant gestures; inappropriate nonverbal displays.

wasting the voters' (and media's) time and to just give up – in a US Presidential context, drop out of the race – so the 'real' candidates can be heard. Visual cues are predominantly the opposite of the ideal and populist frames. Coverage of campaign events may be described as protest events or highlight the poor turnout (in contrast to the populist's large crowd) rather than the substance (Grabe & Bucy 2011). Donald Trump was framed as a sure loser as no one – including his own team – thought he was going to win.

In the Australian context, an additional frame must be added to Grabe and Bucy's theory; that of the maverick. Borrowing from Peter Tucker's (2011) PhD on the Australian maverick, which defined the maverick candidate with the party context, I would submit the maverick frame¹² is that of the unpredictable, celebrity candidate with their own issue agenda at odds with the mainstream. Pitching themselves as a 'conviction politician', they intentionally, aggressively, and in a media attention-grabbing way, 'buck the system'. Ignoring convention and breaking the rules to appear to be 'not a politician', their dress is rarely conforming, often adopting a signature physical attribute or item of apparel, such as Bob Katter's hat. Their style of speech is blunt, bordering on brash and at times is downright offensive. A maverick does not try to appear informed about serious issues; they only care about their issues, their people, and are harshly dismissive to those who question their ability or commitment. Mavericks do exist in party structures – Barnaby Joyce is the most prominent current example - but they currently thrive on the Senate cross bench. The maverick is a concept associated with populism, but they need to be offering an anti-establishment appeal to be populist (Barr 2009; Vraga 2017).

Note here that language of these frames is demonstrably masculine. That is not an error, or a failure to update old theories and make them gender neutral. Politics is still a masculine domain. Ask a voter to define their ideal candidate and the phrases most use are masculine ones, even if they have no intention or meaning that the ideal candidate should be a man, as the stereotypes of traits needed for electoral success favour masculine over feminine traits (Dolan 2013; Vraga 2017). For example, Aaron Moore and David Dewberry (2012) analysed the use of sport by presidential candidates to communicate to voters that they are a 'man's

¹² The maverick coding set I developed was unconventional dress; standing alone; aggressiveness; defiance; blunt speech; disengagement from broader agenda; behaving like a celebrity.

man', physically superior to other men; and as noted above a key component of the 'ordinariness' aspect populist campaigning is engaging in ordinary (male) sports. Moore and Dewberry conclude that female candidates must also communicate their 'masculinity' via sports to be successful. This presents an invasive conundrum for female candidates when being 'sporty' for a woman can also result in the double-edged whisper of questions about her sexuality (Krane & Kaus 2014).

Campaign framing, like the ideology of populism, is not tied to any side of politics. Any of these frames could be deployed by, or applied to, any candidate – and in the Australian context almost all parties do, to some extent, deploy populist campaigning techniques. It is also worth noting that a campaigner can fall foul of the framing strategy, by choosing the wrong frame. Miscasting a candidate in an ill-fitting frame, such as casting an ideal candidate in a populist campaign frame (such as George H.W. Bush's re-election, or for an Australian example Tony Abbott) will generally result in an election loss (Grabe & Bucy 2011).

The psephological approach – personality candidates

Whatever the ideology or strategy, it always helps to cook with quality ingredients. There is solid evidence in an Australian context for the boost yielded to a candidate's vote simply by being a well-known personality. Malcolm Mackerras analysed swing deviations, in combination with data from Don Aitkin's Australian Survey Project panel, to identify the value of personal vote for longstanding, popular or well-known candidates in both of his PhD attempts (Mackerras 1974, 1976). Mackerras argued that country seats and ministers are more likely to benefit from personal vote; that this benefit is highest in Tasmania, higher than average in Queensland, with Victoria having the lowest personal vote variation. Clive Bean (1990) and Ernie Chaples (1997) have since confirmed the benefit of the personal vote, with estimates at anywhere from 3 to 10 per cent above the party base level of support being achieved by a prominent candidate. This psephological approach to examining populism aligns with Kurt Weyland's (2001) definition of populism as "a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalised support from large numbers of mostly unorganised followers".

The personality candidate is one of the indicative characteristics of populism. Populism is generally associated with a strong leader whose charismatic personal appeal, rather than ideology or policy program, is the basis of their support (Abts & Rummens 2007; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, p. 42; Weyland 2001). Populist parties are often constructed entirely around a personality, such as Emmanuel Macron’s new party in France or Pauline Hanson’s One Nation. Emmanuel Macron is an example of the personality candidate purportedly ‘rising above’ ideology or party in his defeat of right wing populist Marine Le Pen: another result that defied polling and expectations, Macron winning by more than 10 points than predicted (Barbieri 2017; Enten 2017). In a Senate context, the personality candidate may be all the voter knows about that party. In the case of (say) Bob Katter and Katter’s Australian Party, or Fred Nile and the Christian Democrats, that personality may not be a candidate on the Senate ballot paper, however, they may be the only person (and indeed the only piece of information) the voter associates with that party.

Table 2 lists those minor or micro parties that have a prominent figure or personality candidate associated with the party, which have been categorised into two groups. Group A (in bold) are personalities who are standing in the Senate and thus their personal vote should be reflected in voting figures; group B are personalities that are prominent within their personal sphere of influence but not prominent media figures, or did not personally stand for the Senate.

Table 2: Personalities associated with AEC registered parties 2013 & 2016

| Party | Personality | Group |
|---|---|----------|
| Australian Liberty Alliance | Kirralee Smith, Angry Anderson | A |
| Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party | Ricky Muir | A |
| Australian Sex Party | Fiona Patten | A |
| Derryn Hinch's Justice Party | Derryn Hinch | A |
| Family First | Bob Day | A |
| Glenn Lazarus Team | Glenn Lazarus (2016) | A |
| Jacqui Lambie Network | Jacqui Lambie | A |
| John Madigan's Manufacturing & Farming Party | John Madigan | A |
| Liberal Democrats (LDP) | David Leyonhjelm | A |
| Nick Xenophon Team | Nick Xenophon | A |
| Palmer United | Clive Palmer, Glenn Lazarus (2013) | A |
| Pauline Hanson's One Nation | Pauline Hanson | A |
| Voluntary Euthanasia Party | Philip Nitschke | A |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| The WikiLeaks Party | Julian Assange | A |
| Australia First Party | Jim Saleam | B |
| Christian Democratic Party | Fred Nile | B |
| CountryMinded | Peter Mailler (2016) | B |
| Drug Law Reform | Greg Chipp | B |
| Katter's Australian Party | Bob Katter, Peter Mailler (2013) | B |
| Renewable Energy Party | Peter Breen | B |
| Rise Up Australia Party | Daniel Nalliah | B |
| Shooters, Fishers and Farmers | Robert Brown | B |
| Socialist Equality Party | Nick Beams | B |
| Sustainable Australia | Sandra Kanck | B |

Which is gaining support?

To try and determine whether it is populism, populist campaigning, or personalities gaining support, there are few suitable data sources available in Australia. I have chosen to undertake a simple aggregate analysis comparing the 2013 and 2016 Senate election results¹³. Electoral support can be demonstrated by the number of votes received, or by seats won. Electoral success can also be defined in two ways: electoral breakthrough - winning enough votes to enter parliament, or electoral persistence - the ability to develop into a stable force within the political system (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, p. 59). Additionally, we need to distinguish a between a rise in a particular party from a rise in an ideology. The collapse of one party being replaced by another party does not necessarily indicate a rise in that ideology if the net result of votes for that ideological position is flat or in decline.

First, comparing the parties that promoted a populist ideology (as discussed earlier) reveals that most had little movement from their 2013 result; most moved less than 1 % and many less than 0.1%. Only three

¹³ The Australian Election Study data set is too small for a meaningful comparison of voters for most of these micro parties, we do not have panel data addressing the specific question, and not all parties contest House seats, thus Senate results are the best available data set. As noted by Antony Green (2017b) in his review of the election, using the figures from 2014 Senate re-run in Western Australia is not really useful for this purpose, so I am using the 2013 election figures: thus these swing figures will not correlate with the AEC tally room site but should correlate with Antony Green's blog. Additionally, the figures used by both myself and Green are the 'at the time of the writs' final count, not what is listed on the AEC Tally Room site as the 'official count'; following the exclusion of Bob Day and Rod Culleton the AEC recounted as though both candidate were never on the ballot in 2016, and that is the count which is on the AEC Tally Room website (Green 2017a). These figures are not how people voted in 2016 and not appropriate for this kind of analysis, however an archived version of the Tally Room is available with the 'at the return of the writs' count.

parties had substantial movements, Nick Xenophon Team (NXT) and PHON gaining 1.37% and 3.76% respectively and Palmer United Party (PUP) losing 4.72%.

Table 3: Parties with observed populism platforms 2013-2016 vote comparison

| Party | 2013 Vote | 2013 % | 2013 Seats | 2016 Vote | 2016 % | 2016 Seats | Var. | Swing | Net |
|--|----------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|------------|---------------|-------------|----------|
| Australia First Party | 10157 | 0.08 | 0 | 3005 | 0.02 | 0 | -7152 | -0.06 | 0 |
| Australian Liberty Alliance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 102982 | 0.74 | 0 | 102982 | 0.74 | 0 |
| Australian Protectionist Party | 3379 | 0.03 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -3379 | -0.03 | 0 |
| Citizens Electoral Council | 1708 | 0.01 | 0 | 9850 | 0.07 | 0 | 8142 | 0.06 | 0 |
| Health Australia Party | 0 | 0 | 0 | 85233 | 0.62 | 0 | 85233 | 0.62 | 0 |
| John Madigan's Manufacturing and Farming Party | 0 | 0 | 1 Sitting (DLP) | 5268 | 0.04 | 0 | 5268 | 0.04 | -1 |
| Katter's Australian Party | 119920 | 0.89 | 0 | 53123 | 0.38 | 0 | -66797 | -0.51 | 0 |
| Nick Xenophon Team | 258376 | 1.93 | 1 | 456369 | 3.3 | 3 | 197993 | 1.37 | 2 |
| Online Direct Democracy | 9625 | 0.07 | 0 | 11857 | 0.09 | 0 | 2232 | 0.02 | 0 |
| Palmer United Party | 658976 | 4.91 | 3* | 26210 | 0.19 | 0 | -632766 | -4.72 | -3 |
| Pauline Hanson's One Nation | 70851 | 0.53 | 0 | 593013 | 4.29 | 4 | 522162 | 3.76 | 4 |
| Rise Up Australia Party | 49341 | 0.37 | 0 | 36424 | 0.26 | 0 | -12917 | -0.11 | 0 |
| Socialist Alliance | 2728 | 0.02 | 0 | 9968 | 0.07 | 0 | 7240 | 0.05 | 0 |
| Uniting Australia Party | 5423 | 0.04 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -5423 | -0.04 | 0 |
| Flux | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20453 | 0.15 | 0 | 20453 | 0.15 | 0 |
| TOTAL Nat Populism | 1190484 | 8.88 | 5 | 1413755 | 10.22 | 7 | 223271 | 1.34 | 2 |

Sources: AEC 2013 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version 9.1.17.21449 (AEC 2013) AEC 2016 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version (AEC 2016)

The total net gain of populism votes was 223,271 or 1.34%, and it yielded an additional two seats. However, this would not have been the case if it were not a double-dissolution election. After the election, the AEC conducted a re-count under section 282 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* which simulated the outcome as if only six senators were elected. This saw Derryn Hinch and Pauline Hanson elected (but none of the other PHON candidates), four Greens and the rest from the Coalition and Labor. Theoretically a NXT candidate in South Australia and Jacqui Lambie Network candidate in Tasmania would have been elected, but note that neither Nick Xenophon nor Jacqui Lambie themselves were facing re-election if it were a normal election, so it is debatable whether that would have eventuated (Green 2017b). Applying this 'normal election' re-count, the net seat column for the above table would have been John Madigan -1, NXT 1 + 1

continuing, PHON 1, PUP 1 continuing; a total of 4 populism cross bench Senate seats, a loss of one seat, despite the increase in votes. Thus there was a small increase in votes for populism, but a false indicator of increased support in the seat gain, in that the net increase in seats was only a by-product of the double dissolution election.

If we break down the populism vote by the imperfect left/right spectrum, we see something else which goes against the dominant narrative: the right wing populism vote actually fell 0.87%.

Table 4: Right wing parties with observed populism platforms 2013-2016 vote comparison

| Party/Group name | 2013 Vote | 2013 % | 2016 Vote | 2016 % | Var. | Swing |
|--|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Australia First Party | 10157 | 0.08 | 3005 | 0.02 | -7152 | -0.06 |
| Australian Liberty Alliance | 0 | 0 | 102982 | 0.74 | 102982 | 0.74 |
| Australian Protectionist Party | 3379 | 0.03 | 0 | 0 | -3379 | -0.03 |
| Citizens Electoral Council | 1708 | 0.01 | 9850 | 0.07 | 8142 | 0.06 |
| John Madigan's Manufacturing and Farming Party | 0 | 0 | 5268 | 0.04 | 5268 | 0.04 |
| Katter's Australian Party | 119920 | 0.89 | 53123 | 0.38 | -66797 | -0.51 |
| Palmer United Party | 658976 | 4.91 | 26210 | 0.19 | -632766 | -4.72 |
| Pauline Hanson's One Nation | 70851 | 0.53 | 593013 | 4.29 | 522162 | 3.76 |
| Rise Up Australia Party | 49341 | 0.37 | 36424 | 0.26 | -12917 | -0.11 |
| Uniting Australia Party | 5423 | 0.04 | 0 | 0 | -5423 | -0.04 |
| TOTAL Right Wing Populism | 919755 | 6.86 | 829875 | 5.99 | -89880 | -0.87 |

Sources: AEC 2013 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version 9.1.17.21449 (AEC 2013) AEC 2016 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version (AEC 2016)

Table 5: Left wing and centre parties with observed populism platforms 2013-2016 vote comparison

| Party/Group name | 2013 Vote | 2013 % | 2016 Vote | 2016 % | Var. | Swing |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| Health Australia Party | 0 | 0 | 85233 | 0.62 | 85233 | 0.62 |
| Nick Xenophon Team | 258376 | 1.93 | 456369 | 3.3 | 197993 | 1.37 |
| Socialist Alliance | 2728 | 0.02 | 9968 | 0.07 | 7240 | 0.05 |
| TOTAL Left or Centre Populism | 261104 | 1.95 | 551570 | 3.99 | 290466 | 2.04 |

Sources: AEC 2013 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version 9.1.17.21449 (AEC 2013) AEC 2016 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version (AEC 2016)

Table 6: Parties with observed pure populist (direct voting) platforms 2013-2016 vote comparison

| Party | 2013 Vote | 2013 % | 2016 Vote | 2016 % | Var. | Swing |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Online Direct Democracy | 9625 | 0.07 | 11857 | 0.09 | 2232 | 0.01 |
| Flux | 0 | 0 | 20453 | 0.15 | 20453 | 0.15 |
| TOTAL Pure Populist Vote | 9625 | 0.07 | 32310 | 0.24 | 22685 | 0.16 |

Sources: AEC 2013 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version 9.1.17.21449 (AEC 2013) AEC 2016 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version (AEC 2016)

The pure populist parties do not fit on the spectrum as they have no policies or positions of any kind, but 32,310 votes arguably will not make a substantive difference to any overall trend and are not worth overstating. Of all these ideologically populist parties, only NXT can be argued to have demonstrated electoral success, electoral breakthrough, and electoral persistence through increasing both vote and numbers of seats in parliament over subsequent elections.

As discussed above, almost all parties in Australia deploy some populist campaigning strategy during the campaign. Using a sampling of images and stories from the 2016 campaign, my brief analysis¹⁴ is that Pauline Hanson and Jacqui Lambie were pitching themselves as mavericks but were framed by the media as sure losers. While there was little doubt, particularly in Lambie's case, that they would win their individual seats, coverage of both women regularly focused on their opposition and lack of organised support – for example, Lambie needing to use crowd funding to pay for her campaign and only being able to raise \$60 (Smith 2016). Images of both women most frequently show them alone exhibiting negative facial expressions such as frowns or scowls, waving hands or pointing fingers which are clearly identified in the sure loser coding framework (Grabe & Bucy 2009, p. 292). Glenn Lazarus was the text book example of a personality candidate: often dressed in his casual clothes, surrounded by adoring fans, and many stories referencing his football past (see for example Atfield 2016; Harrison 2016). Nick Xenophon was famed in the past for his populist stunts (Manne 2015); but in the 2016 campaign he was very much playing the role of party leader of a disciplined 'ideal candidate' team, trading his signature bright orange shirt with sleeves rolled up of the 2013 campaign for a black suit, and just one stunt involving a three-wheeled motorcycle starting at a shock-absorber

¹⁴ For comparison: Labor Leader Bill Shorten and his 100 Policy bus, nearly always in a blue suit (except when taking in his daily run), was framed an ideal candidate; Leather jacket wearing, wandering through the markets or at the beach Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and skivvy wearing Greens Leader Richard Di Natale were populist campaigners.

manufacturer (O'Malley 2016). Derryn Hinch certainly tried the ideal candidate, aside from never wearing a tie and that he had been to jail (Wright 2014); he was arguably a borderline ideal maverick. David Leyonhjelm was an ideal candidate, always in a tie and usually pictured only at a desk or other formal setting, aside from the occasional picture with a motorbike or gun (see for example Selmes 2016). John Madigan was a definite maverick, using his blacksmith skills to make a steel 'Ned Kelly' bushranger suit to raise money for his campaign (Hamer 2016).

Many of the smaller parties either did not campaign, did not campaign enough, or were not covered in a way that is archived and accessible so long after the election that their tactics can be assessed using the visual framing content analysis method. Regardless, we cannot objectively assess campaign framing strategy performance using electoral return statistics. To conduct a proper analysis of campaign framing strategies and their success would require a detailed campaign and media content analysis (such as the method used by Grabe & Bucy 2009; or alternatively Jagers & Walgrave 2007), and a corresponding voter impact and saliency survey of some kind to see which strategies resonated and influenced voters. One could then correlate those results with electoral statistics for confirmation.

Returning to aggregate analysis with our list of personality-led parties, there is a figure in the bottom line of Table 7 that rightfully warrants due attention: personality-led parties account for the entire Senate cross bench.

Table 7: Parties with personality figures 2013-2016 vote comparison

| Party | 2013 Vote | 2013 % | 2013 Seats | 2016 Vote | 2016 % | 2016 Seats | Var. | Swing | Net |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------|------------|-----------|--------|------------|--------|-------|-----|
| Australia First Party | 10157 | 0.08 | 0 | 3005 | 0.02 | 0 | -7152 | -0.06 | 0 |
| Australian Liberty Alliance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 102982 | 0.74 | 0 | 102982 | 0.74 | 0 |
| Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party | 67560 | 0.5 | 1 | 53232 | 0.38 | 0 | -14328 | -0.12 | -1 |
| Australian Sex Party* | 183731 | 1.37 | 0 | 94262 | 0.68 | 0 | -89469 | -0.69 | 0 |
| Sex Party/HEMP* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 76744 | 0.55 | 0 | 76744 | 0.55 | 0 |
| Christian Democratic Party | 72544 | 0.54 | 0 | 162155 | 1.17 | 0 | 89611 | 0.63 | 0 |
| CountryMinded | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9850 | 0.07 | 0 | 8142 | 0.06 | 0 |
| Derryn Hinch's Justice Party | 0 | 0 | 0 | 266607 | 1.93 | 1 | 266607 | 1.93 | 1 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|----------|
| Drug Law Reform | 10189 | 0.08 | 0 | 61327 | 0.44 | 0 | 51138 | 0.36 | 0 |
| Family First | 149306 | 1.11 | 1 | 191112 | 1.38 | 1 | 41806 | 0.27 | 0 |
| Glenn Lazarus Team | 0 | 0 | (PUP) | 45149 | 0.33 | 0 | 45149 | 0.33 | 0 |
| Jacqui Lambie Network | 0 | 0 | (PUP) | 69074 | 0.5 | 1 | 69074 | 0.5 | 1 |
| John Madigan's Manufacturing and Farming Party | 0 | 0 | 1 Sitting (DLP) | 5268 | 0.04 | 0 | 5268 | 0.04 | -1 |
| Katter's Australian Party | 119920 | 0.89 | 0 | 53123 | 0.38 | 0 | -66797 | -0.51 | 0 |
| Liberal Democrats (LDP) | 523831 | 3.91 | 1 | 298915 | 2.16 | 1 | -224916 | -1.75 | 0 |
| Nick Xenophon Team | 258376 | 1.93 | 1 | 456369 | 3.3 | 3 | 197993 | 1.37 | 2 |
| Palmer United Party | 658976 | 4.91 | 3** | 26210 | 0.19 | 0 | -632766 | -4.72 | -3 |
| Pauline Hanson's One Nation | 70851 | 0.53 | 0 | 593013 | 4.29 | 4 | 522162 | 3.76 | 4 |
| Renewable Energy Party | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29983 | 0.22 | 0 | 29983 | 0.22 | 0 |
| Rise Up Australia Party | 49341 | 0.37 | 0 | 36424 | 0.26 | 0 | -12917 | -0.11 | 0 |
| Shooters, Fishers and Farmers | 127397 | 0.95 | 0 | 192923 | 1.39 | 0 | 65526 | 0.44 | 0 |
| Socialist Equality Party | 9774 | 0.07 | 0 | 7865 | 0.06 | 0 | -1909 | -0.01 | 0 |
| Sustainable Australia | 12671 | 0.09 | 0 | 26341 | 0.19 | 0 | 13670 | 0.1 | 0 |
| The WikiLeaks Party | 88092 | 0.66 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -88092 | -0.66 | 0 |
| Voluntary Euthanasia Party | 21854 | 0.16 | 0 | 23252 | 0.17 | 0 | 1398 | 0.01 | 0 |
| TOTAL Personality vote | 2434570 | 18.15 | 8 | 2885185 | 20.84 | 11 | 450615 | 2.69 | 3 |

*The Sex Party and HEMP ran on a joint ticket in Qld, WA, SA, Tas and NT in 2016.

**The third PUP Senator Dio Wang, was from Western Australia. He was elected on the first count, lost to Wayne Dropulich on the second count, and safely elected in the re-election in 2014.

Sources: AEC 2013 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version 9.1.17.21449 (AEC 2013) AEC 2016 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version (AEC 2016)

If we drill down to the state level figures to assess the performance of those specific personalities, focusing only on those parties that contested both 2013 and 2016 and polled above 1% of the vote, we can infer a significant influence of personality candidates. As shown in Table 8, the collapse of the PUP vote in Queensland was almost directly matched with the rise of the PHON vote and Lazarus vote, the net gain across all three in 2016 being 26, 799 votes or 0.59% of the Queensland vote. Mackerras (1976) found a higher personal vote for Queensland candidates than the national average, so it may be reasonable to surmise that there is a culture of voting for personalities and that this 'personality vote' shifted from Palmer to Hanson in 2016. In Victoria, the Sex Party paid a price for not having their standard bearer Fiona Patten as a candidate in 2016. In South Australia the NXT vote fell 3.14% (their national gain of 1.34% attributable to standing candidates in other states for the first time); Family First also suffered a loss of 0.89% in a hotly contested state Senate race. It is worth noting that the South Australian contest does have some of our Senate's biggest

personalities, in addition to Xenophon, Cory Bernardi, Penny Wong and Sarah Hanson Young were all battling to be returned in 2016, and Liberal, Labor and Greens all increased their vote share in South Australia. The fall in David Leyonhjelm Liberal Democrats' vote in New South Wales needs to be seen in context of the 2013 aberrant result; they drew the 'donkey vote' position of column A in 2013 and it was generally regarded that their large result was a result of name confusion with the Liberal Party (Colebatch 2013; Green 2014). The 2016 Liberal Democrat vote is simply a correction.

Table 8: Parties with Group A personalities that contested both 2013 and 2016 elections polling over 1%, State figures where personality was candidate

| Party/Group name | 2013 Vote | 2013 % | 2016 Vote | 2016 % | Var. | Swing |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|---------|-------|
| New South Wales | | | | | | |
| Liberal Democrats | 415,901 | 9.5 | 139007 | 3.09 | -276894 | -6.41 |
| Queensland | | | | | | |
| Glenn Lazarus Team | 0 | 0 | 45149 | 1.66 | 45149 | 1.66 |
| Palmer United Party | 258944 | 9.89 | 4816 | 0.18 | -254128 | -9.71 |
| Pauline Hanson's One Nation | 14348 | 0.55 | 250126 | 9.19 | 235778 | 8.64 |
| Victoria | | | | | | |
| Australian Sex Party | 63883 | 1.89 | 54128 | 1.55 | -9755 | -0.34 |
| South Australia | | | | | | |
| Nick Xenophon Team | 258376 | 24.88 | 230703 | 21.74 | -27673 | -3.14 |
| Family First | 39032 | 3.76 | 30464 | 2.87 | -8568 | -0.89 |

Sources: AEC 2013 Tally Room 2013 Federal Election Senate First Preferences By Group By Vote Type By State version 9.1.17.21449 (AEC 2014), AEC 2016 Tally Room 2016 Federal Election Senate First Preferences By Group By Vote Type By State Version 10.5.84.43192 (AEC 2017a).

If we overlay the personality and populism analyses to look for any pattern, we can see that the two parties with significant gains – NXT and PHON - are both proponents of populism *and* have personality candidates. However, they did not predominantly engage in populist campaigning. As mentioned previously, Nick Xenophon primarily pitched himself as an ideal candidate, and Pauline Hanson was a maverick framed by the media as a sure loser. There is nothing about posting YouTube videos from inside your own plane (or James's plane, branded with PHON and possibly used for campaigning, but not donated to the party by a millionaire

property developer¹⁵) that communicates ‘I’m one of the common people like you’. This is a celebrity approach to campaigning, a similar one to that employed by Clive Palmer, where the leader or candidate makes little attempt to appear like their life is similar to their constituents, but rather one more like movie stars. Much is known about celebrities and others with significant name recognition moving into politics, in particular that they will enjoy a boost from the reality that voters will vote for ‘somebody’ over a ‘nobody’ regardless of platform (Wood, Corbett & Flinders 2016; Zwarun & Torrey 2011). If a celebrity effect carries over to just behaving like a ‘somebody’ and is not limited to name recognition is not clear (for a discussion of the literature on celebrity politicians, see Wood, Corbett & Flinders 2016). Whether Xenophon’s shift from the far more populist campaigning style in 2013 to the ideal frame in 2016 can be attributed to the decline in the South Australian figures shown in Table 8 is certainly a point for consideration: it is possible, but cannot be determined on this data alone.

Table 9: Parties with both observed populism platforms and personalities 2013-2016 vote comparisons

| Party | 2013 Votes | 2013 % | 2013 Seats | 2016 Vote | 2016 % | 2016 Seats | Var. | Swing | Net |
|--|----------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|---------------|-------------|----------|
| Australia First Party | 10157 | 0.08 | 0 | 3005 | 0.02 | 0 | -7152 | -0.06 | 0 |
| Australian Liberty Alliance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 102982 | 0.74 | 0 | 102982 | 0.74 | 0 |
| John Madigan's Manufacturing and Farming Party | 0 | 0 | 1 Sitting (DLP) | 5268 | 0.04 | 0 | 5268 | 0.04 | -1 |
| Katter's Australian Party | 119920 | 0.89 | 0 | 53123 | 0.38 | 0 | -66797 | -0.51 | 0 |
| Nick Xenophon Team | 258376 | 1.93 | 1 | 456369 | 3.3 | 3 | 197993 | 1.37 | 2 |
| Palmer United Party | 658976 | 4.91 | 3** | 26210 | 0.19 | 0 | -632766 | -4.72 | -3 |
| Pauline Hanson's One Nation | 70851 | 0.53 | 0 | 593013 | 4.29 | 4 | 522162 | 3.76 | 4 |
| Rise Up Australia Party | 49341 | 0.37 | 0 | 36424 | 0.26 | 0 | -12917 | -0.11 | 0 |
| TOTAL Populism + personality | 1167621 | 8.71 | 5 | 1276601 | 9.22 | 7 | 108980 | 0.51 | 2 |

Sources: AEC 2013 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version 9.1.17.21449 (AEC 2013) AEC 2016 Federal Election Senate First Preferences by Group by Vote Type Version (AEC 2016)

¹⁵ The Australian Electoral Commission is investigating PHON’s failure to declare the donation of the plane used by Pauline Hanson during the campaign by property developer Bill McNee (McGhee 2017). Senator Hanson has defended herself by insisting the plane belongs to staffer James Ashby (Bickers 2017).

The other parties that used the combination of populism and personality need to be considered in their individual context, but overall the combination analysis does not yield additional insight. Some parties gained, some lost, some were flat; there is no discernible pattern.

Is this a good way to measure this?

What you may be thinking is this is a pretty clumsy way to try and figure this out. You would be right. These figures do not mean much, especially in a compulsory voting scenario, as there is no scope to know just from the numbers to know what caused voters to put a number one in that particular box: was it the populism ideology, the populist campaign, or the personality – or something else entirely? Were they not actually voting for anything, but protest voting against the major parties? To answer this question, you need to actually ask voters.

There is a significant lack of voter behaviour research in Australia in comparison with comparable electoral systems, and none recently specifically looking at vote causality, which is usually done via panel studies. To demonstrate causality the following four tests that must be met:

- Covariation: the variables must be statistically related. As each independent variable varies there must be an observable variation in the dependent variable too.
- Non spuriousness: the relationship observed between the independent and independent variables must not be due to the effects of another variable.
- Temporal order of events: the hypothesized cause or independent variable must happen prior to the dependent variable in time.
- Causal link: the causal mechanism or process theorised must link the two variables (Halperin & Heath 2012, pp. 146-147; Kosicki, McLeod & McLeod 2011; Ruspini 2002, pp. 25-26).

Proving causality, particularly on something as complex as a vote decision, is extremely difficult.

The Voter Choice Project, which is the research component of my PhD, will conduct 3 multi wave panels during 2018 and 2019. A smaller study on the federal election will be focused primarily on understanding timing of vote decision, with weekly waves once the election is called. Two larger studies on the Victorian and New South Wales elections will run monthly waves for 6 months prior to election day with a stratified sample from each electorate in those states. This study is based on the Columbia studies of voting behaviour conducted by Paul Lazarsfeld and colleagues in the 1940s with the appropriate modifications to deliver it online, and in a somewhat more complex media environment than the pre-television era. We know very little about why Australians vote the way they do, so I have very little in the way of pre-conceived ideas of what results I expect to get. However, the results of the voter choice project will not be able to answer the question of whether support for populism, populist campaigning, or personality candidates is increasing. To do that, one would need to run a multi-wave panel over a series of elections.

Conclusion

In conclusion, to assess the rise of populism you first need to define what you mean by populism. I have demonstrated it can be approached ideologically, looking for increased support for those promoting the cause of the people over the corrupt elite; it can be approached from a communications perspective, looking for success of populist campaigning strategies that use simplified messaging to appeal to the common sense of the people; or it can be approached psephologically, looking for increases electoral success or breakthrough the personality candidate or leader provides to the party or in comparison to competitors of otherwise similar qualities. You then need to determine if it is in fact on the rise, and looking at the electoral statistics from 2013 and 2016 in Australia, there is little support for the premise that populism, in any of these three approaches to the concept, has significantly risen. There is a very small 2.69% increase in support for personality candidates; combined personalities and populism ideology is essentially flat at 0.51% increase, populism ideology has a rise of only 1.34%, and when the centre and left parties are removed, right wing populism has actually declined by 0.87%. From this analysis, if there is an increase in populism, it is for the personality candidate, with a significantly higher success rate for getting those individuals elected to the

Senate cross bench. All three approaches are, however, theorising and cannot address causal reasons for voter support: to answer that, alternative methodologies need to be utilised.

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