The Young Vote: Age and Populist Radical Right Voting

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the relationship between age and populist radical right voting in Europe. First, I outline the challenges involved in settling on a definition for populism, before concluding that defining populism as a discourse is the most appropriate. However, actually using a discursive definition proves difficult owing to a lack of available data. In the end, our hand is forced by the data and a list of populist radical right parties is identified using data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

Next, the European Social Survey is a large-sample individual level survey. The CHES party data was mapped to each respondent's choice of vote, resulting in the main finding of this thesis. Young people are more likely to vote for populist radical right parties than any other voting age group. The potential causes of this finding were investigated, with the two leading theories of what causes populist voting being found to not explain this result. However, by treating age as a variable of interest, it was shown that low turnout from young voters meant that those who did were significantly more radical than other cohorts, thereby explaining the earlier finding. I conclude by discussing the potential for combining the populist literature with the age, period and cohort literature.

Contents

Declaration

This work is substantially my own, and where any part of this work is not my own, I have indicated this by acknowledging the source of that part or those parts of the work.

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Introduction

2017 was to be the year of the populist. In the wake of Donald Trump's rise to the US presidency and the success of the Brexit referendum there was an outpouring of mainstream media coverage concerning the rise of populism. Adding fuel to this fire was a spate of elections across Europe to be contested by flamboyant, high-profile populist candidates, all promising to smash the existing political status quo on their inevitable path to power.

The reality turned out to be rather more mundane. Populist parties and candidates made gains across the continent, but often underperformed the breathless predictions made in the lead up to elections. Geert Wilders in the Netherlands failed to come close to unseating the incumbent Prime Minister. Marine le Pen similarly limped to defeat in the second round of the French Presidential election. And while *AfD* claimed seats in the Bundestag for the first time, Angela Merkel remains in charge. The year of the populist turned out to be somewhat of a flop. Nevertheless, populist parties and candidates have indeed made large strides in recent years, prompting many, myself included, to wonder what lies behind their success. Why have they suddenly risen in prominence now? Who is voting for these parties? And are they a threat to democracy?

Political scientists, however, have long since been preoccupied by the phenomena, studying the rise of populism well before the banner victories of 2016 (Canovan 1981; Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Taggart 2000). That said, there has been a notable uptick in the quantity of this scholarship over the past decade. Countries around the world have been studied,

parties across the ideological spectrum have been studied and voters' attitudes regarding a plethora of different issues have been studied. Notably lacking, however, is a study of populist voting and age. Stranger still given that there is a diverse literature linking age and voting patterns at large. This thesis therefore aims to link populist voting, specifically radical right populist voting, with the wider scholarship on age and voting. The thesis will examine how likely particular age groups are to vote for populist radical right parties, and attempt to explain the results using an age, period and cohort frameworks. Ultimately, I conclude that age itself is the strongest factor in determining a whether young people vote for populist radical right parties.

The most basic question this literature asks is what exactly populism refers to. Some of the fiercest debates amongst populist scholars have been over this seemingly innocuous question. Chapter 1 attempts to navigate these fraught definitional waters. Three main definitions have been proposed: populism as an ideology, populism as a political communication strategy, and populism as a discourse. After carefully evaluating the benefits and detriments of each definition, this thesis concludes that the literature is rightly beginning to coalesce around Moffitt's (Moffitt 2016a) discursive definition.

However, it is by no means smooth sailing from here. While populism as a discourse is the most theoretically sound definition, it also brings with it a host of practical difficulties. For a start, such a definition pointedly excludes parties and candidates, as it is their discourse that is considered to be populist, not the party itself. This makes it rather difficult to study populist parties, given that under a discursive definition there is no such thing, only parties that use populist discourse to a greater or lesser degree. Further, while a discourse definition is easily operationalisable on a small scale, when comparing a large number of parties from around the world the amount of manpower needed to exhaustively code even just manifestos becomes quickly overwhelming. After establishing that using an existing dataset of coded manifestos does not produce accurate results, this thesis resorts to using a methodology established by Inglehart and Norris (2016), who used the Chapel

Hill Expert Survey (CHES) to classify parties as populist or not. While this method is far from ideal, the list of populist parties obtained using it corresponds well to generally accepted populist radical right parties. The chapter thus concludes that while it would be better to have a method that classifies parties in a manner that is fundamentally discursive rather than ideological, the benefits of a systematic, transparent method of classifying parties, as opposed to an *ad hoc* list of parties simply defined to be populist by the author, is worth this price of admission.

With our list of populist radical right parties established, Chapter 2 moves to the meat of the thesis: establishing the link between age and populist radical right voting. By using the all seven waves of the European Social Survey (ESS), the sample was large enough that we can break down even small portions of the total survey into individual ages or years of birth and retain statistical accuracy. Linking the CHES survey data to the set of populist radical right parties that were identified in Chapter 1, a plot of the percentage of voters in each age or year of birth who voted for a populist radical right party can be drawn. This revealed the surprising finding that it is younger voters who are voting for populist radical right parties at the highest rates, with the oldest voters being the least likely to support these parties. As this was a surprising result, the data was broken down by country to check for outliers that could be skewing the overall result. The chapter concludes that while the country by country data is mixed, there are enough countries that follow the trend of younger voters supporting populist radical right parties at higher levels than other age groups that it is reasonable to say that this trend is not driven by a statistical outlier; across the countries covered, young voters on the whole really do vote for populist radical right parties at a higher rate than the other age groups.

Chapter 3 investigates why the two major theories of populist voting fail to predict this outcome. The first theory, which hypothesises that the populist vote is driven by a cultural backlash against the rise of post-material values, predicts that older voters ought to be the most likely to vote for populist parties. The second theory, arguing that the populist

vote is instead driven by an economic backlash led by the losers of globalisation, while somewhat less explicit about which ages it predicts ought to vote for populist parties, heavily implies that the losers of globalisation are older men. Other potential explanations, such as authoritarian personalities and a dissatisfaction with domestic governance, also fail to explain why younger voters are more likely to vote for populist candidates. In the end, the solution is hiding in plain sight all along: age itself is the variable of interest. The remainder of the chapter pieces together how age, treated on its own rather than as part of a broader hypothesis, can solve our puzzle. Young voters have not learnt the habit of voting yet, so they turn out at much lower rates. Even with all else equal, a lower turnout by definition means that those who actually do vote are the most motivated voters. This leads to a higher proportion of radical voters in one direction or another. On top of this, there is also evidence that younger people are psychologically less conservative and thus more likely to take a risk on a non-mainstream party. Finally, populist parties have proven to be savvy with social media, allowing them to boost turnout even among young voters. Post-material values do not overcome this perfect storm, which shows that the higher proportion of young populist voters is mainly driven by an age effect, rather than either period or cohort effects.

The thesis concludes with some broader thoughts about linking these two literatures together. There are a number of significant challenges that need to be overcome in order to facilitate meaningful dialogue between the two bodies of work. First, a database utilising a discursive definition of populism needs to be established in order to improve the ability to accurately identify populist parties as a whole, rather than just populist radical right parties. Second, some promising direct measurements of populist attitudes have been trialled on a small scale and proven to be quite successful, these variables ought to be included in future large-scale surveys like the ESS. Finally, given that the next wave of ESS is due to be released imminently, I finish with a prediction for what it ought to look like if this thesis is correct.

Chapter 1

What is Populism?

Before we can dive into an analysis of populist voters, it would be helpful to have a firm handle on exactly what we mean by the term 'populism'. This, however, is no trivial task. Political actors spanning a wide ideological spectrum have been labelled populists, from Hugo Chavez in Venezuela to Marine le Pen in France. In recent times, an avalanche of stories in mainstream media have used the term for almost anything vaguely anti-elitist, threatening to stretch its usage to the point of meaninglessness.

Political scientists too have long been preoccupied by the phenomena of populism, but even (or perhaps especially) amongst the academy there is disagreement over what exactly populism ought to refer to. Indeed, the problem of defining populism has so vexed political scientists that it has now reached the point that "it has become common to acknowledge the acknowledgement" of its contestability (Moffitt and Tormey 2014, 382). This chapter will identify the main contours of the debate, outlining definitions that treat populism as an ideology, as a strategy and as a discourse, as well as expanding on their respective strengths and weaknesses. I'll conclude that the literature is correctly beginning to converge to a definition that treats populism as a discourse.

Next, this chapter will explain the difficulties in operationalising such a definition in any sort of large scale manner. There are questions surrounding which documents should

be used, how parties change over time, and most pressingly the fact that grading parties around the world on such a scale would be a monumental undertaking. Absent a small army of researchers to hand code manifestos and discourse around the world, another solution is required. There are two main datasets that have already done the heavy lifting of comparing many parties around the world: the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the Manifesto Project. The remainder of the chapter demonstrates how, by using the appropriate variables, parties can be scored on both an economic and cultural dimension, with those scoring highly on the cultural dimension classed as populist radical right parties. After comparing the results from the two datasets, I conclude that despite the appealing methodology employed by the Manifesto Project, the results obtained from the CHES data more consistently classified parties that are known to be populist radical right parties correctly. The CHES methodology was not able to identify radical left populist parties, and so this thesis focuses on the populist radical right from this point forward. Despite its shortcomings, using the CHES dataset is currently the best way to systematically identify populist radical right parties. At the conclusion of the chapter, we have a method that adequately identifies these parties, and we will have used this method to create a list of populist radical right parties that will be used throughout the rest of the thesis (Appendix A.1).

1.1 Defining populism

The first and most vexed question in the literature surrounding populism is how it ought to be defined. Until relatively recently, most of the scholarship on populism was largely regional. Academics focused on populist actors in their region of choice, most often Western Europe (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2008; Mudde 2007; Norris 2005), Latin America (Hawkins 2009) or North America (Bonikowski and Gidron 2016b; Kazin 1995; Williamson, Skocpol, and Coggin 2011). This approach has generated many important findings, but because definitions were generally adopted to suit a particular region, consensus toward

adopting a generalisable definition of populism has proved elusive. This has begun to change in recent times, with various attempts being made to combine these regional literatures (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, 2013; Torre 2015). Nevertheless, while the core feature of populism is mostly agreed upon, namely the concept of pitting 'the people' against 'the elite,' there are three notable strands of thought as to how populism itself ought to be defined (Gidron and Bonikowski 2013).

1.1.1 As an ideology

The first approach defines populism on the basis of ideology. This is the dominant view amongst the European populist literature, and up until recently was also the most widely adopted definition for comparative work. Mudde, one of the main exponents of this definition, defines populism as:

> "a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous 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" (Mudde 2004, 543)

This minimal definition of populism is convenient for comparativist work, because there is no room for the regional bias that can afflict other definitions. The definition also explicitly incorporates Freeden's (1998, 2004) concept of a 'thin-centred' ideology, which bears some explaining. While 'thick' ideologies provide consistent answers to a wide spectrum of important political questions, 'thin' ideologies are restricted to only a few core concepts. In this case, populism as an ideology can provide consistent answers to the validity of categorising society into two antagonistic groups ("the pure people" and "the corrupt elite"), but it cannot consistently answer other political questions, like how we ought to redistribute income fairly. For these questions, populism necessarily attaches itself to other, thicker ideologies, such as socialism or nationalism.

Several scholars have taken umbrage with this ideological definition. Moffitt (2016a) argues that while in theory such a definition provides conceptual clarity, in practice its status as the de-facto consensus definition has meant that it has been used sloppily. Rather than allowing it to function as a stand-alone definition, he argues that some authors add elements to it in order to suit their research ends. This presents two problems. Firstly, it means that in reality some uses of this definition blur into the other definitions discussed below, particularly populism as a discourse. Secondly, if every time this definition is adopted extra elements need to be added by scholars in order to make it usable, this suggests a definition that is so minimal as to be redundant. Finally, Moffitt argues that while proponents of other 'thin' ideologies have made a conscious effort to intellectually thicken and expand them, no such attempt has been made by proponents of populism (Stanley 2008).

This argument is taken further by Aslanidis (2016), who lays waste to the entire concept of a 'thin-ideology' by showing that basically any political notion could be classified as a 'thin-ideology' as it is defined by Freeden. A small set of core concepts is needed to define basically anything, and if this small set of core concepts does not add up to a comprehensive policy platform, then *voilà*, according to Freeden we have a thin ideology. In fact, any of the central tenants of populism, such as anti-elitism, could themselves be classed as a 'thin-ideology.' Therefore, talking of 'populist' parties as a coherent entity while using this definition is difficult if not impossible. Therefore, it is hard to escape the conclusion that defining populism as an ideology is unworkable, or at the very least it is a concept so vague as to be useless.

1.1.2 As a political communication strategy

A second definition posits that populism should instead be defined by how leaders communicate with their followers, arguing that the directness of this communication is what ought to define populism. This definition has gained particular traction in Latin America,

with Weyland expressing its most widespread enunciation by defining populism as:

> "a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers" (Weyland 2001, 14)

A close variant of this definition is put forward by Taggart (1995), who argued that populism was distinct in its centralised structure, led by a charismatic leader wielding far more control over the party than is the case in other, non-populist parties.

Both definitions are effectively critiqued by Moffitt (2016a, 20–21), who provides three reasons why we ought to discount this centralised definition. Firstly, he argues that many mainstream political parties and other movements also communicate with their supporters directly, and as such this definition unwittingly includes many actors that we don't particularly want to define as populist. Secondly, by citing examples of commonly acknowledged populist parties with strong institutions and organisations, such as *Front National* in France and *PVV* in the Netherlands, he shows that this definition may well exclude parties that we absolutely *do* want to include in our definition of populist. Moreover, there are also examples of populist movements being mobilised without the presence of a strong, charismatic leader at the helm, such as the American People's Party (Pauwels 2011), so again it's not clear that this centralised leadership style is the defining feature of populism. Finally, he points out that this definition leaves out the one thing that basically everyone else agrees is axiomatic of populism, namely reference to 'the people.' Given these convincing reasons, I agree with Moffitt that defining populism as a political communication strategy is also flawed.

1.1.3 As a discourse

A final approach is to define populism as a discourse, an approach that has gained so much traction over the last few years that Moffitt (2016b) has declared a 'performative

turn' in the literature. Treating populism as a discourse effectively sheds the ideology section of Mudde's definition, with Aslanidis (2016, 96) defining populism as an "anti-elite discourse in the name of the sovereign People." Other authors use different terms with slightly different emphasises. Moffitt (2016a) uses the term 'political style,' Bonikowski and Gidron (2016b) use 'discursive strategy' and Aslanidis (2016) uses 'discursive frame.' The common element is that they all view populism not as an ideology but as "something that is done, embodied and enacted" Moffitt (2016b, 53).

The roots of a discursive definition of populism lie with Laclau (2005), who pioneered the attempt to shed definitions of populism of all unnecessary baggage and was wary of generalising a definition from regional cases. Other scholars have built on this base, notably Moffitt (2016a), who identifies three characteristics of populism as a style: appealing to 'the people' in opposition to 'the elite, a disregard for political norms by using 'bad manners,' and the performance of a crisis or threat (Moffitt 2015). Aslanidis (2016) and Bonikowski and Gidron (2016a) both argue for discursive definitions of populism as the most useful and appropriate, and while they use slightly different definitions and terminology, they agree on the core idea: the message of a political actor is populist, rather than the actor themselves.

This approach has several benefits. First, by focusing on what political actors say and do rather than what they believe, a discursive approach is much easier to operationalise. Treating populism as a discourse allows scholars to study speeches and manifestos not as a proxy for ideology, but as what populism actually is. Aslanidis (2016, 96–97) argues that many of the erstwhile subscribers to Mudde's ideological definition already tacitly accept a discourse theory, given most quantitative scholarship does not tend to attempt a direct measure of ideology, but instead has found a close reading of texts a worthy way of classifying populist actors. Textual analysis has the secondary advantage of allowing for gradations of populism. While ideological and strategic definitions tend to view political actors in a binary of populist or not populist, a discourse approach accommodates a

range of styles being more or less populist. A wealth of quantitative scholarship has already used textual analysis, a fundamentally discursive technique. This has necessarily produced results in which populism is measured to be continuous rather than discrete due to discourse analysis techniques whereby frequency of terms is counted, with higher counts indicating more populist discourse (Bernhard, Kriesi, and Weber 2015; Hawkins 2009; Oliver and Rahn 2016; Rooduijn, Lange, and Brug 2014).

As such, we find that defining populism as a discursive technique, rather than an ideology or a communication style, is the most appropriate way to think about what the concept actually is.

1.2 Difficulties in using a discourse definition

While a definition centred around populist discourse is the most theoretically satisfying, actually implementing it for a study of those who vote for populist parties is difficult. At the most basic level, such a definition says that there is really no such thing as a populist party, only populist discourse. Clearly, by this definition it is somewhat of a misnomer to even refer to populist parties, given that any candidate or party can use populist rhetoric. We thus immediately run into the problem that while we are defining populism as discourse, people do not vote for speeches and manifestos, they vote for candidates and parties. That vote might be (and probably is) motivated by the discourse these parties use, but determining exactly how much certain instances of populist rhetoric are factored into any given voter's decision to vote for a particular party is probably an epistemologically unsolvable problem. At the end of the day, the most fundamental unit of measurement in political science is voting, and happily we have an abundance of voting data. We therefore need to bridge the divide between a definition of populism as a discourse and people who vote for parties which repeatedly use that populist discourse. Put simply, we need find a way to grade political parties on a scale of how often they use populist rhetoric in their

speeches and manifestos. Populist parties could therefore be defined as parties that use populist discourse consistently rather than fleetingly, parties where populist discourse is central to their existence.

Unsurprisingly, this task is not straightforward. Attempting to grade political parties on a populist scale, or even as a dichotomous scale of populist party or not, is to enter another scholarly minefield. To begin with, how often do political parties need to use populist discourse before they ought to be considered populist parties? Moreover, presumably the amount of populist rhetoric used can vary considerably across both time and platform. With regard to time, some parties may use more populist discourse in one election campaign compared to others that they have contested. There is no requirement for political parties to be consistent over time, so it is not unreasonable to think that parties can and do change the amount of populist rhetoric used over time (Stanley 2008). Kessel (2014) provides one such example, charting the change of the British National Party (BNP) from an explicitly neo-fascist party when it was founded to a radical right populist party now. Fascism and populism can be thought of as mutually exclusive ideas; the former is anti-democratic in advocating for a totalitarian state, while the latter cites the "will of the people" as justifying their legitimacy (Canovan 1999). Should scholars consider this shift a legitimate change, or is the BNP still a neo-fascist party that has made overtures toward populism for the sake of electoral legitimacy? Does the fact the BNP cannot be considered to be a consistently populist party; indeed it was the opposite of populist at its founding; matter for its definition as one now?

Party change over time is one thing, but simultaneous differences in party messaging between platforms further muddies the water of how to classify parties. Parties can pitch manifestos at a very different audience to speeches and interviews. Manifestos are normally quite rigid documents that outline specific policy proposals, and as such offer a more limited opportunity to address the people or decry elites when compared to speeches (Pauwels 2011). Should we consider one form of communication as more defining of

populist discourse than another? How should that judgement call be made? Even beyond this external facing literature, Mudde (2000) emphasises the importance of reviewing internal party documents, arguing that material aimed at party members is less likely to self-censor and thus more likely to be representative of the actual views of a party than externally facing literature that is aimed at the whole electorate. One last wrinkle can be added by considering divisions within parties. While Silvio Berlusconi often used populist rhetoric, the party he led, *Forza Italia*, was more muted. There was a clear discrepancy between the official documentation of the party and the discourse engaged in by its leader (Kessel 2014). Such problems get to the heart of the difficulty of exactly how to go about measuring the populist rhetoric of parties. These problems are only exacerbated as parties form alliances or merge with other parties. In short, the amount of populist rhetoric a party uses can change throughout time, and even within a party there can be a variety of different types of material to select between that will give different results as to how populist that party's discourse has been. All of this means that consistency in grading the populist character of rhetoric used by parties is incredibly difficult.

Even supposing the above problems can be worked through in such a way that we could devise a systematic way to analyse a corpus of texts put out by a party, ascertaining exactly how populist the discourse they use is, there are still a litany of practical problems that a discursive definition runs into. Meticulously combing through manifestos and speeches is incredibly labour intensive and thus expensive. In order to be comparative, materials would have to be read and coded for a huge amount of parties. This material would be in a myriad of different languages from around the world, all of which would need to be coded consistently with each other. Suffice to say, all of this is a mammoth task, though several scholars have attempted to undertake it. Rooduijn, Lange, and Brug (2014) look at the manifestos of 11 populist parties over a number of different elections, comparing them to more mainstream parties. However, rather than using this analysis to classify the degree to which a party was populist, they instead proceeded from the standpoint that they already knew which parties were populist (drawing on prior scholarship from country

experts) and attempted to find out whether these parties had influenced the manifestos of mainstream parties. This led to some strange results, such as parties that they had declared to be mainstream (such as the *Liberal Democrats* in the UK) having more populist manifestos than parties they declared to be populist (such as *Die Linke* in Germany and *Lega Nord* in Italy). Pauwels (2011) uses quantitative text analysis to measure populist discourse of parties in Belgium, finding that internally oriented literature is more populist than externally oriented literature. This method is less labour intensive but possibly less reliable given that a computer "does not interpret text units, [so] one should also be aware that the method either overestimates or underestimates the degree of populism" (Pauwels 2011, 114). While it seems to work reasonably well in Belgium, it is both unproven in any other context as well as suffering from many of the difficulties described earlier, such as a lack of clarity over what documents ought to be used and why, party positions that change over time, etc.

It is worth noting that this debate can become increasingly confusing given that the word populism is now being used to simultaneously describe two different phenomena. In the first instance, we are talking about populist discourse. In the second sense, we are describing populist parties, who meet some criteria whereby they use populist discourse often enough that we call them populist parties. To be clear, this second sense is essentially a sorting term; it is still discourse that is populist rather than parties, but we are referring to populist parties as a term of convenience rather than having to constantly refer to parties that regularly use populist discourse, a more accurate but also more cumbersome term. This distinction is rarely made in the literature (partly because many authors use Mudde's (2004) 'thin-ideology' definition of populism), so it is worth clarifying how the term populism is used in the paper going forward.

To sum up, there is no consensus as to how one should to use a discursive definition of populism. There have been a few attempts to classify parties as populist or otherwise using their manifestos and rhetoric, but these attempts have generally been limited in the

number of parties they cover because of the vast amount of resources needed to hand code parties from around the world. Your humble author lacked the resources to undertake such a project from scratch, and so necessarily sought other classification methodologies.

1.3 Why does getting the definition right matter?

At this point, it can be tempting to throw one's hands in the air and give up on the entire slippery concept of populism. At the very least, given that we have a fairly good idea of roughly what characterises populism as distinctive (an invocation of the pure people against a corrupt elite), why do we need to work so hard to get this definition exactly right? Surely it is a waste of time for reams of scholarship to be devoted to the arcane minutiae of definitional debates, when practical scholarship studying populism can continue unencumbered. Moreover, country specialists from around the world can do the heavy lifting of classifying which parties are populist or not, and comparative scholars can build on their work. Why go to so much trouble for a more widespread definition when we could just accept their opinion for which parties are populist and which are not?

Firstly, a piecemeal approach to key theories fundamentally undermines the legitimacy of social science research. It is incumbent on researchers to clearly define exactly what the phenomena under study *is* so that we can also define what it is *not*. Without a clear definition, it becomes impossible to falsify any theories we might have relating to populism, because we could simply change what we include as populism on the fly. Abdicating the responsibility for clearly delineating between what is and isn't populism undercuts the whole basis of the scientific method.

There are also more practical reasons to abhor this 'solution'. For a start, country specialists often disagree with each other. This is particularly relevant when we are talking about populism, which is almost always used as a pejorative term. Rarely do any political candidates refer to themselves as populist, instead they are normally branded populist by

those who disagree with them. Populist parties are easy villains, peddling rhetoric that pits communities against each other. Most academics disagree with their agenda and so study them and what drives their support as a logical first step in making sure that people don't fall for their toxic message. This agenda is often explicit, with journal articles and books recommending various methods for dealing with populist parties and voters such that 'the problem' does not get worse (Bale 2012). Therefore, defining a party as populist often carries a normative baggage. Aslanidis (2016, 94–95) illustrates a rather extreme example of this, whereby scholars use largely *ad hoc* reasons in order to justify defining either the Tea Party or the Occupy movement in the US as populist. Urbinati (2014, 130) classifies the Tea Party as populist while preferring the term 'popular' for the Occupy movement, ostensibly on the grounds that Occupy was more of a protest movement than the Tea Party, which she contends sought to take over the Republican party and thus wasn't a protest so much as a concerted attempt at gaining power. On the other hand, Postel (2012a) classifies the Occupy movement as 'strikingly populist,' while arguing that the Tea Party is better thought of as conservative than populist (Postel 2012b). The stakes of calling a party populist are somewhat lowered by treating populism as a discourse, because it places all parties on a scale of how much populist rhetoric they use. This makes it harder to simply define parties that one disagrees with as populist while ignoring populist discourse from other more agreeable parties, it is still clear that there will be disagreements over who ought to be considered a populist party.

1.4 Which parties are populist?

This brings us back to our original problem; an objective, quantifiable, consistent and repeatable classification method is required in order to move away from the current method of largely taking country expert's word for which parties are populist. How are we going to go about that task? There are two main datasets that attempt to classify parties around the world on various metrics, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Bakker et al.

2015; Polk et al. 2017) and the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al. 2017) (previously known as the Comparative Manifesto Project). Neither explicitly code for populism, and so the challenge is to figure out a way to use the variables they do measure to try and come up with a systematic way to classify a party as populist or not.

1.4.1 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES)

To begin with, the CHES data will be looked at. This is a dataset where European country experts have been asked to rate a party's stance across a number of different policy and ideological variables. The survey has been conducted in 5 waves since 1999, with the most recent wave occurring in 2014. All in all, the survey covers 31 countries, consisting of all EU member states as well as Turkey, Switzerland and Norway. The range of variables covered was expanded in 2006, so only data from the three most recent waves (2006, 2010 & 2014) has been used. In cases where parties were covered in multiple waves the most recent data was used. This leaves a list of 332 parties that have been rated by country experts on a plethora of different variables. From here, we need to figure out which of these variables are useful to us. Inglehart and Norris (2016) used the 2014 CHES data and found that 13 variables neatly correspond to two separate cleavages: four can be reduced to an economic cleavage and nine can be reduced to a cultural cleavage. I've attempted to replicate their results by first performing a factor analysis using a varimax rotation, with Table 1.1 showing the loadings on each variable. The high loadings on each of the variables combined with their neat split into two corresponding factors demonstrates the legitimacy of reducing these thirteen variables down to two underlying factors. The loadings are slightly different to those obtained by Inglehart and Norris (2016) because more waves from the CHES dataset were used, but the basic story is the same.

The variables summed to create the populism factor have been chosen to closely reflect ideological leanings associated with right wing populism. They have to do with immigration, as scapegoating of immigrants is a common tactic among populist parties to create an

Table 1.1: Factor analysis of CHES variables

CHES Variable Name	Description	Cultural Cleavage	Economic Cleavage
galtan	Favour traditional values	0.946	
sociallifestyle	Opposes liberal social lifestyles	0.918	
nationalism	Promote nationalism	0.897	
civlib_laworder	Favours tough law and order	0.901	
multiculturalism	Against multiculturalism on immigrants	0.874	
immigrate_policy	Against immigration	0.871	
ethnic_minorities	Opposes rights for ethnic minorities	0.826	
religious_principle	Supports religious principles in politics	0.793	
urban_rural	Supports rural interests	0.728	
deregulation	Favours market deregulation		0.973
econ_interven	Opposed to state economic intervention		0.959
redistribution	Opposed to wealth redistribution		0.924
spendvtax	Favour cuts in taxes and services		0.935

other that is distinct from the pure people (Ivarsflaten 2008; Mughan and Paxton 2006). A tendency toward nationalism was also included for similar reasons. All of the variables have been rated by the experts on a 1-10 scale, so a simple mean of the nine and four variables was taken to give us the populist and economic factor scores respectively. Each of the means were then multiplied by 10 to give us a result for each party on a standardised scale out of 100 for both an economic and populist dimension. Choosing the cut-off for where we consider a party to be populist is necessarily arbitrary, but in this analysis it has been chosen such that it most closely matches the populist party list that Inglehart and Norris (2016) found. All in all, 50 parties are classified as populist, a full list of which can be found in the Appendix (see A.1) along with their respective scores on each of the factors and their most recent election result where available. The results are summarised in Figure 1.1, which plots every party analysed on both the economic and populist scale. Populist parties are coloured in red and are at the top of the graph, corresponding to the higher cultural cleavage scores.

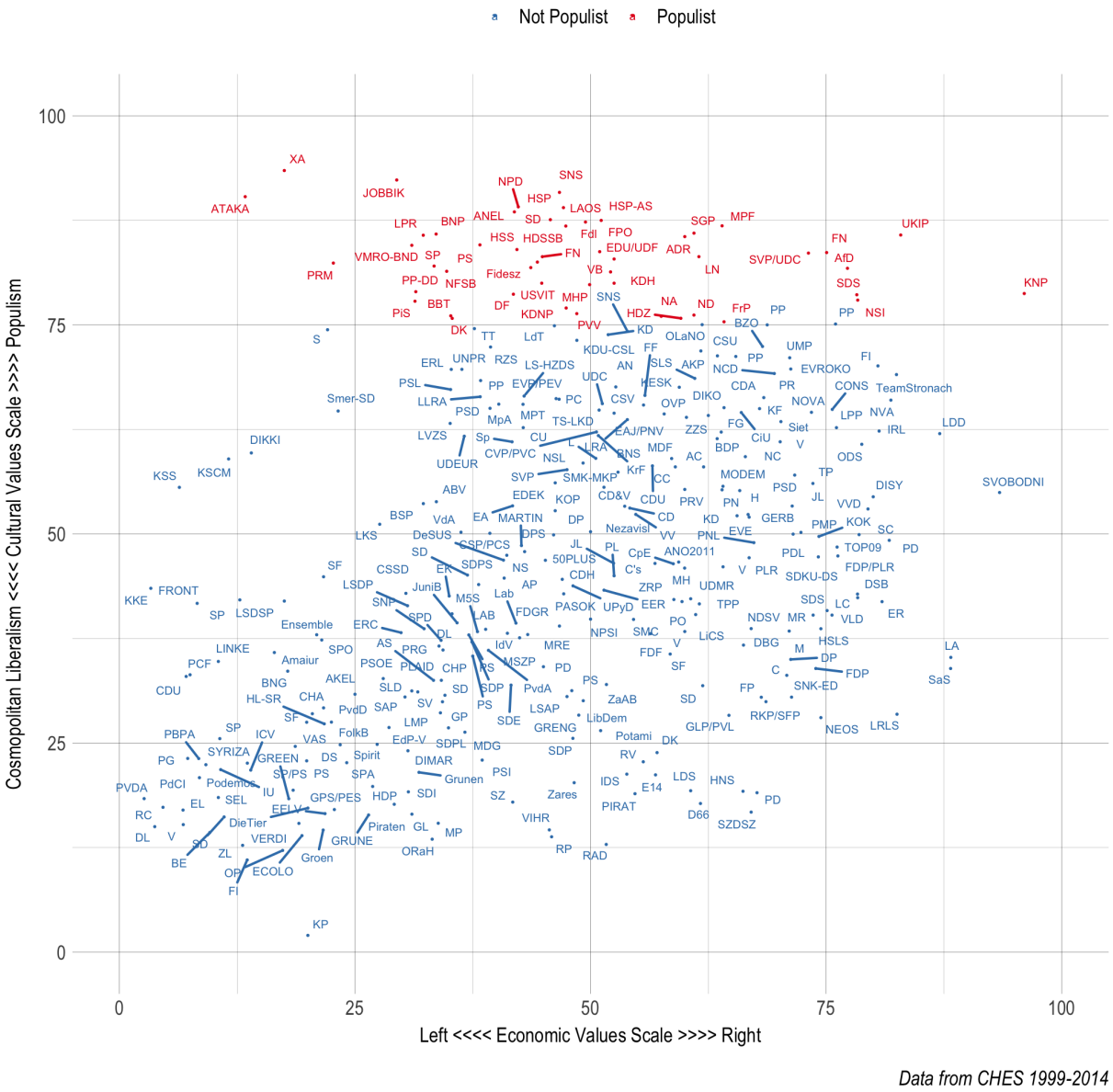

Figure 1.1: Classification of European Parties

1.4.1.1 Strengths and Weaknesses

Reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of this method, it's important to examine exactly which parties have been included and which have not. The main strength of this method of classifying parties lies in its transparency and consistency. There is no *ad hoc* inclusion of some parties over others, no subjective justification that some parties are more inclined to populism over others. There is a clear rationale behind which variables have been used to classify parties, and a clear list of parties that have been classified as populist. Even if one disagrees with the method, there is no ambiguity over how the classification has occurred. Secondly, the efficacy of this quantitative methodology is corroborated by the qualitative. In other words, the parties that are classified as populist largely correspond to the parties that are generally acknowledged to be populist parties. Nearly all of the parties that Mudde (2007, 44) includes as the main populist radical right parties are classified as such by this method, with the only exceptions being parties that have ceased to be in competitive electoral existence since his book was published (namely *MIEP* in Hungary and *Die Republikaner* in Germany). Inglehart and Norris (2016) also cross-referenced their variables with another expert survey conducted by Immerzeel, Lubbers, and Coffé (2013) and found a good correlation for both factors. Therefore, a second strength of this method is its ability to accurately capture parties that we already think of as populist.

This leads us neatly to an overview of how Inglehart and Norris (2016) treat the edge cases of populist parties. It is surely a minimal requirement that any method of classifying populist parties manages to include such canonical cases as *FN* in France or *FPÖ* in Austria; much more interesting is which of the more controversial cases are included. The first thing to note is that radical left-wing parties that are often branded as populist are not included. *Syriza* in Greece, *Podemos* in Spain and *M5S* in Italy all score low on this populist scale, and none are classified as populist parties. This is a direct consequence of the variables that have been used to classify populism, which include opposing liberal lifestyles and favouring traditional values. These are designed to capture a traditional, conservative

sentiment, and as such are excellent at capturing the parties that fall under the banner of the populist radical right, in Mudde's (2007) terminology. While Inglehart and Norris (2016) do talk of the populist-left and the populist-right, they are exclusively talking about left wing in an economic sense. Parties such as *Ataka* in Bulgaria, *Golden Dawn* in Greece and *Jobbik* in Hungary are the prototypical populist-left parties under this conception, espousing extreme nationalistic and xenophobic positions while also being critical of capitalism. Owing to where we have chosen the cut-off value, a few parties commonly thought of as populist radical right parties also narrowly miss the cut. Both *BZÖ* in Austria and *LDD* in Belgium are often cited as populist parties, but both fall slightly short of the required value using this method and thus are not included.

Perhaps the most obvious weakness of this method is its explicit reliance on ideology to grade parties. This is despite concluding earlier that a discursive definition of populism was the most appropriate. The ideological emphasis is reflected in the results, with parties often referred to as populist on the left scoring very low on the populist scale, but populist radical right parties being well identified. As such, it is better to think of the scale as a method of identifying populist radical right parties, rather than populist parties overall. As this thesis is focused on populist radical right parties and their voters, this is less of a concern here, but is worth noting as a limitation for more widespread usage. It may well be the case that while populism as a whole is best defined as a discourse, what is distinctive about the populist radical right is a populist discourse paired with a more specific ideology that CHES data can help us identify.

There are other weaknesses too. As discussed earlier, country experts frequently disagree over the classification of parties, and CHES is simply a survey of country experts. This is mitigated somewhat by the fact that multiple expert responses are collected and aggregated, thereby reflecting the consensus of country experts and reducing the effect of those experts with controversial opinions. Nevertheless, the fact that we obtain relevant (?) quantitative scores for each party should not distract from the fact that these scores are obtained by

the entirely subjective (if well informed) means of asking experts what they think. Finally, the CHES dataset only covers parties in Europe, limiting its usefulness for worldwide comparative work.

1.4.2 Manifesto Project

In light of these weaknesses, let's turn to the second large scale source of data on parties, the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al. 2017). This, as the name suggests, examines the electoral manifestos and other related materials of parties, coding based on how often certain topics are mentioned. Jungar and Jupskås (2014) uses this data to categorise populist radical right parties in Scandinavia on economic and populist dimensions in a similar manner to Inglehart and Norris (2016). The advantages of using data from the Manifesto Project are numerous. It covers parties from around the world, rather than just from Europe. It also spans a longer time-period, with coded manifestos from as far back as 1920. Most importantly, using manifestos is directly in line with our preferred discursive definition of populism.

In order to compare the two methods of classification, the Manifesto Project data was restricted to only parties that have a match in the CHES dataset. Parties are plotted in Figure 1.2 on an economic and populist scale using the variables identified by Jungar and Jupskås (2014), which measure what percentage of the manifesto was used to write either for or against populist causes, and similarly for the left or right wing economic variable. As such, the scale runs from -100 to 100, with -100 meaning the whole manifesto was against populist causes and 100 meaning the whole manifesto was for them. Parties have also been coloured according to whether they were previously classified as populist in the CHES dataset. As parties take a much smaller range of values and are thus more tightly clustered using these measures, it was not possible to label all of them. In order to highlight the differences in outcomes between the CHES and Manifesto Project results, political parties have been labelled that were classed as populist by the CHES data but

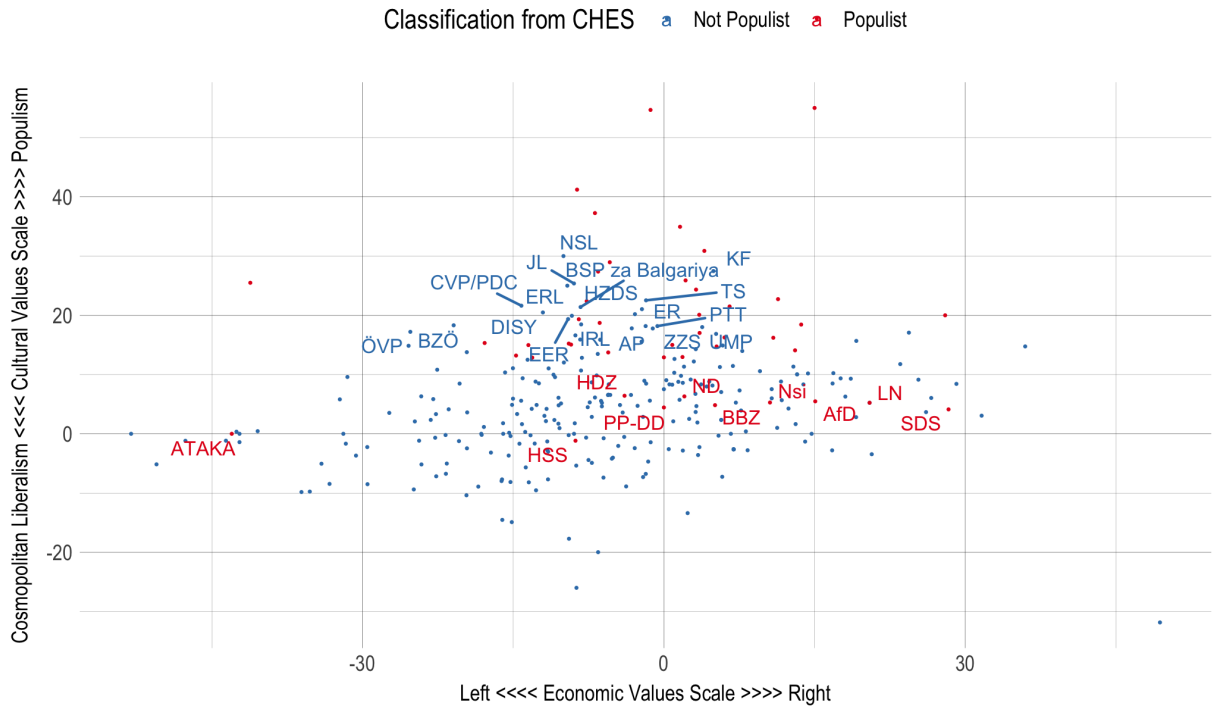

Figure 1.2: Classification of European Parties

scored lowly on the populist scale using the Manifesto Project data, as well as parties that scored highly but were not classified as populist by CHES.

To further compare and contrast both datasets and methods, the Manifesto Project populist score have been rescaled to a 0-100 scale, then each party plotted by their populist scores from the CHES data against the scores from the Manifesto data (Figure 1.3). Also included is a simple linear regression showing the relationship between the two scores, with some of the parties that have the highest absolute residuals from this linear regression labelled. Finally, I've plotted the residuals themselves, with the same parties labelled (Figure 1.4).

Looking at these comparisons, it becomes clear that the Manifesto Project populism score is worse at identifying populist radical right parties than the CHES score. Figure 1.2 shows several widely accepted populist parties, including *Ataka* in Bulgaria, *AfD* in Germany and Lega Nord in Italy, with populist scores close to the mean of all parties. This difference is even more stark in Figure 1.4, where we can see that the parties rated higher by CHES

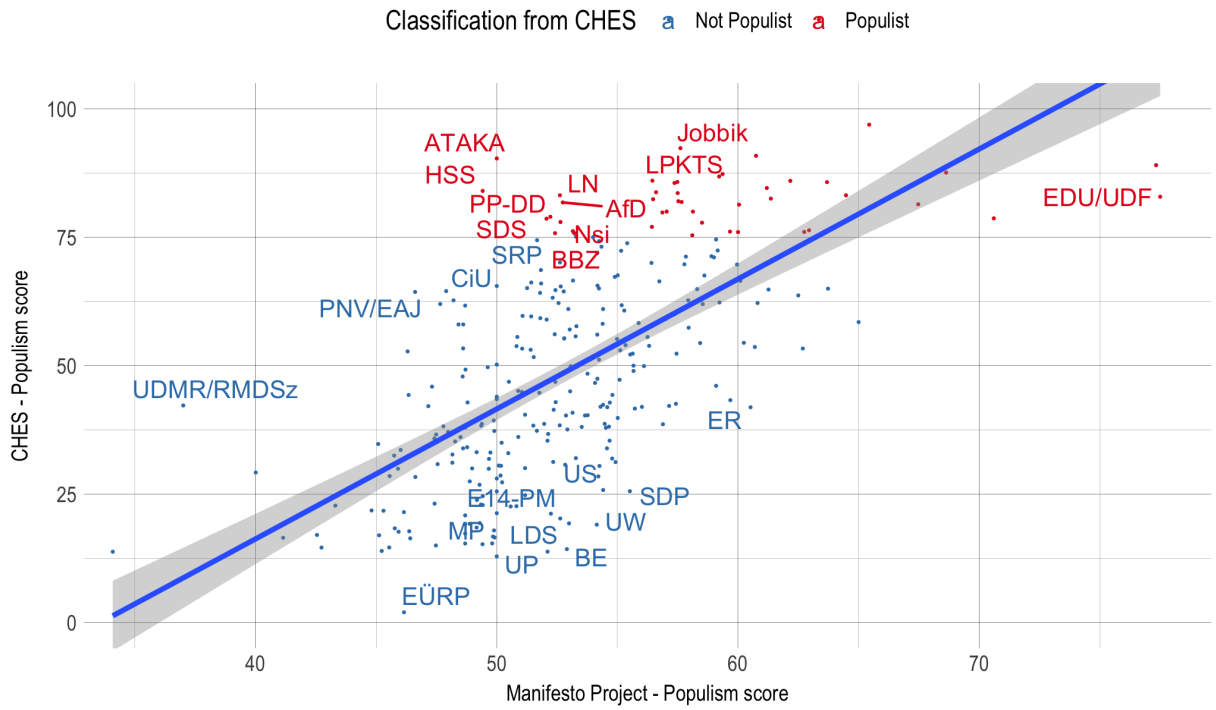

Figure 1.3: Significant differences in how the two methods classify parties

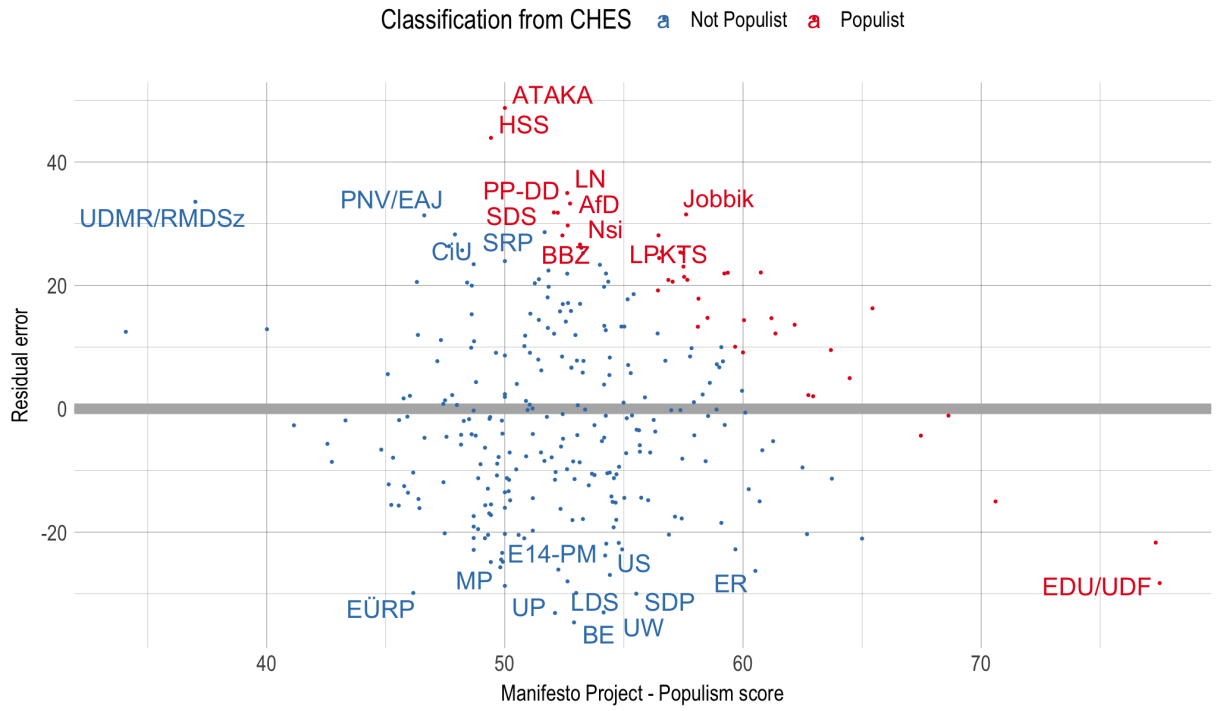

Figure 1.4: Above 0 means a party's CHES populism score is higher (more populist) than expected given its score from the Manifesto Project

include other populist parties, such as *Jobbik* in Hungary and the *People's Party – Dan Diaconescu* in Romania. Parties that are rated as higher by the Manifesto Project metric include more left-leaning parties, such as the *Left Bloc* in Portugal and the *Green Party* in Sweden. Full details of the outlying residuals can be found in the Appendix (Table B.1), but it is reasonable to argue that CHES clearly captures radical right populist parties better than the Manifesto Project.

Why did the Manifesto data fare so much worse? Firstly, while examining electoral manifestos is fundamentally a discursive methodology, the way variables are coded is largely ideological. There is no variable for reference to the people, or for anti-elitism. The variables selected instead tend to be more reflective of traditional conservatism, such as coding for references to 'Traditional Morality' or 'National Way of Life'. This meant that the way the Manifesto data was used to classify parties as populist or not was largely ideological, somewhat undermining the discursive definition of populism that was the reason we were drawn to using electoral manifestos in the first place. This inevitably leads to misclassification; as an example, the Conservatives in Britain were rated as narrowly more populist than UKIP owing to their greater emphasis on 'Law and Order' in their manifesto. Further, Manifesto Project data falls prey to all of the practical problems with a discursive definition, discussed above in 'Difficulties in using a discourse definition'. Manifestos can change drastically from election to election. They can be aimed at a different audience to speeches and other material, and thereby not really reflect the true level of populism espoused by a party. These problems may have contributed to the Manifesto Project populist score being overall less reliable than the CHES score.

1.5 Going forward

Despite its conceptual advantages, it can be seen that using Manifesto Project data does not yield a better classification system, at least for radical right populist parties and using

Jungar's (2014) method. Using CHES data also has a number of issues, as outlined in 'Strengths and Weaknesses', but ultimately the list of populist parties obtained using Inglehart and Norris' (2016) method closely corresponds with other scholarship concerning radical right populist parties, particularly Mudde's (2007) exhaustively sourced list. Going forward, hopefully both the Manifesto Project and the CHES will begin to consider references to the people more directly, thereby improving upon the current best systematic method of using ideology as a proxy for populism. As it stands, using CHES data is useful for identifying parties of the populist radical right, but perhaps less useful for identifying a broader array of populist parties.

Chapter 2

Who is voting for populist radical right parties?

Now that we have identified which parties fall under the banner of populist radical right parties, it is time to turn our eye to who is voting for them. In particular, we want to know if certain political generations or age groups are more likely to vote for populist radical right parties than other age groups. To begin, this chapter will take a quick detour through the literature surrounding generational voting, which brings with it some methodological challenges. From here, I will briefly outline the dataset and methodology used to identify which age groups have been more likely to vote for populist radical right parties. This leads to the main result of this thesis: **contrary to popular belief, young voters are actually more likely to vote for populist parties.** Given the counter-intuitive nature of this result, the underlying data is investigated in order to prove that this result was not driven by statistical outliers. The conclusion still stands in the face of this analysis; younger voters are indeed more likely to vote for populist parties.

2.1 Generational voting

A rich history of scholarship has studied how age influences voting choice. One of the more fundamental concepts in this literature is the concept of political generations. The general idea was proposed by Mannheim's (1952) essay 'The Problem of Generations', where he theorised that political values are formed early in life. When people are young their political views are malleable, but they gradually harden as they get older. The upshot of this dynamic is that people born at a similar time form distinct generations because they share common formative experiences that stay with them for the rest of their lives, which continue to shape their political views long after they have occurred. Other researchers have also concurred that important political views are formed early in life and are somewhat static from then onward (Campbell et al. 1960). However, research involving longitudinal studies gave rise to a disagreement over whether aging itself was a factor (Crittenden 1962), instead of simply Mannheim's generational imprint theory.

Eventually it became clear to researchers that there were three separate factors that influence political views. First, there is aging, with some scholars arguing that older people are naturally more conservative. Second, there are period effects, the short-term factors of the current political climate that influences views. Finally, there are cohort effects, whereby each generation has distinctive political experiences from their youth that they carry through the rest of their lives. Typically, these factors are theorised to interact in some sort of an additive fashion, whereby an individual's political views are completely determined by an aging effect plus a period effect plus a cohort effect. The problem with empirically testing this theory is that with full knowledge of any two factors as well as data about voting patterns, the third factor is also precisely determined. For example, to determine an age effect, one can simply subtract the year born (cohort effect) from the current year (period effect). As such, it is impossible to hold two variables constant without also holding the third constant too, rendering basic regression analysis useless. Therefore, to disentangle the three effects various theoretical assumptions need to be

made. In practice, there is no agreement on what are sensible or empirically grounded assumptions.

Curiously, despite the recent intense focus on what is causing the contemporary rise in populist support, there is very little literature regarding populist voting and age. Many studies are explicit about controlling for it, and as such briefly mention their results regarding age before moving onto whatever thesis that they are actually interested in. Among these studies, there is absolutely no consensus regarding which age groups or cohorts are more likely to be populist voters. Spruyt, Keppens, and Van Droogenbroeck (2016) found age to be "largely irrelevant throughout the entire analysis" (Spruyt, Keppens, and Van Droogenbroeck 2016, 342), concurring with Oesch (2008) who states that "age does not seem strongly to influence RPP [Right-wing Populist Party] support" (Oesch 2008, 359). More studies seem to indicate that age does play a role, but these are split between whether they predict older or younger people are more likely to support populist parties. Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers (2002) found that younger people were "over-represented among extreme right-wing electorates" (Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers 2002, 348), and Bakker, Rooduijn, and Schumacher (2016) concur in the Netherlands, saying that "the young are more likely to vote for the PVV" (Bakker, Rooduijn, and Schumacher 2016, 313). Arzheimer and Carter (2006) also agrees, but adds the caveat that pensioners too are more likely to support extreme right parties, creating a "U-shaped phenomenon" (Arzheimer and Carter 2006, 421). On the other hand, Hawkins, Riding, and Mudde (2012) found that the oldest cohort is "far more likely to be populist than those in the next cohort (Baby Boomers)" (Hawkins, Riding, and Mudde 2012, 23), but only found this effect in one of their models. Inglehart and Norris (2016) found the "populist support in Europe is generally stronger among the older generation" (Inglehart and Norris 2016, 4). In the Brexit referendum, which was clearly characterised by populist rhetoric (Clarke and Newman 2017) and spearheaded by a leader with a history of using populist discourse (Pareschi and Albertini 2015), excluding prior vote history, age was the single best predictive variable of the vote, with older people voting leave at much higher rates. In short, the literature is deeply

confused on the question of which age groups are more likely to vote for populist parties.

None of these studies, however, focus on age. As far as I'm aware, only one paper has been wholly devoted to an even vaguely age-related study of populist voting, looking at whether the fact that young people are likely to vote for the same party as their parents holds up in the case of the Swiss People's Party, a radical right populist party (Coffé and Voorpostel 2010). Therefore, while the literature surrounding age and voting is well-established, and many studies that aim to figure out what drives populist voting take a passing glance at age, there is a significant gap in the literature as to exactly which age groups and generations vote for populist parties.

2.2 Young people are populist voters

To figure out which age groups and generations are voting for the populist parties identified in the last chapter, we need data about which party people have voted for, and how old they were when they did so. The European Social Survey (2014) is a survey that asks a variety of questions about attitudes and voting behaviour to respondents across Europe. It has been run biennially since 2002 with the most recent release of data from 2014, meaning there are 7 waves of data with 331,871 individual respondents. Such a large sample means that we can accurately trace the age profiles of populist party voters even though many of these parties receive quite small vote shares. Respondents were weighted using both post-stratification weighting, which attempts to correct for non-response bias by weighting respondents so that the overall sample matches the composition of the general public in demographics such as age-group, gender, education, and regional distribution, as well as by country weights, which adjusts for the fact that different countries in Europe have different populations, but the sample size in each country is approximately the same. From here, the voting data was recoded such that it matched the CHES dataset. Countries that were not in the CHES dataset as well as non-voters were discarded, leaving us with 171,341

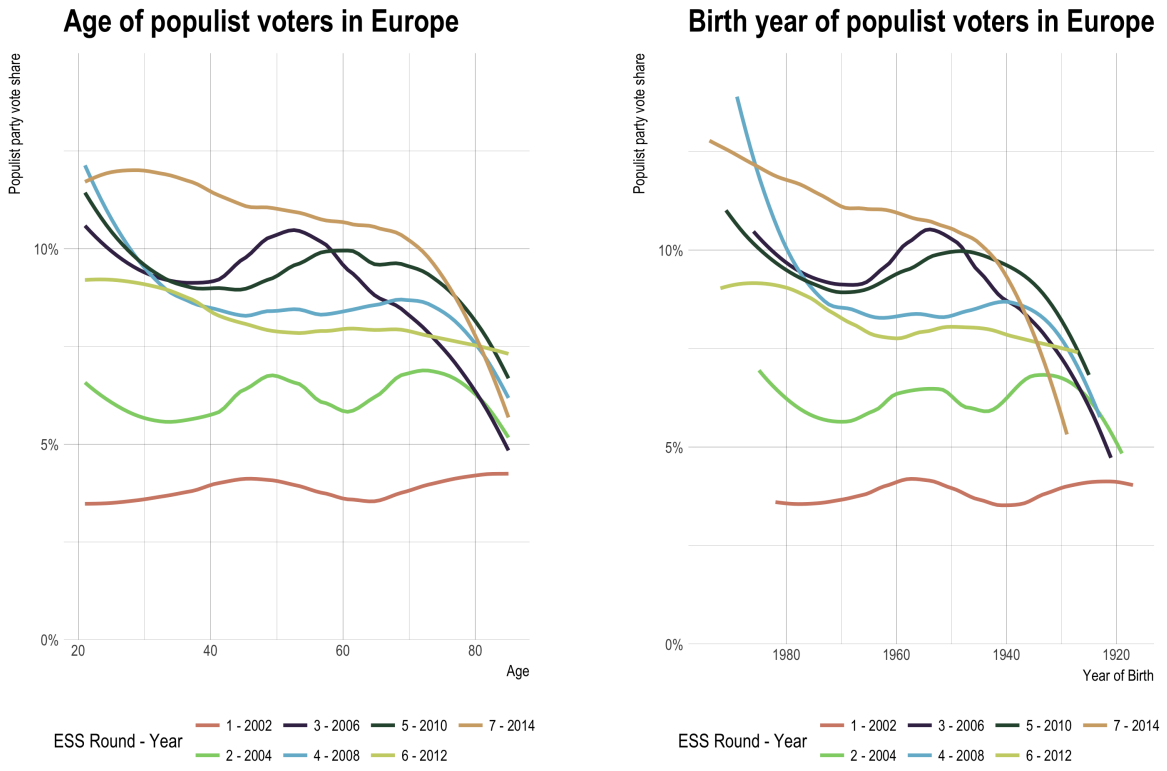

Figure 2.1: Surprisingly, young people vote for populist parties at the highest rate

respondents who both voted and lived in a country covered by CHES. Respondents were then grouped by age and year of birth, with the weighted percentage of people who voted for a populist party calculated for each age and birth year. Finally, a simple locally weighted regression (LOESS) curve was plotted to fit this data for each wave of the ESS, resulting in the main finding of this thesis, Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 shows that young people are more likely to vote for populist parties than older people. In all bar the first two ESS waves the youngest voters are the most likely to vote for populist parties. In all bar the first wave, there is also a drop off of varying intensity in the number of people voting for populist parties starting at around age 70. The graphs clearly demonstrate period effects, especially the notable rise of populist voting in the 21st century. The first ESS wave, conducted in 2001-2002, shows less than 5% of respondents at any age voted for a populist party. By contrast, in the most recent survey, wave 7, almost

15% of the youngest respondents voted for a populist party. Finally, the graphs also show generational effects. At the extreme ends of the age spectrum, it would seem that age is a better predictor of voting patterns, with the youngest and oldest portions of the voting curves lining up better in the age plot than in the year of birth plot. However, the year of birth plot reveals a small bump in the level of populist voting in four of the seven waves for those born in the 1950s, an effect that cannot be observed in the age plot.

The main finding of Figure 2.1 contradicts a number of the previous findings regarding age and populist voting, as discussed above. Particularly striking is that Inglehart and Norris (2016), using similar data, found that older people were more likely to vote for populist parties. As such, it is worth taking a more granular look at the data. Perhaps this finding is driven by one particular country with an overwhelming youth vote for a populist party, an outlier that skews the overall finding. To check for outliers, Figure 2.2 plots populist vote by each of the countries that had a populist party, with all ESS waves combined into one curve in order to maximise sample size. Note that the top row shows countries with a higher populist vote, and thus has a different scale on the y-axis to the other two rows (Norway is plotted on both scales to illustrate the scale difference).

While there are significant differences in trends between the countries, it is also clear that young people voting for populist parties is not isolated to one country. France, Norway, Belgium, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany and Turkey all show a clear trend that younger people are more likely to vote for populist parties. Clearly, the data is not uniform, and there are countries that buck the overall trend. As such, we can conclude that the data is somewhat country specific. Nevertheless, as there is nothing particularly obvious connecting the countries to do share the trend, and because respondents have been weighted to take into account country population, we can conclude that the overall data is valid; this result is not driven by a sole outlying country that has a huge young populist vote. The trend shows up in multiple unrelated countries as well as the overall plot. As such, young voters across Europe *are* more likely to vote for populist parties than

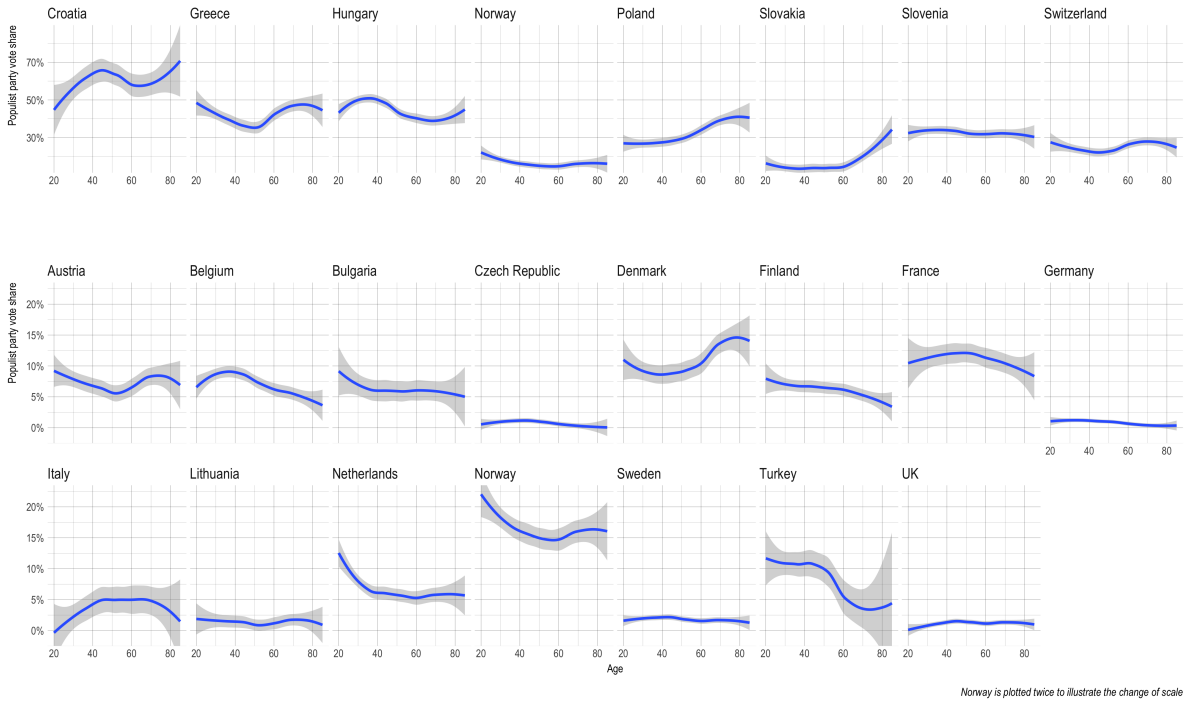

Figure 2.2: Populist voting by country

older voters.

Chapter 3

What drives populist voting?

Given the surprising finding that populist radical right parties are more likely to be supported by young people, we can now turn to the next question: what is driving this support? As previously alluded to, there are a huge number of different theories that purport to explain the rise in populist voting. Broadly, there are two main schools of thought to answer this question, one emphasising economic insecurity and the other pointing to cultural grievances. Unfortunately, neither theory predicts that young cohorts will vote for populist radical right parties at the highest rate. The cultural grievance hypothesis explicitly predicts that young voters ought to be the least likely to vote for radical right populist parties. It is harder to judge the economic insecurity thesis because it does not specify which cohorts are the most economically insecure, but in its most usual enunciation it argues that it is the 'losers of globalisation' who are susceptible to populist voting; older workers that have been laid-off as their jobs are shipped offshore. As such, this theory also fails to predict that young people are more likely to be populist voters. Nevertheless, both theories are examined in depth in order to find out exactly where they went wrong. It concludes that failing to explicitly treat age as a variable is the downfall of these theories. Finally, this chapter examines what might cause age itself to cause young people to vote for populist radical right parties. Study after study shows that voting is a

habit, and the data supports this with young voters having a much lower turnout than any other age group. We therefore conclude that only the most motivated and therefore most extreme young voters actually bother to vote, which naturally results in radical parties of both sides receiving a higher share of the vote than they do with other age groups.

3.1 Cultural Backlash

Perhaps the most dominant thesis for what drives populist radical right voting is that of cultural grievances, which holds that populist voting is mainly driven by a cultural backlash against the rise of progressive values in society. This thesis was first proposed by Inglehart (1977), who advanced the notion of 'the silent revolution,' whereby postmaterial values such as inclusion, environmental protection and equality have all gained greater prominence in recent times. He argues that this prompted a backlash among older generations, who see the erosion of traditional values as detrimental to society and who therefore vote for populist candidates that promise to a return to a society that respects these traditional values.

The crucial idea behind Inglehart's 'silent revolution' is this notion of material and postmaterial values. For most of human history, people have struggled to simply survive. Consequently, they have valued materialism, whereby economic well-being is their most important concern. In this environment, people naturally close ranks to outsiders, and are more accepting of authoritarian leaders as long as they deliver prosperity and security. Contrast this with the generations that have lived their entire lives after WWII, who have enjoyed unprecedented prosperity. In the developed world, it is now a given that people have enough to meet the basics of survival, facilitating the development of postmaterial values. As these younger generations have entered the electorate, postmaterial values began to dominate the political discourse of these developed economies, replacing economic issues in salience. As a result, non-economic issues now dominant the political

scene of advanced economies, with post-war generations free to indulge in progressive causes such as gender equality, LGBTQI rights and environmentalism absent material concerns (Inglehart 1997). On top of the relative prosperity of the post-war generations, more of them have gone to university, opening them up to a group of people with diverse backgrounds and leading them to be even more open-minded as a cohort (Inglehart 1990).

Inglehart (1977) postulates that this changing political landscape triggered a backlash among both the older generation and the economically less secure. As the post-material values of the younger and better educated grow further entrenched, those holding traditional values feel left behind and out of step with the values of their own country. Much of the blame for this feeling has fallen on immigrants, who post-materialists welcome but traditionalists blame for changing the cultural make-up of their country and furthering the erosion of traditional values. There is a wealth of evidence that successful right-wing populist parties invariably draw on immigration to tap into this cultural backlash. Ivarsflaten (2008) finds that populist right parties must invoke grievances surrounding immigration in order to be successful, while Mughan and Paxton (2006) find that electoral outcomes are only influenced if there is a populist outlet for voters' fears around immigration. On the individual level, economic factors such as income and unemployment are nowhere near as predictive of a vote for a populist candidate as attitudes toward immigration, which can be seen as a proxy for cultural backlash (Sides and Citrin 2007). Donovan, Redlawsk, and Tolbert (2016) compares Trump's supporters with supporters of other populist parties from Canada, the UK, NZ and Australia, finding that strains of racial resentment and anti-immigration sentiment is similar across all cases.

The idea of a cultural backlash driving radical right populist voting is convincing. The theory traces the evolution of political discourse in the developed world, tying it back to the notion that increased material living standards post WWII has afforded more recent generations the luxury of focusing on non-economic issues. This explains both the liberalism of younger generations as well as the recent uptick in populist voting, driven by

older voters frustrated with this political discourse. It is an elegant theory, tying multiple strands of observations into one neat explanation. It's main problem, however, is that it is wrong.

The problem for this theory is that younger people, as we saw in Chapter 2, are more likely to vote for populist radical right parties than older people. The whole idea behind this thesis is that older people, feeling alienated by the changing nature of a society that is increasingly fixated on post-material values, respond by voting for parties that promise a return to traditional values. On the other hand, those in the younger generations are the people driving this change toward post-material values, having lived in relative economic security their entire lives. As a result, they ought to be the least likely to vote for parties that promise a return to traditional values. This thesis clearly predicts that older people will vote for populist parties at the highest rate. It is difficult to square this idea with the fact that literally the opposite is happening.

Given such a spectacularly erroneous prediction, it is tempting to entirely dismiss this theory, but this would be a mistake. Instead, ESS data will be used in an attempt to figure out exactly where the cultural backlash thesis has gone astray, of which there are a few possible places. Firstly, it could be the case that the backlash part of the thesis is correct, and populist voting is indeed driven by those who feel alienated from an emphasis on post-material values. However, rather than older people, it is young people who have the largest affinity for traditional values and thus vote for populist parties in higher numbers. Alternatively, it could be that younger people are indeed more progressive, as the cultural backlash thesis predicts, but these post-material values do not make much of an influence in how they vote. To answer these questions, we turn again to the ESS data, which asks respondents about their views on a wide variety of issues. So that the results can be compared to our earlier finding that young people are more likely to vote for populist radical right parties, only voters in countries covered by CHES are included. We therefore have the same 171,341 respondents as above, weighted in exactly the same manner. We

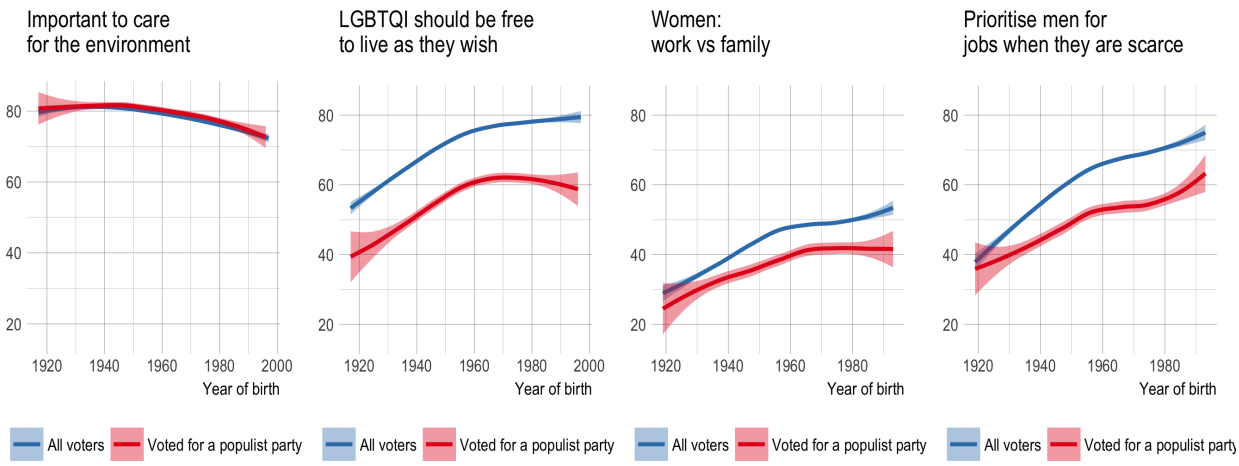

Figure 3.1: Younger voters are more liberal by post-material measures

will be sorting respondents by year of birth rather than age throughout given that the post-material values idea relies on cohort replacement, but the same analysis was also run for age and the results were almost identical.

To begin with, the most canonical examples of Inglehart's post-material values were plotted for all respondents as well as for only those who voted for populist parties. Four variables were chosen to reflect how the respondents felt about the environment, LGBTQI rights, and gender equality. Each question was rescaled onto a 0-100 scale, with 100 representing the most liberal option in every case. The results are plotted in Figure 3.1.

The results are largely consistent with the part of the cultural backlash thesis stipulating that each successive generation was likely to be more progressive with regard to post-material values, with the notable exception of the environmental variable. For each of the other three variables, there is a clear linear trend of each younger cohort being successively more likely to hold a liberal view than those older. Also as predicted, people who voted for a populist party were indeed significantly less liberal than the overall population, with this gap the largest in the acceptance of LGBTQI variable. However, the environmental views are a surprise, with no difference at all between populist voters and the overall population. Additionally, older generations held a more liberal view on this variable than younger generations. While this result is puzzling, it is mitigated somewhat by

the very small range of values, with all age groups purporting to value the environment highly. It could also be a reflection of the question wording, which asks whether people should care for the environment, but makes no mention of a whether one should prioritise the environment over anything else. While the results are somewhat mixed, it can be concluded that Inglehart (1977) is broadly correct so far; younger voters are more liberal when it comes to post-material values, and populist voters are less liberal than the overall population.

A variant on these post-material values of openness and tolerance is the idea that those voting for populist parties will have a certain psychological profile, specifically of being less open and more deferential to authority. Bakker, Rooduijn, and Schumacher (2016) theorise that populist voters have 'low agreeable personalities.' MacWilliams (2016) argues that authoritarian voters powered Trump's rise. Hetherington and Weiler (2009) also study authoritarian voters, rather presciently demonstrating that they were sorting into the GOP, and arguing that if this continued they would soon have enough electoral sway to make themselves heard within the party. Jan (2016, 16), however, pushes back against this research, arguing that shifting the conversation to personality types further alienates these voters by ascribing psychological reasons for their vote rather than simply taking them at their word that their vote reflects some more concrete reason.

To use the ESS to investigate these whether an authoritarian personality can help explain why young people are voting for populist radical right parties, we build an authoritarian index for each voter using variables identified by Inglehart and Norris (2016). These variables aim to measure how deferential someone is to authority, specifically the importance of living in safe surrounds, following rules, and behaving properly. As usual, the results have been rescaled from 0-100, with 100 representing the lowest score on the authoritarian index so that this graph is easily comparable to the plots of the other variables in this chapter. The results are shown in Figure 3.2.

The curves for all voters and for populist voters both bear a striking resemblance to the

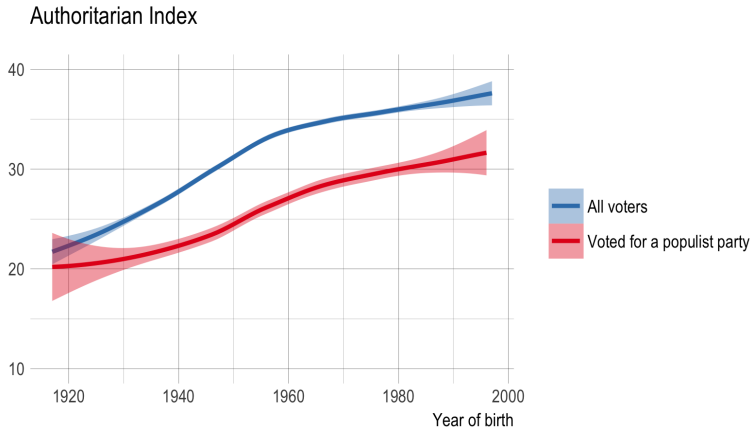

Figure 3.2: The age curve of authoritarian values is similar to the post-material values curves

series of curves we saw earlier when plotting post-material values. That is, the trend is linear for both groups, younger voters have less authoritarian personalities, and populist voters have more authoritarian personalities. So far so good for the post-material values thesis; as younger generations are more materially secure, they can afford to be more open and are less respectful of traditional norms than older generations.

Next, attitudes on immigration are looked at, perhaps the most widely linked variable to populist voting. The ESS asks respondents for their views on the effect immigration has on the economy, culture and overall country, with these variables combined and plotted in Figure 3.3. Again, the result concurs with the existing literature. Younger people view immigration more positively than older people, with an approximately linear trend. Populist voters have a much dimmer view of immigrants than the overall public, with young populist voters holding a similar view of immigration to the oldest cohorts of the general public. Finally, the linear trend also holds among the subset of populist voters. Populist voters born earlier still view immigrants less favourably than those born more recently.

One explanation for why younger people are more likely to vote for populist candidates is that both they and older voters are more dependent on welfare, claiming more in

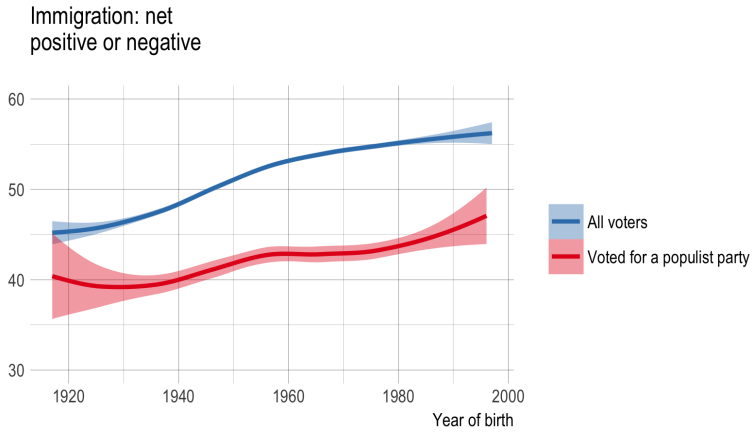

Figure 3.3: As expected, younger voters have a more positive view of immigrants

unemployment benefits and pensions respectively than other age groups (Arzheimer and Carter 2003, 17). As a result, it is argued that these groups are likely to be especially sensitive to immigration because they will view new migrants as competitors for these benefits. On top of predicting that both the oldest and youngest ages are most likely to vote for populist radical right parties, when it has already been shown that that the oldest cohorts are in fact the least likely to vote for populist parties, this theory is also proven wrong by Figure 3.3, which shows that younger people have the most favourable opinion of immigration, even as it relates to the economy.

At this point, a rather confusing picture is presented. There is clearly something to the idea that younger generations are more liberal when it comes to post-material values. In most of the metrics that have been looked at so far, there is a clear linear trend whereby the youngest cohort has the most liberal view. Furthermore, populist voters are also on the whole less liberal than the overall population. It thus seems logical to draw the conclusion that therefore populist voting is driven in large part by older generations, who are the least liberal. However, this conclusion is wrong; young people are more likely to vote for populist parties than older people. What have we been missed?

Firstly, we need to more carefully unpack the difference between the curves showing the

views of the whole population and those that show only the subset of people who voted for populist parties. In each case, the shape of both curves is quite similar, with younger voters more likely to hold liberal views *even among the subset of populist voters*. This is important, because it's not necessarily what we would expect to find if it were these attitudes that were themselves the primary drivers of populist voting. To illustrate, let's drastically oversimplify what factors influence which party someone votes for. Suppose that voting choice was perfectly predicted by one's views on immigration; everyone who responded with a 0 to a survey (such as the ESS) that asked about their feelings toward immigrants on a 0 - 10 scale all vote for populist parties, and everyone who responded with another answer do not. Replicating Figure 3.3 in this case would produce some arbitrary curve for all voters. Perhaps there would be some pattern, perhaps not. However, there would be an incredibly obvious trend among the subset of populist voters: the curve would be perfectly horizontal at the 0 for every year of birth. The point here is that if it *is* these post-material values that are driving the vote for populist parties, we shouldn't expect the age curve among those who have voted for populist parties to look the same as the age curve for those who haven't. Even though voters as a whole are more liberal for every year of birth than the subset of populist voters, the fact that both curves are a similar shape is cause to doubt in the view that it is these variables driving the populist radical right vote in the first place.

To make this point in another way: let's say that I presented you with a large group of people, all of whom were born in the same year. I then tell you two things: first, as a group their feelings toward immigrants is 45 on a 0-100 scale, and secondly that the group is either representative of the overall population or composed only of populist voters. Looking at Figure 3.3, we run into a problem: it could be either. The group could be representative of the whole population and born in around 1920, or it could consist of only populist voters born in around 1985. Granted, if you could see them you'd probably notice the difference between a group of 97 year olds and a group of 32 year olds, surmising fairly quickly which of these two possibilities was correct, but the takeaway is that knowledge of year

of birth is required before we can decide whether they are a group that is representative of the overall populace or a subset of populist voters. Similarly, this effect is even more pronounced when we look at the other post-material values, all of which have ages where a given y-value intercepts with both the populist age curve and the overall age curve.

On the surface, this whole rationale seems rather banal. Of course vote choice isn't driven by just one variable, and of course taking additional information like age or year of birth into account will increase the accuracy with which we can predict the tendency of a person to vote for a populist party. Nevertheless, it remains the case that populist voters are less liberal than the overall population for every year of birth. Why does this matter? The reason that I'm taking such great pains to spell this out fully is because it is easy to jump to the conclusion that given we know populist voters are less liberal, then populist voting is by definition driven by those who are less liberal. While this is in some sense correct, because populist voters are indeed less liberal for both any given age group as well as overall, we are starting to run up against a correlation vs causation problem. This breakdown becomes painfully clear at the next leap of logic, where the cultural backlash theory proclaims that because young people are more liberal, and populist voters are less liberal, then it follows that populist voting is driven by older voters. This, as we have observed, is not the case.

After all this, there is an obvious conclusion. Inglehart (1977) is correct in arguing that young people have more liberal attitudes on the post-material values he identifies. Despite this, they are voting for populist parties at a higher rate than older people. The clear inference is that these post-material values are not what is driving populist radical right support. Exactly the same logic applies to the ever-expanding literature that hypothesise authoritarian personalities are driving the populist vote. Older voters have more authoritarian personalities, but younger voters are more likely to vote for populist parties. Therefore, authoritarian personalities are not what is driving populist support either.

3.2 Economic insecurity

The second major thesis aiming to explain the rise in populist voting is that of economic insecurity. This theory argues that it is the losers of globalisation who are increasingly drawn to populist causes. In years gone by, those with merely a high-school education could expect a reliable pay check and a comfortable existence. Globalisation has dramatically changed this status quo, as manufacturing jobs are shipped overseas and those that aren't are replaced by robots. Compounding this, labour unions are no longer the force they once were, resulting in stagnant wages across the developed world. This is contrasted with a massive accumulation of wealth by the already wealthy, resulting in a dramatic increase in inequality (Piketty 2014).

The economic security argument holds that the rise of populist voting can be directly linked to this inexorable rise in inequality and decline of manufacturing jobs. It is those that are no longer economically secure that lash out at the political status quo by voting for populist parties. They blame 'outsiders' for their economic fate, migrants and refugees that have arrived and threaten jobs and welfare benefits. As such, populist discourse finds a particularly ready audience among the poorly educated and the unemployed, who band together in support of an authoritarian leader who promises to protect the pure people from these outsiders (Inglehart 2016). On top of this, mainstream political parties have seen their traditional bases eroded, with secularisation and the decline of unions affecting centre-right and centre-left parties respectively, both of whom have responded by tacitly or explicitly accepting the logic of markets in an effort to retain their appeal (Inglehart and Norris 2016). The losers of globalisation therefore feel abandoned by these parties, further pushing them toward populist parties that promise to restore society to the post-war glory years.

There is some evidence that populist voting is concentrated among these losers of globalisation. Variables such as high unemployment, low levels of education and blue-collar employment do correlate with an increased tendency to vote for populist candidates

(Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers 2002). However, there has also been pushback against this theory. While within a country, the above variables do somewhat correlate with a tendency to vote for populist candidates, there is no such correlation when looking at the unemployment rate across countries. Put simply, even states with low inequality and comprehensive welfare systems have seen the vote share of populist parties rise.

This theory doesn't take a direct position on which ages are most likely to vote for populist parties, but it seems reasonable to conclude that the 'losers of globalisation' are generally likely to be older workers. It is not the better educated younger generations that are nostalgic for the days of stable jobs with a high-school education, who have watched factories shut down and move offshore, it is the older workers. As such, this thesis also makes the wrong prediction regarding who is likely to vote for populist parties. This is confirmed by examining the ESS data. While a more direct measure would be preferable, using employment data by age proves difficult given the differences in the work situations that are inherently tied to age groups. Older people are likely to have retired, while many younger people are studying, making a comparison using a direct measure like unemployment difficult. Instead, the level of satisfied of each age group or birth year in the state of the economy is used as a work around, plotted in Figure 3.4. If the economic backlash thesis is correct, we would presumably see younger people more dissatisfied with the economy than older generations. As the ESS has only been gathering data since 2001, which is not enough time for even one generation to pass all the way through their working life, the results here should be taken with a slight grain of salt. Nevertheless, the results are clear enough that it can confidently be concluded that younger voters are not hugely dissatisfied with the economy. Figure 3.4 shows a U-shaped curve, with older and younger people most satisfied in the economy, and those born in the late 1950s the least satisfied. Again, this could be a product of the lack of longitudinal data, with someone born in 1960 being 42 years old in the first ESS wave and 54 years old in the most recent, a fairly small and specific portion of their life. Perhaps there is something about these ages that leads to dissatisfaction in the economy. In any case, there is no evidence that

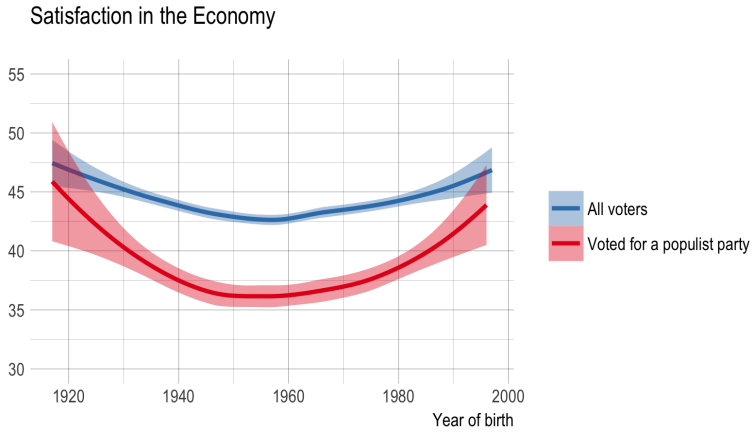

Figure 3.4: Satisfaction in the Economy

young people are especially dissatisfied with the economy, as would be the case if it were driving populist voting. If anything, the opposite is found to be true. Interestingly, the youngest cohort of populist voters is only marginally more pessimistic about the economy than the overall view of the youngest cohort, so much so that the populist margin of error (represented by the error bars) ever so slightly crosses the overall voter curve. Not only are young people not more pessimistic than the other cohorts about the economy, but young populist voters aren't even that much more pessimistic than young people overall. As such, we can dismiss another theory: it is not dissatisfaction with the economy that is spurring younger voters to vote for populist radical right parties.

To recap, both of the main theories that purport to explain why people are likely to vote for populist parties fail to predict the voting behaviour of the youngest cohort. They all predict to various extents that older voters are more likely to be populist radical right voters. Given that this has already been found to be not the case, it makes sense that these theories would also be found deficient. Clearly, something is missing. Despite their collective failure to predict the populist vote age curve, most of these theories *do* tend to accurately portray the views of younger cohorts, describing them as less authoritarian, more liberal on social values, and less likely to be victims of globalisation, all of which is

true. This further illustrates why it is so perplexing that younger cohorts are more likely to vote for populist parties. However, perhaps our focus has been misdirected: so far all of the theories looked at have advocated that some particular variable is what drives populist voting, and comparing the age distribution of that variable to the age distribution of the populist vote we have come up short each time. Perhaps age itself is the variable we are looking for.

3.3 Treating age as a variable

Up until now, this chapter has focused on period and cohort based explanations. Inglehart (1977) is not contending that younger cohorts have more liberal post-material values because they are younger, but because they were born in a time-period that was sufficiently economically well-off as to allow these post-material values to develop. It just happens to be the case that these cohorts are younger. If there were some catastrophic event that caused human progress to reverse and plunged the world into a scenario where economic well-being again became the primary concern, Inglehart's thesis would predict that the cohort which grew up under these conditions would be more materialistic and less post-materialistic, despite being younger. The post-material values are a function of cohort rather than age. Similarly, the economic insecurity thesis argues that it is specific economic indicators that predict a populist vote, rather than age or cohort. If tough economic times happen to hit one generation particularly hard then the economic insecurity thesis argues that this cohort would be more likely to vote for populist parties. Similarly, this wouldn't be because of their age or even their generation, but because of the overall economic conditions. As such, the economic insecurity argument leans on period factors to explain the populist vote.

Given that both of these explanations have proven unable to explain young voting habits, we now turn to age based explanations. Is there something about *being* young, as opposed

to being born in a year that currently makes you young, that causes one to be more likely to vote for populist radical right parties? Age based explanations can be split into two further categories: those that use age as a proxy for life-cycle effects, and those that argue there is something intrinsic about age itself that causes certain voting behaviour.

To begin with, there is a simple explanation for why young people are voting for populist radical right parties that contains elements of both categories: voting for a populist party is a vote for change, a vote of no confidence in the political system. Perhaps younger people are always the most sceptical of the current political system because they have the least sway in democratic societies. As 18 year olds enter the electorate, they are dwarfed in number by older generations, and accordingly politicians pay little attention to them. Young people might therefore wish to express their discontent with the political status quo with a vote for parties that are overtly hostile toward it. Populist parties, with their emphasis on anti-elites, might appeal in this scenario. This theory finds some support from Foa and Mounk (2017), who show that younger generations are much more sceptical of democracy than other generations. However, their article also received a fair bit of criticism for the way in which it used World Value Survey data, as they transformed a 10-point scale into a dichotomous variable in such a manner as to dramatize the results (Alexander and Welzel 2017; Norris 2017; Voeten 2017). In any case, the ESS includes many questions on this topic, with Figure 3.5 showing three such variables: trust in politicians, satisfaction with the national government and satisfaction with democracy. The last plot, trust in national governance, is a simple average of the other three.

Figure 3.5 shows some interesting results. Older voters are more satisfied with their government and democracy, as well as trusting politicians more than younger voters. This upswing begins in all of the variables for those who are about 55 years old. For voters younger than 50, the trend line is mostly flat: voters who are 20 years old view national governance with roughly the same or a slightly higher favourability as those who are 50. Populist voters, as predicted, take a less favourable view on each of these variables than

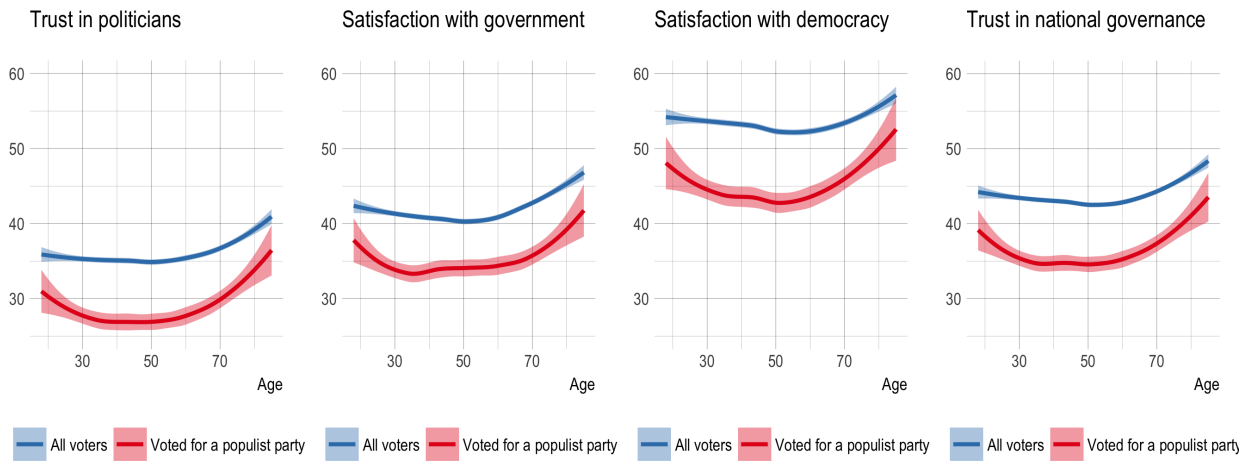

Figure 3.5: Older generations trust national political systems more than younger generations

the voting public. Notably, the gap between the views of populist voters and all voters is narrowest for both the oldest and youngest voters, while those who vote for populist parties in their middle ages are more sceptical on each measure. The most promising finding here is that older people have the most faith in their system of government, with those 70 or older scoring significantly higher on all of the measures. This correlates well with the findings shown in Figure 2.1, with people 70 and over found to be less likely to vote for populist parties. While the knowledge that older people are more generally more favourable to national political institutions is valuable, these results still don't shed any light on why younger voters are more likely to vote for populist parties. At worst, younger voters are no more dissatisfied with domestic political governance than those who 50, and yet they still vote for populist parties at a higher rate.

Perhaps it is not domestic governance that young voters are riled up about, but instead global governing institutions, specifically the European Parliament and the United Nations. Respondents' feelings toward these two bodies are plotted in Figure 3.6, alongside the average of these variables, plotted as 'Trust in Global Governance.' For comparison, the average of the national governance variables from Figure 3.5 is also plotted. Especially among the younger voters, global political institutions are viewed in high regard. In fact, they are viewed more positively than their domestic counterparts. Again, this is a

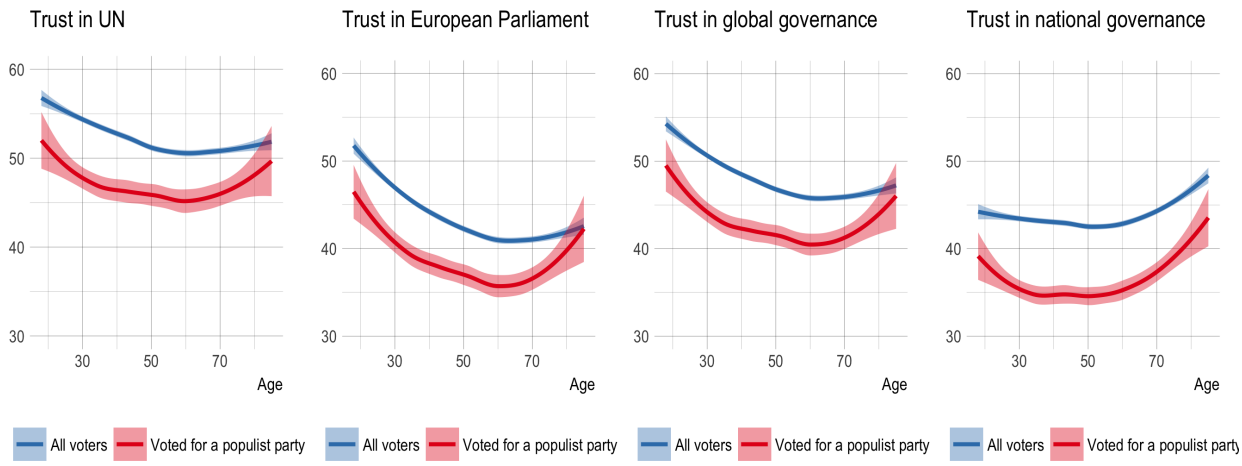

Figure 3.6: Younger generations trust global governance institutions more than national ones

confusing finding, given that populist radical right parties are nearly all deeply nationalistic and Euro-sceptical. Even more surprisingly, for the very oldest voters, people who voted for populist parties felt similarly about global institutions to all voters of that age. A generational explanation of this finding could be that the oldest voters are the only people in the sample that have first-hand memory of WWII, so we can hypothesise that this probably has something to do with their feelings toward institutions set up specifically to prevent WWIII. Overall though, we find no evidence that younger voters are voting for populist parties because they are dissatisfied with either global or domestic governance.

Perhaps it's not so much that younger voters are voting for non-mainstream parties out of sheer spite for the political system, but instead because mainstream political parties do not tailor their platform to issues that young people care about. Mainstream parties need to appeal to the whole electorate, and those who have just become eligible to vote make up a tiny proportion of that. In this case, it makes sense that young people would vote for non-mainstream parties that do represent their interests, and they would continue to do so until enough of their cohort was in the electorate, forcing mainstream parties to respond in order to stay competitive. To be clear, this is an argument about age rather than generations, as the youngest age eligible to vote will always make up a small proportion of the electorate. Indeed, Franklin and Eijk (2004) argues that it via precisely this mechanism

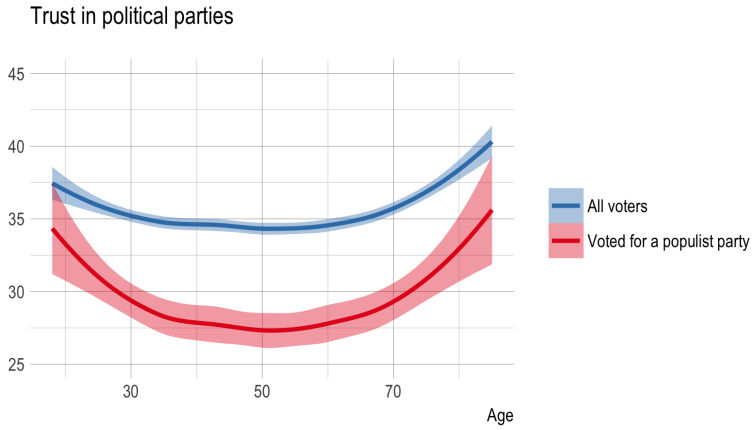

Figure 3.7: Young voters are not more sceptical of political parties

that new issues and parties enter the political mainstream. Each generation has some political issues that are more important to them than older generations, and these issues enter the political mainstream when this generation is a large and influential enough portion of the electorate that mainstream parties change their platform in order to gain votes. If mainstream parties don't do this fast enough, then new parties will enter the political mainstream. In this formulation, the youngest voters will always be voting for non-mainstream parties at higher levels, because almost by definition mainstream parties pay less attention to them.

The problem with this idea as it relates to populist radical right parties is that it strays dangerously close to the ideological ground that was already covered and rejected as a driver for young people voting for populist parties. The most obvious platform that populist radical right parties run on, that of anti-immigration, has been shown to be antithetical to the youngest voters' views. This argument might make sense as an explanation for why radical *left* parties tend to receive more votes from young people, as they are more progressive than the electorate as a whole, but it is unconvincing as a rationale for why young people are also voting for populist radical right parties at higher levels than other age groups. The argument is also undercut by the ESS data, which shows that younger

people actually trust political parties more than middle aged people (see Figure 3.7.

If it is not parties that are driving the high youth populist vote, then perhaps it has more to do with voting itself. There is a wealth of literature establishing that voting is habitual, both in terms of turnout and vote choice (Franklin and Eijk 2004, Smets (2016)). This habit is generally picked up over the first three elections someone votes in (Maggini 2017, 3). As a result, newly eligible voters have not built up an affinity to any party, and are therefore more likely to vote for non-mainstream parties simply because they haven't built this habit of always voting for the same party that older voters have. This is borne out in practice, both from the results of this thesis as well as other studies which have found that more mainstream party families including Christian Democratic parties receive lower vote shares from young people than the overall populace (Maggini 2017, 118). This touches on the second category to do with age: the idea that it is not just life-cycle effects causing people of different ages vote differently. It is also that young people are psychologically more radical and less conservative than older people (Jost et al. 2003; Kruglanski 2014). Correspondingly, young voters tend to vote for more radical parties at either end of the ideological spectrum, eschewing mainstream parties in the process.

All of this has built toward the second factor of habitual voting: turnout. Young people have not built the habit of voting and do so in far lower numbers than the rest of the population. The is demonstrated for each wave of ESS data in Figure 3.8, which shows that voting is a learnt behaviour. Firstly, we can see that for the youngest age groups, the curves by age line up much more neatly than those by birth year. Secondly, we can see that after the most recent years of birth, where the respondents were young, the curves by birth year line up better than those by age, reflecting the fact that voting is a habit. Those who have experienced a few elections and voted in them are likely to continue to do so, while those who have experienced a few elections and not voted are also likely to continue to do so. Turnout therefore stabilises after the initial turbulence caused by age, and is thereafter driven more by cohort than age. Finally, a period effect in the form of the steady decline of

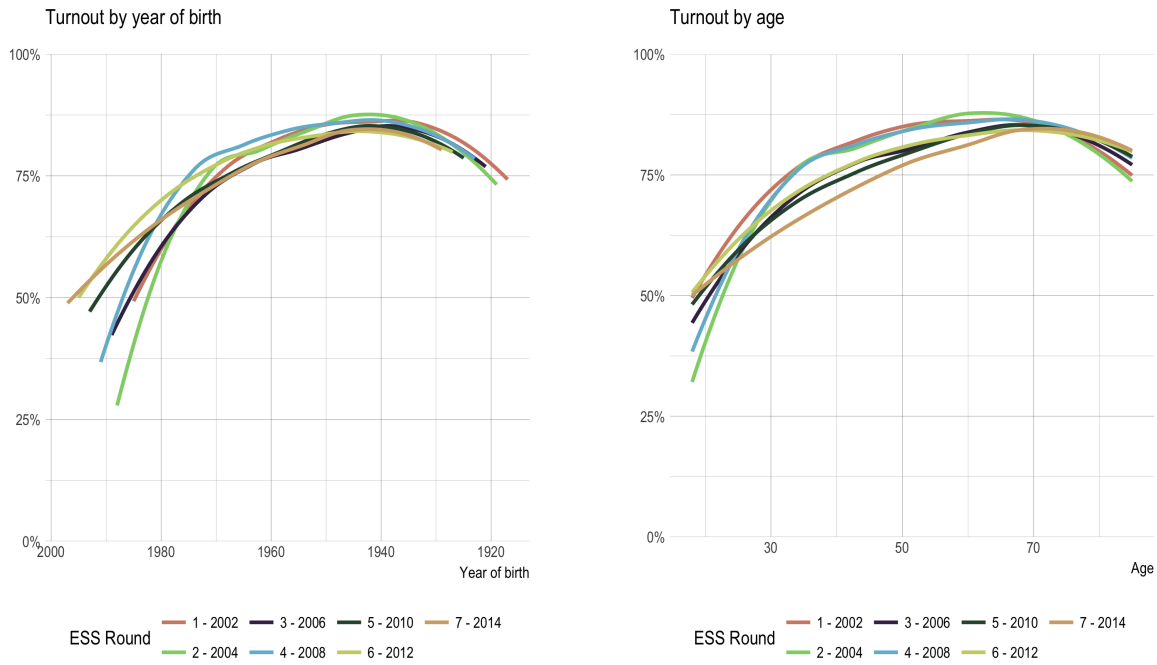

Figure 3.8: Turnout is drastically lower among young people

turnout is also visible by focusing on a fixed age, for example 40 years old. Around 80% of 40 year olds voted in the first wave of the ESS, conducted in 2002, compared to around 70% of 40 year olds in the most recent wave.

With the knowledge that turnout is consistently lower for young voters, finally a more accurate picture of why young voters are more likely to vote for populist radical right parties begins to emerge. The low turnout of young voters presumably means only the most motivated are likely to show up to the ballot box. The fact that young voters are already psychologically more likely to vote for radical parties and that they have not participated in enough elections to have developed a habit for voting for a specific party all adds together to create an electorate of young people that are perfectly positioned to vote for populist radical right parties at rates higher than we would expect by simply looking at their ideological viewpoints. There is also evidence that populist radical right parties such as *AfD* in Germany use social media more effectively than their mainstream rivals, allowing them to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and communicate directly with

their followers (Arzheimer 2015, 548). This is likely to further bolster their youth turnout compared to mainstream parties. To conclude, it is only by treating age as a variable unto itself that the mystery of why young people are more likely to vote for populist radical right parties was unravelled.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

This thesis sought to bridge the gap between two extensive but largely separate bodies of literature. On the one hand, we have the vast and rapidly expanding literature surrounding populism, of which only a small subsection was examined for this thesis. Specifically, I looked at how populism ought to be defined, concluding that a discursive definition is the way forward. Secondly, the main theories attempting to explain the populist vote were examined. Both the cultural backlash thesis and the economic insecurity thesis get a lot right. They accurately note that populist voters tend to be less open to post-material values and more pessimistic about the economy. However, they both fall over badly when the age profile of populist voters is revealed, with neither predicting that younger voters are most likely to vote for populist parties.

It is here that we introduced our second body of literature, which aims to parse how age, cohort and period effects interact to shape vote choice. These variables are collinear and are therefore incredibly difficult to untangle from each other. Nevertheless, it is shown that the most plausible explanation for young voters tending to vote for populist candidates is the very fact that they are young. Age is the factor that has the most predictive power when voters are young, overwhelming the cohort effects theorised by Inglehart (1977). Young people are less likely to vote overall, and thus those that do vote tend to be the

most motivated and thus the most extreme. While this thesis only examined populist radical right parties, there is evidence that young voters also are overrepresented on the radical left, lending more credence to the notion that young voters tend not to be moderate centrists but extreme in one direction or the other. Voting is a habit, one that young people, by virtue of their age, have yet to pick up, explaining the large turnout gap. Partisanship is also a habit, with much of the vote for mainstream parties coming from those who habitually vote for the same party each election. As young people have not built this habit either, it makes sense that the vote share of mainstream parties is lower for young people than the overall populace. It is clear that by thinking about populism through an age, period and cohort lens, we can add extra depth to our knowledge of who votes for populist parties than we would be able to otherwise. After all, neither of the main theories attempting to explain populist voting had an answer for why young people were more likely to vote for populist radical right parties.

Some scholars in the populist world do try to think about these problems through an age, period and cohort lens. Notably, Inglehart and Norris (2017) propose effectively a cohort and period explanation of populist voting. On an individual level, they stick with Inglehart's post-material values concept, arguing that these are more predictive of a populist vote than economic variables. However, they propose that the reason populist voting has risen overall in the developed world is due to economic variables, specifically rising inequality and stagnating wages. This is a period effect, as they contend that if these indicators reduce in severity then the overall level of populist voting would also decrease. This is not only an attempt to combine the two most influential theories about what drives populist support into one unified theory, it also is an incorporation of the language of the age, period and cohort literature. I contend that this theory would be bolstered by adding age effects too, specifically that younger voters are more likely to vote for non-mainstream parties, including populist radical right parties.

There is a rich vein of potential that could be tapped into with a concerted attempt to

combine these two literatures, which this thesis has barely scratched the surface of. Cutting edge statistics and increased computing power have recently yielded some exciting results in the APC field. Bartels and Jackman (2014) have proposed a model whereby political preferences are formed as a result of a generalised running tally evaluation of each party's performance over their life, with each age allowed to be assigned a larger or smaller weight to simulate the crucial formative years that shape a person's political views and allow the formation of political generations. Ghitza and Gelman (2014) build on this work, proposing a similar model but including an extra layer of data which yields more intuitive age-weights. Generational voting models such as these could be combined with measures of a candidate or party's populist discourse, which crucially could be treated as a continuous variable rather than discrete as outlined in the populism as a discourse section, to quantify whether any generations are more susceptible to populist discourse. Generational voting models might even be able to be repurposed to act as a generational attitudinal model, measuring changes in populist attitudes by generation.

This bring us to the impediments to linking the two literatures. Firstly, there needs to be a systematic way to grade parties on a scale of populist discourse. The CHES dataset used in this thesis was adequate in the sense that it accurately identified radical right populist parties in a systematic rather than *ad hoc* manner. However, it was also deeply flawed. Most glaringly, it could not identify commonly acknowledged populist left parties such as *Syriza* and *Podemos*. This is due to its use of ideology to grade populist parties, rather than the superior discursive theory of populism. Ideological methods clearly miss something crucial about populism, given the ideological definition of populist parties missed canonical examples of left-populist parties and the ideology based post-material values thesis attempting to explain what causes populist voting missed the group that voted for populist radical right parties at the highest rate. The results of this thesis make even clearer the superiority of a discursive definition of populism. The Manifesto Project does use a discursive methodology given its use of electoral materials, however it currently does not code for examples populist discourse, such as references to the people or a decrial

of elites, meaning that I was forced to use ideological variables for the Manifest dataset too, defeating the purpose of using electoral manifestos in the first place. Ideally, there would be a similar dataset that coded manifestos and other electoral materials for populist discourse, preferably over time. Clearly, this is a mammoth undertaking, but this is the direction the field needs to take in order to truly facilitate comparative populist work, breaking the regional shackles that currently afflict the populist literature. This thesis was constrained by this limitation, initially aiming to compare multiple regions before eventually settling on only Europe because of the ease of access to data.

Secondly, large scale individual data surveys like the ESS can also be improved. Recent studies have shown that it is possible to directly measure the populist attitudes that drive voting patterns. Akkerman, Mudde, and Zaslove (2014) build on the work of Hawkins, Riding, and Mudde (2012) to craft a survey that directly measures populist attitudes, along with pluralist and elitist attitudes. They found a strong correlation between their populist scale and voting for populist parties, validating their survey design, which has subsequently found further support from Spruyt, Keppens, and Van Droogenbroeck (2016). The questions they propose ought to be rolled out onto large scale surveys like the ESS, ANES and Eurobarometer. Secondly, a longer dataset is needed before APC analysis can truly take-off in Europe. All of the graphs in this thesis were initially plotted for both age and birth year, but the results turned out to be so similar as to be largely redundant. With only 12 years of data, only a small portion of a lifespan is covered, whereas APC analysis typically requires much longer timescales to in order to accurately distinguish between each effect. This is why the field is mainly concentrated in the US; the ANES has been run for more than 60 years with gold-standard survey design and consistent question wording to facilitate comparison between surveys. Clearly, there's not much one can do with this problem other than wait. Eventually Europe will have a similar length of high-quality data.

These (large) hurdles aside, the two literatures are natural complements of each other.

The wealth of data from populist scholarship could confirm the hypothesis that political views do become entrenched as people get older, as well as quantify by how much and whether this holds true for all political attitudes or only some. It could do the opposite, showing that successful generational voting models have no further applicability, and thus are every chance of being a case of statistically manipulating a model until results that fit a prior theory fall out. Conversely, combining the two literatures would force the populist literature to reckon with long time-series data, the use of which is not especially prevalent in the current literature (of course, there are notable exceptions, such as Inglehart and Norris (2016)). Many populist voting studies derive their data from a single large N survey or a small set of elections. While this is all well and good to establish which attitudes contribute to populist voting, it does not tell us much about how and why these attitudes change over time. Introducing long a time-series analysis using a dataset such as the Eurobarometer, as generational voting models do, would be a valuable way to understand more about the dynamics of these attitudes as they change. Of course, an obvious limitation of this approach is a potential lack of detailed time-series data with consistent questions over a long period of time. Such data is only likely to exist in relatively few developed countries, thereby limiting the scope of bridging the two literatures to regions such as Western Europe and North America, just as populist literature is starting to expand beyond these more typical regions of study (Moffitt 2016b). However, given the aforementioned possibilities of combining the literatures, this seems like a small price to pay.

To conclude, this thesis has sought to show that the puzzle of younger voters being more likely to vote for populist parties cannot be solved by the main theories in the populist literature, but can be explained by treating age as a variable and examining how age itself is likely to influence vote choice. To be clear, as it stands this is just a hypothesis, albeit one that I think is the most plausible explanation for the puzzle. Accordingly, we can test that hypothesis by making predictions, and in this case there is the perfect test candidate. The eighth wave of the ESS is due to be released this month, having been conducted

throughout 2016. If my theory is correct, it ought to show the youngest cohort of voters, 18 year olds who were born in 1998, having the highest propensity to vote for populist parties. The 18 year olds of the previous round, born in 1996, will be slightly less likely to vote for these parties, though owing to period effects it's not certain whether their absolute vote for populist candidates would be higher or lower than when this cohort was surveyed in 2014. This effect will cascade down, with each successive age group settling more into habitual voting until eventually, at around age 30, the bump in populist voting caused by youth will have been totally overwhelmed by other factors. Perhaps these are period effects; after all there was a lot going on in the world in 2016. Perhaps these are cohort effects, as Inglehart (1977) would have us believe. Or perhaps these are other age effects, to do with people getting married and having children as they cross 30. However, even if this prediction is completely wrong, the main contribution of this thesis ought to be a proof of concept. With the increased prevalence of populism around the world and a corresponding increased demand for a more nuanced understanding of the phenomena, combining the age, period and cohort literature with populist scholarship is likely to be both a fruitful and insightful endeavour.

Appendix A

Table of populist parties

Table A.1: Classification of Parties

Country	CHES Wave	Party Abbreviation	Party Name in English	Election Year	Vote Share	Economic Scale	Populism Scale
Austria	2014	FPO	Freedom Party of Austria	2013	20.50	50.97	83.75
Belgium	2014	VB	Flemish Block	2014	3.70	52.12	81.33
Belgium	2010	FN	National Front	2010	0.51	75.06	83.65
Bulgaria	2014	VMRO-BND	Bulgarian National Movement	2014	3.10	31.03	84.52
Bulgaria	2014	ATAKA	Attack	2014	4.50	13.35	90.33
Bulgaria	2014	NFSB	National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria	2014	4.20	34.73	81.41
Bulgaria	2014	BBT	Bulgaria without Censorship	2014	5.70	35.32	75.78
Croatia	2014	HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union	2011	21.90	59.58	75.79
Croatia	2014	HSS	Croatian Peasant Party	2011	0.60	42.19	84.01
Croatia	2014	HDSSB	Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja	2011	3.00	44.36	82.51
Croatia	2014	HSP	Croatian Party of Rights	2011	3.00	47.12	89.02
Croatia	2014	HSP-AS	Croatian Party of Rights – Dr. Ante Starcevic	2011	0.60	51.13	87.49
Czech Republic	2014	USVIT	Tomio Okamura's Dawn of Direct Democracy	2013	6.90	44.82	79.99
Denmark	2014	DF	Danish Peoples Party	2011	12.20	41.81	78.67
Finland	2014	PS	Finnish Party | True Finns	2011	19.10	38.26	84.57
France	2014	FN	National Front	2012	13.60	44.89	83.16
France	2014	MPF	Movement for France	2012	0.23	63.96	86.84
Germany	2014	NPD	German People's Union	2013	1.30	42.33	89.12
Germany	2014	AfD	Alternative for Germany	2013	4.70	77.27	81.77
Greece	2014	ND	New Democracy	2012	29.70	60.97	76.17
Greece	2014	LAOS	Popular Orthodox Rally	2012	1.60	49.46	87.30
Greece	2014	ANEL	Independent Greeks	2012	7.50	41.92	88.51
Greece	2014	XA	Golden Dawn	2012	6.90	17.50	93.46
Hungary	2014	Fidesz	Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Party / Christian Democratic People's Party	2014	39.50	43.66	81.85
Hungary	2010	KDNP	Christian Democratic People's Party	2010	7.32	47.41	77.02
Hungary	2014	JOBBIK	Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary	2014	20.20	29.43	92.33
Italy	2014	LN	North League	2013	4.10	61.50	83.16
Italy	2014	Fdl	Brothers of Italy - National Centre-right	2013	2.00	47.38	86.82
Latvia	2014	NA	Latvian National Independence Movement	2014	16.60	57.50	76.03
Lithuania	2014	DK	The Way of Courage	2012	8.00	35.17	76.08
Luxembourg	2014	ADR	Alternative Democatic Reform Party	2013	6.60	60.00	85.56
Netherlands	2014	SGP	Reformed Political Party	2012	2.10	60.98	85.97
Netherlands	2014	PVV	Party for Freedom	2012	10.10	48.54	76.34
Norway	2014	FrP	Progress Party	NA	NA	64.17	75.37
Poland	2014	PiS	Law and Justice	2011	29.90	31.37	77.83
Poland	2010	LPR	League of Polish Families	2007	1.30	32.25	85.72
Poland	2014	KNP	Congress of the New Right	2011	1.10	96.03	78.75
Poland	2014	SP	United Poland	2011	NA	33.40	82.04
Romania	2010	PRM	Greater Romania Party	2008	3.20	22.70	82.39
Romania	2014	PP-DD	People's Party - Dan Dianconescu	2012	14.00	31.46	78.97
Slovakia	2014	KDH	Christian Democratic Movement	2012	8.80	52.50	79.98
Slovakia	2014	SNS	Slovak National Party	2012	4.60	46.70	90.84
Slovenia	2014	SDS	Slovenian Democratic Party	2014	20.70	78.26	78.60
Slovenia	2014	NSI	New Slovenia – Christian People's Party	2014	5.60	78.36	77.96
Sweden	2014	SD	Sweden Democrats	2014	12.90	45.74	87.58
Switzerland	2014	SVP/UDC	Swiss People's Party	NA	NA	73.12	83.58
Switzerland	2014	EDU/UDF	Federal Democratic Union of Switzerland	NA	NA	52.50	82.88
Turkey	2014	MHP	National Action Party	NA	NA	49.90	79.81
UK	2014	UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party	2010	3.10	82.92	85.75
UK	2010	BNP	British National Party	2010	1.90	33.61	85.86

Appendix B

High residual parties

Table B.1: High Residual Parties

Country	Party Abbreviation	Party Name in English	Populism Score (Manifesto)	Populism Score (CHES)	Residual
Bulgaria	ATAKA	National Union Attack	50.00	90.33	48.76
Croatia	HSS	Croatian Peasant Party	49.42	84.01	43.91
Italy	LN	Northern League	52.62	83.16	34.96
Romania	UDMR/RMDSz	Hungarian Democratic Alliance of Romania	37.00	42.25	33.55
Germany	AfD	Alternative for Germany	52.74	81.77	33.27
Slovenia	SDS	Slovenian Democratic Party	52.06	78.60	31.82
Romania	PP-DD	People's Party - Dan Dianconescu	52.22	78.97	31.78
Hungary	Jobbik	Movement for a Better Hungary	57.61	92.33	31.50
Spain	PNV/EAJ	Basque Nationalist Party	46.61	64.35	31.34
Slovenia	Nsi	New Slovenian Christian People's Party	52.64	77.96	29.71
Poland	SRP	Self-Defence of the Polish Republic	51.67	74.42	28.63
Spain	CiU	Convergence and Union	47.90	64.52	28.25
Lithuania	LPKTS	Lithuanian Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees	56.45	86.00	28.11
Bulgaria	BBZ	Bulgaria without Censorship	52.42	75.78	28.10
Sweden	MP	Green Ecology Party	49.81	15.41	-25.68
Hungary	E14-PM	Together 2014 -Dialogue for Hungary Electoral Alliance	52.25	21.19	-26.06
Estonia	ER	Estonian Reform Party	60.52	41.90	-26.27
Czech Republic	US	Freedom Union	54.41	25.80	-26.92
Slovenia		For Real	52.63	20.26	-27.97
Switzerland	EDU/UDF	Federal Democratic Union	77.50	82.88	-28.25
Italy		Pannella-Sgarbi List	50.00	12.88	-28.70
Estonia	EÜRP	Estonian United People's Party	46.15	2.00	-29.84
Slovenia	LDS	Liberal Democracy of Slovenia	52.99	19.30	-29.85
Croatia	SDP	Social Democratic Party of Croatia	55.52	25.56	-29.97
Poland	UW	Freedom Union	54.15	19.06	-33.00
Poland	UP	Union of Labour	52.11	13.80	-33.10
Portugal	BE	Left Bloc	52.91	14.30	-34.62

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