The Populist Voter: A Nationalist and Eurosceptic Loser of Globalization?

Matthijs Rooduijn

Department of Political Science
University of Amsterdam
Oudezijds Achterburgwal 237
1012 DL Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Contact: m.rooduijn@uva.nl

DRAFT, please do not cite without the permission of the authors

Paper prepared for presentation at the Team Populism May 2015 Conference: "Solving the Puzzles of Populism". April 30 – May 2 2015

The Populist Voter: A Nationalist and Eurosceptic Loser of Globalization?

Abstract

Who votes populist and why? Although we know quite a lot already about those who vote for radical right and radical left parties, we know only very little about those who vote for *populist* parties. In this paper, which is the most encompassing study of populist voting to date, I employ an innovative conceptualization and operationalization of populism as a matter of degree. Based on an automated content analysis of election manifestos of various parties from four Western European political systems, I assess the degree of populism of parties and combine this party-level information with individual-level data coming from the European Social Survey (ESS, 2002-2012). I show that the populist voter is, contrary to the expectations, not a nationalist and Eurosceptic 'loser of globalization'. Instead, s/he is discontent with politics, holds a radical position on the general left-right axis, is not religious and is in favor of socioeconomic redistribution. These findings show that it is very important to carefully distinguish the populist voter from both radical left and radical right voters.

Introduction

There has been an explosion of studies on Western European populism. This is hardly remarkable considering the fact that many countries in this part of the world have recently witnessed the upsurge of one or more allegedly populist parties. Think of the *United Kingdom Independence Party* (UKIP) in Britain, the *Front National* (FN) in France, and the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) in the Netherlands. Or of *Podemos* in Spain, *Syriza* in Greece, and *MoVimento 5 Stelle* in Italy. The electoral successes of these parties have inspired studies on how populism can best be defined (Mudde, 2004; Weyland, 2001), how the populist upsurge can be explained (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Mény & Surel, 2002), and on how it affects public opinion (Akkerman, Mudde, & Zaslove, n.d.), party positions (Rooduijn, De Lange, & Van der Brug, 2014a), policy making (Albertazzi & Mueller, 2013) and liberal democracy (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). Interestingly, however, as of yet only very little attention has been paid to the question what the populist *voter* looks like. Who votes for populists and why? The lack of scholarly attention for these questions is remarkable. After all, in order to understand the recent successes of populist parties it is of essential importance to know what the populist support base looks like.

We know a great deal already about those who vote for *radical right-wing* parties (see Ivarsflaten, 2008; Lubbers, Gijsberts, & Scheepers, 2002; Van der Brug, Fennema, & Tillie, 2000, 2005; Zhirkov, 2014), and increasingly also about supporters for the *radical left* (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007; Visser, Lubbers, Kraaykamp, & Jaspers, 2014). However, knowledge about the electorates of these specific party families tells us nothing about *populist* voting. Crudely stated, populism is the message that the good people is betrayed by an evil elite (Hawkins, 2010; Mudde, 2004; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Stanley, 2008). Such a message can be combined with different ideologies (Taggart, 2000), and can therefore be employed by parties on both the radical right and the radical left. Moreover, also other parties, including mainstream parties, can endorse the populist message to a lesser or larger extent (Hawkins, 2009, 2010; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Rooduijn, De Lange, & Van der Brug, 2014b; Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011). An analysis of populist voting should therefore differ from existing studies of voting for the radical left and radical right in two essential ways: (1) it should focus on all parties that express the populist message to a lesser or larger extent; (2) it should take into account *how* populist parties are –populism is a matter of degree and parties can be more or less populist.

There exists a widely held belief that those who vote for populist parties are those with a lower socio-economic position –the so-called 'losers of globalization' – who are nationalist and Eurosceptic (Kriesi et al., 2006; Kriesi, Grande, Lachat, Dolezal, & Bornschier, 2008). The most important reason for this belief is probably that most studies of populist voting concern populist *right-wing* voting only. And indeed, these studies have shown that voters for the populist radical right have low socioeconomic positions (Lubbers et al., 2002), are anti-immigrant (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Van der Brug et al., 2000) and Eurosceptic (Werts, Scheepers, & Lubbers, 2012). Recent studies of supporters of the radical left have come to highly similar conclusions (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007; Visser et al., 2014). The radical left electorate turns out to have low socioeconomic positions and to be rather distrustful towards the EU.

The main question of this paper is what the populist voter looks like. Are the supporters of more populist parties indeed the losers of globalization with nationalist anti-EU attitudes? Based on a combination of party-level data on the degree of populism of parties (collected by means of an automated content analysis) with individual-level data on socio-demographics, attitudes and voting behavior (coming from the European Social Survey, 2002-2012) in four political systems in Western Europe (Flanders, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland), I show that the claim that it is mainly the nationalist and Eurosceptic loser of globalization who votes populist is not tenable. Instead, this paper demonstrates that the populist voter is discontent with political actors and institutions, holds

a radical position on the general left-right scale, is in favor of economic redistribution by the state, and is not religious.

My conclusions are relevant beyond the scholarly literature. The Western European public debate is replete with analyses of the increasing successes of populist parties. In order to fully understand the rise of these parties and the political changes they have brought about, we should not only focus on the electoral supply side. The success of populists is just as much shaped by the demand side of the electorate market. Curiously, this demand side is to a large extent still a black box. What does the populist support base look like?

The paper proceeds as follows. In the following section I discuss the concepts of populism and populist voting. Then, I pay attention to the most important explanations for populist voting. In this section I also formulate my main hypotheses. The third part of the paper concerns the case selection and a discussion of the employed content analysis of election manifestos. After a discussion of the main measurements and method I present the findings. In the concluding section I connect the main findings to the existing literature, I pay attention to some shortcomings of this study, and I discuss some possible strategies for future research.

Populist voting

Although the concept of populism is a highly contested concept, scholars increasingly agree about an appropriate definition of the term. Cas Mudde (2004: 543) defines populism as "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people".[1] Kirk Hawkins (2009: 1042) proposes a highly similar definition: populism is, according to him, "a Manichean discourse that identifies Good with a unified will of the people and Evil with a conspiring elite". These definitions have in common that: (1) they focus on the antagonistic relationship between the good people and the evil elite; and (2) they conceive of populism as a set of ideas (Hawkins, Riding, & Mudde, 2012).

Populists conceive of the people as a homogeneous entity, devoid of divisions. They are 'people-centrist' because they argue that the will of the people should be the point of departure of all political decision-making (Taggart, 2000). The term 'the people' could refer to the nation, the electorate, peasants or to the proletariat (Canovan, 1981). Populists are anti-elitist because they accuse the elite of being incompetent, arrogant and/or selfish (Barr, 2009; Canovan, 2002; Laclau,

[1] Populism differs from full ideologies such as liberalism, socialism and conservatism. Full ideologies offer all-inclusive views of the world. Thin ideologies focus on a confined range of concepts. Populism focuses on the relationship between the elite and the people.

2005). The critique could be directed towards political elites, economic elites, media elites and/or cultural elites (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007).

The mentioned definitions do not only have in common that they emphasize people-centrism and anti-elitism. They also share with each other that they perceive populism as more than merely a particular rhetoric, style or strategy. Populism is conceived of as being a substantive message – or a set of ideas (Hawkins et al., 2012). As a set of ideas, populism can be attached to different ideologies, ranging from left-wing to right-wing and from progressive to conservative. Populism has therefore been compared to a chameleon: it takes on the color of the environment in which it occurs (Taggart, 2000). Moreover, the populist message can be endorsed to a lesser or larger extent. This makes populism a matter of degree: parties, media or individuals can be more or less populist. Recent empirical studies of populism – be it studies of populism among parties, in the media or among people – all conceive of populism as a message that can be endorsed to a lesser or larger extent (Akkerman et al., n.d.; Hawkins, 2010; Pauwels, 2011; Rooduijn, 2014).

Most previous studies on populist voting focused on either the radical right or the radical left. If we aim at making inferences about populist voting *in general*, however, relying on these studies will lead to flawed conclusions for three main reasons: (1) these analyses are not inclusive enough because many other (non-radical) parties that might also express a populist message are excluded from the analysis; (2) these analyses are contaminated by the specific ideological positions of the voters for these particular party families (e.g. anti-immigrant attitudes when it comes to radical right parties and attitudes toward welfare redistribution when it comes to radical left parties); and (3) these analyses do not take into account that populism is a matter of degree. As said, parties are not either populist or not populist but they are *more* or *less* populist.

Hence, in this study populist voting is not a dichotomous variable (voting for a populist party or not), but a continuous variable (voting for a more or less populist party). In other words, I focus on the degree of populism of the party a respondent voted for. It is important to emphasize that the term 'populist voting' refers to the *act* of voting for a more populist party. The term explicitly does not refer to someone's voting *motivation*. One could vote for a more populist party because of its populism, but one might just as well vote for this party for other reasons.

Explaining populist voting

Which variables affect the degree of populism of the party a person votes for? Because it has been shown that a strong relationship exists between the degree of populism of a party and its left-right radicalism (Rooduijn & Akkerman 2013), the most likely factors explaining populist voting are those variables which have been found to affect both voting for the radical left and the radical right.

Kriesi et al. (2008; 2006) claim that the Western European societal landscape has changed profoundly. A new political cleavage is said to have developed, which distinguishes the winners from the losers of globalization. The winners are those who profit from international competition and have positive ideas about cultural diversity and European integration (e.g. highly educated entrepreneurs). The losers are those who feel threatened by the opening of borders and hold negative attitudes toward immigration and European unification (e.g. lower educated employees in traditionally protected sectors). The losers of globalization thus have socio-economically left-wing attitudes (protection of the welfare state) and socio-culturally right-wing attitudes (negativity toward immigration and European unification). Kriesi et al. (2008: 19) argue that the transformation of the Western European societal landscape is also represented in terms of political supply and electoral behavior:

> "We consider those parties that most successfully appeal to the interests and fears of the 'losers' of globalization to be the driving force of the current transformation of the Western European party systems. In most countries, it is [the] parties of the populist right who have been able to formulate a highly attractive ideological package for the 'losers' of economic transformations and cultural diversity."

This theory implies that those who vote for populist radical right parties will generally hold lower socioeconomic positions. Various studies have shown that this is indeed the case. To start with, it has been shown that those who vote for these parties tend to be lower educated (Arzheimer, 2009; Lubbers et al., 2002). It has also been shown that radical right voters tend to come from lower social classes (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Van der Brug et al., 2000). Similarly, those who are unemployed are more likely to vote for the radical right as well (Lubbers et al., 2002; Van der Brug et al., 2000).

Kriesi et al. (2006; 2008) pay almost no attention to the populist left. This is remarkable because it might be expected that the losers of globalization are not only inclined to vote for populist right-wing parties, but also for populist left-wing parties. After all, populist left-wing parties also call for protection of the welfare state and also criticize various aspects of the opening of borders and the process of European unification (see March & Mudde, 2005). Visser et al. (2014) indeed find that the unemployed and those with lower incomes are more likely to support radical left ideologies. Lubbers and Scheepers (2007) also find that those with lower class positions are more likely to vote for the radical left. Interestingly, both studies show that education exerts a positive effect on radical left voting. Most likely because those with a higher education often

subscribe to values emphasized by radical left parties (e.g., solidarity, equality). Pauwels (2014) has indeed found that when it comes to voting for populist parties in general, education does not exert a negative effect. I therefore expect that someone's socioeconomic position – but not education – has a positive effect on the degree of populism of the party voted for.

> H1: The lower someone's socioeconomic position (class, unemployment and income) is, the higher the degree of populism of the party s/he voted for will be.

The above-mentioned expectations also imply that those who vote for radical right and radical left parties are more likely to be nationalist. After all, the 'losers of globalization' oppose the process of increasing globalization because they fear losing their jobs and their identity (Kriesi et al., 2008). One of the ways in which this nationalism expresses itself among the supporters of radical right parties is anti-immigrant attitudes. Those who vote for radical right parties often do so because they agree with their fierce anti-immigrant positions (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Van der Brug et al., 2000). Most radical left supporters do not share these anti-immigrant attitudes (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007) because they have rather cosmopolitan attitudes. However, when we look at attitudes towards European unification, radical right and radical left nationalisms reveal themselves in rather similar ways. Both supporters of the radical left and the radical right tend to be rather Eurosceptic (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007; Visser et al., 2014; Werts et al., 2012). This is not strange, because the parties that express Eurosceptic attitudes are those parties positioned at the fringes of the political spectrum (De Vries & Edwards, 2009; Halikiopoulou, Nanou, & Vasilopoulou, 2012; L. Hooghe, Marks, & Wilson, 2002). I therefore expect that:

> H2: The more Eurosceptic an individual is, the higher the degree of populism of the party s/he voted for will be.

Another variable that has often been linked to voting for the radical right is political distrust. Various studies have shown that those voting for these parties tend to be discontented with politics (Bélanger & Aarts, 2006; Betz, 1994; Swyngedouw, 2001). It is likely that the politically discontented vote for populist radical right parties because the negative attitude towards politics of these parties is congruent with their own ideas. I label those who vote populist out of political distrust 'protest voters'. According to Bergh (2004: 385), "protest voting is the act of voting for a political party as a means of expressing political distrust. The extent to which supporters of a particular party are protest voters is measured by the effect of political distrust on support for that party". Although the

literature focuses on voting for the radical right, it could be expected that protest voting also holds for other parties that express a populist message (see Schumacher & Rooduijn, 2013). After all, that support for the radical right can be explained by protest voting is not due to the radical right ideology of the party, but to the anti-elitist message in which the party attacks the 'established political order'. Support for a left-wing populist party or any other party that expresses such a message might just as well be explained by protest voting. Some studies have indeed shown that political dissatisfaction exerts a positive effect on voting for populists (M. Hooghe, Marien, & Pauwels, 2013; Pauwels, 2014). This leads to the third hypothesis:

> H3: The more politically dissatisfied an individual is, the higher the degree of populism of the party s/he voted for will be.

It might also be expected that those who hold radical positions on the general left-right axis are likely to vote for more populist parties. After all, radical left-right positions often point to attitudes that are not congruent with those of established mainstream parties. It might therefore well be the case that these voters are sensitive to the by populist parties expressed message that the political elite does not listen anymore to ordinary citizens. I therefore expect that:

> H4: The more radical an individual is on the general left-right scale, the higher the degree of populism of the party s/he voted for will be.

Finally, it has been shown that religiosity affects both voting for the radical right (Lubbers et al., 2002) and supporting the radical left (Visser et al., 2014). It might be the case that those who are more religious are more likely to attend church and are, as a consequence, less likely to be socially isolated, and will therefore be less likely to vote for 'outsider' populist parties.

> H5: The more less religious an individual is, the higher the degree of populism of the party s/he voted for will be.

Selected cases and content analysis

To assess the degree of populism of parties, I executed an automated content analysis of election manifestos. I employed the dictionary developed by Rooduijn & Pauwels (2011) that has been shown to measure populism both validly and reliably (see Appendix A for the dictionary). For each party

manifesto the relative number of words associated with populism is computed. This leads to the so-called populism score; the higher the score, the more populist a party manifesto is. Because the dictionary was developed in Dutch, English, Italian and German, I have only applied it to manifestos written in those languages.[2] Italy is missing from the analysis because individual-level data from this country are missing (see below). Yet I have been able to include Dutch-speaking Flanders and German-speaking Switzerland. Because individual data from Austria were missing as well, I have not included this case in the analysis. I have not included the UK in my analysis because the party system in this country is strongly different from the party systems in the other countries under investigation, making cross-country comparisons problematic. Moreover, the UK seems to be an outlier when it comes to the degree of populism expressed by mainstream parties (Mair, 2002; Mudde, 2004; Rooduijn et al., 2014a).

Hence, I focus on four political systems in Western Europe: Flanders, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. These political systems represent a wide variation of populist successes – both across and within these systems. For example, regarding variation across cases when it comes to radical right-wing populism, Switzerland and Germany are interesting cases. Radical right populists have been very successful in Switzerland (*Schweizerische Volkspartei*, SVP), but very unsuccessful in Germany (*Republikaner*). Radical left-wing populists, on the other hand, have had vast electoral successes in the Netherlands (*Socialistische Partij*, SP), but not in Switzerland. Focusing on variation over time, Flanders and the Netherlands are interesting cases because the success of the *Vlaams Belang* (VB) has strongly dwindled over time, whereas the success of the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) has increased over the years. As I focus on populism as a matter of degree, I have also included other parties than the prototypical radical right- and radical left-wing parties. In fact, I have included all parties with seats in the national parliament for which election manifestos are available between 1998 and 2012. An overview is presented in Appendix B.

Because I analyze election manifestos that Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011) did not include in their study, I briefly pay attention to the face validity of my measurements. The measurements turn out to be sufficiently valid. 26 out of a total of 116 election manifestos come from allegedly populist parties. 2 of these manifestos are located below the first quartile of the distribution of populism scores (ranged from low to high), 2 of them between the first and the second quartile, 4 of them between the second and the third quartile and 18 of them have populism scores higher than the third quartile. This indicates that the allegedly populist parties indeed have rather populist manifestos.

[2] Translating the dictionary into other languages leads to measurements with low face validity. The reason is most probably that the language populists employ is highly context-sensitive – something also acknowledged by Rooduijn and Pauwels. The results of the mentioned analyses are available upon request.

In Figure 1 the average populism scores of the 12 most populist parties are displayed (with a populism score of more than 0.05). 9 out of a total of 10 allegedly populist parties turn out to be among these top 12 most populist parties (they are colored black). The only exception is the Dutch *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (LPF). This exception has already been noted by Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011). The reason might well be that this was the first manifesto of the party and it might have tried to be as little populist as possible. Doubtful cases are the German *Grünen* (Greens) and the Flemish *Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie* (N-VA) (they are colored grey). Usually these parties are not labelled as populist. However, that they endorse the populist message to some extent should not come as a surprise. It has been argued that progressive green parties can also be populist (Mudde, 2004), and it has been shown that the N-VA employs an anti-establishment discourse (Pauwels & Rooduijn, n.d.). One mainstream party – the German *Freie Demokratische Partei* (FDP) – is included in this list of 12 most populist parties (it is colored white). The reason why this party belongs to the most populist parties might be that this party regularly denounces elite corruption – much more often than the other German mainstream parties do. However, it needs to be taken into account that this party is much less populist than most allegedly populist parties studied here.

[Figure 1 about here]

Measurements and method

The individual-level data used in this study come from the European Social Survey (ESS, 2002-2012). These data have been linked to the populism scores which resulted from the content analysis of election manifestos in the following way. One of the questions which is consistently asked in the ESS is what party a respondent voted for during the previous national elections. This categorical party choice variable has been replaced by the continuous populism score of the respective party. Hence, if a Dutch respondent has indicated during the second wave of the ESS (2004) that he or she voted Labour (PvdA) during the previous elections (held in 2003), the populism score of Labour's 2003 manifesto is ascribed to this respondent. If the 2012 ESS survey indicates that a German respondent has voted for the Green party during the previous elections (held in 2009), the populism score of the Green party's 2009 manifesto is ascribed to this individual. Hence, the degree of populism of the party voted for is the dependent variable in this study.

The socioeconomic variables have been measured as follows: class is measured with the Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero (EGP) classification scheme (Erikson, Goldthorpe, & Portocarero,

1979)[3], income is measured in deciles, and employment status is measured with a dummy variable in which 0 = employed and 1 = unemployed. Level of education is measured by means of 5 categories: (1) less than lower secondary education; (2) lower secondary education completed; (3) upper secondary education completed; (4) post-secondary non-tertiary education completed; (5) tertiary education completed.

Euroscepticism is measured on an 11-pointsscale with the question whether European unification should go further (0) or whether it has already gone too far (10).[4] Political dissatisfaction is measured by means of two variables: dissatisfaction with democracy and political distrust. Dissatisfaction with democracy is measured with the question how satisfied respondents are with the way democracy works in their country. The answering categories are coded so that they range from 0 (extremely satisfied) to 10 (extremely dissatisfied). Political distrust is measured by means of a scale including two variables: trust in parliament and trust in politicians.[5] The two items are summed up and recoded so that they range from 0 (complete trust) to 10 (no trust at all). The reliability of this scale is satisfactory (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.84). An individual's general left-right position was measured with the following question: 'where would you place yourself on [a scale] where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?' The variable was recoded so that -5 = 'left' and '5' = 'right'. The variable left-right radicalism is this variable squared. The variable religiosity ranges from 'not at all religious' (0) to 'very religious' (10).

I control for several attitudinal variables, such as satisfaction with the economy ('how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy?'; 0 = 'extremely dissatisfied' and 10 = 'extremely satisfied'), satisfaction with the government ('how satisfied are you with the way [the government] is doing its job?'; 0 = 'extremely dissatisfied' and 10 = 'extremely satisfied'), someone's attitude toward income redistribution ('the government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels; 1 = 'disagree strongly' and 4 = 'agree strongly'), someone's attitude toward immigrants (1 = 'none should be allowed to come and live here' and 4 'many should be allowed to come and live here') and someone's political interest (1 = 'not at all interested' and 4 = 'very interested'). I also control for age and gender (0=male; 1=female). See Table 1 for an overview of the employed variables.

[3] I recoded this class scheme into a variable with 6 categories: (1) semi- and unskilled manual workers and agricultural laborers; (2) manual supervisors and skilled manual workers; (3) small self-employed and farmers; (4) routine non-manual workers; (5) lower level professionals and managers; (6) higher level professionals, managers and entrepreneurs.

[4] Because this variable has not been asked in all waves of the ESS it will not be included in all regression models (see below).

[5] Another variable, which measures trust in *parties*, has not been included in all waves of the ESS. I have therefore not included it in this scale. The 'trust in parties' variable is, however, strongly correlated with both trust in parliament (r = 0.70) and trust in politicians (r = 0.87).

[Table 1 about here]

I estimated OLS regression models and included country- and year-fixed effects to take into account that respondents are nested within both countries and years. I clustered the standard errors by country-year. The observations are weighted using the population size weights and the design weights, which are provided by the ESS.

Findings

In Table 2 I present the findings of the pooled analysis. Model 1 shows the findings regarding the socioeconomic variables, religiosity and the controls age and gender. Social class has a small effect on populist voting. Only the category of higher level professionals, managers and entrepreneurs differs from the reference category of semi- and unskilled manual workers and agricultural laborers. Income does not exert a significant effect. Employment status and gender are not significantly related to populist voting. Also education does not exert an effect on the degree of populism of the party voted for. Most likely because the lower educated tend to support populist radical right parties, whereas the higher educated are more likely to vote for populist radical left parties. Age turns out to be significantly related to populist voting: the younger vote for more populist parties ($b = -0.01$, significant at $p < 0.01$). Religiosity exerts a rather strong effect as well. The regression coefficient of -0.11 (significant at $p < 0.01$) indicates that the more religious a person is, the lower the populism score is of the party he or she voted for.

[Table 2 about here]

In Model 2 I added the attitudinal variables dissatisfaction with democracy, political distrust, general left-right position and general left-right radicalism. Only the variables political distrust and left-right radicalism, turn out to significantly affect populist voting. As predicted, those who are more distrustful towards political actors and institutions and those with a more radical position on the general left-right axis tend to vote for parties with a higher populism score. In Model 3 I have, in addition to these attitudinal variables, also included the variable Euroscepticism in the analysis. This

variable does not significantly affect populist voting. It has only been included in Model 3 because it has not been asked in all the waves of the ESS. Including it in our model reduces the number of cases under analysis with more than 7,000. In Model 4 I have included all other attitudinal control variables. Satisfaction with the government, satisfaction with the economy, attitudes towards immigrants and political interest are not significantly related to populist voting. Interestingly, however, attitudes towards income distribution are related to populism. The more one thinks that the government should reduce differences in income levels, the more populist the party is one votes for ($b = 0.13$, significant at $p < 0.01$). The reason for this finding might be that populist radical right parties have become increasingly left-wing in socioeconomic terms (De Lange, 2007).

[Table 3 about here]

Table 3 gives an overview of the regression analyses per country. The table shows whether the effects are positive or negative. Statistically significant effects are marked grey. Social class exerts a negative effect in all countries, but is significant only in Switzerland and the Netherlands. Income has a negative effect in Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands, but is statistically significant only in Switzerland and the Netherlands. The effect of income is positive (but not significant) in Belgium. In all countries employment status is positively related to populist voting, meaning that the unemployed are more likely to vote populist. However, the effect is significant only in Switzerland. Education has a negative effect in Belgium, Switzerland and Germany, but a positive effect in the Netherlands. The effect is significant only in Belgium and Switzerland. Age is in all countries significant and exerts a negative effect on populist voting. Gender exerts a significant effect in none of the countries. The separate country analyses show clearly that the negative effect of religiosity is not driven by one specific case. In all countries religiosity is negatively and significantly related to populist voting. The effect of dissatisfaction with democracy is positive in Belgium (significant), Germany (not significant) and the Netherlands (not significant). The effect is negative (but not significant) in Switzerland. Political distrust exerts a positive and significant effect in all countries under analysis. The picture is rather mixed when it comes to the general left-right position. In Belgium and Switzerland the effect is positive and significant, and in Germany and the Netherlands it is negative and significant. The effect of left-right radicalism is positive in all countries and only fails to reach statistical significance in Switzerland. Euroscepticism exerts a positive and significant effect in Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands, but is negatively (and not significantly) related to

populist voting in Germany. Satisfaction with the economy exerts in none of the countries a significant effect on populist voting. Satisfaction with the government is significant only in Switzerland and Germany. However, in Switzerland this effect is negative, whereas in Germany it is positive. Attitudes towards income redistribution are positively related to the degree of populism of the party voted for in all countries under investigation. Yet the effect is significant only in Germany and the Netherlands. Attitudes towards immigrants exert a positive and significant effect in Belgium, and Switzerland and a negative significant effect in Germany. In the Netherlands the effect is positive but not statistically significant. The variable political interests does not exert a significant effect in any of the for countries under analysis.

Conclusion

Various scholars have investigated the support bases of radical right parties (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Lubbers et al., 2002; Van der Brug et al., 2000; Zhirkov, 2014) and radical left parties (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2007; Visser et al., 2014). However, only very few studies have focused on which voters vote for *populist* parties (but see Pauwels, 2014a). This is remarkable because populist parties on both the left and the right are increasingly successful in Western Europe, and the populist message expressed by these parties has become more and more widespread in the public debate (Rooduijn, 2014).

Based on a combination of individual-level data about individuals' (socioeconomic) background characteristics, attitudes and voting behavior (coming from the European Social Survey, 2002-2012) and party-level data on the degree of populism of parties (collected by means of an automated content analysis) within four political systems in Western Europe (Flanders, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland), I show that, contrary to the expectations, those who vote for more populist parties are not the so-called 'losers of globalization' – i.e. those with lower socioeconomic positions who fear the opening of borders. The unemployed, those with lower incomes, and those with a lower education are not more likely to vote for populists. Only social class exerts an effect. However, this effect turns out to be statistically significant in only two of the four countries under analysis. Moreover, more Eurosceptic citizens are not more likely to vote for parties that express a strongly populist message either. Although populism and Euroscepticism have a lot in common and can easily be combined in a political discourse, the findings in this paper demonstrate that the two need not always go hand in hand (Mudde, 2007).

The variables most clearly explaining populist voting are political distrust, left-right radicalism, age and religiosity. As expected, those who vote for more populist parties tend to be distrustful towards political actors and institutions. The most likely reason is that this attitude

towards political actors and institutions matches well with the populist message according to which the (political) elite does not listen to ordinary citizens anymore. Next to political distrust, also left-right radicalism exerts a significant effect on populist voting. Those who hold a radical position on the general left-right-scale are more likely to vote for more populist parties. Most probably, this effect is due to the ideological distance of these citizens towards mainstream parties. Further, younger people seem to feel more attracted to parties that express a populist message than older people and more religious people are less likely to vote populist. Remarkably, there is also a small positive effect of socioeconomically left-wing attitudes on populist voting. The most likely reason is that when it comes to socioeconomic issues radical left and radical right parties are increasingly alike.

This is one of the first comparative studies into populist voting. yet, this paper has focused on only four Western European political systems. Upcoming studies of populist voting could aim at improving the measurement equivalence of computerized content analysis methods so that more (Western) European countries can be included in the analysis. Despite this shortcoming, this study has made various important contributions. First, it is the most encompassing study of populist voting to date. Second, in its assessment of the populist vote, it has relied on an innovative conceptualization and operationalization of populism as a matter of degree (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011). Third, this study has demonstrated that populist voting is not more common among the losers of globalization. The belief that populism is something for those with lower socioeconomic positions is probably due to the stubborn – but incorrect – one-on-one association of populism with the radical right.

Tables

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Populism score	26968	4.18	3.79	0	63
Class	23419	3.80	1.66	1	6
Income	23553	6.56	2.45	1	10
Employment status	26928	0.03	0.16	0	1
Education	26875	3.44	1.23	1	5
Euroscepticism	16988	4.70	2.58	0	10
Dissatisfaction with democracy	26698	4.14	2.14	0	10
Political distrust	26641	5.26	1.95	0	10
General left-right	26253	4.91	2.01	0	10
General left-right radicalism	26253	4.05	5.71	0	25
Satisfaction with economy	26756	5.14	2.15	0	10
Satisfaction with government	26634	4.62	2.16	0	10
Income redistribution	26787	3.57	1.08	1	5
Immigrants	26347	2.29	0.72	1	4
Political interests	26954	2.83	0.80	1	4
Age	26919	51.37	16.68	18	102
Gender	26965	0.50	0.50	0	1

Table 2: Regression analyses explaining the degree of populism of the party voted for

	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4
Class (ref = 1)				
2	-0.28	-0.30	-0.45	-0.29
	(0.17)	(0.19)	(0.27)	(0.19)
3	-0.32	-0.30	-0.43*	-0.28
	(0.18)	(0.16)	(0.19)	(0.16)
4	-0.10	-0.15	-0.26*	-0.14
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.09)
5	-0.06	-0.11	-0.25	-0.09
	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.18)	(0.12)
6	-0.27**	-0.27*	-0.42**	-0.22*
	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.13)	(0.09)
Income	-0.05	-0.03	0.00	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Employment status	0.59	0.57	0.88	0.58
	(0.49)	(0.53)	(0.71)	(0.52)
Education (ref=1)				
2	-0.09	-0.09	-0.30	-0.07
	(0.25)	(0.24)	(0.27)	(0.23)
3	-0.39	-0.38	-0.31	-0.37
	(0.23)	(0.24)	(0.29)	(0.25)
4	-0.32	-0.32	-0.22	-0.28
	(0.23)	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.26)
5	-0.22	-0.26	-0.21	-0.22
	(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.33)	(0.30)
Age	-0.01**	-0.01**	-0.02*	-0.01**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.00)
Gender	0.05	-0.01	0.02	-0.04
	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Religiosity	-0.11**	-0.07**	-0.05*	-0.07*
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Dissatisfaction with democracy		0.02	0.00	0.03
		(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Political distrust		0.05	0.06*	0.09**
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
General left-right		-0.18	-0.11	-0.18
		(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.12)
General left-right radicalism		0.03**	0.03**	0.04**
		(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Euroscepticism			0.01	
			(0.02)	
Satisfaction with economy				-0.03
				(0.02)
Satisfaction with government				0.09
				(0.07)
Income redistribution				0.13**
				(0.03)
Immigrants				0.03
				(0.09)
Political interest				-0.02
				(0.06)
Constant	6.12**	6.28**	7.12**	5.20**
	(0.6)	(0.78)	(1.26)	(0.66)
N	20,445	19,719	12,101	19,143
R-squared	0.09	0.11	0.12	0.11

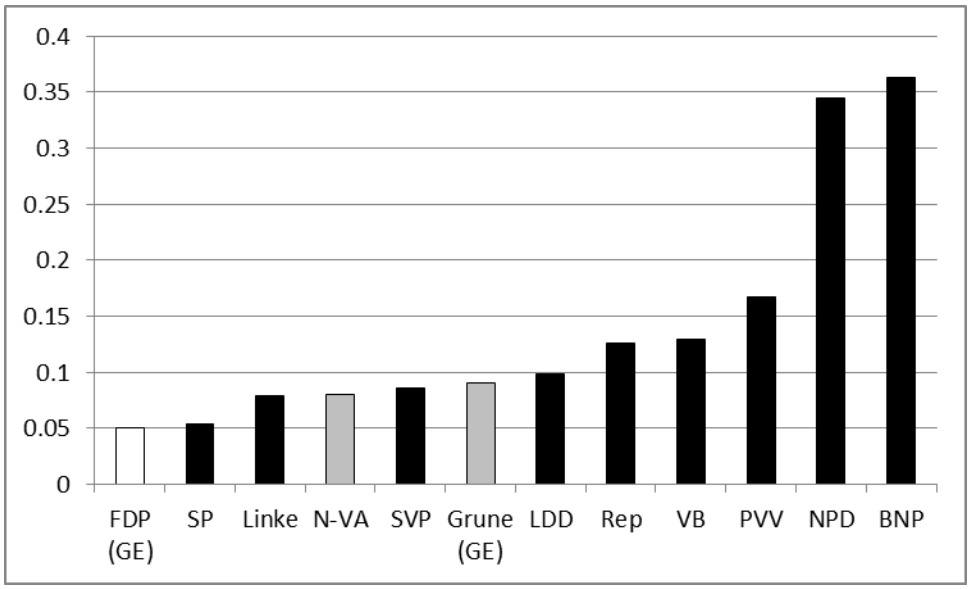
*: significant at $p < 0.05$. **: significant at $p < 0.01$. Two-tailed tests

Table 3: Regression analyses explaining the degree of populism of the party voted for per country (marked in grey = significant)

	Belgium	Switzerland	Germany	Netherlands
Class	-	-	-	-
Income	+	-	-	-
Employment status	+	+	+	+
Education	-	-	-	+
Age	-	-	-	-
Gender	-	-	+	-
Religiosity	-	-	-	-
Dissatisfaction with democracy	+	-	+	+
Political distrust	+	+	+	+
General left-right	+	+	-	-
General left-right radicalism	+	+	+	+
Euroscepticism	+	+	-	+
Satisfaction with economy	+	+	+	-
Satisfaction with government	+	-	+	-
Income redistribution	+	+	+	+
Immigrants	+	+	-	+
Political interest	+	+	-	+

Figures

Figure 1: Average populism scores of the 12 most populist parties



Appendix A: Dictionary for content analysis (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011)

Dutch	German
elit*	elit*
consensus*	konsens*
ondemocratisch*	undemokratisch*
ondemokratisch*	
corrupt*	korrupt*
propagand*	propagand*
politici*	politiker*
bedrog	täusch*
bedrieg	betrüg*
	betrug*
verraa	*verrat*
verrad	
schaam*	scham*
	schäm*
schand*	skandal*
waarheid*	wahrheit*
oneerlijk*	unfair*
	unehrlich*
establishm*	establishm*
heersend*	*herrsch*
leugen*	lüge*
lieg*	

Appendix B: Analyzed election manifestos

Country	Party	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
NL	CDA	1998	2003	2006	2010
	VVD	1998	2003	X	2010
	PvdA	1998	2003	2006	2010
	D66	1998	2003	2006	2010
	GroenLinks	1998	2003	2006	2010
	SP	1998	2003	2006	2010
	SGP	1998	2003	#	2010
	ChristenUnie	*	2003	2006	2010
	LPF	*	2003	*	*
	PvdD	*	2003	2006	2010
	PVV	*	*	2006	2010
GE	CDU/CSU	1998	2002	2005	2009
	SPD	1998	2002	2005	2009
	FDP	1998	2002	2005	2009
	Grünen	X	2002	2005	2009
	PDS/Die Linke	1998	2002	2005	2009
	Republikaner	X	2002	2005	#
	NPD	X	#	2005	2009
SW	Christdem	1999	2003	2007	
	Evangel	1999	2003	2007	
	FDP	1999	2003	2007	
	Grünen	1999	2003	2007	
	Liberalen	1999	2003	2007	
	SVP	1999	2003	2007	
	Socdem	1999	2003	2007	
FL	CD&V	1999	2003	2007	2010
	SP(.A)	1999	#	#	2010
	Groen	1999	2003	2007	2010
	N-VA	*	2003	2007	2010
	LDD	*	*	2007	2010
	VB	1999	2003	2007	2010
	Open VLD	1999	2003	2007	2010

X = not available

* = party did not exist yet or anymore

= not enough respondents in ESS

References

Akkerman, A., Mudde, C., & Zaslove, A. (n.d.). How Populist Are the People? Measuring Populist Attitudes in Voters. *Comparative Political Studies*. doi:10.1177/0010414013512600

Albertazzi, D., & McDonnell, D. (2008). Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Albertazzi, D., & Mueller, S. (2013). Populism and Liberal Democracy: Populists in Government in Austria, Italy, Poland and Switzerland. *Government and Opposition*, *48*(03), 343–371. doi:10.1017/gov.2013.12

Arzheimer, K. (2009). Contextual Factors and the Extreme Right Vote in Western Europe, 1980–2002. *American Journal of Political Science*, *53*(2), 259–275.

Arzheimer, K., & Carter, E. (2006). Political opportunity structures and right-wing extremist party success. *European Journal of Political Research*, *45*(3), 419–443.

Barr, R. R. (2009). Populists, Outsiders and Anti-Establishment Politics. *Party Politics*, *15*(1), 29–48.

Bélanger, E., & Aarts, K. (2006). Explaining the Rise of the LPF: Issues, Discontent, and the 2002 Dutch Election. *Acta Politica*, *41*, 4–20.

Bergh, J. (2004). Protest Voting in Austria, Denmark, and Norway. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, *27*(4), 367–389.

Betz, H.-G. (1994). *Radical right-wing populism in Western Europe*. Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Canovan, M. (1981). *Populism*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Canovan, M. (2002). Taking Politics to the People: Populism as the Ideology of Democracy. In Y. Mény & Y. Surel (Eds.), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (pp. 25–44). New York: Palgrave.

De Lange, S. L. (2007). A New Winning Formula?: The Programmatic Appeal of the Radical Right. *Party Politics*, *13*(4), 411–435. doi:10.1177/1354068807075943

De Vries, C. E., & Edwards, E. E. (2009). Taking Europe To Its Extremes: Extremist Parties and Public Euroscepticism. *Party Politics*, *15*(1), 5–28. doi:10.1177/1354068808097889

Erikson, R., Goldthorpe, J. H., & Portocarero, L. (1979). Intergenerational class mobility in three Western European societies: England, France and Sweden. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *30*(4), 415–441.

Halikiopoulou, D., Nanou, K., & Vasilopoulou, S. (2012). The paradox of nationalism: The common denominator of radical right and radical left euroscepticism. *European Journal of Political Research*, *51*(4), 504–539. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6765.2011.02050.x

Hawkins, K. A. (2009). Is Chávez Populist?: Measuring Populist Discourse in Comparative Perspective. *Comparative Political Studies*, *42*(8), 1040–1067.

Hawkins, K. A. (2010). *Venezuela's Chavismo and Populism in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hawkins, K. A., Riding, S., & Mudde, C. (2012). *Measuring Populist Attitudes* (pp. 1–35). Retrieved from http://www.concepts-methods.org/Files/WorkingPaper/PC_55_Hawkins_Riding_Mudde.pdf

Hooghe, L., Marks, G., & Wilson, C. J. (2002). Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions on European Integration? *Comparative Political Studies*, *35*(8), 965–989. doi:10.1177/001041402236310

Hooghe, M., Marien, S., & Pauwels, T. (2013). Where Do Distrusting Voters Turn if There is No Viable Exit or Voice Option? The Impact of Political Trust on Electoral Behaviour in the Belgian Regional Elections of June 2009. *Government and Opposition*, *46*(2), 245–273. doi:10.1111/j.1477-7053.2010.01338.x

Ivarsflaten, E. (2008). What Unites Right-Wing Populists in Western Europe? *Comparative Political Studies*, *41*(1), 3–23. doi:10.1177/0010414006294168

Jagers, J., & Walgrave, S. (2007). Populism as political communication style: An empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium. *European Journal of Political Research*, *46*(3), 319–345.

Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., & Bornschier, S. (2008). *West European Politics in the Age of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., & Frey, T. (2006). Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research*, *45*(6), 921–956. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00644.x

Laclau, E. (2005). *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso.

Lubbers, M., Gijsberts, M., & Scheepers, P. (2002). Extreme right-wing voting in Western Europe. *European Journal of Political Research*, *41*(3), 345–378. doi:10.1111/1475-6765.00015

Lubbers, M., & Scheepers, P. (2007). Euro-Scepticism and Extreme Voting patterns in Europe: Social cleavages and socio-political attitudes determining voting for the far left, the far right, and non-voting. In G. Loosveldt, M. Swyngedouw, & B. Cambré (Eds.), *Measuring Meaningful Data in Social Research* (pp. 71–92). Leuven: Acco.

Mair, P. (2002). Populist Democracy vs Party Democracy. In Y. Mény & Y. Surel (Eds.), *Democracies and the Populist Challenge* (pp. 81–98). New York: Palgrave.

Mény, Y., & Surel, Y. (2002). Democracies and the Populist Challenge. New York: Palgrave.

Mudde, C. (2004). The Populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition*, *39*(3), 541–563.

Mudde, C. (2007). *Populist radical right parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mudde, C., & Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2012). *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy*. (C. Mudde & C. Rovira Kaltwasser, Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pauwels, T. (2011). Measuring Populism: A Quantitative Text Analysis of Party Literature in Belgium. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties*, *21*(1), 97–119. Retrieved from http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/17457289.2011.539483

Pauwels, T. (2014). *Populism in Western Europe: Comparing Belgium, Germany and The Netherlands*. New York: Routledge.

Pauwels, T., & Rooduijn, M. (n.d.). Populism in Belgium in times of crisis: A longitudinal study of the ideology of the Vlaams Belang. In H. Kriesi & S. Pappas, Takis (Eds.), *Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession*. ECPR Press.

Rooduijn, M. (2014). The Mesmerising Message: The Diffusion of Populism in Public Debates in Western European Media. *Political Studies*, *62*(4), 726–744. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12074

Rooduijn, M., De Lange, S. L., & Van der Brug, W. (2014a). A populist Zeitgeist? Programmatic contagion by populist parties in Western Europe. *Party Politics*, *20*(4), 563–575. doi:10.1177/1354068811436065

Rooduijn, M., De Lange, S. L., & Van der Brug, W. (2014b). A populist Zeitgeist? Programmatic contagion by populist parties in Western Europe. *Party Politics*. doi:10.1177/1354068811436065

Rooduijn, M., & Pauwels, T. (2011). Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis. *West European Politics*, *34*(6), 1272–1283.

Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2012). The ambivalence of populism: threat and corrective for democracy. *Democratization*, *19*(2), 184–208. doi:10.1080/13510347.2011.572619

Schumacher, G., & Rooduijn, M. (2013). Sympathy for the "devil"? Voting for populists in the 2006 and 2010 Dutch general elections. *Electoral Studies*, *32*(1), 124–133. doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2012.11.003

Stanley, B. (2008). The thin ideology of populism. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *13*(1), 95–110.

Swyngedouw, M. (2001). The subjective cognitive and affective map of extreme right voters: using open-ended questions in exit polls. *Electoral Studies*, *20*(2), 217–241. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S026137940000010X

Taggart, P. (2000). *Populism*. *Concepts in the Social Sciences*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Van der Brug, W., Fennema, M., & Tillie, J. (2000). Anti-immigrant parties in Europe: Ideological or protest vote? *European Journal of Political Research*, *37*(1), 77–102. doi:10.1023/a:1007013503658

Van der Brug, W., Fennema, M., & Tillie, J. (2005). Why Some Anti-Immigrant Parties Fail and Others Succeed. *Comparative Political Studies*, *38*(5), 537–573. doi:10.1177/0010414004273928

Visser, M., Lubbers, M., Kraaykamp, G., & Jaspers, E. (2014). Support for radical left ideologies in Europe. *European Journal of Political Research*, *53*(3), 541–558. doi:10.1111/1475-6765.12048

Werts, H., Scheepers, P., & Lubbers, M. (2012). Euro-scepticism and radical right-wing voting in Europe, 2002-2008: Social cleavages, socio-political attitudes and contextual characteristics determining voting for the radical right. *European Union Politics*. doi:10.1177/1465116512469287

Weyland, K. (2001). Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics. *Comparative Politics*, *34*(1), 1–22.

Zhirkov, K. (2014). Nativist but not alienated: A comparative perspective on the radical right vote in Western Europe. *Party Politics*, *20*(2), 286–296. doi:10.1177/1354068813511379