How Populist Are the People? Measuring Populist Attitudes in Voters

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Abstract

The sudden and perhaps unexpected appearance of populist parties in the 1990s shows no sign of immediately vanishing. The lion's share of the research on populism has focused on defining populism, on the causes for its rise and continued success, and more recently on its influence on government and on public policy. Less research has, however, been conducted on measuring populist attitudes among voters. In this article, we seek to fill this gap by measuring populist attitudes and to investigate whether these attitudes can be linked with party preferences. We distinguish three political attitudes: (1) populist attitudes, (2) pluralist attitudes, and (3) elitist attitudes. We devise a measurement of these attitudes and explore their validity by way of using a principal component analysis on a representative Dutch data set (N = 600). We indeed find three statistically separate scales of political attitudes. We further validated the scales by testing whether they are linked to party preferences and find that voters who score high on the populist scale have a significantly higher preference for the Dutch populist parties, the Party for Freedom, and the Socialist Party.

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Introduction

The sudden and unexpected rise of populist parties since the 1990s has shown no immediate sign of abating. The *populist* radical right is the most successful new party family in postwar Western Europe (e.g., Mudde, 2007), the Tea Party has become an influential political force in the United States (e.g., Skocpol & Williamson, 2012), and populist leaders have proven to be lasting figures in Latin American politics (e.g., Remmer, 2012). In addition to this geographical diversity, populist parties span the left–right political spectrum: from the populist radical right such as the National Front in France or One Nation in Australia, to neoliberal populists like Berlusconi in Italy and Fujimori in Peru, to left-wing populists such as Chávez in Venezuela, and The Left in Germany.

The continued success of populism is reflected in the academic literature (Bale, 2012; Mudde, 2007). The lion's share of this research has focused on defining populism (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008a; Hawkins, 2009; Mudde, 2004; Weyland, 2001; Zaslove, 2008), on explaining the rise and continued success of populist parties (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008b; Mény & Surel, 2002b; Mudde, 2007), and more recently on assessing their influence on the political system (e.g., Akkerman, 2012; Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2005, 2010; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012b). Much less research has been conducted on measuring populist attitudes at the mass level (few exceptions include: Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012; Hawkins, Riding, & Mudde, 2012; Stanley, 2011). To be sure, numerous studies have focused on (supposedly) related attitudes, such as trust and satisfaction with democracy and/or immigration (e.g., Doyle, 2011; Fieschi & Heywood, 2004; Ivarsflaten, 2008; Norris, 2005; Oesch, 2008), assuming that low levels of trust or satisfaction with democracy and opposition to immigration are related to populism or that they serve as a breeding ground for (right-wing) populism.

As illuminating as these studies are, they do not directly measure populist attitudes. First, we should not assume that populism is automatically linked with opposition to immigration (March, 2011; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). And, second, even though low levels of trust and satisfaction with democracy may constitute a breeding ground for populism, they are not direct measures of populist attitudes among the voting public per se (Mudde, 2007; Norris, 2005).

In this article, we seek to measure populist attitudes directly and to investigate whether these attitudes can be linked with party preferences. The

article is organized as follows. First, we construct a minimal definition of populism (Mudde, 2007; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012a; Weyland, 2001). Building on this definition, and on earlier attempts to measure populism (notably Hawkins et al., 2012), we, subsequently, construct a measure of populism that is both theoretically sound and empirically robust. This measure constitutes the basis for a series of questions that have been adopted for a web-based survey conducted in the Netherlands ($N = 600$). We perform a principal component analysis (PCA) to investigate whether it is possible to identify a populist dimension and distinguish it from other, related, ideological constructs, such as pluralism and elitism. Finally, we link these attitudes to voting preference for specific parties.

Populism Defined

It is common for academic scholarship to proclaim that populism is a (essentially) contested concept. The contention is that controversy over competing definitions is intrinsic to the field of populism. However, while such controversy did exist in earlier periods (Canovan, 1981; Ionescu & Gellner, 1969), this is no longer the case. Or, perhaps better said, there is currently much less controversy over how to define populism than ever before. The large number of (especially recent) studies of populism, most specifically in Europe and the Americas, has led to more consensus than is commonly acknowledged. This is not to say that populism in, for example, Latin America and in Europe is identical. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) note that populism in Latin America is left-wing, economic, and inclusive, while in Europe it is right-wing, identity-based and exclusionary.

The perceived confusion over how to define populism stems in part from the important role that context plays in determining the ideological positions of the populist actor (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). Context can influence, for example, whether the populist actor focuses on (opposing) globalization, immigration, imperialism, or Islam. Moreover, as populism is a thin-centered ideology (see below), it rarely exists on its own; it mostly attaches itself to other ideologies ranging from (neo-) liberalism, the radical right, to socialism (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Weyland, 1996; Zaslove, 2008). Any definition of populism must take these considerations into account, that is, it must be positioned at a high enough level of abstraction to "travel" across the ideological spectrum and across geographical regions. However, at the same time it is important not to stretch the concept too far, that is, it must be context-sensitive (Sartori, 1970). To achieve this, we use the following minimal definition, which includes only the necessary and sufficient conditions: Populism is a "thin-centered 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, 2007, p. 23).

Our minimal definition begins with a common starting point: the people. Populists define "the people" as the core and the heart of democracy. To be sure, this is not unique to populists: The sovereignty of the people also constitutes a core and defining feature of liberal democracy, often referred to as the representative pillar (Mair, 2002; Mény & Surel, 2002a). However, populists have a very specific understanding of the people. The people are viewed not only as sovereign, but also as homogeneous, pure, and virtuous. The people represent the backbone of society; they are the silent majority, constituting the basis of the good society (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008a; Mény & Surel, 2002a; Mudde, 2004; Zaslove, 2008). They are what Taggart (2002) refers to as the heartland.

The people are subsequently contrasted with the elite, that is, those who threaten the purity and unity of the sovereign people. The elite is seen as "evil," while the people are seen as "good." This distinction between "good" and "evil," or "pure" and "corrupt," is an essential distinction and a defining feature of populism; it further separates the populist concept of the people from that of the mainstream parties. The tension between "the people" and "the elite" is Manichean, that is, it has essentially a *moral* quality (Hawkins, 2009; Mudde, 2004).

Clearly defining a concept implies also defining what the concept is *not* (Goertz, 2006; Sartori, 1970). This provides theoretical clarity and clear boundaries between the concept and the non-concept. Furthermore, distinguishing between populism and non-populism increases the validity of the measure in the empirical stage. In this article, we contrast populism with pluralism and elitism (Hawkins et al., 2012; Mudde, 2004). Populists are skeptical of one of the cornerstones of liberal democracy, pluralism (Hawkins, 2009; Mudde, 2007; Plattner, 2010). Animosity toward pluralism emanates from the idea that the people are pure and homogeneous. Mudde (2007) notes that "populism is essentially a monist ideology, it is inherently opposed to division and pluralism" (p. 151). More specifically, populists are skeptical of the key features and institutional structures that are intrinsic to pluralism, that is, compromise, mediating institutional bodies, and procedures that ensure, most notably, minority rights. In opposition to a pluralist conception of democracy, there is an elective affinity with plebiscitary politics and the personalization of power (Mudde, 2007, 150-57; Weyland, 2001). Plebiscitary politics and direct personal representation, it is argued, are the best means for the direct and unmediated representation of the people. Obviously, it is often the populist leader who embodies the will of the homogeneous and sovereign people (Barr, 2009; Weyland, 2001; Zaslove, 2008).[1]

Theoretically, elitism represents the mirror image of populism (Mudde, 2004, 543-44). However, at the same time, elitism shares a key feature with populism: the Manichean division of society into the people and the elite. In sharp contrast to populism, elitism considers "the elite" as pure and virtuous and "the people" as corrupt. In practice, however, populism often has an ambiguous relationship with elitism. Even though populists call for more (direct) democracy, populist movements are often led by charismatic leaders and organized in highly centralized and personalized parties. Hence, it is not surprising that several definitions include leadership and charisma as defining features of populism (Plattner, 2010; Taggart, 2000; Weyland, 2001). And while elitism, charismatic leadership, and personalization are not the same thing, they often convey a similarly hierarchical concept of leadership. Moreover, elitism shares with populism a distain for politics as usual. Therefore, it is possible that, at least in practice, populist and elitist ideas are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but rather might overlap to some extent.

Measuring Populism: Data and Method

Treating populism as a thin-centered ideology implies that populism consists of a set of ideas concerning the world, democracy, and political representation (Hawkins, 2009; Hawkins et al., 2012). An added advantage of this approach is that populism can be measured in party manifestos, speeches, and at the individual level.

Recently, political scientists have begun to measure populism empirically. So far, the focus has been primarily on the internal supply-side, that is, on party platforms, party manifestoes, and leader speeches. A variety of techniques have been used, from holistic qualitative coding, paragraph coding, to computerized content analyses (Hawkins, 2009; Pauwels, 2011a; Rooduijn, de Lange, & van der Brug, 2012; Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011). Less prominent in the literature are measurements of populist attitudes at the individual level.

The first attempt at measuring populist attitudes at the micro level was published more than 45 years ago (Axelrod, 1967). However, it was based on a very U.S. centric and, by now, dated conceptualization of populism.[2] Only in the last couple of years new empirical studies have been published (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012; Hawkins et al., 2012; Stanley, 2011).

Stanley (2011) tested a series of populist survey questions in a post-election survey in Slovakia. However, the populist attitudes in this attempt do not significantly explain voting behavior: Variables relating to national and economic issues better explain vote choice. As the author notes, there may be several reasons for these non-significant results. First, the populist parties

were in government at the time of the survey, which might have made it difficult for respondents to separate the populists from the elite. Second, it might have been problematic, especially in the Slovak post-communist context, to disentangle the populist message from deeper concerns regarding national interests and economic social solidarity. Third, the questions might not have adequately captured the concept of populism (Stanley, 2011).

Elchardus and Spruyt (2012) conducted their research in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern part of Belgium. Their survey combined four populism questions[3] with variables that measure economic position, life satisfaction, anomie, relative deprivation, and perception of the general state of society. While the study found some interesting correlations between both relative deprivation and feelings of unjust treatment and between authoritarian attitudes and "populism," it is less clear whether the authors are, in fact, measuring populism per se. The very high number of respondents that agree with the four populism questions (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012, 118) seems to indicate that they are rather tapping into broader anti-establishment sentiments. Even though populist parties have received significant support in Flanders over the years (Pauwels, 2011b), their electoral support was never nowhere near the support Elchardus and Spruyt (2012) found for "populist" attitudes.

The third study, by Hawkins et al. (2012), uses an innovative research design, based on a clear definition of populism. Most importantly, it seeks not only to measure populism, but also the two main opposites: pluralism and elitism. Their approach, which created these three distinct political attitudes on the basis of a combination of existing and original questions, allows for a better validity check of populism.[4] The study by Hawkins et al. (2012) is therefore an important first step in creating a set of questions that measure populism and pluralism, while they also make important advances toward assembling questions that measure elitist attitudes.

Our research design and populist measure benefits from the previous studies, in particular the last one. However, we are also able to improve on them on several essential points. First, we improve on both Hawkins et al. (2012) and Stanley's (2011) by defining and operationalizing all three dimensions (populism, pluralism, and elitism) and by strengthening the validity test of the populist measure. Second, we measure the populist dimension on the full range of its defining characteristics, that is, to ensure that we are not simply tapping into anti-establishment sentiments (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012). To accomplish this, we include additional questions to those used by Hawkins et al.: two new questions that we created for the survey (our POP3 and POP4) and two questions that Hawkins et al. suggested to be included in the populist dimension in future studies (our POP5 and POP7).[5] And finally, we more

clearly define and operationalize the third dimension, elitism, and add a newly created question (our E1).

Finally, the Dutch case is a much better test of the face-validity of our populism variable (see also below). Hawkins et al. (2012) test their populism measure, with socioeconomic and attitudinal items that are associated with populism, in the United States. Hence, the authors are not able to test whether populists also support populist parties per se. The strong presence of populist parties in the Netherlands, and the existence of both a left-wing and right-wing populist party (unlike in Flanders; cf. Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012), permits us to better test the validity of the measure, that is, whether populist attitudes correlate with populist parties. In addition, the Dutch party system, being more institutionalized than the Slovak party system (cf. Stanley, 2011), provides a better environment to test the measure of populist attitudes.

Data

For the empirical analysis, we use a survey of over 600 Dutch citizens held in November 2011. A professional survey company (MWM2) carried out the survey, which was funded by the multidisciplinary research group Discon in the Faculty of Management Sciences at Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. The questionnaire of this web-based survey was sent to 981 members of an existing panel group of Dutch citizens. The panel participants are recruited via the Internet and consist of individuals who regularly participate in panels organized by the survey company. The panels are regularly updated to ensure high response rates and sample sizes. Given that internet coverage is higher than the listed phone numbers in the country, internet surveys can be considered to be reliable and valid means for conducting surveys in the Netherlands.[6]

A total of 631 respondents completed the survey, which is a response rate of 64.3%. To reduce possible biases due to age, region, and gender in our analyses, we used a small weight factor for these variables (see Table A1 in the online appendix).[7] The average time for completing the questionnaire was 25 min. We excluded all respondents who took 10 min or less, since pilot testing indicated that it was impossible to fill in the questionnaire in a serious way in less than 10 min for someone not already familiar with the questionnaire. The remaining 586 respondents (59.7%) were used for the analysis.

Variables

Populist attitudes. The above-mentioned definition of populism serves as the basis for our survey questions and our measurement model of *populist attitudes*. The focus of the questions is on the three core features of populism:

Table 1. Items Measuring Populist, Pluralist, and Elitist Attitudes.

POP1 *The politicians in the Dutch parliament need to follow the will of the people.*
POP2 *The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions.*
POP3 *The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people.*
POP4 *I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialized politician.*
POP5 *Elected officials talk too much and take too little action.*
POP6 *Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil.*
POP7 *What people call "compromise" in politics is really just selling out on one's principles.*
POP8 *Interest groups have too much influence over political decisions.*
PLU1 *In a democracy it is important to make compromises among differing viewpoints.*
PLU2 *It is important to listen to the opinion of other groups.*
PLU3 *Diversity limits my freedom.*[a]
E1 *Politicians should lead rather than follow the people.*
E2 *Our country would be governed better if important decisions were left up to successful business people.*
E3 *Our country would be governed better if important decisions were left up to independent experts.*

[a]Formulate in reverse of the original statement.

sovereignty of the people, opposition to the elite, and the Manichean division between "good" and "evil." The survey questions are designed to capture the full ideology of populism and its conception of democracy, in particular the will of the people (their sovereignty) and the distinction between the people and the elite. The Manichean nature of the distinction between the people and the elites is also a feature of our survey questions: statements POP5, POP6, and POP7 are intended to emphasize that the distinction between the people and the elite is a battle between good and evil. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the eight populism questions on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*I very much disagree*) to 5 (*I very much agree*).

Pluralist attitudes. The pluralism questions focus on the core dimensions that value compromise, different viewpoints, and the need to listen to dissenting voices. Although more aspects of pluralism are suggested in the literature, we are here first and foremost interested in those aspects that mirror the core features of populism. For this purpose, we used the Pluralist statements in Table 1 (beginning with "PLU").[8] We expect pluralists to be much more accommodating to diversity and a plurality of voices. The respondents were asked to rate their agreement with these statements on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (I very much disagree) to 5 (I very much agree).

Elitist attitudes. To capture elitism, we have included statements that capture its core dimensions, in particular the extent to which "elites" should lead the people. Hence, unlike in the populist statements, the focus is on strong and decisive leadership as well as a distain for contemporary politicians.[9] Hence,

we have inserted questions that focus on alternative forms of leadership, that is, leadership by experts and by business. We used the Elitist statements (beginning with "E") shown in Table 1. The respondents were asked to rate their agreement with these statements on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (I very much disagree) to 5 (I very much agree).

Voting preference. Finally, voting preference is measured by the question: *What party would you vote for, if elections for parliament were held today?* In addition to all the political parties in the Dutch parliament (Second Chamber) at that time, we offered the following answer categories: the parties Proud of the Netherlands (TON) and *50Plus*, "I would cast a blank vote," "I don't want to tell," "I don't know," "I would not vote," and "another party, namely . . .." Table A2 in the online appendix shows the distribution of party preferences in our sample.

Results

Political Attitudes

To determine whether different dimensions were present in our data set, we performed a PCA on all the 14 items, using Oblimin rotation to extract the components (see Table 2).[10] This PCA resulted in three factors with an Eigenvalue equal or larger than 1, explaining over 50% of the total variance. With the exception of one item, all items loaded higher than the generally accepted lower bound of .45. We deleted loading item "*Interest groups have too much influence over political decisions*," since it loads insufficiently on each of the three dimensions. We also deleted the PLU3 question ("*Diversity limits my freedom*"), since it loaded low on the pluralism scale (see below). Although it loads relatively high on the Elitism scale, there is no clear and convincing theoretical link between this specific item and elitism.

Six populist statements load high on the populist dimension: POP1 through POP5 and POP7. The first four items reflect ideas about representative government, reflecting the ideas that there is a division between the people and the politicians (the elite) and that politicians do not represent the true will of the people. In addition, POP3 ("*The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people*") focuses on the idea that the people have more in common with one another than with the elite. The ideas on this scale express a view of the political world that resembles the belief in popular sovereignty combined with a negative view of

Table 2. Results of Factor and Reliability Analysis.

	Factor I		Factor II		Factor III
	Eigenvalue 4.21		Eigenvalue 1.67		Eigenvalue 1.27
Item:					
% squared loadings (after rotation) Cum.51.05%	30%		11.9%		9.1%
POP1 The politicians in the Dutch Parliament need to follow the will of the people.	**.760**		.179		.035
POP2 The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions.	**.762**		−.061		.206
POP3 The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people.	**.674**	Populist Attitude scale (Chronbach's α = 0.82)	.219		.292
POP4 I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialized politician.[c]	**.643**		−.029		.547
POP5 Elected officials talk too much and take too little action.[b]	**.680**		.241		.353
POP7 What people call "compromise" in politics is really just selling out on one's principles.[c]	**.696**		−.003		.523
PLU1 In a democracy it is important to make compromises among differing viewpoints.	.051		**.831**	Pluralist Attitude scale (Chronbach's α = 0.60)	−.032
PLU2 It is important to listen to the opinion of other groups.	.342		**.696**		.083

Table 2. (continued)

	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	
	Eigenvalue 4.21	Eigenvalue 1.67	Eigenvalue 1.27	
E1 Politicians should lead rather than follow the people.	.018	.423	**.661**	
E2 Our country would be governed better if important decisions were left up to successful business people.[b]	.251	.042	**.593**	Elitist Attitude scale (Chronbach's α = .48)
E3 Our country would be governed better if important decisions were left up to independent experts.[b,c]	**.525**	.272	.403	
POP6 Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil.	.315	−.140	**.497**	
PLU3 Diversity limits my freedom.[a]	.354	−.262	.654	Not in analysis
POP8 Interest groups have too much influence over political decisions.[d]	.256	.395	.366	Not in analysis

[a]Original item reversed.
[b]Slight adjustment of the original for translation purposes.
[c]Allocated to elitist scale for substantive and statistical reasons.
[d]Left out of the analysis due to insufficient loading.

representative government, directed primarily at existing politicians (Hawkins et al., 2012; Mudde, 2004).

The Manichean dimension, that is, the tension between "good" and "evil," is captured in the questions POP5 through POP7. The first Manichean statement, POP5 ("*Elected officials talk too much and take too little action*"), loads high on the populist dimension. However, this is not the case for the second Manichean statement, POP6 ("*Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil*"). Two explanations can be put forward for its insufficient loading: either the item does not capture aspects of the populism

dimension, and is a more appropriate item for measuring elitist attitude, or respondents had difficulties in interpreting POP6. The statement was originally developed for the Latin American context, where populist leaders use a more religiously inspired discourse than in the more secularized Netherlands (see Hawkins, 2009). It is also possible that this question, which refers to "good" and (particularly) "evil," was interpreted more strictly along religious lines in the Netherlands. This seems to be supported by the fact that we found significant higher mean scores on this item for all, but the protestant religious respondents, compared with non-religious respondents.

Item POP7 ("*What people call 'compromise' in politics is really just selling out on one's principles*") loads high on both the populism dimension and the elitism dimension. This makes theoretical sense: Elitism is populism's mirror image, while sharing its Manichean distinction between good and evil. This seems to be confirmed by not just the high loading of POP7 on the elitism and populism dimensions, but also by its low loading on the pluralism dimension. It is theoretically consistent that those who support compromise and the importance of listening to other groups oppose an item that frames compromise in a negative light.

The second dimension contains two items, reflecting political ideas that favor diversity. This perspective accepts different views (PLU2) and acknowledges that the interests of opposing groups should be acknowledged through compromise (PLU1). The intention was to have three items for this scale, but we find that the PLU3 item ("*Diversity limits my freedom*") does not load well on the pluralism dimension.[11] Importantly, both PLU1 and PLU2 load low on the populism and elitism dimensions. Thus, in line with the theory, the items loading high on the pluralism dimension are clearly distinguished from the other two dimensions.

The third dimension reflects a particular dissatisfaction with *who* represents the people: This dimension is intended to capture the elitist dimension. In some aspects this is clear; for example, regarding question E1 ("*Politicians should lead rather than follow the people*"). As theoretically expected, this item loads high on elitism, but low on populism. In addition, the item that favors government by successful business leaders (E2) gravitates toward the elitist dimension. Theoretically, this makes sense, as most ordinary people consider the business class as part of the elite. What is interesting, however, is the degree to which the item on the rule by independent experts (E3) loads on the populist dimension. In fact, this items loads higher on the populism dimension than on the elitism dimension, although the difference is not very large.

Though there is a clear empirical distinction between elitism and populism, the elitist dimension is not as clearly distinct from the populism dimension as from the pluralism dimension. This reflects the complex theoretical

relation between elitism and populism. On the one hand, populism opposes elitism, but, on the other, populism and elitism do share some key features. Most importantly, populists and elitists are both skeptical of politicians; for elitists this is reflected in support for "successful business persons" and "independent experts" over existing politicians. In the case of populists, not surprisingly, this is reflected first and foremost in their preference for ordinary citizens, but also in support for independent experts. Although perhaps initially surprising, these findings fit well with the claim that populism is reluctantly political (Taggart, 2002, p. 69). Moreover, populists have championed the role of independent experts (over professional politicians) in politics (Taggart, 2000, p. 68). In the Netherlands, the late Pim Fortuyn, the country's most famous populist, was an avowed champion of a larger role for independent experts in Dutch politics (Fortuyn, 2002).

From dimensions to scales. From the factors we constructed three scales (means of the sum scores), based on the item's highest factor loading, with one exception: the item on the representation by independent experts. This item loads highest on the Populism scale, but the difference with its loading on the Elitism scale is low. For theoretical reasons, we allocated this item to the Elitism scale. We constructed a Populism scale of the items POP1-5 and POP7 (Chronbach's α = .82), a Pluralism scale on the basis of the items PLU1 and PLU2 (Chronbach's α = .60), and an Elitism scale of the items POP6 and E1-E3 (Chronbach's α = .48). Table A3 in the online appendix reports on the descriptives of all separate items and the inter-item correlations.

Correlations between the scales. In assessing the three dimensions, it is important to note that there is no theoretical reason for these scales to be mutually exclusive: individuals can score on each scale simultaneously, although some combinations are more likely than others. For instance, people can hold populist attitudes, but still prefer a professional (populist) politician to a regular citizen, or they may be populist *because* they are dissatisfied with the ruling elite. The data show that this is indeed the case: the Populism scale correlates significantly and positively with the Elitism scale (Pearson's R = .480, p < .01, two-tailed test). A strong association is less likely between the Elitism scale and the Pluralism scale, because the compromises praised in pluralism are condemned in elitism. Although there is a positive and significant correlation between the Pluralism and the Elitism scales, it is rather weak (Pearson's R = .199, p < .01, two-tailed test). The relation between the Populism and the Pluralism scales is positive as well (Pearson's R = .200, p < .01, two-tailed test), indicating that at least some individuals with populist attitudes also accept different views and support the need for compromises between different viewpoints.

Table 3. Percentage of the Vote Obtained by a Populist Party in the National Elections for the Dutch Parliament (Tweede Kamer), 2002-2012.

Party	2002	2003	2006	2010	2012
List Pim Fortuyn (LPF)	17	5.7	0.2	—	—
Proud of the Netherlands (TON)	—	—	—	0.6	—
Party for Freedom (PVV)	—	—	5.9	15.5	10.1
Socialist Party (SP)	5.9	6.3	16.6	9.8	9.7
Total % populist vote	22.9	12.0	22.7	25.9	19.8

Source: Kiesraad (http://www.verkiezingsuitslagen.nl/).

Political Attitudes and Party Preference

Contextualizing Populism

The Netherlands constitutes an ideal case for testing the validity of our measurement of populism. First, the country has a strong presence of populist parties (e.g., Lucardie, 2008; Lucardie & Voerman, 2012). Since 2002, populist parties have gained on average almost 21% of the vote in elections (see Table 3). The presence of multiple populist parties enables us to run a validity check of our measurement of populism, allowing us to test the degree to which populism is associated with voting for populist parties. Second, the Netherlands is a multiparty system, which offers voters frustrated with the more established or mainstream parties a number of possible exit strategies (consisting of mainstream, non-mainstream, and populist parties), which permits us to better disentangle populism from simple vote-switching and protest voting. Third, the Netherlands is one of the few countries in which both left-wing (Socialist Party, SP) and right-wing populist parties (notably the Party for Freedom, PVV) have been successful at the same time. This allows for an interesting comparison of populist attitudes of supporters of left-wing and right-wing populist parties. Fourth, and final, the Dutch political system has many characteristics that authors have identified as being particularly prone to a populist backlash (e.g., Andeweg, De Winter, & Müller, 2008; Betz, 2002; Kitschelt, 2002).

The sustainability of populism in the Netherlands is rather surprising, given that it came rather late to the country (Rydgren & Holsteyn, 2005). Until the arrival of Pim Fortuyn in 2002, populism was less prevalent in the Netherlands than in much of Europe. There had been some exceptions, such as the Farmer's Party (BP) in the late 1960s and the early 1970s and the SP under Jan Marijnissen in the 1990s (Lucardie & Voerman, 2012). However,

the real surge in populism started only in 2002 with Pim Fortuyn. And although Fortuyn himself had a more pluralist understanding of the people than many populists, the List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) was clearly a populist party (Lucardie, 2008).[12]

There has been a steady wave of populists since the short-lived LPF. Rita Verdonk's TON was a populist party.[13] Verdonk claimed to represent the ordinary people vis-à-vis the elite, demanded direct democracy, and opposed alleged external threats to the Dutch people, such as immigrants (Lucardie & Voerman, 2012; Vossen, 2010). However, the most important populist party in the Netherlands is Geert Wilders' PVV, which combines a Manichean distinction between the people and the elite with a vehement anti-immigrant (anti-Islam) and law and order discourse, which places him solidly within the category of the populist radical right. Since its formation in 2006, the PVV has become more and more populist (Vossen, 2010). Finally, the SP has been classified as a populist party for most of the period since its (in)famous "Vote Against, Vote SP" (*Stem Tegen, Stem SP*) campaign of 1994.[14]

Political attitudes and party preference. In this second part of the analysis, we seek to determine the relationship between populist, pluralist, and elitist attitudes and party preferences, more specifically between the PVV, the SP, and the non-populist Dutch mainstream parties. Hence, we compared the mean scores on the attitude scales by party preference. Figure 1 depicts both the mean scores and the confidence interval for the mean scores (>95%) for the parties ($n > 20$) on the Populism scale.[15]

Figure 1 shows that respondents who would vote for the SP have the highest mean on the Populism scale, quite similar to the PVV. The mean of the social democratic Labor Party (PvdA) is closer to the overall mean and differs significantly from the mean scores of the SP and the PVV (*t*-value 2.7, $p < .01$ and *t*-value 2.9, $p < .005$, respectively). The PvdA holds a cutoff point between the populist (SP and PVV) and the non-populist parties. The mean score of the PvdA voters is significantly higher (*t*-value 2.6, $p < .01$) than that of the conservative People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD). The results of all *t*-tests are available in Table A4 in the online appendix. To sum up, those who scored high on the Populism scale also support the two Dutch parties that are considered to be populist, that is, the PVV and the SP.

Figure 2 shows the mean scores and confidence intervals (>95%) on the Pluralism scale. The first two pluralism questions loaded on a single dimension and, as predicted, the PVV voters score lowest on this scale. Although somewhat higher, the mean score of the VVD voters does not differ significantly from that of the PVV voters. On the Pluralism scale, however, the VVD voters hold a cutoff position between the PVV and the rest of the
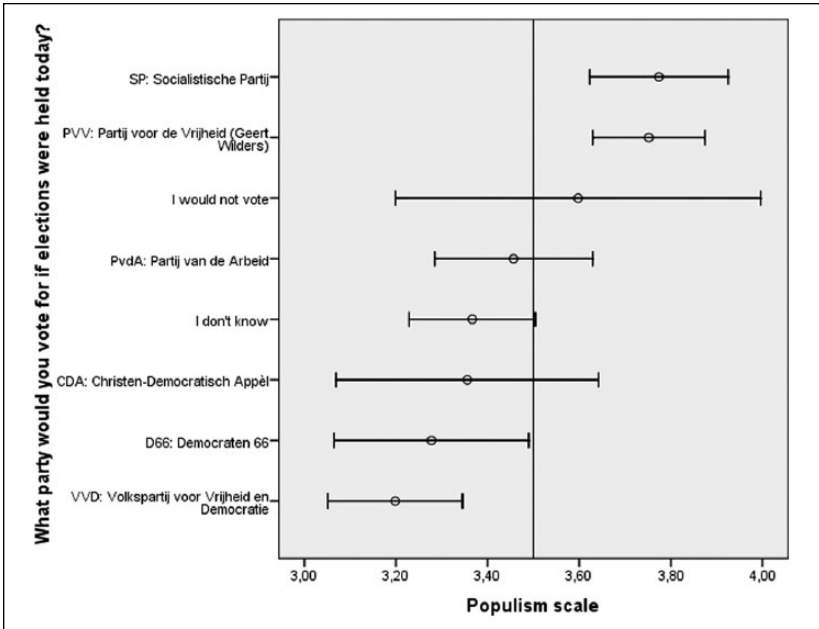
Figure 1. Populist attitude by party preference (reference line is total mean).

parties: while the PVV voters' mean score differs significantly from those of the voters of all other parties, the mean score of the VVD voters does not. The mean score of the SP voters is significantly higher than that of the PVV (*t*-value 1.7, $p < .1$), implying that SP voters (on average) are more positive toward diverse opinions and groups within society than PVV voters. The mean scores of the other parties do not significantly differ from those of the SP voters (The results of all *t*-test are available in Table A4 in the online appendix).

The differences between the PVV and SP are initially surprising. However, additional analyses of the mean scores of the separate items of the Pluralism scale provide a further important distinction between the two parties regarding pluralism. On the PLU1 item ("*In a democracy it is important to make compromises among differing viewpoint*s"), both parties are skeptical. In other words, the supporters of both parties oppose compromise. However, the SP voters are much more willing to listen to the opinion of others: on the PLU2 item ("*It is important to listen to the opinion of other groups*") they were more accommodating than the voters of all parties except the Christian
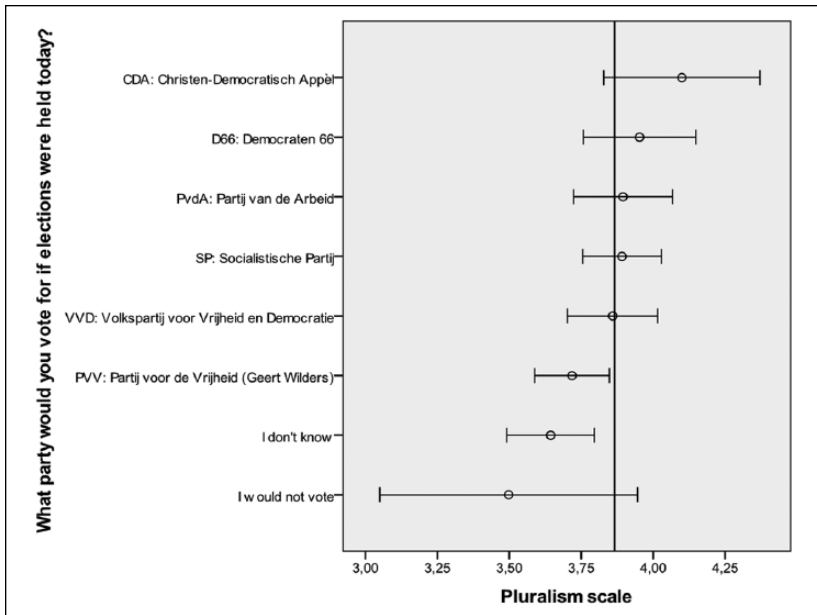
Figure 2. Pluralist attitude by party preference (reference line is total mean).

Democratic Appeal (CDA). Figures 3 and 4 show the results of these separate analyses.

Thus, SP voters agree that it is important to listen to the viewpoint of others, while PVV voters do not (*t*-value 3.4, *p* < .001). However, the SP voters are as averse to compromise as the PVV voters. These findings complement supply-side studies: De Lange and Rooduijn (2011) contend that the SP's conceptualization of the people is less exclusionary than that of the PVV, while Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) found that left-wing populism (in Latin America) is less exclusionary than right-wing populism (in Western Europe).

Finally, Figure 5 depicts the mean scores on the Elitism scale. In contrast with expectations from the populism literature, the means scores of the SP and PVV voters are the highest on this scale, closely followed by those of the CDA.[16] Two explanations are possible: (1) the SP and PVV may attract both populists and elitists, or (2) populist parties attract support from individuals who possess both populist and elitist attitudes. It appears that both are in fact true.
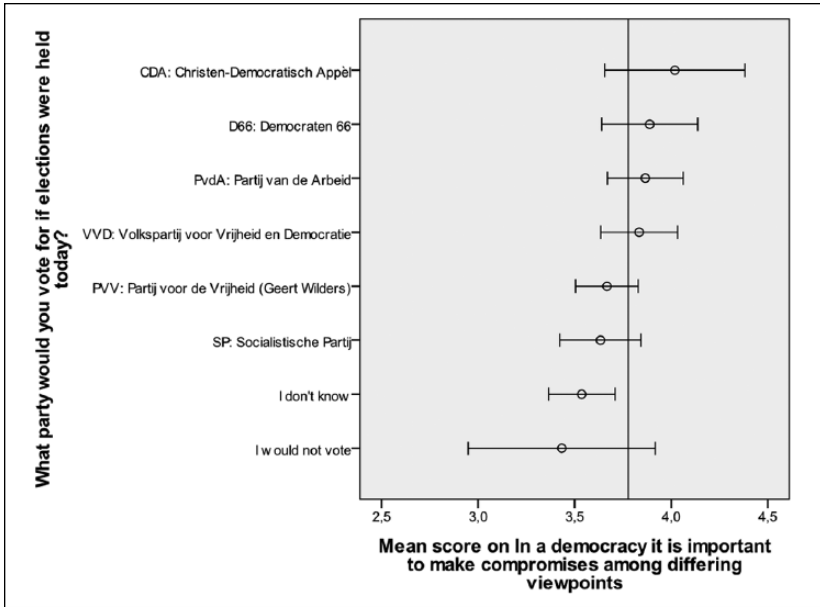
Figure 3. Mean scores on item "*In a democracy it is important to make compromises among differing viewpoints*" by party preference.
Reference line is the total mean.

The correlation between populism and elitism is relatively high for both the SP (Pearson's R = .526, p < 0.01) and the PVV (Pearson's R = .436, p < 0.01) implying that a part of the voters who are attracted to these parties hold—at least to some extent—both populist and elitist attitudes. On the other hand, as the correlation already indicates, this correlation is not perfect, meaning that another part of the SP and PVV voters scores high on one of the attitudes, while scoring low on the other.[17] In other words, the populist message of the parties may attract the populist voters, while there may also be something about populist parties (charismatic leadership, centralized parties, the so-called outsider status of the leader) that also appeals to those with higher elitist attitudes.

To further understand the complex relationship between populism and elitism, we also examined the four elitist items separately (see Figures 6 through 9). At first sight, support for the independent expert item may be surprising given that populists espouse the will of the people (see Figure 8). However, two caveats are in order. First, as noted above, some populist parties do advocate a role for independent experts. Second, populism scholars emphasize the
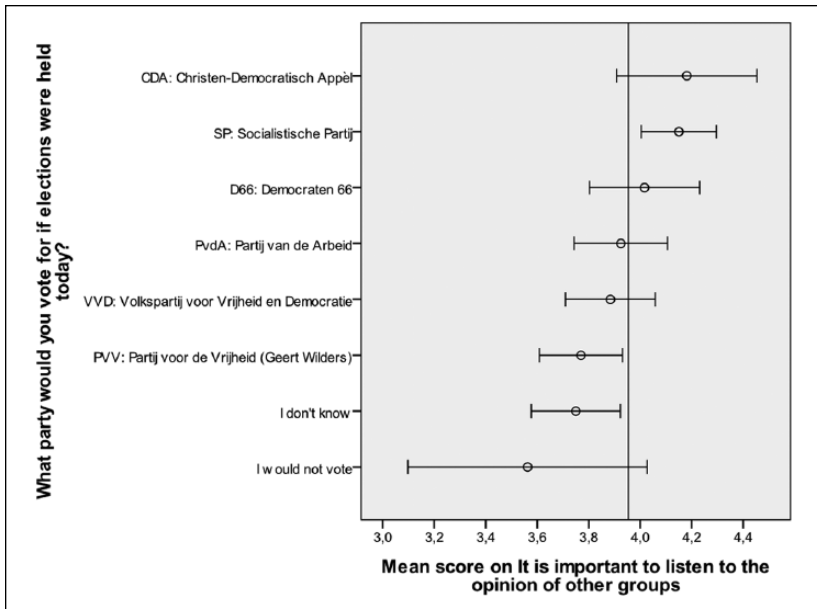
Figure 4. Mean scores on item "*It is important to list to the opinion of other groups*" by party preference.
Reference line is the total mean.

reluctantly political nature of populist parties, arguing that they demand clear, "no non-sense" solutions to complex problems (Taggart, 2002).

As noted earlier, elitism and populism share a Manichaean element. This is reflected in particular in the high scores of the SP voters on the item "*Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil*" (see Figure 9). Finally, PVV and SP supporters differ regarding the role of successful business people. PVV supporters do not oppose using successful business people for political purposes (they were much in line with the market-oriented conservative-liberal party, the VVD), while the SP supporters were the most skeptical in this regard (see Figure 7). In fact, this is consistent with the different economic positions of the two parties: the PVV is overall supportive of capitalism, advocating lower taxes and less economic regulation, while the SP is (traditionally) a socialist party that is highly suspicious of the market economy.

None-Voters

A final interesting finding is the relation between those who declare "I would not vote" and populism. At this point, we are only in a position to make some
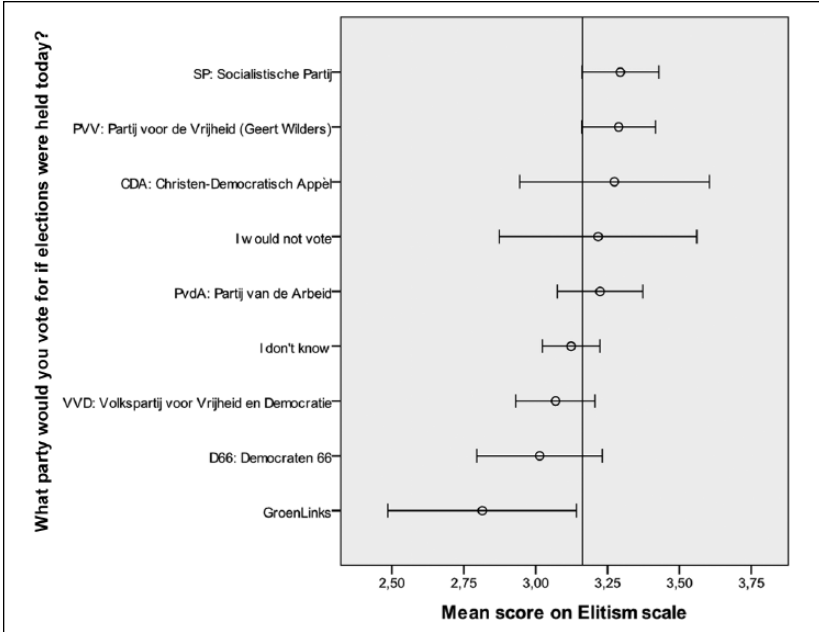
Figure 5. Elitist attitude by party preference.
Reference line is the total mean.

tentative comments, given the low number of "non-voters" and the large confidence intervals (see the category "I would not vote" in the figures). However, interestingly, those who declare "I would not vote" have a high mean on the Populism scale; it is the third highest on the Populism scale, behind the PVV and the SP (see Figure 1), and the lowest on the Pluralism scale (see Figure 2). In addition, even though the mean of non-voters is not particularly high on the Elitism scale (see Figure 5), non-voters score high on "*Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil*" (i.e., the Manichean item) and on the independent expert item (see Figures 8 and 9). In sum, a large number of respondents who declare that "they would not vote" possess strong populist attitudes, just like those declaring their intention to vote for the PVV and SP. This begs the question: why do some voters with high populist attitudes vote for populist parties, while others do not vote at all?

Conclusion

Building on previous efforts, this article demonstrates that it is possible to measure populist attitudes at the individual level in a theoretically consistent
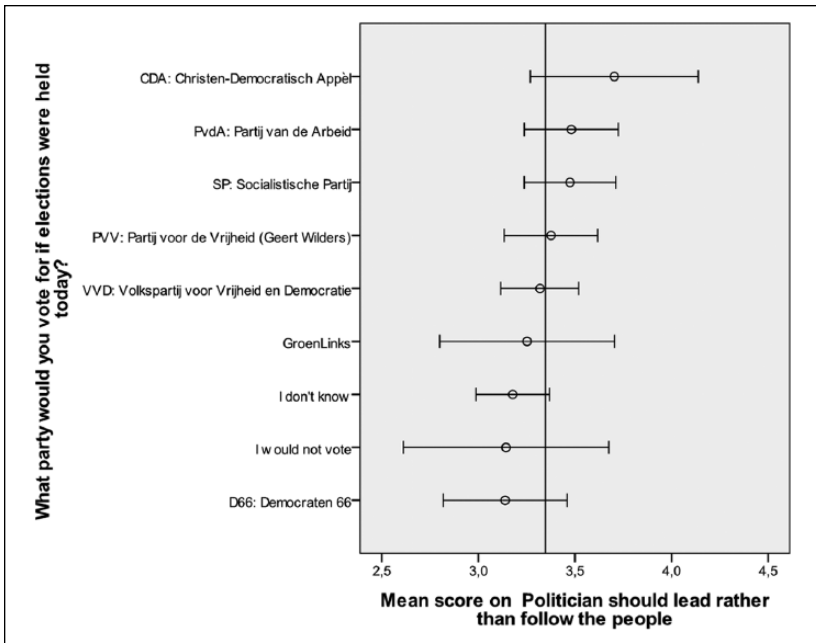
Figure 6. Mean scores on item "*Politicians should lead rather than follow the people*" by party preference.
Reference line is the total mean.

and empirically robust manner. The PCA demonstrates considerable consistency. A multi-item Populism scale was constructed, which could not only be clearly identified, but was also found to correlate with the Elitism scale. In addition, a Pluralism scale was clearly distinguished from the other two scales: items that scored high on the pluralism dimension did not score high on the other two. Of particular interest is the extent to which the Populism scale is distinct from the Pluralism and the Elitism scales. These findings were much more conclusive than in previous studies (Hawkins et al., 2012), which was probably due to the more extensive set of populism and elitism questions that we used.

Going beyond previous studies (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012; Hawkins et al., 2012), we linked populist attitudes to party preferences. And, unlike Stanley (2011), we found a significant and positive correlation between populist attitudes and the intention to vote for populist political parties. This is the case for both the right-wing populist PVV and the left-wing populist SP. At the same time, our study also indicates that there is a distinction between
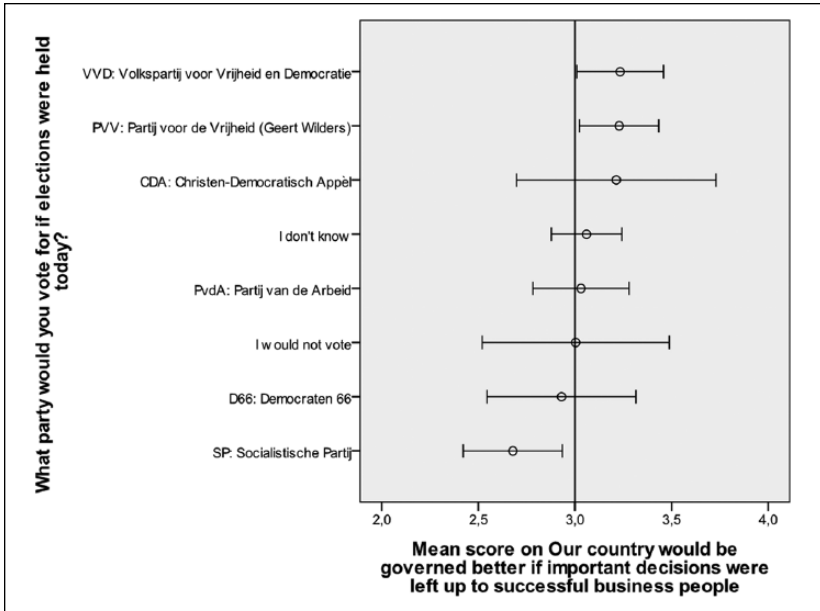
Figure 7. Mean scores on item "*Our country would be governed better if important decisions were left up to successful business people*" by party preference.
Reference line is the total mean.

left-wing and right-wing populism, especially with regard to pluralist attitudes. SP voters are more willing to listen to the opinions of others, even though they are as averse to compromise as PVV voters. This is theoretically consistent with recent findings that right-wing populism is more exclusionist, while left-wing populism is more inclusive, which would explain the SP's greater willingness to listen to others (e.g., Filc, 2010; Lucardie & Voerman, 2012; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013).

A particularly interesting finding concerns the complex relationship between elitism and populism. Although the PCA shows that there is a clear distinction between the populism and the elitism dimensions, there is substantial positive correlation between the two scales. Supporters of the PVV and SP scored high on the Populism scale, but they also scored high on the Elitism scale. Further analysis demonstrated that both PVV and SP voters supported the idea of independent experts and, to some extent, also exhibited a high degree of Manichaeism (particularly in the case of the SP). Supporters of the SP are also more skeptical of successful business people as decision
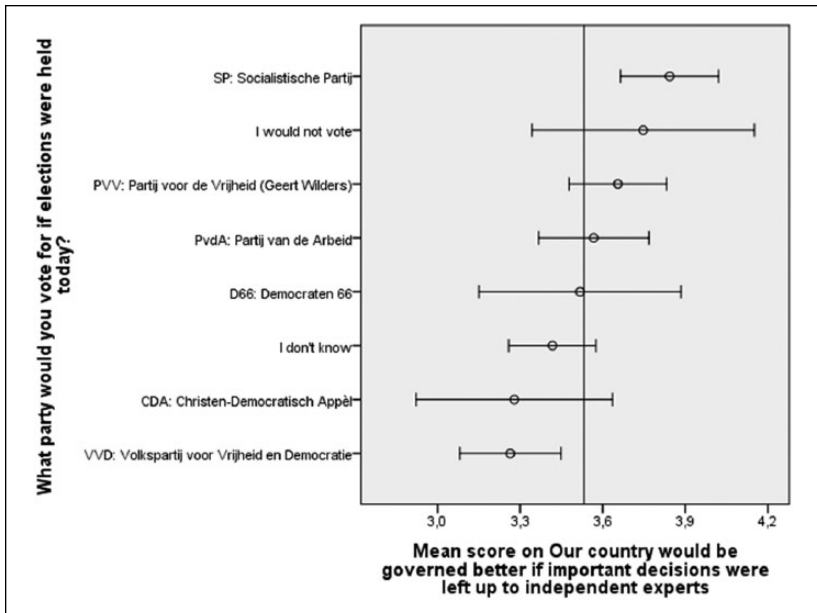
Figure 8. Mean scores on item "*Our country would be governed better if important decisions were left up to independent experts*" by party preference.
Reference line is the total mean.

makers. While the former is related to the fact that populism is based on a Manichean division and that several populists, including the late Pim Fortuyn in the Netherlands, have propagated a larger role for independent experts in politics, the latter is explained by the differences between left-wing and right-wing populism.

In closing, we suggest that future research should expand on this study in a variety of ways. First, having demonstrated that it is possible to measure populism in individuals, it will be interesting to see whether populist attitudes correlate with other attitudes. For example, are the differences between left-wing and right-wing populism also reflected in attitudes toward issues such as crime, immigration, the economy, and European integration?[18] From the literature on populism, we would expect right-wing populism to be more exclusionary and identity-focused, while left-wing populism should focus more on the economy and be more inclusive (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). Second, who are the populists? What are their personal characteristics, socioeconomic status or personal traits? Third, can populism (as measured in
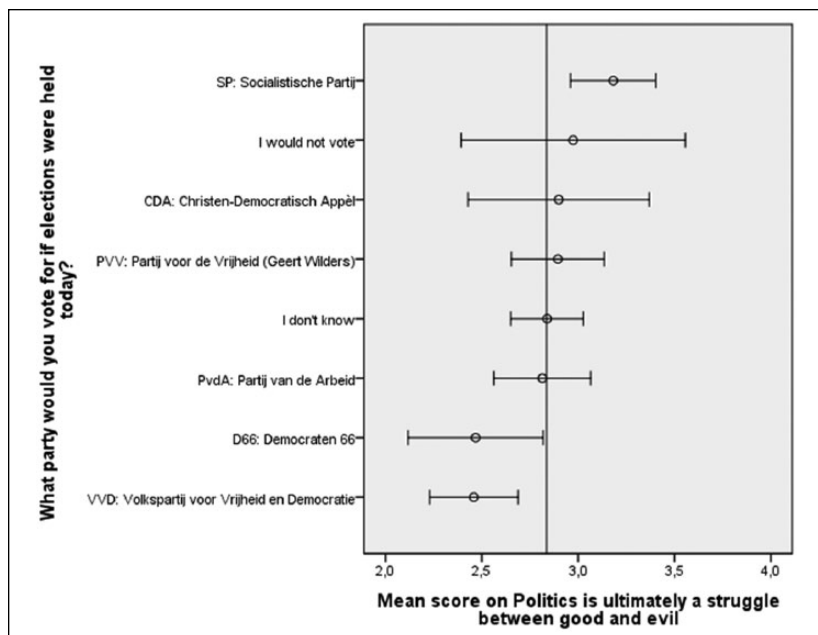
Figure 9. Mean scores on item *"Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil"* by party preference.
Reference line is the total mean.

this paper) be a significant explanatory (i.e., independent) variable in political analyses? For example, can the distribution of populist attitudes help explain the success and failure of populist parties? And, fourth and final, it will be interesting to measure populism in other regional contexts. For example, do populist attitudes correlate as well with successful populist parties in other countries (e.g., Austria, Denmark, or France)? Do we find similar populist sentiments in countries where there are no populist parties? And does this Populism scale travel to non-European regions like North and South America, which have been prone to populist politics for a longtime?

Author's Note

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Notes

1. The connection between populism and unmediated representation is elective, not definitional, as many scholars on populism in Latin America state (e.g., Roberts, 1995; Weyland, 2001). While this type of representation is indeed typical for populist leaders in Latin America, which often are political outsiders without a larger organizational structure supporting them, Western Europe is mostly home to populist political parties, which are organizationally fairly similar to other (non-populist) new political parties. In addition, North America has seen various leaderless populist movements, from the original Populist movement to the contemporary Tea Party (see Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, in press).

2. For example, it used questions such as "The government in Washington should stay out of the question of whether white and colored children go to the same school" and "The U.S. should keep soldiers overseas where they can help countries that are against Communism" (Axelrod, 1967, pp. 52-53).

3. The four questions are as follows: (1) The opinion of the average man or women in the street is more worthy than the opinion of experts or politicians; (2) Politicians should listen more to the problems of the people; (3) Ministers should sit less in their offices and spend more time with the average people; and (4) Those who have studied for a long time have lots of diplomas, but they do not know how the world really works.

4. Hawkins, Riding, and Mudde (2012) use several questions that have been used in the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), directed by Mitchell Seligson at Vanderbilt University. They further adapted questions from Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) study on "stealth democracy." Although the latter did not measure populism per se, Hawkins et al. (2012) found that two of their questions tap into populism, while two others seem to form another dimension, that of Elitism.

5. We would like to thank and acknowledge Kirk Hawkins and Scott Riding for allowing us to use their populist questions for our survey. Questions POP1, POP2, POP6, POP8, PLU1, PLU2, and PLU3 were adapted from Hawkins et al. (2012). POP5, POP7, and E2, E3 where originally used by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) to measure "stealth democracy." Based on the analysis and suggestions by Hawkins et al. (2012), we have adapted these questions to our survey. Questions POP3, POP4, and E1 are newly created for this specific survey.

6. Taken from the website of the Central Agency for Statistics (CBS): http://www.cbs.nl/ NR/rdonlyres/0D30D23B-FE40-4570-B41A-E9B2CADF01DB/0/200944x10pub.pdf

7. We repeated the analyses with the unweighted data set, which produced similar results.

8. See Note 5 for the origins of the questions. Dutch versions are provided in the online appendix Table A3. The third question ("*diversity limits my freedom*") is a pluralism question. However, the question is framed in reverse, that is, high scores on this scale represent low support for pluralist attitudes, to better capture the original intention of the question (in Dutch).

9. Given our particular focus on populism, and constraints to the length of the survey, we focus on these core characteristics of our conceptualization of elitism.

10. Varimax rotation produces a similar attribution of the items to dimensions.

11. Further analysis demonstrates that the PLU3 question taps into different attitudes from the other two pluralism questions. When correlated to parties, the Party for Freedom (PVV) (and to a lesser degree the Socialist Party [SP]), scored high on this item. Further analysis with questions regarding national identity demonstrated that in all likelihood diversity was interpreted as a question about national identity and national belonging.

12. Fortuyn made a clear distinction between the people and the traditional political parties and his electoral success was due to his ability to mobilize voters who were frustrated with the established political parties (Pellikaan, De Lange, & Van der Meer, 2007).

13. In October 2011, Verdonk retired from Dutch politics. In June 2012, Proud of the Netherlands (TON) fused with the Independent Citizen's Party (OBP), of disgruntled former PVV MP Hero Brinkman, to form the Democratic Political Turning Point (DPK).

14. Lucardie and Voerman (2012) write that the SP was populist under Marijnissen, especially in the late 1990s, arguing that there was not only a clear distinction between the people and the elite, but that this distinction was based on a clear Manichean "us against them" opposition. At the same time, the SP has gone through periods when it was less populist. Under Agnes Kant's leadership (2008-2010), it is arguable that the party was less populist, while her successor, the current party leader Emile Roemer, has been more populist.

15. Parties and answer categories with a frequency lower than 20 are omitted from this picture; they were used to calculate the total mean. Online appendix Table A2 reports on all the scale scores of all parties (and other answer categories).

16. On this Elitism scale, the CDA and the Labor Party (PvdA) seem to hold a cutoff position between the PVV and SP and the other parties. The mean scores of CDA and PvdA voters do not differ significantly from the other parties, while the mean scores of the PVV and the SP do: the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD; *t*-value = 2.3, $p < .05$) and D66 (*t*-value = 2.3, $p < .05$).

17. Scatter plots linking populist and elitist attitudes for the two populist parties show that SP and PVV attract voters who score high on the populist scale as well as the elitist attitude and voters who score high on just one of the attitudes. Due to space constrain, we have not included the figure in the article. Available from authors on request.

18. Hawkins et al. (2012) found that populists were also more skeptical of immigration. However, since they were not able to link the populist attitudes with specific populist parties they were not able to distinguish between left and right populists.

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