A Fourth Wave of Populism?

Trajectories of Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe, 2000-2017

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A "refugee crisis" has caught Europe by surprise in 2015. This article seeks to integrate the influence of the crisis into models of the electoral success of populist radical right parties. The overarching research question is whether we can observe a "fourth wave" of populism. The theoretical argument rests on existing demand- and supply-side explanations, but emphasizing the electoral trajectories of parties as well as the shock of the crisis. Empirically, the electoral results of 16 populist radical right parties at 50 elections between 2000 and mid-2017 in 12 countries are studied. The modelling strategy involves party-specific non-linear latent curves. Results indicate that net of the "refugee crisis", a slowing down or downward trend of populist parties' electoral results might be observed. Sparse data and the hypothetical prediction limits the findings, though.

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The United Kingdom Independence Party, UKIP, collapsed mightily at the 2017 general election despite the successful "yes" vote on Brexit in June 2016. Its leader Nigel Farage had resigned before, citing the fulfilment of the party's goals.[1] Boris Johnson, a Tory which has backed Brexit, was also dismantled after the vote when his ambitions of becoming Prime Minister crushed, and he ultimately joined the cabinet of newly elected Prime Minister Theresa May as foreign minister.[2] A bit further to the south, Geert Wilders both won and lost in the Dutch 2017 parliamentary elections. His populist PVV has increased its seat share and finished second behind PM Mark Rutte's VVD, with little chances of entering the national government, though. This failed expectations, as the PVV had been projected to win for a considerable time before the election, reflecting the mood in the Dutch citizenship.[3] Also, Marine Le Pen failed to gain the French presidency in 2017, which had been pictured as a realistic scenario.[4]

The aim of this article is to test whether there is a general pattern to these observations. For instance, the successful Brexit vote, which can arguably be regarded as a populist enterprise, has caught its proponents off guard to some extent, and the personal career of populists or partisan electoral fate might suffer from temporary success. Arguably, populism can hit a ceiling when disenchanted. Obviously, there are counter-examples or variations in timing, such as the expected strong showing of the relatively young AfD at the 2017 German federal election.[5] Yet, a notion of "waves" of populist party success (and research) has been noted (Mudde 2016, Von Beyme 1988). Here, an argument of such waves is developed, resting on assumptions about populist parties partially serving as pressure valves (Golder 2016: 489), cycles in media attention (Golder 2016: 488) and the short-term orientation of voters (Healy and Lenz 2014). A further argument is that the so-called European "refugee crisis" has given populists a boost since 2015, prolonging the populist wave.

To capture the potential inversely U-shaped trajectories of populist parties, 16 of them from 12 western European countries are studied at 50 elections between 2000 and 2017.[6] A Bayesian

[1] http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-36702468.
[2] http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-36789972.
[3] https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/15/world/europe/dutch-elections.html.
[4] https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/05/07/world/europe/france-election-results-maps.html.
[5] See the prediction model at http://zweitstimme.org/.
[6] As a working definition of populism, we follow Mudde (2004: 543) who sees "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and anatoginistic 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", adding that the notion of populism as an ideology is contested (Aslanidis 2016). In any case, the perceived conflict of "people vs. elites" is crucial, often accompanied by anti-immigration stances (Rydgren 2007) as well as nativism and authoritarianism (Mudde 2017). Populist parties are identified largely following Inglehart and Norris (2016; see below).

latent curve multilevel model allows for the estimation of party-specific developments over time while controlling for the impact of the crisis. Results indicate that net of the "shock" of the crisis, there might have been a wave-shaped development of the electoral success of populist parties. The article closes with some cautions regarding the hypothetical character of predictions of the model and a series of propositions for future research.

Populism Research

As presented by Mudde (2016: 3-4), research on what he labels "populist radical right parties" has followed a distinct trajectory. Accordingly, early research in the post-WWII period has been largely carried out from a historical perspective. A second wave in the 80s and 90s relied on modernization theory and focused on demand-side factors (see, for instance, Kitschelt and McGann 1995). After the turn of the century, more attention has been paid to the supply side, including the internal organization of parties (such as in Art 2011) as well as the impact of radical right parties.

Regarding explanations of the success of populist radical right parties more specifically (to name a few recent overviews: Golder 2016; Ingelhart and Norris 2016; Arzheimer 2017: 538-9; Agerberg 2017: 3), three areas of explanations are emphasized in contextual, demand- and supply-side factors. Contextual factors include electoral rules, unemployment and reactions of elites, the demand side is shaped by individual-level variables such as anti-immigrant attitudes and the supply side features the programmatic appeal of parties and their leadership and activist structure (Arzheimer 2017). Processes such as globalization and individualization are often cited as motors of the success of populist parties (Agerberg 2017: 3) and are also framed in terms of economic inequality or cultural backlash (Ingelhart and Norris 2016). In his review of the literature on the success of what he calls „far right" parties in Europe, Golder (2016) emphasizes the interaction between demand- and supply-side factors, as do Inglehart and Norris (2016). Furthermore, Golder (2016) points at the geography of support and its different stages.

Demand for populism is described as driven by modernization, economic and cultural grievances (Golder 2016: 482). As Cas Mudde puts it, people don't vote for populists because they are happy.[7] Modernization grievances refer to the insecurity perceived by "individuals who are unable to cope with rapid and fundamental societal change", economic grievances more

[7] https://www.ceu.edu/article/2017-06-15/happy-people-rarely-vote-populists-mudde-says.

directly reflect (perceived) threats from (economically motivated) immigration and cultural grievances are related to social identities invoking anti-outgroup attitudes (Golder 2016: 482-5). Ideally measured at the individual level, these processes can be reflected by gender, age, education, religion or ethnic identification and explained by occupation, economic security, rurality, mistrust, anti-immigration attitudes or authoritarian values as well as interactions between these variables (Inglehart and Norris 2016). Some direct measures of populist attitudes (along the lines of "people vs. elites") are also available at the individual level (Akkerman et al. 2014; Spruyt et al. 2016).[8]

The "supply side" of populist radical right parties is often framed in terms of properties of parties themselves (Arzheimer 2015: 539; Mudde 2016: 4), while "structural" factors such as political institutions (electoral rules), socio-economic conditions (unemployment, which could also be defined as an aggregate-level measure of demand) or political factors including the saliency of key issues (immigration) at times form a separate category (Arzheimer 2015: 538), but could also be subsumed under the heading "supply side" (Golder 2016: 486).[9] Regardless of the classification of variables, electoral rules, party competition, media attention, dealignment processes, party organization and ideology are classic contextual explanations for the success of populist parties (Golder 2016: 486-90). A clear trend in the literature is to move beyond simple categorical measures of electoral rules such as a distinction between proportional, mixed and majoritarian systems, using district magnitude or effective thresholds instead (Cox 1997; Taagepera 2002). Party competition explanations could be implemented drawing on elaborated theories (compare Rooduijn et al. 2014). As (Meguid 2008) demonstrates, mainstream parties have more options than to try and either oppose (adversarial strategy) or capture (accommodative strategy) the issues raised by populist parties, fighting for issue ownership. A strategy that can be quite successful is the ignorance of the populists' agenda, attempting to de-legitimize it and limiting its saliency (dismissive strategy). Furthermore, the constellation of strategies chosen by the most relevant mainstream parties matters, as well as the timing of reactions (Meguid 2008). Potential measures of this kind of specific party competition are the anti-immigrant positions of mainstream parties or their level of populism (subject of future research), which can be used to capture the presence of reactions

[8] This could also be framed in terms of symbolic representation (Bernauer and Giger 2017).
[9] The contextual and supply side of the electoral success of parties has also been generally described in terms of a "political opportunity structure" (Eisinger 1973; Golder 2016: 486; Kitschelt 1986; Opp 1996) subsuming institutional and other factors. As (Opp 1996) shows, the concept is contestable as it is rather fuzzy.

as well as its nature. Party-specific explanations equally touch on programmatic appeal (which could be complemented by survey data, content analysis or advanced quantitative text analysis of political texts; also see Polk et al. 2017; Rooduijn et al. 2014; Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011) and leadership or the shape of the parties' activists (Art 2011; Arzheimer 2015: 539) also form a promising area of research on populism (Mudde 2016: 13), but are beyond the scope of this article as much as a number of other factors. The contributions of this article are the development of an argument of electoral waves of populist success and its empirical implementation into a model of trajectories.

Theoretical Argument

The basic assumption about populist parties is that despite their vast differences, they display a sufficient level of functional equivalence (Mudde 2016: 16) when studying their success: They serve as vehicles for voters to express their discontent with mainstream politics (Kriesi 2014). This is of course a strong assumption, as for instance the Swiss SVP is much more established as other populist parties, regularly participating in government. A further assumption is that the mechanisms driving the success of populist parties are not fundamentally different from that of other parties. For instance, their leaders are expected to calculate the costs and benefits of electoral entry to some extent, similarly to that of other parties.

As discussed in the previous section, the vote shares of right-wing populist parties have been studied before, citing a number of explanations. The theoretical argument of this article draws on these factors, but adding two twists to the plot. First, one proposition states that populism might be in the process of hitting a ceiling in Europe, which has second been intertwined with the recent "refugee crisis", marked by a sharp increase in immigration. This is reflected in two hypotheses. The first draws on the idea that populism occurs in "waves" (Mudde 2016; Von Beyme 1988). Apparently, this implies that voters loose interest in populist parties after a while, ceasing to show support to populists once they realizes their impact is limited, the parties fail in or out of office (Agerberg 2017), or even just out of its nature as a temporary pressure relief valve.[10]

[10] See also https://www.ceu.edu/article/2017-06-15/happy-people-rarely-vote-populists-mudde-says.

The second core expectation rests on the assumption that the refugee crisis has sparked a short-term increase in the success of populist parties, but not necessarily with longer-term effects. The mechanism behind this hypothesis is that voters react to "shocks" but their attention is rather short-termed (Healy and Lenz 2014). As much as Green parties' electoral fortune went up after the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster, populists regularly expressing an anti-immigrant stance should temporarily benefit from the perceived threats in the context of high levels of immigration. A mechanism connecting events and perceptions is media attention, which does not necessarily need to be pro-populist such as the American Breitbart News but can help populist success "simply by covering immigration" (Golder 2016: 488) – hence populists should suffer once a topic receives reduced media attention. As the refugee crisis has occurred very recently, its effects on populist party success are probably still felt in the countries affected. How this affects the possibly wave-shaped trajectories is a crucial question discussed in the subsequent paragraph. Immigration rates can also be seen as an operationalization of the demand side, which is somewhat difficult to study using aggregate-level data.

A focus of the argument is on the dynamics of the electoral success of populist parties. Hence, the expectations are refined and recombined to describe the electoral trajectories in the countries studied. The empirical model used (see below) allows non-linear trajectories (using time and time squared as variables), and the entry point for the further expectations is whether electoral success of populist parties, generally trending upwards since 2000, has been reduced or slowed down recently in a country. One way of doing so would be to model the squared term of years since 2000 to reflect the idea that the rate of reduction is influenced by the "refugee crisis", but this would put a heavy computational burden on the model as it creates a number of interactions.[11] As an alternative specification, the general effects of the crisis shock as well as actual immigration on electoral success are estimated, which are both election-level variables. These factors are assumed to increase success, representing relationships which potentially blur a non-linear trajectory of electoral success if they occur towards the end of the electoral period studied.

While most other sources of variation are captured by country-, election- and party- specific random effects, one further variable is incorporated. A classic explanation for the success of not only populist radical right parties is the permissiveness of the electoral system (Bernauer

[11] Furthermore, as the time squared variable is located at the level of parties, and the shock and immigration variables at the level of elections, the latter cannot be easily used while retaining their temporal information. Rather, they would have to be aggregated per party, making them actually only country-specific. A model attempting this specification (not reported) fails to converge.

and Bochsler 2011; Cox 1997, Hug 2001). The electoral hurdles to clear influence the costs of electoral entry as much as the success of populist parties, as voters are expected not to waste their vote on hopeless candidates – unless they are casting a pure protest vote, a notion which has some special relevance in the case of populism. Yet, restrictive electoral systems should be associated with less success of populist parties.[12]

A number of other explanations is disregarded despite their theoretical significance, including government participation, the programmatic appeal of populist and the reactions of mainstream parties (Akkerman 2015; Meguid 2008; Rooduijn et al. 2014), corruption/the quality of government (Agerberg 2017) and the leadership as well as internal organization of parties (Mudde 2016).[13] These would require more cases or additional data collection efforts, such as the quantitative analysis of political texts to extract the degree of populism or policy positions of parties.

[12] Given more data, this should clearly be extended featuring interaction effects. For instance, the electoral system should only display its negative impact if the populist party cannot expect to face demand (for example approximated by immigration rates) high enough to clear the electoral hurdles.

[13] Government participation is a particularly relevant item here. As populism is based on the critique of the political establishment, it runs into the danger of undermining its credibility when participating in government (Akkerman and De Lange 2012). Unlike for most politicians, incumbency is not necessarily perceived as beneficiary for populist. For instance, the Five Star Movement in Italy has installed a system to control the major of Rome to protect its chances at the next general election, institutionalized via a contract foreseeing a hefty monetary fine if Virginia Raggi does not follow the will of the party (see http://www.zeit.de/2016/24/rom-virginia-raggi-buergermeisterin-wahlen/komplettansicht). Hence, one could expect government participation to negatively impact the performance of populist parties at the next elections (which could be implemented using a lagged effect of government participation). Unfortunately, only a few instances of government participation are featured in the data at hand, some of which such as the permanent inclusion of the Swiss SVP are rather atypical, and a model featuring government participation (not reported) does not fit the data well.

Data and Design

The empirical test of the expectations formulated necessarily restricts itself to the post-2000 period, as this constitutes the period of a potential "fourth wave" of populism (Mudde 2016). Furthermore, the regional focus is western Europe (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland), as "the target remains moving" (Mudde 2016: 5) in central and eastern Europe. Of course, future research should extent the time frame and regional coverage. The aim here is to sketch a framework for analysing the trajectories of populist parties where it is likely to work, at the expense of a limited number of observations and especially only 12 unique countries and 16 populist radical right parties (which are not equally distributed across countries). Given the varying number of three to six elections and one to three parties per country, the absence of populist radical right parties in Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Iceland as well as after excluding the cases where only two elections are covered for a party the number of observed electoral results is 66 (level of parties at elections). The data structure is nested and cross-classified: Parties are observed at multiple elections per country, and in some countries, more than one party is observed at the same election. Figure 1 (results section) displays the parties and elections covered along with their raw electoral trajectories. See Appendix 1 for the long names of parties and the precise election years.

Data sources are described in Appendix 2 and are found, along with data and replication material, under https://github.com/julianbernauer/populism. Populist parties are identified using Inglehart and Norris (2016).[14] A list is displayed in Appendix 1. A major source is the "Parliaments and Governments Database". The dependent variable is the log of electoral success in per cent of the votes. The log ensures that the variable's distribution is less skewed and makes theoretical sense as most explanations of electoral success likely see diminishing returns.

As alluded to before, the development of success is of focal interest rather than its levels. To this end, the number of years since the year 2000 as well as the squared term of this variable are used to capture the potentially inversely U-shaped relationship between time and the

[14] Inglehart and Norris (2016) use CHES 2014 data and expert assessments along a range of nine items capturing a cultural cleavage (such as: pro traditional values, against liberal social lifestyle, pro nationalism, in favor of tough law and order, against immigration and multiculturalism) to identify populist parties. The criterion used by Inglehart and Norris (2016) to identify populist parties is that they are rated at or above 80 on a standardized 100-point cultural values scale. The list is slightly adjusted, excluding the borderline populist CSU in Germany, which is the Bavarian sister party of Angela Merkel's CDU, and adding the clearly populist Swiss Ticino League, which barely misses the cut.

electoral success of populist parties in western Europe. The further explanatory variables, including the shock specification and the rate of immigration, are used to model the level of electoral success. Sparse data available dictates a parsimonious model, and further explanations are disregarded except for district magnitude.

To measure the high levels of (media) attention created by the 2015 refugee crisis, a fading variable is created. It takes on the value 1 for elections occurring in or after April 2015, when immigration numbers, which have been on the rise before, started to increase, along with media attention.[15] In line with the argument of short-term orientation among voters, the variable is reduced by .25 for every year that has passed, leaving us with values of .5 for 2017 as no elections have occurred in 2016 in the sample studied – probably, populists would have fared well in these. Immigration rates are taken from Eurostat (see Appendix 2) and divided by the population number to arrive at immigration per citizen. Data before 2004 (France: 2006) as well as the most recent figures (2016 and 2017) are missing, making it problematic to fully assess the influence of the refugee crisis which unfolded in 2015. Yet, the rates of 2015 should be a good proxy for the extent of the "crisis" in the single countries and influence the electoral results in 2016 and 2017. Generally, the running average over the last three years running up to the election is used, and the data of the year 2015 for the elections in 2016 and 2017. Pre-2004 levels are approximated by the number for 2004 (France: 2006). Future research should obviously operate with updated figures. The numbers indicate that with the exception of Germany and a few other countries, immigration rates have increased already before 2015, for instance in Sweden.

Electoral rules are measured using the average district magnitude in the lower tier (Germany with a compensatory mixed electoral system and Austria with a multi-tier system: upper tier) taken from several waves of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). Information on Italy and Belgium and is retrieved from the Database of Political Institutions provided by the World Bank. See Appendix 2 for details.

Model

To implement a systematic empirical test of the expectations that 1) populism has hit a ceiling and 2) that the "refugee crisis" plays its part in this process, a tailored statistical model is

[15] See http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911.

introduced. It only uses data from countries with at least three elections where populist radical right parties have gained measureable success (hence more than a handful of votes), starting in the year 2000 the earliest. The model accommodates the fact that party-specific election results are nested within country, election and party contexts. As noted, this yields a partially cross-classified multilevel structure (Snijders and Bosker 1999: 155). The lowest level, at which the dependent variable is measured, is a party's electoral result at a specific election. The cross-classified structure emerges as results share some variance both due to partisan and election-specific factors, and these two contexts are not ordered hierarchically: single parties appear at multiple elections as much as single elections feature multiple parties. To analyse the development of party shares over time, latent curves are estimated for the parties. The test of non-linear trajectories is conceptualised statistically in terms of two variables, the number of years that have passed since 2000 and its squared term, which are located at the lowest level. These receive party-specific random slopes, allowing for a test of the wave hypothesis.

$$\ln(pvote)(i) \sim N(\mu_{pvote}(i), \sigma_{pvote})$$

$$\mu_{pvote}(i) = \alpha_{party}\big(idp(i)\big) + \alpha_{election}\big(ide(i)\big) + \beta_{time}\big(idp(i)\big) * time(i) + \beta_{time2}\big(idp(i)\big) * time(i) * time(i)$$

$$\alpha_{party}(m) \sim N(\mu_{party}(m), \sigma_{party})$$

$$\mu_{party}(m) = \alpha_{country}(idc(m))$$

$$\beta_{time}(m) \sim N(\mu_{time}(m), \sigma_{time})$$

$$\beta_{time2}(m) \sim N(\mu_{time2}(m), \sigma_{time2})$$

$$\alpha_{election}(n) \sim N(\mu_{election}(n), \sigma_{election})$$

$$\mu_{election}(n) = \alpha_{country}\big(idc(n)\big) + \gamma_{shock} * shock(n) + \gamma_{immi} * immi(n)$$

$$\alpha_{country}(j) \sim N(\mu_{country}(j), \sigma_{country})$$

$$\mu_{country}(j) = \alpha_0 + \gamma_M * M(j)$$

The dependent variable, log vote shares of populist parties at single elections (N=66), is assumed to follow a normal distribution. Time and time squared, with their random effects β_{time} and β_{time2}, model the latent electoral trajectories of parties. The other independent variables such as district magnitude and their effects (such as γ_M) are either located at the election (shock and immigration) or country (district magnitude) level. The cross-classified random intercepts such as α_{party} capture the 12 countries (j), 16 parties (m) and 50 elections (n). R and JAGS are used to simulate three MCMC chains for each parameter, using diffuse priors, 50'000 iterations for burn-in (as data is sparse) and 20'000 for inference. The model convergences reasonably well.

A potential issue in the analysis not touched yet is selection bias (Bernauer and Bochsler 2011, Heckman 1974, Hug 2001, King et al. 1994). Populist activists are surely well aware of their electoral chances influenced by electoral rules and other factors, some of which such as their leadership momentum are not observed and might bias the findings. As some preliminary analysis in Appendix 3 shows, the danger of selection bias appears to be limited in the sample at hand. Looking at western European democracies, the emergence of populist parties appears to be almost fully driven by immigration. There is still room for hidden factors potentially affecting electoral entry and success, which will be matter of future research. See Appendix 3 for details.

Results

A first look at the data is descriptive. Figure 1 displays the vote shares of 16 populist parties covered between 2000 and mid-2017. Between three and six elections are covered in the era described as the fourth wave of populism (Mudde 2016). Parsing the data visually, only some of the parties appear to show an approximately inverse-U-shaped pattern (BNP, FRP, LN, UKIP), a few have slowed down in their growth (PS, PVV), some are stagnating (EDU, SVP), the NPD and the VB face rather decreasing results and quite many populist parties in Europe apparently show an upward trend (DF, FN, FPÖ, LDT, SD, SGP). Local regression analyses per country could underpin these descriptive results, but the data is too sparse to do so. The model proposed below comes close to such an approach, but from an integrated perspective. Notably, stagnation appears in the Swiss party system, where populist parties, especially the SVP, are strong and even in government for decades. It also has to be noted that these patterns occur at very different levels and rates of electoral success and using only a very low number of observations in some cases. The extremist German NPD rather stagnates between one and two per cent. The Belgian VB is the only case where vote shares have truly plummeted, arguably as a more moderate party has been established also advocating the independence of Flanders. Finally, the introduction of explanatory variables surely alters the picture.

The parties are analysed in more detail using the latent curve multilevel model described above. The first step of the analysis refrains from the introduction of most of the explanatory variables and models the non-linear electoral trajectories using an indicator of the number of years since 2000 (time) and its squared term only, both allowed to vary by party.[16] Figure 2 displays the results. Note that a Bayesian interpretation is used, where parameter are perceived as distributions. The parameters of interest along with their one and two standard deviation credibility intervals are reported (about 80 and 95 per cent).

[16] The inverse-U-shaped relationship only appears in tendency generally (without party-specific estimates) in a model using time and time squared as explanatory variables (not reported).

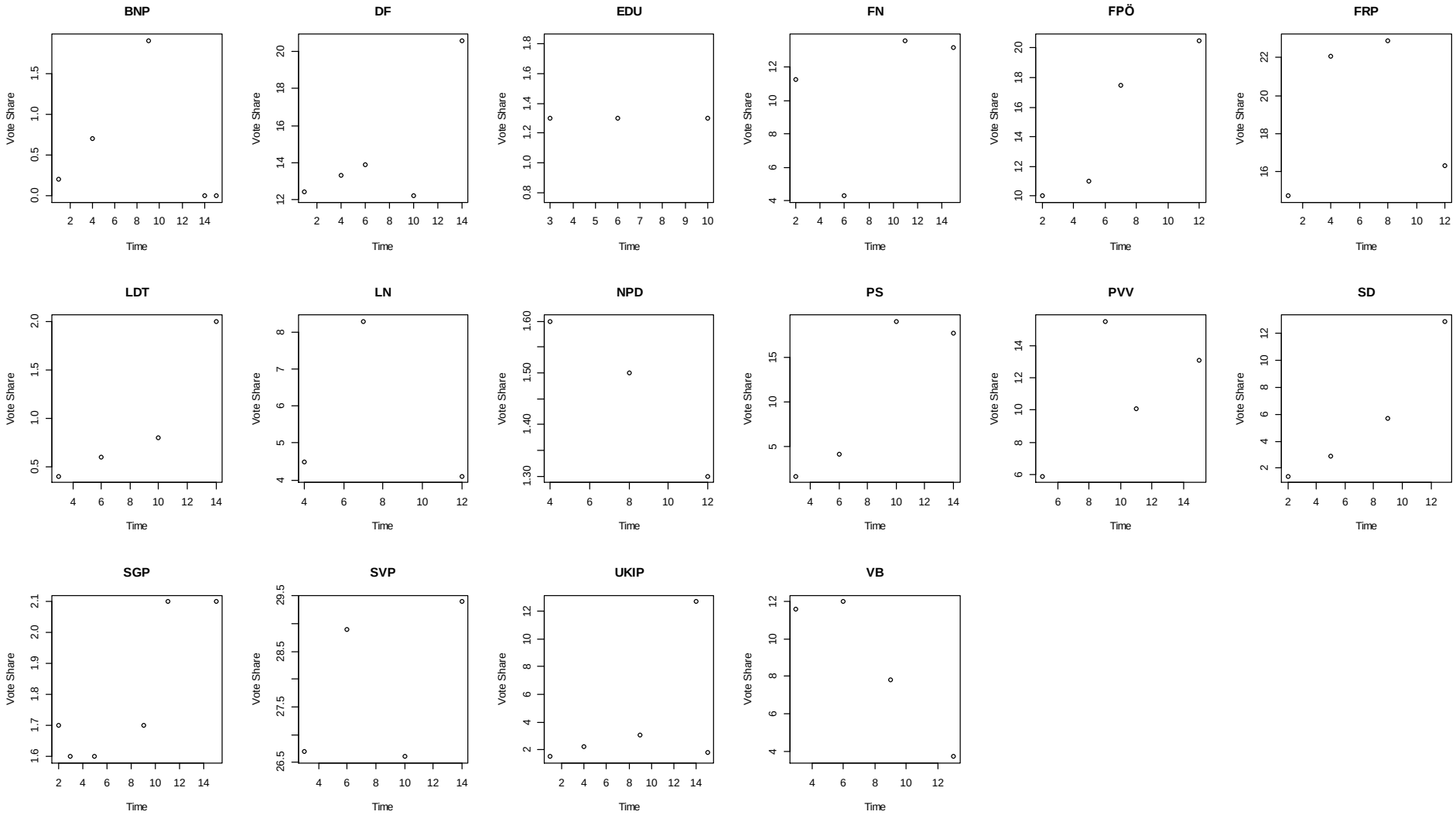

Figure 1: Electoral record of populist parties in western Europe, 2000-2017. Source: http://www.parlgov.org/.

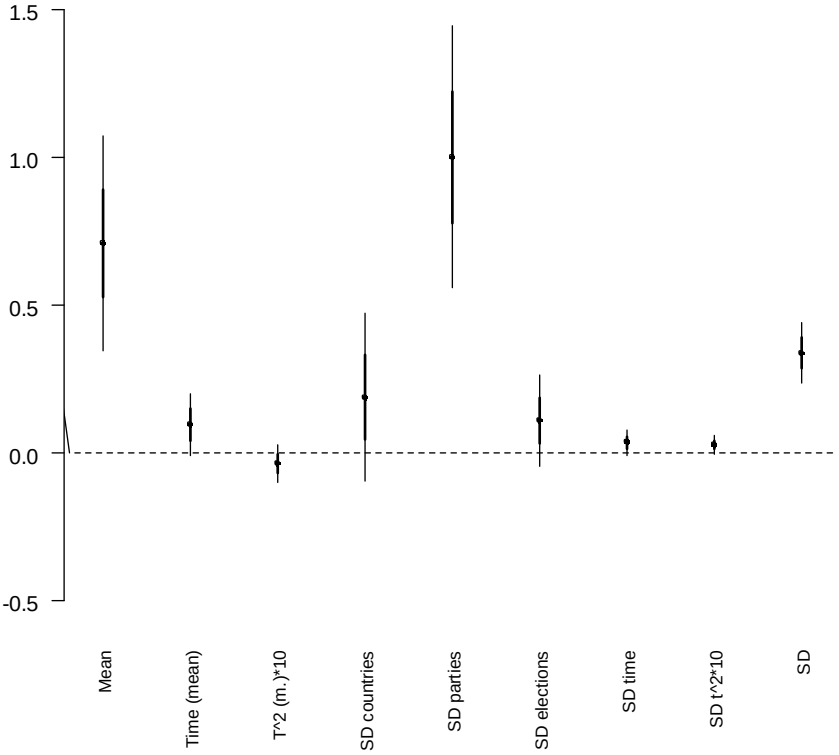

Figure 2: Model of electoral trajectories without further covariates. Mean of estimated parameters and one- and two-standard deviation credibility regions reported. Vote shares are on the log scale.

Figure 2 shows that the log of electoral votes on average tends to increase over time ("Time ("mean)"), but that this tendency is countered by some negative trend towards the later years of the period observed ("T^2(m)*10", which is the effect of time squared magnified by the factor 10). These mean estimates are associated with considerable uncertainty and not specific to single parties. The standard deviations of the effects of time and time squared are small but observable (with uncertainty), providing some initial evidence that there are party-specific trajectories over time. Obviously, these numbers suffer from the low number of cases observed, in combination with a rather complex model. Regarding the multilevel random effects, the strongest source of variation is the party, reconfirming the hunch of the literature that this might be the most neglected context. Again with considerable uncertainty, country- and election-level variance is observed as well.

In Figures 3 and 4, the possible U-shaped relationship is studied in more detail for the single parties, reporting party-specific effects of time and time squared from the same model. Here,

the 90 and 95 per cent credibility intervals for the effects of the two variables are reported along with the means. Figure 3 confirms the uncertainty in all estimates, but the striking feature is that for all parties, the effect of time tends to be positive once controlling for time squared, hence allowing for a non-linear trajectory. This is more true for the PS (True Finns) than for VB (Vlaams Belang), but even in the latter case the downward trend rather occurs in the later years of 2000-2017. This observation is backed up by Figure 4, where VB shows the clearest negative effect of time squared, while that of the PS is close to but not above zero. Substantially, this implies that even for the PS, the upward trend has at least slowed down a little bit towards the end of the period observed.

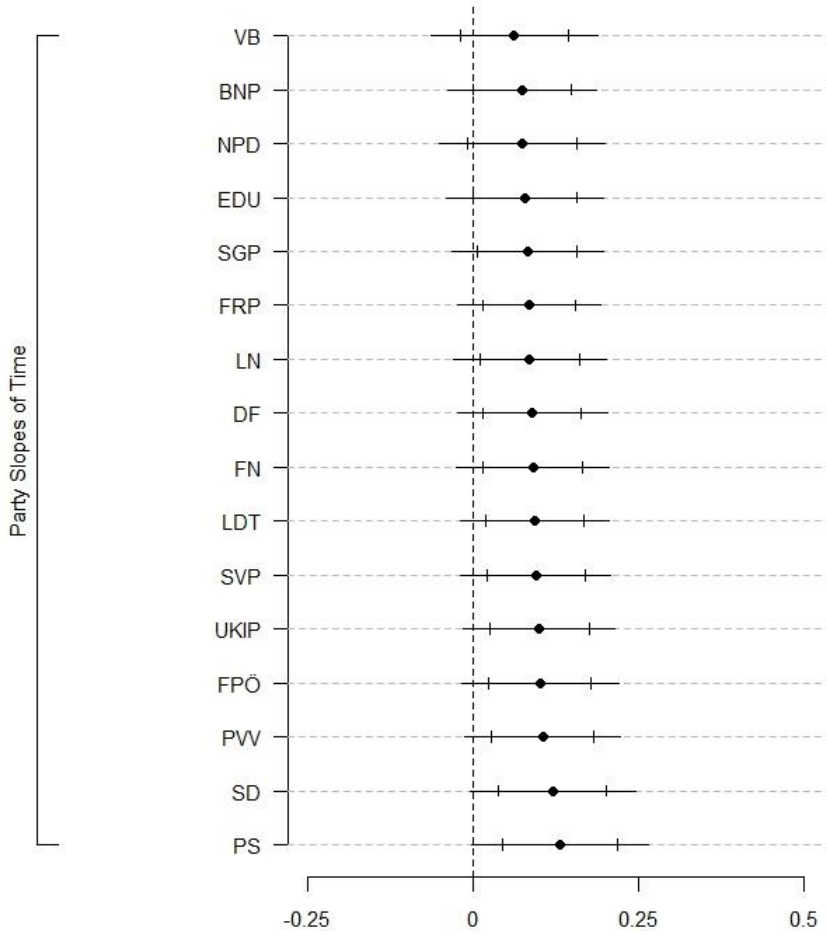

Figure 3: Party-specific effects of time from the model of electoral trajectories without further covariates. Mean of estimated parameters and 90/95 per cent credibility regions reported.

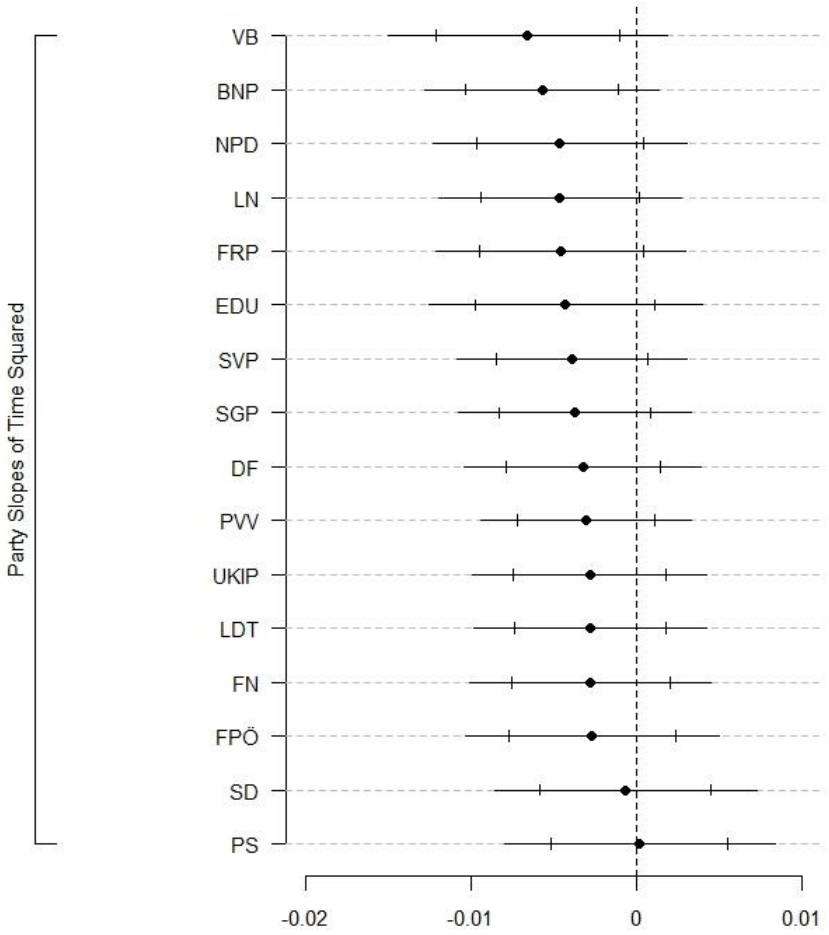

Figure 4: Party-specific effects of time squared from the model of electoral trajectories without further covariates. Mean of estimated parameters and 90/95 per cent credibility regions reported.

The results of the full model are reported in Figure 5. Surprisingly, the model can converge nicely even given the low number of cases and the high number of random effects. The three variables added are the fading shock measure as well as immigration per capita at the level of elections and the log of mean district magnitude at the country level. To recapitulate, the idea has been to control for the recent "refugee crisis" to see whether there is a fourth wave of populism net of these developments. The shock variable has a notable positive effect, as almost all findings associated with considerable uncertainty. Controlling for other factors, parties have indeed done better in the wake of the "refugee crisis". The mean of the parameter on immigration also has a positive sign, but the effect is very uncertain. The same is true for district magnitude. Maybe most notably, the effects of time and time squared emerge more clearly once controlling for the "refugee crisis", with the mean parameters' two standard deviation credibility regions not including zero. Unsurprisingly, a similar improve in fit is observed for the standard deviations of time and time squared. Hence, the model suggests that the trajectories

of most parties would resemble an inversed U – net of the crisis. Also note the considerable party-level variance left, which actually often reflects country-level variance at the same time as most countries feature one populist party only.

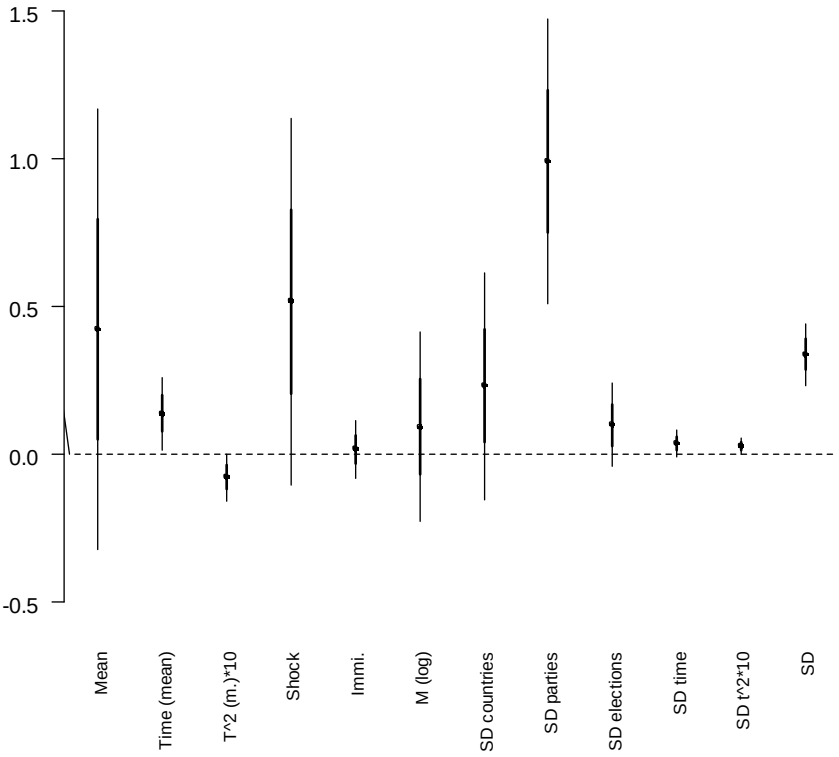

Figure 5: Full model of electoral trajectories. Mean of estimated parameters and one- and two-standard deviation credibility regions reported. Vote shares are on the log scale.

In sum, and once more stressing the limited data base, there is some evidence that the perceived shock induced by increased immigration in the context of the Syrian conflict and other developments since 2015 has given populist parties a boost. Whether this boost will last is difficult to predict. Actual immigration rates and institutional provisions are of less systematic influence. But here, the limited number of cases, the overlap between the crisis and immigration variables and the lack of an interaction term between immigration and district magnitude might hide some systematic patterns. Yet, the results indicate that there might a co-occurrence of an electoral downtrend or slowing down of populist parties, curbed by the shock of the "refugee crisis".

Conclusions

The article provides a framework for analyzing the electoral trajectories of populist radical right parties. To this end, an argument of "waves" of populism is developed, stating that due to processes such as media attention and their partial function as a pressure valve, populist parties enjoy rather temporary success (Mudde 2016). An auxiliary topic is that the "refugee crisis" unfolding since 2015 has given populist parties an electoral surge, which interferes with the development of the wave. Empirically, the expectations are tested using the electoral results of 16 populist parties in 12 western European countries at 50 elections between 2000 and 2017. The model used acknowledges the country-, party and election-contexts and features latent curves to analyze the party-specific development of electoral success across time. The results indicate that net of the impact of the crisis, populist parties tend to slow down in their electoral growth. Whether this hypothetical scenario would have emerged without the crisis or will arrive once the crisis looses its impact remains an open question which depends on many factors such as further external events, the strategies of populist and mainstream parties as well as the substance of the wave argument. It is too early to tell whether we are moving towards a fourth wave of populism.

While contributing to the literature on populist party success by providing a theoretical and empirical framework of the analysis of electoral trajectories, the article has a considerable number of shortcomings. Sparse data is a major one, and model convergence is just possible. Also, while the context random effects should capture the bulk of them, many explanatory variables are not featured in the empirical model, mainly due to a lack of degrees of freedom. For instance, government participation is excluded, but also interactions such as between district magnitude and immigration (see Golder 2016) as well as a treatment of potential selection bias (see Appendix 3).

A long list of to do's awaits future research. Regional or local data would strongly increase the number of cases as well as allow for moving closer to the mechanisms (Agerberg 2017). The geography of support implies that huge intra-country variations in electoral support for populist parties (Golder 2016: 491-3). For example, economic downturn associated with grievances causing a vote for a populist party often occur in certain areas in the process of de-industrialization.[17] For the immigration measures, the country of origin (for instance Syria vs.

[17] Compare the geographic distribution of Le Pen's vote in the 2017 French presidential election: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/05/07/world/europe/france-election-results-maps.html.

other) could yield a better explanation. Some data on populist parties is missing, at they are just starting to contest more than one election, as well as the 2016 immigration data. Especially, the constellation in Germany is of interest, which had a high rate of immigration in 2015 (1.5 million in total) and where the populist AfD is only about to enter its second federal election in 2017, where it is projected to gain 8.3 per cent as of 22 August 2017 by http://zweitstimme.org/, a complex prognosis model relying on historical structural as well as up-to-date survey information. With a very high probability, the party will enter the national parliament for the first time. Also, and as mentioned before, populist party organization, strategy and programmatic appeal are promising areas of research, backed up by the considerable party-level variance in the data analysed here. For instance, the quantitative text analysis of political documents and social media content could reveal just how populist the parties are or if there are reactions by mainstream parties. Other areas of research beyond the explicit scope of this article are the extension to multiple waves of populism, media attention and the impacts (Mudde 2016: 13-4) of populist parties. For now, the take-away-message is that according to the framework proposed, and net of the refugee crisis, there is some evidence that a fourth wave of populism is possible.

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Appendix 1: Coverage

Table A.1: List of populist parties and elections covered

Country	*Party names*	*Abbreviation*	*Elections covered*
Austria	Austrian Freedom Party	FPÖ	2002, 2006, 2008, 2013
Belgium	Vlaams Belang	VB	2003, 2007, 2010, 2014
Denmark	Dansk Folkeparti	DF	2001, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2015
Finland	True Finns	PS	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015
France	Front National	FN	2002, 2007, 2012, 2017
Germany	National Democratic Party of Germany	NPD	2005, 2009, 2013
Great Britain	United Kingdom Independence Party	UKIP	2001, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2017
	British National Party	BNP	2001, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2017
Iceland	-		
Ireland	-		
Italy	Lega Nord	LN	2001, 2005, 2008, 2013
Netherlands	List Wilders	PVV	2006, 2010, 2012, 2017
	Social Reformed Party	SGP	2002, 2003, 2006, 2010, 2012, 2017
Norway	Progress Party	FRP	2001, 2005, 2009, 2013
Portugal	-		
Spain	-		
Sweden	Sverigedemokraterna	SD	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
Switzerland	Swiss People's Party	SVP	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015
	Federal Democratic Union	EDU	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015
	Ticino League	LDT	2003, 2007, 2011, 2015

Notes: Populist parties identified following Inglehart and Norris (2016), but replacing the German CSU with the Swiss LDT (see discussion above).

Appendix 2: Data Sources

All websites have been consulted repeatedly in August 2017. See https://github.com/julianbernauer/populism for further details, data and code.

Electoral results

Döring, Holger and Philip Manow. 2016. Parliaments and governments database (ParlGov): Information on parties, elections and cabinets in modern democracies. Development version. http://www.parlgov.org/.

Immigration

Eurostat:
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&pcode=tps00176&language=en

Notes:

- Defined as „long-term immigrants arriving into the reporting country"
- Time series reported beginning in 2004

Population statistics

Eurostat:
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00001&plugin=1

Notes:

- The data features all residents, including immigrants
- Time series reported beginning in 2006, that year is used to approximate earlier values

District magnitude

1. Multiple waves of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)
    a. Wave 4: The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (www.cses.org). CSES MODULE 4 FOURTH ADVANCE RELEASE [dataset]. April 11, 2017 version. doi:10.7804/cses.module4.2017-04-11.
    b. Wave 3: The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (www.cses.org). CSES MODULE 3 FULL RELEASE [dataset]. December 15, 2015 version. doi:10.7804/cses.module3.2015-12-15.
2. Database of Political Institutions (DPI), Cruz, Cesi, Philip Keefer and Carlos Scartascini (2016). "Database of Political Institutions Codebook, 2015 Update (DPI2015)." Inter-American Development Bank. Updated version of Thorsten Beck, George Clarke, Alberto Groff, Philip Keefer, and Patrick Walsh, 2001. "New tools in comparative political economy: The Database of Political Institutions." 15:1, 165-176 (September), World Bank Economic Review.

Notes:

- CSES 4 as default, CSES 3 for Netherlands and Spain
- Italy and Belgium: DPI
- Upper tiers used in the case of Germany and Austria

Appendix 3: Selection Bias

As discussed briefly in the "Model" section of the article, the question of different stages of success (Golder 2016) leads to the potential problem of selection bias (King et al. 1994: 131). In the case of parties, they self-select into the electoral race if they expect to succeed. This also implies that some parties do not even form as they are deterred by conditions such as a rigid electoral system. While some factors influencing these decisions can be controlled for, others cannot, and these might introduce some bias to the model of electoral success. The reason is that if for instance a party lacks attractive leadership (and we do not control for this variable), this influences its (expected) electoral support, and party elites of a small party with few resources might anticipate a weak performance and refrain from running for election. If the unobserved variable is correlated with other explanations such as electoral support, bias is introduced. To control for these unobserved confounders influencing both self-selection and success, a selection model can be used (Heckman 1979). While the explanations discussed above refer mainly to the success of parties, most of them are also relevant for their electoral entry, as it is influenced by expectations of success. Typically, a variable capturing registration costs, assumed to only influence selection but not success, is used to identify the model (Hug 2001, see also Bernauer and Bochsler 2011).

To model electoral entry (and for the identification of a selection model), a variable capturing the extend of the public financing of parties could be included, which is a crucial dimension of party regulation (Tavits 2008: 127). The measure tested here is a dummy which relies on information found in Van Biezen and Rashkova (2014: 895) and, for Switzerland, Vatter (2016). Countries coded as having no considerable direct public funding (receiving a 0) are Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain and Ireland. In line with the literature (Hug 2001; Tavits 2008), this variable is assumed to primarily affect the entry into the electoral race rather than the success of parties.

Instead of implementing a full selection model, an analysis of the entry of populist parties presented, already indicating to some but not full extent whether a selection model is necessary. Figure A3.1 reports the results of a logistic model of electoral entry adding the four countries without populist radical right parties (Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Iceland) to the sample of twelve with, giving us 16 countries with twelve times a 1 on the entry variable and only four times a 0. The model uses district magnitude and the availability of strong public funding as predictors, as it cannot afford more explanatory variables. In tendency, public funding increase the probability of electoral entry, while district magnitude has no systematic impact. Given the very low number of cases, a normally inappropriate linear probability (OLS) model is used to study the binary dependent variable of entry (Figure A3.2). This allows adding immigration to the equation, where the log is taken (as much as for district magnitude). Immigration is a very strong predictor of electoral entry of populist parties in the sample at hand, boosting R squared to over 75 per cent. Hence, there is not too much room for selection bias, which is still possible, though.

A closer look at the fitted values and residuals (Figure A3.3) reveals that the linear probability model consistently predicts countries without a populist party not to have one. Iceland is the only case in the group where the prediction to feature a populist party is slightly above .5. Figure A3.4 shows that Iceland, Ireland and Spain have large negative residuals – which is no surprise, as the dependent variable can take only 0 and 1 and these countries are predicted to have a probability larger than zero. Switzerland, Belgium and Sweden fit the model well. Positive residuals are observed in countries such as France, Finland, Netherlands or Great Britain, implying that their predicted probability of a populist party to appear is below one. Portugal shows the limits of using OLS for a binary outcome. The country is predicted to have a probability of a populist party below zero, which is not possible. Similar nonsensical predictions are observed for a few countries including Austria and Belgium, which have predicted probabilities above one. These residuals are discussed in detail as they can in principle be used to capture unobserved confounders introducing selection bias.

Challenges for the further implementation of a selection model are the restricted number of cases, the right type and level of selection and the identification of the model. The preliminary analysis presented moves at the level of parties, whereas the selection mechanisms probably occur mainly at the party level. This would require a switch from a selection model of stochastic censoring, where the cases with missing information are known, to stochastic truncation, where no information on the missing cases is available, putting a heavier burden on the identification of the model (King et al. 1989).

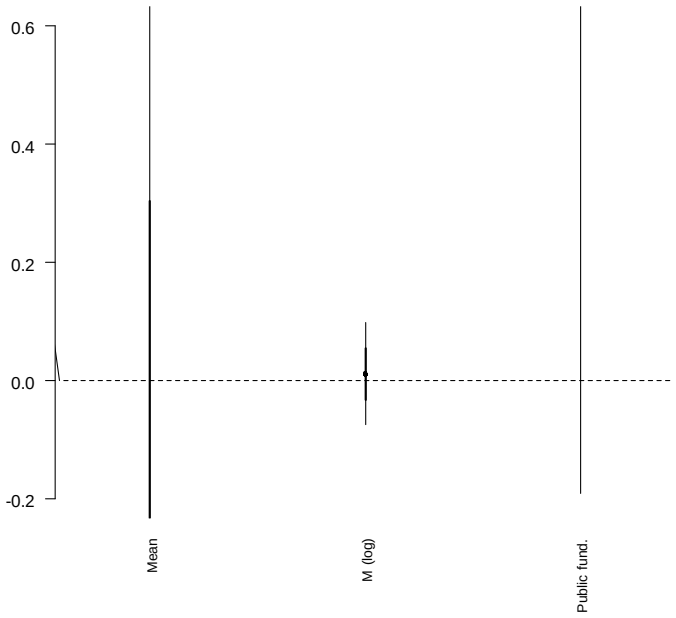

Figure A3.1: Logit model of electoral entry. N=16 countries.

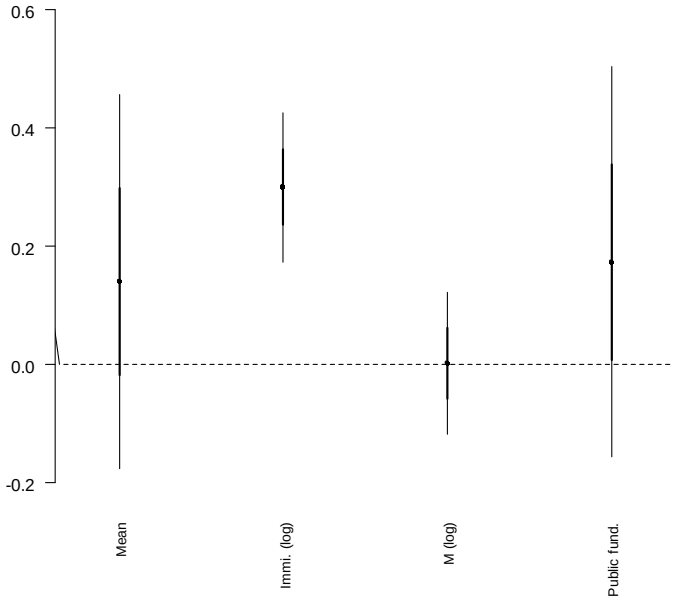

Figure A3.2: Linear Probability (OLS) model of electoral entry.

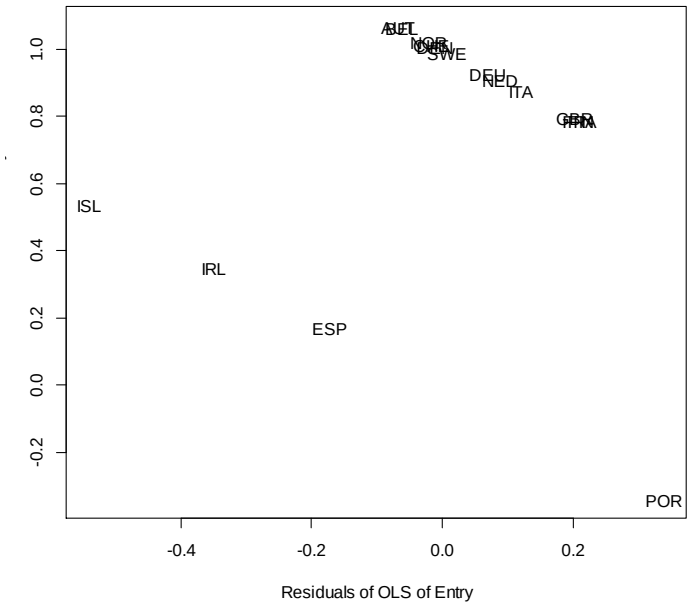

Figure A3.3: Residual vs. fitted for the model reported in Figure A3.2.

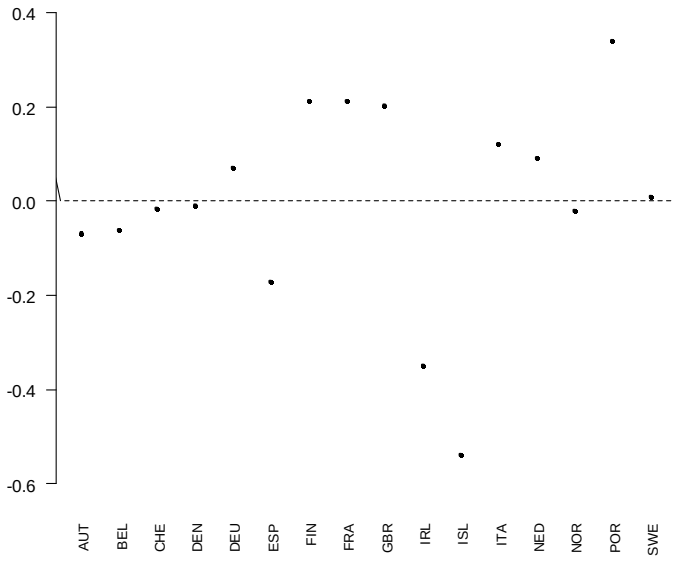

Figure A3.4: Residuals of the model reported in Figure A3.2 by country.