

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE UNDER POPULIST GOVERNMENTS

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Overview

This Paper

Research Question

- ▶ How do populist parties in power use constitutional changes?

Theory

- ▶ More Constitutional Changes under populist government
- ▶ Effects differ with what aspect of democracy is considered

Data

- ▶ V-Party, V-Dem & Comparative Constitutions Project
- ▶ Country-Year Observations from 1990-2020

Research Design

- ▶ Multi-Level Model with Country-Intercepts

THEORY

DO POPULISTS USE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES MORE FREQUENTLY?

POPULISM

“[Populism is 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.**”

Mudde (2004)

POPULISM & CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

General Will

- ▶ Constitutions are political (Blokker 2020, Mazzoleni & Voerman 2020)
- ▶ Mirror the will of the people (Tushnet 2015, Fabbri 2020)
- ▶ Popular Sovereignty as key of democracy (Rovira Kaltwasser 2012, Mazzoleni & Voerman 2020)
- ▶ Radical Democracy (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2013)

Homogenous People

THE EFFECTS OF CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES UNDER POPULIST GOVERNMENTS

HETEROGENOUS POPULISM

- ▶ Exclusionary vs inclusionary populism (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2013)
 - ▶ Exclusion of people who are not considered part of the people
 - ▶ Inclusion of more people in society in politics
- ▶ Strong impact of host-ideology on populist demands
- ▶ Different emphasis on participation

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

- ▶ Understanding of a **homogenous** people
- ▶ The **general will** as the only legitimate input in the decision-making process
 - ▶ Majoritarianism (Blokker 2019, Urbinati 2019)
 - ▶ Executive Aggrandizement (De La Torre & De Lara 2020, Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2013)
 - ▶ Disregard for checks and balances

Hypotheses 2: The quality of liberal democracy is decreased

Research Design

Data

CCP

- ▶ Yearly Data on Constitutional Changes

V-Dem

- ▶ Yearly Data on Democratic Quality

V-Party

- ▶ Party Data for Election Years
- ▶ Government Participation
- ▶ Populism Score
- ▶ Economic Left-Right Score
 - ▶ Fill Scores Until next Election

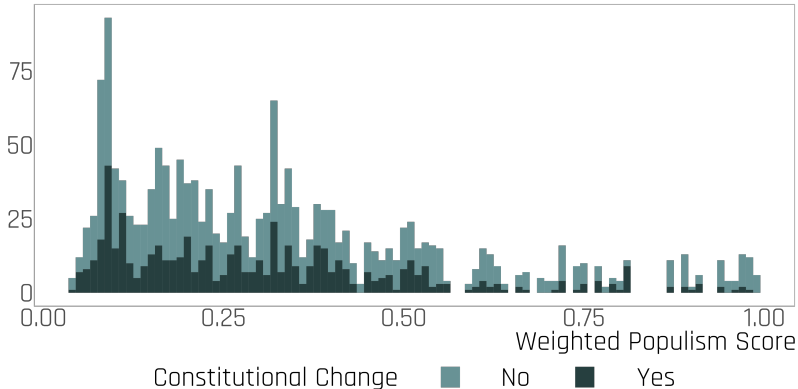
Time-Frame

- ▶ 1990 - 2020

POPULISM IN POWER

Continuous V-Party Measure

- ▶ Expert Survey from 2019



Histogram of Continuous Weighted Government Score

ESTIMATION H1

Independent Variable

- ▶ Weighted Populism Score per Government

Dependent Variable

- ▶ Constitutional Change Dummy

THANK YOU

APPENDIX

BINARY POPULISM

Binary Measure

- ▶ Expert Survey PopuList for Europe (Rooduijn et al 2019)
- ▶ Author Coding for Latin America (Huber & Schimpf 2015, Ruth 2018, Ruth-Lovell/Grahn 2022)
- ▶ Government level

