Francesco Marolla

WHY DO EUROPEAN CITIZENS SUPPORT POPULISM?

A comparative study of demand-side and supply-side explanations

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Francesco Marolla
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Promotors
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dr. R.J. Wouters, Tilburg University

Abstract

European democracies have witnessed the progressive affirmation of populist parties in the last two decades. This thesis draws from the suggestions of the theoretical literature on populism to study why European citizens support populist parties. In doing so, the aim of this thesis is twofold: on the one hand, it applies the ideational approach to populism to investigate support for populism from a comparative perspective; on the other hand, it seeks to understand how demand-side and supply-side factors contribute to explaining the cross-country and temporal heterogeneity in their electoral performances. This thesis focuses on two demand-side factors (i.e., social marginalisation and sociotropic concerns about economy) and two factors of the supply-side (i.e., liberal institutional arrangements and party competition). The results show that, first, populist parties attract significant support from citizens perceiving socially marginalised, especially in wealthy and globalised contexts; whereas sociotropic concerns about economy do not lead to higher support for populism. Second, liberal institutional arrangements increase the anti-institutional appeal of populist parties; whereas party competition on a core element of the far-right populist ideology (nativism) does not affect support for far-right populism to a great extent. This thesis shows that an approach that integrates both demand and supply side perspectives is beneficial to understand the reasons underlying support for populism.

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A mio fratello Simone,
perché il nostro amore per te ci fa andare avanti ogni giorno.
/
To my brother Simone,
because our love for you keeps us going every day.

You'll never live like common people
You'll never do whatever common people do
You'll never fail like common people
You'll never watch your life slide out of view
And you dance and drink and screw
Because there's nothing else to do

Pulp. "Common People" Different Class, Island Records, 1995

Workin' in the fields
That'll get your back burned
Workin' 'neath the wheels
'Til you get your facts learned
Baby, I got my facts
Learned real good right now
You better get it straight, darlin'

Bruce Springsteen. "Badlands" Darkness on the Edge of Town,
Columbia Records, 1978

Thought you were smart when you took them on
But you didn't take a peep in their artillery room
All that rugby puts hairs on your chest
What chance have you got against a tie and a crest?
Hello-hooray, cheers then mate, it's the Eton rifles, Eton rifles!

The Jam. "The Eton Rifles" Setting Sons, Polydor (UK), 1979

'We in the West have not faced a crisis like this for a long time. The ideological wars of the twentieth century – against the totalitarian powers of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union – were terrible, but democratic West rallied, and defeated them both. Now the West is at war with itself. We have seen what future the globalist ruling class has to offer. But we have a different future in mind. The globalists can all go to Hell; I have come to Texas!' [1]

Speech by Hungarian Prime Minister and leader of the party 'FIDESZ', Viktor Orbán, at the Conservative Political Action Conference in Texas, 2022

'Erasing national borders does not make people safer or more prosperous. It undermines democracy and trades away prosperity. We're giving it away. The so-called global elite have done very well for themselves, but have left working families with shrinking wages. Really, I mean they are shrinking [...] 18 years ago, many of you in this room rule made more money working one job than you're making right now working two and three jobs.' [2]

US President Donald Trump at a political rally in Florida, 2017

'You have the charisma of a damp rag, and the appearance of a low-grade bank clerk. And the question that I want to ask, [...] is "Who are you¿' I'd never heard of you. Nobody in Europe had ever heard of you. [...] Sir, you have no legitimacy in this job at all, and I can say with confidence that I speak on behalf of the majority of British people in saying: We don't know you, we don't want you, and the sooner you're put out to grass, the better.' [3]

Speech by Nigel Farage, leader of the British party 'UKIP', in the European Parliament in 2010 addressing then-EU President Herman Van Rompuy.

I Support for populism

Demand-side and supply-side approaches

1 • INTRODUCTION: THE RISE OF POPULISM IN EUROPE

Modern democracies are witnessing the affirmation of populist actors whose campaigns portray societies as being ruled by a shadowy elite that pursues its interest at the expense of unjustly oppressed people. Populists' political messages argue that an illegitimate elite sits in power and promises to restore the popular will by taking back the power that has been stolen. They claim to be the true representative of the people's will, flattening the political debate to a Manichean contention between good and evil. The rise of populism is likely to have a profound impact on modern democracies. Populists have shown to be hostile to the traditional liberal values of democracy, such as pluralism, tolerance and constructive dialogue. As they gather consensus globally, societies are likely to become more divided, with a growing divide between two visions of society and no middle ground on where to settle.

Examples such as those from well-known leaders of Western democracies (shown at the beginning of this chapter; see page 1) provide typical examples of how populist campaigns heavily use anti-establishment rhetoric to garner consensus. Such rhetoric has the aim of mobilising public opinion against an established order portrayed as a homogeneous enemy, embodied by the 'evil elite'. They often use divisive language ('us vs them'), as well as appeals to emotion, to create a sense of solidarity among their supporters in the struggle against a power-

ful elite. Populists consider themselves outsiders who are working to protect the interests of 'the common people'. They often rely on the 'messianic' images of their leaders, portrayed as the only ones who can bring the necessary change to solve an ongoing crisis or decay. Their anti-establishment rhetoric also aims to undermine the legitimacy of their opponents, often using the media to spread their message and frame them in a negative light. From this perspective, other political parties are no longer adversaries, but rather enemies.

The rise of populism in European politics has caused considerable concerns about the future of democracies in the region. Over the past few years, populist discourse has been gaining relevance beyond the European scenario as populist leaders have been elected in several countries, such as the United States, Brazil and India. Recent results from national elections in Europe show that populist parties no longer represent the extreme fringes of public opinion and openly challenge centre-right and centre-left parties on an almost equal footing. In France, the presidential elections of 2017 and 2022 have seen Marine Le Pen, candidate for the *Rassemblement National*, obtaining 34 and 42% of the vote, respectively; a considerable expansion when compared to the past precedent in 2002, when Jean-Marie Le Pen's vote share was approximately 18%. In Italy, the 2018 general election witnessed a coalition between the populist *Five Star Movement* (32.7%) and the far-right populist *League* (17.4%), while the more recent 2022 elections produced a far-right-leaning populist coalition between the *Brothers of Italy* (26.0%), *League* (8.8%) and Berlusconi's *Forward Italy* (8.1%), which obtained approximately 44% of the vote share[1]. In Austria, the *Freedom Party of Austria* (FPO) joined a coalition government with the centre-right Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) after the 26% result obtained in the 2017 elections[2]. Other notable examples include

[1] Considering the *Five Star Movement*, the Italian elections of 2022 have seen about 60% of the vote share being obtained by populist forces. This count would be even higher when also considering small populist formations that did not reach the representation threshold.

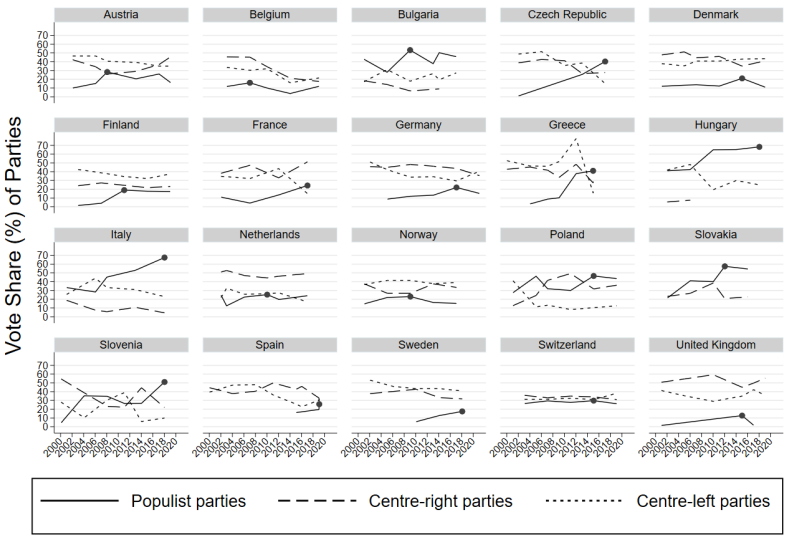
[2] The subsequent snap election of 2019, called after a corruption scandal involving the FPO, awarded them approximately 16% of the vote share.

the *Party for Freedom* (Netherlands), the *Flemish Interest* (Belgium) and the *Danish People's Party* (Denmark), which have consistently received a non-marginal portion of the vote share in their countries despite having never participated in government experiences[3]. Other recent outstanding examples include *Alternative for Germany* and the *Sweden Democrats*.

The scenario in Eastern European democracies is not much different, with populist parties not only being on the rise but also succeeding in achieving governmental positions several times. Parties such as *Law and Justice* (Poland) and *FIDESZ* (Hungary) are in government positions after multiple elections, with the latter obtaining a supermajority in the last four elections. In addition, while all of the aforementioned parties are close to the far-right, notable electoral success has also been shown from far-left populist formations such as *Podemos* (Spain), the *Socialist Party* (Netherlands), *Die Linke* (Germany), and *SYRIZA* (Greece), with the latter party forming a government after the Greek elections of 2015, which was marked by the Greek government debt crisis. Thus, despite often being referred to by others (and by themselves) as 'outsiders' or 'challengers' of politics, populist parties have become a consolidated reality of the last two decades of European politics.

Figure 1.1 provides a more comprehensive picture of how populism has evolved within European countries. It presents an overview of the vote share obtained by these parties (far-right, far-left and pure populists) when compared to those of established party families such as the centre-right and the centre-left. Contrary to a perspective of a general growth of populism, the within-country trends reveal all but homogeneous electoral trajectories for these parties. Except for the case of the United Kingdom (5,33%), populist parties represented at least 10% of the electorate all over European countries. Considering the vote shares in French legislative elections, populist forces have grown from approximately 10% to 20% against the severe decline of centre-left parties. In Switzerland, much of the electorate has been steadily

[3] Excluding experiences of external support to governments provided by the *Party for Freedom* (2010) and the *Danish People's Party* (2001, 2005, 2007, 2015)



Source: *Manifesto Project Database*. Own calculation.

FIGURE 1.1 Vote share (%) of populist parties over the last two decades by election year and country.
The year in which the highest vote share occurred for populist parties is highlighted for each country. The Manifesto Project Database provides the classification for centre-right (conservatives, Christian democrats, liberals) and centre-left parties (social democrats, greens, radical left). Shares refer to votes obtained for the parliamentary elections of each country.

supporting populist formations across elections, mostly led by the *Swiss People's Party*. In Austria, after a peak in electoral performances reached in 2008, support for populists has decreased to the levels of previous elections. Belgium, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark show similar patterns of moderate and stable populist presence. Conversely, in Finland, support for populism has been consolidated after an electoral breakthrough, while in Sweden, populist influence has emerged relatively recently when compared to other contexts. On the other hand, Eastern European countries show scenarios where support for populist formations overwhelms those of competing political par-

ties. Exemplary cases in this sense are Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia. It is interesting to note that similar scenarios are also occurring in Italy and Greece, which have institutional settings more similar to those of Western than Eastern democracies.

In light of these developments, this thesis aimed to study factors that can explain the support for populism in Europe by investigating explanations that focus on *demand-side* and *supply-side* factors. Demand-side theories underline the grievances that increase the appeal of populist parties; therefore, they mostly pertain to voters' characteristics. On the other hand, supply-side theories stress the importance of having a favourable environment that facilitates populist parties' mobilisation of voters (Golder, 2016). This thesis is situated within the corpus of literature adopting the ideational definition of populism (e.g., Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Mudde, 2004, 2017; Stanley, 2008). Populism is defined as an ideology that considers society as being divided into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite' (Mudde, 2004, p. 543), and where this opposition is based in terms of morality (Mudde, 2017, p. 29). This definition is grounded in previous seminal accounts that focused on minimal definitions of populism based on its appeal to the people and opposition to a power structure (e.g., Canovan, 1981, 1999; Wiles et al., 1969). This definition focuses on the set of ideas that all manifestations of populism in Europe have in common, thereby allowing a clear distinction between populism and non-populism and facilitating comparative investigation. A more detailed discussion on populism and its definitional features is provided in section 2.

The main idea advanced by this thesis is that to understand support for populism and how it varies cross-nationally or temporally, empirical research must integrate citizens' political behaviour within their contexts. Demand-side explanations focus on the roles of different types of grievances (e.g., economic, social, political) as drivers of populist support. However, an exclusive focus on such factors does not clarify how grievances can be translated into support for populist parties. In this sense, it is important to consider how contextual elements forming the supply side intervene in determining the success (or failure) of pop-

ulist parties in mobilising voters' grievances. Supply-side explanations, different from the demand-side, pertain to all the contextual factors that can form a favourable (or unfavourable) political opportunity structure for populist actors. Namely, while the presence of grievances constitutes a necessary precondition for the success of these parties, the extent to which they lead to support for them is contingent on the characteristics of the environment in which both voters and parties are embedded. Thus, a comparative study of the European scenario that considers the interaction between these two types of factors offers the opportunity to advance the understanding of populism by testing the implications of the theories proposed to explain their rise in a democracy.

The rationale for this thesis was twofold. First, it addresses calls from scholars who have argued that new empirical research on populism should build upon previous theories rather than starting from scratch (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Rovira Kaltwasser et al., 2017). Many previous studies have examined support for populist parties under labels and frameworks that focused more on their radical/extremist ideology (e.g., Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Rydgren & Ruth, 2013) but have given less attention to their populist ideology and the connected literature. This thesis aimed to fill this gap by providing empirical studies on support for populist parties that drew on previous theoretical literature on populism. Second, it aimed to advance knowledge of the phenomenon by exploring interactions between demand-side and supply-side factors (Golder, 2016; Muis & Immerzeel, 2016; Rydgren, 2007). Most previous studies have predominantly focused on one type of explanation while omitting that the electoral success of populist parties could be jointly determined by factors belonging to both levels of explanation (Golder, 2016, p. 490). Namely, populist parties' success could be the result of both a large demand and a favourable environment that translates this demand into support for these parties. Thus, this thesis applied the theoretical suggestions from theoretical studies on populism to investigate interactions between demand-side and supply-side factors of support for populist parties.

While previous studies have separately explored either demand or supply factors (e.g., Lubbers et al., 2002; Van der Brug et al., 2005), this thesis aims to bridge these traditionally separate domains to provide a new perspective on the dynamics of support for populism in the European scenario. By examining the interaction between demand-side grievance factors and supply-side contextual characteristics, this thesis aims to advance existing theories of populism (e.g., Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Rovira Kaltwasser et al., 2017) and applies them to the European context. While more recent literature has acknowledged this interaction (e.g., Engler & Weisstanner, 2021; Milner, 2021; Rooduijn & Burgoon, 2018), to the best of my knowledge, no prior research has directly used this integrated approach in direct relation with previous theories of populism. Through this approach, this thesis aims at providing previously unexplored insights and a more comprehensive understanding of populism.

Specifically, the focus of this thesis will be on two factors from the demand side and two factors from the supply side. From the demand-side perspective, the thesis will focus on subjective social marginalisation (Chapter 2) and negative perceptions of the national economy (Chapter 3). From the supply-side perspective, the focus will be on political pragmatism (Chapter 4) and competition for the issue of nativism (Chapter 5). While these chapters differ in terms of what they investigate in relation to support for populism, they all share multi-level analysis as the method of analysis. Employing multi-level models enabled the analysis of not only how demand-side and supply-side factors directly affect support for populist parties, but also the interactions between them. Thus, using insights from the literature on populism, this thesis will also examine how the effects of voters' characteristics (demand side) vary depending on the contextual characteristics (supply side).

This introductory chapter provides the theoretical background on which each empirical chapter stands. It sketches the connection between the four empirical chapters of this thesis and shows how each empirical chapter contributes to a specific debate in the literature. The connection between these chapters and their limitations will be further

addressed in the concluding remarks (Chapter 6). The remainder of this chapter is organised into two sections. The next section provides a general overview of the literature on populism and the main societal developments connected to its rise (Section 2). The last section provides a summary of each empirical chapter of this thesis in terms of their objective and contribution to the literature (Section 3).

2 • BACKGROUND

What we talk about when we talk about populism?

The title of this section is inspired by the famous collection of short stories by Raymond Carver (2014) 'What We Talk About When We Talk Love'. Carver's literature piece obviously addressed a very different subject from populism, but it shows how even popular concepts such as love can be difficult to define. In everyday parlance, populism already assumes very different connotations depending on who refers to it (ordinary citizens or intellectuals). Such a problem also involves, albeit to a different extent, the definitional debate on populism. This challenge plagues almost all studies on populism, as it does for this thesis.

The acknowledgement of the contested nature of populism is so recurrent that it has become common to acknowledge the acknowledgement of this fact (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014; Panizza, 2005). As argued by Moffitt and Tormey (2014), populism has become such a widely used concept that it has lost analytical value and become meaningless. Another obstacle to the identification of populism is the generally poor reputation it holds among intellectuals (Canovan, 2004, p. 241). For instance, it is generally acknowledged that populism is often used with connotations to accentuate the demagoguery and/or insincerity of political personalities. Recent definitions provided by the media, such as 'the unprincipled willingness to give mobs — the vox populi — whatever they bay for.' (Kluth, 2022) or 'an appeal to the majority for the sake of that appeal' (Jukes, 2022), offer some examples of normative bias when approaching populism. While one may agree

on the problematic nature of these parties, such an approach does not bring scientific efforts any closer to a better understanding of what populism really is and what it implies for democracy. This section sets out to provide the coordinates for the reader to understand how populism has been approached in this thesis and its main elements.

Before delineating how this thesis understands populism, the first key step is to clarify what normative approaches dominate the scholarship and what view this thesis adopts in this regard. A great deal of the scientific efforts of populism's scholarship has been engaged in the normative debate concerning populism's compatibility with democracy. One stream, often identified with the liberal approach (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012), essentially approaches populism as a pathology of democracy, or, in other words, as the result of democratic malfunctions. It is not uncommon to find parallels between populism and fascism in the literature (e.g., Germani, 1978; Griffin, 2000; Lipset, 1960). More moderate accounts contend that populism represents a problem for democracy since it endangers important principles such as individual rights, representative institutions, the rule of law and checks on power. Populism relegates political adversaries as illegitimate because they cannot intrinsically represent the political will of the people (Abts & Rummens, 2007, p. 419). In its portrayal of 'the people' as a homogeneous entity, it supplants equality for unity and, as a result, it opposes pluralism (Urbinati, 1998). In other words, populism dismisses the processes of intermediation and deliberation in the name of the legitimate authority of 'the people', which populists claim to personify. Constitutional limitations to power represent an obstacle to the implementation of the will of the people, to which populism provides a potentially authoritarian and despotic answer (Blokker, 2018). Thus, this account gives a rather pessimistic view of populism's co-existence with democracy. In the words of Urbinati (1998, p. 122), 'Populism does not seem to be able to solve the riddle of either being minoritarian or becoming despotic'.

In contrast to this standpoint, other scholars have argued that populism is inevitably a part of democracy rather than its pathology. More radical accounts in this regard go as far as defining populism as democ-

racy in its purest form (Torbjörn, 1992). Other scholars have remarked on the importance of populism in articulating social antagonism originating from a large variety of unmet demands (Laclau, 2005b; Mouffe, 2000). While populism's anti-pluralism can be seen as a threat to public contestation, it has also been pointed out that under certain conditions, it can bring inclusiveness by representing marginalised sectors of society (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). It has been argued that populism represents an attempt to solve dilemmas that characterise contemporary democracies. It offers (controversial) solutions to important democratic dilemmas, such as the definition of 'the people' and who controls the controllers by principally using morality arguments about the virtues of 'the people' versus the corruption of 'the elite' (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014). Moreover, populism attempts to solve democratic paradoxes emerging from conflicts between ideology and practice (Arditi, 2004; Canovan, 1999, 2002). Notably, both perspectives carry normative assumptions regarding how democracy should function, which influence the definition of populism.

Far from representing the solution to this specific debate, this thesis, taking the example of Taggart (2000), contends that "scholars should avoid portraying populism as either good or bad" and that "we should be sensitive to the presence of populism" (Taggart, 2000, p.115). On the one hand, this thesis acknowledges that while populist formations might not intentionally pursue anti-democratic goals, they can potentially expose democracy to authoritarian drifts by weakening its institutions in the long run. On the other hand, it also recognises how populism's mobilisation of the marginalised sectors of society can offer important insights into the problems that characterise liberal democracies, which can be used to help develop potential solutions. Therefore, understanding the social foundations of support for populism, together with what contextual features represent a favourable environment for its growth, becomes crucial to understanding the sources of such risk.

In pursuing this goal, this thesis opted for a more agnostic approach to the phenomenon of populism by adopting what has been called

the *minimal approach* (e.g., Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012) or *ideational approach* (e.g., Hawkins et al., 2018; Mudde, 2004, 2017) to populism. In other words, in this thesis, a 'thin' understanding of populism is applied by focusing on the 'lowest common denominator' shared by all far-left or far-right expressions of populism (Schulz et al., 2018). On the one hand, this approach recognises the ambivalent relationship between populism and democracy and uses it to reach a common understanding of what constitutes populism. On the other hand, by offering a minimal definition of populism, it enables the comparison of different manifestations of populism (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Schulz et al., 2018). As such, it offers the opportunity to empirically test the implications of populism's theory concerning its inclusiveness towards marginalised sectors of society, and its anti-institutional appeal.

In doing so, this thesis principally follows the definition of Mudde (2004), which has served as a foundation for later studies adopting ideational approaches to populism:

> 'An ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the evil élite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people' (Mudde, 2004, p. 543).

Such an approach to populism also underscores what Taggart (2000) referred to as the 'chameleonic nature' of populism or, in other words, its thin-centred ideology (Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008). Indeed, contrary to other ideological traditions (e.g., socialism, liberalism, nationalism), populism maintains a narrower range of concepts and does not propose 'a broad menu of solutions to major socio-political issues' (Freeden et al., 2003, p. 96). Populist ideology draws solutions on how best to conduct a democracy (i.e., by applying the people's will), but it offers few specific views on socioeconomic or sociocultural issues per se. Its ideological core stands in its antagonistic division of society, and it often compensates for its lack of broader concepts by cohabiting with other more comprehensive ideologies (Stanley, 2008,

p. 100). Far-right populist parties have perhaps been the most well-known manifestation of populism that has occurred in Europe, where elements of populism with exclusionary ethnic-cultural nationalism coexist (Mudde, 2007). Its less frequent counterpart, far-left populism, combines the populist ideology with anti-capitalism (March & Mudde, 2005).

Other scholars have defined populism as a political strategy (*organisational approach*) (e.g., Weyland, 1999), a political discourse (*discoursive approach*) (e.g., Laclau, 2005a; Mouffe, 2005; Stavrakakis, 2017) or a political style (*performative approach*) (e.g., Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Moffitt & Tormey, 2014; Ostiguy et al., 2017). The *organisational approach* defines populism as a type of popular mobilisation where the leader plays a key role in relating directly to followers. The *discoursive approach* contends that populism is a discourse used by the elites to maximise support by providing meaning to empty signifiers, such as the people (and the elite). The *performative approach* proposes that populism is defined based on how political actors relate to the people. However, while recognising their potential for different research goals, such definitions are problematic to use in comparative research. First, these definitions tend to derive from the specific contexts where populism has manifested (e.g., Latin America), consequently not allowing for generalisation outside of the analysed contexts. For instance, definitions emphasising populism as a particular style of doing politics or as a strategy for achieving power have often been adopted with the Latin American context in mind, where charismatic leadership has played a relevant role. These definitions mainly focus on charismatic leadership, which despite being shared by a large part of populist manifestations, does not encompass all of them (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014). While leadership is a more central feature of populism in these contexts, the European context has provided a much more mixed picture in this sense. Examples such as Jean-Marie and Marine Le Pen, Jorg Haider, Geert Wilders, Matteo Salvini and Viktor Orbán provide a picture of parties whose successes were strictly related to having a charismatic leader. Yet, cases such as the *Flemish Interest*, the *Danish People's Party*, *Alternative for Germany* and the *Sweden Democrats* have shown exam-

ples where leadership seemed less relevant. Second, these definitions do not allow for the identification of populist actors since they tend to focus on elements that can also be present among non-populist actors. In principle, a populist mobilisation strategy, as well as a populist style of doing politics or utilising populist discourse, can also be adopted by political personalities operating in mainstream political backgrounds. Again, the problematic aspect here is the focus on leadership rather than on populist ideology.

For a better understanding of what this thesis considers to fall under the label of populism, it is useful to focus on its core elements. Drawing from previous theoretical and empirical literature engaged in finding dimensions related to populist ideas (e.g., A. Akkerman et al., 2014; Castanho Silva et al., 2017; Schulz et al., 2018), it is possible to outline three main elements: *people-centrism*, *anti-elitism* and *anti-pluralism*. These elements were found to be common among all manifestations of populism.

People-centrism revolves around the idea that the people are the ultimate authority in a democracy and should be at the centre of decision-making Canovan (2005). This feature refers to what perhaps is the essential claim behind all populists‘ proposals: the appeal to the recognised authority of ’the people‘ Canovan (1999). In the view of populism, this entity represents a homogenous group and constitutes the basis of a good society (e.g., Mény & Surel, 2001; Mudde, 2004). They are portrayed in terms of moral superiority and embedded in populists’ vision of ‘the heartland’ (Taggart, 2002, 2004), which uses a past-derived vision of society to provide an identity of the people as virtuous in opposition to a present characterised in negative terms due to corruption and decay. Other typical portrayals of the people see them as the backbone of society, the silent majority, or the good society (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2007; Mény & Surel, 2001; Mudde, 2004; Zaslove, 2008). However, how populists define the identity of ‘the people’ varies considerably across contexts. This is one example that shows what Taggart (2000) referred to as the chameleonic nature of populism, or what Stanley (2008) referred to as the thin-centred ideology of populism. Depending on the host ideology of populists

(far-right or far-left), the people take on different connotations. While the far-right interpretation of the people involves ethnic considerations (e.g., the natives, our people), the far-left version emphasises class considerations (e.g., the working class, the ordinary people). In either case, both variants share the concept of popular sovereignty to lay their claims of being the only legitimate representatives of the people's will.

On the other hand, *anti-elitism* represents the other extreme of the populist ideology. The elites are considered the antithesis of the people, a powerful entity that is detached from the people's needs and that exploits them to its benefit (Mudde, 2004; Panizza, 2005; Stanley, 2008). Populists accuse the elite of betraying the people (Jansen, 2011). They are often depicted as an infamous group plotting against ordinary people, often accused of working in collusion to maintain their privileged position (Canovan, 2004), or even of being corrupted by special interests or foreign powers (Canovan, 1999). In this sense, they are also seen as a homogeneous group; but in this case, in a negative light in terms of morality. Other typical epithets of the elite portray them as 'arrogant' (Rooduijn, 2014a, p. 6), 'conspiring' (Hawkins, 2009, p. 1042) or 'immoral' (Jansen, 2011, p. 84). As for the people, the conception of the elite also varies depending on far-right or far-left connotations of populism. Far-left populists view the evil elite as the 'capitalist elite', while far-right populists see it as the 'multicultural elite'. Also, at their core, both visions have the opposition of populism to a power structure not necessarily represented by only the political class (Canovan, 1999). Within the entity of the corrupted elite, it is also possible to find economic elites (i.e., bankers, managers), cultural elites (i.e., journalists, scholars, writers) and legal elites (i.e., judges, bureaucrats) (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). Thus, populists' opposition to an elite constitutes another important element that is inextricable from its view of the sovereign power of the people.

Anti-pluralism represents the logical consequence of populism's Manichean vision of society since it tends to dismiss the political dialectic between diverging interests existing in a society in a struggle between good and evil. This element is also strictly connected to the opposition of populist democracy to the liberal principles of democ-

racy (e.g., Dahl, 2006; Kriesi, 2014b; Pappas, 2014). Populism rejects pluralism by conceiving the will of the people as homogeneous and supreme, thus denying the presence of plural interests within society and their representation. The only existing societal cleavage according to populism is between the people and the elite (e.g., Mudde, 2007; Pappas, 2014). Also, populism disdains institutions of representative democracy, such as the parliament and the parties. Populist politicians advocate for the restriction of the powers of parliament and constitutionalism to show their opposition to all forms of intermediation that get in between the direct and full expression of the people's will (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2007; Mény & Surel, 2001). In this line of reasoning, established political parties are criticised for creating fictional divisions within the homogeneous entity of the people (Mudde, 2004). Populists see different interests within society as a threat to the unity of the people and thus seek to reduce any sort of political pluralism. They are not open to dialogue or negotiation, and instead, they seek to impose their vision on the people with little to no regard for any opposing views (Rostbøll, 2021). Thus, the element of anti-pluralism helps identify another core element shared by all variants of populism. Populism's antagonism with pluralism embodies its support for models of democracy where institutions are no longer necessary (Rosanvallon & Goldhammer, 2008), or it more simply shows its intolerance towards opacity and complexity of institutionalism (Canovan, 1999).

Therefore, this thesis builds on these elements in defining populism and which parties constitute populist parties. Focusing on these core elements (*people-centrism*, *anti-elitism*, *anti-pluralism*), this thesis will provide a comparative analysis of which factors (individual and contextual) explain populist parties' success in European countries. The empirical chapters dealing with support for populism in terms of voting behaviour (Chapters 2, 4 and 5) will rely on the suggestions provided by The PopuList (Rooduijn et al., 2019) for the coding of populist parties across each European context. This source is constituted by the collaboration of a wide range of scholars that builds within the minimal approaches to populism. Chapter 3, on the other hand, will

analyse support for populism by focusing on the element of people-centrism (i.e., support for popular sovereignty). As such, this thesis aims to provide comparative studies that bring the implications made by theoretical literature on populism to the investigation of support for populism across Europe.

The demand side: marginalisation and political disaffection

Most previous studies addressing support for populist parties have focused on analysing the demand side. This section will outline the background literature that informed the theoretical framework of the empirical chapters concerning the demand-side aspects. It will mainly focus on two important societal changes that have been attributed to the growth of the demand for populist parties: globalisation/modernisation and the decline of political participation. Building on this literature, this thesis will focus on two demand-side factors: subjective social marginalisation (Chapter 2) and economic grievances (Chapter 3). Specifically, this thesis will address two questions concerning these two factors: (I) *To what extent is support for populism explained by perceptions of social marginalisation?* (II) *To what extent do economic grievances due to sociotropic fears of a country's economic collapse explain support for populism?* Investigating these factors will help clarify how support for populism is connected to the phenomenon of social marginalisation, and what mechanisms underlie the economic sources of support for populism.

A seminal theory in this field suggests that such political subjects appealed to the *losers of modernisation* (Betz, 1994), referring to all social groups that have been disadvantaged by the changes due to modernisation. Two main developments have been attributed to these changes. On the one hand, the progressive bifurcation of the labour market was caused by a shift from the secondary to the tertiary sector (see Figure 1.3). While this process favoured the labour market opportunities for highly skilled jobs, it decreased the demand for unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in production. The result is a growing divide between one side prospering and the other growing resentment toward political

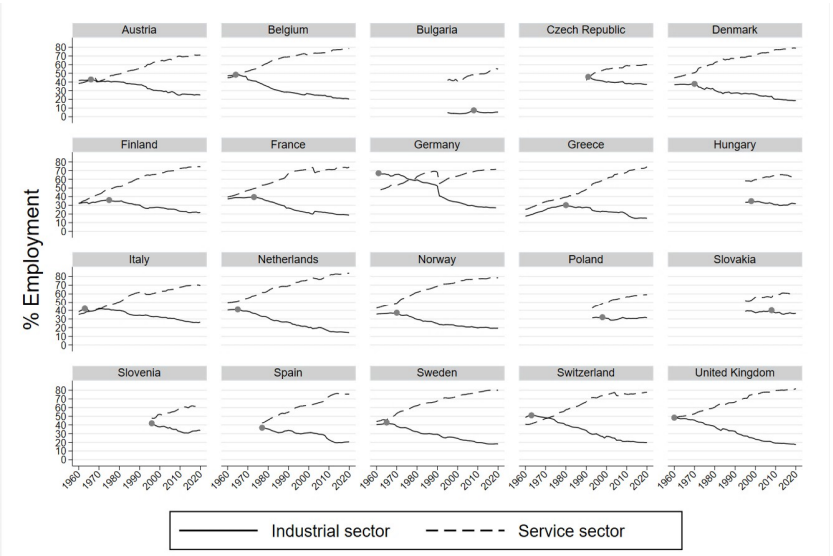


FIGURE 1.2 Share of employment in the industrial and service sectors by country, 1960–2020.
The year in which the highest share of employment in the industrial sector occurred is highlighted for each country.

institutions (especially for the left-wing parties) for not having shielded them from the deterioration of their social status. On the other hand, the rise of far-right populism has been seen as the materialist answer to the rise of post-materialist values from left-libertarian parties. Namely, while the growth of left-libertarian parties was the result of the so-called *silent revolution* (Inglehart, 1971) for their promotion of post-material values, the rise of (far-right) populism represented the *silent counter-revolution* (Ignazi, 1992).

Moreover, while the losers of modernisation theory placed more emphasis on technological and cultural changes, the more recent *losers of globalisation theory* (Kriesi et al., 2006, 2008) stressed the role of international economic and cultural competition. The main argument of this theory is that globalisation caused new social divisions between citizens and, as a consequence, new political potentials in the

electorates for parties' mobilisation. Specifically, this theory argues that globalisation has caused a fracture between a group of citizens whose skills benefit from openness to international competition and that support cosmopolitanism (the winners) and another group that includes citizens with lower qualifications employed in traditionally protected sectors and that strongly identify with the national community (the losers). While the losers seek protectionist and nationalistic policies from parties, the winners demand more economic openness and integration in the global market. Thus, in this division, the populist parties aim to mobilise the losers of globalisation, while the winners tend to find political representation in the mainstream parties. Although these two famous accounts refer to different factors, they both share the tenet that these very important societal changes have created a divide between citizens whose social status has benefited from such changes and those who have been left behind.

Relatedly, the societal consequences of globalisation/modernisation have been associated with significant signs of the increased estrangement and disenchantment of citizens with politics. This disenchantment is evidenced by the withdrawal of citizens from traditional forms of political participation and the growth of alternative forms of participation, such as protest. One famous example in this sense is the noticeable decline in electoral participation in most modern democracies. Many scholars have documented the global decline in voting turnout rates (e.g., Blais, 2007; Gray & Caul, 2000; Kostelka, 2017). It has been documented how voting turnout has globally declined by an average of approximately 11% since the 1970s after an initial rise after the 1940s; however, there is considerable country-level variation (Vowles, 2017). Figure 1.3 provides an overview of electoral participation trends in the European scenario from 1960 to 2020. It can be noticed that there has been a declining trend in terms of voting in most cases. Eastern European democracies such as Bulgaria (-36,5%), Czech Republic (-36%) and Slovakia (-29,6%) have reported the most marked reductions in voter turnout. Nevertheless, to a lesser extent, this decline is also visible amongst the more established Western European democracies, such as France (-28,5%). Notably, Hungary and

FIGURE 1.3 Voting turnout trends over elections from 1960 to 2020 by country.

Poland did not follow the trend of other Eastern European democracies, and voting turnout has registered also a decline in Belgium despite its compulsory voting system. Thus, over the years, it appears that a substantial proportion of European citizens has progressively disengaged from politics by abandoning its perhaps most important form of participation.

Scholars somewhat agree on attributing this decline in electoral participation to the progressive disengagement of citizens from politics. Although it remains unclear whether populist actors played a more active role in this trend, it is possible to argue that they have manifested themselves within a framework of changing relations between citizens and politics. Scholars have argued that a growing number of citizens are dissatisfied with politics. Although opinion surveys collected worldwide have shown a visible decline in trust in public institutions over recent decades, there are significant cross-country differences (Perry, 2021). In line with the implications of the losers of

modernisation/globalisation theories, political dissatisfaction could be caused by the perceived failure of mainstream parties in managing the societal changes brought by modernisation and globalisation. Consequently, citizens' level of political efficacy became lower due to the perceived lack of ability to control the decision-making process (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002).

A considerable increase in dissatisfaction with important political institutions such as parliament, the parties and the political class has also been visible in Europe. As Figure 1.4 shows, significant proportions of citizens display low levels of trust in their institutions. Important cross-country variations are discernible, with democracies such as Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and Switzerland showing lower levels of distrust when compared to Greece, Italy, Poland and Bulgaria. Also, another interesting source of variation concerns differences between institutions. Overall, it appears that citizens tend to be more trustful towards parliamentary institutions, while parties and politicians are the most unpopular. Bearing in mind the significant cross-country and temporal differences, these trends provide another picture of how the anti-political campaign of populism can find potential pools of supporters across European democracies.

Some theoretical accounts have provided several explanations for how the macro-societal changes of modernisation/globalisation could have contributed to increasing political dissatisfaction and consequently favoured the rise of populism. For instance, the *mass society thesis* (Hawkins et al., 2017; Rydgren, 2007) maintains that these changes have eroded the traditional forms of social control and cohesion, which have created the premises for political alienation and a lack of solidarity. Drawing from the well-known sociological framework of Durkheim (1893), scholars supporting this hypothesis argued that by changing labour relations, modernisation/globalisation created an atomised workforce deprived of a sense of a class identity, which unions were once effective in providing. This has led to individuals feeling increasingly frustrated by the impersonal and bureaucratic nature of contemporary democracies and the lack of control over their lives and environment, leading to an increase in

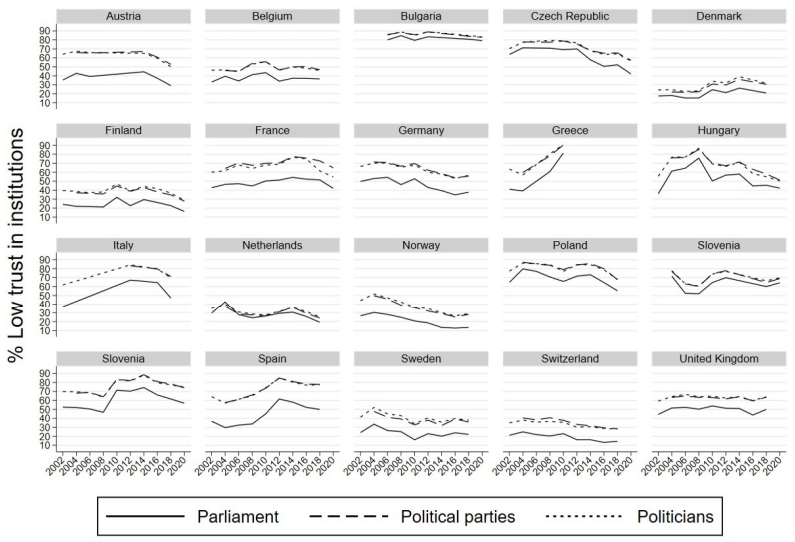


FIGURE 1.4 Share of European citizens with low levels of trust in political institutions.

political dissatisfaction. Lacking the influence of previously relevant socialising institutions such as trade unions, religion, and political parties, some individuals have been left without a social identity and are in search of another source of identity. Populism makes up for this deficiency by providing an identity portrayed in terms of moral superiority (e.g., 'the pure people'), which transcends ideological and class divisions. In doing so, it also provides an explanation for the grievances that these individuals experience by using a negative identity for the outgroup that is embodied by the corrupted elite. Thus, the so-called losers are identified with the disenfranchised, deprived not only in material terms but also of their social identity.

Another view follows a more economic explanation for the reasons underlying support for populism (e.g., Eatwell, 2016). This perspective builds upon the idea that contemporary economic changes (e.g., globalisation, technological advances, increased competition) have altered the labour market demand for specific occupations, resulting in higher

levels of economic insecurity. Occupational groups that suffered the most from these changes (i.e., blue-collar workers, the low-skilled, the unemployed) have turned their support towards populist alternatives to express their economic grievances (e.g., Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Ivarsflaten, 2008; Lubbers et al., 2002). This view sees socioeconomic marginalisation as a source of support for populism. In other words, individuals are attracted by populist parties out of self-interested considerations about their vulnerable socioeconomic position. They feel betrayed by mainstream parties, whose policies contributed to the spread of social risks connected to modernisation/globalisation, thereby developing resentment for their political class. By supporting populist parties, these voters manifest their demand for policies designed to protect their endangered occupations.

In connection to this, an alternative viewpoint contends that economic sources of support for populism could also involve sociotropic considerations. Drawing from the distinction between 'pocketbook voting' and 'sociotropic voting' (e.g., Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000), this view claims that support for a populist formation could derive from citizens' concerns about the declining state of their national economy. Such intuition was also stressed by earlier studies analysing aggregate-level support for extremist parties (e.g., Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Knigge, 1998). Economic hardship is expected to increase support for these parties not only as a result of experiencing objective material deprivation but also because of citizens' concerns about the state of the national economy. This explanation underpins the declinist mood of populist campaigns (e.g., Canovan, 1999; Taggart, 2002). Thus, based on this reasoning, populist voting is again explained as resulting from societal concerns rather than self-interested motivations. Populist supporters answer the call of populist parties for reversing an ongoing crisis that society is experiencing.

These views subtend the role played by perceptions of social status erosion due to changes in the social hierarchy (Kurer, 2020). Since employment also provides social status in addition to income (Jahoda

et al., 1982), modernisation and globalisation processes reshape the relative importance of the occupations that they threaten. The result is that the conditions of routine workers (both from the working and middle class) worsen not only from a material but from an identity perspective (Fukuyama, 2018). Therefore, if the material deprivation caused by these challenges can increase support for populist parties as a result of the increased demand for income redistribution or social protection (Häusermann et al., 2015; Rehm, 2009), the uncertainty due to status anxiety can increase the demand for socially conservative or authoritarian policies (Jost et al., 2018).

However, the category of the 'losers' could expand beyond encompassing only the lower classes. After all, appealing strictly to these classes is hardly enough to obtain the striking successes achieved by some of these parties. The account of the losers of modernisation theory already refers to the radical right populists as a 'paradoxical coalition of rather heterogeneous groups' (Betz, 1994, p. 423), referring to their ability to appeal to an alliance between less well-off and more well-off classes. Also, Mudde (2007, p. 204) argued that far-right populist electorates might be more heterogeneous than solely being composed of profiles associated with the 'losers'. The economic consequences of modernisation and globalisation have been pervasive. On the one hand, labour market demands are polarised between an increasing demand for high-paid professionals and low-paid service workers, and decreasing demand for manufacturing and routine office workers (Goos et al., 2014). On the other hand, technological advancement and offshoring have posed a threat not only to blue-collar jobs but also involved a significant portion of white-collar jobs with routine tasks (Kurer, 2020). Some cross-country studies have indeed shown that these parties can also attract voters from the middle class in addition to the working class, although not for the same reasons (Oesch, 2008; Oesch & Rennwald, 2018). To explain the support from more well-off groups, Minkenberg (2000, p. 187) suggested that the core of the electorate of these parties does not necessarily come from only the bottom of the social ladder, but also includes a stratum of voters that

'is rather secure but objectively can still lose something'. Considering the enlargement of popular consensus experienced by populist parties, it is plausible to expect consistent support for these parties coming from the more well-off classes as well.

Alternative demand-side explanations stress the importance of cultural aspects, especially those focused on support for the far-right variants of populism. One well-known account in this regard is the *cultural backlash theory* (Norris & Inglehart, 2019), which argues that individuals increasingly support far-right populist parties due to feelings of cultural insecurity due to the perceived erosion of traditional values resulting from economic and cultural globalisation. By voting for far-right populist parties, these individuals satisfy their demand for the protection of their traditional values. The rise of these parties has often been linked to the increasing inflow of foreign immigration that has especially involved the Western European countries (e.g., Knigge, 1998; Swank & Betz, 2003). These parties appeal to the constituencies that are more hostile towards immigrants and dissatisfied with the multicultural policies advocated by mainstream politics.

Finally, cultural explanations of support for far-right populists often involve economic arguments. This perspective emphasises the importance of threat perceptions due to competition with migrants for scarce resources (e.g., Blalock, 1967; Olzak, 1994). These parties often resort to a scapegoating narrative that blames immigrants for rising levels of unemployment (e.g., Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Knigge, 1998). Their campaigns often stress the need to restrict immigration to prevent migrants from stealing jobs from the native population. Previous studies have found that far-right populism is inevitably connected with anti-immigrant attitudes (e.g., Coffe & Voorpostel, 2010; Ivarsflaten, 2008; Lubbers et al., 2002; Norris, 2005; Oesch, 2008), mainly due to motivations linked to economic threats (Mayda, 2006; Sides & Citrin, 2007). Also, these parties attract voters that support redistribution policies aimed at the native population (Enggist & Pinggera, 2022; Schumacher & Van Kersbergen, 2016), while also mixing cultural and economic aspects in this case. Thus, cultural explanations received a great deal of attention from previous studies; however, they

mostly apply to a subgroup of populism (the far-right) and can hardly disentangle cultural aspects from economic ones.

The supply-side: institutions and party competition

While the study of the demand side of populism helps a great deal in understanding how their constituencies are composed, only focusing on such factors is not enough to explain the variation of electoral performance among these parties (e.g., Bustikova, 2014; Givens, 2005; Golder, 2016; Mudde, 2010; Norris, 2005). In the previous section of this chapter, it was shown how the socioeconomic and sociocultural consequences of globalisation and modernisation, along with rising levels of political disaffection, created the necessary conditions for a large demand for populist parties across European democracies. However, as the European scenario shows, the presence of such large potential demand does not automatically imply success for populist parties. Factors related to the context in which actors such as voters and populist parties operate thus become crucial to understanding how such demand can be translated into support for populism, consequently influencing their electoral performance. Building on the previous literature, two important factors emerged as important to understanding how context can affect the rise of populism: institutions (Chapter 4) and party competition (Chapter 5). This thesis sets out to comprehensively answer the following two questions regarding these two factors: (I) *How do liberal institutional arrangements influence support for populist parties?* (II) *To what extent is support for far-right populist parties affected by competition with mainstream parties?* By studying these two factors, this thesis will shed light on the institutional sources of populist success and populism's susceptibility to the agency of political competitors.

In the theoretical literature on populism, institutions serve an important role in the normative debate on whether populism is compatible with democracy or represents a threat to it. Many scholars have stressed the potential danger represented by populism due to its disregard for

liberal principles such as individual rights (especially minority rights), pluralism, the rule of law and the separation of powers (e.g., Abts & Rummens, 2007; Blokker, 2018; Rostbøll, 2021; Urbinati, 1998, 2017). Yet, other scholars have underlined the potential for populism to serve as a corrective method that addresses the representational gaps of liberal democracies (e.g., Hayward, 1996; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012) and the unresolved dilemmas of such democracies (e.g., Arditi, 2004; Canovan, 1999, 2004; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014). What recent developments in Europe have shown (e.g., A. Akkerman, 2021; Buzogány, 2017; Pirro & Stanley, 2022) is that populism is not necessarily undemocratic, but it is illiberal in its claims about how democracy should function (Mudde, 2004, 2016).

Populism is forcefully sceptical of the mediating role of democratic institutions and advocates for a political model in which they are not necessary (Rosanvallon & Goldhammer, 2008). It criticises the shortcomings of representative politics and the complexity that characterises its bureaucratic apparatuses and supports more straightforward forms of democracy (Taggart, 2002). All that matters is the sovereignty of the people, portrayed as a homogeneous entity, which is also supposedly homogeneous in its interests. Such a view dismisses the concept of pluralism (Mudde, 2017), intended as the divergence of interests, as illegitimate by appealing to the authority of the people (Rostbøll, 2021). Political parties, especially the mainstream parties, are accused of creating fictional divisions (Mudde, 2004, p. 546). Similarly, populism is impatient towards the checks and balances set by constitutional arrangements, instead favouring the unbalanced supremacy of the people (Mény & Surel, 2001). Limitations to power are seen as obstacles to enacting the will of the majority embodied by 'the people'. Thus, populism has a conflictual relationship with institutions, and more specifically to the institutional arrangements concerning liberal democracy.

The role of institutions has been considered by previous studies mainly in terms of how electoral systems influence the electoral performance of radical or extremist parties. The main argument is that permissive electoral systems (i.e., those with low representation thresh-

olds and high district magnitudes) facilitate the electoral performance of such parties by allowing them to easily reach political representation (Golder, 2016). As voters become less concerned about wasting their vote for a party that would not obtain representation, permissive electoral systems provide a favourable political environment for the growth of small parties (e.g., extremist formations), while non-permissive systems encourage voters to be more pragmatic in their choice, thus favouring larger parties (Golder, 2003; Van der Brug et al., 2005). However, the evidence in this regard has been inconclusive so far. Some studies have found that permissive electoral systems increase support for these parties (e.g., Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Swank & Betz, 2003), while other studies have found negative or no effects (e.g., Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Bustikova, 2014; Van der Brug et al., 2005). If explanations stressing the importance of electoral laws rest on the assumption that voters are careful when considering voting for small parties, such an assumption might be less tenable when considering populist parties. In light of the events of recent years, populist parties have obtained shares of votes that are rarely achieved by small parties. Also, the increase in government experiences can contribute to making their choices 'less risky' in the eyes of voters. Thus, institutional approaches to the study of support for populist parties require theoretical frameworks that consider the anti-institutional impulse of populist ideology.

Furthermore, party competition is another important element of the supply side. Most previous studies have investigated the role of party competition in terms of it affecting support for far-right populist parties. Earlier studies have posited that far-right populists' success was facilitated by mainstream parties converging their policy positions (e.g., H. Kitschelt & McGann, 1997). This suggestion aligns with the criticism of populist parties towards mainstream parties, which are often accused of colluding to hold power rather than offering concrete differences in their propositions. However, previous studies have provided mixed evidence to support this claim (e.g., Abedi, 2002; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Norris, 2005). These studies mostly relied on the framework of the spatial theory (Downs et al., 1957), which assumed

that party competition mainly occurs along one ideological dimension (usually the economic one) and that voters ultimately decide on which party to vote for based on which is the least distant from their position.

More recently, scholars have started to consider more seriously how parties compete in more than one policy dimension, and how they can manipulate the salience and ownership of the issues that are discussed during electoral campaigns (e.g., Meguid, 2005, 2008). These two insights are particularly useful to understand the extent to which far-right populists are sensitive to the nature of party competition. On the one hand, far-right populist parties share a common ideological core based on nativism (Mudde, 2007) and populism (Canovan, 1999; Mudde, 2004). Their policy positions are typically against open immigration and emphasise the importance of traditional values. These parties, together with the green parties, have often been referred to as niche parties to underline their focus on a restricted range of issues not covered by other parties and emphasise their competitive advantage. It has often been argued that the success of far-right populist parties heavily relies on their perceptions as 'owners' of the anti-immigration issue (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007), while their positions on the economic policy dimension have been more ambiguous (e.g., Fenger, 2018; Rovny, 2013). Previous studies have shown that far-right populist parties consistently attract support from constituencies that hold hostile attitudes towards immigrants (Coffe & Voorpostel, 2010; Ivarsflaten, 2008; Lubbers et al., 2002; Norris, 2005; Oesch, 2008). Therefore, far-right populists are expected to perform well when voters recognise them as more competent in handling the issues they promote.

On the other hand, recognising the active role that parties have in manipulating the salience and ownership of such issues suggests how competitors can contest the policy reputation of far-right populist parties, thus undermining their electoral performance (Meguid, 2008). Especially considering the decline of partisan attachments (Dalton, 2013), voters might increasingly base their decision on issue ownership. Recent political developments have given concrete examples of the leaders of mainstream parties adopting policy positions that are

close to the political area of the far-right (e.g., Bodlos & Plescia, 2018; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020). Such examples could constitute examples of accommodative strategies being used by mainstream parties (Meguid, 2005, 2008). Depending on their aim, mainstream parties can be strategic in terms of their issue positioning by either accommodating the position of their competitors, dismissing them or opposing them. In all cases, the attempt is to manipulate voters' perceptions of the ownership and salience of the issues during an electoral campaign. Therefore, the extent to which mainstream parties occupy the same political space could explain part of the temporal and cross-country variation in the electoral performances of far-right populist parties.

3 • OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

This thesis involved studying the support for populist parties across European countries by focusing on demand-side (Chapters 2 and 3) and supply-side explanations (Chapters 4 and 5) and applying the suggestions from the previous theoretical literature on populism. Specifically, each empirical chapter will investigate how factors belonging to both sides affect support for populism. Also, the empirical chapters will examine the interaction between the two factors to assess whether an effect from the demand side can vary depending on characteristics from the supply side. Figure 1.5 shows the conceptual scheme, which summarises the main factors considered by each chapter. Each empirical chapter of this thesis aims to contribute to a specific strain of literature investigating support for populism.

Contribution I: support for populist parties from a social integration perspective

The **first contribution** is the study of the role of social marginalisation in explaining support for populist parties (Chapter 2). Following the theories of the losers of modernisation (Betz, 1994) and globalisation (Kriesi et al., 2006), previous research has paid more attention to explaining support for populist parties as a result of economic, cultural

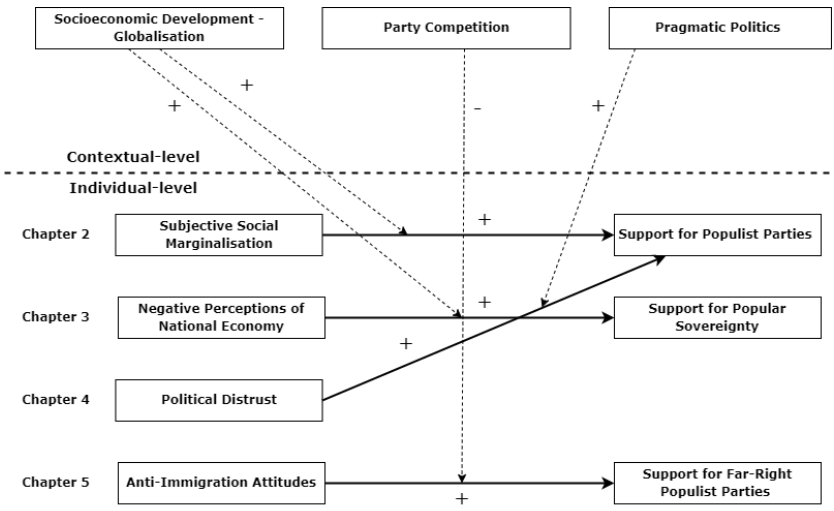


FIGURE 1.5 Conceptual scheme of research questions addressed by the dissertation's chapters.

or political grievances (Ivarsflaten, 2008). However, none of these grievances has proven to be sufficient in measuring the perceptions of losing out being connected to modernisation or globalisation (Golder, 2016). Previous designs often relied on measurements of objective economic deprivation, attitudes towards migrants, or political institutions to measure resentment due to such status. Simultaneously, the perceptions of being socially marginalised have only recently gained more attention (e.g., Gest et al., 2018; Gidron & Hall, 2017, 2020).

The main argument in Chapter 2 is that perceptions of social marginalisation play a key role in understanding the appeal of populist parties to the so-called 'losers'. In this regard, it introduces a new measurement of *subjective social marginalisation*, which considers the individual's perceptions of being integrated with his/her local community and broader society, and of being valued as a member of society. Populist parties spread their appeal to the broad electorate to provide an identity portrayed in terms of moral superiority ('the pure people'), with the aim of mobilising voters that do not recognise

themselves as falling within the values and norms of established parties. Their message conveys a sense of belonging, collective pride and recognition of the moral superiority of the group embodied by 'the people'. In this way, marginalised voters find their chance for reintegration not only under political representation but also in terms of social status. Considering feelings of marginalisation might be crucial to understanding the broader support for populist parties in terms of social classes, which often extends beyond the lower classes alone (e.g., Minkenberg, 2000; Mudde, 2007). Therefore, Chapter 2 contributes to this strain of literature in two ways: (I) It brings new evidence to the theories of the losers by showing that individuals that perceive themselves as being highly marginalised are more likely to support populist parties net of alternative grievance factors; (II) It shows that this effect is contingent on contextual characteristics such as socioeconomic development and globalisation. This chapter represents a further step in investigating grievance mobilisation mechanisms that link populism to individuals' perceptions about their social status.

Therefore, Chapter 2 investigates the role of *subjective social marginalisation* using the European Social Survey modules on personal and social well-being (2006 and 2012) at the individual level while using contextual data from the World Bank Open Database and the KOF Globalisation Index. It addresses two main questions. First, *it inquires about whether voters' perceptions of being socially marginalised explain support for populist formations across European countries*. Second, following the arguments of the relative deprivation theory (e.g., Gurr, 1970; Runciman, 1966), the economic voting theory (e.g., Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000), and the losers of globalisation theory (Kriesi et al., 2008), it examines *whether the effect of subjective social marginalisation is contingent on socioeconomic development or globalisation*. Using the insights from the ideational approach to populism (e.g., Hawkins et al., 2018; Mudde, 2017) and the mass society thesis (e.g., Hawkins et al., 2017; Rydgren, 2007), this chapter argues that populist parties provide a popular identity depicted in terms of moral superiority ('the pure people' to

voters who do not identify with the values and norms promoted by mainstream politics (i.e., 'the evil elite'). Support for populist parties derives from the loosening of citizens' previous social identities, which were largely shaped by established parties. Previous research has mainly investigated support for populism as either the result of economic, cultural or political grievances (e.g., Ivarsflaten, 2008). However, on the one hand, perceptions of being at the margins of society can be at the root of these grievance factors. On the other hand, considering these perceptions can help explain the cross-class support for populist parties (e.g., Ivarsflaten, 2005; Oesch & Rennwald, 2018). In addition, previous research that addressed social isolation mainly measured it in terms of the objective connections of individuals with socialising institutions (e.g., Billiet & De Witte, 1995; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000), while only recent literature has looked at subjective indicators (e.g., Gest et al., 2018; Gidron & Hall, 2020).

Contribution II: the role of the economy in support for populism

The **second contribution** is the examination of sociotropic and egotropic mechanisms connected to economic grievances as a source of support for populism (Chapter 3). The core argument is that populist parties also attempt to mobilise voters by performing a crisis that serves their purpose to pit 'the people' against 'the elite' (Moffitt, 2015). Previous research has found that populist parties attract disproportionate support from socioeconomically vulnerable voters (i.e., the unemployed, manual workers, low-income individuals) (e.g., Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers et al., 2002), arguing that these groups have been suffering the most from modernisation/globalisation and thus find appropriate representation in populist parties. However, these studies have conceptualised economic grievance voting as mainly an egotropic mechanism, while sociotropic mechanisms have received less attention. This is surprising given that earlier aggregate-level research argued that support for anti-establishment parties could be explained not only by objective deprivation but also by dissatisfaction with the worsening

conditions of the general economy (Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Knigge, 1998; Rydgren & Ruth, 2013). While it is plausible that populists' messages could particularly resonate amongst the more disadvantaged, their rhetoric of crisis could attract the support of higher classes worried about the worsening of economic conditions.

Based on the previous literature, there are at least two reasons to expect sociotropic factors to play a more important role than egotropic ones. First, the theoretical literature on populism has often argued that crises do not only play an exogenous role (Laclau, 2005a; Stavrakakis, 2005), suggesting that they are an internal feature of the populist ideology (Moffitt, 2015; Taggart, 2004). Second, the economic voting theory has often found that political behaviour tends to be explained more by voters' concern about the state of the general economy rather than by their own financial situation (e.g., Borre, 1997; Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000). Thus, Chapter 3 analyses whether sociotropic mechanisms, measured with negative perceptions of the national economy, explain support for a core of ideological feature of populism: popular sovereignty (e.g., A. Akkerman et al., 2014). In addition, it also examines how contextual effects due to socioeconomic development and globalisation affect support for popular sovereignty when compared to individual-level factors. This chapter provides new evidence of how economic grievances affect support for populism.

Thus, chapter 3 addresses the role of economic grievances using data from the European Election Studies 2019 (at the voter level) and the World Bank Open Database (at the contextual level). The chapter begins from the extant literature, which argues that economic grievances, which are mainly conceived in terms of socioeconomic vulnerability, constitute a significant source of support for populist parties. It has been widely argued that unemployed, low-skilled workers and the less-educated are typical voters for populist parties (Golder, 2016). However, previous research has not always found consistent evidence in this regard (Stockemer et al., 2018). Other streams of research have consistently shown that another likely electoral outcome of socioeconomically vulnerable citizens is non-voting (Smets & Van Ham,

2013), thus determining their underrepresentation in voting behaviour research. Considering the electoral breakthroughs experienced by several populist forces across Europe, support from the socioeconomically marginalised segments of the electorate can hardly be enough. This chapter aims to fill these research gaps by (I) analysing economic grievances in terms of sociotropic and egotropic concerns (Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981) and (II) examining the effect of aggregate conditions of socioeconomic development and globalisation. Building on insights from the literature on populism, it argues that support for populist parties can be explained as support for the sense of crisis that characterises their campaigns (Canovan, 1999; Moffitt, 2015). In this view, economic explanations of support for populism are explained not as a response to individual circumstances but rather as a reaction to a situation of crisis for which 'the pure people' suffer, and for which the 'corrupt elite' is responsible. Thus, this chapter will shed light on how economic grievances explain support for a core ideological element of populism: popular sovereignty.

Contribution III: support for populist parties from an institutional perspective

The **third contribution** is the study of how institutional arrangements related to liberal democracy influence support for populist parties, testing for the first time the theory of (Canovan, 1999) of populism and the two faces of democracy (Chapter 4). Previous studies have mostly paid attention to the role of electoral systems, arguing that permissive electoral systems facilitate the electoral success of extremist parties; however, the evidence has been mixed (e.g., Arzheimer, 2009; Bustikova, 2014; Givens, 2005; Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996). This stream of research did not consider the considerable amount of scholarship on populism that has engaged with the relationship between populism and democratic institutions. While a large part of this scholarship has been devoted to the normative debate on whether populism is a corrective (e.g., Arditi, 2004; Canovan, 1999; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Roberts, 2012; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012) or a dan-

ger (Abts & Rummens, 2007; Rostbøll, 2021; Urbinati, 1998) to democracy, it has also provided several insights on how the internal contradictions of democracy can shape the mobilisation opportunities for populism.

The theory of (Canovan, 1999) provides several insights into how institutions related to liberal democracy can give rise to the phenomenon of populism. This theory argues that populism is more likely to emerge where the tension between the redemptive face and the pragmatic face becomes untenable. Canovan described such tension occurring when democracies face dilemmas in which the necessities of pragmatic politics take over the democratic principles of redemptive politics. The excessive imbalance in favour of pragmatic politics offers opportunities for populist parties' success. Therefore, Chapter 4 will provide an important contribution to the research on populism by bridging the theoretical contributions of scholarship on populism to the empirical studies on institutional arrangements. It will shed light on how institutional designs related to pragmatic politics affect support for populism, and how they affect the appeal of populist parties among politically dissatisfied citizens.

Chapter 4 studies the role of institutional factors using EVS and WVS data (1994–2019) at the voter level, as well as the Comparative Political Dataset, the KOF Globalisation Index, and the Global Democracy dataset at the contextual level. Building mainly on Canovan (1999)'s theory of populism and the two faces of democracy, this chapter expands upon extant research that analysed how institutional designs determine the political opportunities for extremist parties and provide new theoretical insights related to populism. While most of the attention has been paid to how permissive electoral systems influence the electoral performance of extremist formations (Golder, 2003, 2016; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Van der Brug et al., 2005), this strand of literature has neglected how other aspects of institutional arrangements (i.e., pluralism, democratic deficit, checks and balances) can influence support for populism. Briefly, Canovan's theory argues that populism originates from unresolved conflicts between the redemptive face and the pragmatic face of democracy: the wider the gap between

these two faces, the more populism is likely to find opportunities to mobilise voters. While the redemptive face emphasises the ideal of democracy as the direct enactment of the will of the people, the pragmatic face champions the ideals of moderation and stability. Therefore, from this perspective, pragmatic politics relates to the features of liberal institutions that populists oppose since they consider them an estrangement from the ideal of democracy. The main questions addressed by this chapter are (I) whether contexts characterised by high degrees of pragmatic institutional arrangements increase support for populism in the general electorate and (II) whether they only increase support from politically dissatisfied voters. Following the wisdom of Canovan's theory and later scholars inspired by her, the expectation is that high degrees of pragmatic politics increase attractiveness for the anti-elitist campaigns of populist parties. The main argument is that the complexity of pragmatic institutional arrangements can alienate voters, thereby pushing them to demand the simpler models of democracy that populists propose. Therefore, this chapter will shed light on how the institutional designs of democracies can influence populist parties' success. It highlights that while the complexity characterising contemporary societies calls for complex institutional arrangements, these might not find the favour of voters, especially when characterised by high levels of political distrust.

Contribution IV: support for far-right populists from a party competition perspective

The **fourth and final contribution** to the literature is an examination of the extent to which party competition for the issue of nativism affects the likelihood of supporting far-right populist parties in Western European democracies (Chapter 5). Far-right populism has mainly been studied from the niche party perspective (Meguid, 2005, 2008), where previous studies argued that these parties' electoral performances heavily rely on their policy reputation around immigration (e.g., Abou-Chadi & Krause, 2020; Van Spanje, 2010). Far-right populist parties differentiate from populism since they combine their

anti-establishment rhetoric with nativist stances (Mudde, 2007). While previous research has paid attention to party competition dynamics at the aggregate level (e.g., Abou-Chadi & Orlowski, 2016; Bale et al., 2010; Schumacher & Van Kersbergen, 2016), less attention has been paid to analysing how different contexts of party competition can influence individuals' support for far-right populist parties, and especially to the role that the mainstream parties have in determining their chances of success.

The core argument is that once mainstream parties occupy the same political space as far-right populists' core issue (nativism), voters might react by either more strongly supporting the far-right populist parties (legitimising effect) (e.g., Arzheimer, 2009; Carvalho, 2019) or by supporting them less (delegitimising effect) (e.g., Meguid, 2005). Adopting the same positions as the far-right populists might either legitimise their issue to the broader electorate or delegitimise their ownership of the nativist issue. By covering the same anti-immigration policies, voters could find mainstream parties more attractive given their larger legislative experience and thus greater likelihood of affecting policy-making. This chapter will contribute to the literature focused on understanding how party competition shapes the electoral performances of far-right populist parties across Western Europe.

Chapter 5 investigates the role of party competition using ESS data (2002–2018) at the voter level and the Manifesto Project dataset at the contextual level. The chapter builds on the theoretical framework provided by Meguid (2008), which argues that party competition occurs between unequal parties: the mainstream parties and the niche parties. While mainstream parties have greater legislative experience, a larger bureaucratic apparatus and more control over the media, niche parties base their campaigns on issues neglected by mainstream politics. Right-wing populist parties are mainly known for their radical right ideology focused on nationalism and anti-immigration policies (Mudde, 2007) (Mudde, 2007). Contrary to other niche parties mentioned in the silent revolution theory (Inglehart, 1971), right-wing populists constitute what has been called the silent counter-revolution (Ignazi, 1992). Indeed, these parties oppose the libertarian values represented by new left

parties promoting conservative stances in terms of immigration. This chapter investigates whether the electoral attractiveness of right-wing populist parties is affected by the attempts of mainstream parties to steal ownership of their core issues (cultural or economic nationalism). This can operationalise mainstream parties' accommodative strategies due to the differential positioning between right-wing populists and mainstream parties along issues of cultural and economic nationalism. In addition, this chapter investigates whether such strategies affect the chances of supporting right-wing populist parties among the segments of the electorate that hold high anti-immigrant attitudes. The rationale behind these questions is that once mainstream parties occupy the same political space as right-wing populists, voters might be tempted to support mainstream parties since they perceive them as more likely to bring about policy change. Thus, this chapter provides insights into how party competition dynamics have affected the likelihood of supporting right-wing populists over the last two decades in Western Europe.

NOTES

[1]https://edu.nl/ppmgy
[2]https://edu.nl/9uhn4
[3]https://edu.nl/gagm8

"I can't define myself as Italian, Christian, woman, mother. No. I must be Citizen X, Gender X, Parent 1, Parent 2. I must be a number. Because when I am only a number, when I no longer have an identity or roots, then I will be the perfect slave at the mercy of financial speculators. The perfect consumer." [1]

Giorgia Meloni, leader of the party "Brothers of Italy" speech at 2019 the World Congress of Families in Verona

"A deep gratitude goes to all of those men, women from the rural regions and other areas as well. Those people who voted for me overwhelmingly in the second round. I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart because that is the side of France that is so far, too often forgotten but we will not forget it." [2]

Marine Le Pen, leader of French party "Rassemblement National" in concession speech after the 2022 French Presidential elections

"[...] But who pays the bill? Who pays that hundred billion? These are the people who built the Netherlands, the people who work hard, the people who save neatly and pay their taxes properly. The ordinary Dutchman who does not receive it as a gift. Henk and Ingrid pay for Mohammed and Fatima." [3]

Geert Wilders, leader of Dutch "Party for Freedom" in a parliamentary debate in 2008

2 Appealing to the "Losers"

The Effect of Subjective Social Marginalisation on Support for Populist Parties

ABSTRACT

The rhetoric of populist actors typically appeals to the portions of the population that are unfairly neglected by an out-of-touch ruling elite. Extant research explains these sentiments mainly using grievance models: support for populist parties is explained by economic, cultural, or political grievances. However, these explanations neglect the feelings of social marginalisation that resonate in appeals of populist leaders. This chapter examines the effect of Subjective Social Marginalisation on support for populist parties in Europe. It advances that voters expressing social discomfort support more the populist parties because they are more likely to identify with the popular identity provided by these actors. Moreover, it tests whether this effect is stronger in contexts characterised by high socioeconomic development and/or globalisation (economic and social). Using cross-national data from the ESS modules on personal and social well-being, the findings show that Subjective Social Marginalisation is positively associated with higher support for populist parties, net of alternative explanations. The evidence also shows that this effect appears stronger where socioeconomic development is high (GDP per capita and Social Protection Expenditure) and, to a smaller extent, where economic and social globalisation is higher. The findings call for more attention to support for populist parties as a result of social marginalisation.

1 • INTRODUCTION

A consensus crisis has affected the mainstream parties of Europe. Growing portions of electorates seem to shy away from the values promoted by most mainstream politics, opening up an electoral market of voters in search of an identity. Quotes such as those proposed at the beginning of this chapter (see page 42) provide examples of populist leaders appealing to that market: remarking on an identity (the common people) that mainstream politics has stopped appreciating in favour of obscure interests of non-specified elites (the evil elite). After years of steady growth at the polls, populist parties have become prominent political actors in many established party systems, challenging the previously dominant poles of centre-left and centre-right parties (Oesch & Rennwald, 2018). Scholars argued that these parties flourish from growing sentiments of disenchantment with politics (Della Porta & Mény, 1997) and discontent for contemporary economic and cultural changes caused by modernisation (Betz, 1994) or globalisation (Kriesi et al., 2008).

The existing research on populist voting behaviour has focused on three main grievance-mobilisation factors: economic, cultural, and political grievances. Scholars studying the economic grievances suggest that these parties thrive especially from contexts of economic hardship (e.g., Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Rydgren & Ruth, 2013) and attract vulnerable socioeconomic groups (e.g., Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers et al., 2002; Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012). Studies on cultural grievances emphasise the role of migration (e.g., Bjørklund, 2007; Golder, 2003; Rydgren & Ruth, 2013) and anti-immigrant attitude (e.g., Ivarsflaten, 2008; Rydgren, 2008). Finally, political grievance scholars claim that populist parties draw support mainly from sentiments of political distrust (e.g., Lubbers et al., 2002; Rooduijn et al., 2016; Werts et al., 2013). However, the debate on which grievance better predicts this type of voting choice is still far from being over. The theoretical boundaries between the economic and cultural grievance explanations often mix (e.g., Golder, 2016; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). Similarly, the economic voting framework is

often used to explain support for populist parties due to dissatisfaction towards incumbent parties' economic performances (Hernández & Kriesi, 2016; Knigge, 1998). Also, grievance explanations often depend on the local contexts, making it difficult to find the lowest common denominator behind support for populism (Gest et al., 2018).

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, it examines what the existing explanations could have in common: social marginalisation. It tests the theoretical arguments of the mass society thesis (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Rydgren, 2007), which argues that support for populist parties is a consequence of the loosening of the citizens' social identities. The main argument is that populist parties successfully mobilise socially marginalised voters by providing them with a popular identity that portrays them as morally superior and against a 'corrupt elite'. Using the European Social Survey modules on personal and social well-being from 2006 and 2012 (Huppert et al., 2009), this chapter tests this hypothesis using a scale measuring individuals' Subjective Social Marginalisation (SSM from now onwards) which comprises the quality of their social networks with their local community, with the broad society, and their perceptions of contributions to society. This scale measures the citizens' subjective perceptions of marginalisation as a function of their social integration within their local community, social capital, and social recognition.

Second, this chapter analyses how the effect of SSM varies depending on contextual characteristics related to socioeconomic development and globalisation (economic and social). First, following the suggestions from (Rooduijn & Burgoon, 2018), it tests the contrasting expectations of socioeconomic development effects from the economic voting (Duch & Stevenson, 2008; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000) and the relative deprivation theories (Gurr, 1970; Runciman, 1966). The former expects that aggregate economic well-being discourages support for populist parties from the more socially marginalised voters. The latter predicts that such contexts might exacerbate voters' perceptions of social injustice and increase their tendency to support populist parties. Second, building on the Losers of Globalisation arguments (Kriesi et al., 2008), this chapter examines whether economic globalisation

and/or social globalisation reinforce the positive effect theorised at the individual level. It projects that in contexts characterised by large phenomena of globalisation, populist parties find more opportunities to mobilise the social resentment of the so-called losers.

The results show that SSM has an independent and positive effect on populist voting. Although the other grievance factors still exert an effect on populist voting, the results show that they do not fully explain the effect of SSM on populist voting. Thus, this chapter brings new evidence to the literature on how populism and social integration are related. Unlike previous studies (e.g., Berning & Ziller, 2017; Billiet & De Witte, 1995; Gidron & Hall, 2017, 2020; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000), it provides evidence of the role of social marginalisation using more refined measures of individuals' appraisal of their social integration, tapping its different sub-dimensions. Moreover, the cross-level interaction effects analysis shows that populist parties attract more effectively individuals with high SSM in contexts of high socioeconomic development (GDP per capita and social protection expenditure), providing support for relative deprivation arguments. On the other hand, they also show partial support for the Losers of Globalisation arguments: contexts with high socioeconomic and sociocultural globalisation tend to increase the likelihood of socially marginalised voters voting for populist parties. However, no significant effects have been found for low socioeconomic development and globalisation, meaning that in contexts of economic hardship, SSM does not significantly affect voting for populist parties. Also, the non-significant effect of the unemployment rate calls for more studies on the differential effect of economic indicators on populist support.

The chapter is structured as follows: section two reviews the main explanations of support for populist parties, explains the theoretical framework adopted in this chapter and outlines the hypotheses. Section three describes the data, the method, and the measures utilised. Section four reports the empirical findings with their interpretation. Finally, section five discusses the theoretical relevance of the findings and their implication for future studies.

2 • THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

'The people' as a source of identity

This chapter aims to provide an empirical test for one of the main interpretations of causes of populism (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Rydgren, 2007), which argues that populist parties thrive from situations of social breakdown by providing a popular identity portrayed in terms of moral superiority ('the good people') to the citizens who have a weak identification with the values and norms of their society. Thus, those citizens are more likely to seek a new identity in the Manichean campaign of populist parties, where 'the good people' are opposed to an antagonist group ('the evil élIte'). The existing research has mainly operationalised feelings of marginalisation through grievance factors. However, social marginalisation could originate from economic marginalisation and the rejection of the multicultural values promoted by a perceived dominant elite (Gidron & Hall, 2020). Under this view, economic, cultural, and political grievances find their common root in citizens' resentment for having been cast aside by more central and valued members of their society portrayed by populist parties as the 'evil elite'.

Although the different manifestations of populism from both right-wing and left-wing, there is general agreement in the literature that populist parties share a thin-centred ideology that considers society ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups: 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people (Canovan, 1999; Mudde, 2004). The definitions of the people and the elite vary between right-wing (natives vs multiculturalist elite) and left-wing populists (working-class vs capitalist elite); nevertheless, they share a narrative of social injustice inflicted by the latter groups against the formers. Thus, the political mobilization of these parties mounts on the resentment the 'the people' feel for being cut off from the societal changes promoted by 'the ruling elite'.

Arguments of social resentment resonate in the losers of modernisation (Betz, 1994) or globalisation (Kriesi et al., 2008) theories, which argue that the societal changes brought by these processes contributed to the growth of resentment towards the political establishment by the so-called losers. Populists' narrative, thus, provides an identity for social groups that do not identify with the values and norms promoted by the latter group. It gives those identifying in the 'the people' a chance to find political representation and reintegrate into a social order where these groups are praised as the dominant group instead of the 'evil elite'. Thus, under this view, these parties provide an answer to the need to belong to a group portrayed with a positive identity, as described by the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981). Differently put, populist parties represent the demand of broad social segments for more social recognition (Fukuyama, 2018).

Furthermore, the centrality of charismatic leadership emphasises the importance of identity in populist propaganda (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). Populist leaders propose themselves as distant personalities from the established politics and true representatives of the *volonté generale*. They incarnate a popular identity by using plain and provocative language through which people can feel closer to the leader (Canovan, 2004; Hawkins, 2009). They propose themselves literally as men or women "of the people" by favouring habits connected with an idealised "pure" low culture against the "high culture" of the elite (Ostiguy et al., 2017). The simplicity of the ordinary people is a virtue, and the provocative language they use can easily prevail over the 'tedious' ones from mainstream parties (Mazzoleni, 2008). Their rhetoric often recurs to the fiction of a heartland that provides a moral compass to discern values in right from wrong and wisdom from corruption (Taggart, 2004). Moreover, populist parties' narratives often recur to suspicion regarding the progressive initiatives promoted by mainstream elite (Canovan, 2004). The elite is often depicted as a shady group plotting against ordinary people. Populist actors' support of conspiracy theories underlines the narratives of oppression and injustice against the unaware and good people (Castanho Silva

et al., 2017). Thus, marginalised citizens find in populist leaders their identity portrayed in favourable terms.

Despite being an often-used interpretation, previous studies have not fully considered the social exclusion feelings that mount these parties' campaigns. Marginalisation has often been conceptualised in socioeconomic terms (Rydgren & Ruth, 2013). The more vulnerable socioeconomic support populist parties because they perceive their status as increasingly at risk and ferment resentment towards the political institutions (e.g., Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers et al., 2002). However, new social risks have also affected the middle-class occupations (Häusermann et al., 2015, 2016), increasing sentiments of status anxiety also for seemingly less vulnerable groups and their tendency to support populist parties (Kurer, 2020). Therefore, perceptions of being marginalised might also grow in groups that are "second-to-last fifth of postmodern society, a stratum which is rather secure but objectively can still lose something" (Minkenberg, 2000, p. 187). Despite different objective economic conditions, these groups could share similar resentment towards the elite that did not shield them from societal changes.

Moreover, cultural grievances studies have focused primarily on the immigration issue, often referring to the right-wing populists as 'anti-immigration parties' (e.g., Oesch, 2008; Van der Brug & Fennema, 2003). Such arguments are motivated by the emphasis of far-right parties' campaigns on nativism and the danger to cultural identity (Mudde, 2007). However, their campaign is against the immigrants and a 'multicultural' elite that promotes values at odds with citizens holding more traditional values. Also, populist radical right parties reject the inclusive messages of mainstream politicians towards LGBTQ minorities, therefore targeting other cultural aspects than immigration. In this view, therefore, cultural and political grievances are explained as the distance that socially marginalised individuals perceive from the norms and the values promoted by their political institutions. While it may be argued that these values have contributed to the inclusion of minorities within industrialised democracies, they also could have increased

the feelings of social estrangement of the people holding traditional values (Gidron & Hall, 2020). Thus, the appeal of populist parties can be seen as a chance for marginalised citizens to obtain social integration and regain prestige within their society.

Although the mass society thesis has found little empirical support in the European context (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 270), some studies have investigated the relationship between social isolation and populist parties' support. Some early studies found evidence of higher support for these parties from people perceiving social isolation and by non-religious and non-unionised workers (Billiet & De Witte, 1995; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000). Moreover, Berning and Ziller (2017) study reports a positive association between low social trust and voting for right-wing populist parties net of the mediation of anti-immigrant attitudes. Steenvoorden and Harteveld (2018) found societal pessimism connected with higher voting for radical right parties in Western Europe. Gidron and Hall (2017, 2020) found cross-country evidence of social integration, measured with synthetic measures of subjective social status, to discourage voting for radical parties. In contrast, the study of Werts et al. (2013) found no significant effect of social isolation on radical right voting.

This chapter aims to provide new evidence to this literature by analysing survey data from Western and Eastern European democracies using comparative measures about the interpersonal well-being of respondents provided by the European Social Survey modules on personal and social well-being. It will operationalise social marginalisation using the construct of Social well-being (Keyes, 1998) and refer to it in its opposite perspective (SSM). It encompasses the perception of poor integration with the local community, low generalised trust, and the perception of being not a valued member of society. Thus, the first hypothesis of this chapter is that a higher presence of SSM feelings in individuals is connected to a higher probability of supporting populist parties.

> **H.1:** The higher the individuals' SSM, the higher the probability of voting for populist parties.

What is the role of Socioeconomic conditions and Globalisation?

The second aim of this chapter is to examine whether the effect of SSM could be contingent on characteristics related to socioeconomic development or globalisation. Based on the extant literature, two potential expectations can be made. First, socially marginalised citizens vote more for populist parties in conditions of economic hardship. According to the economic voting theory (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000), citizens tend to reward or punish the incumbent parties depending on economic performance. Thus, citizens will select the political party that most likely will bring economic stability to their society (Knigge, 1998). Studies provided evidence of electoral defeats of incumbent parties (Bartels, 2013; Margalit, 2019) and the increase of votes to populist parties in the elections after the Great Recession (Hernández & Kriesi, 2016). Moreover, studies argued that economic vulnerability conditions facilitate group conflict dynamics and trigger competition over scarce resources (Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Knigge, 1998). This competition makes vulnerable social groups more prone to support political parties that use political scapegoating. Additionally, there is some evidence that economic hardship conditions should help the growth of radical left parties, given their emphasis on economic security (March & Rommerskirchen, 2015).

However, the evidence provided by empirical studies on voting has been mixed. While some studies confirm a positive effect of economic hardship on extreme right-wing (Knigge, 1998) or radical left voting (March & Rommerskirchen, 2015), other studies found no effects (Lubbers et al., 2002), effects conditional on other characteristics (Golder, 2003) or even opposite effects (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Jackman & Volpert, 1996). Many empirical studies tested economic voting implications with analyses at the aggregate level, without testing cross-level interaction effects to include individual-level behaviour. In addition, the economic voting theory does not distinguish between opposition parties when investigating anti-incumbent voting. Therefore, this chapter examines the implications of the economic voting theory by testing the cross-level interaction effects between indicators of so-

cioeconomic development and SSM. The first group of expectations is that conditions of social breakdown might be more spread over the population than in economic prosperity, thus increasing the chances of populist parties mobilising socially marginal voters. Conversely, socially marginalised citizens could prefer the mainstream parties to confirm economic stability in contexts of high socioeconomic development. Another argument can be that more socioeconomically developed contexts are in possession of stronger welfare states, in which social protection nets should prevent the spread of social exclusion phenomena, thus undermining the ability of populists to mobilize these voters. Based on these suggestions, the following first group of hypotheses is formulated:

> **H.2:** Conditions of economic development, expressed as high GDP per capita (**2a**), low unemployment rate (**2b**), and high social welfare expenditure (**2c**), *weaken* the positive relationship between SSM and populist voting.

Second, the arguments from the Relative Deprivation theory show a different perspective (Gurr, 1970; Runciman, 1966). This theory implies that individuals' sociopolitical behaviour is driven by frustration caused by a condition of deprivation perceived as relatively unjust. Thus, paradoxically, economic development might increase the perceptions of social injustice of the socially marginalised voters and lure them more to support populist parties. When a country is economically well-performing, socially marginalised citizens might benchmark their condition with their well-off fellow citizens, triggering social resentment and grievance reactions, favouring populist parties. Following this argument, citizens that perceive themselves as socially marginal in a flourishing economy could show more enraged reactions than in a depressed economy where marginalisation might be more widespread and therefore not affecting specific portions of the population. Similarly, citizens that feel socially marginalised *despite* the presence of a strong welfare state might be even more prone to the narrative of

injustice presented by the populists where 'the people' are portrayed as neglected by 'the elite'.

To the current knowledge, no other study has tested the implications of this theory using the interaction between aggregate socioeconomic conditions and individuals' perceptions of social marginalisation. Using individual subjective economic well-being, the study of Rooduijn and Burgoon (2018) provided partial support to arguments of relative deprivation: under favourable socioeconomic conditions, citizens in economic distress are more likely to support radical right parties, but not the radical left parties. In another study (Burgoon et al., 2019), they found that positional deprivation, namely the extent to which an individual voter has seen his/her income increase/decrease relative to others increases support for radical right and left parties. The results have been explained by the growth of dissatisfaction and social ill-being of the voters who do not benefit from the country's economic well-being.

Other studies point to sociocultural sentiments of deprivation. Some studies found that populist parties attract the support of people who perceived their social status as more marginal over the years (Gest, 2016; Gest et al., 2018) and express their nostalgia for the 'good old times' with societal pessimism (Steenvoorden & Harteveld, 2018). These people might develop in their marginalisation feelings of being forgotten by their ruling elite because they care more about the citizens in well-being. The perceived decrease of social status compared to more central social groups, thus, drives their vote for political parties who appeal to those unfairly neglected by the corrupted elite (Gidron & Hall, 2017, 2020). Thus, the third set of hypotheses expects (H3) that favourable socioeconomic conditions might exacerbate social inequalities and increase the support for populist parties of those perceiving socially isolated.

> **H.3:** Conditions of economic development, expressed as high GDP per capita (**3a**), low unemployment rate (**3b**), and high social welfare expenditure (**3c**), *strengthen* the positive relationship between SSM and populist voting.

Finally, another strain of literature primarily emphasises the role of globalisation factors. Building on the Losers of Globalisation theory (Kriesi et al., 2008), the fourth set of hypotheses expects both high economic and social globalisation to strengthen the positive effect of SSM. The theory's focus suggests that populist parties attract the support of those harmed by competition with the global market and perceive the erosion of their cultural identities. Also for this case, a mechanism related to the relative deprivation theory is suggested: citizens who identify as the 'losers' should perceive the differences in terms of life chances compared to the 'winners' (p. 4 Kriesi et al., 2008). While the mainstream parties mobilise the winners, the losers are mobilised by populist parties. However, the evidence linking populist voting to this theory has been weak so far. The existing research links the over-representation of marginalised groups such as the lower educated, the unemployed, and the unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Nevertheless, this does not indicate that they do so because they feel losers of globalisation (Golder, 2016). Therefore, gauging the SSM of individuals could be a possible strategy to identify the losers/winners. While the losers should be more likely to identify themselves as outcasts from their society, the winners should tend to perceive themselves as well-integrated citizens.

Although globalisation increased the economic growth of several countries (Dreher, 2006), it has also widened the existing social inequalities (Hurrell & Woods, 1995). Thus, although a well-performing economy might characterise highly globalised democracies, the consequences of globalisation may constitute the opportunity for the mobilisation of populist parties. On the one hand, economic globalisation contributed to the loss of class identity of large portions of the workforce. These processes have limited the influence of local trade unions to bargain better labour conditions for workers (Slaughter, 2007; Vachon et al., 2016) and thus weakened their socialising power of providing a sense of class identity. Moreover, other studies provided evidence of a connection between trade shocks and support for radical parties. There is evidence of a connection between voters' opposition to open trade and voting for right-wing and left-wing populist

parties (Van der Waal & De Koster, 2018). Other studies found that districts more subject to trade shocks and automation were more likely to support radical right parties and nationalistic policies (Anelli et al., 2019; Colantone & Stanig, 2018b; Swank & Betz, 2003).

On the other hand, globalisation also entails capital flows or goods and the circulation of people and information. One prominent strand of empirical research theorises that cultural diversity should increase the chances of success for radical-right parties, although these studies do not directly connect their implications to globalisation. The empirical evidence is mixed: some studies report positive effects of non-native population on support to the populist radical right (Lubbers et al., 2002; Savelkoul et al., 2017; Van der Brug et al., 2005); while other studies report no effect (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Golder, 2003; Rydgren, 2008). One reason may be that sociocultural globalisation does not include the influence of foreign cultures but also other cultural aspects such as gender and LGBTQ rights. Thus, in contexts of high social globalisation, voters holding more traditional values might feel more excluded from their society and no longer share its dominant values. These voters might be more likely to support political parties advocating restoring ethnic and cultural homogeneity (Taggart, 2004). Thus, the following hypotheses predict that people with high SSM will vote more for populist parties in high economic or social globalisation contexts. In these contexts, the perceived gap between the two groups should be exacerbated, and populist parties should have more opportunities to mobilise voters who feel abandoned by their local institutions.

> **H.4:** High economic (**4a**) and social globalisation (**4b**) *strengthen* the positive effect of SSM on populist voting.

3 • DATA AND METHODS

This chapter uses the cross-sectional data from the ESS modules on personal and social well-being (2006 and 2012). This dataset provides comparable social and interpersonal well-being measurements crucial

for this chapter, allowing the operationalisation of the primary independent variable under investigation. The sample includes all the country-year contexts where at least one populist party had run in the last national elections. After listwise cases deletion, the final sample comprises 34,469 individuals nested within 34 country-year contexts from Western and Eastern European democracies[1].

Individual-level variables

The dependent variable is *support for a populist party*, a dichotomous outcome based on the reported vote choice at the last national elections. The variable distinguishes whether the respondents voted for a populist party (1) or other parties (0). Being the variable focused on voting, individuals who did not vote at the last election, those who did not answer, and those not eligible for voting are excluded from the analysis. The coding of populist parties follows the indications of The PopuList (Rooduijn et al., 2019): individuals were classified as populist voters if the political party voted was coded as 'Populist'[2]. This chapter follows the minimal definition of populism characterised by the dualistic division of society between two homogeneous groups: the 'pure people' vs 'corrupt elite' (p. 562 Mudde, 2004), and therefore it does consider distinctions between manifestations of these parties from the right- and the left-wing. The chapter's objective is to establish whether social marginalisation fuels the support for populist parties across the contexts observed. This chapter has included all the cases of populist voting in the data, including less successful populist parties, to minimise the potential selection bias (Golder, 2003).

The main individual-level independent variable is *Subjective Social Marginalisation* (SSM). This variable is inspired by the construct of social well-being of Keyes (1998, p.122), which measures "the appraisal

[1] The countries included are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia.

[2] See table A.1 in the appendix for the list of populist parties considered for each country

of one's circumstance and functioning in society". High scores on this scale indicate high SSM, and low scores indicate low SSM. Based on the available items, this chapter utilises a reduced version of the construct including three (*Social Integration*, *Social Acceptance*, *Social Contribution*) out of the five dimensions theorised due to the lack of valid items for the operationalisation (*Social Coherence* and *Social Actualisation*). The dimension of Social Integration measures the quality of someone's relationship with society and the local community. Social Acceptance gauges the degrees of generalized trust in the people as members of the broader society. Social Contribution indicates the subjective evaluation of being a valued member of society. The dimensions are operationalised with eight items rescaled from 1 to 5 to obtain an overall index of SSM[3]. The Cronbach's Alpha score (0.6996) indicates that the construct is overall reliable. Furthermore, the relationships between the SSM indicator and other key covariates are analysed to assess its validity[4]. High degrees of SSM are found in the respondents with non-tertiary education, unemployed, and the lower social classes (Production workers, Clerks, and Service workers). Moreover, as expected, the respondents who are currently members of the trade union, affiliated with one religion, and are strongly close to a political party show lower degrees of SSM. High SSM is also associated with higher political distrust, lower subjective economic well-being, and opposition to LGBT rights. No significant effect of the contextual variables has been found. Finally, this variable is specified as a random slope in the multilevel models to test the cross-level interaction hypotheses (Heisig & Schaeffer, 2019).

Several covariates at the individual level will be included to assess the robustness of the main results. Firstly, it considers variables regarding the respondents' objective connections with socialising institutions. *Trade-union membership* and *religious identification* are measured with three-categories variables (currently a member, was a member, not a

[3] See Tables A.2 and A.3 in the appendix for the ESS items' wording and measurement, and for the Factor Analysis performed on the items

[4] See Table A.5 in the appendix for the full model of predicting SSM

member). *Party identification* is measured with an ordinal variable using the closeness to a political party (strong party identification, weak party identification, no party identification). Second, it includes information regarding respondents' sociostructural characteristics: *gender* (1=Female), age (1=18-24, 2=25-34, 3=35-44, 4=55-74, 5=+75), *level of education* (0=Non-tertiary education, 1=Tertiary education), *area of residence* (0=Urban, 1=Rural), unemployment status (1=Unemployed), and *social class* (Oesch, 2006) (1=Self-employed Professionals, 2=Small Business Owners, 3=Techincal (Semi)Professionals, 4=Production Workers, 5=(Associate) managers, 6=Clerks, 7=Sociocultural Professionals, 8=Service Workers). Finally, respondents' socio-political attitudes are included. *Political orientation* is recoded in six categories (1=not placed on the scale/missing, 2=radical left, 3=centre-left, 4=centre, 5=centre-right, 6=radical right). *Political distrust* is measured with a scale of three 10-point items regarding trust in the national parliament, political parties, and politicians[5]. *Subjective economic well-being* is measured with a 4-point ordinal scale gauging the perceptions of individuals' income. *Opposition to LGBT rights* is measured with a 5-point ordinal scale indicating respondents' agreement with gay and lesbian rights.

Country-year level variables

Furthermore, the models will include country-year variables regarding the level of globalisation and the socioeconomic development of the contexts under observation. The GDP per capita and unemployment rate (World Bank Open Database), and social protection expenditure (Eurostat) for each country-year are considered to measure socioeconomic development. Economic and social globalisation are provided by the KOF globalisation index (Gygli et al., 2019). The Economic globalisation index gauges the openness to the global market of countries through two variable groups measuring actual flows of trade and trade restrictions. The Social globalisation index regards the socio-

[5] Cronbach's alpha: 0.908

cultural openness of countries and entails three groups of variables measuring information on personal contact, information flows and cultural proximity. All country-year variables are lagged by 1 year from the respondents' interview time.

Analytical Strategy

This chapter employs multilevel logistic regression modelling for its two main aims: (I) to test whether high degrees of SSM increase the chances of individuals supporting populist parties, and (II) whether levels of socioeconomic development and globalisation (economic and social) influence this effect. The multi-level design of the analysis includes two levels of analysis, with 34,469 individuals nested in 34 country-year clusters representing the contextual levels. The models apply post-stratification weights to correct sampling errors and non-response bias.

The test of H.1 will be addressed by applying multilevel logistic regression models with a step-wise approach. First, the null model is fitted to estimate the extent to which the dependent variable's variance is due to the country-year level of clustering. The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient reports that 37.69% of the variance of populist voting is due to the country-year level of analysis. Second, the bivariate relationship between SSM and the dependent variable is assessed. Third, sets of control variables concerning (I) the influence of socialising institutions, (II) sociodemographic variables, and (III) sociopolitical attitudes are included to assess the robustness of the SSM effect. H.1 will therefore be not falsified if (I) a positive effect will be found and (II) the effect holds net of the control variables included. To address the potential problems of comparing logistic regression coefficients across models (Mood, 2010), the average marginal effects of SSM will be shown for the different model specifications adopted to investigate the mediation of covariates.

Moreover, the test of H.2, H.3, and H.4 groups of hypotheses will be addressed as follows. First, a model where SSM is specified as a random effect will be fitted to understand the extent to which this

effect varies across country-year clusters. Second, each contextual variable will be tested in its interaction with SSM at the individual level. H.2 (H.3) group of hypotheses will be not falsified if the cross-level interaction effects of variables signalling socioeconomic development will be positive (negative). H.4 group of hypotheses will be not falsified if the cross-level interaction effects of variables measuring economic and/or social globalisation will be found positive. Models fit is assessed by observing the variation in the explained variance compared to the variance of the empty model[6], Log-likelihood, and the AIC and BIC information criteria. To facilitate the interpretation of the cross-level interaction effects, the AMEs and the predicted populist voting for the 10th, median, and 90th percentiles of the contextual variables tested will be plotted. Table A.5 in the appendix provides the descriptive statistics of all the variables included in the analysis.

4 • RESULTS

The results show that SSM perceptions significantly increase the probability of voting for populist parties (Figure 2.1). To account for the problematic comparability of logistic regression coefficients across models (Mood, 2010), the figure shows the average marginal effects of the SSM scale for different specifications of the models. The average marginal effect of each point of the SSM scale remains positive and statistically significant for all model specifications. One point of the SSM scale increases the probabilities of support for a populist party by 4.58% for the bivariate model ($p < 0.001$) and by 4.33% the model with the socialising institutions variables ($p < 0.001$); by about 3.21% percentage points for the model with the sociodemographic variables ($p < 0.001$); and by about 1.75% once the sociopolitical attitudes are included ($p < 0.01$). The narrowing of the standard errors (from .0093 in the bivariate model to .0058 in the model controlling for sociopolitical attitudes variables) shows that the control variables explain

[6] for the cross-level interactions, the comparison is given by the model including SSM as random slope without interactions

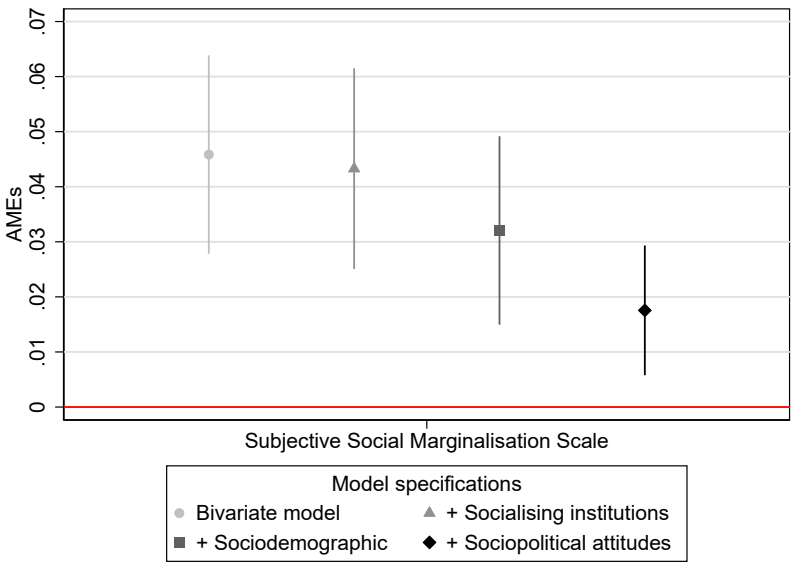


FIGURE 2.1 Average marginal effects (AMEs) of SSM on populist voting for different model specifications (N=34,469; K=34).
Full model available in Table A.5. Own calculations.

part of the positive effect of SSM on populist voting. Thus, consistent with Gidron and Hall (2017, 2020), these findings provide evidence to support H.1: people who feel less social respect or are poorly integrated within their local and broader society are more likely to support populist parties.

Furthermore, the results from the cross-level interaction models show that the effect of SSM significantly varies in strength depending on aggregate conditions of social and economic globalisation, GDP per capita and social protection expenditure, but not for the unemployment rate (Table 1). Namely, the GDP per capita (b = 0,009; $p < 0.01$) and governments' social protection expenditure (b = 0,032; $p < .001$) reinforce the effect of SSM on support for populist parties. On the other hand, the cross-level interaction effect for the unemployment rate shows a negative but not statistically significant effect. The

levels of economic (b = 0,022; $p < 0.001$) and social globalisation (b = 0,029; $p < 0.01$) significantly strengthen the positive effect of SSM on populist voting. The cross-level interaction with the GDP per capita seems to explain more slope variance of the SSM effect at the individual level (35.99%), while the interaction effect of economic globalisation appears to have the least explanatory power (18.78%). The results of socioeconomic development align with the findings of Rooduijn and Burgoon (2018), who have shown similar cross-level interaction effects of GDP per capita and social protection expenditure with individual economic well-being. These results appear to provide additional evidence for mechanisms of relative deprivation: in contexts characterised by high economic development, expressed in terms of high GDP per capita and high social protection expenditure, socially marginalised voters will be more likely to support populist parties than in the context of economic hardship. Interestingly, the coefficient for the unemployment rate cross-level interaction term points toward the same direction, but it is not statistically significant and explains a minor variance of the SSM effect.

Finally, Figures 2.2 and 2.3 report the cross-level interaction effects found statistically significant in Table 1 to facilitate their substantive interpretation. The top-right panel of Figure 2.2 shows that in the 90th percentile of GDP per capita (Denmark 2012), the predicted populist voting estimates increase from 16,49% to 40,59%, while the median percentile (Great Britain 2006) shows a less strong positive relationship (from 16,03% to 26,45%). In the 10th percentile (Slovakia 2006), the relationship is slightly negative but not statistically significant (from 15,33% to 11,40%). The results from the top-right panel of Figure 2.3 show that for lower values of GDP per capita, the effect of SSM is not statistically significant, while it is positive and significant when the GDP per capita is higher than 40000 (50th percentile). Overall, these first results provide support for hypothesis H.3a: voters with high degrees of SSM tend to support more populist parties in contexts of high GDP per capita.

The top-right panel of Figure 2.2 shows similar results for what concerns the 90th (Belgium 2012 and Netherlands 2012) and the me-

TABLE 2.1 Multilevel logistic regression models testing cross-level interactions between aggregate variables and SSM. Models include all the individual-level covariates in the previous models. Odds ratios reported (N=34,469; K=34).

Variables	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
SSM	1.282***	1.271***	1.278***	1.275***	1.295***	1.288***
GDP per capita[a]	1.029	0.988	1.029	1.028	1.028	1.029
Unemployment rate[a]	1.118	1.118	1.279*	1.121	1.117	1.119
Social protection exp (%GDP)[a]	1.005	1.001	1.004	0.856*	1.003	1.004
Economic globalisation[a]	0.997	0.993	0.997	0.992	0.896**	0.996
Social globalisation[a]	0.941	0.941	0.940	0.941	0.944	0.822
SSM*GDP per capita		1.009**				
SSM*Unemployment rate			0.973			
SSM*Social protection exp (%GDP)				1.035**		
SSM*Economic globalisation					1.022**	
SSM*Social globalisation						1.028**
Constant	0.083***	0.087***	0.085***	0.084***	0.079***	0.082***
Random effects						
var(Country-year)	4.654***	3.531***	4.402***	3.672***	3.911***	4.107***
var(SSM)	0.123***	0.079*	0.114**	0.086**	0.091**	0.101**
Covariance SSM with Country year	-0.685**	-0.451*	-0.634**	-0.483*	-0.528**	-0.575**
Pseudo R^2 (SSM)		35.99%	7.07%	24.28%	18.78%	24.54%
Model fit						
AIC	23,282.590	23,273.755	23,280.472	23,275.276	23,277.450	23,276.395
BIC	23,561.367	23,552.533	23,559.250	23,554.054	23,556.228	23,555.173
df	33	34	34	34	34	34
Log-likelihood	-11,608.295	-11,603.878	-11,607.236	-11,736.415	-11,605.725	-11,605.198

$+ p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;
[a] Centered variable

dian (Finland 2006 and Netherlands 2006) percentiles. The predicted populist voting estimates increase, respectively, by about 14 and 10 percentage points. However, different from the previous result for GDP per capita, the estimates in the lower percentile case (Ireland 2006) show that populist voting tends to be higher in general, regardless of the degrees of SSM. Also, the estimates tend to have wider standard errors than the other two cases, probably due to the low sample size of the case characterising the 10th percentile. The top-left panel in Figure 2.3 shows that the effect of SSM on populist voting is statistically

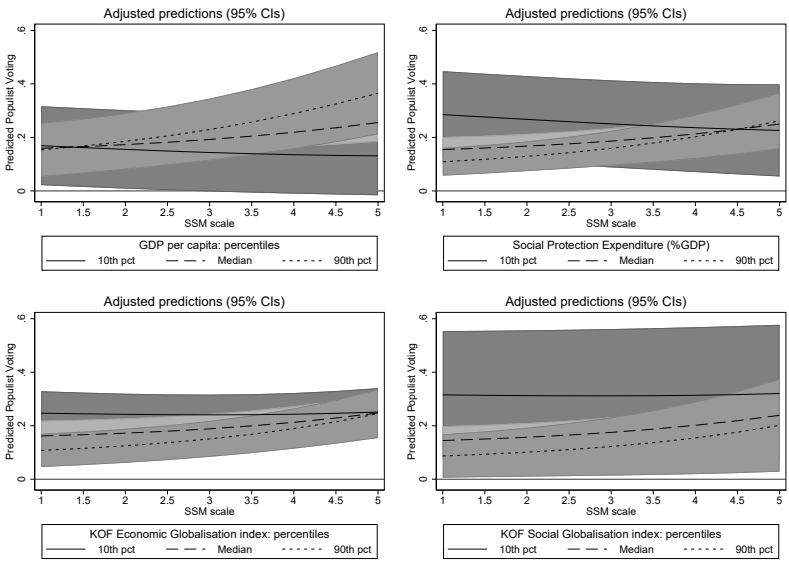


FIGURE 2.2 Predicted populist voting by percentiles of the country-year variables. All the covariates are set to their mean (N=34,469, K=34). Estimates are based on models in Table 2.1. Own calculations.

significant from 24% of the GDP invested in social protection onwards. It also shows that the effect of SSM has a less linear pattern than the one from GDP per capita. Indeed, Figure 2.2 shows that the effect of SSM in the highest values of the variables is not strikingly different from the one in median contexts of social protection expenditure. Thus, these results provide support for H.3c: higher governments' social protection expenditure strengthens the positive effect of SSM on populist voting.

The bottom-right panel of Figure 2.2 shows that in the 90th (Netherlands 2012) and the median (Estonia 2006) percentiles cases of economic globalisation, predicted populist voting increases, respectively, by about 15 and 9 percentage points. On the other hand, in the lower economically globalised context (Bulgaria 2012), populist voting tends to be high regardless of individuals' degrees of SSM. On the other hand,

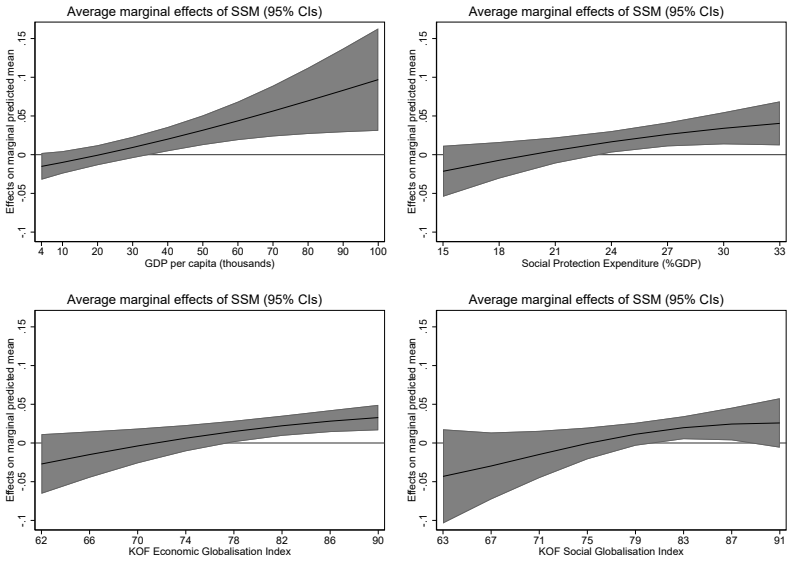


FIGURE 2.3 Average marginal effects (AMEs) of SSM on populist voting for different model specifications (N=34,469; K=34).
Estimates are based on models in Table 2.1. Own calculations.

in contexts characterised by high (Sweden 2012) and median (Estonia 2006) social globalisation, the predicted populist voting increases by, respectively, 11 and 10 percentage points. Where sociocultural phenomena connected to globalisation are lower (Hungary 2006), populist voting tends to be higher than in the previous two contexts regardless of the degrees of individuals' SSM. Nevertheless, different from economic globalisation, the standard errors for the latter context show that the estimates tend to be highly imprecise. The results from the bottom panels of Figure 2.3 show that the effect of SSM is positive and statistically significant from an economic globalization index of about 78 and a social globalization index between 83 and 87. However, while the former shows a trend similar to the one of social protection expenditure; the effect of SSM is positive and statistically significant only for some high socioculturally globalised (e.g., Estonia 2006, Belgium

2012, Denmark 2012) but not for the highest one (e.g., Norway 2012, Switzerland 2012). Thus, these last two results provide partial support for H.4a and H.4b: contexts of high economic and social globalisation reinforce the positive effect of SSM on populist parties voting.

5 • DISCUSSION

Using the measures provided by the ESS modules on personal and social well-being, this chapter has found comparative evidence that SSM has a positive effect on support for populist parties, net of covariates controlling for alternative explanations previously proposed by the literature. These findings emerge from the analysis of cross-sectional samples from Western and Eastern democracies in 2006 and 2012. Consistent with previous findings (e.g., Berning & Ziller, 2017; Billiet & De Witte, 1995; Gidron & Hall, 2017, 2020; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000), this finding confirms that one of the sources of populist support is social disintegration. Unlike previous studies, this chapter brought new evidence related to this aspect by employing a measure that takes into account individuals' appraisal of several aspects related to social integration. Future studies covering more recent periods might further investigate the consistency of this relationship.

Some patterns that have emerged deserve some notice. First, the effects of the socialising institutions (trade unions, religion, political parties) do not significantly alter the strength of the SSM effect. In light of the decline in membership for such institutions, this finding could suggest to future studies that it might be more helpful to look at subjective rather than objective indicators of social integration. Moreover, the effects of the other grievance factors still play a relevant together with SSM, as well as differences between social groups are still existing net of SSM and sociopolitical attitudes. Further research could explore the possible interactions between social marginalisation and the grievances factors in determining the support for far-right populists or far-left populists. Also, panel evidence could enhance the understanding of this relationship by assessing the causality of this relationship and cov-

ering the potential endogeneity problem that might have characterised the results of this chapter (Rooduijn et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the cross-level interaction analyses have provided evidence to support relative deprivation theory arguments (H.3a, H.3c) and partial evidence for losers of globalisation arguments (H.4a, H.4b). Socioeconomically developed contexts (GDP per capita and social protection expenditure) strengthen the probabilities of voters perceiving socially marginalised to support populist parties. This result is consistent with the "paradoxical effect" found by Rooduijn and Burgoon (2018) on individual economic well-being: unlike what was theorised by earlier studies, populist parties can thrive from contexts of economic well-being instead of hardship. This chapter provided evidence in this direction by focusing on an index that tapped into an aspect more related to the quality of individuals' social integration rather than their economic well-being. To explain this finding, this chapter advanced that the socially marginalised voters might consider their condition as more unjust by benchmarking with the well-being of their more socially central fellow citizens, drawing from the arguments of the Relative Deprivation Theory (Gurr, 1970; Runciman, 1966). These perceptions of unfairness might make these voters more prone to the populist political message of social injustice. However, it is important to recognise that Gurr's theory primarily focuses on perceptions of economic conditions, which have been not investigated in this chapter. Following the example of Rooduijn and Burgoon (2018), future research should delve deeper into the interplay between perceptions of social marginalization and economic inequality. On a last note, no significant effect has been found for the unemployment rate, despite going in the same theorised direction as the other variables, adding up to the mixed findings related to effects of unemployment (e.g., Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996).

To a minor extent, results similar to those of socioeconomic development have been found for economic and social globalisation: high levels of these types of globalisation increase the likelihood of socially marginalised voters supporting a populist party. These results have shown less clear patterns than those found for socioeconomic

development, suggesting more non-trivial mechanisms of globalisation affecting the voting behaviour of socially marginalised citizens. In addition, based on these findings, while it is possible to argue that populist parties' grip on socially marginalised electorates is stronger in wealthier and more globalised contexts, SSM did not seem to exert a significant influence in poorer and less globalised ones. In such contexts, support for populism is higher regardless of the amount of perceived social marginalisation. Future research should investigate what mechanisms are more explicatory of the support for these parties in such contexts.

The findings of this chapter call for more attention towards what most empirical studies on populist voting implicitly have claimed in their arguments: social marginalisation. The lack of social integration is indeed a factor that is shared by all the explanatory models based on economic, sociocultural, and political grievances. With increasing numbers of citizenry not identifying with the mainstream parties, the appeal of populist parties might resonate with an ever-wider audience who perceive marginalised and seek a new social identity. This chapter measured these perceptions with SSM, which taps into the lack of social integration of individuals with their local community and the broader society, and the lack of social recognition for one's contribution to society. Moreover, more studies are needed to understand, on the one hand, the underlying mechanisms that explain why SSM leads to higher support for populism in more wealthy and more globalised democracies and, on the other hand, what explains support for populism in poorer and less globalised societies.

Finally, it is important to stress that the research design adopted in this chapter cannot fully take into account the events that occurred during the specific time frame covered, the 2008 economic crisis in Europe amongst all. The Great Recession could have impacted the phenomena observed in this chapter by, for instance, decreasing the perception of social injustice given the magnitude of the crisis. It can be argued also the opposite, as the consequences of the crisis have been not equally spread across the populations. Further studies should incorporate the 2008 crisis as a contextual factor to provide valuable

insights into the dynamics of populist support during this specific period.

To conclude, this chapter raises the appeal of recent literature to focus on social integration problems deriving from the societal changes characterising contemporary democracies to explain the rise of populism (Gidron & Hall, 2020). Also, focusing on social marginalisation could improve the understanding of the cross-class composition of the populist parties' electorate suggested by previous studies (Minkenberg, 2000; Mudde, 2007; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018), as it could also involve less socioeconomically vulnerable voters. Thus, future studies should pay more attention to the implicit aim of populist parties to forge solidarity with marginalised social groups (Jansen, 2011). If social inequalities in developed democracies continue to rise, so could instances of social exclusion where sentiments of social resentment will grow and increasingly fuel the support for these parties.

NOTES

[1]https://edu.nl/t8qra
[2]https://edu.nl/9ubr9
[3]https://edu.nl/c6uja

"When Podemos is in government, JP Morgan is not going to be able to pick up the phone and tell us what to do [...] The people vote for governments, not investment banks" [1]

Pablo Iglesias, leader of PODEMOS, in a speech for the electoral campaign of 2015

"The choice you face is to turn back or to keep fighting on together. Turning back would mean to return to a course of 40 years that piled debts on Greeks" [2]

Alexis Tsipras, leader of SYRIZA, in speech for the electoral campaign of 2015

"The mafia doesn't strangle, the economic crisis does" [3]

Italian comedian and leader of the Five Star Movement Beppe Grillo in a speech in 2012 in Palermo (Sicily) to support a local candidate for mayor

3 My Pockets or My Country's?

The Role of Economic Factors in Explaining Support for Popular Sovereignty

ABSTRACT

Literature has long debated the relationship between crisis and populism. While early scholars argued that crisis plays an exogenous and essential role in the success of populism, more recent scholars argued that populists make active use of crisis for their appeal to the people. While previous research has predominantly focused on objective indicators of economic grievance, less attention has been paid to subjective perceptions of economic crisis. This study addresses this gap with a comparative analysis of the effect of subjective evaluations of the economy on support for popular sovereignty. It investigates the role of negative perceptions of the national economy in shaping support for populism. It compares it with objective indicators of socioeconomic vulnerability and individuals' subjective economic well-being. In addition, it also explores the role of objective conditions of the economy in terms of aggregate macroeconomic conditions and globalisation levels and their interaction with citizens' subjective evaluations. The findings show that individuals' perceptions of their financial situation are more effective in explaining support for popular sovereignty than their assessments of the general economy. Also, macroeconomic conditions mostly do not significantly affect popular sovereignty. Overall, the evidence disconfirms claims that populism is associated with perceptions of crisis and suggests that self-interest explanations still hold true.

1 • INTRODUCTION

Claims such as those above-mentioned (see page 70) show how crisis often serves as a rhetorical device for populist leaders in their appeals to the people. As part of their anti-establishment rhetoric, crises are used by populists to highlight to their constituencies a situation that is getting out of hand at the expense of the innocent people of a nation, and that a corrupted elite is responsible for this. Especially after the Great Recession, the widespread economic turmoil has brought the defeat of several mainstream incumbent parties and raised the popularity of populist forces in Europe (Kriesi, 2014a). Especially hard-hit countries, such as Spain, Italy, and Greece, have witnessed the astonishing rise of new populist challengers that cashed citizens' dissatisfaction towards their governments and mainstream parties.

Literature is divided concerning the role crises play in the rise of populism. Some scholars argued that crises constitute a necessary precondition for the success of populist actors (Laclau, 2005a; Roberts, 1995; Stavrakakis, 2005; Weyland, 1999). In this view, crises are mainly seen as exogenous phenomena that create opportunities for populist mobilisation. However, some other scholars are more sceptical of this relationship because of the way crises are operationalised (Mudde, 2007; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012) or because the active role of populist parties in performing crises is not aknowledged (Moffitt, 2015). Crises are not just an external phenomenon for populists to exploit, but it is also an internal feature of their ideology (Canovan, 1999; Taggart, 2004). Crises, in other words, provide populist actors with a rhetorical device to justify their appeal to an oppressed part of the country embodied in 'the people' against a morally corrupted elite blamed for a situation of crisis. Considering these suggestions, support for populism is explained as the result of citizens' concerns for their country's collective state rather than individual grievances.

Sociotropic mechanisms have received less attention from previous studies. Prior research on the role of economic factors has principally focused on egotropic motivations to explain support for populism. Several previous research has argued that populist supporters are more

likely to have vulnerable socioeconomic positions (e.g., unemployed, manual workers, low-skilled) (Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers et al., 2002). Some other research focused on subjective perceptions of economic well-being and found that voters with poor economic well-being are more likely to support populists (Rooduijn & Burgoon, 2018). However, less attention has been paid to how sociotropic motivations related to the economy can stimulate support for populism. The few extant studies showed that sociotropic perceptions of the economy increase support for populism or populist attitudes with evidence based on studies of one country (Giebler et al., 2021; Rico et al., 2017), or on cross-country analysis of nine European countries (Rico & Anduiza, 2019). Although these studies contributed to the disentanglement of economic effects on populism, more comprehensive comparative studies based on a larger set of contexts are needed to assess whether sociotropic mechanisms explain support for populism more than egotropic ones. Also, due to the research designs previously adopted, contextual effects concerning the objective status of the economy have not been considered.

This chapter addresses this research gap in the literature by studying how collective-oriented and self-oriented economic factors affect support for a core element of the populist ideology: popular sovereignty. Using cross-sectional data from the European Elections Study of 2019 (Schmitt et al., 2022), it aims to answer three research questions. (I) *To what extent do negative perceptions of the national economy explain support for populist ideas?* (II) *Do sociotropic effects explain support for populism more than egotropic effects?* (III) *What role is played by the contextual characteristics related to the macroeconomy and globalisation?* Using multilevel modelling, first, this chapter will test different mechanisms related to individual economic factors to assess which one provides a better explanation for support for popular sovereignty. Second, it will examine how cross-country differences due to economic performance and levels of trade and interpersonal globalisation explain support for popular sovereignty. Third, it will analyse whether the effect of citizens' negative perceptions of the

national economy is moderated by any of the contextual factors under analysis.

The findings show that citizens' negative perceptions of the economy do not explain support for popular sovereignty better than variables related to egotropic mechanisms (i.e., socioeconomic vulnerable position, and subjective economic well-being). The results have shown that the effect of individuals' negative perception of the economy is explained once sociopolitical attitudes (i.e., trust in the national parliament, and policy preferences) are included in the equation, suggesting that sociotropic mechanisms on populism might work in tandem with respondents' political preferences (e.g., Bellucci, 2014; Hellwig & Samuels, 2007; Mair, 2013). Respondents' subjective well-being proved more effective in influencing the dependent variable and in explaining its cross-country differences than the other economic mechanisms. In addition, results have shown mixed support for the effects of vulnerable socioeconomic positions. While lower levels of education provided a robust effect net of the controls considered, the unemployment status effect did not provide a significant effect. However, more research is needed to unravel whether the effects due to lower education are caused by labour market vulnerability or sociocultural effects.

Furthermore, results showed partial support for effects due to the objective economic condition and levels of globalisation of a country: high GDP countries are associated with lower levels of support for popular sovereignty, while high trade globalisation countries are correlated in the opposite way. Finally, the cross-level interaction effects results showed that these contextual characteristics do not significantly moderate the effect of citizens' negative perceptions of the national economy. These last two findings provide a mixed picture concerning the division between subjective and objective economy effects. On the one hand, they show that objective economy indicators influence support for populist models of democracy, but they do not interact with citizens' perceptions of the national economy. This study contributes to the literature by providing cross-country evidence of how different economic factors affect citizens' support for the core populist idea of popular sovereignty.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In the second section, the theoretical framework is introduced, and the hypotheses are formulated. The third section describes the data and variables used and outlines the analytical strategy followed. The fourth section shows and describes the results of the main empirical analysis and of additional analyses. The final section discusses the findings in relation to the extant literature and outlines some suggestions for future research.

2 • THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Populism and (Sense of) Crisis

Literature has long argued about the role played by crises in the upsurge of populism. Among the strongest advocates for the role of crisis, Laclau (1977, 2005a) argued that a period of crisis is a necessary precondition for populism to emerge. What he intended as crises not necessarily relate to economics, but rather to a period of crisis of representation, which triggers the anti-institutional impulse of populism (Laclau, 2005a). On a similar opinion is Stavrakakis (2005), who argued that the collapse of previously hegemonic discourses paves the way for the affirmation of new identities and discourses proposed by anti-establishment actors such as the populists. Referring to Latin American cases, Roberts (1995) and Weyland (1999) argued that populism is more likely to emerge where previously dominant institutions and authorities are put into crisis by profound social changes. Thus, in this view, crises and populism are causally related. Crises prepare the ground for the populist advance by opening a political representation crisis (Mouffe, 2005).

Nevertheless, a growing number of scholars have developed a consistent scepticism towards the connection between crisis and populism. One of the main critiques of this link is the lack of a clear conceptualisation of crisis. Mudde (2007) argued, on the one hand, that the variables used by literature do not necessarily reflect a crisis. On the other hand, he argued that most recent politics had been argued to be in crisis, making it difficult to argue that populism emerges only

in extraordinary occasions characterised by a crisis. Rovira Kaltwasser (2012) criticised this connection as assuming populism emerging automatically as a result of a democratic pathology. He argued that such a view ignores how often empirical analysis has shown how far-right populism could be successful also in contexts where crises were hardly existent. Therefore, the conceptualisation of crisis might not pertain only to structural conditions, but also to subjective indicators such as declinism (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016), societal pessimism (Steenvoorden & Harteveld, 2018), or collective nostalgia (Cheung et al., 2017).

Crisis, or rather a sense of crisis, is also an internal feature of populist ideology. Namely, populist actors often recur to a narrative of crisis in their campaign to appeal to voters. They use crises to justify their ideological view where 'the pure people' are opposed to a 'corrupted elite' (Mudde, 2004). Canovan (1999, p.6) mentioned the populist sense of crisis in terms of 'populist mood', referring to the ability of populists to "turn politics into a campaign to save the country or to bring about a great renewal''. Similarly, Taggart (2004, p.275) argued that "populism is not the politics of the stable, ordered polity but comes as an accompaniment to change, crisis and challenge". Moreover, Moffitt (2015) argued that populists actively mediate and perform crises to divide 'the people' against a dangerous other. The performance of crisis is a core feature of populism, and the denouncement of an ongoing crisis has been found recurring in many cases of populism (Rooduijn, 2014b). Thus, crisis as a rhetorical device provides populists with a seemingly 'objective' justification for their claim that popular sovereignty must be restored in order to save the country from the crisis caused by a corrupted and unrepresentative elite.

Popular sovereignty is one of the main core and defining features of the populist ideology. 'The people', according to populists, are the heart of democracy. They represent a homogenous and virtuous group; they constitute the basis of a good society (Mény & Surel, 2001; Mudde, 2004). They compose the narrative of what Taggart (2002) calls 'the heartland'. The people are central to Canovan (2005, p. 128) observation that populism appeals to the vague democratic notion

that "we, the People, are somehow the source of political authority". The people, thus, are portrayed in terms of moral superiority and contrasted with an elite depicted in terms of moral corruption and perversion. The division in terms of morality between these two groups underlies the ideational conception of populism (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Mudde, 2017), which focuses on the set of ideas related to populist ideology.

Although already anticipated by some earlier attempts (Axelrod, 1967; J. J. Farrell & Laughlin, 1976), a number of studies focused on the demand side of populism have been engaged in the measurement of populist attitudes, one of which is represented by the concept of people sovereignty. Previous studies focused on supposedly related attitudes such as political distrust and dissatisfaction with democracy (Doyle, 2011; Fieschi & Heywood, 2004; Ivarsflaten, 2008), although they do not constitute a direct measurement of populist attitudes (A. Akkerman et al., 2014; Mudde, 2007; Norris, 2005). Several studies have aimed at measuring multiple dimensions related to the ideology of populism (A. Akkerman et al., 2014; Schulz et al., 2018). A. Akkerman et al. (2014) have shown that three distinct political attitudes related to populism can be identified: Populist attitudes, Elitist attitudes, and Pluralist attitudes. However, Schulz et al. (2018) showed that within populist attitudes it is possible to distinguish other sub-dimensions: anti-elitism, belief in unrestricted popular sovereignty, and the conviction of the people as homogeneous and virtuous. Studies attempted to measure people-centrism in different ways. Some studies focused on statements that refer to the "will of the people" (A. Akkerman et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2018), or on claims that that the people should be consulted for important policy and political decisions (A. Akkerman et al., 2014; Schulz et al., 2018). Other studies have focused on the "honest" and "hardworking" character of ordinary folk, as well as its common sense wisdom (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Stanley, 2011).

This chapter will study whether it is citizens' perceptions of the economy that trigger demands for more popular sovereignty rather than more objective indicators of the economy. The EES survey of 2019 represents an opportunity to investigate this relationship cross-nationally

using an item that has been often used by surveys as part of measurements of populist attitudes. This item has figured in several other surveys with the aim to measure an index of populist attitudes (Hawkins et al., 2018), and more specifically pertained to the sub-dimension of popular sovereignty (Schulz et al., 2018). Investigating this element of populist attitudes instead of voting choice permits alleviating some methodological issues that characterise research focused on voting behaviour and economic effects. First, it allows the investigation of the degrees to which individuals support a core element of the ideology of populism, which would be ignored when considering the vote choice. Some previous research, mostly based on one-country studies, investigated the link between these attitudes and electoral support for populist parties. Populist attitudes have been found linked to electoral support for both far-right and far-left populist parties in the Netherlands (A. Akkerman et al., 2014), and in Greece and Chile (Hawkins et al., 2020), although they were not relevant in Slovakia compared to other covariates (Stanley, 2011). Second, it helps to have a better grasp of effects due to economic factors by avoiding the exclusion of non-voters from the analysis, as several previous research has shown that factors of economic grievance are associated with lower political participation (Smets & Van Ham, 2013; Solt, 2015). Third, it allows studying support for populism with linear models rather than discrete choice models, enabling comparison of coefficients across models and the examination of effects mediation (Mood, 2010).

Economic factors of support for popular sovereignty

Several previous studies investigated the role of economic hardship in affecting the electoral performances of extreme political formations. The main argument posits that economic hardship facilitates the political mobilisation of extremist parties, who can take advantage of social distress for their anti-establishment campaigns. The condition of economic crisis provides these parties with an argument to appeal to constituencies that are disappointed with their political establishment and worried about the worsening of the general economy. In such con-

ditions, extreme right-wing parties often use a scapegoating narrative blaming immigrants (Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Knigge, 1998), while extreme left-wing parties put the blame on capitalism and economic elite (March & Mudde, 2005; Visser et al., 2014). In either case, this literature points out that economic crisis represents the breeding ground for the prosperity of these parties by creating the preconditions to capitalise on citizens' dissatisfaction.

Previous research at the individual level on economic factors and populism has mainly considered variables related to egotropic factors. Building on the insights of the economic interests thesis (Eatwell, 2016), several studies have shown that voters in vulnerable socio-economic positions (e.g. manual workers, lowly educated, unemployed) are more likely to vote for populist parties (Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers et al., 2002). In this view, voters in vulnerable positions are expected to support populist formations in reaction to their disadvantaged socioeconomic position. Several previous studies argued about the presence of educational differences in support for populist parties, but they divide in terms of why this is the case. Some scholars argue that the higher support of lower educated citizens is due to the vulnerability of their labour market positions, which makes them more economically insecure to the changes brought by globalisation (Kriesi et al., 2006). Some others argue that socialising effects might be in place: higher education corresponds with higher civic knowledge, political efficacy, or cultural capital (Spruyt et al., 2016). However, recent evidence shows that socioeconomic vulnerability variables are rather modest in predicting support for populist parties (Stockemer et al., 2018). Voting for populist parties represents not the only type of reaction to economic grievances, as also voting for mainstream opposition parties or abstaining from voting are within the range of possible choices of socioeconomically vulnerable voters (Kriesi, 2014b).

Most previous studies on the link between economic grievances and support for populist parties mainly referred to the theoretical frameworks of the losers of globalisation (Kriesi et al., 2006) or the losers of modernisation (Betz, 1994). Namely, these theories argue that changes

brought by post-industrialisation or globalisation have resulted in a division between citizens whose skills allow them to stay afloat economically and socially and those who cannot keep up. The literature defines the 'losers' of these processes as the unskilled workers, the unemployed, the lower educated, or generally those whose jobs are threatened by technological advancement (Golder, 2016). In this view, populist parties principally capitalise on socioeconomically marginalised voters, who feel betrayed by the established parties. A similar argument by Ignazi (1992) points out that the emergence of post-materialist values in modern societies caused a reactionary backlash from those holding materialist values. In this perspective, economic sources of support for populist parties seem defined as a mixture of anxiety regarding the personal socioeconomic position and the state of the general economy.

Surprisingly, sociotropic mechanisms have been considered less in these research designs, despite early aggregate-level studies have often suggested how economic crises may favour extremist parties because of both voters experiencing objective economic distress and those concerned with the state of the national economy (e.g., Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Knigge, 1998; Rydgren & Ruth, 2013). That citizens' political preferences might be driven by their collective-oriented assessments of the economy is not new in political science literature. The economic voting theory (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000) posits that a central way to exert democratic accountability is to reward or punish the incumbent parties depending on the economic performances during their time in office. Such insights are confirmed by a large body of literature which finds that national election outcomes are influenced by macroeconomic performances (Dassonneville & Lewis-Beck, 2014). Therefore, following this view, political choices might not be much the result of a reaction to personal experiences of grievance, but rather the product of citizens' evaluations of the country's economy.

Suggestions from early research on economic voting already suggested that citizens' political preferences are driven more by sociotropic assessments of the economy rather than self-oriented judgments (Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981). The significance of sociotropic effects in support of incumbents has been confirmed by several

other later studies (Borre, 1997; Nadeau et al., 2013). It has been argued, however, that such a mechanism would assume the presence of a voter fully informed in his/her assessment of the general economy (Anderson, 2007). Nevertheless, the lack of a fully informed assessment does not prevent voters from making decisions based on their partial information (Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981), as reactions to economic assessment can also be of emotional nature rather than cognitive (Conover & Feldman, 1986).

Thus, how do sociotropic economy mechanisms apply to populism? A negative view of society's trajectory is central to Taggart (2002) concept of Heartland as romanticised construction of a past ideal world to which present society is negatively compared. Moreover, the thesis of persistent republicanism posits that citizens' political choices are influenced by their evaluation of how society is doing rather than by their personal circumstances (Elchardus, 2011). Evidence from empirical research provides some support for these views. The study of Elchardus and Spruyt (2016) shows that perceptions of declinism and relative deprivation feelings explain support for populism more than uncertain socioeconomic position. In another previous study, Elchardus and Spruyt (2012) found that feelings of relative deprivation increased the likelihood of citizens embracing authoritarian, ethnocentric, social-Darwinist views of society. Moreover, the study of Steenvoorden and Harteveld (2018) found that support for far-right parties is higher amongst citizens holding pessimist views about society. Thus, in this view, negative evaluations of the state of the national economy might reflect citizens' pessimism towards the declining trajectory of their society. Such negative views might also reflect the economic anxiety of the so-called 'losers' (of globalisation/of modernisation), whose vulnerable socioeconomic position might prompt perceptions of a country in economic hardship.

Few research has addressed this specific aspect to study support for populism. In a study of Rico et al. (2017), emotional responses related to anger for the effects of the economic crisis in Spain have been found to be significantly related to support for populism. (Giebler et al., 2021) found that societal-centred discontent, including negative

views of the national economy, increased the likelihood of supporting the far-right party AfD in Germany. Moreover, Rico and Anduiza (2019) found cross-sectional evidence from nine European countries of citizens' perceptions of the economy affecting populist attitudes. Based on these suggestions, this study will test whether citizens' negative perceptions of the national economy are associated with higher support for popular sovereignty. In addition, it will compare this effect with the effects of variables previously considered by research and reflect two nuances of egotropic mechanisms: socioeconomic vulnerability and subjective economic well-being.

> **H.1**: The more negative citizens' perceptions of the national economy are, the higher the level of support for popular sovereignty.
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> **H.2**: The more vulnerable the socioeconomic position of the individual (lower education, unemployed), the higher the level of support for popular sovereignty.
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> **H.3**: The higher the subjective economic well-being is, the lower the level of support for popular sovereignty.

Furthermore, this chapter will also investigate the effects due to aggregate macroeconomic conditions and globalisation levels. By doing so, it will consider another nuance of economic factors, namely, the objective conditions present in a specific context. Aggregate macroeconomic conditions have been largely investigated by previous economic voting research, which argued that national elections outcomes are responsive economic performances (Kramer, 1983; Van der Brug et al., 2007). The ambiguity of findings concerning aggregate economy effects on support for extremist or populist parties is well-known in the literature. Studies have found that economic hardship enhances the electoral performances of far-right parties (Jackman & Volpert, 1996), that it harms them (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Knigge, 1998; Rydgren & Ruth, 2013), that it does not affect it (Lubbers et al., 2002), or that it does only in concomitance with immigration (Bloom, 2012; Golder, 2003; Knigge, 1998). Nevertheless, a recent meta-analysis has

found that, overall, the unemployment rate exerts a positive but small effect on support for radical-right parties (Sipma & Lubbers, 2020), indicating potential diversity of effects within contexts. The same mixed evidence also applies to the radical left parties (March & Rommerskirchen, 2015; Visser et al., 2014). In light of these suggestions, this chapter will test whether favourable macroeconomic conditions influence the level of support for popular sovereignty.

> **H.4**: The higher is country's socioeconomic development, measured in terms of high GDP per capita (**H.4a**) and low unemployment rate (**H.4b**), the lower the level of support for popular sovereignty.

Moreover, the consequences of globalisation processes play an important role within the Losers of Globalisation theory (Kriesi et al., 2006). While the 'winners' are theorised to be in possession of the necessary skills to keep pace with a globalised labour market, the 'losers' are likely to struggle with these processes and perceive their occupational status, and therefore their economic well-being, as in erosion. Globalisation is a multifaceted phenomenon, with implications in several domains of societies (Dreher, 2006; Gygli et al., 2019). Considering the implications of the Losers of Globalisation theory, this chapter will look at two distinct aspects related to the socioeconomic and sociocultural effects of globalisation.

The impact of trade globalisation will be investigated for what regards socioeconomic effects of globalisation. Populist parties often take protectionist stands when it comes to economic issue positioning (Snower & Bosworth, 2021; Van der Waal & De Koster, 2018). In the campaigns of populist actors, globalisation is envisioned as a plot orchestrated by a corrupted elite at the expense of the common people. Given their stance for more closed economies to protect national interests, it might be possible that contexts characterised by a high exchange of goods from foreign countries could trigger more requests from citizens to have the people making decisions instead of a corrupted elite. Some studies showed that far-right populist parties performed better

in contexts extremely exposed to trade imports (Colantone & Stanig, 2018b; Dorn et al., 2020), or that trade-exposure consequences affect support for the incumbent parties (Margalit, 2011).

The sociocultural effects of globalisation will be examined by examining the degrees of interpersonal globalisation of a country, namely the influx of foreigners in a country. Populists, typically the far-right, often blame a corrupted elite that promotes a multicultural vision of the society for the erosion of traditional identities belonging to a nation (Mudde, 2007). Also, these parties often campaign on restricting immigration to preserve the national economy from immigrants stealing jobs from the native population (Golder, 2003). Several studies found that far-right attract voters with anti-immigrant attitudes (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Lubbers et al., 2002; Norris, 2005), and argued that economic threats perceptions are at the root of this relationship (Mayda, 2006; Sides & Citrin, 2007). Contexts characterised by a high influx of foreign population could increase anxieties related to economic competition and raise support for popular sovereignty in opposition to a cosmopolitan elite. Thus, in light of these suggestions, the following hypotheses will be tested:

> **H.5**: The higher is country's levels of Trade Globalisation (**H.5a**) and/or Interpersonal globalisation (**H.5b**), the higher the level of support for popular sovereignty.

Finally, this chapter will also test whether these contextual characteristics influence support for popular sovereignty by moderating the effect of sociotropic mechanisms. The main argument of the economic voting theory posits that citizens react to the poor economic performance of governments by voting them away in the next elections. Nevertheless, such mechanisms might be conditional on the objective economic circumstances of a country. For instance, in contexts of economic recession, economic issues are more likely to characterise political campaigns, and thus citizens could make their political preferences based on them (Singer, 2011). Also, countries in which the economy is highly open to foreign trade might weaken this mechanism

by shifting the responsibility attribution away from governments (Hellwig & Samuels, 2007). One example of interaction between individuals' economic well-being and macroeconomic conditions is shown by Rooduijn and Burgoon (2018): individuals with poor economic well-being were more likely to support far-right parties when macroeconomic conditions were favourable and more likely to support the far-left when migration was modest. Therefore, one possibility can be that citizens' evaluation of the national economy might lead to more requests for popular sovereignty in contexts of poor socioeconomic development and where globalisation is more pervasive. In view of these suggestions, this chapter will test the following two hypotheses:

> **H.6**: The higher is country's socioeconomic development, measured in terms of high GDP per capita (**H.6a**) and low unemployment rate (**H.6b**), the weaker the effect of negative perceptions of the national economy on support for popular sovereignty.
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> **H.7**: The higher is country's levels of Trade Globalisation (**H.7a**) and/or Interpersonal globalisation (**H.7b**), the *stronger* the effect of negative perceptions of the national economy on support for popular sovereignty.

3 • DATA AND METHOD

This study uses data from the European Election Studies (EES) 2019 (Schmitt et al., 2022) to test the hypotheses formulated. It comprises information about EU citizens' political behaviour, perceptions of their own financial situation and country's economy, and sociodemographic characteristics from representative samples of the EU member countries. After the exclusion of missing cases, the final sample of analysis comprises 22,131 individuals from the 28 European Union member countries at the time of the survey[1]. Using these data allows this study to analyse support for a core element

[1] Figure 3.1 shows the countries that are included in the analysis

of populist attitudes (popular sovereignty) also in contexts that are often neglected by research focused on support for populist parties in elections.

Individual-level variables

The dependent variable used for this study is *support for popular sovereignty*, measured using a five-point Likert scale, from fully disagree to fully agree, which asks the respondents their agreement with the statement "The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions". The item ranges from 0 to 4, where the highest value represents the position where respondents fully agree with the statement. This item is part of the scale proposed by A. Akkerman et al. (2014), and it can be interpreted as a measure of one core feature of populist ideology: people-centrism. Although this item does also capture other dimensions related to populism, such as anti-elitism and pluralist attitudes, this is the best measurement available from the EES 2019 survey and that allows for cross-country comparison.

The first independent variable is *Negative perceptions of the national economy* is measured with an index that combines respondents' retrospective (previous 12 months) and prospective (next 12 months) evaluations of the country's economic performance. The index measures with a five-point scale from 1 "A lot better" to 5 "A lot worse", the degrees to which respondents negatively evaluate the state of the national economy. The higher the score is, the more respondents negatively evaluate the state of the country's economy. Although the economic voting literature tends to analyse these two variables separately, they also tend to be highly correlated with each other, bearing problems for analysis in terms of multicollinearity (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000). In these data, the correlation between these two items is about 0.65, indicating a quite high correlation. The univariate distribution of this new averaged variable shows that respondents' modal opinion about the state of the economy is of a stable economy (26.61%). Generally, in this data, pessimistic opinions about the state of the economy are

slightly more than optimistic ones, indicating a small left-skew of the distribution.

The second variable related to economic factors is respondents' *socioeconomic vulnerability*. This study uses two variables to consider their objective socioeconomic condition. To measure respondents' labour market vulnerability, this study uses the *level of education* coded in three categories from the EES variable "How old were you when you stopped full-time education¿' (1="Low level= 15 years and less, 2="Medium level= 16-19 years", 3="High Level= 20 +"). The variable also includes a fourth category for respondents who are still studying at the moment of their interview, which composes 6.72% of the sample. Moreover, this study uses *unemployment status* to consider the objective material condition of respondents. Based on the respondents' occupational status provided by the EES data, the variable distinguishes with a dummy whether the respondent reported being Unemployed (1) or any other occupational status (0). Although these variables do not fully capture the extent of labour market vulnerability, they constitute the best proxies available in the ESS 2019 survey.

This study's third and final economic factor is *Subjective economic well-being*, using a variable that measures the *perception of family's standard of living*. This variable differs from the previous variables concerning socioeconomic vulnerability and perceptions of the national economy as it considers the subjective assessment of respondents' own financial situation. The variable measures with a 7-point scale whether respondents perceive their family's standard of living as poor (1) or rich (7). To facilitate the interpretation of the results, the scale has been reversed so that a higher score indicates that respondents perceive their family's standard of living as poor.

To assess the robustness of the findings, the models will include a set of controls at the individual level. The models will include respondents' sociodemographic characteristics such as *Age*, *Gender* (1=Male, 2=Female), and *Area of Living* (1=Rural area or Village, 2=Small or middle size town, 3=Large town). Respondents' sociopolitical attitudes are considered with variables measuring *distrust in their national parliament* (5-point scale ranging from 1="Yes, totally'' to 5="No,

not at all'‘); *Support for Wealth redistribution policies* (11-point scale from 0="You fully oppose redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor in [country]'‘ to 10 "You fully favour redistribution from the rich to the poor in [country]'‘); and *Support for restrictive immigration policies* (11-point scale from 0="You fully oppose a restrictive policy on immigration'‘ to 10 "You fully favour a restrictive policy on immigration").

Country-level Variables

To account for the effects of the objective economy in aggregate terms, this study considers the macroeconomic conditions of countries in the year before the period observed by the surveys. This allows the analysis to plausibly consider the period of change that respondents have been asked to evaluate. Specifically, this study measures the macroeconomic conditions of countries using *GDP per capita* and *Unemployment rate* provided by the World Bank data. The models will include also control variables at the contextual level to control for alternative explanations of aggregate-level effects. Considering the previous literature, the analysis will control for two nuances of globalisation using the KOF Globalisation Index dataset (Gygli et al., 2019): *Trade globalisation* and *Interpersonal Globalisation*. The first variable is a composite measure that combines the exchange of goods and services over long distances and the policies adopted by a country that facilitates and promotes such exchange. The second variable measures direct interactions among citizens living in different countries, and the policies and resources that facilitate these interactions. This variable is used to include additional nuances of the flow of foreigners that live in a country at a certain moment. All the variables are centred around their mean to facilitate the interpretation of the results. Table B.1 in the appendix provides the descriptive statistics of all the variables included in the analysis.

Analytical strategy

As the analysis builds up insights into the effects of subjective and

objective economic factors, the analytical section will show the results gradually. This study uses multilevel linear models to account for the cross-country differences in the dependent variable under analysis. For this research design, individuals represent the first level of analysis, while the countries where they live represent the second level. The models apply sampling weights to adjust individuals' probabilities of being included in the sample.

To test the hypotheses of this study, the analysis will be performed as follows. First, the models with the fixed effect of the independent variables will be performed to test the effects of the economic factors variables and their robustness net of potential confounding effects. The model with only the random intercept is fitted to estimate the amount of variance of the dependent variable at the country level. This model will serve as a benchmark for comparing the amount of explained variance of subsequent models that include the independent variables. Moreover, the fixed effects concerning the economic factor variable will be included gradually to assess the mediation of effects. Finally, the model will include progressively the control variables concerning sociodemographic characteristics and sociopolitical attitudes to assess the robustness of the economic factor variables.

Second, the models will include the variables concerning the country-level variables to test for the effects of objective macroeconomic conditions and levels of globalisation on the dependent variable. Finally, the effects of negative perceptions of the national economy and family's standard of living will be specified as random effects to allow for the test of the cross-level interaction effects. These models will serve as a benchmark for comparing the amount of variance explained by the cross-level interaction effects tested. These last models will also include the covariates previously included but will show only the estimates of the coefficients involved in the interactions. The fit of models will be assessed by observing variation in explained variance, Log-likelihood, and the AIC and BIC information criteria. To facilitate the interpretation of the cross-level interaction effects, the Average Marginal effects of the individual-level variables conditional on the contextual characteristics will be plotted.

4 • RESULTS

Before outlining the main results concerning the economic sources of support for popular sovereignty, it might be worthwhile to mention the distribution of this variable. Insights from a univariate analysis of the variable show that support for popular sovereignty is on average slightly higher than the neutral position. About 5% of respondents fully disagree with the statement, 15% disagree, 26% hold neutral positions, 33% agree, and about 21% fully agree with the statement. There seems to be some variation across the countries in the sample. Romania (33.57%), Slovenia (33.29%), and Cyprus (32.43%) are the countries with the highest share of respondents with high support for popular sovereignty. Curiously, among these three countries, only Slovenia presents a scenario where populist parties abound, while populism in Cyprus represents a quite marginal reality and Romania had no populist parties running for elections at the time of the EES 2019 survey. This descriptive result already suggests that support for popular sovereignty is not necessarily connected with the presence of a strong populist political offer. Figure 3.1 shows the means of support for popular sovereignty for each country of the sample. With the exception of Denmark, in all the countries the average is above the neutral position (2). Higher mean levels of support for popular sovereignty are found in Greece, Slovenia, and Romania, while Denmark, Finland, and Luxembourg show the lowest mean levels of the sample. It is worth noticing that support for popular sovereignty is also high in cases where the political offer does not present populist parties competing (Malta and Romania) or where they appeared only recently (Portugal). Countries where populist parties have gained electoral success, such as Italy, Poland, Spain, or Czech republic, do not seem to be characterised by a higher average of support for popular sovereignty. On the other hand, although with some exceptions, it appears that support for popular sovereignty seems to be higher among countries with low socioeconomic conditions. These results show that support for popular sovereignty appears to be rather diffuse among countries and constitutes a potential pool of followers that populist parties can mobilise.

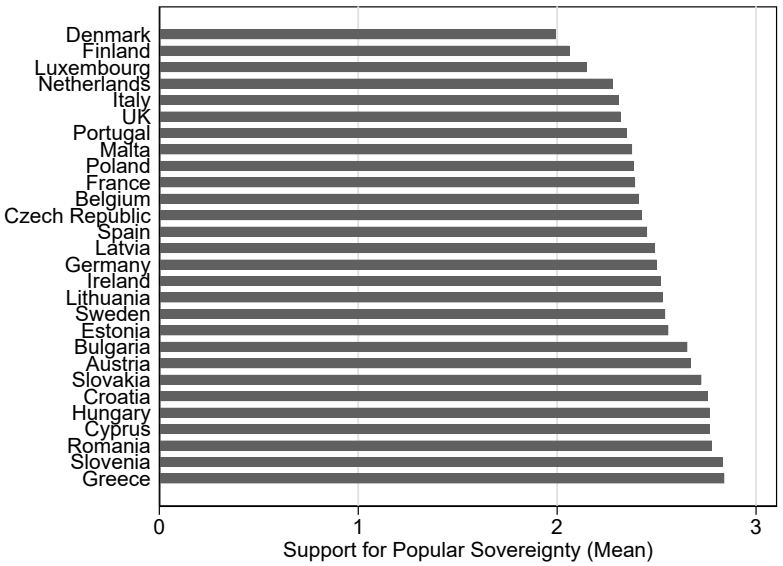

FIGURE 3.1 Mean of the item measuring support for popular sovereignty by country.
Own calculations.

What economic factors explain support for popular sovereignty?

Table 3.1 shows the estimates from the multilevel linear regression models analysing the effects of individual-level variables on the dependent variable. The first model containing only the dependent variable is fitted to estimate the amount of variance at the country level. However, it is worth noticing that the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient obtained from this model reported only 3.77% of the total variation is due to the country level, indicating that a rather small portion of the dependent variable variance is due to cross-country differences.

Model 1 introduces respondents' negative perceptions of the national economy. The results show that the higher the negative perceptions of the national economy, the higher is support for popular sovereignty (b = 0.115, $p < 0.001$). However, this variable accounts for a small portion of explained variance at the country level (2.33%),

TABLE 3.1 Multilevel linear regression analyses of support for popular sovereignty on individual level fixed effects (N=22,131; Countries=28).

Variables	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Perceptions of Economy		0.115***	0.111***	0.096***	0.098***	0.017
Level of Education (Ref. High education)						
Low education			0.268***	0.240***	0.271***	0.255***
Medium education			0.137***	0.117***	0.122***	0.098***
Still studying			0.065+	0.065+	-0.075*	-0.043
Unemployment status (Ref. Not Unemployed)						
Unemployed			0.167***	0.122*	0.077+	0.064
Subjective Economic well-being				-0.067***	-0.069***	-0.038***
Gender (Ref. Male)						
Female					-0.017	-0.018
Age					-0.065***	-0.056***
Area of Living (Ref. Rural area or village)				0.009	0.013	
Small or medium size town					0.014	0.018
Large town					-0.021	-0.013
Distrust in national parliament						0.162***
Support for wealth redistribution						0.042***
Support for immigration restriction						0.018***
Constant	3.484***	3.127***	3.062***	3.388***	3.624***	2.868***
Random effects						
var(Country)	0.048***	0.047***	0.046***	0.042***	0.042***	0.032***
R^2 Country-year		2.33%	5.36%	12.92%	13.97%	34.45%
var(Residual)	1.234***	1.233***	1.215***	1.210***	1.204***	1.157***
R^2 Residual		0.89%	1.50%	1.95%	2.45%	6.25%
Model fit						
AIC	68,006.326	67,808.421	67,678.299	67,574.826	67,470.096	66,583.668
BIC	68,030.340	67,840.440	67,742.337	67,646.869	67,574.158	66,711.743
df		1	5	6	10	13
Log-likelihood	-34,000.163	-33,900.21	-33,831.149	-33,778.413	-33,722.048	-33275.834

$+ p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;
[a] Centered variable

and for even less of the residual variance (0.89%). Looking at factors of socioeconomic vulnerability (M2), respondents with medium (b = 0.137, $p < 0.001$) and lower levels of education (b = 0.268, $p < 0.001$) are associated with higher support for popular sovereignty. Unemployed respondents are positively associated with support for popular sovereignty (b = 0.167, $p < 0.001$). These factors contribute only to a small extent in explaining the effect of perceptions of the

economy, which still maintain positive and statistically significant. However, introducing subjective economic well-being (M3) explains more significantly the effect of perceptions of the national economy (b = 0.096, $p < 0.001$), although the effect still remains statistically robust. Respondents who report poor economic well-being are significantly associated with higher support for popular sovereignty (b = -0.067, $p < 0.001$). The effect of subjective economic well-being appears to largely explain the effect of unemployment status (b = 0.122, $p < 0.05$), although it still remains statistically significant. Looking at the explanatory power of economic factors variables, it is already possible to see that the egotropic motivations, and to a smaller extent also the indicators of socioeconomic vulnerability, do a better job in explaining cross-country variation of the dependent variable than sociotropic motivations do. Including subjective economic well-being increases explained cross-country variance by about 7%, while the socioeconomic vulnerability indicators do so by about 3% compared to the model with sociotropic indicators. Overall, having information about individual economic factors accounts for 12.92% of the country-level variance and 1.95%.

Moreover, Models 4 and 5 progressively include the control variables to assess the robustness of these effects. Model 4 includes controls related to respondents' sociodemographic characteristics. While gender and area of living do not exert a significant effect, age is negatively and significantly associated with the dependent variable (b = -0.065, $p < 0.001$), meaning that support for popular sovereignty is lower among older respondents. Looking at the economic factor variables, including these sociodemographics explains the effect of unemployment status, which now is below the conventional levels of statistical significance. On the other hand, the effects of education and perceptions of the economy become slightly stronger. This model increases the portion of explained variance at the country level to 13.97%, and the residual variance explained up to 2.45%. Model 5 contains the control variables related to respondents' sociopolitical attitudes. Political distrust is significantly associated with higher support for popular sovereignty (b = 0.162, $p < 0.001$). Support for Wealth re-

distribution (b = 0.042, $p < 0.001$) and restrictive immigration (b = 0.018, $p < 0.001$) policies significantly increase support for popular sovereignty.

However, including respondents' sociopolitical attitudes totally explains the effect of perceptions of the economy, which while still being positive is no longer statistically significant. This result indicates that sociopolitical attitudes are not only correlated with support for popular sovereignty but that they also strongly correlate with the sociotropic mechanism, suggesting that an underlying relationship is taking place and might confound the real effect of such a mechanism. The effects of levels of education and family's standard of living decrease to a small extent, while the effect of unemployment status gets totally explained by sociopolitical attitudes. Once considered sociopolitical orientations of individuals, the status of unemployment does not matter in explaining the rise of support for popular sovereignty. The effect of subjective economic well-being gets considerably explained but still maintains statistically robust. Including sociopolitical attitudes considerably increase the amount of explained variance at the country level (34.45%) and residual (6.25%).

Thus, in contrast with the expectations, these results show that respondents' subjective economic well-being and, partially, indicators of socioeconomic vulnerability explain support for popular sovereignty more than negative perceptions of the economy. Namely, factors that are more related to egotropic mechanisms seem to matter more in explaining the rise in support for popular sovereignty rather than sociotropic mechanisms. Especially subjective economic well-being accounted for a higher portion of explained cross-country variance of the dependent variable than the other two economic factors considered and remained robust net of the control variables considered. The results have shown that sociotropic mechanisms get eclipsed by the effects of sociopolitical attitudes, indicating that such effects might be in interaction with individuals' political behaviour. Overall, these results provide support for H.3, partial support for H.2, but no support for H.1.

What is the role of macroeconomy and globalisation?

Table 3.2 includes information regarding countries' contextual characteristics. These variables pertain to the objective macro-economic and globalisation conditions of countries in the previous year to that of observation of the surveys. Model 6 shows that GDP per capita exerts a significant negative influence on the dependent variables (b = -0.003, $p < 0.05$), and maintains its significance also when other contextual characteristics are included. Model 7 shows that the unemployment rate is positively correlated with the dependent variables, although its effect is not statistically significant. Model 8 shows that the amount of trade globalisation in a country increases support for popular sovereignty, although with an effect significant at the 10% level (b = -0.010, $p < 0.10$). However, the effect becomes significant at the 5% once other contextual factors are included (b = 0.011, $p < 0.05$). Correlation analysis of the contextual variables shows that trade globalisation is principally correlated with the unemployment rate (-0.4158). This suggests that the original positive effect of trade globalisation was also reflecting the non-significant effect of the unemployment rate when omitted from the model.

Model 9 shows that the effect due to interpersonal globalisation is negative but not statistically significant. Figure 3.2 shows the linear effects of the GDP per capita and trade globalisation graphically. The average level of support for popular sovereignty drops from about 2.7 to 2.23, showing the biggest uncertainty in estimates around the high-GDP contexts. Conversely, trade globalisation raises average support for popular sovereignty from about 2.3 to 2.6, with the low trade globalisation contexts showing more uncertainty in the estimates. Including contextual information about countries' economies and globalisation increases the explained country-level variance up to 50.51%. GDP per capita results as the more efficient variable in terms of explaining the cross-country differences in the dependent variables compared to the other contextual variables (43.88%).

These results offer partial support to H4 and H5. GDP per capita

TABLE 3.2 Multilevel linear regression analyses of support for popular sovereignty on country level fixed effects. Control variables omitted from the output (N=22,131; Countries=28). Full models are available in table B.2 in the appendix.

Variables	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
Perceptions of Economy	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.018
Level of Education (Ref. High education)					
Low education	0.256***	0.255***	0.255***	0.255***	0.256***
Medium education	0.098***	0.098***	0.098***	0.098***	0.099***
Still studying	-0.043	-0.043	-0.043	-0.043	-0.043
Unemployment status (Ref. Not Unemployed)					
Unemployed	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.063
Subjective Economic well-being	-0.038***	-0.038***	-0.038***	-0.038***	-0.038***
GDP per capita (in thousands)[a]	-0.003*				-0.003*
Unemployment (%)[a]		0.003			0.006
Trade globalisation Index[a]			0.010+		0.011*
Interpersonal globalisation Index[a]				-0.004	0.002
Constant	2.873***	2.868***	2.866***	2.870***	2.869***
Random effects					
var(Country)	0.027***	0.032***	0.029***	0.031***	0.024***
Pseudo R^2 Country-year	43.88%	34.62%	39.74%	35.19%	50.51%
var(Residual)	1.157***	1.157***	1.157***	1.157***	1.157***
Pseudo R^2 Residual	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%
Model fit					
AIC	66,581.482	66,585.596	66,583.442	66,585.353	66,584.174
BIC	66,717.563	66,721.676	66,719.522	66,721.434	66,744.269
df	14	14	17		
Log-likelihood	-33,273.741	-33,275.798	-33,274.721	-33,275.677	-33,272.087

[a] Centered variable;
$+ p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

is associated with lower support for popular sovereignty, while the unemployment rate did exert a significant impact. On the other hand, trade globalisation has been found to be positively associated with the dependent variable, while this has not been the case for interpersonal globalisation. Therefore, some factors related to the objective conditions of the economy appear to correlate with support for popular sovereignty. The results have also shown that including information regarding objective economy and globalisation of contexts improves the explanation of cross-country differences in the dependent variable.

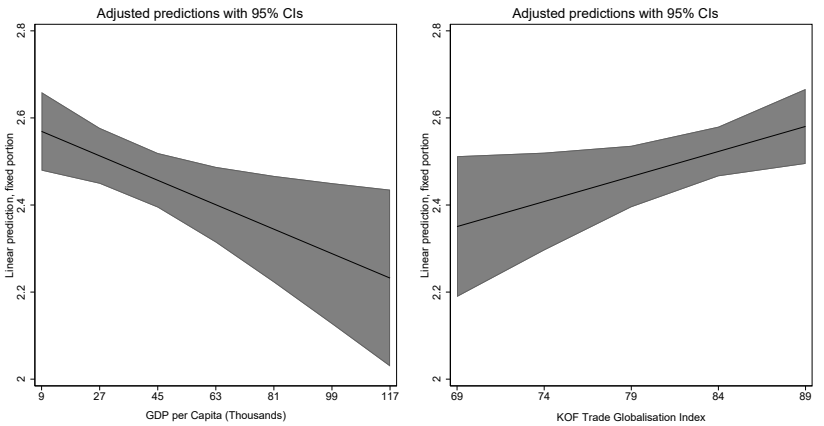

FIGURE 3.2 Linear predictions of *Support for Popular Sovereignty* depending on *GDP per capita* and *Trade Globalisation index*.
Estimates are based on table 3.2. Own calculations.

Finally, Table 3.3 shows the models testing the cross-level interaction effects between negative perceptions of the national economy and the contextual variables. Model 11 shows that the effect of negative perceptions of the economy significantly varies across country clusters, although not to a great extent. While GDP per capita (Model 12) appears to strengthen the effect of perceptions of the economy, the unemployment rate (Model 13) weakens the effect of perceptions of the economy. However, in both cases, the interaction effects are not statistically significant. Trade globalisation (Model 14) and interpersonal globalisation (Model 15) both increase the strength of perceptions of the economic effect, but they are not statistically significant. The interaction with trade globalisation explains the highest portion (3.81%) compared to the others. Overall, these results provide no support for H.6 and H7: objective macroeconomic conditions and trade and interpersonal globalisation do not significantly affect the extent to which negative perceptions of the national economy affect support for popular sovereignty. Thus, these results lend no support to H6 and H7, as aggregate economic conditions and levels of trade or interpersonal

TABLE 3.3 Multilevel linear regression analyses of Support for popular sovereignty on cross-level interaction effects between negative perceptions of the national economy and country-level variables (N=22,131; Countries=28). Only variables involved in interactions are included in the output. Full models are available in table B.3 in the appendix.

Variables	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15
Perceptions of Economy	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017
GDP per capita (in thousands)[a]	-0.003*	-0.005*	-0.003*	-0.003*	-0.003*
Unemployment (%)[a]	0.005	0.005	0.017	0.005	0.005
Trade globalisation Index[a]	0.010+	0.010+	0.010+	-0.003	0.010+
Interpersonal globalisation Index[a]	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001	-0.001
GDP per capita (in thousands)*Perceptions of Economy		0.001			
Unemployment (%)*Perceptions of Economy			-0.004		
Trade globalisation Index*Perceptions of Economy				0.004	
Interpersonal globalisation Index*Perceptions of Economy					0.001
Constant	2.935***	2.936***	2.935***	2.935***	2.936***
Random effects					
var(Perceptions of Economy)	0.012***	0.012***	0.012***	0.012***	0.012***
Pseudo R^2 Perceptions of Economy		1.67%	1.39%	3.81%	0.14%
var(Country)	0.149***	0.146***	0.147***	0.144***	0.149***
var(Residual)	1.146***	1.146***	1.146***	1.146***	1.146***
Covariance (X,Y)	-0.039***	-0.039***	-0.039***	-0.038***	-0.039***
Model fit					
AIC	66,441.309	66,442.871	66,442.959	66,442.404	66,443.287
BIC	66,617.413	66,626.980	66,627.068	66,626.512	66,627.396
df	17	18	18	18	18
Log-likelihood	-33,198.655	-33,198.435	-33,198.479	-33,198.202	-33,198.644

[a] Centered variable;
$+p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

globalisation do not significantly moderate the effect of perceptions of the economy.

5 • DISCUSSION

This chapter departed from the numerous reference to crises in the electoral campaigns of populist leaders. Namely, in their attempt to appeal to the people, populist actors often use a narrative of crisis in their portrayal of the state of a country. While some scholars posited that crises play mostly an exogenous role, providing the necessary precondition for the affirmation of populism and its anti-establishment

discourse, more recently it has been argued that crises are also actively mediated by populist actors and are an internal feature of their ideology. This chapter has aimed to analyse how different economic factors are related to one core element of populist ideology: support for popular sovereignty. Drawing from the suggestions of the economic voting literature, it has inquired whether support for this element is explained by sociotropic motivations (i.e., negative perceptions of the national economy), whether these motivations prevail over egotropic motivations (i.e., subjective economic well-being, socioeconomic vulnerability); and whether objective aggregate macroeconomic conditions and globalisation play a role in affecting the dependent variable observed either directly or moderating the effect of sociotropic mechanisms.

Analysing cross-national data from the EES 2019 survey, the findings of this chapter have shown that sociotropic perceptions of the economy do not significantly affect support for the populist idea of popular sovereignty. On the contrary, it found that egotropic motivations, and more specifically subjective economic well-being, prevail as mechanisms related to economic grievances. These findings contrast with the study of Rico and Anduiza (2019) and suggest that sociotropic effects might be conditional on factors related to the political preferences of individuals, which have not been considered by previous studies (G. Evans & Andersen, 2006; Kramer, 1983). One possibility could be that effects due to the assessment of the general economy are contingent on responsibility attribution (Bellucci, 2014). Namely, reactions to perceptions of economic recession might depend on who the citizens deem as responsible for this. Depending on whether they blame the government or other supranational entities for the state of the economy, negative perceptions might lead more (or less) to anti-incumbent voting (Hellwig & Samuels, 2007; Mair, 2013). Disentangling this aspect was not possible in the research performed in this chapter and was out of its initial scope. Additional analyses performed using the variables provided by the EES 2019 have shown that, indeed, citizens react differently to economic crisis perceptions depending on their trust in their national parliament or their policy preferences (see figures B.1 and B.2 in the appendix). These results might suggest that

sociotropic effects related to the economy on support for populism might depend on citizens' previous beliefs on whether their current elite causes the economic situation and whether the current government meets their policy preferences. However, more research with more refined variables covering these aspects is needed to understand the contingency of sociotropic effects.

Egotropic factors appeared more strongly related to the outcome variable than sociotropic perceptions, indicating that further studies should still not dismiss such variables from their research designs. However, while it has been argued that egotropic and sociotropic evaluations of the economy could be considered separately in their influence on political choices (Mutz, 1998), such disentanglement still constitutes an analytical challenge (Kramer, 1983). As already acknowledged by Kinder and Kiewiet (1981), differences between egotropic and sociotropic arguments should be regarded in terms of *information* and not on *motivation*, as both can lead to reactions based on self-interest rather than on altruistic concerns. Thus, the results in this chapter might suggest that considerations based on own personal financial situation are still relevant when investigating support for populism, but more research is needed to understand the motivations behind this effect. Indicators of socioeconomic vulnerability have shown mixed results. The unemployment status is confirmed as not a significant factor, aligning with previous findings (Norris, 2005; Rooduijn & Burgoon, 2018; Van Elsas, 2017). Lower levels of education have been found to correlate with higher support for popular sovereignty. This finding also aligns with several previous research, but further research should disentangle whether such effects are due to socioeconomic vulnerability or the lack of social capital (Spruyt et al., 2016).

Moreover, this chapter has moved forward the understanding of how economic factors influence support for a core idea of populism by addressing contextual effects. It found that high-GDP countries are associated with lower support for popular sovereignty, while the unemployment rate did not yield any significant effect aligning with the previous inconclusive findings about this effect (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Lubbers et al., 2002). On the other

hand, high levels of trade globalisation have been found to correlate with higher support for popular sovereignty, while interpersonal globalisation did not exert a significant influence. The impact of trade openness is consistent with previous findings (Colantone & Stanig, 2018b; Dorn et al., 2020), while the insignificant findings on the influx of foreigners add to the mixed results of previous studies (Knigge, 1998; Norris, 2005). These findings could suggest that citizens of wealthier democracies show a higher trust in politicians' decision-making due to the higher economic performance, while in those with highly open economies, this seems to be less the case. However, the analysis of the cross-level interactions between sociotropic perceptions and these contextual characteristics did not show any significant result. Therefore, one conclusion can be that citizens' perceptions of their country's economy are not responsive to objective aggregate conditions for what regards the support for popular sovereignty. More research is needed to understand what underlying factors related to economic performance or trade openness explain support for populism.

Although the results have been tested for several important mechanisms related to populist support, these analyses remain correlational and therefore cannot assess the causality of the relationships investigated. An analysis with panel data would be required to have deeper insights into the causal relationship between sociotropic or egotropic mechanisms and support for populist ideas. This limitation also points to the possible endogeneity problem that the data analysed in this chapter cannot rule out. On the one hand, there is a potential reverse-causality issue between the sociopolitical attitudes used in this chapter and the dependent variable. On the other hand, it might be possible that perceptions of crisis might be both the cause and consequence of the rise of populist parties (Rooduijn et al., 2016). This latter issue has been investigated in a study of Rico and Anduiza (2019) of panel data from Spain and concluded that previous holding of populist attitudes did not affect subsequent evaluations of the general economy. To partially consider this aspect, additional analyses in this chapter have shown that the presence of a strong populist parties' supply or their government status did not significantly affect the results obtained.

Therefore, far from being a conclusive test on the issue, effects due to the presence of populist actors instilling crisis perceptions in citizens can be excluded. More panel analyses covering other contexts are required to assess this aspect better. Although it could not use a more comprehensive measurement of populist attitudes as used by other studies (A. Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins et al., 2020; Schulz et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2018), this chapter has provided a cross-national study on a larger sample than in the ones previously investigated, including also countries that would be excluded if analysing support for populist parties.

In conclusion, this chapter has aimed to provide cross-country evidence of the connection between support for popular sovereignty and economic factors. It has provided evidence on a larger variety of European contexts, exploiting the multilevel structure of the data to account for contextual effects that previous research design could not take into account. It has been found that economic factors related to egotropic mechanisms prevail over sociotropic mechanisms in explaining support for popular sovereignty. Moreover, it also showed that countries' wealth and economic openness are correlated with the rising or weakening of support for this populist idea. Overall, these findings suggest that indicators of economic grievances should not be dismissed by future studies when investigating support for populism.

NOTES

[1]https://edu.nl/p4q93
[2]https://edu.nl/ut6nc
[3]https://edu.nl/7kxgc

"[...] Hungarian nation is not a simple sum of individuals, but a community that needs to be organized, strengthened and developed, and in this sense, the new state that we are building is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not deny foundational values of liberalism, as freedom, etc.. But it does not make this ideology a central element of state organization, but applies a specific, national, particular approach in its stead." [1]

Speech by Hungarian Prime Minister, and leader of the party "FIDESZ" Viktor Orbán in 2014

"Germany and America are connected by values of democracy, freedom, and respect for the law and the dignity of man, independent of origin, skin color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or political views [...] I offer the next President of the United States close cooperation on the basis of these values." [2]

Speech by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in response to Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential elections 2016

"I get a growing feeling that liberal democracy is something we have taken for granted for too long." [3]

Per Ohlsson, Swedish columnist on local newspaper Sydsvenskan

4 Populism Against Liberal Democracy?

Testing Canovan's Theory about Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy

ABSTRACT

The latest developments in European politics have shown attempts from populist parties to dismantle the institutions of liberal democracy. While liberal institutions are essential for protecting principles such as individual freedom and the rule of law, populists are impatient towards its horizontal guarantees and advocate for the unmediated application of the people's will. In light of these facts, studying the relationship between institutions and support for populism is essential to understand populism's anti-institutional appeal. While scholars of populism have dedicated much theoretical effort to this aspect, empirical research has paid less attention to it. This chapter contributes to this literature by providing, for the first time, a test to Canovan's theory about populism and the two faces of democracy, where liberal institutional arrangements are identified under the *pragmatic face* of democracy, and populist democracy values are associated with the *redemptive face*. It tests three mechanisms connected to the theory: (I) *Populism against Pluralism*; (II) *Populism against Impotence of Democracy*; (III) *Populism against Limitations to Power*. Using multilevel

This chapter is a slightly adapted version of a manuscript currently under review in an international academic journal.

modelling, it tests whether high degrees of pragmatic politics increase support for populist parties across Europe and whether they increase support for these parties of highly politically dissatisfied citizens. The findings provide support for Canovan's theory under the second type of effects tested: institutional arrangements related to pragmatic politics increase the propensity to support populist parties of citizens with high political distrust. These findings have implications for both the empirical literature engaged with the role of institutions and the normative debate on the compatibility of populism with democracy.

1 • INTRODUCTION

Quotes like the one by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban are crystal-clear examples of how populism relates to the concept of liberal democracy (see page 104). Recent political developments have shown how populist actors are putting institutions of liberal democracy under considerable strain. In Hungary, Orban's party FIDESZ has undertaken since 2010 a series of constitutional reforms to strengthen the Prime Minister's power, removing a large part of checks and balances and undermining judiciary and media independence (Buzogány, 2017). In Poland, the government led by the populist party PiS, lacking the necessary majority to implement constitutional reforms, has undermined liberal constitutional structure by colonising independent institutions with party-loyalists (Pirro & Stanley, 2022). Similar attempts have also occurred amongst Western European democracies, although populists have proven less successful in shaping liberal democracies (A. Akkerman, 2021). In these cases, populist actors have undermined liberal principles mostly by pursuing anti-immigration policies and attacking press freedom and judicial independence (Holtz-Bacha, 2020; Petrov, 2020). With populism rising in consensus in multiple European democracies, concerns about the survival of liberal democracies such as the one expressed by the third quote shown at the beginning of this chapter are warranted.

Populist parties are extremely critical of liberal democracy (Müller, 2017; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014). Their model champions a crude ma-

joritarian type of democracy based on the will of the people (often embodied by a charismatic leader) and represents an illiberal version of democracy where principles such as individual rights (especially minority rights), pluralism, and the rule of law are viewed with impatience (Mudde, 2016). This contrast has been the subject of a long debate among populist scholars about whether populism is compatible with democracy. By virtue of its opposition to liberal democratic principles, many scholars have concluded that populism symbolises a danger to democracy for its application of crude majoritarianism and disregard for checks to government power (Abts & Rummens, 2007; Rostbøll, 2021; Urbinati, 1998). On the other hand, other scholars have argued that populism also can represent a corrective to liberal democracy (Arditi, 2004; Canovan, 1999; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012, 2013; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012, 2014). However, the main focus of this debate has been theoretical, while less attention from empirical research has been paid to how such institutions shape populist parties' opportunities to obtain consensus. Previous empirical research considered the role of proportionality in affecting the performances of extremist or radical parties (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Bustikova, 2014; Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996), but paid less attention to the relationship between populist ideology and democratic institutions.

This chapter addresses this research gap in the literature by providing for the first time an empirical test of Canovan (1999)'s theory on populism and the two faces of democracy. Briefly, the theory argues that populism emerges from the unresolved tension between *redemptive* and *pragmatic* faces of democracy. The contrast between these two opposing views of democracy lies not in idealism vs reality, as their names might suggest, but rather in what they idealise in democracy. *Pragmatic politics* pursues peace, stability, and moderation; *Redemptive politics* champions popular sovereignty and direct democracy. In this view, pragmatic politics is closer to liberal democratic principles, while populist democratic principles belong to redemptive politics. This inevitable tension constitutes a constant invitation for populist mobilisation, which follows democracy like a shadow (Canovan, 1999,

p. 10). Despite the seminal contribution of this theory to the literature (see figure 4.1), no previous studies provided an empirical test for it.

This chapter proposes to scrutinise Canovan's theoretical suggestions by investigating (I) *whether contexts characterised by high degrees of pragmatic politics increase support for populism in the general electorate* and (II) *whether such contexts increase especially the support of voters with high levels of political distrust*. Drawing on the democratic dilemmas outlined in Canovan's theory, this chapter examines three different mechanisms explaining how high degrees of pragmatic politics can increase support for populism: (I) *Populism against Pluralism*; (II) *Populism against Impotence of Democracy*; (III) *Populism against Limitations on Power*. It operationalises these aspects related to pragmatic politics using, respectively, the Lijphart (1994) Executive-parties dimension index, the KOF economic and political globalisation indices (Gygli et al., 2019), and the Checks on Government index (Idea, 2019). Employing multilevel modelling, this chapter analyses the effect of these factors on support for populist parties in Europe with data from the European Values Study/World Values Survey 1995-2017 (EVS/WVS) at the individual level, and contextual level data provided by the Comparative Political Dataset, the KOF globalisation index, and the Global State of Democracy indices. The findings support Canovan's theory under the perspective of pragmatic politics helping populist parties to attract support from politically dissatisfied citizens instead of from citizens in general. Specifically, pluralism, globalisation, and checks on government power all concur to strengthen the positive effect of political distrust on support for populist parties. By investigating how these institutional arrangements affect support for populism, this chapter contributes to the literature, firstly, by providing for the first time an empirical test to a very influential theory on populism and, secondly, by giving evidence of how liberal institutional arrangements affect support for populist parties.

This chapter is structured as follows: the first part outlines the democratic dilemmas, connecting them with contributions of later scholars in the field of populism, and it derives testable hypotheses; the second part describes data and research design adopted; the third part

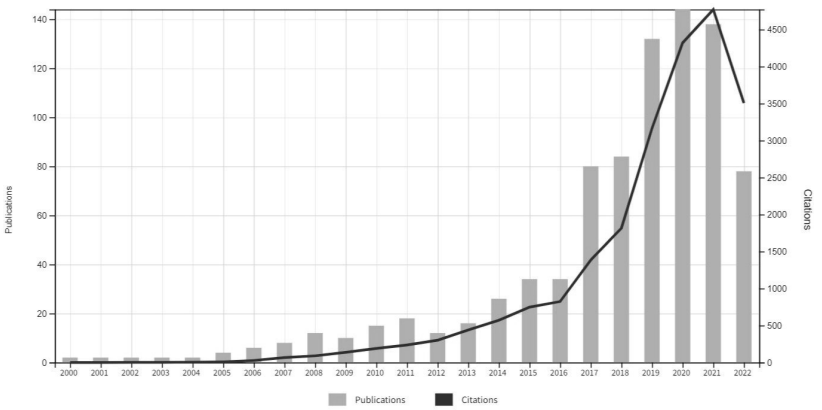

FIGURE 4.1 Number of publications that cited Canovan (1999) and the number of times cited over time. Source: Web of Science, retrieved on November 2022.

shows the results from the main empirical analyses; the fourth part discusses the findings, explains the implications for the literature, and indicates suggestions for future research.

2 • THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

This chapter examines whether populist parties receive higher support where institutional arrangements reflect what Canovan (1999)'s theory referred to as *pragmatic politics*. It provides an empirical test of Canovan's main argument that populism is more likely in democracies where there is an unsolved tension between the pragmatic and redemptive face of democracy. Indeed, both aspects refer to important features of democracy, and any unbalance in favour of one of the two produces risks. An excessive unbalance in favour of pragmatism carries the risk of a democracy being prey to only procedures and rules and hence unresponsive to constituencies' demands; while excessive redemptive politics bears the risk of a democracy based on crude majoritarianism and vulnerable to the volatility of popular will. Building on similar previous arguments made by Oakeshott (1996), Canovan argued that

the chances for populist mobilisation lie in the unsolved tensions between these two contrasting features of modern democracy. To show how this contrast materialises within modern democracies, Canovan outlines three dilemmas that show how democracies have a hard duty in balancing these two kinds of politics:

(I) The first source of tension is the opposition between democracy as the government of the people and democracy as a way of coping peacefully with conflicting interests (Canovan, 1999, p. 10). Namely, while for redemptive politics, a better world is achievable only through the action of the sovereign people, pragmatic politics holds a more disenchanted view where institutions are necessary to deal with the diversity of interests within its polity. This contrast shows redemptive politics' impatience with pluralistic models of democracy, where the institutions of representative democracy that articulate the diverse interests of a polity are looked at with suspicion by sympathisers of redemptive politics. Democracy is the people's government intended as a homogeneous entity, and this idea is at odds with the pragmatic conceptions of multiple interests competing for political power. In this gap, populism can find potential for its redemptive call to speak for the legitimate authority of the people as a homogeneous entity.

(II) The second source of tension occurs between the power of the sovereign people and the impotence of democracy (Canovan, 1999, p. 12). The redemptive ideal of popular sovereignty implies that democratic governments can fully control their destiny by applying the will of the people. However, in the view of pragmatic politics, governments often have minimal ability to exert this control given the complexity that characterises contemporary politics. One example is globalisation: the more governments are interconnected with the global economy, the more they are exposed to events out of their control. When this interconnection results in economic crises, democratic systems become vulnerable to populist redemptive claims. If the elected government cannot protect the people's interests, power must be returned to the people. Another example is supranational institutions: the more governments are tied with global organisations through agreements and treaties, the more they are tied in their policy-making by entities that

are not elected. Such interdependence may be looked at with frustration by citizens who believe that the only legitimate authority is the democratically elected government. Therefore, this democratic deficit offers another opportunity for the advance of populism.

(III) The final source of tension between institutional and direct democracy (Canovan, 1999, p. 13). Institutions are important to make democratic power effective and lasting, but redemptive views of democracy are impatient with institutions getting in the way of the people's will. Pragmatic politics sees democracy as viable only through institutions, rules, and practices, but populism is intolerant of mediating institutions and advocates for models of direct democracy. Such contrast paves the way for a crisis of institutions' legitimacy. While institutions are indeed important to solve political disputes without violence, they also need to be legitimised by their polity in order to carry out their function. In this case, therefore, the contrast lies between institutionalism and direct democracy. Canovan mentions the judicial system as an example (Canovan, 1999, p. 14): while judicial institutions are meant to ensure equal protection of the law to citizens, they often conflict with the popular sense of justice. Thus, populists' redemptive politics advocates for forms of democracy where the *Vox Populi* is unmediated and, often, embodied by charismatic leadership. In other words, populists are impatient towards the role of institutions in putting constraints on the power of the majority. In this view, a democratic system composed of checks and balances alienates the people's will and creates the premises for populist' party mobilisation.

In the next sections, this chapter connects the suggestions from these three dilemmas with insights into subsequent literature on populism and the available empirical studies on the matter. It will refer to these three dilemmas as (I) *populism against pluralism*; (II) *populism against the impotence of democracy*; (III) *populism against limitations of power*.

Populism against pluralism

The first contrast portrayed by Canovan resonates with the arguments of Taggart (2002, 2004) where populism opposes the institutions of

representative politics. Populism criticises representative politics' complexity, opacity, and bureaucracy and advocates for more straightforward and direct forms of democracy (Taggart, 2002, p. 75). Political parties are perhaps the main target of the populist critic of representative politics. Populists exploit the erosion of the legitimacy of parties in their mediation role by proposing a model of popular democracy without parties (Mair, 2002, p. 91). They accuse political parties of creating fictional divisions within the homogeneous people they represent (Mudde, 2004, p. 546). Populism rejects the notion of pluralism (Mudde, 2017), intended as the divergence of interests, as illegitimate by appealing to the legitimate authority of the people (Rostbøll, 2021). Thus, in the shortcomings of representative politics populists find room for their claim to embody the ruled reacting to their rulers. Following these arguments, populist parties should find the ideal breeding ground in political systems that facilitates the political representation of multiple interests.

Previous research has largely examined the effects of permissive electoral laws on the electoral performances of radical or extremist parties, arguing that low representation thresholds and high district magnitudes facilitate these parties (Golder, 2016). Informed by Duverger (1954) law, the main explanation advanced is that permissive electoral systems encourage small-party voting, as voters are less concerned about wasting their vote, while non-permissive systems encourage voters to vote instrumentally (Golder, 2003; Van der Brug et al., 2005) by opting for bigger parties. However, the evidence in support of this hypothesis has been inconclusive. Some studies have shown that support for these parties increases under permissive electoral systems (Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Swank & Betz, 2003) and that they win fewer seats in disproportional systems (Givens, 2005; Norris, 2005); while other studies have found negative or no effects (Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Bustikova, 2014; Van der Brug et al., 2005). Despite most of these analyses involved populist parties, their frameworks did not consider implications related to their populist ideology but rather focused on voters' utility considerations.

Studies on the effects of institutions on citizens' support for their political system provide some helpful suggestions about the potential effects of consensual systems on support for populism. This literature typically refers to open systems (low representational barriers, proportionality, multi-party governments) as consensus democracies, whereas their opposite model is represented by the majoritarian democracy (Lijphart et al., 1999). While consensus democracies are characterised by a system where multiple groups can easily find political representation and by coalition governments, majoritarian democracies tend to establish clear winners from elections by limiting representation. Consensus democracies prioritise inclusiveness over the stability of governments; majoritarian democracies champion electoral accountability with arrangements that establish clear winners from elections. Several previous research has found that consensus democracies generally increase citizens' satisfaction with their democracy as a result of the more inclusiveness of these systems compared to the majoritarians (Anderson et al., 2005; Christmann & Torcal, 2018; D. M. Farrell & McAllister, 2006; Lijphart, 1994; Lijphart et al., 1999). However, other studies have found no effect over time (Ezrow & Xezonakis, 2011) or that majoritarian systems produced higher citizen satisfaction than consensus systems (Martini & Quaranta, 2015; Quaranta & Martini, 2016; Singh, 2014).

It has been argued that voters can consider representation or accountability as valuable elements of a political system (Carey & Hix, 2011). Scholars argued that accountability is also an important criterion for citizens' satisfaction, which is easier to find in majoritarian systems, while coalition governments often make accountability difficult for voters (Lundell, 2011). Similar conclusions have been reached by Christmann and Torcal (2018), who found that government and party fractionalisation increased citizens' dissatisfaction over time. Other studies have found similar evidence pointing to a curvilinear relationship happening between citizens' support for their system and the number of effective parties (Berggren et al., 2004; Marien, 2011). Moreover, Anderson and Guillory (1997) argued that while

consensus democracy might in general increase citizens' satisfaction, it can decrease winners' satisfaction due to the lack of a clear winner in elections from such systems.

Although examining populist voting was not in the research agenda of these studies, they could suggest how the dissatisfaction generated in consensus systems can fuel support for populist challengers ready to cash citizens' frustration with the lack of clear accountability of these systems. Citizens could perceive their efficacy in terms of influencing politics as weak, as both policy-making and the formation of executives are more resulting from elite bargaining rather than elections outcome (Blais, 2007). Moreover, such systems could increase the appeal of populist parties to politically dissatisfied voters as a result of the proportional nature of such systems, which favours shared governments but weakens the link between electoral outcomes and accountability of elites in power (Ashworth, 2012; Schulte-Cloos & Leininger, 2022). Such systems where pluralism might be seen by voters as complicating the representational process could facilitate the claim of populist parties to represent the more homogenous group of 'the people'. Criticism of the complex method of political decision-making of representative politics is often present in populist discourses where they accuse mainstream politics of failing in reaching socioeconomically underprivileged portions of society (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). In light of these suggestions, this chapter will test the following two hypotheses.

> **H.1:** The more a political system is consensual, the higher the likelihood of supporting a populist party
>
> **H.2:** The more a political system is consensual, the higher the likelihood of supporting a populist party of voters with high political distrust

Populism against the impotence of democracy

The theoretical literature on populism identifies globalisation as one

of the main causes of populists' rise due to the severe limitation it imposes on national elites (Mair, 2002; Mudde, 2004, p. 555). Populists denounce the unaccountability to the people of the 'independent authorities' that regulate the global market instead of the representative governments (Mény & Surel, 2001, p. 11). By creating a 'politics of simplicity', populists attempt to reassert the primacy of popular sovereignty and reject the complications deriving from a globalised world (Taggart, 2004). They refer to the interference of external actors in national business who are not legitimated by the people's choice as examples of democratic deficit. Moreover, globalisation provides mobilisation opportunities to populists by creating a new structural conflict between globalisation losers and winners (Kriesi, 2014b, p. 369). By appealing to the 'losers', populist parties campaign against the consequences of globalisation and promise to regain control of nations' destiny by getting back power to the people.

Previous research has shown that opposition to open trade increase voting for populist parties (e.g., Van der Waal & De Koster, 2018). Other studies also found that trade shocks and automation were more likely to increase support for radical right parties and nationalistic policies (Anelli et al., 2019; Colantone & Stanig, 2018b; Dorn et al., 2020; Swank & Betz, 2003). The main argument is that voters of populist parties hold protectionist views concerning national economic policy. Another study from Colantone and Stanig (2018a) has shown how support for Brexit was stronger in areas heavily hit by economic globalisation. Moreover, following the losers of globalisation theory (Kriesi et al., 2006), populist parties attract the support of voters whose interests are harmed by the consequences of globalisation by opposing it. Especially low-skilled voters who are more likely to suffer the consequences of a globalised economy are hypothesised to be highly supportive of populist challengers. However, these studies considered the economic and cultural consequences of globalisation, while they paid less attention to voters' dissatisfaction with governments' lack of control over national performances or policy-making.

It has been suggested that globalisation affects the relationship between countries' economic performances and electoral accountabil-

ity. Mair (2013) argued that the influence of global markets and international institutions limits the manoeuvring room of political actors at the national level. The ability of voters to hold governments accountable for their performance is the main tenet of the economic voting theory (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000). It is implied within this theory that the relationship between government popularity and their performance is dependent on citizens' perception of responsibility for the economy rather than on objective economic conditions (Hernández & Kriesi, 2016). Some studies have shown evidence that voters in open economies make their choices giving less importance to the country's economic performance (Fernández-Albertos, 2006; Hellwig, 2008; Hellwig & Samuels, 2007). Hellwig and Samuels (2007) argued that higher economic interdependence of a country decreases voters' perceptions of their political elite being able to influence the national economy. Citizens' scepticism can also be facilitated by politicians' behaviour in taking responsibility for their policy-making, as globalisation provides them with an optimal excuse for shifting blame when the economy is in dire times (Mudde, 2004, p.556). In addition, international trade agreements between countries can be criticised by populists as the result of agreements between untrustworthy political elite (Van der Waal & De Koster, 2018). Mainstream parties might be in trouble in their attempt to behave as responsible agents to supranational institutions and, at the same time, explain their decisions to their voters (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). Thus, globalisation might facilitate populist support by facilitating their anti-institutional campaign against their plans to further embed with the global market or with supranational institutions. Given these suggestions, the following two hypotheses will be tested:

> **H.3:** The higher the levels of economic (H.3a) and/or political (H.3b) globalisation in a country, the higher the likelihood of supporting a populist party
>
> **H.4:** The higher the levels of economic (H.4a) and/or political (H.4b) globalisation in a country, the higher the

likelihood of supporting a populist party of voters with high political distrust

Populism against limitations to power

Populism is intolerant towards the counterweights set by constitutional arrangements to unbalanced supremacy of the people. It sees with suspicion these limitations to power that aim to protect citizens from government and arbitrary exercise of power and dismisses them as obstacles to enacting the will of the majority embodied by 'The people'. In this view, liberal democratic institutions and their representatives are often the scapegoats of populists' failures to deliver on their promises (Mény & Surel, 2001, p. 9). In this perspective, populism constitutes a reaction to an excess of constitutionalism and its horizontal guarantees in terms of rights, especially for minorities (Taggart, 2002, p. 66). Thus, the tension described by Canovan finds expression in the tension between popular and constitutional pillars of democracy (Mény & Surel, 2001) or between constitutionalism and representation (Taggart, 2002). Following this intuition, excessive limitations to power provided by constitutionalism and institutions provide another gap for populist mobilisation.

Other scholars pointed out that populists do not necessarily reject the concept of constitutionalism itself but rather liberal constitutionalism (Blokker, 2018; Muller, 2017; Urbinati, 2017). Populism constitutionalism provides an authoritarian and potentially despotic answer to liberal democracy (Blokker, 2018). In cases where they obtained overwhelming majorities (e.g., Hungary, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador), populists modified the previous liberal constitutions and rewrote new ones where the homogeneous popular will is less constrained by checks and balances and division of power (Muller, 2017, p. 598). These new constitutions ultimately helped populists consolidate their power further rather than enhancing popular participation and connection with power. By making constitutions continuously open to emendation, manipulating the definition of who constitutes the people, and re-engineering requirements to access important institutions (e.g.,

constitutional courts), populists can reinvent the rule of the game to keep them in power. Such experiences have supported further claims that populism is a fundamental danger to liberal democracy (Abts & Rummens, 2007; Urbinati, 2017).

This aspect has been less considered in empirical research. Findings from research on the role of institutions suggest that the constitutional design of consensus democracies increases citizens' support for their system because it allows political minorities to participate more in daily politics and to interfere with legislation (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Wagner et al., 2009). In such systems, minorities feel more empowered by the possibility of having a voice in politics. Having more accessible opportunities for political representation, minorities obtain some bargaining positions allowing them to access economic resources to distribute to their constituencies. While majoritarian democracies concentrate power in the hands of the majority, consensus democracies aim to achieve as much consensus possible by limiting majority rule and by sharing and limiting political power (Lijphart, 1994, p. 2). Constitutional designs can explicitly limit or allow political representation based on more specific minority status, such as ethnic minorities (Ruiz-Rufino, 2013). However, findings of a satisfaction gap between winners and losers in democracies show that winners are more satisfied under majority constitutional designs than consensual (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Ruiz-Rufino, 2013). The main explanation for such a differential in satisfaction is the lack of a clear winner in consensus democracies, where executives need to share their power with other groups, thus limiting their power. This argument suggests that the constitutional design of these systems might create the margin of political dissatisfaction that populists need to undermine the legitimacy of the institutional process.

An excessively complex constitutional design could increase the sentiments of political alienation of citizens. As suggested in another work of Canovan (2002): while democratic institutions pursue their mission of *bringing the people into politics*, they also increase the level of complexity required by their systems, thus failing in *taking politics to the people*. In the populist understanding of democracy, political

control through effective opposition and institutions is seen as nothing but an obstacle to the implementation of the people's will (Huber & Schimpf, 2017). While the horizontal guarantees of liberal-democratic institutions are considered a pragmatic necessity to protect individual rights (especially minority rights), citizens could perceive these guarantees as illegitimate and shifting away power from the elected majority. A constitutional design characterised by several checks on the power of government might cause increasing frustration among citizens and populists can push their rhetoric of an illegitimate system to attract voters from politically dissatisfied constituencies. Therefore, the following two hypotheses will be tested:

> **H.5:** The higher the checks to limit government power, the higher the likelihood of supporting a populist party
>
> **H.6:** The higher the checks to limit government power, the higher the likelihood of supporting a populist party of voters with high political distrust

3 • DATA AND METHODS

To test these hypotheses, this chapter deploys data from the EVS/WVS Integrated Values Surveys (EVS, 2021; Haerpfer et al., 2021). Specifically, it uses four waves of the World Values Survey data (1994-1998, 2005-2009, 2010-2014, 2017-2019) and two of the European Values Study data (2008-2010, 2017-2020). The final sample covers European contexts from 26 countries ranging from 1996 to 2018[1]. The contexts

[1] The following list shows the countries included and the year of the survey between parentheses: Austria (2008, 2018); Belgium (2009); Bulgaria (2006, 2008, 2017); Croatia (2017); Czech Republic (2008, 2017); Denmark (2008, 2017); Estonia (2018); Finland (1996, 2005, 2009, 2017), France (2018); Germany (2008, 2013, 2017); Greece (2008), Hungary (2008, 2009, 2018); Ireland (2008); Italy (2009, 2018); Lithuania (2008, 2018); Luxembourg (2008); Netherlands (2008, 2012, 2017); Norway (1996, 2007, 2008, 2018); Poland (2005, 2008, 2012, 2017); Romania (2005, 2008, 2012, 2018); Slovakia (2008, 2017), Slovenia (2005, 2008, 2011, 2017); Spain (2017); Sweden (2011, 2017); Switzerland (1996, 2007, 2008, 2017); Great Britain (2018).

have been selected depending on the availability of (I) voting intentions for populist parties and (II) key independent variables at individual and contextual levels. The contextual-level data are taken from the Comparative Political Dataset (CPD) (Armingeon et al., 2022), the KOF Globalisation index dataset (Gygli et al., 2019), and the Global State of Democracy Dataset (Idea, 2019).

Individual-level variables

The dependent variable is *support for a populist party*, obtained from two EVS/WVS survey questions that asked respondents (I) *which party they would vote for if there were elections tomorrow* (all WVS survey waves and 2008-2010 EVS survey wave), and (II) *which party appeals the most to the respondents* (covered by the 2017-2020 EVS survey). Although the two questions have different wording, they both should gauge respondents' party preferences at the time of the survey. As the variable is a self-reported measure, it is important to note that underestimation due to social-desirability bias might occur, especially given the nature of the political parties under investigation (Hooghe & Reeskens, 2007; John & Margetts, 2009). That said, these WVS/EVS survey questions remain the most suitable, although imperfect, measures for the purposes of this chapter.

Populism is undoubtedly a debated concept in the literature. To further adapt to the empirical test of Canovan's arguments, this chapter follows her definition of populism as "an appeal to 'the people' against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society" (Canovan, 1999, p. 3). This definition emphasises the lowest common denominator shared by all manifestations of populism and strictly relates to the *ideational approach* (Mudde, 2004, 2017; Stanley, 2008). Given the variety of contexts under analysis, this chapter follows the indications of The PopuList (Rooduijn et al., 2019) for the coding of populist parties across Europe[2]. Political

[2] https://popu-list.org/

parties classified as 'Populist' are considered populist parties, regardless of the influence of far-right or far-left ideology[3].

The main individual-level variable is *political distrust*. Many studies argued that populist voting, given the anti-political campaign of these parties, is connected with citizens' distrust towards political institutions (Bélanger, 2017; Betz, 1994; Rooduijn & Burgoon, 2018). To measure this concept, this chapter uses an index composed of three items gauging respondents' confidence level in three political institutions: the parliament, the government, and the political parties[4]. All items measure respondents' confidence in these institutions with an ordinal scale ranging from 0 'A great deal' to 3 'Not at all'. Thus, a higher score on this index indicates that respondents show high levels of political distrust. This variable is also used to test the hypotheses related to the cross-level interaction effect with the contextual level variables.

The analyses include individual-level control variables that are usually associated with support for populist parties. First, the models include respondents' sociodemographic characteristics such as *Gender* (0 'Male', 1 'Female'), *Age* (linear and squared); *Education* (recoded in three categories: 0 'Low', 1 'Medium', 2 'High'); *Household income* (recoded in four categories: 0 'Low', 1 'Medium', 2 'High', 3 'Missing'); and *Unemployment status* (0 'Not unemployed', 1 'Unemployed'). Previous research has found populist parties over-represented among males (Harteveld et al., 2015; Immerzeel & Pickup, 2015; Spierings & Zaslove, 2017), and lower educated (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers et al., 2002; Werts et al., 2013), while unemployment status produced more mixed results (Rooduijn & Burgoon, 2018; Van Elsas, 2017). Second, the models also control for respondents' sociopolitical attitudes such as *Social trust* (0 'Most people can be trusted', 1 'Can't be too careful'); *Authoritarianism* measured as an ordinal variable measuring whether respondents positively value strong leadership in a political system (0 'Very good' - 3' Very bad'); and *Nationalism* (0 'Not

[3] See table C.1 in the appendix for the list of populist parties covered by this chapter
[4] Cronbach's alpha: 0.842

at all proud of [nationality]' - 3 'Very proud of [nationality]'). Previous research has shown that voters with low social capital (Berning & Ziller, 2017; Gidron & Hall, 2020), authoritarian attitudes (Donovan, 2019), and nationalist attitudes (Dunn, 2015) are more likely to support populist parties.

Country-year level variables

This chapter operationalises Canovan's *pragmatic politics* using three different measures at the country-year level. The first uses the Lijphart et al. (1999) *Executive-parties dimension index* provided by the CPD to measure the level of consensual democracy in a context. Consensual democracy should best represent what Canovan described in the attrition between populism and pluralism. Consensual systems are indeed characterised by ideas of political representation of multiple interests and sharing of government power. The variable is a time-variant proxy for Lijphart's first dimension 'Executive-parties' provided by the CPD, and it is composed of four indices: (I) number of effective parties in parliament; (II) absence of minimal winning and single-party majority cabinets; (III) proportionality of electoral systems (Gallagher, 1991); (IV) average cabinet duration (cabinet dominance). Overall, the index considers both societal cleavages (Number of parties), institutions (proportionality), and elite behaviour (coalition building and cabinet dominance). A higher score on this index indicates political systems closer to consensus democracies, while lower scores belong more to majoritarian democracies. The former systems are commonly characterised by higher levels of pluralism than the latter.

The second variable measures the degrees of economic interdependence and political interdependence of a country using data from the *KOF Globalisation index* (Gygli et al., 2019). For the former, this chapter uses the *Economic Globalisation index*, while for the latter it uses the *Political Globalisation index*. Both indices combine both *de jure* and *de facto* aspects of globalisation in the attempt to include, on the one hand, the policies in place to enhance/restrict globalisation

and, on the other hand, the actual levels of globalisation of a context. The Economic Globalisation Index combines sub-dimensions related to trade and financial globalization, both of which are gauged de jure and de facto. It taps into the flows of capital and goods of a country, and policies that facilitate and promote trade flows and foreign investments between countries. The Political Globalisation Index taps into the amount of foreign influence in a country (in terms of UN Peacekeeping missions, number of embassies and international NGOs) and the ability to engage in international political cooperation (number of multilateral treaties signed, number of memberships in international organizations and treaty partner diversity). The higher the score of these two indices, the higher the level of the kind of globalisation they measure.

The third variable uses the index of *Checks on Government* provided by the Global Democracy Dataset. The variable is a composite indicator that measures the extent to which executive power is subject to scrutiny by other branches of government (legislative and judiciary) and/or critical and pluralistic press. In detail, the index includes several indicators related to three aspects: (I) the extent to which the legislature is capable of overseeing the executive; (II) the extent to which the courts are not subject to undue influence from the other branches of government, especially the executive; (III) the extent to which the media landscape offers diverse and critical coverage of political issues. The higher the score on this index, the more executive power is put under scrutiny by other democratic institutions.

Finally, the analyses also include control variables for the contextual level. *GDP growth*, *unemployment rate*, and *social security transfers (%GDP)* provided by the CPD are used to control the results for effects due to macroeconomic conditions. Numerous previous studies have investigated the connection between economic hardship and populist parties' electoral performances and produced mixed results (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Knigge, 1998; Lubbers et al., 2002; March & Rommerskirchen, 2015). Finally, the *share of employment in the industrial sector* is also considered to control

for support for populism due to the higher presence of manual workers in a context. Table C.3 in the appendix shows the summary statistics of the variables used in this study.

Analytical strategy

This chapter employs multilevel logistic regression modelling to test whether high degrees of pragmatic politics significantly affect the likelihood of supporting a populist party. After list-wise deletion of missing cases, the multi-level design of the analysis includes two levels of analysis, with 68,359 individuals nested in 59 country-year clusters representing the contextual levels. The models apply sampling weights to adjust individuals' probabilities of being included in the sample.

The test of the hypotheses will be performed as follows. First, the model containing only the dependent variable is fitted to estimate the amount of variance at the country-year level of the dependent variable. The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient from this model showed that at least 26.80% of the dependent variable's variation is due to the country-year clustering. Second, the models estimate the fixed effects at the individual and country-year levels. By adding the contextual level variables of interest, the models will test H.1, H.3a and H.3b, and H.5. The hypotheses concerning the cross-level interaction effects (H.2, H.4a and H.4b, and H.6) are tested by allowing the variation of the political distrust variable across country-year clusters and adding a covariance term between the random slope and the random intercept. These last models include the control variables but show the estimate of only the coefficients of the variables involved in the interactions[5]. Models fit is assessed by observing the variation in the explained variance compared to the variance of the empty model[6], Log-likelihood, and the AIC and BIC information criteria. Finally, the Average Marginal Effects (AME) of political distrust conditional on the contextual vari-

[5] See table C.3 in the appendix for the estimates of the complete models

[6] for the cross-level interactions, the comparison is given by the model including political distrust as random slope without interactions

ables of the hypotheses are plotted to facilitate the interpretation of the cross-level interaction effects.

4 • RESULTS

The results of the multilevel logistic regression analyses are shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. Table 4.1 reports the odds ratio of the fixed effects concerning individual and contextual level variables, including those related to the hypotheses. Table 4.2 lists the odds ratio of the variables included in the cross-level interaction effects tested. The dependent variable analysed in all the models is whether respondents have expressed support for a populist party.

The first group of variables of table 4.1 pertains to the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents. As expected, years spent in full-time education (OR = 0.985, $p < 0.001$) and being a female (OR = 0.726, $p < 0.001$) are negatively associated with support for populist parties. On the other hand, unemployment status and income levels yield no significant effects on the dependent variable. The effects of age as linear (OR = -0.005, $p < 0.01$) and quadratic (OR = 1.000, $p < 0.001$) indicate that age has a curvilinear effect on the dependent variable, with younger and middle-aged respondents‘ more likely to support a populist party than older respondents. Moreover, the other individual-level variables in Model 1 refer to respondents' sociopolitical attitudes. Somewhat surprisingly, the results of the political distrust coefficient show a positive but not statistically significant effect. Respondents who have reported low social trust have significantly higher chances of supporting a populist party than those who have high social trust (OR = 1.578, $p < 0.001$). Authoritarian (OR = 1.187, $p < 0.001$) and nationalist (OR = 1.211, $p < 0.001$) attitudes are associated with higher chances of showing support for a populist party. Finally, looking at the effect of contextual level variables, only GDP growth (OR = 0.860, $p < 0.05$) has a significant effect among the contextual level variables included: the more a context is in economic growth, the fewer respondents are likely to support populist parties on average. The effects of all these variables hold stable across all the

TABLE 4.1 Multilevel logistic regression analyses of support for populist parties on individual and contextual characteristics (N=68,359; Country-years=59). Odds ratios reported.

Variables	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
Years in full-time education[a]		0.985***	0.985***	0.984***	0.985***	0.985***	0.985***
Gender (Ref. Male)							
Female		0.726***	0.726***	0.726***	0.726***	0.726***	0.726***
Age[a]		0.995**	0.995**	0.995**	0.995**	0.995**	0.995**
Age squared		1.000***	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***
Unemployment status		1.091	1.091	1.091	1.091	1.091	1.091
Income (Ref. Low income)							
Medium income		1.015	1.015	1.015	1.015	1.015	1.015
High income		0.908	0.908	0.908	0.908	0.908	0.908
Missing		0.695***	0.695**	0.695**	0.695**	0.695**	0.695**
Political distrust		1.164	1.164	1.164	1.164	1.164	1.163
Social Trust (Ref. Most people can be trusted)							
Can't be too careful		1.578***	1.577***	1.577***	1.578***	1.576***	1.576***
Authoritarian attitudes		1.187***	1.187***	1.187***	1.187***	1.187***	1.187***
Nationalist attitudes		1.211***	1.211***	1.211***	1.211***	1.211***	1.211***
GDP Growth		0.860*	0.853**	0.835**	0.860*	0.839**	0.823**
Unemployment (%)[a]		1.044	1.039	1.048	1.043	1.024	1.033
Employment in Industrial sector (%)[a]		1.025	1.024	1.022	1.025	1.026	1.022
Social Security Transfers (% GDP)[a]		0.930	0.919	0.935	0.930	0.947	0.947
Executive-parties dimension Index			0.843				0.933
Political Globalisation Index[a]				0.976			0.981
Economic Globalisation Index[a]					0.998		1.011
Checks on Government Index[a]						0.977	0.978
Constant	3.336***	2.957***	2.886***	2.915***	2.957***	2.783***	2.733***
Random effects							
var(Country-year)	1.205***	1.084***	1.060***	1.070***	1.084***	1.024***	1.005***
Pseudo R^2 Country-year		10.01%	12.03%	11.20%	10.02%	15.04%	16.56%
Model fit							
AIC	53,275.436	51,976.698	51,977.390	51,977.904	51,978.692	51,975.606	51,980.537
BIC	53,293.701	52,141.083	52,150.908	52,151.422	52,152.210	52,149.124	52,181.452
df		16	17	17	17	17	20
Log-likelihood	-26,635.718	-25,970.349	-25,969.695	-25,969.952	-25,970.346	-25,968.803	-25,968.268

$^{*}\ p < 0.05$; $^{**}\ p < 0.01$; $^{***}\ p < 0.001$

[a] Centered variable

models fitted in the analysis. The variables included in M1, without the key variables concerning the hypotheses, account for 10,01% of the dependent variable's variance at the country-year level.

Furthermore, models 2, 3, and 4 of table 4.1 deal with the test of the hypotheses concerning the additive effect of contextual variables related to pragmatic politics. M2 tests H.1 concerning whether higher

TABLE 4.2 Multilevel logistic regression analyses of the Cross-Level Interactions with Political Distrust (N=68,359; Country-years=59). Odds ratios reported. Control variables omitted from the output.

Variable	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
Political distrust	1.501***	1.452***	1.627***	1.596***	1.590***
Executive-parties dimension index	0.900	0.478*	1.015	1.001	1.002
Political Globalisation Index	1.007	1.013	0.901*	1.014	1.012
Economic Globalisation Index	1.015	1.021	1.025	0.940	1.024
Checks on Government Index	1.023	1.022	1.021	1.022	0.924*
Executive-parties dimension index*Political distrust		1.242**			
Political Globalisation Index*Political distrust			1.037**		
Economic Globalisation Index*Political distrust				1.026*	
Checks on Government Index*Political distrust					1.031***
Constant	0.035***	0.040***	0.028***	0.030***	0.030***
Random effects					
var(Political distrust)	0.404***	0.388***	0.379***	0.389***	0.286***
Pseudo R^2		3.95%	6.09%	3.72%	29.25%
var(Country-year)	5.276***	5.221***	5.134***	5.268***	4.046***
Covariance Political distrust with Country-year	-1.357***	-1.318***	-1.287***	-1.325***	-0.967***
Model fit					
AIC	50,753.424	50,749.966	50,750.638	50,751.817	50,737.968
BIC	50,972.604	50,978.279	50,978.951	50,980.130	50,966.281
df	20	21	21	21	21
Log-Likelihood	-25,352.712	-25,349.983	-25,350.319	-25,350.908	-25,343.984

$^{*}\, p < 0.05$; $^{**}\, p < 0.01$; $^{***}\, p < 0.001$

levels of pluralism in a political system increase the likelihood of citizens supporting populist parties, using Lijphart's Executive-parties dimension index to measure consensus democracy. Contrarily from the hypothesised direction, the coefficient shows that highly pluralistic contexts decrease on average the chances to support a populist party, although the effect is not statistically significant. Including Lijphart's Executive-parties dimension index increases the portion of explained variance at the country-year level to 12.03%. Based on these results, H.1 does not find supporting evidence and therefore is rejected.

Models 3 and 4 test H.3a and H.3b concerning whether higher levels of economic or political interdependence of political systems increase support for populist parties on average. To test these hypotheses, the models include the KOF political and economic globalisation indices.

The coefficients are again in contrast with the direction hypothesised: both political and economic globalisation are negatively associated with support for populist parties. However, both of these effects are not statistically significant, and they do not appear to perform as well as the other models in terms of explained variance (respectively, 11.20% and 10.02%). Thus, in light of these results, H.3a and H.3b do not find supporting evidence and are rejected.

Finally, model 5 tests H.5 regarding whether political systems with high Checks on Government power increase support for populist parties on average. The model tests this hypothesis including the Checks on Government Index. The results are again in contrast with the hypothesised direction: the higher the checks on government, the less the likelihood of supporting a populist party. This effect is not statistically significant, yet this model performs better than the previous in terms of explained variance at the country-year level (15.04%). Therefore, H.5 is rejected as the results did not provide evidence to support it.

Table 4.2 shows the results concerning the test of hypotheses concerning the cross-level interactions. Model 6 specifies political distrust as a random effect, and it is used as a benchmark to compare the explained variance of this effect once cross-level interaction terms are considered. Once specified as a random slope, The effect of political distrust turns positive and statistically significant (OR = 1.501, $p < 0.001$) and the statistical significance of its variance shows that this effect is heterogeneous across country-year clusters. These results warrant the investigation of how contextual factors could moderate the effect of political distrust.

Moreover, models 7, 8, 9, and 10 show the results of the cross-level interaction effects. Model 7 deals with the test of H.2 and shows that the interaction term between political distrust and Lijphart's Executive-parties dimension index is positive and statistically significant (OR = 1.242, $p < 0.01$). Consensual systems reinforce the positive effect of political distrust on support for populist parties. Figure 4.2 (top-left panel) provides a graphical representation of the average marginal effect of political distrust across values of the Executive-parties dimension index. Political distrust has a negative but not significant effect on the

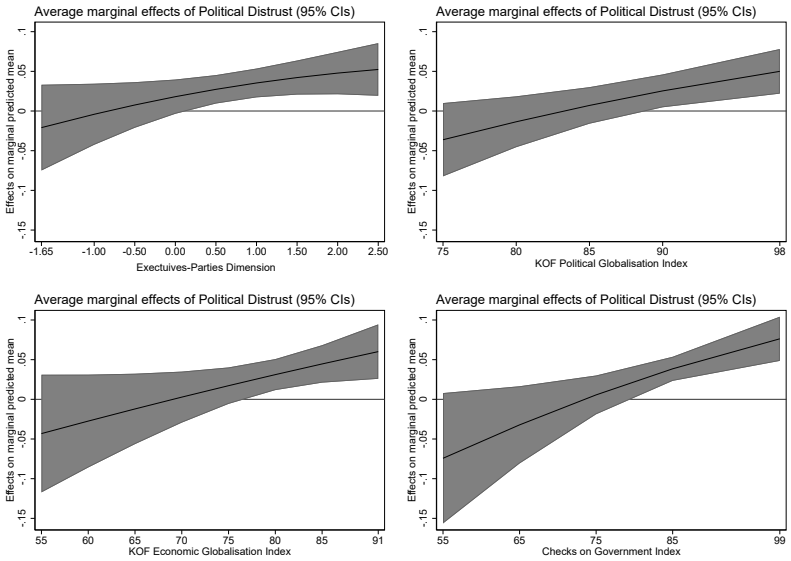

FIGURE 4.2 Average Marginal Effects of Political Distrust on Support for Populist Parties and 95% confidence intervals conditional on *Executive-parties dimension index*, *KOF Political Globalisation Index*, *KOF Economic Globalisation Index*, and *Checks on Government Index*.
Own calculations.

dependent variable in the lowest values of the index till becoming positive and statistically significant amongst the higher values. Each value of the political distrust scale increases chances to support a populist party by 5,2% ($p < 0.01$) in the most consensual systems (Executive-parties dimension index=2.5). This cross-level interaction accounts for 3.95% of political distrust effect variance across country-year levels. This result shows support for H.2: the more political systems are consensual, the higher the likelihood of supporting populist parties of politically dissatisfied citizens.

Models 8 and 9 test H.4a and H.4b and show the results concerning the cross-level interaction effects between political distrust and political and economic globalisation. The coefficients show that higher political

(OR = 1.037, $p < 0.01$) and economic globalisation (OR = 1.026, $p < 0.05$) have both positive and statistically significant interaction effects. Highly globalised contexts, therefore, increase the chances of politically dissatisfied citizens supporting populist parties. As visible in Figure 4.2 (top-right and bottom-left panel), whereas in low globalised contexts, the effect of political distrust is negative but not statistically significant, it gets positive and significant when globalisation is higher. Each value of the political distrust scale increases the likelihood of supporting populist parties by 5% ($p < 0.001$) when political globalisation is the highest (98) and by 6% when economic globalisation is the highest (91). Specifying these cross-level interactions explain, respectively, 6.09% and 3.72% of the political distrust effect variance. Thus, these results provide supporting evidence for hypotheses H.4a and H.4b: the higher political and economic interdependence, the higher the likelihood of supporting populist parties of politically dissatisfied citizens.

Model 10 tests H.6 and displays the results concerning the cross-level interactions between political distrust and checks on government power. The results show that the interaction with checks on government yields a positive and statistically significant effect (OR = 1.031, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the effect of political distrust gets stronger the more political systems apply balances and checks to their government. Similar to the previous interactions observed, figure 4.2 (bottom-right panel) shows that political distrust is positive and significant only among contexts with higher limitations on government power, increasing by 7.6% ($p < 0.001$) the chances of supporting populist parties for each value of the political distrust scale when the checks on government index is at its highest value (99). This cross-level interaction accounts for a large portion of the political distrust effect variance (29.25%). This result provides strong supporting evidence to H.6: the higher the balances and checks to government power, the higher the likelihood of supporting populist parties of politically dissatisfied citizens.

Finally, figure 4.3 shows the predicted probabilities of populist voting for different percentiles of the contextual variables observed. As can be noticed, the probability of supporting a populist party along the levels of political distrust increases across the 90th percentiles, to

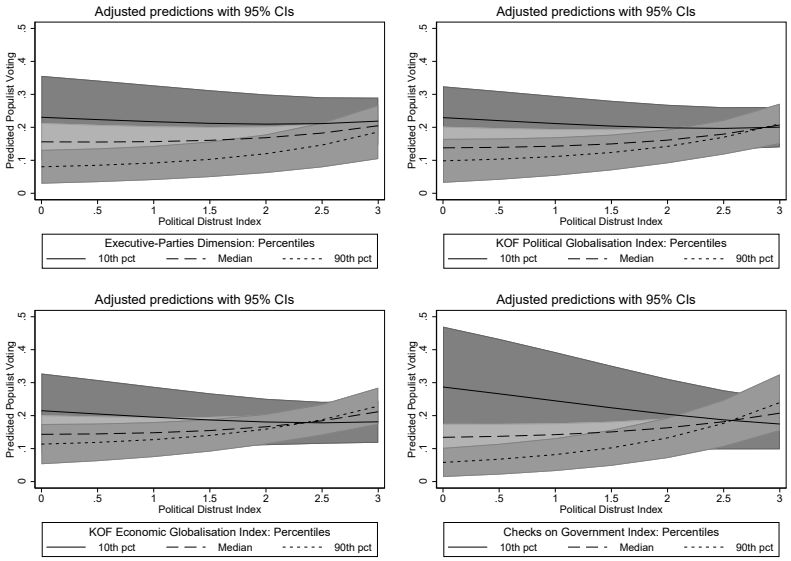

FIGURE 4.3 Predicted probabilities of populist voting conditional on percentiles of *Executive-parties dimension index*, *KOF Political Globalisation Index*, *KOF Economic Globalisation Index*, and *Checks on Government Index*. Own calculations.

a smaller extent in the median contexts, and in the 10th percentiles cases, the relationship tends to be slightly negative but with large confidence intervals. In the 90th percentiles, the probabilities increase from about 8% to 19% (executive-parties dimension), from about 10% to 21% (Political globalisation index), from about 12% to 23% (Economic globalisation index), and from about 6% to 24% (Checks on government index). Checks on government show the sharpest increase in probabilities, suggesting that populist parties are more successful in attracting politically dissatisfied voters where government power is heavily put under political control from the opposition, media, and independent institutions.

5 • DISCUSSION

This chapter departed from the several attacks from populist parties to the institutions of liberal democratic institutions of some European democracies. While it has been argued that populists represent a response to democratic dilemmas left unsolved (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014), their solutions aim at the dismantlement of vital institutions for democracy. The weakening of these institutions exposes European citizens to the risk of authoritarian forms of government. In light of these developments, this chapter has provided a contribution to the literature with an empirical test of Canovan (1999) theory on populism and the two faces of democracy. It analysed whether institutional features associated with *pragmatic politics* increase support for populist parties in general or by increasing the efficacy of its anti-institutional appeal. While Canovan's pragmatic politics is closely related to the institutions of liberal democracy (e.g., individual rights, rule of law, independent authorities), populism represents *redemptive politics* by prioritising the core values of a democracy (e.g., the will of the people, popular sovereignty, direct democracy). Overall, the findings suggest that Canovan's theory finds support more in terms of pragmatic politics increasing the anti-institutional appeal of populist parties instead of increasing general support for populist parties.

Regarding the contrast between populism and pluralism, the results have shown no support for H.1: consensual democracies (high numbers of political parties, high proportionality, ideologically diverse coalitions) do not significantly affect citizens' probability of supporting populist parties. This result contrasts with previous findings on effects of proportionality and support for radical or extremist formations (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Bustikova, 2014; Golder, 2003; Jackman & Volpert, 1996) but aligns with other studies which found no significant effects (Carter, 2013; Van der Brug et al., 2005). Differently from previous research, this chapter used Lijphart's Executive-parties dimension index to capture also other aspects than proportionality related to consensus democracy, which are the contexts that should most resemble highly pluralistic political systems. Although not signif-

icant, the effect found in this chapter was negative instead of positive, meaning that pluralistic contexts actually discourage support for a populist party. Previous studies explained positive relationships mainly from the perspective of small-party voting, where proportional systems should encourage support for small parties as voters are less concerned about wasting their votes. However, especially in recent years, populist parties hardly fit the category of small parties, making this argument less tenable (Golder, 2016). Also, as argued in Arzheimer and Carter (2006), voters might just be unaware of the rules of their electoral systems, or given the anti-establishment ideology of these parties, voters might be just less concerned with their votes being translated into seats. Future research interested in the effect of electoral institutions should take more into consideration the level of distrust in the system of anti-establishment parties' voters.

In line with this suggestion, the findings have provided support for H.2, showing that pluralism increases the probability of supporting populist parties of politically dissatisfied citizens. This chapter hypothesised that Canovan's suggestion on pluralism could operate by channelling the support of politically distrusted citizens towards populist parties. This result aligns with the expectations of populism as opposed to the institutions of representative politics (Mair, 2002; Taggart, 2002, 2004) and suggests that, in such contexts, populist parties are favoured by attracting more efficiently the support of politically dissatisfied citizens. Some support for this suggestion is provided by previous research that showed how consensus democracies with high party fragmentation can increase citizens' dissatisfaction with their system, especially among the winners (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Christmann & Torcal, 2018). Although more research is needed, the results of this chapter could indicate that populist parties can exploit citizens' impatience for consensus systems to attract support. Future research should thus consider whether the dissatisfaction of citizens' voting for winning parties in consensus systems could play a role in support for populism. In addition, further studies might investigate the interaction between such systems and citizens' satisfaction with democracy, an aspect that could not be covered by this chapter.

Findings regarding the direct effects of economic (H.3a) and political globalisation (H.3b) have shown no significant results, while their interactions with citizens' political distrust provided support to hypotheses 4a and 4b. Following Canovan's suggestions, this chapter expected that highly globalised contexts could increase the appeal of populist parties claiming to regain control of their democracy from external influences that have not been democratically elected. The lack of significant effects of globalisation on support for populism deviates from previous findings (Anelli et al., 2019; Colantone & Stanig, 2018b; Dorn et al., 2020; Swank & Betz, 2003). While this research could not include voters' occupation to control for indications from the losers of globalisation theory (Kriesi et al., 2006), the effect of the share of employed in the industrial sector did not significantly affect the propensities to support populist parties, indicating that globalisation may influence support for populism in non-trivial ways.

Nevertheless, the significant interactions with political distrust suggest that high globalisation could provide populist parties with another rhetorical device to attract politically dissatisfied citizens. Previous studies have argued that globalisation provides politicians with the perfect excuse to escape blame in case of poor economic performance, thus reducing electoral accountability (Hellwig & Samuels, 2007). Populists can exploit the disenchantment of citizens regarding their ruling elite by claiming to bring back a government which puts the nation back in control of its destiny, in line with expectations. Future research could investigate whether voters' support for protectionism might interact with the levels of economic globalisation of a country. Also, the results have shown that the interaction with political globalisation explained a larger portion of the political distrust effect variance than economic globalisation, paving the way for future studies on globalisation and democracy which might consider also this often neglected aspect of globalisation.

Finally, the findings concerning the checks and balances to government power provided no support for direct effects on support for populism (H.5). Canovan's theory suggested that when executives' power is subject to many limitations due to the constitutional design

of certain democracies, populism is likely to rise with its model of direct democracy. No previous study has investigated this aspect of institutional features. Although not significant, the analysis has shown contrary to what hypothesised that high balances and checks to government power tend to decrease the probability to support populist parties. Considering the suggestions from scholars of populism in power (Blokker, 2018; Muller, 2017; Urbinati, 2017), future research might investigate further this relationship by considering the active role that populist forces have in attempting to modify democratic rules and practices. When looking at populists' electoral performances, it looks indeed that these parties obtain more success where limitations to power are limited (e.g. Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland). However, recent political developments from these countries have also shown that once populist parties reach power they have an interest in reforming the constitutional asset in order to eliminate limitations to the executive and centralise power by removing independent authorities.

On the other hand, the strengthening of the political distrust effect when checks on government are higher provides support for H.6. Compared to the other interaction effects tested, checks on government explained a considerable part of the variation of the political distrust effect across contexts. This result aligns with the expectations of the democratic paradox argument of Canovan (2002): The more democracy is successful in its attempt of *bringing the people into politics*, the harder it becomes *taking politics to the people*. Namely, as democracy becomes more inclusive, its institutional settings become more complex and make it harder for citizens to have a clear picture. This argument is in line with other scholars' suggestions which see populism as a reaction to an excess of constitutionalism that overshadows the people's will (Mény & Surel, 2001; Taggart, 2002). Thus, populist actors might profit from citizens' frustration deriving from the complexity of institutional settings which continuously put executives' power under scrutiny. Also for this case, it might be worthwhile for further studies to investigate the interaction with citizens' satisfaction with democracy or political cynicism (Fieschi & Heywood, 2004).

In conclusion, despite the limitations in terms of cross-sectional

design and the lack of more refined measures at the individual level, the findings of this chapter provide a unique contribution to the literature on populism by applying the theoretical insights of Canovan's theory in the analysis of the relationship between populism and institutions. Overall, following Canovan's insights, these findings suggest that populism, instead of being an anomaly of democracies, finds room for mobilisation within the dilemmas that characterise modern democracies. Instead of stimulating directly populism, pragmatic institutional arrangements can contribute by channelling anti-institutional sentiments into support for populist parties. The gaps that remained uncovered by this research constitute an invitation for future research in the interaction between institutions and citizens' institutional trust. With growing levels of disaffection from politics and institutions, populist actors can always exploit their illiberal claims to attract a potentially large pool of voters across modern democracies. Political systems that want to defend the legitimacy of liberal institutions should therefore focus on policies able of *taking politics to the people* to improve citizens' understanding of the complexity that such institutions require, together with their benefits and problems.

NOTES

[1]https://edu.nl/q3pkc
[2]https://edu.nl/4gwfx
[3]https://edu.nl/n8bnf

"Discomfort will increase if people misuse our freedom, especially since they came to this country to enjoy those freedoms [...] I understand that people think: if you reject our country fundamentally, I'd rather see you go. I have the same feeling. Act normal or leave" [1]

Speech by Dutch Prime Minister and leader of the liberal party People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) Mark Rutte in 2017.

"For me, it is becoming increasingly clear that the price of unregulated globalisation, mass immigration and the free movement of labour is paid for by the lower classes." [2]

Speech by Danish Prime Minister and leader of the Danish centre-left party Social Democrats Mette Frederiksen in 2019.

"If you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere" [3]

Speech by former British Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party Theresa May in 2016.

5 Fighting Fire with Fire?

The Effect of Mainstream Parties' Competition for the Issue of Nativism on Support for Far-Right Populist Parties

ABSTRACT

The rise of Far-Right Populist Parties (FRPPs) has been linked to the increasing salience of immigration across Western Europe. The policy agenda of these parties is mainly characterised by nativism, which entails restrictive immigration positions and the promotion of traditional values. However, some examples of leaders of mainstream parties adopting similar stances on public occasions bring into question whether FRPPs can still manage to mobilise their voters successfully. This chapter investigates how mainstream parties' policy positions along the issue of nativism relative to FRPPs' positions affect individuals' support for FRPPs. It uses multilevel logistic modelling, with individual-level data from the ESS 2002-2018 and party-level data from the Manifesto Project. The core argument is that mainstream parties attempt to influence the voters' perceptions of which party owns the issue of nativism by adopting similar positions of FRPPs. Two divergent expectations are drawn based on extant literature: (I) adopting similar nativist stances harms FRPPs support (*delegitimising ownership effect*), or (II) co-opting nativism helps FRPPs support (*legitimising ownership effect*). The results show that mainstream parties' copying of FRPPs' positions produces little to no effect on the probability of

individuals supporting FRPPs. The findings show no significant direct effects on the general electorate. Yet, to a small extent, the probability of supporting FRPPs of voters with high anti-immigrant attitudes decreases the more mainstream parties adopt similar or greater nativist stances than FRPPs. Overall, the findings show that FRPPs suffer little losses from attempts by mainstream parties to mimic their nativism.

1 • INTRODUCTION

The last two decades of Western European politics have seen the progressive affirmation of Far-right populist parties (FRPPs). These parties challenged mainstream politics by opposing open immigration policies and advocating for traditional-based societies. It has been argued that these parties base their electoral success on their primacy on (conservative) sociocultural issues that mainstream parties have previously ignored in their programmes (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007). However, the quotes at the beginning of this chapter show some examples of political leaders of mainstream platforms who wink at nativist positions on the issue of immigration (see page 138). Such examples come from both centre-left and centre-right parties and showed that they could create some troubles for the electoral performances of FRPPs (e.g., Bodlos & Plescia, 2018; Economist, 2018; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020). These developments bring into question the connection between FRPPs' policy reputation and their electoral strength.

Based on extant literature, this chapter anticipates two competing expectations about how voters could react to such party competition dynamics between mainstream parties and FRPPs. On the one hand, voters may not trust the rapprochement of mainstream parties towards the FRPPs policy position, thus causing higher support for FRPPs (Eatwell, 2000) *legitimising effect*. In other words, when mainstream parties co-opt the issues of FRPPs, voters might prefer 'the original rather than the copy' (Arzheimer, 2009; Carvalho, 2019). Also, by approaching the FRPPs' anti-immigrant positions, mainstream parties could also operate as legitimisers of such positions to the broad

electorate and thus helping the electoral success of FRPPs (Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Bale, 2003; Golder, 2016). On the other hand, endangering the FRPPs' main policy positions could lure voters away from FRPPs *delegitimising effect*. Mainstream parties can attract voters due to the competitive advantage that these parties have compared to the FRPPs (Meguid, 2005, 2008). Voters might be attracted by the greater governmental experience of mainstream parties, which makes them more likely to bring policy change in the direction desired by voters. Also, mainstream parties have an advantage in terms of media coverage and access to the broader electorate through their established apparatus, which gives advantages them in advertising their positions during the electoral campaign.

This chapter addresses this topic by investigating how mainstream parties' positioning along the issue of nativism in comparison to FRPPs' affects the probabilities to support FRPPs. Specifically, this chapter inquires whether (I) *the adoption of similar or greater nativist position from mainstream parties affect the probabilities of supporting FRPPs of voters in general* and/or whether (II) *such dynamic affects the probabilities of supporting FRPPs only of voters with high anti-immigrant attitudes*. This chapter addresses these research questions by employing multilevel modelling where information about individuals is clustered within their respective electoral contexts. In detail, it uses the European Social Survey (ESS) data from 2002 to 2018 from 12 Western European countries for the individual level of the analysis. At the contextual level, it uses the Manifesto Project (MP) dataset (Volkens et al., 2017) to measure parties' policy positioning and obtain the extent to which mainstream parties are close to FRPPs' positions on nativism. Parties' position on nativism is gauged following the suggestions of Colantone and Stanig (2018b) and Lowe et al. (2011).

The findings show no significant evidence of a direct effect on the probabilities of supporting FRPPs in general, and limited evidence for what regards the probabilities of supporting such parties by the more anti-immigrant voters. While the adoption by centre-right and centre-left parties of similar or more nativist policy positions than FRPPs does not significantly affect the probability of supporting FRPPs of

the general electorate, they do so to a small extent when considering voters holding high anti-immigrant attitudes. When centre-right or centre-left parties adopt greater or similar nativist positions than FRPPs, voters with high anti-immigrant attitudes are less likely to support FRPPs. This evidence indicates that mainstream parties undermine FRPPs' electoral performances by attracting their more radical voters. However, such competition dynamics explain a small portion of the variation of the anti-immigration effect (about 5%) across the contexts analysed. Therefore, a large part of how FRPPs attract anti-immigration voters remains unexplained. These findings suggest that mainstream parties have almost nothing to gain from adopting positions closer to FRPPs. If something, they only manage to lure away some of the more anti-immigration-oriented voters.

The study is structured as follows. The first section reviews the relevant literature, explains the theoretical framework and formulates the hypotheses. The second explains the research design and the analytical strategy adopted. The third section reports the results of the analysis and the robustness checks. Finally, the fourth section summarises the findings and discusses their implication for future research.

2 • THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Far-right populism ideological basis and sources of support

The rise of FRPPs across Western Europe has often been associated with the increasing salience of immigration issues. Since the 1980s, a significant inflow of foreign immigration has involved Western European countries (Knigge, 1998; Swank & Betz, 2003). Several scholars argued that such a dramatic increase in the immigrant population brought many cultural and economic conflicts in Western European societies, providing mobilisation opportunities to FRPPs (Kriesi et al., 2008). On the one hand, it increased the sense of economic insecurity among social groups that perceive themselves as more likely to be threatened in their socioeconomic status by the competition with migrants (especially the low-skilled migrants). On the other hand, it

raised cultural anxiety among the more traditional strata of the native population due to the considerable cultural diversity of the migrant population.

FRPPs increasingly appeared across Western European democracies to collect the consensus of constituencies more against migrant groups and dissatisfied with the immigration policies advocated by mainstream politics. Although with some differences across countries in electoral profile, these parties share a common ideological core based on nativism (Mudde, 2007) and populism (Canovan, 1999; Mudde, 2004). On the one hand, unlike left-wing populism manifestations, FRPPs' campaigns are typically against migrant outgroups and open-immigration policies and emphasise the importance of traditional values and of a society based on such traditions. On the other hand, FRPPs ideology is based on the conflict between two allegedly homogenous groups in terms of morality: 'the pure people' vs 'the corrupt elite' (Mudde, 2017). FRPPs politicians claim to be on the side of the 'common citizen' that is unjustly oppressed by an illegitimate and unrepresentative ruling elite, and promise to restore the people's will once they will win the elections. In this view, the portrayal of the 'common people' corresponds with the 'native people', and the outgroup is not only represented by the migrants but also by a globalist elite who promotes multiculturalism as a value. The combination of nativism and populist anti-establishment rhetoric has probably allowed these parties to put aside the stigma characterising extreme right-wing formations and gave them access to broader electorates (Rydgren, 2005).

Thus, immigration plays an important role in FRPPs' discourses. These parties are considered the owners of the (anti-)immigration issue (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007) because their policy reputation is strictly related to immigration and constitutes their competitive advantage during the electoral campaign. It has been argued that FRPPs have contributed to raising the salience of immigration issues to exploit their competitive advantage (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Van Spanje, 2010). FRPPs' campaigns often adopt scapegoating narratives by blaming migrants for the country's worsening conditions (Cochrane & Nevitte, 2014; Golder, 2003; Knigge, 1998), emphasising family values

and a nationally oriented, immigrant-free way of life (Meguid, 2005). Their positions on economic policies are often ambiguous (Rovny, 2013), with some FRPPs advocating for neoliberal policies (Betz, 1994; McGann & Kitschelt, 2005) and others supporting redistribution and protectionist policies (Mudde, 2007). Research has shown how these parties promote welfare chauvinism (Enggist & Pinggera, 2022; Schumacher & Van Kersbergen, 2016), where wealth redistribution is mixed with a nativist discourse about who deserves social welfare benefits. Thus, under many accounts, FRPPs' electoral success is closely related to their nativist policy agenda which is not necessarily new but is radically different from established parties (De Vries & Hobolt, 2012).

Many studies have investigated the demand-side sources of FRPPs support. Under the well-known theoretical accounts of the Losers of Modernisation (Betz, 1994) and the Losers of Globalisation (Kriesi et al., 2008) theories, most studies have argued that FRPPs attract support mainly from the social groups that are more likely to suffer from the societal changes brought by these dynamics. These parties are more likely to be supported by young male voters, with a lower level of education, manual workers, unemployed, or self-employed (e.g., Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; J. A. Evans, 2005; Givens, 2005; Lubbers et al., 2002; Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012). One explanation advanced is the greater likelihood of these groups to compete with migrants for economic resources (Blalock, 1967; Olzak, 1994). Another explanation hints at cultural conflict explanations, suggesting that support for FRPPs is explained by ingroup-outgroup dynamics (Golder, 2016). Namely, these parties are able to mobilise voters by emphasising the incompatibility of immigrants' culture with the native population. Previous studies showed that individuals from these groups are often associated with stronger anti-immigrant attitudes (Scheve & Slaughter, 2001) and that perceptions of economic threat are often linked with anti-immigrant attitudes (Mayda, 2006; Sides & Citrin, 2007). Other previous studies have confirmed that anti-immigrant attitudes are consistently linked with FRPPs support (e.g., Coffe & Voorpostel, 2010; Ivarsflaten, 2008; Lubbers et al., 2002; Norris, 2005; Oesch, 2008).

However, in light of the recent political developments in Western

Europe, the capacity of FRPPs to mobilise the anti-immigration attitudes of voters is called into question. On several occasions, leaders of mainstream parties have appealed to their constituencies proposing stricter immigration policies or, in general, more conservative views regarding sociocultural issues. This trend has also been confirmed by research that showed how established parties are reacting to the challenge of FRPPs by shifting their policy position towards more conservative stands (e.g., Abou-Chadi & Orlowski, 2016; Abou-Chadi & Wagner, 2020; Bale et al., 2010; Schumacher & Van Kersbergen, 2016). If it is true that FRPPs' electoral performances crucially rely on their policy reputation linked to immigration, it makes sense to ask whether this assumption still applies once other parties start to contest this area of policy. While most of the extant research has investigated this issue mainly from an aggregate-level point of view, fewer efforts have been dedicated to studying how these factors belonging to the supply-side of FRPPs support interact with demand-side factors such as voters' anti-immigrant attitudes (Golder, 2016, p.499). The next section will outline the theoretical foundations underlying these two factors that inform the hypotheses that will be tested.

Chasing nativism: legitimising or delegitimising?

This chapter investigates support for FRPPs as a function of issue-ownership competition of FRPPs' key ideological feature: nativism. Building on the issue ownership theory (Budge & Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996), it investigates whether the electoral attractiveness of FRPPs depends on their policy-reputation advantage from mainstream parties. On the one hand, it expects that political parties emphasise the issues where they perceive to be advantaged in terms of policy reputation, especially during electoral campaigns. On the other hand, it theorises that voters decide based on which party they deem the best to handle specific issues. Established parties enjoy long-standing policy reputations built on several electoral competitions, which could function as heuristics for voters (Aldrich, 2011; Converse, 2006; Downs et al., 1957). Niche parties are disadvantaged in such competition, given

their lack of governmental experience and novelty relative to the established parties. Nonetheless, these parties are expected to thrive from addressing salient interests of electorates previously not considered by mainstream parties (Hug, 2001; H. P. Kitschelt, 1988) and, especially when considering they find their strength in their lack of government experience by emphasising their distance from established politics.

Especially with the decline of partisan attachments and the increase of electoral volatility (Dalton, 2013), issue ownership increasingly assumed a fundamental role in determining electoral outcomes. While models that emphasise voters' social identification were able to explain the long-term components of voting behaviour, models considering issue ownership can explain electoral volatility happening in the short term. Candidate evaluation and issue salience play a primary role in voters' decisions, and electoral campaigns play an essential role in shaping both. Electoral campaigns set the criteria for voters to choose between candidates by priming specific issues, and candidates compete by framing the vote choice as a decision about candidates' ability to handle important issues. These insights suggest that issue ownership is not an uncontested feature of certain parties, but it is constantly under competition from the parties themselves. Whereas parties might enjoy long-standing policy reputations, they are not stable over time (Petrocik, 1996). Candidates actively compete to achieve and hold issue ownership, and previous government experiences test parties' policy reputations. If an incumbent party is judged negatively in its policymaking, voters might change their minds regarding its reputation for handling a particular issue and punish it for an opponent party proposing itself more competent.

Issue-ownership perceptions are subject to party manipulation and could play a primary role in voting behaviour. The theoretical framework of Meguid (2005, 2008) provides a toolkit to understand such dynamics by focusing on the strategies adopted by mainstream parties to address niche parties' core issues. First, it defines party competition as strategic manipulation of both the salience and the ownership of specific issues, and therefore not limited to the only left-right ideological dimension (Downs et al., 1957). Second, it considers political

parties' ability to adapt to the institutional and sociological environment to explain their electoral performances (Meguid, 2005, p.348). It defines three possible strategies that mainstream parties can adopt: they can ignore the issues raised by their challengers (*dismissive strategy*), oppose them (*adversarial strategies*), or converge to their policy positions (*accommodative strategies*). This framework provides then a possible interpretation of why political actors from mainstream politics might be interested in chasing the policy positions of a competitor. It acknowledges the active role of political parties in recognising the salience of specific issues for the electorates and adopting strategies to pursue (or reject) the consensus of distinct portions of public opinion.

Recent political developments where leaders of mainstream parties progressively adopted anti-immigration positions could suggest the increasing utilisation of accommodative strategies to tackle FRPPs in elections. For instance, the Danish *Social democrats* parties inflicted heavy electoral losses on the *Danish People's Party* by campaigning on restrictive immigration policies and exploiting both the increasing salience of the immigration issue and the support by the majority of the Danes for a tighter immigration policy (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2020). In the Dutch 2017 elections, the FRP *Party for Freedom* did not increase its electoral support despite being favoured by the polls, probably due to the accommodation of traditional centrist parties to their positions on Islam, immigration, refugees, and the EU (Witteveen, 2017). The 2017 Austrian elections have shown how the centre-right *Austrian People's Party* has benefitted electorally from copying the anti-immigration agenda of the FRP *Freedom Party of Austria* (Bodlos & Plescia, 2018). In all these contexts, immigration and the sociocultural issues connected have been predominant for voters and political parties during electoral campaigns. Thus, in analysing the competition between mainstream and FRPPs, this study will focus on the parties' position on nativism.

The first expectations of this chapter are that FRPPs are *harmed* by mainstream parties because they *delegitimise* their primacy on the nativist policy agenda. One argument posits that mainstream parties always represent a consistent threat to niche parties' electoral perfor-

mances (Meguid, 2008, p.29). First, their greater legislative and governmental experience makes them an appetible alternative for those who seek policymaking. Second, these parties often have privileged positions to advertise their policies during electoral campaigns, given their broader access to the electorate through their associations and greater control over the media.

Previous studies have argued that radical right parties thrive when mainstream parties hold similar ideological positions (Abedi, 2002; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015; Spies & Franzmann, 2011). Following seminal suggestions from the spatial theory, Downs et al. (1957) argued that political parties should aim to make themselves distinguishable for voters, especially in multiparty systems. The studies of Adams (1999) and Adams and Merrill (1999) have suggested that parties maximise voting by moving away from centrist positions. Therefore, mainstream parties could benefit electorally by moving to more radical positions similar to FRPPs.

Mainstream parties could also move towards more radical positions because the median voter's position could have followed the same trend. According to the 'pathological normalcy' argument of Mudde (2010), the values promoted by FRPPs are not alien to mainstream values but rather a radical interpretation of such. The author mentioned cross-country evidence that attitudes close to the FRPPs (immigration, corruption, trust in institutions) are shared by not neglectable portions of European populations. To explain the differences in FRRPs' mobilising capacity across Europe, he pointed to whether these parties could achieve issue ownership on immigration, corruption or security (Mudde, 2010, p.1198). Mainstream parties could be more than willing to adopt a less distant position if the electorate largely shares such attitudes. Based on these suggestions, the first two hypotheses are:

> **H.1**: The more mainstream left-wing (1a) and/or mainstream right-wing (1b) parties' policy positions on nativism are similar to or greater than the FRPPs', the *lower* the probability of supporting FRPPs in general.

> **H.2**: The more mainstream left-wing (2a) or mainstream right-wing (2b) parties' policy positions on nativism are similar to or greater than the FRPPs', the *weaker* the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and support for FRPPs.

Contrarily, the second set of expectations of this chapter is that FRPPs *benefit* from mainstream parties adopting similar positions in terms of *legitimisation* of their nativist policy agenda. In other words, competing on the same political ground of niche parties can backfire them (Eatwell, 2000, p.423). Previous research has shown that accommodating the position of extreme right-wing parties increases their share of the vote as it can act as a 'legitimising effect' for their core issues (Arzheimer, 2009; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006). Mainstream parties can, on the one hand, make FRPPs' issues more respectable to the broad electorate and, on the other, raise the salience of anti-immigration issues (Bale, 2003, p.76). Moreover, adopting accommodative strategies entails raising the salience of niche parties' issues, which benefits the electoral performance of niche parties (Meguid, 2008). In such a process, the use of the media can furtherly help the legitimisation of FRPPs' anti-immigration issues (Golder, 2016).

Moreover, another assumption of the issue ownership theory is that political parties should not emphasise issues where they are not perceived as solid holders during electoral campaigns. Previous research has suggested that when parties are ideologically similar, voters decide based on competence considerations(Green & Hobolt, 2008). Challenge FRPPs on their political ground, anti-immigration voters could decide for 'the original rather than the copy' (Arzheimer, 2009; Carvalho, 2019). Considering the populist ideology of FRPPs, accommodative strategies could be perceived as not credible by voters given the previous 'unsatisfying' policy experiences of mainstream parties (Bale, 2003; Mudde, 2004). In this sense, the greater legislative experience of mainstream parties could turn from an advantage into a disadvantage.

Finally, another reason why pursuing such strategies could backfire

on mainstream parties is that it might alienate voters and coalition partners (De Vries & Hobolt, 2012). In other words, adopting extreme positions could work in luring the more radical voters away from radical parties, but it can alienate the hardcore electorate of mainstream parties. This fact may be especially valid for mainstream left-wing parties, given their ideological identity in contrast with FRPPs' nativism. Existing studies have shown that parties adopting moderate positions have better electoral performances (Abou-Chadi & Orlowski, 2016; Adams & Somer-Topcu, 2009; Ezrow, 2005).

Extant research has provided mixed evidence regarding the effect of co-opting FRPPs' policy positions on their electoral performances. Van Spanje and De Graaf (2018) have found that anti-immigration parties in Western Europe were not losing votes due to accommodation from mainstream parties. Arzheimer (2009) and Arzheimer and Carter (2006) studies have shown that when mainstream parties adopt tougher positions on immigration, they favour FRPPs. Similarly, the study of Dahlström and Sundell (2012) has shown that when mainstream parties go tough on immigration, they favour FRPPs' electoral performances, as long as all established parties adopt the same anti-immigration positions. On the other hand, Spoon and Klüver (2020) comparative study shows that accommodative strategies benefit mainstream left-wing parties but not the mainstream right, while Abou-Chadi and Krause (2020) show that mainstream left-wing parties adopting anti-EU and authoritarian positions lower their electoral support. Based on these other suggestions, the following hypotheses will be tested:

> **H.3**: The more mainstream left-wing (3a) or mainstream right-wing (3b) parties' policy positions on nativism are similar to or greater than the FRPPs', the *higher* the probability of supporting FRPPs in general.
>
> **H.4**: The more mainstream left-wing (4a) or mainstream right-wing (4b) parties' policy positions on nativism are similar to or greater than the FRPPs', the *stronger* the re-

lationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and support for FRPPs.

3 • DATA AND METHOD

This chapter uses multilevel logistic regression models to test the hypotheses formulated, with individuals nested within country-years (namely the years in which each national ESS survey took place). It uses the ESS data from 2002-2018 for the individual-level data and the MP dataset (Volkens et al., 2017) for the party-level data to derive the parties' policy positions on nativism. While the ESS data serves the purpose of providing a large set of information regarding voters' sociodemographic and sociopolitical characteristics, the MP dataset provides information on parties' policy positioning through the content of the electoral manifestos of their respective national elections. Individuals of each ESS survey are clustered with the MP data of their last elections to measure the corresponding party competition dynamics[1]. After the listwise deletion of missing values, the final sample comprises 72,389 individuals and 81 country-year contexts from 12 Western European countries[2]. Post-stratification weights to correct sampling errors and non-response bias will be applied to the models.

Individual-level variables

The dependent variable is *support for far-right populist parties* based on

[1] The choice of the MP dataset instead of other datasets such as the Chapel Hill expert surveys (CHES) mainly for two reasons: (I) the MP dataset provides parties' positions for each election, while the CHES dataset is limited to the waves covered by the survey; (II) the MP dataset relies on the objective claims made by parties in their manifestos, while the CHES is based on expert judgments on parties' ideological positioning on issues. Based on the theoretical assumptions made in this chapter, parties' policy reputation perceived by voters is more likely to be measured by the claims made by parties' manifestos rather than the assessment of experts

[2] The following list shows the countries included: Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden

whether respondents have voted for a far-right populist party in the last general elections. The political parties reported by ESS data are coded in a dichotomic variable that distinguishes whether respondents voted for an FRP party (1) or whether they voted for mainstream parties (0)[3]. The political parties coded by the MP dataset as Social democratic, Conservatives, Christian-democratic, and Liberals are considered mainstream parties. The FRPPs coding follows the categorisation provided by the *PopuList*(Rooduijn et al., 2019) which provides an overview of populist parties (both right-wing and left-wing) based on the cooperation between academics and journalists of all European countries involved. All the parties considered by the source as "Populist" and "Far-Right" are considered FRPPs[4]. Respondents who did not vote at the last general election, who cast a blank or null vote, or who reported voting for "other parties" could not be included in this analysis.

The main independent variable is respondents' *anti-immigration attitudes*, measured through a scale composed of the three items collected by the ESS dataset: 1) "Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country] 's economy that people come to live here from other countries?"; 2) "Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?"; 3) "Would you say that [country] 's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?". Such scale is widely used by studies investigating perceived ethnic threat (e.g., Manevska & Achterberg, 2013; Rydgren, 2008; Schneider, 2008; Sides & Citrin, 2007; Visser et al., 2014), and allows to capture the multiple facets characterising anti-immigration sentiments. The indicator ranges from 0 to 10, where the highest score indicates that the respondents hold high anti-immigration attitudes[5]. This chapter follows Enders and Tofighi (2007) methodological suggestion of group-centring the anti-

[3] Table D.1 in the appendix lists the FRPPs for every country in the study

[4] The only deviation from *The Populist* regards the *List Pym Fortuyn* due to its anti-Islam stances (T. Akkerman, 2005; T. Akkerman & Hagelund, 2007)

[5] Cronbach's alpha = 0.84

immigrant attitudes scale to allow for more accurate estimates of the moderating influence of level 2 predictors.

The models include individual-level control variables related to sociodemographic characteristics and sociopolitical attitudes usually associated with support for FRPPs. The socio-demographic characteristics consider *age* (and its quadratic term); *gender* (1= female); and *level of education* (ISCED) coded in three categories (1= low, 2= medium, 3= high); and *social class* measured using the 8-class scheme of Oesch (2006) (1= Self-employed professionals, 2= Small business owners, 3= Technical (semi)professionals, 4= Production workers, 5= (Associate) managers, 6= Clerks, 7= Socio-cultural (semi)professionals, 8= Service workers). Moreover, sociopolitical attitudes include *political distrust* (an index that includes respondents' distrust in their national parliament and politicians ranging from 1 to 10)[6], and *subjective economic well-being* (1= Living comfortably on present income, 2= Coping on present income, 3= Difficult on present income, 4= Very difficult on present income).

Country-year variables

The main country-year variable is represented by the *difference of nativist policy positions* measured by the difference in nativism policy positioning between mainstream-right or mainstream-left parties and FRPPs. This measure is obtained in two steps. First, parties' mean log-position on *nativism* is obtained following the suggestions of Colantone and Stanig (2018b) and Lowe et al. (2011). Parties' policy position on nativism is acquired by summing positive and negative claims on *national way of life* (per601-per602), *traditional morality* (per603-per604), *law and order* (per605), and *multiculturalism* (per607-per608)[7]. Second, mean log-positions of nativism of the main-

[6] Distrust in political parties could not be included in the measurement as the item was not included in the first round of the ESS

[7] log(0.5 + (per601+per603+per605+per608))-log(0.5 + (per602+per604+per607)); see figure D.1 in the appendix for the mean scores of nativism and table D.3 for the list of the items included from the MP dataset

stream right and mainstream left parties are subtracted from the mean log-positions of nativism of FRPPs to measure the extent to which each mainstream party is close to FRPPs[8]. Lower values indicate contexts where mainstream parties' position on nativism is the most distant from FRPPs', while higher values indicate situations where mainstream parties have similar or more nationalist positions than FRPPs. The log scaling approach, unlike the more widely-used additive percentage scores (see Budge, 1999; Budge et al., 2001; Ivaldi, 2015; Rovny, 2013; Spoon & Klüver, 2020), focuses on the relative balance between positive and negative mentions regarding policy positions instead of their absolute quantity and allows for better empirical properties[9]. Measuring the distance between parties on this issue could allow the analysis to have a proxy measure for situations in which mainstream parties adopt accommodative strategies FRPPs when they are close, and those where they adopt adversarial strategies by being highly distant. However, given that the variables do not measure the intention of mainstream parties to pursue such strategies, the interpretation of their effect will pertain to differences in terms of positioning between the two competitors.

Finally, this study includes aggregate-level control variables regarding socioeconomic conditions which might affect FRP voting. It includes *Net migration* (% of the population)[10] and the *number of refugees*, respectively, from Eurostat and the World Bank Open Database. *Social benefits expenditure* (% GDP) and *GDP per capita* are obtained from Eurostat, while the *Unemployment Rate* is from World Bank Open Database. These aggregate variables are considered during individuals' last elections and centred around their mean value.

[8] The two variables are then centred around their minimum values to facilitate the interpretation of the results. See figure D.3 in the appendix for the distributions of the two variables

[9] see figure D.1 in the appendix for a comparison between alternative measurements of Nativism

[10] Given that the values of Net migration are five-year estimates, these values are matched to individuals of the closest ESS survey

See table D.2 in the appendix for the descriptive statistics of all the variables included.

Analytical strategy

This chapter employs multilevel logistic regression modelling to test whether approaching of FRPPs' positions on nativism from mainstream parties affects the probabilities of supporting FRPPs. In the first step of the analysis, the intercept-only model is fitted to estimate the amount of variance of the dependent variable due to the country-year level of analysis. The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient showed that at least 18.04% of the variation of probabilities to support FRPPs is due to the country-year clustering. Second, the models estimate the fixed effects at the individual and country-year levels, including the main country-year variables concerning FRPPs' Nativism issue ownership. The effect of the two variables (Mainstream left distance from FRPPs' nativism; Mainstream right distance from FRPPs' nativism) is estimated in separate models due to their high correlation[11] that may cause estimation problems due to multicollinearity. Including these variables will address the test of H.1a and H.1b. Third, to test the hypotheses related to the cross-level interaction effects (H.2a and H.2b), the models will specify anti-immigration attitudes as a random effect, allowing its variation across the country-year clusters[12]. Models fit is assessed by observing the variation in the explained variance compared to the variance of the empty model, Log-likelihood, and the AIC and BIC information criteria[13]. Finally, the Average Marginal Effects (AME) of anti-immigrant attitudes and the predicted probabilities conditional on the contextual variables related to the hypotheses are

[11] .700

[12] The covariance term between the random slope and random intercept has been not included as it was not statistically significant

[13] for the cross-level interactions, the comparison is given by the model including political distrust as random slope without interactions. See tables A5 and A6 for the full estimates of the main analysis

plotted to facilitate the interpretation of the cross-level interaction effects.

4 • RESULTS

Before mentioning the principal results, it is worthwhile to note the results connected to the other variables included in the models. Table 5.1 shows the results of the multilevel logistic regression analysing support for FRPPs. The results confirm that FRPPs are the parties of the lower social classes, the lower educated, and male voters (Golder, 2016). Production workers (OR = 1.490, $p < 0.001$), service workers (OR = 1.316, $p < 0.001$), and clerks (OR = 1.200, $p < 0.01$) are significantly more likely to support FRPPs compared to the (associate) managers. The only negative significant difference with the reference category concerns the socio-cultural (semi-)professionals (OR = 0.791, $p < 0.01$). Surprisingly, small-business owners are not significantly associated with support for FRPPs, disconfirming previous findings (Oesch, 2008). From the social classes usually associated with the middle class, it is rather the clerks showing higher support for these parties. Compared to the lower educated, medium (OR = 0.866, $p < 0.001$) and higher (OR = 0.497, $p < 0.001$) educated voters are significantly less likely to vote for FRPPs. Female voters are significantly less likely to support FRPPs (OR = 0.676, $p < 0.001$) than male voters. Moreover, the sociopolitical profile of FRP voters shows anti-immigrant attitudes (OR = 1.505, $p < 0.001$) and political distrust (OR = 1.213, $p < 0.001$) are positively associated with higher chances of supporting FRPPs. There are no significant differences in terms of subjective economic well-being.

Among the aggregate socioeconomic variables, only GDP per capita shows a positive and significant association with the outcome variable (OR = 1.024, $p < 0.01$). In contrast, the unemployment rate and social protection expenditure are not. The finding about support for FRPPs being higher where socioeconomic well-being is higher finds support in previous literature (Mudde, 2007; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Rooduijn & Burgoon, 2018). The sociocultural

aggregate characteristics show that the presence of immigrants on the territory increases the probabilities of supporting FRPPs (OR = 1.056, $p < 0.001$), while the presence of refugees exerts almost no significant effect.

Figure 5.1 shows the results of the multilevel logistic regression model predicting support for FRPPs. The figure shows the average marginal effects of the main variables involved: the fixed effect of anti-immigrant attitudes (individual level), and the variables measuring the distance between mainstream right or mainstream left parties' and FRPPs on nativism (country-year level). Each of the two models addresses the test of the hypotheses concerning the direct effect of competition dynamics between FRPPs and mainstream parties (H.1a, H.1b, H.2a, H.2b). Not surprisingly, anti-immigrant attitudes positively affect the chances of supporting FRPPs net of the covariates. Each point increase of the anti-immigrant attitudes scale increases the chances of supporting FRPPPs by about 3.56% ($p < 0.001$). However, the main results concerning the distance between parties show no significant findings. Both measures about mainstream right and mainstream left parties show effects slightly negative but very close to the zero estimates and with rather large standard errors suggesting that their effects on voting behaviour might be largely heterogeneous. Thus, these first results do not provide supporting evidence for all hypotheses concerning a direct effect of mainstream parties' threat to FRPPs' issue ownership of nativism. FRPPs appear to be neither harmed nor facilitated by mainstream parties' distance on nativism.

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 plot the cross-level interaction effects tested in table 5.1 to facilitate their interpretation. Figure 5.2 shows the average marginal effects of each point of the anti-immigrant attitudes scale on the dependent variable conditional on the country-year variables used. The left-side panel shows the moderation effect when mainstream right-wing parties are considered. At its minimum value (0) the average marginal effect of anti-immigration attitudes corresponds to b = 0.041 ($p < 0.001$). In contrast, at the maximum value (8) the average marginal effect of anti-immigration attitudes is b = 0.028 ($p < 0.001$). Namely, the average marginal effect of anti-immigration

TABLE 5.1 Multilevel logistic regression analyses of support for FRPPs on individual and contextual characteristics (N=72,389; Country-years=81). Odds ratios reported.

Variables	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Anti-immigrant attitudes[a]		1.505***	1.505***	1.497***	1.595**	1.572***
Social Class (Ref. (Associate) Managers)						
Self-employed Professionals		1.037	1.037	1.026	1.027	1.027
Small business owners		1.095	1.095	1.087	1.087	1.087
Technical (semi-)professionals		1.140	1.140	1.141	1.141	1.141
Production workers		1.490***	1.490***	1.496***	1.496***	1.496***
Clerks		1.200**	1.200**	1.196**	1.197**	1.196**
Socio-cultural (semi-)professionals		0.791**	0.791**	0.794**	0.795**	0.795**
Service workers		1.316***	1.316***	1.323***	1.322***	1.322***
Level of education (Ref. Lower)						
Medium education		0.866***	0.866***	0.865***	0.865***	0.865***
Higher education		0.497***	0.497***	0.495***	0.495***	0.495***
Subjective economic well-being (Ref. Living comfortably)						
Coping on present income		1.012	1.012	1.007	1.007	1.007
Difficult on present income		1.092	1.092	1.092	1.092	1.092
Very difficult on present income		1.078	1.078	1.083	1.084	1.085
Political distrust		1.213***	1.213***	1.216***	1.217***	1.216***
Gender (Ref. Male)						*
Female		0.676***	0.676***	0.674***	0.674***	0.674***
Age[b]		0.985***	0.985***	0.985***	0.985***	0.985***
Age squared		1.000*	1.000*	1.000	1.000	1.000
Mainstream Left - FRPPs distance[c]		0.993			1.003	
Mainstream Right - FRPPs distance[c]			0.996			1.019
Unemployment (%)[b]		0.941	0.942	0.938	0.938	0.936
GDP per capita (thousands)[b]		1.024**	1.024**	1.022**	1.022**	1.023**
Social Protection Expenditure (% GDP)[b]		1.012	1.012	1.002	1.002	1.003
Migrant population (%)[b]		1.056***	1.057***	1.051***	1.051**	1.050**
Refugee population (thousands)[b]		0.999	0.999	0.999*	0.999*	0.999*
Mainstream Left - FRPPs distance*Anti Immigrant attitudes					0.983*	
Mainstream Right - FRPPs distance*Anti Immigrant attitudes						0.978*
Constant	0.122***	0.038***	0.037***	0.036***	0.036***	0.035***
Random effects						
var(Country-year)	2.063***	1.902***	1.903***	1.911***	1.914***	1.909***
Pseudo R^2 Country-year		11.25%	11.20%	10.57%	10.34%	10.75%
var(Anti-immigrant attitudes)				1.012***	1.012***	1.012***
Pseudo R^2 Anti-immigrant attitudes					4.43%	5.66%
Model fit						
AIC	48,604.966	40,372.602	40,372.611	40,247.251	40,248.455	40,247.305
BIC	48,623.346	40,602.347	40,602.356	40,476.996	40,496.580	40,495.430
df	0	23	23	22	24	24
Log-likelihood	-24,300.483	-20,161.301	-20,161.305	-20,098.625	-20,097.227	-20,096.652

[a] Group-mean centered; [b] Grand-mean centered; [c] Min-value centered;
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

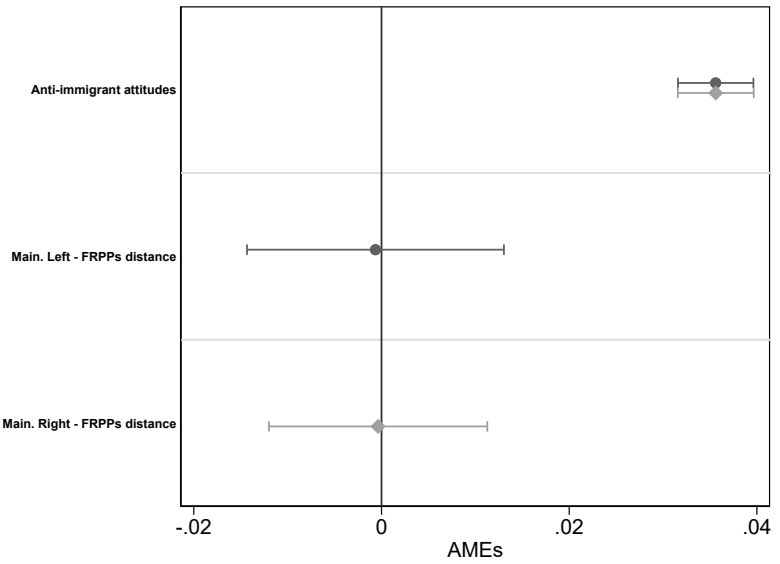

FIGURE 5.1 Average marginal effects of Anti-immigrant attitudes and mainstream right and left parties on support for FRPPs (N=72,389; K=81). Effects of control variables omitted from the output.
Estimates are based on models in Table 5.1.

attitudes on the dependent variable decreases from 4.1% to 2.8% the more mainstream right-wing parties adopt the nativist positions of FRPPs. Similarly, the right-side panel shows the same moderation effect once mainstream right-wing parties are considered in the equation. When these parties are more distant from FRPPs on nativism (0), each point of the anti-immigrant attitudes scale increases support for FRPPs by 3.9% ($p < 0.001$). Contrarily, when mainstream right-wing parties show similar or greater stances on nativism than the FRPPs, the probability of voting for FRPPs for each point of the anti-immigrant scale drops by 2.8% ($p < 0.001$). It is worth noticing, however, that the results regarding the contexts where both mainstream parties adopt greater nativist stances than the FRPPs, as well as those where they are very distant, should be interpreted carefully due to the low number

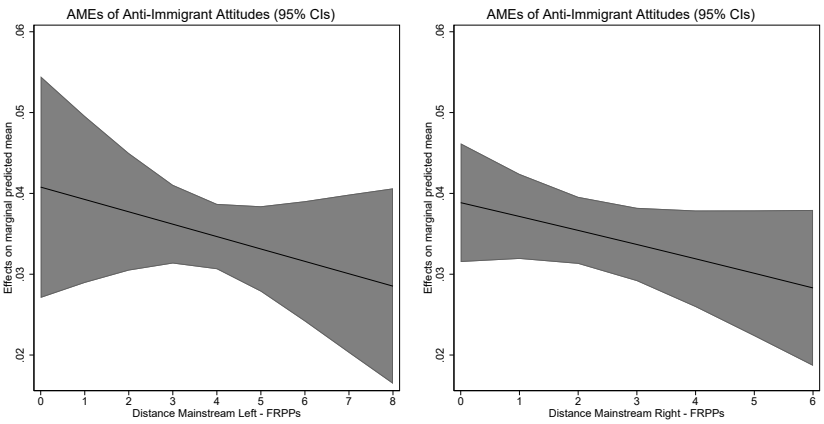

FIGURE 5.2 Average Marginal effects of anti-immigration attitudes on far-right populist voting conditional on the distance of mainstream left and mainstream right on nativism (N=72,389; K=81).
Estimates are based on models in Table 5.1. Own calculations.

of cases in the sample (as the wide standard errors of the estimates suggest).

Moreover, Figure 5.3 shows the predicted FRP voting resulting based on the effect of anti-immigration attitudes and conditional on different percentiles of the country-year variables used. As visible, the effects of anti-immigrant attitudes are similar across the different party competition situations observed in the sample. However, it is possible to see that in both the 90th percentiles, the probability of supporting FRPPs is slightly lower than in the 10th percentiles. In other words, in line with the previous results, anti-immigrant attitudes lead to less support for FRPPs when mainstream parties adopt similar or greater nativist stances. In detail, probabilities of supporting FRPPs in the most anti-immigrant groups drop from 17.09% to 15.88% when the mainstream left is considered, and from 17.04% to 15.99% when mainstream right-wing parties are considered. Conversely, it is possible to notice that when mainstream parties are the most distant from FRPPs, support for FRPPs is higher.

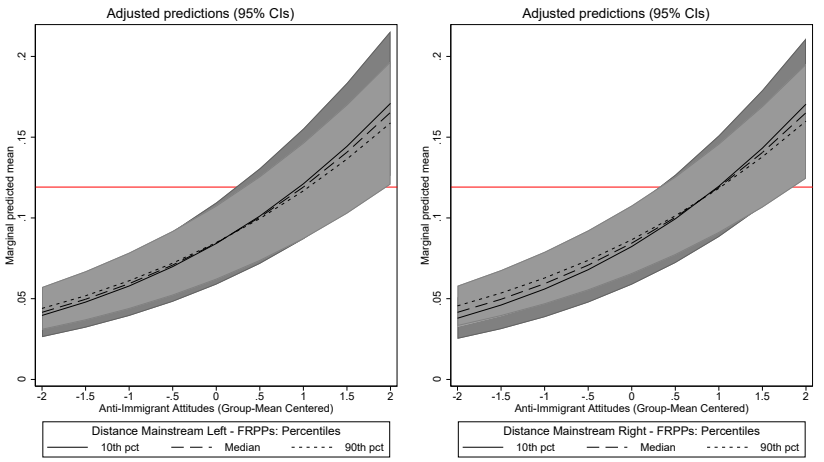

FIGURE 5.3 Predicted FRP voting conditional on percentiles of mainstream left (left-side panel) and mainstream right (right-side panel) distance on nativism. The horizontal line indicates the average FRP voting (11.92%). All covariates are set to their mean value (N=72,389; K=81).
Estimates are based on models in Table 5.1. Own calculations.

5 • DISCUSSION

This chapter departed from the several examples of leaders of mainstream political parties of Western European democracies that increasingly started to blink at nationalistic positions often associated with FRPPs' nativism. Considering the variance of electoral performance of FRPPs across European contexts, these developments prompted the question of whether party competition dynamics can affect the probability of voters supporting FRPPs. In other words, what do voters do when mainstream parties and FRPPs are similar in terms of policy positions related to nativism? This chapter has investigated this issue addressing two research questions: (I) whether the adoption of similar nativist position from mainstream parties affects the probability of supporting FRPPs of voters in general; (II) whether doing so affects the probability of supporting FRPPs of only the voters with high anti-immigrant attitudes. Drawing from the suggestions of extant literature,

the expectations have been that, on the one hand, mainstream parties aping FRPPs nativism might *legitimise* their issue ownership and thus increase FRPPs voting or, on the other hand, it might *delegitimise* their issue ownership and therefore discourage FRPPs voting.

Analysing almost two decades of ESS cross-national data of Western European democracies, the findings show that the adoption of mainstream parties of nativist stances similar to or greater than FRPPs produces little to no effect on the likelihood of supporting FRPPs. First, the findings show that distance between parties on nativism does not exert any significant direct effect on the probabilities to support FRPPs in general. The results have shown that the effects from the mainstream right and mainstream left parties' positioning relative to the FRPPs exert very little negative and imprecise effects on the outcome variable observed. This finding could suggest that the effects of such dynamics might depend on other intervening factors operating at the lower levels of analysis such as whether voters deem immigration issues important for them (Bélanger & Meguid, 2008). Moreover, this finding might reflect that the effects of such dynamics on the general electorate might be extremely heterogenous and the extent to which they positively or negatively affect support for FRPPs could not be disentangled by the research design adopted in this chapter. Thus, results about the direct effects of mainstream parties' distance on the issue of nativism remained inconclusive. Future research should investigate what party competition dynamics determine the higher or lower electoral attractiveness of FRPPs.

Moreover, the findings regarding cross-level interactions have shown that when mainstream parties are less distant, voters with high anti-immigrant attitudes are less likely to support FRPPs. This evidence aligns with the suggestion of Bélanger and Meguid (2008): issue ownership affects voting behaviour depending on whether the issue under competition is important for voters. Although the measure of anti-immigrant attitudes used in this chapter does not necessarily tap into the importance that individuals give to the issue of immigration, it represents the best measure at the disposal of the data analysed. Future research might want to investigate this aspect further with more refined

measures of voters' issue salience. Furthermore, unlike what Spoon and Klüver (2020) found, the results have shown that both mainstream parties regardless of their ideological orientation manage to attract voters from FRPPs when they accommodate their nativist policy agenda. One explanation might be that, by aiming at being issue owners of nativism, mainstream parties manage to 'win back' contested constituencies with the FRPPs: blue collars for mainstream left-wing and the low middle-class for the mainstream right (Oesch & Rennwald, 2018). However, the investigation of how FRPPs' party base in terms of social groups varies according to party competition dynamics was out of the scope of this chapter. Future studies could investigate this aspect further by examining which social classes are more responsive to competition for FRPPs' key issues.

This chapter has some limitations. First, it has investigated the effect of distance between parties on nativism using a cross-sectional research design, therefore excluding the assessment of causality. Moreover, factors such as the level of importance that individuals, political parties, or media attach to immigration issues could not be considered. This data limitation has been addressed by controlling the results for potential confounders due to the actual presence of migration phenomena in the territory (net migration and refugee population), and countries' socioeconomic conditions (GDP per capita, expenditure on social benefits, and unemployment rate). Nonetheless, the results still do not imply the causality of relationships. Other research designs (longitudinal or experimental) are needed to assess the causal effect of mainstream parties' competition strategies on support for FRPPs.

Second, this chapter has relied on the assumptions that party positions from electoral manifestos are (I) representative of the policies promoted by political parties during electoral campaigns and (II) considered by voters in their voting decisions. Voting behaviour literature suggests that voters are often unaware of candidates' positions on issues (Converse, 2006) and make their decisions based on the little information provided during the campaign (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006). In addition, political parties and leaders increasingly campaign on platforms that are more accessible to voters, such as digital media. These

platforms have contributed especially to the success of populist parties (Mosca & Quaranta, 2021). Nevertheless, election manifestos remain authoritative documents of the ideas of a political party at a certain point in time, and they are binding for politicians (Rooduijn et al., 2014, p. 566). In addition, electoral manifestos still represent the most appropriate documents for comparative analysis between countries and over time (Klemmensen et al., 2007; Lowe et al., 2011). Therefore, substantive discrepancies between party positions expressed in the manifestos and those expressed elsewhere by political actors appear unlikely.

This chapter proposed to measure such dynamics with the extent to which mainstream parties' electoral manifestos have similar or more nativist policies than the FRPPs, hinting at the accommodative and adversarial strategies mentioned by Meguid (2005, 2008). While situations with the most distance between FRPPs and mainstream can be regarded as adversarial, those with little distance can be seen as accommodative. Future research may contribute by introducing alternative measures to gauge these strategies and their effect on individual-level voting behaviour.

In conclusion, this chapter has shown evidence that mainstream parties had little success in affecting the electoral performances of FRPPs over the almost last two decades of Western European politics. Investigating the effect of a supply-side factor (the distance on nativism policy positions), and its interaction with a demand-side factor (anti-immigrant attitudes), it has shown that, if something, mainstream parties managed to lure away from FRPPs voters more anti-immigration oriented. Overall, the results indicate that future studies on FRPPs voting should explore other party competition dynamics that can operate in encouraging, or discouraging, support for these parties. Mainstream parties seem to harm these parties by draining them of immigration-sceptical voters, but only to a certain extent, suggesting that fighting fire with fire might not pay off for mainstream parties.

NOTES

[1]https://edu.nl/xt6cn
[2]https://edu.nl/k6mur
[3]https://edu.nl/qm8yb

'If power is poison, who has taken most? Who has a stomach full of poison? Who is vomiting it out now? It is Congress, the party which divides and rules, which pits one religion against another, states against states, which is breaking the country [...] Time is running out. Promise me you will change this nation. Clench your fists. Say it with all your might: Vote for India!' [1]

Narendra Modi, current prime minister and leader of the 'Indian People's Party', in an electoral campaign speech for the Indian General Elections, 2014

'Russian democracy is the power of the Russian people with their own traditions of national self-government, and not the realisation of standards foisted on us from outside.' [2]

Vladimir Putin, current president and leader of the party 'People's Front For Russia', in a presidential speech, 2012

'We are the people. Who are you?' [3]

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, current president and leader of the 'Justice and Development Party' answering to corruptions allegations during the presidential election campaign, 2014

6 Concluding Remarks

1 • TWO DECADES OF POPULIST PARTIES IN EUROPE: SO WHAT?

The title of this introductory section draws from the considerations of Mudde (2013) on the evolution of radical-right populist parties from the 1980s to 2011, and their possible future trajectories. Based on his predictions, populist parties have indeed increased their influence across Europe, be that in terms of electoral results or government experiences. So far, Mudde has also been correct in predicting no significant impacts on European political systems since liberal democratic settings remain in place. However, although the European cases are still far from such scenarios, the examples displayed at the beginning of this final chapter (see page 166) serve as an admonition of how populism can lead to the degeneration of democracies to more authoritarian forms of government. The developments in Turkey and Russia have shown how populist rhetoric has been used to reach and further concentrate power in the hands of their leaders. On the other hand, what the example of India shows is that even when provided with liberal democratic institutions, populism can put such a system under severe strain in the long run. Whether populism necessarily leads to the erosion of democratic regimes is debatable, with scholars being divided between those essentially considering it a threat to democracy (e.g., Abts & Rummens, 2007; Urbinati, 1998), or more specifically to liberal democracy (e.g., Blokker, 2021; Mudde, 2021),

and those highlighting its intrinsic connection to democratic principles (e.g., Arditi, 2004; Canovan, 1999) or the potential of corrective of representative gaps (e.g., Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). Nevertheless, the rise of populism in contemporary democracies is a phenomenon with a wide range of societal implications in terms of the demand that it represents, and in terms of policy-making in the cases where they reach power.

Therefore, it is of paramount importance to understand the drivers of citizens' support for these parties, as well as the contextual factors underlying the success or failure of populist parties. The fact that the questions raised in this thesis remain relevant today, and have been for decades, is a witness to the relevance of populism for both social sciences and society and to the importance of the topics addressed in this thesis. As shown in Chapter 1, over the last two decades, populism has grown across Europe, although with alternate fortunes. The European scenario offers an opportunity to investigate the considerable variance of populism by analysing individuals' behaviour within their electoral context. Considering the role of context and adopting a minimal definition of populism (e.g., Hawkins et al., 2018; Mudde, 2004; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Stanley, 2008), this thesis aimed to address the 'chameleonic' nature of populism (Taggart, 2000), which has often made analysing populism from a comparative perspective problematic. As such, it contributes to the literature by providing a comparative analysis of Europe that focuses on the role of populist ideology in attracting support and tests some of the implications made by theories on populism.

This thesis has contended that to understand why citizens choose to support populism, both factors belonging to demand-side and supply-side explanations, and how they interact, need to be observed. As many previous studies have suggested, populist parties appeal to different types of voters' grievances (economic, cultural, political) to obtain consensus. Other previous studies emphasising the role of supply-side factors have stressed the importance of contextual elements to explain why populist parties can succeed. However, while the presence of grievances can pave the way for the rise of populist actors, a favourable

political environment can be a determinant for the translation of such grievances into support for populism. Integrating both perspectives offers the opportunity to test theories of support for populism not only by looking at each type of factor but also by considering how the effect of voters' grievances varies depending on their social, political, economic and strategic context.

This thesis represents a novel and valuable contribution to the existing literature by integrating demand- and supply-side explanations within the context of support for populism. While previous studies have explored demand or supply factors separately (e.g., Lubbers et al., 2002; Van der Brug et al., 2005), this research bridges these traditionally separate domains to shed new light on the dynamics of support for populism. By examining the interaction between demand-side grievance factors and supply-side contextual characteristics, this study advances existing theories of populism (e.g., Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Rovira Kaltwasser et al., 2017) and tests them using the European scenario. While recent literature has started acknowledging the interaction(e.g., Engler & Weisstanner, 2021; Milner, 2021; Rooduijn & Burgoon, 2018) no prior research, to the best of my knowledge, has directly tested existing theories of populism using this integrated approach. Through this synthesis, a more comprehensive understanding of populism emerges, revealing previously undiscovered insights.

This final chapter will delineate more general conclusions based on the analyses presented throughout the empirical chapters. This thesis aimed to apply the perspective of theoretical studies on populism to the empirical literature by investigating demand- and supply-side factors. Its contribution is twofold: on the one hand, the concepts provided by the ideational definition of populism can help empirical studies understand support for populism; on the other hand, the interactions between demand- and supply-side factors provided a test for some claims theory on populism and provided new avenues for future research. The next sections of this chapter will summarise the main findings and their implications for the literature, outline the limitations specific to each chapter and this thesis in general, and conclude with some final remarks.

The demand side: Social and socioeconomic marginalisation

As outlined in Chapter 1, globalisation and the rising levels of disaffection from politics have likely formed the necessary premise for creating a demand for populism across European democracies. First, the progress of globalisation in most developed democracies has created the premise for exacerbating the social divisions between those who have been able to benefit from globalisation and those who have not (Kriesi et al., 2008). While globalisation has led to economic growth and more labour market opportunities for those in possession of the skills to adapt to a globalised labour market, it also corresponded to increased income inequality and the deterioration of the social status of other portions of populations whose skills are not sufficient to keep up with the demands of the modern labour market. In addition to this, the increase in cultural openness has also contributed to feelings of estrangement among the more traditional portions of societies and anxiety about the erosion of national identities and cultures. Driven by the fears connected to the economic and cultural consequences of globalisation, the so-called 'losers' have increasingly represented the 'political potential' (Kriesi et al., 2008, p. 4) for the mobilisation of populist parties since their campaigns tap into the frustration and anger of those adversely affected by globalisation for the old established parties, which could not shield them from these developments. As a result, the rise of political disaffection levels due to the perceived lack of representation of those adversely impacted by globalisation has also facilitated populist parties with their anti-establishment message.

However, previous studies have provided insufficient evidence in support of this mechanism, mostly identifying feelings connected with the status of 'losers of globalisation' based on the occupational status of voters (Golder, 2016, p. 483). Also, the focus on the most socioeconomically vulnerable groups would not explain how populism manages to enlarge their support by also attracting more affluent groups (e.g., Kurer, 2020; Minkenberg, 2000; Mudde, 2007). These gaps have led to the formulation of two questions: (I) *To what extent is support for populism explained by perceptions of social marginalisation?* (II) *To*

what extent do economic grievances due to sociotropic fears of the country's economic collapse explain support for populism? These two questions are related since they both refer to the role of subjective perceptions in determining support for populism.

Concerning the first question, the findings of Chapter 2 showed that perceptions of social marginalisation significantly increase support for populist parties independently of alternative explanations connected to economic, political and cultural grievances (e.g., Ivarsflaten, 2008), thus supporting the argument that much of the discontent generated by these grievances are rooted in feelings of social marginalisation (Gidron & Hall, 2020, p. 1028). Moreover, other findings connected to the examination of the cross-country variance of this main effect showed that support for populism due to perceived social marginalisation appears to particularly characterise highly socioeconomically developed and globalised contexts. In other words, individuals that perceive themselves as being socially marginalised are more likely to support populist parties in wealthy and interconnected contexts. The findings of stronger support for populism from perceived marginalised voters in wealthy contexts lend support to the arguments of the relative deprivation theory (e.g., Gurr, 1970; Runciman, 1966) and debunk those of the economic voting theory (e.g., Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000). Moreover, findings related to higher support from these voters in contexts of high economic and social globalisation lend some support to the argument of the losers of globalisation theory (Kriesi et al., 2008).

However, findings concerning the cross-national variation of the subjective social marginalisation effect were not complemented by discovering an opposite effect in poorer and less globalised contexts. In such contexts, support for populism has shown to be higher regardless of the perceived social integration of individuals. One explanation for this finding might be the political status of populist parties in such contexts, which are largely represented by Central and Eastern European democracies. Unlike in Western Europe, populism in Central and Eastern Europe has managed to obtain much larger shares of popular support (see figure 1.1) and, consequently, more government experi-

ences. In such contexts, it is plausible to expect how such parties can be viewed by voters as respectable options. Thus, they can be appealing to a larger social base than the socially marginalised voters alone. Another alternative explanation might be the lower degrees of influence of globalisation dynamics in such contexts. Since these contexts are the least globalised of the observed contexts, it is reasonable to expect the social conflict between 'losers' and 'winners' not to be as significant as in more globalised Western democracies, thus making arguments of social marginalisation less efficient in understanding support for populism. In light of this fact, it is safer to conclude that social marginalisation provides a useful tool for understanding the dynamics of support for populism in industrialised and globalised contexts. In contrast, more research efforts are required to discover the underlying factors in the opposite contexts.

Moreover, it is worthwhile to point out that while social integration can add another piece to understanding the puzzle of populism, it is still unlikely to grasp the entire complexity behind the feelings connected to the status of 'losers of globalisation', as well as their motivations to support populism. Although measuring individuals' subjective social marginalisation can provide insights into voting for populist parties out of resentment for their current social status, it could still be unable to gauge the motivation to vote for these parties out of anxiety for the future erosion of social status. Therefore, it might be safer to conclude that the findings shown in Chapter 2 provide evidence of how populist parties can attract support from voters that perceive themselves as being at the bottom of the social ladder, but not necessarily from those that perceive themselves as being in a position where they are 'rather secure but objectively can still lose something' (Minkenberg, 2000, p. 187). For instance, this portion may include voters employed in sectors of the national economy that are shielded from global competition and who may reasonably still have a good appraisal of their integration within society but nonetheless might listen to the populist message out of fear of mainstream parties opening the national economy to the global market and thereby undermining their status. More refined

measurements that tap into status anxiety as a driver for supporting populism are thus recommended for future studies.

A final remark must be made regarding the extent to which populist parties can efficiently mobilise the more marginalised portions of society. Chapter 2 provided an analysis of voting behaviour, and such research designs always bear the caveat of excluding considerable proportions of samples due to non-voting. Considering the main factor under analysis, several studies have noted that it is highly plausible that highly marginalised voters might react to their status by abstaining from voting, be that out of a pure disinterest in politics or a lack of trust in politics for their situation to change. Therefore, the question of how many of these voters populists manage to attract compared to those who ultimately decide not to participate in political life remains. The findings have highlighted a significant relationship between the two phenomena, thus supporting the claim of social disintegration being one channel of consensus from which populists can draw. This suggestion paves the way for future research to investigate which strategies populist parties adopt to make contact with such potential yet rather hard-to-reach constituencies. One potential means could be social media given the extensive use of it by such parties to convey their political messages (e.g., Baldwin-Philippi, 2019; Larsson, 2020; Mosca & Quaranta, 2021). More classically, another alternative might be the presence of a *'party on the ground'* (Mair, 2002) that could facilitate the mobilisation of marginalised voters.

Furthermore, the findings of Chapter 3 have shown that economic grievances due to sociotropic concerns for the national economy do not exert a significant influence on support for populism. Aligning with most previous studies (e.g., Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers et al., 2002; Lucassen & Lubbers, 2012), the results have shown that economic grievances due to egotropic concerns, measured based on subjective economic well-being and socioeconomically vulnerable position (level of education), persist in explaining support for popular sovereignty net of the applied controls. Thus, given this evidence, the implication of populist parties mobilising voters by capitalising on

the 'sense of crisis' (Taggart, 2004) of their message is refuted since motivations driven by self-interest seem more efficient in predicting support for populism. This also indirectly shows how the implications of sociotropic voting (e.g., Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000) do not seem to apply to explain the political behaviour related to populism. In addition, results concerning contextual effects measuring more objective indicators of the economy have shown that socio-economic development can depress support for popular sovereignty, while the amount of trade openness exerts the opposite effect. These findings could suggest that support for more popular sovereignty in a country could be influenced by the economic performance of a country, which in turn influences the level of dissatisfaction with the ruling elite. In addition, none of the contextual variables studied seemed to interact with citizens' sociotropic perceptions of the economy, and thus no interaction between subjective and objective economy has been found.

One potential explanation for the non-significant findings of sociotropic mechanisms could be that voters might be responsive to other kinds of 'declinist' messages from populists rather than economic ones. Indeed, economic crises are not the only element characterising the view of societal decay portrayed by populists. For instance, the reference to a romanticised past ideal world to which present society is negatively compared is often part of the populist narrative (Taggart, 2002). In this sense, sociotropic mechanisms might take action under other forms, such as nostalgic deprivation (Gest, 2016; Gest et al., 2018) or societal pessimism (Steenvoorden & Harteveld, 2018), both of which were found to be significantly related to support for populist parties. Thus, considering the research design adopted by this chapter, future research could investigate the connection between other indicators of sociotropic concerns and the endorsement of populist attitudes. Another alternative explanation could be that sociotropic effects on support for popular sovereignty might be contingent on the responsibility attribution of the economic situation from citizens. Especially when considering the adopted measurement ('The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions'), it is

highly plausible to expect divergent reactions to a perceived economic crisis depending on who (or what) citizens blame for it (e.g., Bellucci, 2014). In this sense, suggestions have already been mentioned in the ancillary results of Chapter 3, showing that perceptions of the national economy and socio-political attitudes (i.e., political trust, policy preferences) are strictly connected and that their interaction determines the direction of sociotropic effects. However, the measures at the disposal of the data used did not tap directly into responsibility attribution, nor was it within their scope to delve into the role of citizens' political preferences in sociotropic mechanisms (e.g., G. Evans & Andersen, 2006; Kramer, 1983). Therefore, future studies on this topic should consider more refined variables covering these aspects to analyse their influence on sociotropic effects.

Finally, future comparative studies could reconsider these hypotheses with a more complete measurement of populist attitudes than the partial one adopted in Chapter 3. At best, the outcome variable observed (support for popular sovereignty) taps a core component of the populist ideology (i.e., people-centrism) but leaves out other important components, such as anti-elitism and/or anti-pluralism (e.g., A. Akkerman et al., 2014; Schulz et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2018). Especially considering sociotropic concerns about the economy, it is plausible that perceptions of an economic crisis might also involve negative attitudes towards elitism and liberal democratic principles such as pluralism. According to current knowledge, no existing data sources allow for comparative analyses of populist attitudes in all their elements. The EES 2019 dataset provided an opportunity to examine the effects of different types of economic grievances on at least one important component of populism. Considering the related analytical challenges, future comparative studies that include more complete indicators of populist attitudes are recommended.

The supply side: institutional arrangements and party competition

As mentioned in Chapter 1, cross-national variance in the electoral performances of populist parties calls for analyses that consider the

roles of contextual characteristics. Such characteristics are as important as the demand-side factors since they contribute to the composition of a favourable political opportunity structure (e.g., Arzheimer & Carter, 2006) for political subjects such as populist parties. The considerable variety of contexts that the European scenario offers provides an opportunity to investigate the effects of two important supply-side factors: institutional arrangements and party competition. On the one hand, it is unclear how institutions can influence support for populism given the lack of studies that consider the relationship between populism and institutions. On the other hand, the role of party competition has been mainly addressed at the aggregate level, while previous studies have paid less attention to studying voters' behaviours within their electoral context. Considering these gaps, this thesis has formulated the following two questions: (I) *How do liberal institutional arrangements influence support for populist parties?* (II) *To what extent is support for far-right populist parties affected by competition with mainstream parties?*

Chapter 4 investigated the roles of liberal institutional arrangements to test the arguments of the influential theory of Canovan (1999) regarding populism and the two faces of democracy. The findings showed that liberal institutional arrangements, identified in the theory of Canovan as contexts with high degrees of pragmatic politics, do not have a significant influence on support for populist parties. In other words, different degrees of institutions' political pragmatism do not directly affect the likelihood of citizens supporting populist parties. Nevertheless, other findings have shown that such institutional arrangements can influence support for populism once their interaction with citizens' political distrust is considered. Specifically, political systems characterised by high degrees of consensual democracy, economic and political interdependence, and checks on government increase the probability of citizens with high political distrust supporting populist parties. Thus, these findings support Canovan's theoretical suggestions when considering the interaction between these institutional arrangements and citizens' political distrust.

The testing of Canovan's theory offered the opportunity to connect

the tradition of theoretical studies on populism to the empirical studies adopting an institutional approach in the study of citizens' support for democracy (e.g., Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Christmann & Torcal, 2018; Torcal & Montero, 2006). As such, adopting such an empirical approach allowed this chapter to test not only the implications of Canovan's theory but also those of later scholars inspired by her insights (e.g., Mény & Surel, 2001; Mudde, 2004; Taggart, 2002). While the relationship between liberal democratic institutions and populism has been mostly considered by scholarship within the normative debate (e.g., Abts & Rummens, 2007; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012), the results of this chapter brought some empirical evidence of how these institutions can enhance the anti-institutional impulse of populism and, consequently, its grip on protest voters.

The focus on political distrust has been determined by the data at the disposal for the analysis. Still, there are very good reasons to explore interactions with other factors related to citizens' institutional perceptions, such as satisfaction with democracy or political cynicism. This is especially true when it comes to the populist redemptive ideal of democracy (Canovan, 1999) since it is plausible to expect that populism can attract support by highlighting the negative aspects of liberal democracy, with the aim of obtaining support from citizens dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country. Along the same line of reasoning, it is also reasonable to expect populist parties' anti-institutional campaigns to appeal to citizens that are impatient about the complex institutional designs of liberal democracies. In such cases, political cynicism, rather than political distrust, may play a larger role in explaining how liberal institutional arrangements can help the electoral success of populist parties. Concerning the effects of economic and political interdependence, a possible avenue for future research could be to consider individuals' support for protectionist policies (e.g., Van der Waal & De Koster, 2018) to analyse whether degrees of globalisation increase support for the populism of voters wishing for protectionist policies.

Another potential direction for future research can be to consider the institutional impact of populism when it occupies power. Espe-

cially when considering the more recent events, the phenomenon of populism is increasingly not confined to the role of the opposition party and holds an increasing amount of government experience. Suggestions from scholars of populism (Blokker, 2018; Muller, 2017; Urbinati, 2017), as well as recent developments in some European countries, show that having populists in government has implications for the assets of liberal democracies. Their policy-making might contribute to the weakening of such institutional designs and further consolidate their power position to secure a larger consensus, thereby reversing the relationship investigated in Chapter 4. Therefore, future research should consider the active role that populist forces have in attempting to modify democratic rules and practices.

A final suggestion is to consider how liberal institutional arrangements impact citizens‘ populist attitudes (A. Akkerman et al., 2014; Castanho Silva et al., 2017). Populism's critique of the liberal democratic model involves a specific ideological view of the role of 'the people' in the democratic process, a demonising view of the elite occupying the institutions, and a negative attitude towards pluralism. Thus, populist attitudes can be implemented in future research designs either to investigate how institutions can impact citizens' populist attitudes, or to examine how they can increase voting for populist parties by interacting with these attitudes in a similar fashion as with political distrust in this chapter.

Chapter 5 dealt with the analysis of party competition by focusing on how mainstream parties' competition over the issue of nativism affects support for far-right populist parties. The findings showed that whether mainstream parties adopt similar or greater nativist stances than the far-right populists exerts little to no effect on the overall probability of individuals supporting far-right populist parties. The results showed that in such situations, only the voters holding high anti-immigrant attitudes become slightly less likely to support the far-right populists than when mainstream parties distance themselves from the nativist stances of these parties. Overall, the evidence of this chapter provided little support for arguments on the issue ownership theory (e.g., Budge & Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996).

One alternative explanation for the lack of significant results can be that far-right populist parties' voters might consider other political issues in their decision. Without a doubt, these parties are well known by the public for their anti-immigration stances and opposition to multiculturalism as a societal model. However, despite placing less emphasis on economic policies during campaigns (e.g., Fenger, 2018; Rovny, 2013), these parties nonetheless have a policy agenda concerning the economy. For instance, the economic issues of far-right populism often involve the welfare state, and more precisely the amount of resources that the welfare state should dedicate to members of the ingroups (the natives) instead of the outgroups (immigrants) (e.g., Enggist & Pinggera, 2022; Schumacher & Van Kersbergen, 2016). Welfare chauvinism is a good example of how economic and cultural issues get mixed up in far-right populism campaigns, and there are also examples where this issue has been prominent in public debate (e.g., De Koster et al., 2013; Norocel, 2016). Additionally, other scholars have highlighted how these parties can also adopt an opposite view of what concerns state intervention by advocating for a neo-liberal agenda (e.g., Betz, 1994; Davidson & Saull, 2017). Therefore, a suggestion for future research might be to study the effects of party competition on issues other than nativism.

Another explanation might be the lack of suitable measurements for party competition. This chapter has indeed measured the competition between mainstream parties and far-right populist parties by looking at a static perspective, namely the composition of the political offer in a given moment concerning the issue of nativism. A rapprochement of mainstream parties towards the far-right populists' position could be considered an attempt to convince voters of owning the issue through accommodative strategies (Meguid, 2008). Yet, the adopted measurement accurately assesses this intention by mainstream parties. In this sense, one way could be to consider a more dynamic perspective by looking at the change in policy positions from one election to another. In addition, while these measurements rely on parties' manifestos content, future research could consider other ways of campaigning that voters might more closely consider in their decision (e.g., social media).

Finally, a last remark concerns the measurement adopted at the individual level to gauge voters' salience of nativism issues. The underlying assumption has been that voters holding high degrees of anti-immigrant attitudes are also very likely to deem such issues as important for their voting decision. Although this measurement was the best one at the disposal for the data used in the analysis, it remains an incomplete measurement of voters' issue salience. Therefore, future studies could implement more refined measures of which issues voters deem important to understand how party competition can affect support for populist parties.

2 • GENERAL LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Apart from limitations that are specific to each empirical chapter, it is worthwhile to mention some more general limitations characterising this thesis in terms of the overall results obtained and aspects that have not been considered. In turn, this will provide the opportunity to outline some directions for future research.

For instance, one limitation shared by all the empirical chapters of this thesis is the lack of causal claims due to the correlational research design adopted. All chapters adopted a multi-level methodology based on cross-sectional data; therefore, all the results obtained should be considered correlations. This thesis has proposed a comparative analysis of individual and contextual factors explaining support for populism. It made use of suggestions from multiple fields of research to connect the extensive tradition of theoretical studies on populism to the equally vast tradition of empirical studies on radical or extremist parties' support. Additional insights could be provided by future research investigating the mechanisms underlying the correlations found by adopting research designs that are more appropriate for causal assessments (e.g., panel data or experimental data). However, while such research designs are better suited to addressing causal mechanisms, they can hardly provide insights that are generalisable out of the context they analyse. Yet, they could still provide a valuable contribution in terms of what aspects should be the focus of comparative research.

One aspect of populism that this thesis has not considered is the role of the host ideologies from the far right and the far left. This aspect was only partially addressed in Chapter 5 by studying support for far-right populist parties in relation to party competition. By adopting a minimum definition approach to populism (e.g., Hawkins et al., 2018; Mudde, 2004, 2017; Stanley, 2008), this thesis has focused on the common ideological basis of both the far-right and far-left variants of populism. The main challenge in applying this approach to the study of support for different forms of populism is that while far-right populism is prevalent across numerous European contexts, the same level of prevalence is not observed for far-left populism. Nonetheless, it is very plausible that far-left and far-right ideologies play an important role in driving citizens' choices to support a model of populism. Future studies on populism should focus more on understanding how extremist ideologies and populist ideologies interact in attracting support from the citizenry.

Relatedly, in pursuing its comparative aim, this thesis could only focus on geographical contexts where populist parties have been running for elections (Chapter 2, Chapter 4, Chapter 5) to analyse voting behaviour. This limitation was partially addressed in Chapter 3 by investigating populism in terms of degrees rather than support. By doing this, it could also cover contexts that are usually not considered (e.g., Cyprus, Portugal, Malta, etc.). Since these parties have progressively increased their presence throughout Europe, it is not implausible that future works addressing voting behaviour might cover this gap with more recent surveys. Nevertheless, a more promising avenue would likely be to investigate populist attitudes in order to determine the potential demand for populism that could exist in a given population at a given time. In this sense, the collection of comparative measures of populist attitudes is recommended to advance this field of research further.

In adopting a comparative approach, this thesis aimed to shed light on the dynamics of support for populism across diverse countries and elections. However, it is important to acknowledge that the results presented in each chapter may not fully capture the extensive variation

between these contexts. The selected cases were chosen to explore relevant dynamics, but they may not account for all idiosyncratic elements and variations in each case. It is essential to recognize that finding a single general mechanism applicable to a large group of elections and countries is a challenging endeavour. Future research should further investigate the inherent complexities and variations across different contexts, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of support for populism in a comparative framework.

Finally, the period analysed in this thesis did not consider very recent developments such as the COVID-19 global pandemic that began in December 2019, and the Russo-Ukrainian War that began in February 2022. Both events likely had some influence on the electoral performances of European populist parties. The outcomes of elections occurring during these years have given a mixed picture of whether populists have benefited from these challenges. The far-right populist candidate Marine Le Pen sensibly increased her vote share in the French presidential elections of 2022 (+7.55%). The Italian general elections of 2022 saw a skyrocketing increase in support for the far-right populist party *Brothers of Italy* (+21.6%), but not of its coalition partners *The League* (-8.5%) and *Forward Italy* (-5.9%), or the other populist competitor, the *Five Star Movement* (-17.3%). A similarly mixed picture within a national context has been shown in the Dutch general elections of 2021, where the *Party for Freedom* (-2.25%) and the *Socialist Party* (-3.11%) registered a reduction in vote share, while *Forum for Democracy* increased theirs (+3.2%). Moreover, elections in Germany (2021; -2.3%) and Denmark (2022; -6.1%) have also seen reductions in the vote shares of populist parties. Future research should dedicate efforts to clarify how support for populism has been impacted by the occurrence of these two global crises. Returning to the arguments of the losers of globalisation theory, it is not unreasonable to expect the formation of a new demand for populist parties composed of individuals that have particularly suffered from the socioeconomic consequences of recent global crises. Further research covering recent periods is required to understand how these dynamics could affect support for populism.

3 • CONCLUSIONS

The rise of populism constitutes an important challenge for contemporary societies. While it can bring the opportunity to cover representational gaps occurring in modern democracies by giving a stronger voice to marginalised groups, its ideological offer involves considerable attrition in the principles of liberal democracy (e.g., minority rights, the rule of law, and pluralism). Populism affirmed itself as an audacious challenger of established ideologies from centre-left and centre-right, and populist parties have managed to obtain much larger political representation than in past decades.

Previous studies explaining support for populism have focused on either demand-side or supply-side factors, often paying less attention to the inherent interaction between the two. Demand-side factors principally pertain to grievances of different types being expressed by voters (e.g., social marginalisation, socioeconomic marginalisation, political distrust, anti-immigrant attitudes), thereby portraying support for populism mainly stemming from voters‘ resentment of established politics. Supply-side factors encompass elements of the environment that can facilitate or hamper populist parties' success (e.g., political system, party competition, socioeconomic conditions). However, while explanations based on the demand side enable research to identify the potential pool of supporters from which populists can draw, integrating supply-side explanations can help us to understand how such grievances are successfully mobilised into support for populism in one context, and why they are not in others. Studying populism in the European scenario offered the opportunity to exploit its cross-national diversity to analyse how the effects of individuals' grievances can vary depending on certain contextual characteristics.

Based on the empirical research conducted in this thesis, several key conclusions emerge. Firstly, perceptions of social marginalization play a significant role in driving support for populist parties, particularly in affluent and globally interconnected European countries (Chapter 2). Secondly, while perceptions of economic crisis do not fuel

support for populist ideology, factors related to self-interest, such as socioeconomic vulnerability and personal financial situation, are influential (Chapter 3). Thirdly, populist parties effectively capitalize on the anti-institutional sentiments prevalent among European citizens, particularly within liberal democratic systems (Chapter 4). Lastly, despite attempts by mainstream parties to mimic the anti-immigration policies of far-right populism, these strategies do not yield significant consequences in terms of support for far-right populist parties(Chapter 5). These findings provide valuable insights into the dynamics of populist support within the broader landscape of European democracies.

This thesis has offered a comparative analysis of the individual and contextual factors explaining the rise of populist parties in Europe. As such, the thesis has contributed to the research on populism by testing the implications related to demand- and supply-side explanations of populist parties' success. The demand-side factors included individual characteristics in addition to the main variables under analysis, such as sociodemographic characteristics and socio-political attitudes. The supply-side factors include socioeconomic and sociocultural conditions, the political systems and party competition. This thesis also examined the interaction between the two factors, suggesting that the combination of both can be crucial for understanding the success of populism and how it varies across contexts. By doing so, it has shown that populist parties can be studied from a comparative perspective by focusing on their common features, despite the presence of some ideological heterogeneity within this group in terms of far-right and far-left populism.

Explanations based on social integration and socioeconomic marginalisation serve a key role in defining the demand side of populism. Improving the mechanisms of social protection nets and reducing socioeconomic inequality could contribute to reintegrating these segments within the mainstream public debate, in addition to allowing for fixing representational gaps that characterise liberal democracies. Moreover, this thesis has shown how institutional arrangements related to liberal democracy can facilitate the anti-institutional impulses of populist parties. Policies designed to increase

the institutional awareness of citizens might contribute to decreasing the potential impatience that citizens can feel when confronting complex institutional designs (e.g., the liberal democratic design), thereby possibly reducing the fascination that populist parties can exert on citizens.

NOTES

[1]https://edu.nl/cqqcj
[2]https://edu.nl/mkcck
[3]https://edu.nl/qjqvb

Appendix to Appealing to the "Losers"

the effect of Subjective Social Marginalisation on support for populist parties

TABLE A.1 List of countries and populist parties.

Country	Populist Parties
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (FPO); Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZO)
Belgium	Flemish Interest (VB); National Front Belgium (FNb); People's Party (PP)
Bulgaria	National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria (NFSB); Will (Volya); Attack (Ataka); Order; Law and justice (RZS); National Bulgarian Movement (IMRO)
Czech Republic	Public Affairs (VV)
Denmark	Danish People's Party (DF); Progress Party (FrP)
Estonia	Estonian Conservative People's Party (EKRE)
Finland	True Finns (Ps)
France	Republic Arise/France Arise (DLR/DLF); National Front/Rally (FN/RN)
Germany	The Left (Linke), Die Republikaner (REP)
Hungary	Hungarian Civic Alliance/Christian Democratic People's Party (FIDESZ+KDNP), Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik), Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP)
Italy	Brothers of Italy (FdI), (Northern) League (LN), Movement Five Stars (M5S), The People of Freedom/Forza Italia (FI/PdL)
Ireland	Sinn Fein (SF)
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV), Fortuyn list (LPF), Socialist Party (SP)
Norway	Progress Party (FrP)
Poland	Law and Justice (PiS), Kukiz 15, League of Polish Families (LPR), Self-Defense for the Polish Republic (SRP)
Slovakia	Slovak National Party (SNS), Direction – Social Democracy (SMER), Ordinary People (OLaNO)
Slovenia	Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), Slovenian National Party (SNS)
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD)
Switzerland	Ticino League (LdT), Swiss People's Party (SVP), Automobile Party/Freedom Party of Switzerland (FPS), Geneva Citizens Movement (MCR)
United Kingdom	United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)

TABLE A.2 SSM scale used items, question-wording, and measurement.

Dimension	ESS item	Question-wording	Measurement
Social Integration	pplahlp	Using this card, please tell me to what extent you feel that people in your local area help one another?	0 Not at all – 6 A great deal
	flclpla	Using this card, please say to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. I feel close to the people in my local area	1 Agree strongly – 5 Disagree strongly
	trtrsp	Using this card, please tell me to what extent you feel that people treat you with respect?	0 Not at all – 6 A great deal
Social Acceptance	ppltrst	Would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	0 You can't be too careful – 10 Most people can be trusted
	pplfair	Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair?	0 Most people try to take advantage of me – 10 Most people try to be fair
	pplhlp	Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?	0 People mostly look out for themselves – 10 People mostly try to be helpful
Social Contribution	dngval	Please say to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. I generally feel that what I do in my life is valuable and worthwhile	1 Agree strongly – 5 Disagree strongly
	accdng	please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do	1 Agree strongly – 5 Disagree strongly

TABLE A.3 Factor loadings and uniqueness after principal components factor analysis (N=34,469).

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Uniqueness
pplahlp		0.8579		0.2632
flclpla		0.8244		0.3731
trtrsp		0.5588		0.4682
ppltrst	0.8588			0.2885
pplfair	0.8501			0.2845
pplhlp	0.7683			0.3723
dngval			0.8451	0.3010
accdng			0.8445	0.3060

(blanks represent factor loadings <.4)

TABLE A.4 Descriptives statistics of variables.

Variable	Min	Max	Proportion/Mean	Std Deviation
Support for a populist party	0	1	18.83%	/
Subjective Social Marginalisation	1	5	2.60	0.56
Gender (Female)	0	1	51.13%	/
Age Group				
18-24	0	1	5.08%	/
25-34	0	1	13.59%	/
35-44	0	1	18.26%	/
55-74	0	1	54.26%	/
+75	0	1	8.81%	/
Social class				
Self-employed professionals	0	1	2.40%	/
Small business owners	0	1	10.61%	/
Technical (semi-)professionals	0	1	7.68%	/
Production workers	0	1	20.28%	/
(Associate) managers	0	1	16.19%	/
Clerks	0	1	10.67%	/
Socio-cultural (semi-)professionals	0	1	13.68%	/
Service workers	0	1	18.48%	/
Level of education				
Non-tertiary education	0	1	67.52%	/
Tertiary education	0	1	32.48%	/
Unemployment status	0	1	4.22%	/
Area of residence (Rural)	0	1	38.62%	/
Political distrust	0	10	5.76	2.18
Subjective economic well-being				
Living comfortably with current income	0	1	34.76%	/
Coping with current income	0	1	45.26%	/
Difficult with current income	0	1	14.71%	/
Very difficult with current income	0	1	5.26%	/
Political orientation				
No placement	0	1	3.86%	/
Radical left	0	1	12.05%	/
Centre-left	0	1	20.47%	/
Centre	0	1	25.88%	/
Centre-right	0	1	21.54%	/
Radical right	0	1	16.20%	/
Religious identification				
Yes, currently	0	1	57.65%	/
Yes, previously	0	1	11.19%	/
No	0	1	31.16%	/
Trade union membership				
Yes, currently	0	1	25.38%	/
Yes, previously	0	1	28.70%	/
No	0	1	45.92%	/
Party closeness				
No closeness	0	1	34.65%	/
Weak closeness	0	1	14.60%	/
Strong closeness	0	1	50.75%	/
GDP per capita (thousands)	3.90	100.60	41.09	21.21
Unemployment rate	3.22	17.75	8.22	3.61
Social protection expenditure (%GDP)	14.6	33.5	25.16	4.99
Economic globalisation index	62.46	89.99	79.90	6.39
Social globalisation index	63.84	90.86	82.79	5.23

TABLE A.5 Multilevel linear regression models predicting SSM (N=34,469; K=34)

Variables	Null model	Sociodem.	Socialising institutions	Sociopolitical attitudes	Country-years vars
Social class (Ref.(Associate)Managers)					
Self-employed professionals		-0.036	-0.041*	-0.040*	-0.040*
Small business owners		0.004	0.002	-0.037**	-0.037**
Technical (semi)professionals		0.026	0.021	0.002	0.002
Production workers		0.087***	0.083***	0.012	0.012
Clerks		0.041***	0.039**	0.012	0.012
Sociocultural professionals		-0.079***	-0.077***	-0.092***	-0.092***
Service workers		0.065***	0.063***	-0.001	-0.001
Unemployment status (Ref. Employed)					
Unemployed		0.178***	0.175***	0.086***	0.086***
Tertiary education (Ref. non-tertiary education)					
Tertiary education		-0.068***	-0.066***	-0.022*	-0.022*
Gender (Ref. Male)					
Female		-0.032***	-0.032***	-0.042***	-0.042***
Age group (Ref. 18-24)		0.012	0.015	0.016	0.016
25-34					
35-44		-0.039*	-0.036	-0.069***	-0.069***
55-74		-0.080***	-0.075***	-0.109***	-0.109***
+75		-0.150***	-0.140***	-0.166***	-0.166***
Area of residence (Ref. Urban)					
Rural		-0.105***	-0.101***	-0.101***	-0.101***
Religious identification (Ref. No)					
Yes, previously			0.013	0.005	0.005
Yes, currently			-0.054***	-0.048***	-0.048***
Trade-union membership (Ref. No)					
Yes, previously			0.029***	0.011	0.011
Yes, currently			-0.018*	-0.016	-0.016
Party closeness (Ref. No)					
Weak party closeness			0.008	0.008	0.008
Strong party closeness			-0.064***	-0.018*	-0.018*
Political orientation (Ref. Centre)					
No placement				0.025	0.025
Radical left				0.010	0.010
Centre-left				0.041***	0.041***
Centre-right				0.012	0.012
Radical right				-0.018	-0.018
Political distrust				0.066***	0.066***
Subjective economic well-being (Ref. Living comfortably on present income)					
Coping on present income				0.075***	0.075***
Difficult on present income				0.209***	0.209***
Very difficult on present income				0.353***	0.353***
LGBT opposition				0.030**	0.030***
GDP per capita[a]					-0.002
Unemployment rate[a]					0.001
Social protection expenditure[a]					0.003
Economic globalisation index[a]					-0.003
Social globalisation index[a]					-0.001
Constant	2.626***	2.727***	2.781***	2.653***	2.649***
Random effects					
var(Country-year)	0.042	0.038	0.037	0.015	0.010
var(Residual)	0.276	0.265	0.263	0.239	0.239

$+ p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;
[a] Centered variable

TABLE A.6 Multilevel logistic regression models predicting populist parties voting. Odds ratios reported (N=34,469; K=34).

Variables	Null model	Bivariate	Socialising institutions	Sociodem.	Sociopolitical attitudes
SSM		1.422***	1.395***	1.287***	1.156**
Religious identification (Ref. No)					
Yes, previously			0.981	1.055	1.118
Yes, currently			0.902	0.954	1.061
Trade-union membership (Ref. No)					
Yes, previously			0.850	0.865	0.756**
Yes, currently			0.766*	0.821+	0.827+
Party closeness (Ref. No)					
Weak party closeness			0.842*	0.866+	0.871+
Strong party closeness			0.844+	0.882	0.920
Social class (Ref.(Associate)Managers)					
Self-employed professionals				1.266*	1.218
Small business owners				1.490***	1.344***
Technical (semi)professionals				1.292***	1.316***
Production workers				1.704***	1.678***
Clerks				1.263**	1.269**
Sociocultural professionals				1.347**	1.452***
Service workers				1.712***	1.701***
Unemployment status (Ref. Employed)					
Unemployed				1.232*	1.295**
Tertiary education (Ref. non-tertiary education)					
Tertiary education				0.570***	0.615***
Gender (Ref. Male)					
Female				0.815***	0.833***
Age group (Ref. 18-24)					
25-34				1.266+	1.158
35-44				1.142	1.032
55-74				0.977	0.896
+75				0.789	0.679+
Area of residence (Ref. Urban)					
Rural				1.056	1.056
Political orientation (Ref. Centre)					
No placement					0.424+
Radical left					0.476**
Centre-left					0.763*
Centre-right					1.012
Radical right					1.805**
Political distrust					1.143***
Subjective economic well-being (Ref. Living comfortably on present income)					
Coping on present income					1.196**
Difficult on present income					1.426***
Very difficult on present income					1.170
LGBT opposition					1.112**
Constant	0.179***	0.071***	0.096***	0.091***	0.111***
Random effects					
var(Country-year)	1.990***	1.930***	1.938***	1.891***	1.848***
Pseudo R2 (Country-year)		5.83%	5.08%	9.44%	13.28%

$+ p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$;
[a] Centered variable

B Appendix to My pockets or my country's?

The role of economic factors in explaining support for popular sovereignty

TABLE B.1 Descriptives statistics of variables.

Variable	Min	Max	Proportion/Mean	Std Deviation
Support for Popular Sovereignty	1	5	3.49	1.13
Negative Perception of National Economy	1	5	3.11	0.93
Unemployment status	0	1	5.95%	/
Level of Education				
Lower education	0	1	4.62%	/
Medium education	0	1	37.28%	/
Higher education	0	1	52.26%	/
Still studying	0	1	5,33%	/
Subjective Economic Welll-being	1	7	3.99	1.21
Gender				
Female	0	1	50%	/
Age				
18-24	0	1	10.57%	/
25-39	0	1	24.68%	/
40-54	0	1	27.61%	/
55-64	0	1	17.03%	/
65+	0	1	20.10%	/
Area of Living				
Rural area or village	0	1	22.67%	/
Small or middle size town	0	1	39.75%	/
Large town	0	1	37.59%	/
Distrust in National Parliament	1	5	3.23	
Support for Wealth Redistribution	0	10	5.68	2.98
Support for Immigration Restriction	0	10	5.63	3.25
GDP per capita (thousands)	9.44	117.19	34.71	20.72
Unemployment rate	2.24	19.29	6.70	3.72
KOF Trade Globalisation Index	69.41	89.70	81.03	5.19
KOF Interpersonal Globalisation Index	65.50	90.89	79.39	5.05

TABLE B.2 Multilevel linear regression analyses of support for popular sovereignty on country level fixed effects (N=22,131, Countries=28).

Variables	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
Perceptions of Economy	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.018
Level of Education (Ref. High education)					
Low education	0.256***	0.255***	0.255***	0.255***	0.256***
Medium education	0.098***	0.098***	0.098***	0.098***	0.099***
Still studying	-0.043	-0.043	-0.043	-0.043	-0.043
Unemployment status (Ref. Not Unemployed)					
Unemployed	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.063
Subjective Economic well-being	-0.038***	-0.038***	-0.038***	-0.038***	-0.038***
Gender (Ref. Male)					
Female	-0,018	-0,018	-0,018	-0,018	-0,018
Age	-0,056***	-0,056***	-0,056***	-0,056***	-0,056***
Area of Living (Ref. Rural area)					
Small or medium size town	0,018	0,018	0,018	0,018	0,018
Large town	-0,014	-0,013	-0,013	-0,013	-0,014
Distrust in National Parliament	0,161***	0,162***	0,162***	0,161***	0,161***
Support for Wealth Redistribution	0,042***	0,042***	0,042***	0,042***	0,042***
Support for Immigration Restriction	0,018***	0,018***	0,018***	0,018***	0,018***
GDP per capita (in thousands)[a]	-0.003*				-0.003*
Unemployment (%)[a]		0.003			0.006
Trade globalisation Index[a]			0.010+		0.011*
Interpersonal globalisation Index[a]				-0.004	0.002
Constant	2.873***	2.868***	2.866***	2.870***	2.869***
Random effects					
var(Country)	0.027***	0.032***	0.029***	0.031***	0.024***
Pseudo R^2 Country-year	43.88%	34.62%	39.74%	35.19%	50.51%
var(Residual)	1.157***	1.157***	1.157***	1.157***	1.157***
Pseudo R^2 Residual	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%
Model fit					
AIC	66,581.482	66,585.596	66,583.442	66,585.353	66,584.174
BIC	66,717.563	66,721.676	66,719.522	66,721.434	66,744.269
df	14	14	17		
Log-likelihood	-33,273.741	-33,275.798	-33,274.721	-33,275.677	-33,272.087

[a] Centered variable;
$+ p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

TABLE B.3 Multilevel linear regression analyses of support for popular sovereignty on country level fixed effects (N=22,131, Countries=28).

Variables	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
Perceptions of Economy	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017
Level of Education (Ref. High education)					
Low education	0,250***	0,249***	0,250***	0,249***	0,249***
Medium education	0,096***	0,096***	0,096***	0,096***	0,096***
Still studying	-0,039	-0,039	-0,039	-0,039	-0,039
Unemployment status (Ref. Not Unemployed)					
Unemployed	0,058	0,057	0,057	0,057	0,058
Subjective Economic well-being	-0,035***	-0,035***	-0,035***	-0,035***	-0,035***
Gender (Ref. Male)					
Female	-0,019	-0,019	-0,019	-0,019	-0,019
Age	-0,054***	-0,054***	-0,054***	-0,054***	-0,054***
Area of Living (Ref. Rural area)					
Small or medium size town	0,022	0,022	0,022	0,022	0,022
Large town	-0,009	-0,009	-0,009	-0,009	-0,009
Distrust in National Parliament	0,160***	0,160***	0,160***	0,160***	0,160***
Support for Wealth Redistribution	0,042***	0,042***	0,042***	0,042***	0,042***
Support for Immigration Restriction	0,016***	0,016***	0,016***	0,016***	0,016***
GDP per capita (in thousands)[a]	-0,003*	-0,005*	-0,003*	-0,003*	-0.003*
Unemployment (%)[a]	0,005	0,005	0,017	0,005	0,005
Trade globalisation Index[a]	0,010+	0,010+	0.010+	-0,003	0,010+
Interpersonal globalisation Index[a]	0,001	0,001	0,001	0,001	-0,001
GDP per capita (in thousands)*Perceptions of Economy		0.001			
Unemployment (%)*Perceptions of Economy			-0.004		
Trade globalisation Index*Perceptions of Economy				0.004	
Interpersonal globalisation Index*Perceptions of Economy					0.001
Constant	2,862***	2,863***	2,862***	2,863***	2,863***
Random effects					
var(Country)	0.027***	0.032***	0.029***	0.031***	0.024***
Pseudo R^2 Country-year	43.88%	34.62%	39.74%	35.19%	50.51%
var(Residual)	1.157***	1.157***	1.157***	1.157***	1.157***
Pseudo R^2 Residual	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%	6.25%
Model fit					
AIC	66,441.309	66,442.871	66,442.959	66,442.404	66,443.287
BIC	66,617.413	66,626.980	66,627.068	66,626.512	66,627.396
df	17	18	18	18	18
Log-likelihood	-33,198.655	-33,198.435	-33,198.479	-33,198.202	-33,198.644

[a] Centered variable;
$+ p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

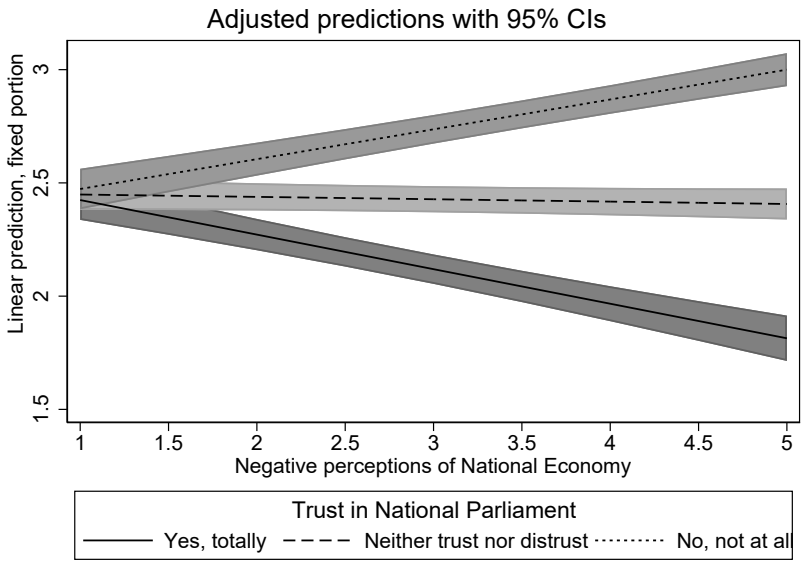

FIGURE B.1 Linear prediction of *Support for Popular Sovereignty* depending on levels of *Distrust in National Parliament*. Source: EES (2019). Own calculations.

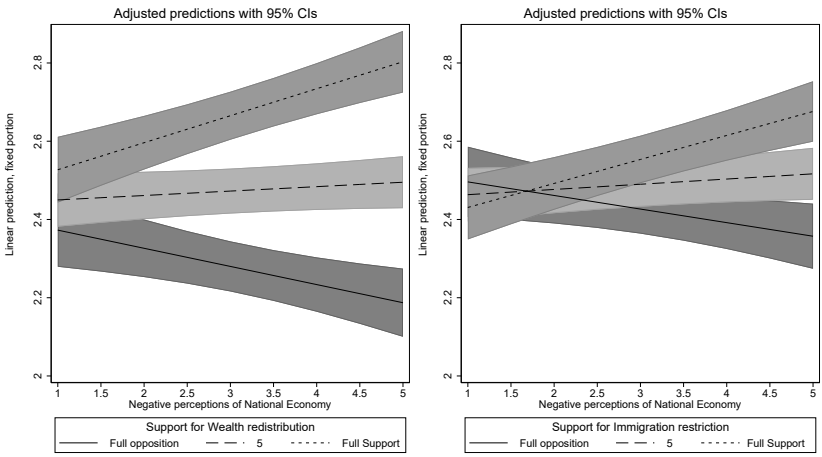

FIGURE B.2 Linear prediction of *Support for Popular Sovereignty* depending on levels of *Support for Wealth Redistribution* and *Support for Immigration Restriction*. Source: EES (2019).
Own calculations.

Appendix to Populism against liberal democracy?

Testing Canovan's theory about populism and the two faces of democracy

TABLE C.1 List of countries and populist parties

Country	Populist Parties
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (FPO); Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZO)
Belgium	Flemish Interest (VB); National Front Belgium (FNb); People's Party (PP)
Bulgaria	National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria (NFSB); Will (Volya); Attack (Ataka); Order; Law and justice (RZS); National Bulgarian Movement (IMRO)
Czech Republic	Public Affairs (VV)
Denmark	Danish People's Party (DF); Progress Party (FrP)
Estonia	Estonian Conservative People's Party (EKRE)
Finland	True Finns (Ps)
France	Republic Arise/France Arise (DLR/DLF); National Front/Rally (FN/RN)
Germany	PDS/The Left (Linke), Die Republikaner (REP), Alternative for Germany (AfD)
Greece	Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS)
Hungary	Hungarian Civic Alliance/Christian Democratic People's Party (FIDESZ+KDNP), Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik), Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP)
Italy	Brothers of Italy (FdI), (Northern) League (LN), Movement Five Stars (M5S), The People of Freedom/Forza Italia (FI/PdL)
Ireland	Sinn Fein (SF)
Lithuania	Labour Party (DB), Lithuanian Centre Party (LCP), Order and Justic (TT)
Luxembourg	Alternative Democratic Reform Party
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV), Fortuyn list (LPF), Socialist Party (SP)
Norway	Progress Party (FrP)
Poland	Law and Justice (PiS), Kukiz 15, League of Polish Families (LPR), Self-Defense for the Polish Republic (SRP)
Romania	People's Party - Dan Diaconescu (PPDD), Greater Romania Party (PRM), United Romania Party (PRU)
Slovakia	Slovak National Party (SNS), Direction – Social Democracy (SMER), Ordinary People (OLaNO)
Slovenia	Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), Slovenian National Party (SNS)
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD)
Switzerland	Ticino League (LdT), Swiss People's Party (SVP), Automobile Party/Freedom Party of Switzerland (FPS), Geneva Citizens Movement (MCR)
United Kingdom	United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)

TABLE C.2 Descriptives statistics of variables.

Variable	Min	Max	Proportion/Mean	Std Deviation
Support for Populist parties	0	1	15.84%	/
Years in Education	0	93	20	5.74
Gender				
Female	0	1	50.10%	/
Age	16	103	47.97	17.66
Unemployment Status	0	1	5.11%	/
Income groups				
Low Income	0	1	25.24%	/
Medium Income	0	1	45.37%	/
High Income	0	1	17.50%	/
Missing	0	1	11.89%	/
Political Distrust Index	0	3	1.88	0.68
Social Trust	0	1	58.97%	/
Authoritarian attitudes	0	3	0.97	0.99
Nationalist attitudes	0	3	2.30	0.73
GDP growth	-0.96	11.15	3.53	2.51
Unemployment rate	2.5	19.6	7.01	3.15
% Employed in Industrial Sector	4.47	35.82	20.73	8.31
Social Security Transfers (% GDP)	9	21.30	13.88	3.04
Executive-Parties Dimension Index	-1.65	2.50	0.36	1.01
KOF Political Globalisation Index	9	21.30	13.88	3.04
KOF Economic Globalisation Index	9	21.30	13.88	3.04
Checks on Government Index	55.42	99.74	83.00	11.92

TABLE C.3 Multilevel logistic regression analyses of the Cross-Level Interactions with Political Distrust (N=68,359, Country-years=59). Odds ratios reported. Control variables are included in the output.

Variable	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
Years in full-time education[a]	0.987**	0.987**	0.987**	0.987**	0.987**
Gender (Ref. Male)					
Female	0.725***	0.725***	0.725***	0.725***	0.725***
Age[a]		0.994***	0.994***	0.994***	0.994***
Age squared		1.000***	1.000***	1.000***	1.000***
Unemployment status	1.100	1.100	1.099	1.099	1.099
Income (Ref. Low income)					
Medium income	1.017	1.017	1.017	1.017	1.017
High income	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.950
Missing	0.692***	0.691***	0.691***	0.691***	0.691***
Political distrust	1.501***	1.452***	1.627***	1.596***	1.590***
Social Trust (Ref. Most people can be trusted)					
Can't be too careful	1.503***	1.503***	1.503***	1.503***	1.503***
Authoritarian attitudes	1.165***	1.165***	1.165***	1.165***	1.165***
Nationalist attitudes	1.214***	1.214***	1.214***	1.214***	1.214***
Executive-parties dimension index	0.900	0.478*	1.015	1.001	1.002
Political Globalisation Index	1.007	1.013	0.901*	1.014	1.012
Economic Globalisation Index	1.015	1.021	1.025	0.940	1.024
Checks on Government Index	1.023	1.022	1.021	1.022	0.924*
Executive-parties dimension index*Political distrust		1.242**			
Political Globalisation Index*Political distrust			1.037**		
Economic Globalisation Index*Political distrust				1.026*	
Checks on Government Index*Political distrust					1.031***
Constant	0.035***	0.040***	0.028***	0.030***	0.030***
Random effects					
var(Political distrust)	0.404***	0.388***	0.379***	0.389***	0.286***
Pseudo R^2		3.95%	6.09%	3.72%	29.25%
var(Country-year)	5.276***	5.221***	5.134***	5.268***	4.046***
Covariance Political distrust with Country-year	-1.357***	-1.318***	-1.287***	-1.325***	-0.967***
Model fit					
AIC	50,753.424	50,749.966	50,750.638	50,751.817	50,737.968
BIC	50,972.604	50,978.279	50,978.951	50,980.130	50,966.281
df	20	21	21	21	21
Log-Likelihood	-25,352.712	-25,349.983	-25,350.319	-25,350.908	-25,343.984

$^{*}p < 0.05; ^{**}p < 0.01; ^{***}p < 0.001$

Appendix to Fighting fire with fire?

The effect of mainstream parties' competition for the issue of Nativism on support for Far-Right Populist parties

TABLE D.1 List of countries and populist parties.

Country	Populist Parties
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (FPO); Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZO)
Belgium	Flemish Interest (VB); National Front Belgium (FNb); People's Party (PP)
Denmark	Danish People's Party (DF); Progress Party (FrP)
Finland	True Finns (Ps)
France	Republic Arise/France Arise (DLR/DLF); National Front/Rally (FN/RN)
Germany	Die Republikaner (REP), Alternative for Germany (AfD)
Italy	Brothers of Italy (FdI), (Northern) League (LN)
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV), Fortuyn list (LPF), Socialist Party (SP)
Norway	Progress Party (FrP)
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD)
Switzerland	Ticino League (LdT), Swiss People's Party (SVP), Automobile Party/Freedom Party of Switzerland (FPS), Geneva Citizens Movement (MCR)
United Kingdom	United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)

TABLE D.2 Descriptive statistics of variables.

Variable	Min	Max	Proportion/Mean	Std Deviation
Support for Far-Right Populist Parties	0	1	12.28%	/
Anti-immigration attitudes	0	10	4.57	1.94
Social Class				
Self-employed professionals	0	1	2.86%	/
Small business owners	0	1	11.50%	/
Technical (semi-)professionals	0	1	8.29%	/
Production workers	0	1	16.93%	/
(Associate) managers	0	1	18.72%	/
Clerks	0	1	11.09%	/
Socio-cultural (semi-)professionals	0	1	12.51%	/
Service workers	0	1	18.68%	/
Level of Education				
Lower education	0	1	40.42%	/
Medium education	0	1	31.40%	/
Higher education	0	1	24.77%	/
Subjective economic well-being				
Living comfortably with current income	0	1	48.62%	/
Coping with current income	0	1	41.71%	/
Difficult with current income	0	1	7.95%	/
Very difficult with current income	0	1	1.73%	/
Political Distrust Index	0	10	4.93	2.03
Gender				
Female	0	1	47.45%	/
Age	18	102	51.60	16.63
GDP per capita (thousands)	22.89	77.44	39.17	10.91
Unemployment rate	2.55	12.15	6.19	2.27
Social Protection Expenditure (% GDP)	21.3	32.5	26.89	2.57
Migrant population (%)	1.95	29.39	11.06	5.19
Refugee population (thousands)	6.20	970.35	88.59	128.82
Mainstream Left - FRPPs distance	0	8.53	3.75	1.42
Mainstream Right - FRPPs distance	0	6.14	2.17	1.27

TABLE D.3 Manifesto items composing the Nativism log-scale.

	Positive mentions		Negative mentions
National Way of Life: Positive	Favourable mentions of the manifesto country's nation, history, and general appeals.	National Way of Life: Negative	Unfavourable mentions of the manifesto country's nation and history.
Traditional Morality: Positive	Favourable mentions of traditional and/or religious moral values.	Traditional Morality: Negative	Opposition to traditional and/or religious moral values.
Law and Order: Positive	Favourable mentions of strict law enforcement, and tougher actions against domestic crime. Only refers to the enforcement of the status quo of the manifesto country's law code.		
Multiculturalism: Positive	Favourable mentions of strict law enforcement, and tougher actions against domestic crime. Only refers to the enforcement of the status quo of the manifesto country's law code	Multiculturalism: Negative	The enforcement or encouragement of cultural integration. Appeals for cultural homogeneity in society.

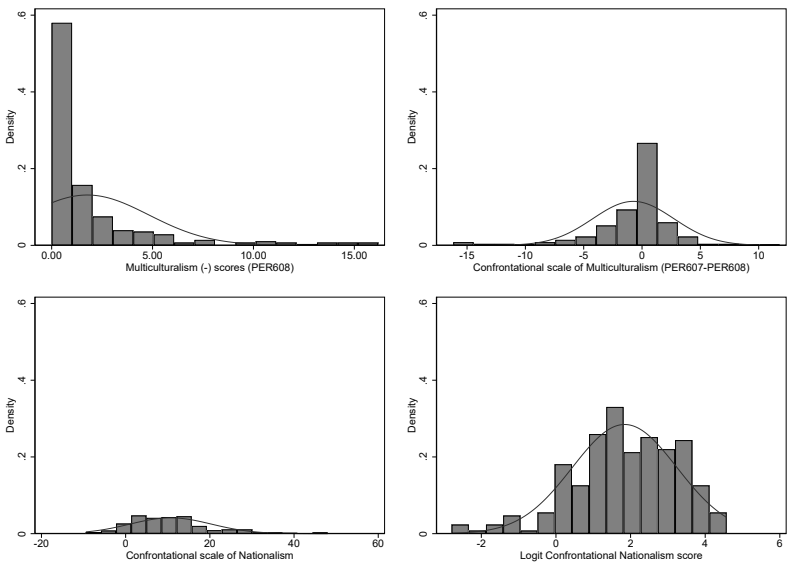

FIGURE D.1 Distributions of different measurements of Nativism.
Source: ESS 2002-2018. Own calculations.

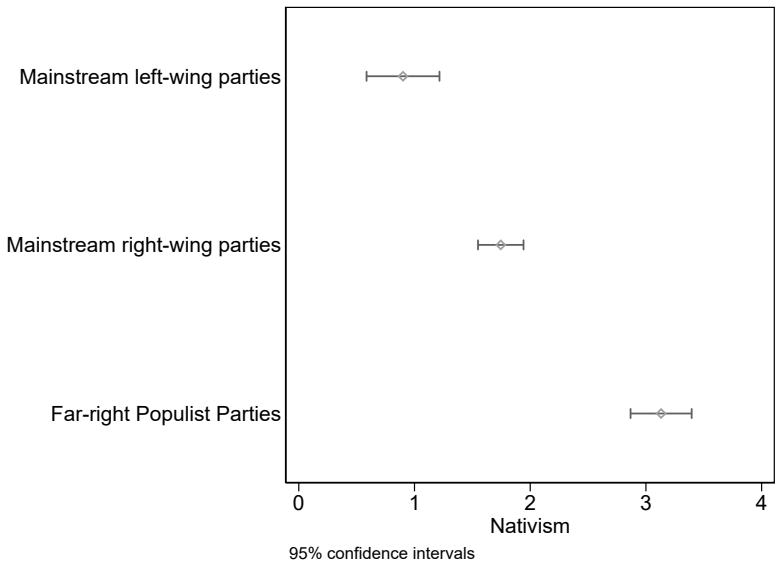

FIGURE D.2 Mean scores of Nativism for each party family considered. Source: ESS 2002-2018. Own calculations.

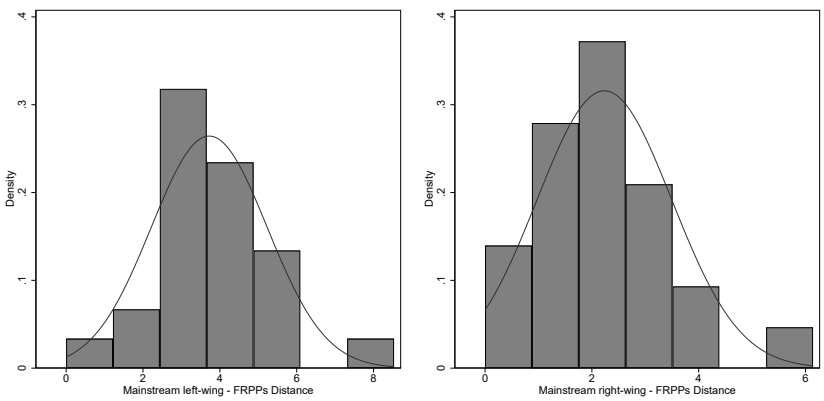

FIGURE D.3 Distributions of mainstream parties'-FRPPs Distances. Source: ESS 2002-2018. Own calculations.

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Summary

The rise of populist parties in Europe constituted a tremendous challenge for European political systems and mainstream parties. While populists can bring more inclusiveness by encouraging the political participation of marginalised citizens, they have shown to be hostile to the traditional liberal values of democracy, such as pluralism, tolerance and constructive dialogue.

This thesis investigates explanations of support for populism related to demand-side and supply-side factors and explores the inherent interaction between them. As such, on the one hand, it links the two traditions of theoretical studies on populism and empirical studies on support for radical/extremist parties. On the other hand, it uses the cross-national variation offered by the European scenario to test some arguments of the theoretical literature on populism. The first two empirical chapters address demand-side factors focusing on the effects of social and socioeconomic marginalisation. The last two empirical chapters address supply-side factors by examining the role of liberal institutional arrangements and party competition.

Chapter 2 investigates the implications of the mass society thesis, which posits that support for populist parties is a consequence of the loosening of the citizens' social identities. This chapter investigates the role of subjective social marginalisation using the ESS modules on personal and social well-being (2006 and 2012). The results show that perceptions of social marginalisation significantly increase support for populist parties net of alternative explanations and that this effect is stronger in wealthy and more globalised contexts. Nevertheless, such

an effect does not significantly influence poorer and less globalised contexts, where populism often obtains large consensus.

Chapter 3 examines the role of economic grievances by comparing the effects of sociotropic and egotropic mechanisms on support for populism. The core argument is that populist parties mobilise voters by performing situations of crisis to support their narrative of 'the people' against 'the élite'. This chapter uses cross-national data from the EES 2019 data to investigate whether sociotropic mechanisms (negative perceptions of the general economy) or egotropic mechanisms (subjective economic well-being; vulnerable socioeconomic position) explain support for popular sovereignty, a core element of populist ideology. The findings show that sociotropic mechanisms do not significantly influence support for popular sovereignty, while egotropic mechanisms remain relevant net of the control variables applied. Overall, the findings remark on the importance of self-interested mechanisms in determining support for populism.

Chapter 4 discusses whether liberal institutional arrangements explain the rise of populist parties testing Margaret Canovan's influential theory of populism and the two faces of democracy. This theory argues that populism is more likely to emerge where the tension between the redemptive face and the pragmatic face becomes untenable. This chapter studies the role of institutional factors using EVS and WVS data (1994-2019), the Comparative Political Dataset, the KOF Globalisation Index, and the Global Democracy dataset. The findings showed that liberal institutional arrangements, identified in the theory of Canovan as contexts with high degrees of pragmatic politics, do not significantly influence support for populist parties. Nevertheless, such institutional arrangements increase the probability of politically distrusted citizens supporting populist parties. Thus, these results offer some empirical evidence of how liberal institutional arrangements can enhance the anti-institutional impulse of populism.

Finally, Chapter 5 focuses on the role of party competition, investigating whether and to what extent competition between far-right populist parties and mainstream parties for the issue of Nativism influences the far-right populist parties' support. The core argument is

that far-right populist parties are widely acknowledged as owners of (anti)immigration issues. However, issue ownership can be subject to competition between parties during the electoral campaign. Using ESS data (2002-2018) and the Manifesto Project Dataset, this chapter shows that the adoption of similar or greater nativist stances than the far-right populists by mainstream parties overall exerts little to no effect on the probability of individuals supporting far-right populist parties. Only voters holding high anti-immigrant attitudes become slightly less likely to support the far-right populists than when mainstream parties occupy their same political space.

The conclusions summarise what theories related to demand-side and supply-side factors have found empirical confirmation and what did not. Concerning demand-side factors, the thesis shows that perceptions of social marginalisation lead to significantly higher support for populism, whereas perceptions of economic crisis did not yield the same results. Regarding the supply-side factors, this thesis finds that political systems characterised by higher degrees of liberal institutional arrangements increase the anti-institutional appeal of populist parties. In contrast, little to no effects are found for the effect of party competition on the issue of Nativism. Based on these findings, general limitations and future research directions are outlined. Overall, this thesis contends that an integrated approach that considers voters' grievances within their context is necessary to understand why citizens support populism and why this support varies temporally and across countries.

Acknowledgements

> "You're hungry, Denis?"
> "Really. Hey, like Godzilla always sez to Mothra — why don't we go eat some place?"
>
> 'Inherent Vice', Thomas Pynchon (2009)

My dear reader,

Please bear with me for a few more moments, because here we are at the end; this is my 'Last Waltz'. In the eventuality that you managed to read till here, my sincere congratulations! That wasn't a walk in the park, as sure as hell it was not for me writing it. And for those who've jumped straight to this section, well, my dearest reader, know that I really cannot blame you. In any case, you'll likely conclude that you've read the best part of this thesis.

What more is for me to say at this point? Well, after you've read (or heard) so much about these nice fellas called populists, I wondered whether you'd like to know a little bit more about the even nicer fella who wrote about them!

Reflecting on these past years, I find myself amazed by the journey I've undertaken. If you had asked me five years ago if I could imagine becoming a doctor, I would have said that it was not even in my wildest guesses. And if you had asked me eight years ago or earlier, I would have boldly said, looking puzzled, "why would I be working in a hospital? I'm studying Sociology¡'. Another thing you'd usually hear from me

was “I was once a cool person, but then I started a PhD‘’. Well, what I can say now is that I didn’t plan all this for sure, but I like where I ended up[1]. So, with these words, combined with the quote that gives the beginnings of this section, I hope I have conveyed to you who the man behind the thesis is: not only the “populism guy”, but also someone who never really liked to take himself too seriously[2].

In this incredible journey, I owe a debt of gratitude to those who have been by my side, providing unwavering support and encouragement. First and foremost, I would like to thank my family. As banal as this may sound, without them none of this would have been possible. I thank my brother, Simone, to whom this thesis has been dedicated, and who gives me the motivation for much of what I do, PhD included. Until there‘s me, until there’s us, you will never be alone. I thank Mamma and Papá for their unconditional support and trust in all I have been doing so far, even in the moments I wasn’t sure myself. And of course, I thank as well the rest of the family from both sides for all their support, with a special thought to my Grandma who has recently passed away.

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[1] Or, as I also like to say: “Given the premises, it could have been much worse‘’

[2] Although I am working on this!

[3] See you all in Kraków, first round in BaniaLuka is on me!

at the Sociology Department of Tilburg, your passion for research, intellectual discussions at the lunch table, and willingness to lend a helping hand have enriched my experience in countless ways. And thanks a lot to my PhD colleagues from Trento as well, although our paths may have diverged, partly due to the unforeseen challenges of the pandemic, I cherish fond memories of the beginning of our PhD journeys together.

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[4] Pictures available upon request

[5] In alphabetical order, so that in case you can take it up with your families.

life in general. Daniele, I have nothing but respect for your dedication to the study of medicine and how you practice the discipline[6]. Davide, perhaps you more than anybody else reminded me how persistence is the key, be it for mastering Call of Duty or to reaching the yearned-for "*posto fisso*"[7]. Donato[8], from endless nights playing video games to the numerous times we played football together, your friendship has given me several good moments I still remember. Emmanuel, you are for certain the best striker and rockstar I ever met in my life, and more generally my favourite embodiment of living life to the fullest. Jhoshua, your infectious humour and unforgettable moments together have brightened even the dullest days, creating memories that still bring a smile to my face. Matteo, you are living proof that it is possible to make such radical changes and reinvent oneself completely. And last, but by all means only in alphabetical order, Mario. What one can possibly say about you, an amazing friend, a cigarette dispenser without ever a complaint, but most of all a truly amazing schoolmate.

Well, I guess this quite wraps it up, my dear reader. With the clock hitting 11:53 p.m., on a hot summer night in Italy, this lone and slightly asleep writer bids you farewell. As I embark on this next chapter of my life, I carry each of you in my heart, and I once again thank you for being part of my journey so far.

As always, sincerely yours.

Francesco

Terracina, July 2023

[6] You may even consider taking a breather once in a while.
[7] For the non-Italian speakers: permanent job
[8] aka TONINO