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**Economic Correlates of Populist Attitudes: An Analysis of Nine European
Countries in the Aftermath of the Great Recession**

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Abstract

This paper analyses individuals' adoption of populist attitudes in nine European countries in the wake of the Great Recession. We assess the consequences of three different, interrelated aspects of economic hardship that are expected to foster the development of populist attitudes at the individual level: vulnerability, grievances, and perceptions of the national economic situation. Using comparative survey data, we find effects of all these three individual aspects. Our analysis suggests that the main explanation for populist attitudes is neither the vulnerability nor the economic hardship suffered by the people, but rather the perceptions that citizens have about the economic situation in their country. Using panel data from Spain we address concerns about the presence of endogeneity in the relationship between economy perceptions and populism

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and conclude that the effect goes mostly from economic perceptions to populist attitudes, and not the other way around.

Keywords: populism, economic crisis, political attitudes, vulnerability, grievances, economic perceptions

Introduction

The last decade in Spain has been characterized by two extraordinary circumstances: an economic crisis that has produced rocketing levels of unemployment (up to 25.7%) and substantively reduced citizens' purchase power (-17% on average), and the rise of a new left wing populist party, Podemos. Founded only by early 2014, Podemos obtained 21% of the popular vote in the 2015 general elections, becoming the third largest party in the Spanish political landscape. Although Spain seems so far immune to the pervasive growth of populist radical right parties that affects other European countries, the main political consequence of the Great Recession has been the birth of this party whose discourse is structured around the constant opposition between *la gente* (the people) and *la casta* (the caste) (Gómez-Reino & Llamazares, 2016).

This example, which could be extended to other peripheral countries such as Greece or Italy, serves to illustrate the question addressed by this paper: to what extent populism is facilitated by economic recession? In order to answer, we analyze individuals' adoption of populist attitudes in nine European countries in the wake of the Great Recession.

The contribution of the paper is threefold. First, the study focuses on explaining individual variation in populist attitudes and not support for populist parties as most previous works have done. Understanding how populist attitudes are forged is fundamental, as these constitute the breeding ground from which vote choice for populist parties may (or may not) result. While most of existing works focus on the electoral support of populist parties not much comparative empirical research is yet done on the antecedents of populist attitudes among voters, and the question of the specific role of economic factors remains open.

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Second, the paper assesses the consequences of three different, interrelated aspects of economic hardship that are expected to foster the development of populist attitudes at the individual level: vulnerability, grievances or personal experience with the crisis, and perceptions of the national economic situation. Using comparative survey data, we find effects of all these three individual aspects. Our analysis yet suggests that the main predictor for populist attitudes is not the vulnerability or the economic hardship suffered by the people, but rather the perceptions that citizens have about the economic situation.

Third, the paper addresses the potential endogeneity problem that may arise between perceptions of the economic situation and populism. A bad economic situation may enhance populist attitudes, but populist attitudes may also condition the evaluations that people do of the economic context. Using panel data from Spain we conclude that the effect goes mostly from economic perceptions to populist attitudes, and not the other way around.

The paper is structured as follows. First we discuss the choice of populist attitudes as dependent variable within the literature on populism and populist parties vote choice. Next, we review the debate over the role of the economy as a source of populist resentment and present our hypotheses. We then describe the data and methods used in the cross-national and longitudinal analyses and present the corresponding results. In the last section we summarize our findings and discuss their implications.

Populism and Populist Attitudes

One of the major hurdles in the quest for explaining the rise of populism has certainly been the many, sometimes divergent, and often hardly specified meanings that the concept has been given, not only within the academia but also by the media and among political commentators and politicians themselves. Even if authors still disagree on whether it should be thought of as an ideology, a discourse or communicational style, or even as an organizational strategy, a growing consensus is recently emerging around a minimal set of core features that would define populism. These have been succinctly conveyed by Mudde (2004, p. 543) when arguing that populism “considers society to be separated into two relatively homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people” (see also Abts & Rummens, 2007; Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Mény & Surel, 2002; Rooduijn, 2014a; Stanley, 2008). Accordingly, populism is conceived of as a Manichean view that sees politics as the struggle between the worthy people’s commonsense and the harmful, self-serving power elite—a view that is deeply suspicious of any constitutional restraints to the democratic principle and hence advocates for the absolute primacy of popular sovereignty.

Such a minimal conceptual core renders populism ideologically ubiquitous (Taggart, 2000). Lacking any true programmatic content, populism does not provide an internally coherent set of specific solutions to the major conflicts present in modern societies. Instead, populist rhetoric is easily attached to different full-fledged ideologies on both sides of the left-right spectrum. Although the populist radical right has proved to be one of the most prolific party families in Europe over the last three decades, other distinct

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families have recently earned the same qualifier, such as neo-liberal populist parties or social-populist parties, not to mention the diverse crowd of contemporary leftist-populist movements in Latin America.

Relatedly, populism is not to be understood as a quality confined to a precise set of allegedly populist parties. Rather, populist rhetoric can be adopted in different degrees by any actor, not only political parties and leaders but also journalists and voters—provided that their discourse complies with the minimal definition. Also mainstream parties might occasionally or even consistently voice populist appeals (Deegan-Krause & Haughton, 2009; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Pauwels, 2011). Populism can vary in degree across actors and over time. It is not an “either–or” concept (Pauwels, 2011) and hence is best used as a “descriptor” rather than as a “classifier” (van Kessel, 2014).

This ideational conceptualization of populism has significant implications in terms of research strategy. Most of the existing research on the origins of populism as a mass phenomenon uses vote choice as the dependent variable, taking as a starting point some categorization of parties as populist and non-populist. Leaving aside the debates on how to classify parties as populists, individual populism in the analysis of vote choice is equated with support for populist parties, which in addition adopt much diverse ideological stances that further condition their electoral support.

Using populist attitudes as the dependent variable, as compared to support for populist parties, helps alleviate at least some of the methodological barriers associated with the study of the breeding ground of populism. First, it allows populism to vary across individuals regardless of their vote choice, thus avoiding an artificial dichotomization

that overlooks differences of degree in the levels of populism in both the discourse of parties and the attitudes of their voters. Second, it helps discern the determinants of populism from those of the other (and often radical) ideological stances that individual populist movements happen to embrace – that is, to “separate populism from features that might regularly occur together *with* it, but are not part *of* it” (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012, p. 2). Finally, it allows us to better focus on demand-side factors – such as the degree to which people are in a vulnerable economic position, have experienced economic hardship, or how they perceive of the country’s economy – rather than on explaining the electoral performance of specific individual parties or party families, a question for which supply-side factors – such as the characteristics of the parties and institutional constraints – have been shown to be overwhelmingly relevant.

Economic Sources of Populist Resentment

The role of the crisis as a trigger of populist upsurge figures prominently in a number of works inquiring into the nature and origins of populism. In Taggart’s (2004, p. 275) words, “populism is a reaction to a sense of extreme crisis” that “spills over into a critique of politics and into the sense that politics as usual cannot deal with the unusual conditions of crisis”. According to Laclau (2005, pp. 37–38), populism is the result of “a situation in which a plurality of unsatisfied demands and an increasing inability of the institutional system to absorb them differentially co-exist”. In a similar vein, Panizza (2005, p. 11) argues that populism typically emerges out of critical circumstances that produce “a breakdown of social order and the loss of confidence in the political system’s ability to restore it.” The rationale behind such theoretical accounts is thus that the perception of persistent unresponsiveness to popular demands

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undermines the public's confidence in the political establishment to the point that it calls into question the whole institutional system's capacity to satisfactorily handle the situation.

Large scale economic crises, such as the Great Recession and the sovereign-debt crisis recently experienced by several Eurozone member states, clearly provide the conditions for feelings of dissatisfaction and perceived unresponsiveness of the political elites to spread among citizens. It is worth noting, however, that populist upsurge is not inevitably restricted to times of crisis and structural transformation, as most strongly argued in studies of the Latin American experience (de la Torre, 2000; Knight, 1998). Populist attitudes must be conceived as the result of the interplay of various factors at multiple levels – the economy being but one of them.

Even if economic hardship is clearly not a necessary or even a sufficient condition for the emergence of populism, populist attitudes may arguably be nourished by economic crisis. That voters turn against governments in times of economic strain has been long established by the economic voting literature. *Continued* bad economic performance, often spanning across different governments and incumbent parties and/or concerning decisions taken by previous governments and parties may end up damaging the public's confidence on the entire political establishment. To the extent that crisis negatively affects the living conditions of citizens, economic crisis breeds dissatisfaction with the elites that are seen as responsible for governing the affairs of the country and ultimately enhances the perceived antagonism between the "people" and the ruling elite, however defined.

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Indeed, this is one of the working hypotheses guiding Kriesi and Pappas' (2015) effort examining the impact of the financial crisis on the performance of populist parties in Europe. They find that electoral support for populist formations experienced a moderate but non-negligible increase during the Great Recession. The evolution of populism was yet far from uniform in the countries under scrutiny, the growth being particularly strong in Southern and Central-Eastern Europe and almost nonexistent in Western Europe. Their analyses provide partial empirical support for the hypothesis that populism benefits from economic crisis, as attested by the fact that populist formations did tend to perform better in countries more seriously affected by the global economic downturn – yet with remarkable exceptions to the general trend (Pappas & Kriesi, 2015). The crisis-breeds-populism thesis has gained additional, albeit indirect, empirical backing from other recent work looking at the influence of the Great Recession on related but distinct attitudes such as satisfaction with democracy and trust in political institutions, which experienced dramatic declines over the last decade (Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014).

Overall, however, extant empirical work concerning the relationship between economic hardship and mass populism remains rather unsystematic, hardly comprehensive, and lends mixed results. A case in point is the effect of unemployment on support for the populist radical right. Whereas several studies have found a positive relationship between unemployment rates and populist electoral performance (Anderson, 1996; Arzheimer, 2009; Givens, 2005; Jackman & Volpert, 1996), some other macro-level studies show no significant association (Lubbers et al., 2002; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2002; Swank & Betz, 2003) or even a weak negative correlation (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Knigge, 1998).

The apparent contradiction raised by the negative associations found in some studies has been explained by virtue of bad economic conditions providing higher salience to socioeconomic issues, which have been traditionally owned by mainstream parties, over immigration and other debates where populist radical right parties play a more visible role (see Mudde, 2007, p. 206; Rydgren, 2007, p. 250; Bornschieer, 2010). Accordingly, the combination of issue salience and issue-specific perceptions of party competence would offset or even reverse the influence of economic hardship on citizens' adherence to populist discourse.

Another alternative approach criticizes the conventional understanding on the basis of its tendency to conceive crisis as a purely exogenous factor. To the extent that crises are socially constructed, populism may become a trigger of crisis rather than crisis be a precondition of populism, as the crisis discourse is a key instrument for populist leaders to convey to the public the Manichean worldview that sees politics as an antagonism between the people and the elite (Moffitt, 2015). It is in the interests of populist challengers to fuel the perception of crisis regardless of actual conditions, since their appeal stems from their self-proclaimed ability to fix that very problem. Indeed, the denunciation of a crisis has been found to be one of the most recurrent themes of the populist rhetoric (Rooduijn, 2014a).

In our view, this interpretation qualifies but does not detract from the analysis of the influence of crisis on populism, once the definition of crisis is expanded beyond objective indicators to include also subjective perceptions and such perceptions are acknowledged to be affected by factors other than actual conditions. Crises may be real

or imaginary, but the sense of threat and emergency they gives rise to may be vividly perceived by a significant portion of the people (Taggart, 2004), and its effects worth inquiring. If a major concern when explaining populist party support, the distinction becomes less of a problem when the focus is on populist attitudes, and it appears as nearly irrelevant when the analysis is set in the aftermath of the unquestionably critical context of the Great Recession.

The aim of this paper is to disentangle to what extent different dimensions of economic hardship enhance populist attitudes at the individual level. For this purpose, we distinguish three facets of economic hardship: (1) vulnerability, (2) grievances, and (3) evaluation of the national economic situation. The first concerns the likelihood that an individual is affected by the crisis, by virtue of her position in the social structure and her membership to given social categories. The second relates to the retrospective deterioration of the objective economic conditions of the individual during, and likely as a direct consequence of, the crisis. The third dimension involves the individual's subjective perceptions the economy of the country.¹

Our expectations regarding the role of a person's vulnerability are chiefly informed by "economic interests thesis" as first applied to the radical right to account for electoral support coming from "the losers in the competition over scarce resources and/or those who suffered from some form of relative deprivation" (Eatwell, 2003, p. 53). These typically emphasize the impact of large scale socioeconomic changes and the fears and uncertainties these bring about (Betz, 1994; Kitschelt, 1995; Kriesi et al., 2008). Major

¹ While it would have been desirable to also take into account objective indicators of the national economy, the number of countries available in our study prevents us from adding them to the analysis.

changes such as globalization, massive immigration flows, cultural diversity, or European integration have been interpreted to be giving rise to a new conflict opposing winners and losers of modernization, the latter typically comprising groups with lower socioeconomic status (Kriesi et al., 2006, 2008). According to Kriesi (2014), the Great Recession would have only exacerbated the emerging cleavage, further fueling populist radical right, while likely leading to the breakthrough of more overtly class-based, left-wing populist movements.

The influence of crisis through an individual's socioeconomic position does not only derive from her economic disadvantage but also, and perhaps more importantly, from the threat of deprivation. The threat might not eventually realize but be nonetheless consequential, via the feelings of fear and insecurity it brings about. Indeed, empirical research has quite consistently found that populist parties, and the radical right in particular, draw disproportionate support from persons with lower income, lower education, and lower occupational status (see for example Lubbers et al., 2002). At the same time, however, a number of works have argued that the radical right does not mobilize by virtue of economic grievances, nor even anti-immigration sentiments elicited by economic concerns, but more uniformly on the basis of immigration policy grievances, which are mainly motivated by cultural and identity concerns (Ivarsflaten, 2005, 2008; Oesch, 2008). In contrast to the economic interests thesis, these accounts claim that it is actually the weight that the radical right voters put on issues such as immigration, crime, and European integration that unites occupational groups with otherwise disparate economic preferences.

Consequently, we expect that:

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Hypothesis 1. The more vulnerable the socioeconomic position of the individual (lower education, manual occupation, lower income, unemployed), the higher the level of populist attitudes

On the other hand, individuals may vary in the extent to which they have actually suffered economic grievances, that is, a deterioration of their economic and working conditions. This retrospective assessment captures the depth and pace of the consequences of the economic crisis among those actually hit by it. Material strain is typically experienced as the inability to keep up with once affordable payments, the reduction in consumption of basic goods and services, and worsening working conditions or loss of job.

Hypothesis 2. The more an individual's suffers from grievances derived from the crisis (having to reduce consumption, having suffered deteriorating working conditions), the higher the level of populist attitudes

Finally, we expect for any effect the personal economy may have on populism to be largely mediated and in any case outweighed by group-based judgments of economic conditions. A large body of economic voting literature has confirmed the prevalence of national concerns over personal, or self-interest, considerations (Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981). People-centrism is one of the necessary components of the aforementioned definition of populism. If populism actually is the product of a "*plurality* of unsatisfied demands", all the more reason for the perception of grievances shared by the community identified as the people, rather than individual economic hardship, to play a

paramount role in explaining citizens' degree of endorsement of populist attitudes.

Indeed, Elchardus and Spruyt (2016) find that an individual's situation economic of vulnerability only indirectly affects populism, via its influence on feelings of relative group deprivation and other group-based considerations. Further, as just noted above, crises may be real or artificially constructed by populist leaders, but it is the subjective perceptions of crisis, rather than the picture conveyed by standard macroeconomic figures, that ultimately fuel populism.

Hypothesis 3. The more negative the perceptions of national economic conditions, the higher the level of populist attitudes.

Hypothesis 4. The effect of perceptions of national economic conditions over populist attitudes will exceed that of vulnerability and grievances.

This study utilizes two data sets to test these hypotheses. We first examine comparative cross-sectional data in order to test hypotheses 1 to 4 at a correlational level. We then look at panel survey data from Spain in order to address legitimate concerns about the direction of causality in the relationship between populist attitudes and perceptions of the national economy.

Cross-National Evidence: The Livewhat Comparative Survey

Data and Measures

The cross-national analysis is based on an online survey jointly conducted in the nine aforementioned European countries in June of 2015. The samples, recruited by YouGov

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using the methodologies available in each country, are quota balanced in order to match national population statistics in terms of sex, age, and education level. This cross-country study allows us to examine political attitudes as a function of individuals' position of vulnerability, grievances due to the economic crisis, and perceptions of the state of the national economy in a variety of contexts.

The measurement of *populist attitudes* among citizens is still in its infancy, but substantial advances have been made in recent times. Following the growing agreement around the definition of populism, in recent years several indicators have been suggested to measure populist attitudes at the individual level (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Rooduijn, 2014b; Stanley, 2011). We adopted the six-item measure proposed by Akkerman et al. (2014), itself developed from previous efforts by Hawkins and colleagues (Hawkins et al., 2012; Hawkins & Riding, 2010). The six statements, displayed in Table 1, are designed to tap the core ideas that make up the populist discourse, namely, people-centrism, anti-elitism, the antagonism between the people and the elite, and the primacy of popular sovereignty. Respondents' agreement with each of the statements was measured using a five-point (panel study) Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The internal consistency of the resulting composite scales (mean of scores) is good for the whole sample, with an internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.83, and across all countries in the survey, with alphas varying between 0.77 (Greece) and 0.87 (France).

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The specification of the models takes into account three groups of economic factors available in the survey, along with a number of control variables.² We first consider variables related to *vulnerability*: low education (defined as less than secondary), employment status (unemployed), occupation (manual), and household income (coded in deciles of the national income distribution and adjusted for the size of household using the OECD-modified equivalence scale). These individual characteristics are expected to condition the extent to which people are vulnerable to the consequences of the economic crisis, and hence we expect them to affect the level of populist attitudes.

In themselves, however, these variables reflecting vulnerability are not indicators of having necessarily suffered economic hardship as a consequence of the great recession. A second group of economic factors concerns individual characteristics that reflect precisely the extent to which people have personally suffered negative economic consequences of the crisis. We used two indicators of these *grievances*, tapping into its financial and occupational dimensions. First, we include a composite index of “reduced consumption” calculated as the number of measures, out of a list of ten, that the respondent or anyone in the respondent’s household has had to take for economic or financial reasons during the past five years. We also included an index of “worsening job conditions”, obtained from an 11-item battery of experiences that denote a deterioration of the respondent’s working conditions during the past five years.

The third of the economic factors to be considered, *perceptions of the national economy*, is measured using a single variable. Following the rationale of long-

² See the supplemental appendix for details on question wording and coding.

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established survey instruments such as the University of Michigan's Index of Consumer Sentiment, we combined both retrospective and prospective assessments of the state of the economy. Specifically, we averaged respondents' evaluations about the country's economic situation over the last year and expectations about its likely prospects one year ahead, both measured on an 11-point scale running from "much worse" to "much better".

All models include a set of standard socio-demographic controls: gender (female), age and its square (to account for the potential curvilinear effect of age), and citizenship (non-national). We eventually control for a set of additional variables, namely: political knowledge, a measure of closeness to the party or parties in government, self-placement on the left-right scale, and attitudes towards immigrants.

These additional controls might be thought as potential factors that influence both perceptions of the economy and populist attitudes; their inclusion thus provides a robustness check of the effects of economic perceptions. But it also might provide valuable insights regarding the formation of populist attitudes among citizens.

Predispositions towards the parties in government are known to color opinions about national economic performance and, to the extent that they concern the most immediate exemplar of the political establishment, should also correlate positively with populist attitudes. As long as populism has been defined as a thin-centered ideology with a chameleonic character, we would not expect it to be associated in any particular direction with voters' left-right orientations. Yet different relationships might be observed in practice as a result of the influence of country-specific factors, mainly the presence and color of populist parties and their relative position in the national party

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system. That is, whatever their dominant ideological stand in a given country, populist leaders may pull the relationship in that same direction. Taking into account the unparalleled success of the populist radical right party family in post-war Europe, we should expect populist attitudes to be more prevalent among right-wing voters. The same rationale can be applied to attitudes towards immigrants. Populism has developed as an exclusionary movement in some contexts and as an inclusionary movement in others, but European populism – in contrast to Latin American populism – is predominantly exclusive (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). Indeed, anti-immigrant sentiments have been found to be a common predictor of support for the populist radical right in Western Europe (Ivarsflaten, 2008). Hence, we expected voters' holding negative views of immigration to exhibit higher levels of populism, at least in countries with prominent populist radical right parties. Finally, we had mixed expectations regarding the effect of political knowledge. As a crucial predictor of exposure to the messages of political elites, we would expect the politically sophisticated to be less likely to adopt an anti-establishment discourse. On the other hand, political knowledge can be thought as capturing the attitudinal consequences of the process of cognitive mobilization, which has been argued to be one of long-term developments explaining why voters in Western democracies have become more receptive to populism over the last decades (Mudde, 2004). It is particularly the highly sophisticated citizens that we would expect to be more critical about elites and more confident about the people's own ability to deal with political issues.

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Populist Attitudes in Nine European Countries

Before turning to the results of the analysis, it is worth looking at how populist attitudes are distributed in our nine countries. A first glance, the last column of Table 1 shows that citizens in all countries tend to agree with statements that reflect different dimensions of populist attitudes. The neutral position (neither agree nor disagree) is reflected by the 2 on the 0 to 4 scale, and all countries show values higher than 2 in their index of populist attitudes. Our data would thus appear lend support to the claim that “a large pool of potential followers always exists” (Hawkins & Riding, 2010, p. 20) which populist movements can draw on. However, we can clearly group countries in two blocks according to their overall level of populist attitudes. Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and Germany show relatively lower levels (around 2.6), while Poland, France, Spain, Greece and Italy show higher levels (between 2.8 and 2.9).

[Table 1 around here]

If we look at the different items used to measure populist attitudes we also find that in most cases a majority of people agree or strongly agree with the statements proposed, with a few exceptions, which provide a more nuanced picture. While in Italy and Greece a majority supports all statements, in Sweden only two of them are supported by more than 50% of respondents. Statements 1 (politicians need to follow the will of the people) and 5 (talk too much) obtain the highest levels of support in all countries, including those that score low in the overall index, while Statements 2 (people, not politicians, should decide on important questions) and particularly 6 (compromise is selling out on one’s principles) appear to rank lowest.

Results

We first estimated four OLS regression models on the pooled data set, with country-level fixed effects and robust standard errors clustered by country. Our dependent variable, the index of populism, is scaled from 0 to 4, with higher numbers denoting higher levels of populism. All independent variables except age (in years) were rescaled to run from 0 to 1. The key predictors were included in sequential steps, following the scheme defined above. Thus, Model 1 includes the variables that denote a position of economic vulnerability; Model 2 adds variables related to grievances; Model 3 adds individual perceptions of the country's economic conditions; finally, Model 4 includes the attitudinal controls. Table 2 presents the results of the models.

[Table 2 around here]

Among the vulnerability factors, occupation and household income are significantly related to populism throughout the analysis, whereas education and unemployment do not appear to make a difference at any point. Manual workers are slightly more likely to display higher levels of populist attitudes. Yet, it is individuals living in less affluent households that more visibly tend to be more supportive of populism. The effect of income is notably diminished once the experience of the crisis is controlled for (Model 2), and it shrinks further when we account for perceptions of the national economy (Models 3 and 4). This pattern suggests that the effect of material vulnerability is the result of actually being more touched by the crisis, as well as forming a more negative assessment of the state of the country's economy.

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As expected, grievances are found to be significantly related to individual levels of populism, particularly through its financial dimension. Respondents reporting having been forced to make sacrifices as a consequence of economic difficulties show more support for populism. There is some evidence that, albeit to a lesser extent, also workers that saw their job conditions worsen during the past years are more likely to support populism. The effects of both these variables seem to be partially mediated by assessments of the country's economy, as shown in Models 3 and 4.

In line with our expectations, perceptions of the national economic conditions are, by far, the strongest predictor of individuals' levels of populism. According to the estimates, people holding the most positive views of the national economy score on average nearly one point lower on the 0-4 populist scale than those with the most negative view. The difference decreases substantially, to 0.73 points, when attitudinal controls are added in Model 4, but this variable still remains as the most decisive factor of support for populism.

We conducted a series of tests to check the robustness of these results. First, we examined alternative specifications of the models outlined above, and in all cases the overall pattern remained unchanged. Among other tests, we explored the influence of perceptions of the personal economic situation, measured in the same fashion as perceptions of the national economy. This variable partially overlaps with our measures of personal experience of the crisis (which are focused on specific events and thus provide a less subjective account) and perceptions of the country's economy (which we argued that should be more directly concerned with populist attitudes). As shown in Table A1 of the supplemental appendix, personal economic perceptions do have a

strong impact on populism when included along with personal experience of the crisis (Model 3) and indeed appear to carry some of the effects of the latter. However, perceptions of the personal situation cease to be significant once we control for national perceptions (Models 4 and 5), which wholly capture their influence, while both reduced consumption and worsened job conditions retain part of theirs.

Next, given the non-negligible proportion of missing data due to item nonresponse for household income and some of the attitudinal variables, we replicated the models using full information maximum likelihood (FIML), which uses all the available information to provide a maximum likelihood estimation.³ FIML estimates of the preceding four models are presented in Table A2 of the supplemental appendix. The results show no substantial deviations from the estimates reported in Table 2.

As a final robustness check, we re-estimated the four models in Table 2 on each of the country samples independently, thus allowing the relationships to vary by country. The full results are presented in Tables A3 to A11 of the supplemental appendix. To summarize, Figure 1 shows the coefficients of the key independent variables as estimated using the specification of the model in which they are first introduced (i.e., Model 1 for vulnerability factors, Model 2 for experience of the crisis, Model 3 for perceptions of the national economy) and as estimated in Model 4 (i.e., with attitudinal controls included).

[Figure 1 around here]

³ The proportion of missing data on income is 15%. Missing values are also present on left-right placement (15%), economic perceptions (11%), and attitudes towards immigrants (3%).

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The close country-wise inspection of the results across all models reveals interesting variations and some remarkable regularities. Using model 1 specification, the influence of household income is consistently negative and statistically significant in all countries except Poland. However, the effect vanes as variables in subsequent blocks are introduced, such that in Model 4 it only remains significant in Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland—which appears to confirm that income has an influence on populism mainly through its effects on the experience of the crisis and national economic perceptions.

A similar, but less systematic, pattern is found for occupation. Manual workers tend to be somewhat more supportive of populism than other occupations in most of the countries, but the difference achieves statistical significance only in Poland, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom when all other variables are controlled for. Low education is consistently associated with populism in Italy and Sweden, while unemployment is only in Poland.

According to Model 2, the effects of grievances are also pervasive, if not uniform. These are mainly driven by the financial dimension: reduced consumption is significantly related to populism in all countries but Greece and Spain – where worsened job conditions are nonetheless consequential. Again, the inclusion of economic perceptions captures a substantial proportion of the effects of experiences of the crisis. In Model 4, the influence of reduced consumption holds in Germany, Poland, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, while that of worsened working conditions only holds in Greece, where it turns out to make a sizeable difference.

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The most persistent finding of the analysis, however, is the close association between individual levels of populism and negative perceptions of the country's economy. The coefficient for national economic perceptions is statistically significant across all countries and models, varying between -0.62 (Poland) and -1.28 (United Kingdom) in Model 3, and between -0.30 (Sweden) and -1.05 (France) in Model 4, which shows that the effect is robust to the influence of additional political attitudes.

Even if they are not the central concern of this paper, the results for the control variables deserve some attention. According to the overall estimates, gender and nationality appear to be unrelated to populist attitudes, though non-nationals are consistently less likely to support populism in a few countries (e.g., France and Greece). Age shows a curvilinear effect, the level of populism gradually increasing until it peaks at age 60, and then it remains stable or declines slightly. In the country-wise analysis the effect of age tends to fade as new predictors are added to the models.

The results for the attitudinal controls (Model 4) show a number of interesting patterns. Political knowledge has a sizeable positive influence on levels of populism in the pooled estimates (see Table 2), an association that also emerges in the national samples, achieving statistical significance in all countries but Germany and the United Kingdom (Tables A3 to A11). As expected, closeness to the parties in government is closely related to support for populism, such that the closer respondents feel towards the national incumbent the less likely they are to adhere to the populist discourse. Interestingly, the only three countries where this does not occur—Greece, Poland, and Switzerland—are precisely those where populist parties are in the executive. Somewhat

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surprisingly, left-right orientations appear to be negatively associated with populist attitudes in the pooled model, even if the coefficient is only marginally significant. The country-by-country analyses show that populist attitudes are significantly more prevalent on the left in Greece and Spain—as one would anticipate—but also in Sweden and France; only in Switzerland they are more prevalent on the right. In view of these results, it is even more interesting to find that attitudes towards immigrants are a consistent predictor of individuals' levels of populism. Anti-immigrant sentiments are significantly associated with populist attitudes in eight of the nine countries, and most effectively in Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Spain is the only exception to the rule.

The effects of some of the factors identified with economic vulnerability, experience of the crisis, and economic perceptions hold in spite of the strong effects displayed by our control variables, at least in the pooled analysis. But, of all the variables in the analysis, only perceptions of the national economy are significantly related to populist attitudes in each and every country. Furthermore, economic perceptions were found to have a stronger effect than (or as strong as) any other variable in all countries except Sweden, where attitudes towards immigration clearly outweigh their influence.

Economic mood thus emerges as a strong correlate of populist attitudes in European countries. Cross-sectional analysis, however, does not allow us to assess whether, and the extent to which, negative perceptions of the economy drive support for populism or if, alternatively, it is populism itself that thrives negative economic perceptions. Societal crises may well prompt populist reactions among citizens, but, as noted above, populist rhetoric has been shown to promote perceptions of crisis. In order to test for the

reciprocal effects of national economic judgments and populist attitudes, in the next section we turn to longitudinal data from Spain—one of the latest democracies in Europe to witness the populist upsurge.

Longitudinal Evidence: The Spanish Panel Survey

Data and Measures

Our data come from a 7-wave online panel survey of young and middle-aged Spanish residents. The sample was selected from an online pool set up through active recruitment of potential subjects in commercial online services and websites. Quotas were used to ensure a balanced representation in terms of gender, education, size of municipality, and region.

Specifically, we draw on the waves consecutively conducted in May 2014 and May 2015, the only for which the required measurements were available, yielding a final sample of 726 individuals who completed the survey in both waves. Hence, our analysis coincidentally focuses on a critical stage in the mobilization of Podemos' supports. The first panel wave we look at was conducted just four months after the party was founded and right before the 2014 European Parliament election, where Podemos received nearly 8% of the national vote. At the time when the second wave data was collected, the party had already come out as a major contender, with opinion polls placing it at least third in popular support—but occasionally ahead the Socialist Party and even the incumbent Popular Party.

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Populist attitudes were measured using the same 6-item battery included in the Livewhat study and employing a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” We combined three items to measure perceptions of the country’s economic situation: an assessment of the current situation (on a 5-point scale from “very bad” to “very good”), and 1-year retrospective and prospective assessments (“worse”, “same”, or “better”). In the analysis that follows, all the observed indicators, including the populism items, were rescaled to run from 0 to 1.⁴

Results

Taking advantage of the longitudinal nature of the data and the availability of multiple indicators for each of our key variables, we estimate a latent-variable cross-lagged structural equation model to gauge the reciprocal relationship between perceptions of the country’s economy and populist attitudes over time (Finkel, 1995). By gauging the temporal precedence among the variables, survey panel data allows us to better address the issue of causal order. Additionally, with multiple repeated measures we can correct for measurement error in the variables of interest by treating these as latent variables.

Structural equation modelling uses observed indicators to estimate latent constructs, and then estimates relationships between latent variables. In each wave, we estimated the latent construct for respondents’ degree of populism using the 6-item battery, and the latent construct for respondents’ national economic perceptions using our three economic assessments (current, retrospective, and prospective).⁵ Then, each of the latent

⁴ See the supplemental appendix for details on question wording and coding.

⁵ The residuals of corresponding indicators were allowed to correlate across waves in order to account for item-specific variability. Results of the measurement model are available from the authors on request.

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variables is modelled at time t (i.e., 2015) as a function of its lagged score and the lagged score of the other latent variable at time $t-1$ (2014). Hence two regression models are estimated in a single step:

$$\text{Populism}_{it} = \alpha_1 + \lambda_1 \text{Populism}_{i,t-1} + \beta_1 \text{Economy}_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Economy}_{it} = \alpha_2 + \lambda_2 \text{Economy}_{i,t-1} + \beta_2 \text{Populism}_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

The autoregressive effects, λ_1 and λ_2 in equations 1 and 2, reflect the stability in individuals' relative standings on the corresponding variables controlling for the influence of the other variable. The reciprocal cross-lagged effects, β_1 and β_2 , reflect the unique effect of one variable at time $t-1$ on the other variable at time t controlling for the latter's autoregressive effect. It is thus the cross-lagged coefficients that are of main concern here, as they indicate the extent to which inter-individual differences in one variable predict subsequent changes in the other variable. As far as β_1 is different from zero it implies that changes in the rank ordering of populist attitudes are related to individual differences in perceptions of the national economy measured one year before, while accounting for initial values of populism. Likewise, to the extent that β_2 differs from zero it implies that relative changes in economic assessments can be ascribed to differences in prior levels of populism, net of pre-existing differences in economic assessments.

Table 3 presents the results of the structural portion of the model. The autoregressive coefficients for populist attitudes and economic perceptions are both significant, but the latter clearly exceeds the former in size. This suggests that, in the context under

consideration, inter-individual differences in economic perceptions were actually more stable than were differences in populist attitudes. On the other hand, the estimated cross-lagged effect of economic perceptions on populist attitudes is positive and statistically significant, denoting that previous assessments of the country's economy affected later changes in levels of populism. The negative sign indicates that individuals who held positive views about the economy in 2014 showed a tendency to reduce their relative levels of populism, while those with negative views tended to change their upwardly. In contrast, changes in populist attitudes between 2014 and 2015 appear to be unrelated to prior standings in populism, as the coefficient estimate of the cross-lagged effect of populist attitudes on economic perceptions is negligible and not significantly different from zero. The results of the longitudinal analysis thus confirm that, at least for Spanish voters in the period of study, effects flow mainly from perceptions of the national economy to populist attitudes rather than vice versa, which is consistent with the hypothesized causal relationship.

[Table 3 around here]

Conclusion

This paper aimed to examine the extent to which economic difficulties create a breeding ground for populist movements. We argued that the analysis of populist attitudes helps to overcome some of the methodological hurdles related to the study of populism among citizens while remaining faithful to the intricacies of the ideational definition that has recently attracted a growing academic consensus.

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Our analyses have shown that economic hardship matters for populist attitudes. Informed by extant literature on the origins of populist movements and anecdotal accounts of their recent upsurge, we posited three pathways to the influence of the economy on the formation of populist attitudes among individuals. The results of the cross-national analyses provide evidence in support of the hypothesis (1) that populist attitudes are more prevalent among citizens in a position of economic vulnerability, as measured by low income and, to a much lesser degree, manual occupations. Low education and unemployment, however, do not appear to have a relevant effect on populism, which renders the interpretation of the influence of vulnerability not entirely consistent with the “losers of modernization” explanation.

We also found support for the hypothesis (2) that populist attitudes are associated with citizens’ grievances related to the economic crisis. It is mainly the need to cut the household expenses that appears to be more consequential on this dimension, though worsening job conditions had far-reaching effects in some countries, particularly Greece. That the inclusion of grievances reduces the effects income indicates that, as one would expect, individuals in a vulnerable economic position were more likely to be hit by the crisis and, as a consequence, were also more likely to show support for populism. Coupled with Hypothesis 1, these results suggest that material deprivation did play a relevant, albeit limited, role in the forging of populist attitudes in European societies in the wake of the Great Recession.

The role of grievances, however, pales in comparison with the paramount influence of perceptions of the national economy (Hypotheses 3 and 4). The effect of these was found to be sizeable and significant for each of the nine countries, and remained

markedly robust to alternative specifications and to the inclusion of other attitudinal factors. Moreover, the results of the longitudinal analysis seem to rule out the possibility that the observed association is merely the product of perceptions of the economy being shaped by populist attitudes themselves. Rather, we found economic perceptions to predict later changes in levels of populism, which supports the causal precedence of economic perceptions over populist attitudes.

Taken together, these findings highlight the importance of economic concerns as a key predictor of populist attitudes in Europe in the aftermath of the crisis. Widespread economic hardship is certainly not a necessary condition for the rise of populism movements, as attested by numerous examples of success during good times. Yet our study provides strong evidence in support of the idea that hardship paves the way for that success, by enhancing populist attitudes among deprived citizens and, above all, those holding negative views of the national economy. It has been demonstrated elsewhere that populist attitudes are strongly associated with support for populist parties and (negatively) for their mainstream opponents across a variety of contexts (Anduiza et al., 2016). The electoral performance of populist leaders may ultimately depend on supply-side factors, but we have shown here that economic downturn increases the likelihood that citizens embrace a populist rhetoric.

Our results thus support the idea that it is not so much an individual's objective economic situation that matters for the development of populist attitudes, but rather the subjective perception that there is indeed a critical economic situation in the country. This is in line with the spirit of populism as an ideology of the people, as such characterized (at least professedly) by people-centric concerns, rather than by self-

interest or restricted in-group motives. Although we found evidence that personal economic hardship matters as well, the overwhelming influence of national perceptions further substantiates populism's depiction as "a reaction to a societal diagnosis" (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016, p. 125).

Importantly, the relationship holds not only in countries that have recently gone through serious economic troubles, such as Greece and Spain, but also in other countries, like Switzerland, that were hardly touched by the crisis. This indicates that, regardless of the actual economic conditions, perceptions are paramount. Even if perceptions cannot be immune to the real economy, they can also be swayed by political discourse – and the case has been made that populist entrepreneurs might be particularly interested in conveying an impression of crisis. In the analysis of panel survey data from Spain, populist attitudes were found to be less stable than economic perceptions, and our estimates suggested that the causal relationship goes mainly in one direction – from perceptions of the country's economy to populist attitudes. But that we did not find the reverse effect in this specific case does not preclude an influence in a different context, presumably under conditions of economic uncertainty. Future research should examine under what circumstances perceptions of the economy may be mainly driven by populist predispositions, rather than vice versa.

Two additional findings stand out. First, political knowledge is rather consistently associated with higher levels of populist attitudes. Although such relationship apparently defies conventional characterizations of the populist voter, it is well consistent with the political irreverence brought about by the process of cognitive mobilization and research suggesting that less efficacious citizens are more likely to

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stick with mainstream parties (e.g., Mudde, 2007). Second, we found anti-immigrant sentiments to strongly predict populism in countries with a prominent populist radical right party (i.e., all but Spain) – which attests the predominantly exclusive stance of the movement in Europe – but at the same time the results suggest that populism in the majority of these countries is significantly more prevalent among left-wing voters. Further research will be needed also to account for both these seemingly contradictory patterns.

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Table 1. Populist attitudes

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Index |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| France | 75 | 66 | 61 | 65 | 77 | 57 | 2,88 |
| Germany | 71 | 55 | 54 | 44 | 67 | 43 | 2,62 |
| Greece | 85 | 66 | 73 | 61 | 81 | 62 | 2,93 |
| Italy | 74 | 63 | 69 | 63 | 82 | 60 | 2,98 |
| Poland | 84 | 64 | 78 | 59 | 84 | 46 | 2,89 |
| Spain | 83 | 65 | 69 | 53 | 80 | 42 | 2,84 |
| Sweden | 79 | 48 | 49 | 38 | 67 | 44 | 2,56 |
| Switzerland | 72 | 60 | 53 | 46 | 65 | 37 | 2,62 |
| UK | 79 | 47 | 57 | 43 | 72 | 47 | 2,60 |

Note: figures in columns 1 to 6 show the percentage of respondents that “agree” or “strongly agree” with each of the following statements:

1. The politicians in [country] need to follow the will of the people
2. The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions
3. The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people
4. I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialized politician
5. Elected officials talk too much and take too little action
6. What people call “compromise” in politics is really just selling out on one’s principles

The composite index is the average score across all items, each coded from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

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Table 2. Correlates of populist attitudes

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Female | -0.030 (0.023) | -0.026 (0.023) | -0.035+ (0.018) | -0.021 (0.017) |
| Age | 0.025** (0.003) | 0.020** (0.003) | 0.017** (0.002) | 0.015** (0.002) |
| Age squared | -0.0002** (0.00003) | -0.0002** (0.00003) | -0.0001** (0.00003) | -0.0001** (0.00002) |
| Nonnational | -0.127 (0.096) | -0.147 (0.098) | -0.106 (0.097) | -0.087 (0.092) |
| Low education | 0.031 (0.022) | 0.034 (0.022) | 0.018 (0.024) | 0.018 (0.018) |
| Manual occupation | 0.071* (0.024) | 0.068* (0.024) | 0.072* (0.025) | 0.060* (0.024) |
| Unemployed | 0.012 (0.027) | -0.010 (0.025) | -0.034 (0.023) | -0.029 (0.022) |
| Income | -0.390** (0.054) | -0.232** (0.052) | -0.174* (0.052) | -0.162** (0.047) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.271** (0.047) | 0.169** (0.050) | 0.166** (0.044) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.167* (0.057) | 0.126 (0.069) | 0.120+ (0.059) |
| National economy | | | -0.930** (0.099) | -0.727** (0.104) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.202** (0.043) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | -0.217* (0.070) |
| Left-right placement | | | | -0.182+ (0.084) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | -0.386** (0.115) |
| Country effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 12604 | 12604 | 12604 | 12604 |

Unstandardized OLS coefficients with cluster-robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable, populist attitudes, is coded from 0 (lowest) to 4 (highest). All independent variables are coded to run from 0 to 1, except for age (in years).

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Table 3. Cross-lagged relationship between populist attitudes and perceptions of Spain's economy, 2014-2015

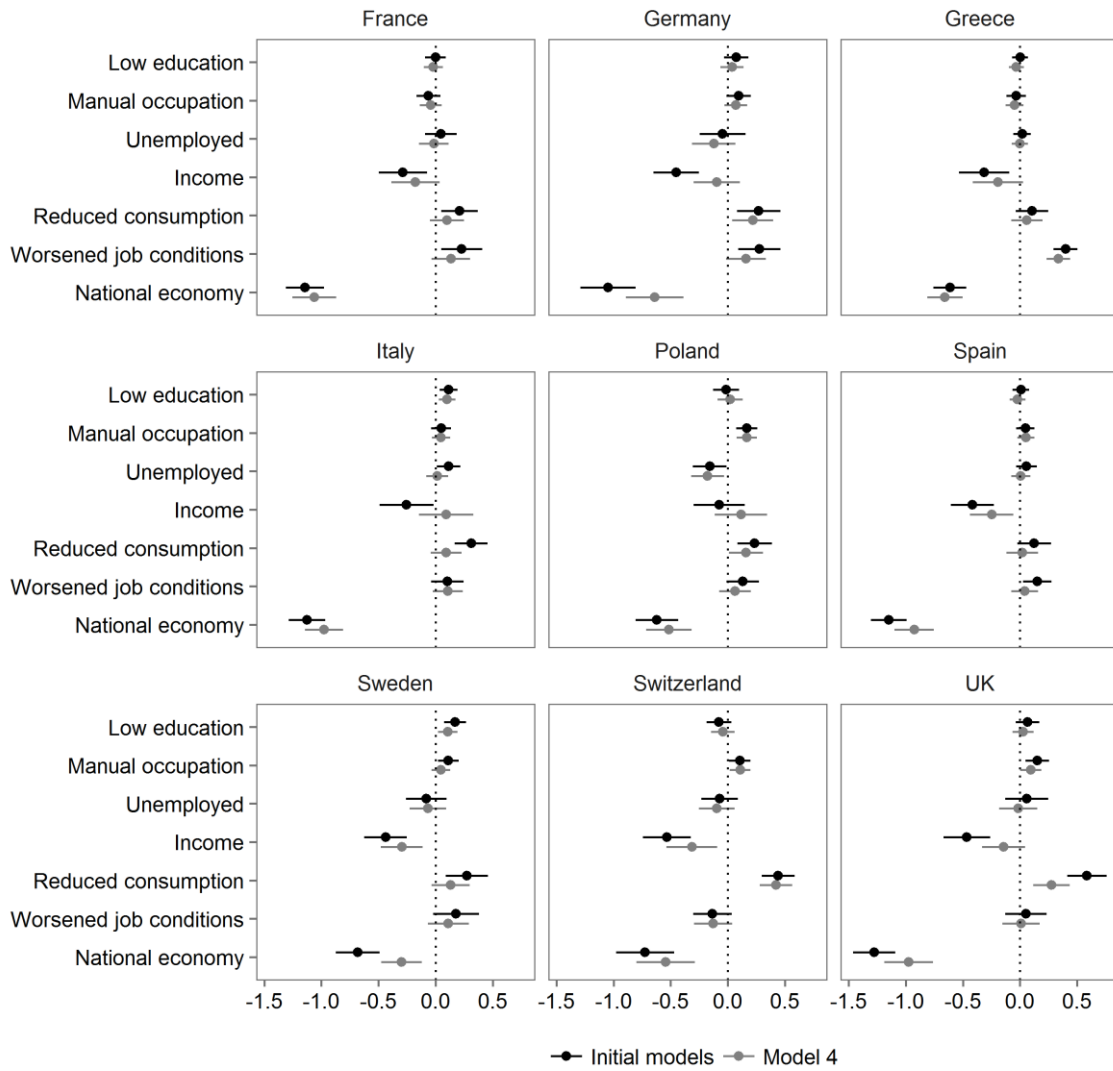
| | Populism t_1 | Economy t_1 |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Populism t_{-1} | 0.571** (0.053) | -0.021 (0.062) |
| Economy t_{-1} | -0.142** (0.028) | 0.829** (0.052) |
| χ^2 (df = 120) | 277.961 | |
| RMSEA (90% CI) | 0.043 (0.036, 0.049) | |
| CFI | 0.963 | |
| SRMR | 0.041 | |
| <i>N</i> | 726 | |

Standardized coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Figure 1. Economic correlates of populist attitudes by country



Note: OLS regression coefficients with 95% confidence intervals, as reported in the models (1, 2, or 3) where the given variable is first introduced (in black) and in Model 4 (in gray) of tables A3 to A11 of the supplemental appendix.

Supplemental Appendix

Coding of independent variables

Cross-national survey

Occupation

“Please tell us which one of the following options best describes the sort of paid work you do. If you are not in paid work now, please tell us what you did in your last paid employment.” Respondents answering “Skilled Manual Work (e.g. plumber, electrician, fitter)” or “Semi-Skilled or Unskilled Manual Work (e.g. machine operator, assembler, postman, waitress, cleaner, laborer, driver, bar-worker, call-center worker)” are coded as manual workers. The occupation of the household’s chief income earner was used when the respondent’s was not available.

Household income

“What is your household's MONTHLY income, after tax and compulsory deductions, from all sources? If you don't know the exact figure, please give your best estimate.” Coded in deciles of the income distribution in the given country, and adjusted for the size of the household using the OECD-modified equivalence scale.

Reduced consumption

“In the past 5 years, have you or anyone else in your household had to take any of the following measures for financial/ economic reasons?” The listed items were: (1) reduced consumption of staple foods; (2) reduced recreational activities; (3) reduced use of own car; (4) delayed payments on utilities; (5) moved home; (6) delayed or defaulted on a loan instalment; (7) sold an asset; (8) cut TV/phone/internet service; (9) did not go on holiday; (10) reduced or postponed buying medicines/visiting the doctor. Additive index (alpha = 0.86).

Worsened job conditions

“Please select those of the following has happened to you in the last five years.” The listed items were: (1) I took a reduction in pay; (2) I had to take a job for which I was overqualified; (3) I had to work extra unpaid overtime hours; (4) I had to work shorter hours; (5) I had to take or look for an additional job; (6) My work load increased; (7) The working environment deteriorated; (8) I had less security in her job; (9) I had to accept less convenient working hours; (10) Employees were dismissed in the organization for which I work; (11) I was forced to take undeclared payments. These questions were asked only to those that are employed or have been in the past; all other respondents are assigned the lowest value in the resulting scale. Additive index (alpha = 0.83).

Perceptions of the national economic situation

Responses to two questions were combined: (i) “Would you say that over the past year the state of the economy in [respondent’s country] has become...?” (ii) “Would you say that over the next year the state of the economy in [respondent’s country] will become...? Both measured on an 11-point scale from 0 (“Much worse”) to 10 (“Much

better”). Additive index ($\alpha = 0.85$).

Political knowledge

An additive index based on four items were used: (i) “Can you tell who is the person in this picture?” [Picture of Jean Claude Juncker] (1) José Manuel Durão Barroso, former President of the European Commission; (2) Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe; (3) Donald Tusk, President of the European Council; (4) Jean Claude Juncker, current President of the European Commission. (ii) “What does public deficit mean?” (1) The lack of public service provision; (2) The money the government owes to its creditors; (3) The money the government fails to collect due to tax fraud; (4) The difference between government receipts and government spending. (iii) “Who sets the interest rates applicable in [respondent’s country]?” (1) The government of [respondent’s country]; (2) The International Monetary Fund; (3) The European Central Bank; (4) The Central Bank of [respondent’s country]. (iv) “As a percentage, what do you think is the current unemployment rate in [country of respondent]?” Responses within a $\pm 1\%$ of the official rate were considered correct. A Don’t Know option was offered and people could also skip the question.

Closeness to the incumbent

Responses to two questions were combined: (i) “Which of the following parties do you feel closest to?” 8 parties were listed, plus options for “other party”, “no party”, and “don’t know”. [If party name is chosen] (ii) “How close do you feel to [party]?” (1) not very close; (2) quite close; (3) very close. Based on the party or parties in each of the country’s government at the time of the survey, the resulting scale was coded to take on four possible values: not close to a party in government; not very close; quite close; very close.

Left-right identification

“People sometimes talk about the Left and the Right in politics. Where would you place yourself on the following scale where 0 means 'Left' and 10 means 'Right'?” Measured on an 11-point scale.

Attitudes towards immigrants

Responses to two questions were combined: (i) “Would you say it is generally bad or good for the [respondent’s country]’s economy that people come to live here from other countries? Please state your answer on this scale where 0 means 'Bad' and 10 means 'Good’”. (ii) Would you say that the [respondent’s country]’s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries? Please state your answer on this scale where 0 means 'Undermined' and 10 means 'Enriched'. Both measured on 11-point scales. Additive index ($\alpha = 0.86$).

Spanish panel survey

Perceptions of the national economic situation

Three questions loaded on this latent dimension: (i) “Referring to the general economic situation in Spain, would you say it is...?” (1) Very good; (2) Good; (3) Neither good nor bad; (4) Bad; (5) Very bad. (ii) “Would you say that the current economic situation of the country is better, the same, or worse than one year ago?” (1) Better; (2) Same; (3) Worse. (iii) “Would you say that over the next year the economic situation of the

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country will be better, the same, or worse than it is now” (1) Better; (2) Same; (3) Worse. Responses were recoded to run from negative to positive assessments.

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Table A1. Taking personal economic perceptions into account

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Female | -0.030 (0.023) | -0.025 (0.023) | -0.026 (0.022) | -0.031+ (0.016) | -0.022 (0.018) |
| Age | 0.025** (0.003) | 0.020** (0.003) | 0.018** (0.003) | 0.015** (0.003) | 0.015** (0.002) |
| Age squared | -0.0002** (0.00003) | -0.0002** (0.00003) | -0.0002** (0.00003) | -0.0001** (0.00003) | -0.0001** (0.00002) |
| Nonnational | -0.119 (0.093) | -0.137 (0.094) | -0.116 (0.091) | -0.079 (0.075) | -0.077 (0.090) |
| Low education | 0.030 (0.021) | 0.034 (0.021) | 0.029 (0.021) | 0.023 (0.023) | 0.018 (0.016) |
| Manual occupation | 0.069* (0.025) | 0.066* (0.025) | 0.067* (0.024) | 0.076* (0.024) | 0.058* (0.025) |
| Unemployed | 0.009 (0.026) | -0.014 (0.024) | -0.039+ (0.021) | -0.036 (0.025) | -0.030 (0.021) |
| Income | -0.399** (0.051) | -0.242** (0.048) | -0.169** (0.050) | -0.127* (0.053) | -0.162** (0.043) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.269** (0.048) | 0.168* (0.053) | 0.188** (0.052) | 0.163** (0.048) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.165* (0.059) | 0.143+ (0.065) | 0.114 (0.067) | 0.119+ (0.060) |
| Personal economy | | | -0.599** (0.080) | -0.056 (0.074) | -0.027 (0.063) |
| National economy | | | | -0.907** (0.113) | -0.709** (0.103) |
| Political knowledge | | | | | 0.195** (0.044) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | | -0.215* (0.069) |
| Left-right placement | | | | | -0.186+ (0.084) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | | -0.385* (0.118) |
| Country effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 12305 | 12305 | 12305 | 13812 | 12305 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Table A2. Correlates of populist attitudes, FIML models

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Female | -0.038+ | -0.032 | -0.047** | -0.026+ |
| | (0.022) | (0.022) | (0.016) | (0.016) |
| Age | 0.023** | 0.017** | 0.015** | 0.012** |
| | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Age squared | -0.0002** | -0.0001** | -0.0001** | -0.00008** |
| | (0.00003) | (0.00003) | (0.00003) | (0.00003) |
| Nonnational | -0.095 | -0.109+ | -0.077 | -0.047 |
| | (0.062) | (0.063) | (0.058) | (0.058) |
| Low education | 0.029 | 0.034 | 0.014 | 0.015 |
| | (0.022) | (0.023) | (0.024) | (0.017) |
| Manual occupation | 0.089** | 0.086** | 0.084** | 0.076** |
| | (0.017) | (0.017) | (0.019) | (0.017) |
| Unemployed | 0.022 | 0.003 | -0.022 | -0.019 |
| | (0.024) | (0.024) | (0.029) | (0.027) |
| Income | -0.326** | -0.162** | -0.103+ | -0.115* |
| | (0.049) | (0.052) | (0.054) | (0.046) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.294** | 0.184** | 0.188** |
| | | (0.050) | (0.045) | (0.040) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.162** | 0.125* | 0.112* |
| | | (0.047) | (0.056) | (0.046) |
| Country economy | | | -0.927** | -0.727** |
| | | | (0.085) | (0.094) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.291** |
| | | | | (0.042) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | -0.186** |
| | | | | (0.067) |
| Left-right placement | | | | -0.186* |
| | | | | (0.084) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | -0.377** |
| | | | | (0.105) |
| Country effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 18368 | 18368 | 18368 | 18368 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Table A3. Correlates of populist attitudes, France

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Female | -0.086* | -0.078* | -0.092* | -0.049 |
| | (0.039) | (0.039) | (0.036) | (0.037) |
| Age | 0.018* | 0.015+ | 0.013+ | 0.010 |
| | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.008) |
| Age squared | -0.000 | -0.000 | -0.000 | -0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) |
| Nonnational | -0.885** | -0.911** | -0.765** | -0.719** |
| | (0.155) | (0.154) | (0.145) | (0.145) |
| Low education | -0.001 | 0.001 | -0.036 | -0.020 |
| | (0.046) | (0.045) | (0.043) | (0.043) |
| Manual occupation | -0.062 | -0.053 | -0.045 | -0.042 |
| | (0.053) | (0.053) | (0.050) | (0.050) |
| Unemployed | 0.047 | 0.012 | -0.025 | -0.015 |
| | (0.071) | (0.071) | (0.067) | (0.066) |
| Income | -0.286** | -0.157 | -0.178+ | -0.176 |
| | (0.108) | (0.114) | (0.107) | (0.108) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.212** | 0.081 | 0.100 |
| | | (0.081) | (0.077) | (0.077) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.229* | 0.172* | 0.134 |
| | | (0.091) | (0.086) | (0.086) |
| National economy | | | -1.144** | -1.061** |
| | | | (0.085) | (0.098) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.269** |
| | | | | (0.063) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | -0.136+ |
| | | | | (0.073) |
| Left-right placement | | | | -0.171* |
| | | | | (0.067) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | -0.205** |
| | | | | (0.077) |
| Observations | 1415 | 1415 | 1415 | 1415 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Table A4. Correlates of populist attitudes, Germany

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Female | 0.001 (0.040) | -0.007 (0.039) | -0.021 (0.039) | -0.031 (0.038) |
| Age | 0.040** (0.008) | 0.031** (0.008) | 0.026** (0.008) | 0.024** (0.008) |
| Age squared | -0.000** (0.000) | -0.000** (0.000) | -0.000* (0.000) | -0.000* (0.000) |
| Nonnational | -0.136 (0.086) | -0.170* (0.086) | -0.196* (0.084) | -0.210** (0.081) |
| Low education | 0.073 (0.054) | 0.092+ (0.054) | 0.090+ (0.053) | 0.037 (0.052) |
| Manual occupation | 0.095+ (0.054) | 0.070 (0.054) | 0.090+ (0.053) | 0.072 (0.051) |
| Unemployed | -0.046 (0.103) | -0.083 (0.102) | -0.078 (0.100) | -0.122 (0.097) |
| Income | -0.453** (0.101) | -0.300** (0.106) | -0.216* (0.104) | -0.098 (0.103) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.270** (0.097) | 0.208* (0.095) | 0.218* (0.092) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.277** (0.093) | 0.176+ (0.092) | 0.159+ (0.089) |
| National economy | | | -1.049** (0.124) | -0.640** (0.128) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.049 (0.077) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | -0.419** (0.052) |
| Left-right placement | | | | -0.069 (0.101) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | -0.467** (0.086) |
| Observations | 1442 | 1442 | 1442 | 1442 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Table A5. Correlates of populist attitudes, Greece

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Female | -0.117** (0.033) | -0.100** (0.032) | -0.089** (0.031) | -0.094** (0.031) |
| Age | 0.023** (0.008) | 0.010 (0.008) | 0.008 (0.008) | 0.005 (0.008) |
| Age squared | -0.000* (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Nonnational | -0.601** (0.108) | -0.593** (0.106) | -0.528** (0.104) | -0.537** (0.102) |
| Low education | 0.001 (0.035) | 0.000 (0.034) | -0.017 (0.033) | -0.032 (0.033) |
| Manual occupation | -0.034 (0.043) | -0.045 (0.042) | -0.051 (0.041) | -0.049 (0.040) |
| Unemployed | 0.018 (0.039) | 0.010 (0.038) | 0.010 (0.037) | -0.003 (0.036) |
| Income | -0.315** (0.113) | -0.156 (0.118) | -0.156 (0.115) | -0.195+ (0.112) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.105 (0.072) | 0.059 (0.070) | 0.060 (0.069) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.399** (0.054) | 0.415** (0.053) | 0.335** (0.052) |
| National economy | | | -0.615** (0.073) | -0.658** (0.079) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.188** (0.065) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | 0.032 (0.047) |
| Left-right placement | | | | -0.449** (0.064) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | -0.294** (0.063) |
| Observations | 1495 | 1495 | 1495 | 1495 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Table A6. Correlates of populist attitudes, Italy

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Female | 0.029 (0.037) | 0.031 (0.037) | -0.005 (0.034) | 0.028 (0.035) |
| Age | 0.037** (0.008) | 0.032** (0.008) | 0.026** (0.007) | 0.024** (0.007) |
| Age squared | -0.000** (0.000) | -0.000** (0.000) | -0.000** (0.000) | -0.000** (0.000) |
| Nonnational | 0.223 (0.247) | 0.218 (0.245) | 0.262 (0.230) | 0.355 (0.226) |
| Low education | 0.113** (0.040) | 0.107** (0.040) | 0.088* (0.037) | 0.101** (0.037) |
| Manual occupation | 0.049 (0.044) | 0.053 (0.044) | 0.043 (0.041) | 0.047 (0.040) |
| Unemployed | 0.114* (0.053) | 0.079 (0.053) | 0.026 (0.050) | 0.015 (0.049) |
| Income | -0.254* (0.121) | -0.025 (0.129) | 0.156 (0.122) | 0.094 (0.121) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.311** (0.073) | 0.137+ (0.070) | 0.093 (0.069) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.104 (0.072) | 0.088 (0.068) | 0.108 (0.067) |
| National economy | | | -1.125** (0.081) | -0.977** (0.085) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.289** (0.063) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | -0.371** (0.064) |
| Left-right placement | | | | 0.019 (0.060) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | -0.112+ (0.067) |
| Observations | 1448 | 1448 | 1448 | 1448 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Table A7. Correlates of populist attitudes, Poland

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Female | 0.005 (0.041) | 0.012 (0.041) | -0.005 (0.040) | 0.006 (0.040) |
| Age | 0.008 (0.009) | 0.001 (0.009) | -0.002 (0.009) | 0.001 (0.009) |
| Age squared | -0.000 (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) | 0.000 (0.000) |
| Nonnational | -0.682 (0.522) | -0.669 (0.519) | -0.562 (0.511) | -0.503 (0.508) |
| Low education | -0.014 (0.058) | -0.010 (0.058) | -0.006 (0.057) | 0.022 (0.057) |
| Manual occupation | 0.166** (0.047) | 0.171** (0.046) | 0.175** (0.046) | 0.166** (0.045) |
| Unemployed | -0.157* (0.075) | -0.164* (0.075) | -0.179* (0.074) | -0.178* (0.073) |
| Income | -0.075 (0.114) | 0.077 (0.119) | 0.137 (0.117) | 0.115 (0.117) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.235** (0.077) | 0.154* (0.077) | 0.160* (0.076) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.131+ (0.072) | 0.085 (0.072) | 0.063 (0.071) |
| National economy | | | -0.621** (0.096) | -0.516** (0.101) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.312** (0.088) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | -0.064 (0.080) |
| Left-right placement | | | | -0.052 (0.073) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | -0.287** (0.087) |
| Observations | 1272 | 1272 | 1272 | 1272 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Table A8. Correlates of populist attitudes, Spain

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Female | -0.026 (0.034) | -0.019 (0.034) | -0.060+ (0.032) | -0.042 (0.032) |
| Age | 0.015* (0.008) | 0.012 (0.008) | 0.013+ (0.007) | 0.009 (0.007) |
| Age squared | -0.000+ (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Nonnational | -0.141 (0.095) | -0.152 (0.095) | -0.093 (0.089) | -0.120 (0.088) |
| Low education | 0.008 (0.037) | 0.011 (0.037) | -0.037 (0.035) | -0.022 (0.035) |
| Manual occupation | 0.047 (0.041) | 0.043 (0.041) | 0.054 (0.038) | 0.050 (0.038) |
| Unemployed | 0.056 (0.046) | 0.045 (0.046) | -0.002 (0.043) | 0.007 (0.043) |
| Income | -0.418** (0.096) | -0.313** (0.104) | -0.231* (0.098) | -0.248* (0.097) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.124 (0.076) | 0.009 (0.072) | 0.021 (0.071) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.151* (0.064) | 0.061 (0.060) | 0.041 (0.060) |
| National economy | | | -1.150** (0.080) | -0.927** (0.088) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.185** (0.059) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | -0.167* (0.068) |
| Left-right placement | | | | -0.311** (0.075) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | 0.041 (0.068) |
| Observations | 1580 | 1580 | 1580 | 1580 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Table A9. Correlates of populist attitudes, Sweden

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Female | -0.119** (0.037) | -0.126** (0.037) | -0.104** (0.037) | -0.048 (0.035) |
| Age | 0.017* (0.007) | 0.011 (0.007) | 0.010 (0.007) | 0.007 (0.007) |
| Age squared | -0.000** (0.000) | -0.000+ (0.000) | -0.000+ (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Nonnational | 0.063 (0.140) | 0.018 (0.140) | 0.042 (0.137) | 0.028 (0.126) |
| Low education | 0.171** (0.048) | 0.175** (0.048) | 0.173** (0.047) | 0.108* (0.044) |
| Manual occupation | 0.112* (0.047) | 0.107* (0.047) | 0.116* (0.046) | 0.046 (0.042) |
| Unemployed | -0.081 (0.091) | -0.072 (0.090) | -0.107 (0.089) | -0.067 (0.081) |
| Income | -0.438** (0.095) | -0.306** (0.102) | -0.239* (0.101) | -0.296** (0.093) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.273** (0.094) | 0.195* (0.093) | 0.132 (0.085) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.179+ (0.102) | 0.132 (0.101) | 0.111 (0.091) |
| National economy | | | -0.683** (0.098) | -0.298** (0.091) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.134* (0.066) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | -0.261** (0.056) |
| Left-right placement | | | | -0.260** (0.072) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | -0.973** (0.061) |
| Observations | 1380 | 1380 | 1380 | 1380 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

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Table A10. Correlates of populist attitudes, Switzerland

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Female | 0.055 (0.038) | 0.061 (0.038) | 0.055 (0.037) | 0.086* (0.037) |
| Age | 0.029** (0.007) | 0.026** (0.007) | 0.021** (0.007) | 0.017* (0.007) |
| Age squared | -0.000** (0.000) | -0.000* (0.000) | -0.000+ (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Nonnational | 0.037 (0.056) | 0.036 (0.056) | 0.071 (0.055) | 0.082 (0.055) |
| Low education | -0.078 (0.055) | -0.067 (0.054) | -0.068 (0.054) | -0.044 (0.053) |
| Manual occupation | 0.104* (0.048) | 0.081+ (0.048) | 0.083+ (0.047) | 0.108* (0.047) |
| Unemployed | -0.070 (0.082) | -0.092 (0.082) | -0.092 (0.081) | -0.097 (0.079) |
| Income | -0.534** (0.107) | -0.281* (0.114) | -0.255* (0.112) | -0.314** (0.113) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.441** (0.074) | 0.441** (0.073) | 0.422** (0.072) |
| Worsened job conditions | | -0.135 (0.086) | -0.158+ (0.085) | -0.129 (0.085) |
| National economy | | | -0.725** (0.130) | -0.545** (0.131) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.277** (0.066) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | -0.082 (0.051) |
| Left-right placement | | | | 0.351** (0.080) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | -0.278** (0.080) |
| Observations | 1322 | 1322 | 1322 | 1322 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01

ECONOMIC CORRELATES OF POPULIST ATTITUDES

Table A11. Correlates of populist attitudes, UK

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Female | -0.007 (0.040) | -0.012 (0.039) | -0.035 (0.037) | -0.041 (0.036) |
| Age | 0.017* (0.008) | 0.010 (0.008) | 0.010 (0.007) | 0.007 (0.007) |
| Age squared | -0.000+ (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) | -0.000 (0.000) |
| Nonnational | 0.352+ (0.185) | 0.282 (0.182) | 0.357* (0.170) | 0.427** (0.165) |
| Low education | 0.066 (0.053) | 0.075 (0.052) | 0.091+ (0.048) | 0.028 (0.047) |
| Manual occupation | 0.151** (0.053) | 0.153** (0.052) | 0.137** (0.048) | 0.095* (0.047) |
| Unemployed | 0.057 (0.096) | 0.049 (0.094) | -0.029 (0.088) | -0.016 (0.085) |
| Income | -0.466** (0.104) | -0.267* (0.106) | -0.189+ (0.099) | -0.142 (0.096) |
| Reduced consumption | | 0.586** (0.088) | 0.327** (0.084) | 0.276** (0.081) |
| Worsened job conditions | | 0.053 (0.092) | -0.013 (0.086) | 0.008 (0.083) |
| National economy | | | -1.277** (0.093) | -0.975** (0.109) |
| Political knowledge | | | | 0.046 (0.072) |
| Attachment to incumbent | | | | -0.398** (0.063) |
| Left-right placement | | | | -0.124 (0.099) |
| Attitudes towards immigrants | | | | -0.586** (0.073) |
| Observations | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 | 1250 |

Standard errors in parentheses

+ p<.1, * p<.05, ** p<.01