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# Brexit, the rise of populism in the United Kingdom and the situation in Vietnam

## Brexit, wzrost populizmu w Wielkiej Brytanii i sytuacja w Wietnamie

**Streszczenie**

Populizm jest zjawiskiem skomplikowanym, ponieważ koncepcja ta nie tylko różni się zarówno w podejściu, jak i przejawach, ale także ukształtowała się w krajach i regionach poza Europą. Podczas gdy intelektualiści nieustannie krytykują i postrzegają to zjawisko jako zagrożenie, któremu należy zapobiegać, miliony ludzi w całej Europie jednocześnie okazują poparcie dla ruchów, partii i osób o ideologii populistycznej. Ten sprzeczny obraz pokazuje, że pojawienie się populizmu jest w istocie odzwierciedleniem szeregu niestabilnych i niepokojących problemów społeczno-politycznych, a także skrajnych emocji i bezsilności ludzi w takich sytuacjach. Celem artykułu jest zatem przyjrzenie się czynnikom napędzającym Brexit, a tym samym zbadanie populizmu na poziomie analizy na poziomie indywidualnym, grupowym, państwowym i systemowym. Wyjaśniając poglądy wietnamskich intelektualistów na temat populizmu, artykuł następnie omawia możliwość wzrostu populizmu w obecnej sytuacji społeczno-politycznej w Wietnamie.

**Abstract**

Populism is a complicated phenomenon, as this concept not only differs in both approaches and manifestations, but also has taken shape in countries and regions outside Europe. While intellectuals are constantly criticizing and seeing this phenomenon as a threat to be prevented, millions of people across Europe are simultaneously showing support for movements, parties and individuals with populist ideology. This contradictory picture shows that the emergence of populism is essentially a reflection of a range of unstable and unsettling socio-political problems, as well as the extreme emotions and powerlessness of the people in such situations. The paper therefore aims to look at the driving factors behind Brexit, thus examines populism under individual, group, state and system levels of analysis. By clarifying the views of Vietnamese intellectuals on populism, the paper then discusses the posibility of the rise of populism in the current socio-political situation in Vietnam.

# 1. Understanding European populism

Once a powerful empire standing on top of the world for centuries, the United Kingdom has holded a special place in Europe in general and in the EU in particular. On January 31, 2020, this "reluctant European" officially withdrew from the EU, putting an end to a long-time debate regarding the realization of Brexit since the historical referendum in June 2016. Since then, the press, media and academics have been talking about the alarming rise of populism in Europe, in which Brexit is one of the outstanding manifestations.

Populism is nothing new, it appeared long ago and flourished around the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the Western world, mostly through peasant movements against the bourgeoisie and the government[1]. However, since it has manifested in different ways during different times, it is difficult to define this phenomenon, even among academics. With the development of modern society, the world has witnessed the increasing complexity of populism, as it is not only associated with different social problems, but also manifested through various political movements from fascism, racism, xenophobia to even anti-globalization. Even though research papers about populism, including those published in Vietnamese, have different approaches on the nature of populism, in general, two popular explanations can be seen.

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[1] Lê Minh Quân (2019), "Về chủ nghĩa dân túy và đấu tranh ngăn ngừa những biểu hiện của nó ở Việt Nam hiện nay", Tạp chí Cộng sản, Số 920 (6-2019), bản mềm toàn văn tại: http://tuyengiao.vn/nghien-cuu/ly-luan/ve-chu-nghia-dan-tuy-va-dau-tranh-ngan-ngua-nhung-bieu-hien-cua-no-o-viet-nam-hien-nay-122295.

Firstly, populism can be seen as an ideology based on the realization of the contrast between two groups in a society, which are the majority of ordinary people and the few who belong to the powerful elites. This ideology argues that politics should manifest the common will of the people and serve the interests of the people; therefore "the people" must stand in opposition to "the elite" who stops them from fulfilling their political interests[2].

Second, populism can also be understood as a political strategy, or a leadership style, in which populist leaders take advantage of mass psychological and their ability of persuasion, rhetoric and eloquence to make people believe that their will and interests are being represented. Eventually, the leaders win the trust and support of the people and use it to serve their own political purposes, or to gain more political power[3].

Besides, most academics more or less agree that the ideological origins and manifestations of populism are relatively heterogeneous. For example, the populist leader of the ruling party might not only stop at mere empty promises, but also come up with socio-economic policies that meet the immediate and short-term needs and interests of the people. Some populist might also claim to be on the side of the people, but actually limit the scope of "the people" to a particular race or ethnicity rather than the general population. Another example is that left-wing populists' ideas of "the people" and "the elite" generally associated with socio-economic unfairness, while right-wing populists tend to focus on socio-cultural issues such as immigration[4].

However, whether using the ideological or strategic approach, populism seems to see social problems on the basis of conflict and antagonism between the people and the elite. Therefore, populism tends to emerge and thrive when the people are faced with difficult situations caused by either crisis or social instability or injustice. Those situations easily cause dissatisfaction and the need to regain immediate interests which are being violated[5]. This is also what has happened in not only

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[2] Muddle C. (2004), "The Populist Zeitgeist", Government and Opposition, Vol. 39, No. 4, p. 541–563  https://ams.hi.is/wp-content/uploads/old/Jungar%20-%20The%20Populist%20Zeitgeist.pdf.

[3] Fukuyama F. (2019), "Contemporary populism", Centre for Development and Enterprise, https://media.africaportal.org/documents/Contemporary-Populism-final.pdf.

[4] Bryant O., Moffit B. (2019), "What actually is populism? And why does it have a bad reputation?", The Conversation, https://theconversation.com/what-actually-is-populism-and-why-does-it-have-a-bad-reputation-109874.

[5] Đỗ Đức Minh, Cù Văn Trung (2020), "Chủ nghĩa dân túy và phòng, chống những biểu hiện của chủ nghĩa dân túy ở Việt Nam hiện nay", Tạp chí Lý luận Chính trị, Số 1-2020, http://lylu-

the UK but also across Europe over recent years. Brexit officially happened, but that does not mean the internal problems that motivated the British people to vote to leave were simultaneously prevented. On the contrary, they still existed persistently, making 2016 a milestone for the emergence of a much larger threat, not only to Britain's political stability but also to the entire European continent.

When looking at the political picture in Europe during this time, it did indeed seem that the populist ideology had become much more popular than how many people envisioned. In the UK, there had already been more than one populist leaders who claimed to represent the people, from the leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, as he attacked elites, argued for the people and claimed that his Party would build a Britain that works "for the many, not the few"[6] to the former Prime Minister Theresa May[7] and current Prime Minister Boris Johnson with their populist rhetoric[8]. Not only was this trend portrayed in the popularity of populist leaders in Britain; but across Europe, the dominance of the populist parties also became a notable trend. In 2018, two years after the UK referendum, six EU countries that held parliamentary elections, which are Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, Sweden, Latvia and Luxembourg, showed overwhelming victory for the populist parties. Also this year, survey findings indicted that 30.3% of European voters were likely to vote for populist parties[9]. Compared to the rate of 26.5% recorded the previous year, an increase to 30.3% after one year shows that populism was not a sudden phenomenon that had risen under the influence of some unexpected political events. Instead, what was happening was a slow and steady rise of the wave of support for populism in Europe. This situation was further confirmed through the statistics showed a trend in 2018 that there was likely a growth in the support for populist parties in countries that went through

anchinhtri.vn/home/index.php/quoc-te/item/3094-chu-nghia-dan-tuy-va-phong-chong-nhung-bieu-hien-cua-chu-nghia-dan-tuy-o-viet-nam-hien-nay.html.

[6] Corbyn J. (2018), "Let's build a real social Europe for the many, not the few" – Corbyn's speech to the Party of European Socialists", Labour List, https://labourlist.org/2018/12/lets-build-a-real-social-europe-for-the-many-not-the-few-corbyns-speech-to-the-party-of-european-socialists/.

[7] Lewis P., et al. (2019), "Theresa May's rhetoric can be as populist as Trump's", „The Guardian", https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/06/theresa-may-british-prime-minister-populism-rhetoric-is-as-rife-as-in-donald-trump-speeches.

[8] Smith P. (2019), "How Boris Johnson used Brexit populism to storm to victory in U.K. election", NBC News, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/how-boris-johnson-used-brexit-populism-storm-victory-u-k-n1101401.

[9] Boros T. et al. (2018), "State of Populism in Europe 2018", Foundation for European Progressive Studies and Policy Solutions, https://progressivepost.eu/wp-content/uploads/WEB_State-of-Populism-in-Europe-2018.pdf, p. 8.

election campaigns, which means the populist leaders had somewhat successfully attracted the supporters. Another notable trend was that in the countries where populists had increased their strength, they rarely lost the support they had previously gained. Also, support for populism decreased in only four EU countries[10]. Of course, 30.3% of voters mentioned above can be perceived as a smaller part, which implies that over two-thirds of Europeans were still support EU and liberal democracy. However, amid the political unstability created in Europe after Brexit involving the eurozone, immigration, human rights or relations with Russia, the trend of rising support for populism were enough for the populists to potentially impact the will of the majority, even without the majority of supporters.

Contrary to the growing support for populist parties and populist leaders, the majority of academics share the view that populism is an unsettling phenomenon that should be prevented. Specifically, many of those writing about this issue tend to assume that populism, once widely supported, would potentially be associated with or transformed into extremism, narrow nationalism, cultural isolationism or even racism[11]. Another common view presented in resesearch papers often see populism as a political strategy in which charismatic populist leaders use rhetorical tactic to mobilise and persuade people[12] in order to pursue their own goals. This view also holds that the leadership style and policies of populist leaders, once become those of the ruling populist party, are likely to constitute a threat to liberal democracy and progressive values[13]. The reason for this negative view lies in the idea that populists do not really represent the interests of the people, they only rely on the support of the people for gaining more political power and then hold on to it[14].

Thus, there exist two opposing pictures. On the one hand, scholars criticize populism and see this phenomenon as a threat that should be prevented. On the

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[10] Ibidem, p. 9.

[11] Lê Minh Quân (2019), "Về chủ nghĩa dân túy và đấu tranh ngăn ngừa những biểu hiện của nó ở Việt Nam hiện nay", Tạp chí Cộng sản, Số 920 (6-2019), bản mềm toàn văn tại: http://tuyengiao.vn/nghien-cuu/ly-luan/ve-chu-nghia-dan-tuy-va-dau-tranh-ngan-ngua-nhung-bieu-hien-cua-no-o-viet-nam-hien-nay-122295.

[12] di Piramo D. (2009), "'Speak For Me!': How Populist Leaders Defy Democracy In Latin America", Global Change, Peace and Security, Taylor & Francis, https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/bitstream/handle/10072/28419/56041_1.pdf%3Bsequence=1 p.19

[13] Calléja L. (2020), "The Rise of Populism: a Threat to Civil Society?", E-International Relations, https://www.e-ir.info/2020/02/09/the-rise-of-populism-a-threat-to-civil-society/.

[14] Fleming I. (2018), "Demagogue Populism and the Future of the International System", „The Geopolitics",  https://thegeopolitics.com/demagogue-populism-and-the-future-of-the-international-system/.

other hand, millions of people across Europe are showing support for populist movements, parties and individuals. This clearly reflects a disturbing reality. What is happening in Europe is not simply the rise of populism as an ideology, or a political strategy of some charismatic leaders with the ability to persuade and motivate. It is also a wide range of problems including economic, political and socio-cultural matters that cause millions of Europeans to lose faith in their government and the old order, thereby creating conditions for populists to easily ignite a smoldering fire of discontent and indignation.

## 2. Populism through levels of analysis:
## The case of Brexit

As mentioned above, it is difficult to give a clear and specific answer to the question of what is populism, as different approaches lead to different views on nature and causes of this phenomenon. However, it's not wrong to assume that each existing view has successfully showed one aspect of the big picture. Indeed, if we consider populism to be the realization of negative emotions the people have towards a wide range of problems in society, then surely one approach will never be enough.

For that reason, instead of continuing to restate different views on populism, this paper aims to analyze the problem from a particular case study, which is Brexit, also known as the clearest evidence of the presence of populism in Europe in general and the UK in particular. Although the majority of Britons supporting populist ideas and voting to leave often belong to the working class with low educational attainment and living mostly in the rural areas, it does not mean their decision are absurd or unreasonable. To understand the reasons behind that decision is also to understand what is happening in our society, thereby contributing to answering the question about the nature of populism. In order to analyse comprehensively and in depth this complex problem, the paper uses a widely accepted approach in international relations, which is the levels of analysis. Even though researchers in this field generally distinguish between three levels of analysis which is the system, the state, and the individual, there are scholars who consider the group level to be important and accept it as the fourth one[15]. These four levels of analysis are also used to look at the situation in Britain.

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[15] Gebhard C. (2018), "Student Feature – Levels of Analysis", E-International Relations, https://www.e-ir.info/2018/02/25/student-feature-levels-of-analysis /.

*First and foremost, on the individual level of analysis,* we focus on decisions made by some individual leaders. In this case, the definition of populism should lies in its reliance on strong political leaders, who are able to mobilize the masses with their charismatic style of leadership. By talking like the common people, the populist leaders will have the ability to present themselves as the voice of the silent and ordinary majority, thereby gaining more support from those people, as well as more power to conduct their political parties. However, in the worst-case scenarios, the populist leaders are able to use eloquence to convince people to believe that something is wrong with the curent establishment, and that their rights and interests are being taken away, or at least not being adequately addressed by the government. Populism under this approach can be dangerous, since not only does it lead to strong divisions among people, but also create threats and finding enemies even when they do not exist, and worst of all, make them all seem believable.

During the EU referendum campain, the small parties and their respective political leaders seemed to have already established a clear stance on whether to support Britain to leave (such as the UK Independence Party and leader Nigel Farage[16]) or to stay (for instance the Scottish National Party and leader Nicola Sturgeon[17], or the Liberal Democrats and leader Tim Farron[18]). However, the two major political parties, which are the Labor Party and the Conservative Party, were both divided by the vote, especially the latter. While Prime Minister David Cameron campaigned vigorously for Britain to stay in the EU, Borris Johnson – the former Mayor of London and a famous Conservative politician – became a key figurehead for the Vote Leave campaign with other Eurosceptic cabinet ministers such as Michael Gove, Chris Grayling or Priti Patel[19]. As David Cameron and Borris Johnson were two welknown politicians on opposite sides of the EU referendum campaign, their conflicting views kept hitting the head-

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[16] Parker C. D. (2016), "The UK Independence Party was central to the Brexit vote", Vox, https://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction/2016/7/1/12060504/ukip-brexit-vote.

[17] Carrell S. (2016), "Scotland to campaign officially to remain in the EU", „The Guardian", https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/mar/03/pro-eu-vote-would-harm-scottish-independence-ex-snp-deputy-jim-sillars.

[18] Stone J. (2016), "Liberal Democrats pledge to keep Britain in the EU after next election", Independent, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-eu-referendum-result-lib-dems-remain-liberal-democrats-live-policy-stay-leave-a7103186.html.

[19] Clarke H. D., Goodwin M., Whiteley P. (2017), "Why Britain Voted for Brexit: An Individual-Level Analysis of the 2016 Referendum Vote", Parliamentary Affairs, Vol.70, Issue 3, p. 439–464. https://academic.oup.com/pa/article/70/3/439/3109029.

lines, and thus attracted attention from people across the country. The picture of the Conservative Party being deeply divided was therefore further exacerbated, which potentially left a strong impact on Britons' emotions and feelings as being evidently demonstrated by the divisive referendum results.

In fact, several studies have also shown that voters' perceptions of party leaders have an important impact in elections[20]. Accordingly, promises of a political leader will be more convincing to those who support or favour this person. In other words, supporters of David Cameron or Jeremy Corbyn would be more likely to vote to stay in the EU, on the contrary, individuals who support Boris Johnson or Nigel Farage will tend to vote to leave.

*Second, on the group level of analysis,* the increasing popularity of populist ideology seems to be largely driven by actions of groups of individuals, rather than just a person's decision. These include activities of political parties, the interaction between political actors in the country, or the way voters perceive the situation and express their views under the influence of media. As mentioned above, the Labour Party and the Conservative Part's failure to convey a clear and consistent message to the people led to the formation of conflicting emotions among the masses, thereby making this community even more vulnerable to opposing or different information flows. At the same time, the influence of the right-wing populist UK Independence Party also had a stronger impact on the referendum results than many people had thought[21].

With the strong development of information technology, internet and social networks, people are more likely to have a lot of trust in the information they consume. Speaking of which, it may be affirmed that the rise of populist movements greatly depends on the mass media or, to be more precise, on how the mass media report on the situation. During the campaign ahead of the Brexit referendum, the media played two important roles. Firstly, the media can be seen as a playing field where the representatives from the two sides competing to lead public opinion. Unsurprisingly, the Leave campaign focused on the three words

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[20] Eroglu A.H., Kaleli S. (2016), "The impact of the images of the political leader on party image and voter preferences during the process of political marketing – Istanbul province sample", International refereed academic social sciences journal, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290175363_THE_IMPACT_OF_THE_IMAGES_OF_THE_POLITICAL_LEADER_ON_PARTY_IMAGE_AND_VOTER_PREFERENCES_DURING_THE_PROCESS_OF_POLITICAL_MARKETING-_ISTANBUL_PROVINCE_SAMPLE.

[21] Parker C. D., op.cit.

"Take Back Control"[22], the simple yet powerful message being repeatedly emphasized in the mass media that effectively combined not only a sense of a positive future, but also suggested a sense of rightful ownership, thus left a strong impact on the people. Nevertheless, the Remain side never had a clear and affective slogan stating the benefits of staying in the EU, which significantly reduced the effectiveness of the campaign. Secondly, the media plays a role in agenda setting by reporting on certain campaigns, or focusing on certain politicians and issues. In fact, studies also showed that arguments in favour of Brexit had mentioned more frequently in the media[23].

Above all, just as the accustomed view that some scholars hold about populism, this phenomenon might represent the defensive response of British people who are disconnected and left out of the normal order of life, or at least that is how they feel. This feeling primarily stems from their failure to keep up with the speed of the world where globalization is happening too quickly and uncontrollably: job opportunities go abroad, small businesses go bankrupt, the increase of migrant workers along with the growth of low-wage work. In addtition, the feeling of being left out appeared to be even more common among people from rural or suburban areas, who feel neglected by the government compared to those in London or other major cities[24]. Finally, this feeling is also experienced by the elderly Britons who are still living in the past and longing for the time when migrants were not everywhere. It can be said that supporters of populist parties all share some certain losses, whether they are loss of jobs, loss of opportunities, loss of income, loss of ability to control their own life, loss of identity, or loss of confidence in the establishment.

*Third, on the state level of analysis*, views on the nature and driving forces of populism need to be broadened further beyond the impact of individuals, political parties or groups of people. Instead, we look at the UK as an actor and examine the country's view on its identity and position in the world in general and in Europe in particular, especially its tough stance on ensuring national sovereignty

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[22] Richards S. (2016), "Take back control – the slogan the left should make its own", „The Guardian", https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/dec/19/take-back-control-slogan-left-power-right-state-intervention.

[23] Berry M. (2016), "Understanding the role of the mass media in the EU Referendum – EU Referendum Analysis 2016", EU Referendum Analysis, https://www.referendumanalysis.eu/understanding-the-role-of-the-mass-media-in-the-eu-referendum-eu-referendum-analysis-2016/.

[24] Bounds A. (2019), "What the UK's 'left-behind' areas want after Brexit", „TheFinancial Times", https://www.ft.com/content/89bff8c8-95dd-11e9-9573-ee5cbb98ed36.

which is unlike other EU member states. Under this approach, the rise of populism is likely to be associated with the formation of nationalism or cultural isolationism, as some scholars have suggested.

The concept of national identity is formed as the result of historical, cultural and political experiences in each country, and is also influenced by the interactions between the country and other actors. Once a powerful empire in history and the leading country in the Commonwealth after World War II, Britain soon established close relations with countries outside of Europe. Besides, the country's geographic separation from the continent also contributed to not only the Britain's reluctant attitude towards the European integration project, but also the British self-perception which leads to a belief that they are special compared to other European country[25]. In other words, the UK has not considered a strong European integration and interdependence as its national interest[26]. This view remained unchanged even after the UK became an EU member, reflected in the country's decision to opt-out of some regional integration agreements, as well as its opposition to a few integration initiatives. For a long time, this stance had created a contradiction between national identity and European identity among the people. Eventually, those who only valued national identity were more likely to be attracted to populist movements, thus had more tendency to vote to leave the EU.

*Fourth, on the system level of analysis*, the development of populism in the UK was potentially being driven by a strong impetus that come from beyond the national border. To be more precise, European populism under this approach can be seen partly as a result, or a consequence, of globalization. There is no denying the positive effects that globalization brings such as reducing poverty, creating millions of jobs, producing huge volumes of goods, boosting the global GDP, promoting economic growth in developing countries, or offering emerging markets the opportunity to become larger players in the global enconomy. However, while globalization clearly benefits developing countries, this process is increasingly causing many social problems in developed European countries, including the UK. These problems include the sharp divide between rich and poor, wealth concentration in the hands of a few, working-class loses their jobs due to

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[25] Schweiger C. (2007), "The Reluctant European: Britain and European Integration Since 1945", in: Britain, Germany and the Future of the European Union. New Perspectives in German Studies, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp.14-42.

[26] Albinger L. K. (2020), "Constructivism's Relevance to Understanding Brexit", E-International Relations, https://www.e-ir.info/2020/06/08/constructivisms-relevance-to-understanding-brexit/.

local businesses shutting down or prefering the cheaper migrant workforce. In fact, millions of jobs have been lost in Europe because of the participation of emerging economies, such as India or China, in this market. This is probably one of the main reasons why populism is often associated with anti-globalization movements, and why this phenomenon tends to rise in wealthy and democratic European countries, instead of developing ones. Of course, the rise of populist ideology will not reverse globalization, especially when the world's largest economies are still focusing on the promotion of free trade, but this trend will certainly make the world re-evaluate the concept of globalization in a more multidimensional and realistic way.

## 3. The threat of populism in Vietnam

In the face of the rise of populism in the world in general and in Europe in particular, many Vietnamese scholars have expressed concern about the negative effects of populism, as well as the possibility of populism appearing in this Southest Asian country. This scenario is actually not out of the question, since just like other developing nations in the region, Vietnam has integrared quickly into the international economy and politics, and therefore, been affected by a wide range of global and national issues. Inevitably, there is widespread discontent among the people in Vietnam over many socio-political issues, which create a suitable environment for populist ideas to emerge and develop.

Reasons for the growth of populist ideas in Vietnam lie in the influence of not only globalization and other international issues, but also internal factors like problems of national development, poverty, social inequality, religious and ethnic divisions, crime and dysfunctional government[27][28]. To some degree, this demonstrates the fact that populist ideologies in Vietnam are not manifested in the same way as those in Europe. As mentioned above, European populists tend to focus on immigration and economic decline; however, there is almost no focus on such problems in Vietnam since the country's economic growth has remained

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[27] Lê Minh Quân (2019), "Về chủ nghĩa dân túy và đấu tranh ngăn ngừa những biểu hiện của nó ở Việt Nam hiện nay", Tạp chí Cộng sản, Số 920 (6-2019), bản mềm toàn văn tại: http://tuyengiao.vn/nghien-cuu/ly-luan/ve-chu-nghia-dan-tuy-va-dau-tranh-ngan-ngua-nhung-bieu-hien-cua-no-o-viet-nam-hien-nay-122295.

[28] Nguyễn Nhâm (2020), "Xu thế của chủ nghĩa dân túy ở châu Âu và bài học cho Việt Nam", Kỷ yếu Hội thảo "Xu thế dân túy ở châu Âu: Một số vấn đề, dự báo và tác động", Viện Nghiên cứu châu Âu, Hà Nội, pp. 236-252, p. 248.

strong, and immigration has not yet become an issue, especially when Vietnam is an important source of migrant workers itself.

Even though Vietnam's fast-growing yet fragile democracy somewhat caused this country more likely to be influenced by populist rhetorics, fortunately, through the eyes of Vietnamese scholars, populism in Vietnam has not yet become a phenomenon or a dominant trend due to the lack of economic, social and political bases. Instead, it has been widely claimed that populism in Vietnam only exists as the mere idea or opinion, and is only manifested in statements or actions of some people. Vietnamese scholars generally share the view that there are various ways that populism in this country can take place through and manifest itself in[29, 30, 31, 32, 33]. However, these manifestations all boil down to two main problems: reactionaries at home or abroad, and political corruptions.

Firstly, reactionaries abroad, linked with those living in Vietnam who are dissatisfied with the establishment, can spread misleading information and demagogic statements, articles and contents on mass media or social networking sites. With the development of information technology, those people take advantage of democracy and human rights issues in order to exaggerate the discontent among the people, smear the government' reputation, cause divisions between the establishment and the people, and incite extreme nationalism.

Secondly, some corrupt government officials and politicians can claim to represent the will of the common people, and offer solutions to social problems where elites have failed to tackle. Their actions are to win the hearts of the masses, thereby taking advantage of people's trust and support in order to serve their own personal goals; for instance, to enhance political interests and power.

Despite the fact that negative influences of populist ideas and actions in Vietnam have not been highly visible, the potentially rising populism in Vietnam is

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[29] Võ Văn Thưởng (2018), "Chủ nghĩa dân túy và những cảnh báo đối với Việt Nam", Nhân Dân, https://nhandan.com.vn/tin-tuc-su-kien/chu-nghia-dan-tuy-va-nhung-canh-bao-doi-voi-viet-nam-324216/.

[30] Lê Minh Quân, op.cit.

[31] Đỗ Đức Minh, Cù Văn Trung (2020), "Chủ nghĩa dân túy và phòng, chống những biểu hiện của chủ nghĩa dân túy ở Việt Nam hiện nay", Tạp chí Lý luận Chính trị, Số 1-2020, http://lyluanchinhtri.vn/home/index.php/quoc-te/item/3094-chu-nghia-dan-tuy-va-phong-chong-nhung-bieu-hien-cua-chu-nghia-dan-tuy-o-viet-nam-hien-nay.html.

[32] Nguyễn Nhâm (2020), p. 246.

[33] Thái Doãn Tước, Thái Doãn Hùng (2021), "Cảnh giác với những biểu hiện của chủ nghĩa dân túy trước thềm Đại hội đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ XIII của Đảng", Tạp chí Quốc phòng toàn dân, http://tapchiqptd.vn/vi/phong-chong-dbhb-tu-dien-bien-tu-chuyen-hoa/canh-giac-voi-nhung-bieu-hien-cua-chu-nghia-dan-tuy-truoc-them-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-toan-quoc-/16571.html.

still widely seen as a danger to not only this country's democracy, but also the socio-political stability and people's confidence in the government. Therefore, it is necessary for the government to be aware of these populism's manifestations, thus take the right measures to prevent the potential consequences. These measures include raising public awareness of the manifestations and effects of populism, tackling the spread of misinformation, training government officials, and strengthening the relevant capabilities in government institutions.

# 4. Conclusion

Over the past decade, populism has emerged and become a major concern for politicians and scholars around the world, especially in Europe, where the phenomenon has shown the most obvious signs of development. No matter how the concept of populism is defined, the increase in both number and popularity of populist parties in Europe are undeniable. This trend, however, does not mean that the old political parties are becoming obsolete and will soon be replaced, as evidenced by the fact that until 2020, there are still European countries that has not let their politics be influenced by populist parties or movements[34]. In other words, the different political, economic and cultural contexts of each country allow populism to manifest itself to varying degrees. These particular manifestations, combined with existing trends of the old order, will reshape each country's politics accordingly.

Brexit as a case study might not be able to reflect the general pattern of development of European populism, but it can show somewhat the "shape" of populism can be seen when being nourished under certain impacts for an adequate amount of time. The rise of populism, when examined on different levels of analysis, has once again demonstrated the complex nature of this phenomenon, as well as partly explained the coexistence of different views on the concept. Populism therefore should not be seen from just one single approach, nor should it be seen as a consequence of the impact made by a mere politician or campaign. Instead, populist ideologies have been persisted for a long time under impetus that come from different movements taking place at various levels. These include calculation in the leaders' behavior, strategies of political parties, social unrest, financial crises, crowd behavior, countries' policies, conflict and interdependence between

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[34] Boros T. et al. (2020), p. 7.

international actors in many fields. The more movements take place at the same time, the stronger populism is likely to get. What happened during the period from the 2008 financial crisis to Brexit is one of the typical examples.

Therefore, the paper holds the view that populism can be seen as a manifestation of the feelings of helplessness among many of those in Europe. They come from a sense of powerlessness that not only the common people, but also the political leaders and the governments have experienced in the face of great challenges in the surrounding world, including problems that go beyond national borders like public debt crisis, migrant crisis, threat of terrorism, or the flip side of globalization. After all, in the face of hardship happening in Europe, even if the Brexit had not happened thanks to the narrow victory of the 'remain' supporters, "Take Back Control" would still have been a powerful and convincing message, and most likely continued to urge the British government to hold the next referendum, in order to regain control in a world that is out of control.

While populism is sweeping through Europe, it is also making gains in Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam. However, according to Vietnamese scholars, populism in this developing country not only differs from those in European developed nations, but also has not yet become a political phenomenon. However, since impacts of populism on this country's fragile democracy might be much more severe, it is vital that necessary measures are taken by the government for preventing the rise of populism in Vietnam.

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