ELSEVIER

An unjustified bad reputation? The Dark Triad and support for populism

Carol Galais [*], Guillem Rico

Dept. Ciència Política i Dret Públic, Edifici B, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 08193, Bellaterra, Spain

ABSTRACT

While research concludes that populist leaders stand out for their "dark" personalities, studies on the psychological underpinnings of citizens' populist attitudes are scant and inconclusive, with some agreement on the association between disagreeableness and populist attitudes. By bringing the Dark Triad personality traits of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism into the picture, we aim to answer whether populist citizens -like populist leaders-score higher in this dark traits, and whether the addition of the Dark Triad helps to better understanding the populist personality. Using an online Spanish sample, our analyses find that using the Dark Triad does indeed add to our understanding of populist attitudes. In opposition to widespread intuitions about the character of populists, we find that psychopathy and Machiavellianism are negatively associated with support for populism, with only narcissism being positively related to the people-centric dimension of populist attitudes.

1. Introduction

In March 2017, Pope Frances warned in an interview with a German newspaper that "populism is evil and never ends well". Although his statement might only be of interest to Catholics, the truth is that value judgements regarding populism are the subject of a lively academic debate. For a number of scholars, populism is a parasite that thrives in times of crisis by draining the lifeblood of liberal democracy (Urbinati 2014). Populism is suspected to erode social consensus and the legitimacy of political institutions, endangering minority rights while upholding civic, political and economic rights (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Dzur and Hendriks 2018; Tamas 2017). Populist leaders, on the other hand, are usually seen as authoritarian strongmen who, at best, behave and speak like "drunken dinner guests" (Nai and Martínez i Coma, 2019). But what about populist citizens? Do they also have a "dark" side?

The relative success of populist parties has spurred academic interest in what causes populist attitudes. A thriving research strand explores the psychological basis of populism, particularly in regard to personality traits, although the existing evidence yields counter-intuitive and inconsistent results (Fatke, 2019). Among the few established findings in this literature, one item stands out: populist citizens tend to be disagreeable; that is, they are not altruistic or cooperative, but distrustful and intolerant (Bakker et al., 2020; but see Pruysers, 2021).

In parallel, a growing body of research is currently seeking out further psychological elements to complete the portrait of populist citizens, since the Big Five personality traits do not fully capture darker, less socially desirable nuances. The Dark Triad model offers three personality traits associated with transgressive behaviour: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Paulhus and Williams, 2002).[1] Machiavellian individuals are cynical, manipulative and lack morals. Typical narcissists are exhibitionists who are arrogant, exploitative and entitled, with oversized egos; at the same time, their self-esteem is vulnerable and they are highly sensitive to criticism. Finally, non-pathological psychopathy features low levels of empathy, conscientiousness and anxiety, along with high levels of impulsivity and thrill-seeking behaviour (Furnham et al., 2013). Our research addresses whether or not, with all else being equal, citizens who display these less than flattering personality traits are also more likely to hold populist attitudes.

To this end, we test the relationship between populist attitudes and the Dark Triad traits on an online sample of Spaniards (N = 3031). In stark contrast to widely accepted depictions of populist citizens, our results indicate that psychopathy and Machiavellianism are negatively associated with the two core dimensions of populism (people-centrism and anti-elitism), while narcissism is positively related to people-centrism.

---

* Corresponding author.
  E-mail addresses: carolina.galais@uab.cat (C. Galais), guillem.rico@uab.cat (G. Rico).
[1] The latter two at subclinical levels.

2. Theoretical background: dark traits and populist attitudes

From an "ideational" perspective, populism is a set of ideas that convey a view of politics as "a Manichean struggle between the will of the common people and an evil, conspiring elite" (Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019, p. 2). Even in its most basic conceptualizations, populism is a multidimensional concept. Its two most agreed-upon components are anti-elitism and people-centrism. While anti-elitism implies a rejection of the elites holding power based on the belief that they are selfish, corrupt and deceitful, people-centrism conceives "the people" as a virtuous and homogeneous community, and asserts that popular sovereignty should guide political decisions (Castanho Silva et al., 2019).

A relatively new avenue of research explores the psychological underpinnings of populism, yielding disturbing results that appear to shed light on the frightening consequences that populism might have on democracy. For instance, support for human values -in particular, benevolence-has been found to be weaker among voters of right-wing populist parties, even after controlling for self-placement in the left-right scale (Marcos-Marne, 2019). In the same vein, populist attitudes are positively related to self-oriented justice (Rothmund et al., 2020) and collective narcissism, i.e., an unrealistic belief in the greatness of the national group (Marchlewska et al., 2018).

Although research on the association between populism and personality is still scant and mixed results abound (Fatke, 2019), some findings suggest that populist ideas might be particularly appealing to dark personalities, i.e. individuals that score high on the three aforementioned dark personality traits. First, recent research indicates that, compared to mainstream politicians, populist politicians score higher on perceived narcissism, Machiavellianism, and (subclinical) psychopathy (Nai and Maier, 2018; Nai and Martínez i Coma, 2019; see also Visser et al., 2017). According to the congruency model of political preferences, voters are more likely to support a politician if the politician's image is consistent with their own self-image (Caprara and Zimbardo, 2004). The similar and distinctive personality characteristics of citizens and leaders can be traced back to a shared set of emotions, feelings, preferences and values. Hence, to the extent that populist politicians tend to display darker personalities, individuals that score high on the Dark Triad traits would be more likely to prefer populist leaders and parties over their non-populist opponents. Along these lines, recent research has found that voters who score high on the Dark Triad traits evaluate politicians with dark personalities more positively than voters who score low on those traits (Hart et al., 2018).

Second, the Dark Triad traits are closely related to the Big Five model, in that those who score higher in the dark traits also tend to score low in agreeableness (Furnham et al., 2013; Jakobwitz and Egan, 2006; Muris et al., 2017; Pailing et al., 2014).[2] A number of studies have found low agreeableness to be related to support for populist parties in countries such as Austria (Aichholzer and Zandonella, 2016), Switzerland (Ackermann et al., 2018), the US, the Netherlands, and Germany (Bakker et al., 2016), as well as Spain and Denmark (Bakker et al., 2020). Even if the overlap between the Big Five and the Dark Triad seems to be restricted to between 18% and 39% (Vernon et al., 2008), the significant relationship between the populist vote and low agreeableness also suggests that populism could potentially appeal to dark personalities.

However, there are several limitations to this argument. First, a recurrent problem found in the research on populism is an inability to separate the factors that drive support for populist ideas from those that drive support for other ideological features with which populist ideas

happen to be associated in a given context, but that are not inherently part of populism itself. Populist discourse is chameleonic, in that it may be combined with right-wing as well as left-wing "host" ideologies, giving rise to more exclusionary or more inclusionary manifestations of populism (Mudde, 2004; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Taggart, 2000). For example, European radical right-wing parties are populist but they are also authoritarian and, foremost, nativist (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2007).

When trying to explain support for the phenomenon of populism, we run the risk of actually explaining support for populist parties' host ideologies instead (Rooduijn, 2019). For example, extant research suggests that all the Dark Triad traits are positively associated with outgroup threat perceptions and prejudice against immigrants (Hodson et al., 2009), which are distinctive features of contemporary far right movements. This risk is particularly acute when the outcome variable is behavioural in nature (i.e. voting for a populist party), which is most often the case in this research strand. One way to try to mitigate for this is to focus on populist attitudes themselves, rather than on partisan preferences. Yet studies that examine personality differences in the endorsement of populist attitudes have actually yielded disparate results. If we focus on the role of agreeableness, Landwehr and Steiner (2017) find that individuals who score low on this trait are more likely to support the related construct of populist majoritarianism in Germany. Yet, the relationship between agreeableness and populist attitudes was not found in the US (Hibbing et al., 2009), France (Vasilopoulos and Jost, 2020), or in Canada (Pruysers, 2021), while Fatke (2019) actually found a positive association in Germany and the UK (populist individuals scoring higher in agreeableness than non-populists).[3]

An additional difficulty arises when the elements that make up the populist discourse are examined individually. As noted above, ideational approaches to populism conceive it as comprising at least two key subdimensions: people-centrism and anti-elitism (Rooduijn, 2019). In this respect, the different aspects of a personality might shape different relationships with particular dimensions of populism. For instance, agreeableness is strongly associated with solidarity, interpersonal trust, and conflict avoidance. Yet, as noted by Bakker et al. (2016, p. 305), "the populist anti-establishment message – accusing the political elite of incompetence, insubordination and profiteering at the expense of the common people – matches a distrusting, tough-minded, cynical and intolerant personality", which is consistent with disagreeable individuals. Hence, agreeableness might positively correlate with people-centrism and negatively with anti-elitism. Along these lines, Bakker et al. (2020) find that the anti-establishment communication style used by populist parties and candidates resonates with highly disagreeable people, but this does not occur with either people-centric or conflict-seeking discourses. Similarly, Kenny and Bizumic's (2019) zero-order correlations reveal a negative relationship between agreeableness and anti-elitism and a positive one with people-centrism, with multivariate analyses showing positive effects of agreeableness on people-centrism.

Just as different elements of the populist message might attract different types of personalities, different associations might also emerge across the distinct facets of a dark personality. Although the Dark Triad members are all moderately but consistently intercorrelated, most studies find a stronger overlap between psychopathy and Machiavellianism (Furnham et al., 2013). Likewise, the extant research tends to show more similarities in the patterns that correlate Machiavellianism and psychopathy; these two traits appear to be more strongly associated with adverse psychosocial consequences than narcissism does (Muris et al., 2017).

In this way, expectations may vary depending on the specific Dark

---

[2] The Big Five model considers five main personality traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability (see Funder & Fast, 2010 and Mondak, 2010). Agreeableness is the personality trait that best predicts moral reasoning (Athota, O'Connor, Jackson, 2009), as agreeable individuals stand out for their empathy and concern for others.

[3] Other works consider that ideology mediates the final effect of personality on populist voting behavior (e.g. Ackermann et al., 2018; Bakker et al., 2016; Aichholzer et al., 2018).

Triad member and sub-dimension of populism examined. This implies that the associations may be cancelled out or substantially moderated when examining the overall measure of populism. The tendency of narcissists to self-enhance, along with their strong sense of entitlement should lead them to claim a fundamental role in politics, and hence to defend people-centrism – at least to the extent that they do not see themselves as part of the elite. Indeed, the empirical evidence suggests that populist attitudes are associated with individuals' self-perceived political competence, which is consistent with the self-aggrandizement and disproportionate overconfidence exhibited by narcissists (Campbell et al., 2004; Sniderman, 1975; but see Pruysers, 2021).[4] Likewise, their inflated sense of deservingness makes narcissists more likely to perceive themselves as victims of abuse perpetrated by authority figures and to distrust them (Harvey et al., 2014), and hence be more prone to endorsing anti-establishment attitudes.

H1. Narcissism will be positively associated with both people-centrism and anti-elitism.

We expect a similar pattern of associations for Machiavellianism and psychopathy. Machiavellian individuals are noted for having a cynical outlook on life and attitude towards people, and for being generally distrusting of others (Dahling et al., 2009). This should make them less likely to sympathize with the people-centric element of populist discourse. For the same reason, we would expect obtaining high scores on this trait to correlate positively with holding anti-establishment attitudes. On the other hand, psychopaths' low empathy and disregard for the well-being of others (Furnham et al., 2013) seem at odds with applauding the people, while their impulsive nonconformity would increase the appeal of messages that criticise the established elites.

H2. Machiavellianism will be negatively associated with people centrism and positively associated with anti-elitism.

H3. Psychopathy will be negatively associated with people centrism and positively associated with anti-elitism.

In sum, our study aims to assess psychological predisposition towards populism by contributing to this emerging literature in several ways. First, by using the Dark Triad traits to complement the general personality traits that are often used to explain populist attitudes. Second, by inspecting the effects of both general and dark traits on the subdimensions of populism (people-centrism and anti-elitism), as this may help explaining some of the extant mixed evidence for general personality traits.

3. Research design

We draw on an online survey conducted in September/October 2018 on a sample of adult residents in Spain. Spain makes an interesting case study because it features relevant populist parties on both extremes on the left-right spectrum. In contrast to most European countries, the first relevant populist force to emerge in Spain was not a radical right-wing party but a radical left-wing party – Podemos, which first made its appearance in the 2014 EP elections and obtained 20.7% of the votes cast in the 2015 general election, placing them behind only the mainstream socialists (PSOE) and the conservatives (PP). The populist radical right party Vox first obtained representation in the 2018 regional elections in Andalusia and quickly became the third largest force in the November 2019 general elections, by combining a nationalist and anti-immigration message with the defence of traditional values and a fierce anti-establishment rhetoric (Ferreira, 2019).

The sample for our study was selected by Qualtrics from among its

panellists, using quota sampling to approximately match Spain's population statistics in terms of sex, age, and education level. The sample included 3031 adults (1542 male and 1489 female; their ages ranged from 18 to 65; 36% had a university education or higher, 36% had completed secondary education, and 28% had less than a secondary education).

The populism components of anti-elitism and people-centrism were measured using the instrument developed by Castanho Silva et al. (2019). For each dimension, there are three items, one of which is negatively worded. The items on the *anti-elitism* scale are: "The government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves", "Government officials use their power to try and improve people's lives" (reversed), and "Quite a few of the people running the government are corrupt". The items for *people-centrism* are: "Politicians should always listen closely to the problems of the people", "Politicians don't have to spend time among ordinary people to do a good job" (reversed), and "The will of the people should be the highest principle in this country's politics". Agreement with each of the statements was measured using a five-point scale, running from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Responses were rescaled to run from 0 to 1 and averaged to obtain composite scores for each of the two dimensions. Finally, a comprehensive scale was built to average the scores of the items.

To assess the Dark Triad, we used an adapted and shortened version of the Dirty Dozen measure (Jonason and Webster, 2010). Specifically, we selected the two items with the highest factor loadings within each of the three dimensions in Jonason & Webster's work. Narcissism was measured by using the following items: "I enjoy it when others pay attention to me" and "I tend to expect special favours from others". For Machiavellianism: "I have used deceit or have lied to get my way" and "I tend to manipulate others to my own benefit". Finally, psychopathy was measured with: "I tend to lack remorse" and "I tend not to be concerned with the morality of my actions". The responses, measured using a five-point Likert scale, were rescaled to run from 0 to 1 and averaged.

The Big Five personality traits are included as a relevant control, as we are particularly interested in the role of agreeableness and its interplay with the Dark Triad. Personality was measured using a short, ten-item version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10), which is suitable in contexts where there are serious time constraints, yet has been proven to produce satisfactory levels of validity and reliability (Rammstedt and John, 2007). Each Big Five dimension thus consisted of one positively-scored and one negatively-scored item (the exact wordings are shown in the Appendix). All items used (see Appendix A1) a five-point Likert scale. Responses were rescaled to range from 0 to 1, and averaged.[5]

Furthermore, our analyses include controls for sex, age (measured in years), education (less than secondary, secondary, post-secondary), and ideological orientation (measured on an 11-point scale from "Left" to "Right" and recoded to range 0–1). Controlling for ideology should allow us to be more precise in identifying the associations between individual differences and populism itself, clear of the overlap between populist ideas, on the one hand, and partisan and ideological orientations that have been found to be driven by personality traits (Bakker et al., 2016).

Given that our dependent variables are scales, we estimate the

---

[4] The sole empirical work on the relationship between narcissism and populist attitudes reveals a negative association, although this relationship is not controlled for other general personality traits, does not pay attention to populist sub-dimensions, and is confined to Canada (Pruysers, 2021).

[5] The Cronbach's alphas for our composite measures range from 0.54 to 0.69 for populist attitudes, 0.46 to 0.81 for dark traits, and 0.40 to 53 for the Big Five traits. The only exception is Agreeableness, whose alpha value below 0.1 suggests that this trait might not be properly measured with our two items, as previous studies using the BFI-10 in Spanish samples have found. Based on criterion validity tests, Gallego and Oberski (2012) recommend excluding the statement "someone who is generally trusting." We tested our hypotheses limiting ourselves to the less problematic Agreeableness item. As shown in Appendix A6, the results for these alternative models do not compromise our conclusions.

association between the Big Five and the Dark Triad traits by using a series of OLS regressions. While the first model only considers the controls and the Big Five traits, the second adds the Dark Triad dimensions to test their explanatory power and to explore how including them alters the initial relationship found for the Big Five traits, with especial attention paid to agreeableness.

4. Results

Before presenting the results of the multivariate models, it is worth examining how the variables are distributed and relate to each other (descriptive statistics and pairwise correlations are displayed in Tables A2 and A3 of the Appendix, respectively). Three of the Big Five personality traits significantly and positively correlate with the populism scale. The strongest Pearson's correlations (although moderate) are found for openness and conscientiousness. When we consider the three Dark Triad traits, we see that all three traits are significantly and negatively related to the populist scale, as well as with the populism subdimensions.[6]

Let us now turn to the multivariate models presented in Table 1.[7] An initial glance at models 1 to 3, considering the Big Five traits alone, reveals that the comprehensive populist attitudes scale is positively associated with openness and conscientiousness; however, we also observe non-significant coefficients for extraversion and agreeableness and small negative coefficients for the relationship with emotional stability. When we look at its components, we notice that agreeableness exerts a positive impact on people-centrism but a negative one on anti-elitism. Extraversion has a positive association with people-centrism but a null one with anti-elitism, and emotional stability is unrelated to people-centrism but is negatively related to anti-elitism.

Adding the Dark Triad to models 4 to 6 also has different effects on each of the dependent variables. Machiavellianism and psychopathy are negatively associated with the comprehensive populist scale, while the coefficient for narcissism is positive but not statistically significant. Machiavellianism and psychopathy are negatively related to both people-centrism and anti-elitism. By contrast, narcissism correlates positively with people-centrism (associated with up to a 0.5 increase on the 0–1 scale when narcissism varies from its minimum to its maximum value) but is unrelated to anti-elitism. Note that the effect sizes are moderate to small, but in some cases comparable to those of other personality traits or even stronger. This is the case for Machiavellianism, where a shift from the lowest to the highest score is associated with a 0.14 decrease on the 0–1 scale of people-centrism (a 0.18 standard-deviation decrease per one standard deviation increase in Machiavellianism).

Interestingly, including the Dark Triad predictors provokes differentiated effects on all the dependent variables. The initial coefficients for the relationship between the Big Five and the populism scale are affected, in that the coefficient for openness and conscientiousness shrinks when the Dark Triad is present. As for agreeableness, the

___

[6] As for the degree of overlap between the personality traits, the highest scores are found for psychopathy and Machiavellianism (.42*), on the one hand, and Machiavellianism and extraversion (−0.38*), on the other. We can conclude that such an overlap does not justify the exclusion of any of these variables nor does it cause multicollinearity problems.

[7] Because our models consider a remarkable number of predictors, we have applied a multiple testing correction procedure to adjust our statistical confidence measures based on the number of tests performed, to rule out the possibility that some of the coefficients will turn out significant simply due to chance. Table A4 in the appendix shows conventional p-values alongside Šidák-Holm adjusted p-values. Only two initially significant coefficients turned out to be non-significant after correcting for multiple comparisons: the association between Agreeableness and overall populism, and the one between emotional stability and anti-elitism. None of the coefficients relevant to our hypotheses are affected by these alternative estimations.

negative coefficient becomes significant when the Dark Triad is present. This association becomes more apparent if we pay attention to people-centrism: when the Dark Triad is taken into consideration, agreeableness no longer has a positive, significant coefficient, but a non-significant one. We can probably interpret this as model 2 achieving a "neater" association between agreeableness and people-centrism, free from overlap with some Dark Triad traits.

Results regarding the model fit confirm the benefits of adding the Dark Triad traits in predicting populist attitudes. Yet, contrary to what the literature finds for populist leaders and suggests when looking at the relationship between populist citizens and human values or self-oriented justice (Marcos-Marne, 2019; Rothmund et al., 2020), populist citizens score lower on the Dark Triad traits than non-populists, all else being equal. Only one Dark Triad trait has a positive association with a populist dimension: those scoring higher on narcissism also tend to exhibit higher levels of people-centrism.

5. Discussion and conclusions

While scholars seem to agree that populist leaders are not exactly the ideal "dinner guests", research on the relationship between citizens' populist attitudes and their dark traits is scant. In parallel, some works point out that populist citizens are disagreeable, although the evidence is mixed. Inspired by recent works that explore the Dark Triad traits of populist leaders, our research has estimated the association between the Dark Triad and populist attitudes, controlling for the effect of the Big Five personality indicators. More precisely, we contended that narcissism would be positively associated with people-centrism and anti-elitism attitudes, and that both Machiavellianism and psychopathy would have a positive relationship with people-centrism and a negative one with anti-elitism. In short, our results align with our hypotheses with regards people-centrism, but overturn all the expectations involving anti-elitism.

Using a Spanish survey, we regressed the two populist subdimensions plus a comprehensive populist scale on the general and dark personality traits, controlling for the usual suspects when it comes to populism. Our results reveal some significant associations between the Dark Triad and populist attitudes, but also yield other intriguing findings.

For a start, some of the small associations and null effects found for some personality traits (e.g. extraversion, emotional stability) might be due to measurement problems associated to short personality inventories (Ludeke and Larsen, 2017; Bakker and Lelkes, 2018). This problem may be especially acute for Agreeableness (see footnote 4). Indeed, the low reliability of this measure might compromise our conclusions, particularly in regards the sign and size of its association with the anti-elitism and populism scales. Nevertheless, our results for the relationship between Agreeableness and people-centrism are in line with Kenny and Bizumic's (2019) findings. We also detect a negative relationship with anti-elitism that partly aligns with previous research (Vasilopoulos and Jost, 2020; Fatke, 2019; Landwehr and Steiner, 2017). Most related to our hypotheses, our results go against Pruysers' (2021) findings for Canada: he finds a negative effect for narcissism, while we find a positive one; we find negative associations for the other two dark traits, he finds none. These discrepancies might be due to different approaches when measuring personality, or to different contexts, but also to the fact that we distinguish between people-centrism and anti-elitism.

Resuming the debate about the virtues and dangers of populism, we can add the following to the existing findings: populist citizens are not "undesirable dinner guests." Quite the contrary: they have notably low levels of Machiavellianism and psychopathy. If someone ruins the banquet, he will more likely be a non-populist. This might seem counterintuitive at first glance, if only for the negative connotations of the populist label. Yet it speaks to the need to differentiate populism from other traits often associated but distinct from it. Populism, after all, is intrinsic to a belief in democracy, and populist ideas remain much more

Table 1
Regression models of populist attitudes.

	(1) Populism	(2) Anti-elitism	(3) People-centrism	(4) Populism	(5) Anti-elitism	(6) People-centrism
Female	0.02***	0.02***	0.03***	0.01*	0.01	0.01*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Age	0.00***	0.00***	0.00***	0.00***	0.00*	0.00***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Secondary	0.00	−0.00	0.00	−0.00	−0.00	−0.00
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Higher	0.00	−0.01	0.01	−0.00	−0.01	0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ideology	−0.08***	−0.06***	−0.11***	−0.07***	−0.05***	−0.09***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Openness	0.13***	0.11***	0.15***	0.10***	0.08***	0.12***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Conscientiousness	0.15***	0.16***	0.14***	0.10***	0.11***	0.09***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Extraversion	0.01	−0.02	0.04*	0.01	−0.02	0.03*
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Agreeableness	−0.01	−0.08***	0.05**	−0.04**	−0.10***	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Emotional stability	−0.02	−0.04*	−0.01	−0.02	−0.04*	−0.01
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Narcissism				0.02	−0.01	0.05**
				(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Machiavellianism				−0.12***	−0.10***	−0.14***
				(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Psychopathy				−0.08***	−0.07***	−0.08***
				(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Constant	0.57***	0.63***	0.50***	0.70***	0.75***	0.64***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Adjusted R^2	0.12	0.07	0.13	0.16	0.09	0.17
Observations	3029	3029	3029	3029	3029	3029

Unstandardized OLS coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

widespread at the mass level than is support for populist parties (Hawkins and Littvay, 2019).

At the same time, the connection between narcissism and people-centrism speaks to the research on collective narcissism and populism (Golec de Zavala et al., 2019). Our measures are probably tapping the communalities between individual and collective narcissism (e.g. claims of special recognition and privilege, hostility towards others, aggressive reactions to criticism) and spurring morally superior visions about what it means to be part of "the people" (Müller, 2016). Another possibility is that narcissism overlaps with a trait that is not included in the Big Five model but is in the HEXACO model.[8] Indeed, previous studies have found that aversive personality types (i.e. "dark" ones) are associated with the Honesty-Humility dimension, and more precisely, negatively associated with the modesty facet (Book et al., 2016). In sum, our results advocate for the benefits of including malevolent personality indicators in the research, as they have clarified the initial findings for the associations with the Big Five -along with the limitations of the Big Five model- and have turned out to have meaningful connections with the populist sub-dimensions.

Acknowledgements

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102357.

References

Ackermann, K., Zampieri, E., Freitag, M., 2018. Personality and voting for a right-wing populist party – evidence from Switzerland. Swiss Polit. Sci. Rev. 24 (4), 545–564. https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12330.

Aichholzer, J., Zandonella, M., 2016. Psychological bases of support for radical right parties. Pers. Indiv. Differ. 96, 185–190. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.02.072.

Aichholzer, J., Danner, D., Rammstedt, B., 2018. Facets of personality and "ideological asymmetries. J. Res. Pers. 77, 90–100.

Ashton, M.C., Lee, K., 2007. Empirical, theoretical, and practical advantages of the HEXACO model of personality structure. Pers. Soc. Psychol. Rev. 11 (2), 150–166.

2009 Athota, V.S., O'Connor, S., O'Connor, P.J., Jackson, C., The, r . J., Jackson, C., 2009. The role of emotional intelligence and personality in moral reasoning. In: Hicks, R.E. (Ed.), Personality and Individual Differences: Current Directions. Bowen Hills, QLD. Australian Academic Press.

Bakker, B.N., Lelkes, Y., 2018. Selling ourselves short? How abbreviated measures of personality change the way we think about personality and politics. J. Polit. 80 (4), 1311–1325.

Bakker, B.N., Rooduijn, M., Schumacher, G., 2016. The psychological roots of populist voting: evidence from the United States, The Netherlands and Germany. Eur. J. Polit. Res. 55 (2), 302–320. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12121.

Bakker, B.N., Schumacher, G., Rooduijn, M., 2020. The populist appeal: personality and anti-establishment communication. J. Polit. https://doi.org/10.1086/710014.

Book, A., Visser, B.A., Blais, J., Hosker-Field, A., Methot-Jones, T., Gauthier, N.Y., D'Agata, M.T., 2016. Unpacking more "evil": what is at the core of the dark tetrad? Pers. Indiv. Differ. 90, 269–272.

Campbell, W.K., Goodie, A.S., Foster, J.D., 2004. Narcissism, confidence, and risk attitude. J. Behav. Decis. Making 17 (4), 297–311. https://doi.org/10.1002/bdm.475.

Caprara, G.V., Zimbardo, P.G., 2004. Personalizing politics: a congruency model of political preference. Am. Psychol. 59 (7), 581–594.

Castanho Silva, B., Andreadis, I., Anduiza, E., Blanuša, N., Corti, Y.M., Delfino, G., Rico, G., Ruth, S., Spruyt, B., Steenbergen, M., Littvay, L., 2019. Public opinion

---

[8] The HEXACO personality model adds an additional personality dimension to the Big Five model: Honesty-Humility (Ashton and Lee, 2007). The HEXACO model is believed to bring forth antisocial traits more clearly than the Big Five model.

surveys: a new scale. In: Hawkins, K.A., Carlin, R., Littvay, L., Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (Eds.), The Ideational Approach to Populism: Theory, Method & Analysis. Routledge.

Dahling, J.J., Whitaker, B.G., Levy, P.E., 2009. The development and validation of a new machiavellianism scale. J. Manag. 35 (2), 219–257. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206308318618.

Dzur, A.W., Hendriks, C.M., 2018. Thick populism: democracy-enhancing popular participation. Pol. Stud. 39 (3), 334–351.

Fatke, M., 2019. The personality of populists: how the Big Five traits relate to populist attitudes. Pers. Indiv. Differ. 139 (1), 138–151. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.11.018.

Ferreira, C., 2019. Vox como representante de la derecha radical en España: un estudio sobre su ideología. Revista Española de Ciencia Política 51, 73–98.

Funder, D.C., Fast, L.A., 2010. Personality in social psychology. In: Gilbert, D., Fiske, S. (Eds.), Handbook of Social Psychology, 5th ed. Wiley, New York, NY, pp. 668–697.

Furnham, A., Richards, S.C., Paulhus, D.L., 2013. The dark triad of personality: a 10 Year review. Soc. Pers. Psychol. Compass 7 (3), 199–216. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12018.

Gallego, A., Oberski, D., 2012. Personality and political participation: the mediation hypothesis. Polit. Behav. 34 (3), 425–451.

Golec de Zavala, A., Dyduch-Hazar, K., Lantos, D., 2019. Collective narcissism: political consequences of investing self-worth in the ingroup's image. Polit. Psychol. 40 (S1), 37–74. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12569.

Hart, W., Richardson, K., Tortoriello, G.K., 2018. Dark personality voters find dark politicians more relatable and fit for office. J. Res. Pers. 75, 59–68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2018.05.007.

Harvey, P., Harris, K.J., Gillis, W.E., Martinko, M.J., 2014. Abusive supervision and the entitled employee. Leader. Q. 25 (2), 204–217. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.08.001.

Hawkins, K.A., Littvay, L., 2019. Contemporary US Populism in Comparative Perspective. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108644655.

Hawkins, K.A., Rovira Kaltwasser, C., 2019. Introduction: the ideational approach. In: Hawkins, K.A., Carlin, R.E., Littvay, L., Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (Eds.), The Ideational Approach to Populism: Concept, Theory, and Analysis. Routledge, pp. 1–24. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315196923-1.

Hibbing, J.R., Theiss-Morse, E., Whitaker, E., 2009. Americans' perceptions of the nature of governing. In: Mondak, J.J. (Ed.), Fault Lines: Why the Republicans Lost Congress. Routledge.

Hodson, G., Hogg, S.M., MacInnis, C.C., 2009. The role of "dark personalities"(narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy), Big Five personality factors, and ideology in explaining prejudice. J. Res. Pers. 43 (4), 686–690.

Jakobwitz, S., Egan, V., 2006. The dark triad and normal personality traits. Pers. Indiv. Differ. 40 (2), 331–339. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2005.07.006.

Jonason, P.K., Webster, G.D., 2010. The dirty dozen: a concise measure of the dark triad. Psychol. Assess. 22 (2), 420–432. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019265.

Kenny, P.D., Bizumic, B., 2019. Is there a populist personality? Populist Attitudes as an Intervening Variable in Australian Public Opinion http://www.academia.edu/download/60777516/Kenny_Bizumic_Is_there_a_Populist_Personality20191002-69921-10gb34b.pdf.

Landwehr, C., Steiner, N.D., 2017. Where democrats disagree: citizens' normative conceptions of democracy. Polit. Stud. 65 (4), 786–804. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321717715398.

Ludeke, S.G., Larsen, E.G., 2017. Problems with the big five assessment in the world values survey. Pers. Indiv. Differ. 112, 103–105.

Marchlewska, M., Cichocka, A., Panayiotou, O., Castellanos, K., Batayneh, J., 2018. Populism as identity politics: perceived in-group disadvantage, collective narcissism, and support for populism. Soc. Psychol. Personal. Sci. 9 (2), 151–162. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550617732393.

September 4-7 Marcos-Marne, Hugo, 2019. Is populism here to stay? Voters of populist parties and basic human values in European democracies. [Paper presentation]. In: ECPR General Conference, Wroclaw, Poland.

Mondak, J.J., 2010. In: Personality and the foundations of political behavior. Cambridge University Press.

Mudde, C., 2004. The Populist Zeitgeist. Gov. Oppos. 39 (4), 542–563. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x.

Mudde, C., 2007. Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe. Cambridge University Press.

Mudde, C., Rovira Kaltwasser, C., 2013. Exclusionary vs. Inclusionary populism: comparing the contemporary Europe and Latin America. Gov. Oppos. 48 (2), 147–174.

Müller, J.-W., 2016. What Is Populism? University of Pennsylvania Press.

Muris, P., Merckelbach, H., Otgaar, H., Meijer, E., 2017. The malevolent side of human nature: a meta-analysis and critical review of the literature on the dark triad (narcissism, machiavellianism, and psychopathy). Perspect. Psychol. Sci. 12 (2), 183–204. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691616666070.

Nai, A., Maier, J., 2018. Perceived personality and campaign style of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Pers. Indiv. Differ. 121, 80–83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.09.020.

Nai, A., Martínez i Coma, F., 2019. The personality of populists: provocateurs, charismatic leaders, or drunken dinner guests? W. Eur. Polit. 42 (7), 1337–1367. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2019.1599570.

Pailing, A., Boon, J., Egan, V., 2014. Personality, the dark triad and violence. Pers. Indiv. Differ. 67, 81–86. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2013.11.018.

Paulhus, D.L., Williams, K.M., 2002. The dark triad of personality: narcissism, machiavellianism, and psychopathy. J. Res. Pers. 36 (6), 556–563. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566(02)00505-6.

Pruysers, S., 2021. A psychological predisposition towards populism? Evidence from Canada. Contemp. Polit. 27 (1), 105–124.

Rammstedt, B., John, O.P., 2007. Measuring personality in one minute or less: a 10-item short version of the Big Five Inventory in English and German. J. Res. Pers. 41 (1), 203–212.

Rooduijn, M., 2019. State of the field: how to study populism and adjacent topics? A plea for both more and less focus. Eur. J. Polit. Res. 58 (1), 362–372. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12314.

Rothmund, T., Bromme, L., Azevedo, F., 2020. Justice for the people? How justice sensitivity can foster and impair support for populist radical-right parties and politicians in the United States and in Germany. Polit. Psychol. 41 (3), 479–497. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12632.

Rovira Kaltwasser, C., 2012. The ambivalence of populism: threat and corrective for democracy. Democratization 19 (2), 184–208.

Rydgren, J., 2007. The sociology of the radical right. Annu. Rev. Sociol. 33 (1), 241–262.

Sniderman, P.M., 1975. Personality and Democratic Politics. University of California Press.

Taggart, P., 2000. Populism. Open University Press.

Tamas, G.M., 2017. The mystery of "populism" finally unveiled. Open Democracy 24.

Urbinati, N., 2014. Democracy Disfigured. Harvard University Press.

Vasilopoulos, P., Jost, J.T., 2020. Psychological similarities and dissimilarities between left-wing and right-wing populists: evidence from a nationally representative survey in France. J. Res. Pers. 88, 104004. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2020.104004.

Vernon, P.A., Villani, V.C., Vickers, L.C., Harris, J.A., 2008. A behavioral genetic investigation of the Dark Triad and the Big 5. Pers. Indiv. Differ. 44 (2), 445–452. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2007.09.007.

Visser, B.A., Book, A.S., Volk, A.A., 2017. Is Hillary dishonest and Donald narcissistic? A HEXACO analysis of the presidential candidates' public personas. Pers. Indiv. Differ. 106, 281–286. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.10.053.