Votes for Populists

CODEBOOK

Anna Grzymala-Busse
Michael McFaul

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1   Introduction

The Global Populisms Project at the Europe Center and the Freeman Spogli Institute examines the global surge in populist movements and the consequences for established democratic rules and institutions.

As part of the project, we collected data on the electoral performance of populist parties in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. This database provides two major contributions to the study of populism: a comprehensive list of populist parties in three major regions, and complete and up-to-data information on the electoral performance of these parties.

2   Definitions

The definition of populism is still a topic of some debate. Under the project's working definition, populism argues that the establishment elites are a corrupt and unresponsive cartel, and that the people need to have their general will represented. This approach is heavily influenced by the works of various scholars, particularly Mudde (2004), as well as Gidron and Bonikowski (2013).

For this dataset in particular, parties are coded as populist if programs, elite pronouncements, or citations explicitly refer to:

1. Claims about corrupt elite, elite cartels or obstruction, failure to represent, economic woes as the fault of the corrupt elites, draining the swamp, elite collusion, etc., and

2. Claims to represent "the people," "the nation," or the "pueblo," rather than narrow interests or groups etc., or the need for unmediated and direct representation.

In addition to primary source analysis, classification decisions are informed by the growing literature in political science and area studies on particular populist parties around the world.

This codebook proceeds as follows: First, in Section 2, we discuss the file structure and data processing. Then, in Section 3, we discuss the variable names, definitions, and sources used to construct the database. Finally, in Section 4, we provide an appendix with further information on parties, politicians, and their classifications as populist.

3   Data Processing and Files

To produce the complete dataset, we begin with a core data set for each region that contains only election years. The data is cleaned and updated by hand. Then, it is moved to R, where `deltafor` and `deltaback` are computed. Next, a custom method is used to pad the data (i.e. forward-fill data from election years into non-election years, starting with the first observed election). Observations start with the first election year to avoid biasing calculations at the regional level, such as average support for populist parties. Finally, the data is merged with other features, like migration statistics, GDP growth, and the Gini Index, which are also forward-filled.

In general, data that is unavailable is recorded as missing. One notable exception is elections where no populist parties contested seats, in which case 0 is substituted for missing values. Though this data is technically unobserved, since a party that hasn't contested an election can't obtain a numerical vote share, we assume that the absence of a populist party indicates the absence of support for populism on the order of a 0% vote share. The core data sets for each region, as well as the final database, are available in .csv format.

4 Variable Names and Definitions

In this section, we introduce the variable names of the database, as well as their definitions and sources. Categorical variables are coded as 1 when the statement is true and 0 otherwise.

Table 1: Variable Names and Definitions

Variable Name	Definition
region	Region, coded as 1 for Europe, 2 for Asia and 3 for Latin America.
country	Country name (in English).
iso2c	Unique ISO 3166-1 2-character country code.
iso3n	Unique ISO 3166-1 3-number country code.
year	Year of observation. Generally ranges from 1945 (or the first year of elections) to 2019. For some countries, earlier elections are also observed.
populist1	Name of populist party (in English), at the time of the election.
populist2	Name of populist party (in the original language), at the time of the election.
populist3	Populist party abbreviation, at the time of the election.
populist4	Alternate name, in cases where the party runs as part of an electoral block or is the primary successor of a different party. In chains of succession or name changes, the name of the most recent predecessor is recorded.
populist5	Consistent party name, constructed using **populist1** and **populist4**. Allows populist parties to be traced over time, regardless of name changes.
presparty	Primary party affiliation of the presidential candidate.
percentage	Vote share received by the party or candidate. In non-election years, the vote share from the most recent election is used. For bicameral legislatures, support in the lower house is reported. For presidential elections with multiple rounds of voting, results are reported for the latest stage in which the candidate stood.
turnout	Percent of eligible and/or registered voters who participated in the election by casting a vote. Where precise statistics are unavailable, the number of valid votes counted is used as a proxy for the number of votes cast.
source_a	Source for **percentage**. For coding details, see Table **??**
source_b	Source for **turnout**. For coding details, see Table **??**
enteredgov	Binary variable. Coded as 1 if the party or candidate won a seat in the election. Coded as 0 otherwise.
populistpres	Binary variable. Coded as 1 if, at the time of the election, the sitting president represents a populist party or is otherwise a populist. Coded as 0 otherwise.
pressystem	Binary variable. Coded as 1 if the system is a presidential one and 0 otherwise. For a system to qualify as presidential, there must be (a) direct elections for the office of president and (b) the president must be elected separately from the governing party and prime minister.
preselection	Binary variable. Coded as 1 if this is a presidential election and 0 otherwise.

coalition	Binary variable. Coded as 1 if the populist party was in the governing coalition at the time of the election (including if party governed solo) and 0 otherwise. Applies to most parliamentary systems.
sologov	Binary variable. Coded as 1 if party was governing by itself at the time of the election and 0 otherwise.
deltaback	Change in electoral support since the last election: $$deltaback = pergentage_t - pergentage_{t-1}$$
deltafor	Change in electoral support from the current electoral period to the next period: $$deltafor = pergentage_t - pergentage_{t+1}$$
migrantpop	National migrant population (number of migrants). Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2017). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).
totalpop	National population in thousands of people. Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2017). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).
migrantshare	Percent of migrants in total population. Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2017). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).
migrantchange	Approximate annual rate of change of the migrant stock, measured over a five- to ten-year period beginning half way through the first observed year and ending half way through the next observed year. Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Population Division (2017). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017).
gini	World Bank estimate of the Gini Index. The Gini index is a measure of wealth inequality, where 0 indicates perfect equality and 100 indicates perfect inequality. In years where the Gini Index is unavailable, a value is taken from the previous observation. Source: World Bank Development Indicators (SI.POV.GINI).
growth	World Bank estimate of average GDP growth per year. Source: World Bank Development Indicators (NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG).

Table 2: Source Codes for **percentage** and **turnout**

Code	Source
Nordsieck	Nordsieck, Wolfram. 2017. *Parties and Elections in Europe.*

Nohlen	May refer to any of the following: Dieter Nohlen and Philip Stover, eds. 2010. *Elections in Europe: A Data Handbook.*; Dieter Nohlen, ed. 2005. *Elections in the Americas: A Data Handbook.*; Dieter Nohlen, Florian Grotz, and Christof Hartmann, eds. 2001. *Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook.*
Almanac of Electoral History	Mackie, Thomas. 1982. *The International Almanac of Electoral History.*
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems. IFES Election Guide. www.electionguide.org.
ERA	Binghampton University. Election Results Archive.
ER	Alvarez-Rivera, Manuel. Election Resources. www.electionresources.org.
GED	Brancati, Dawn. Global Elections Database. www.globalelectionsdatabase.com.
PDBA	Georgetown University Center for Latin American Studies. Political Database of the Americas. pdba.georgetown.edu.

5 Index of Populist Candidates and Parties

In this section, we document the information that was considered in some selection decisions. These notes focus on classification decisions in Latin America, but include some discussion of classification decisions in Asia. This section serves two purposes. First, it documents the research process used to assemble this dataset. Second, we hope it can form the basis for a more systematic and complete accounting of populist parties and candidates.

5.1 Latin America

Belize

PEOPLE'S UNITY PARTY (PUP) — 1979 to present. After independence, the PUP became the dominant party in Belizean politics, winning an absolute majority of votes in every parliamentary election before 2008. Today, it is an opposition party. The PUP was coded as a populist party after an analysis of it's newspaper, *The Belize Times*, in which the party claims to represent the Belizean people and describes the current government as corrupt and out-of-touch.

Bolivia

NOTES — Presidential elections from 1966 to 1993 were fraudulent or ineffectual. In the first part of this period, elections were organized to support leaders of the military Junta. In the second part of this period, congress elected the president in spite of the results of popular elections. Even so, because direct elections were held and because they were held separately from the election of the governing party and/or prime minister, Bolivia is recorded as a presidential system during this period.

Brazil

NOTES — Like Bolivia, despite direct presidential elections in Brazil, leaders often assume power by coup d'etat or indirect election. Even so, whenever direct elections were held and conducted separately from the election of the governing party and/or prime minister, Brazil is coded as a presidential system.

Also, for the period of 1945 to 1962, many parties ran in multiple coalitions. The statistics reported reflect the share of the vote that a party received while running on its own. As such, this data likely under-estimates support for populist parties.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDS) — Founded by populist leader Getulio Vargas. An early example of moderate-conservative populism in Brazil.

BRAZILIAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDB/PMDB) — The MDB was the sole opposition party under military rule from 1966 to 1979. After the party was abolished in 1979, it was reincorporated as PMDB. In the 1990's, the party developed deeply populist rhetoric. On the official party website, the development of the party platform is rooted in the observation that "Traditional elites were not able to build a great democratic civilization for the entire Brazilian people. Hence the recognition of the primacy of the people" (translated from Portuguese). One component of the party platform echoes this populist rhetoric: "The PMDB intends to continue being the political expression of the majority of the Brazilian population, oppressed and exploited by an economic regime focused on the satisfaction of a small minority. It identifies, primarily, with the struggles and interests of the great mass of the marginalized and excluded" (translated from Portuguese).

AVANTE (AVANTE) — Minor party founded by dissidents of the On their official website, the party claims to "listen to the people's wishes" (translated from Portuguese). The website also features numerous boasts about electoral support for party politicians.

Columbia

JORGE ELIECER GAITAN — Left-wing populist president of the 1930's.

GUSTAVO ROJAS PINILLA — Ceased power in a coup-de-etat in (year). Ran for re-election in 1970 under a populist platform and was narrowly defeated.

LVARO URIBE — Founding leader of Colombian right-wing populism, a subtler political identity grounded in popular demands for security and the failure of incompetent elites to provide it. Javier Corrales has written on this trend toward right-wing populism in Columbia.

IVN DUQUE MRQUEZ — Close ally of former president lvaro Uribe. Places a similar emphasis on security and administrative incompetence, particularly in the context of the contentious FARC peace process.

Ecuador

MOVIMIENTO ALIANZA PAIS (AP) — Populist president Rafael Correa's party. Lenn Moreno succeeded Rafael Correa without populism, and proceeded to reform the party.

El Salvador

NAYIB BUKELE — An unprecedented candidate in Salvadoran politics. As a third-party candidate, Burkele won the 2019 presidential election by a wide margin. In numerous tweets, Burkele has railed against corrupt elites, called on the support of the people, and promised to "dismantle the neoliberal model."

Costa Rica

JUAN DIEGO CASTRO — Anti-corruption candidate promising direct democracy with no parties or corrupt politicians. Despite early success in the polls, Castro failed to reach the second round of voting.

Cuba

Party of the Cuban People - Orthodox (PPC-O) — Populist opposition party. Electoral data is unavailable for this period, so it is not reported in the data set.

Fulgencio Batista — Revolutionary political figure. After governing behind-the-scenes with the support of the security forces, Batista entered a populist phase from 1937 to 1940, and was elected president in 1940. After ceasing power in a military coup in 1952, he stood as the sole candidate in a fraudulent presidential election in 1954.

Fidel Castro — Castro campaigned against corruption and authoritarianism in Batista's regime. In a 1959 speech, Castro proclaimed that he was "obeying the people's will." He ceased power in the overthrow of the Batista government, and never stood in a presidential election. For that reason, he is not included in the data set.

5.2   Asia

Israel

For more details on populism in Israel, refer to "Is Israel in democratic decline?", a Brookings Institution policy brief by Tamara Cofman Wittes and Yael Mizrahi-Arnaud.

The Likud — The Likud (lit. The Consolidation) has a long history of advocating for economic and cultural populism. Under Benjamin Netanyahu, this approach has been emphasized. Through the political identity of "the Jewish people" (which Netanyahu equates to the state of Israel), liberal elites and non-Jewish minorities have come under threat. Bernard Avishai's commentary on the 2019 general election articulates some of these trends.

Japan

Japan has been relatively, though not entirely, immune to the populist tide that swept through most of the developed world. Even so, populist parties have formed on the fringes of Japanese democracy, and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has experimented with populist politics.

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) — In the 2009 election, the Democratic Party rose to power on a platform of anti-elitism. Even so, the party lacked a clear assertion of the will of the Japanese people.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) — Under Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, the LDP took an anti-establishment turn while simultaneously advocating for the "Japanese people." During this period, the LDP effectively became a populist party. Later, failure on these proposed reforms led to the victory of the DPJ in 2009. The current LDP Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, has recieved admiration from far-right populists. Even so, Abe and the LDP are firmly entrenched as elites. Abe's social conservatism is more accurately classified as right-wing nationalism.

Japan Restoration Party — A fringe party launched by the former mayor of Osaka, Toru Hashimoto, ahead of the 2012 general elections. As Sheila A. Smith, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relation, has pointed out, Hashimoto has consistently advocated against the governing elite and in favor of more direct governance by the Japanese people. This qualifies the Japan Restoration Party as a populist group.

Sunrise Party (SP) — The party platform declares that the party "reaffirms the proud Japanese traditional culture and popular culture not only as irreplaceable property to be inherited to future generations." Even so, the party lacks a clear assertion of the existence of corrupt elites. The party is more accurately classified by its cultural nationalism.