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Populism and civil associations

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the impact of civil associations on populist support using survey data from 44 liberal democracies over the period 1995-2022. Employing a linear probability model with country and year-fixed effects, I find that membership in civil associations reduces the probability of supporting populist parties by 2-2.8%, which translates to a 10% reduction relative to the sample's average preference for populism. This finding, consistent with previous literature and robust to several tests, suggests that civil society can play an important role in mitigating the rise of populism in liberal democracies.

1 Introduction

The beginning of the twenty-first century has witnessed an unprecedented rise of populism, reaching an all-time high presence in governments in 2018 after a 30-year upward trend (Funke, Schularick & Trebesch, 2023). Populists exploited the economic and cultural grievances caused by globalization shocks and the global financial crisis, gaining support through anti-establishment rhetoric. In doing so, they also managed to penetrate established liberal democracies, previously considered immune (Guriev & Papaioannou, 2022). This thesis, positioning itself in the political economy literature that investigates the driving and preventing factors of populism, studies the role of the informal bodies of liberal democracies - civil associations - in explaining this phenomenon.

Defining populism is complex as it encompasses various contexts, personalities, and ideologies (Guriev & Papaioannou, 2022). Nevertheless, in recent years, there has been growing consensus on the definition by Mudde (2004), which is commonly used in populism research (De la Torre & Mazzoleni, 2019; Noury & Roland, 2020; Guriev & Papaioannou, 2022; Funke et al., 2023). Mudde defines populism as a ‘thin-centered ideology that considers society ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, “the pure people” and “the corrupt elite”, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volontè generale* (general will) of the people’ (p. 542-543). Thin-centered ideologies do not offer a comprehensive worldview, but only a limited set of ideas, which attaches to other ‘thick’ ideologies (such as liberalism or socialism). This explains why the term populism has been applied to both right-wing, exclusive populism in Europe and left-wing, inclusive populism in Latin America (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013).

The populist Manichean view of society as divided into two homogeneous and morally different groups rests on two assumptions (Galston, 2018). First, ‘the people’ are seen as a unique

body with a singular will; second, they are virtuous, elevating one moral standard above the others. These claims not only are artificial but also undermine the ideal of pluralism, which views society as composed of diverse and partly overlapping groups with distinct ideas and interests (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Pluralism is at the basis of liberal democracies, political systems based on different values that are equally valid, provided that they respect the law (Boeri, Mishra, Papageorgiou & Spilimbergo, 2021), and where property, civil, and electoral rights are protected (Mukand & Rodrik, 2020). The liberal component of these systems underscores the possibility of a ‘sphere beyond the rightful reach of government in which individuals can enjoy independence and privacy’ (Galston, 2018, p. 10). This sphere, called civil society, is a space where citizens can act publicly, by struggling against or agreeing with each other and with the economic and political authority, through bodies such as voluntary associations (Kaldor, 2003).

The role of voluntary associations in civil society has been acknowledged since 1835, when Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*, emphasized their importance as platforms for aggregation and civic engagement (Tocqueville, 2016, as cited in Boeri et al., 2021). Putnam (2000) also recognizes the value of associations in his definition of social capital, viewing it as a form of capital arising from the existence of social networks and contributing to positive social outcomes, such as increased political participation and trust. Conversely, populism is often linked to declining trust and civic engagement. Given these opposite trends correlated with higher social capital and rising populism, the question is whether a strong civil society can reduce the spread of populism. According to Boeri et al. (2021), there are theoretical reasons for both the hypotheses that associations reduce anti-establishment support, or that they function as vehicles of the populist message. The authors use European individual data from 2002 to 2016 to address this question empirically and find evidence that civil society reduces populist votes.

This thesis investigates the same hypothesis. Using data from the Integrated Values Survey (IVS), I study the relationship between social capital, measured by membership in civil associations, and preference for populist parties. Employing a linear probability model that accounts for country and year-fixed effects, I find that participation in associations decreases the probability of supporting a populist party by 2-2.8%. This translates to a roughly 10% reduction in populist support, considering that the sample’s average preference for populism is around 23%. This finding is robust to the use of two different indicators measuring populism, as well as to the exclusion of labor union membership from the sample, which is potentially endogenous. I interpret this result as supporting the hypothesis presented by Boeri et al. (2021), suggesting

that associations provide ideological anchors that discourage voting for outsiders or serve as protective shields that increase resilience against populism.

This study makes the following contributions to the existing literature. First, it replicates and reinforces the findings of Boeri et al. (2021), expanding the geographical coverage from 17 European countries to 44 countries globally and extending the period of interest from 2002-2016 to 1995-2022. Secondly, it broadens the scope of the analysis by examining how varying levels of participation in civil associations, measured by the number of membership types and the intensity of engagement, affect the impact of associations on populism. Thirdly, unlike many other studies that use a single time-invariant classification of populism, I validate my results using two time-varying indicators, one of which is recent and never used before in similar research. These contributions are possible thanks to a novel dataset, which combines the World Values Survey and the European Values Study datasets for information on individuals' socio-demographics and political preference, and the V-Party and RFPOPI datasets for information on political parties.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 reviews the related literature and presents the hypotheses. Section 3 describes the data sources, construction of the main variables, and empirical strategy. Section 4 reports the results of the analysis and robustness tests, and provides a comparison with Boeri et al. (2021). Section 5 interprets the results and discusses causality. Section 6 concludes with suggestions for further research.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Populism and its causes

The economic literature has identified two main drivers of the recent rise of populism, whose relationship is still under debate. The first explanation focuses on economic factors. Guriev and Papaioannou (2022) review the theoretical and empirical evidence of globalization shocks, such as international trade and technological progress, which have increased inequality and unemployment in the Western world. The resulting economic insecurity led to disappointment towards traditional political parties, fueling the demand for populist alternatives (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). This view is consistent with the widely corroborated argument that voters punish the incumbents in times of economic turndown (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000). For the same reasons, the 2008-2009 global financial crisis has also received great attention as a

shock causing populism. Algan, Guriev, Papaioannou and Passari (2017) use European regional and individual data from the European Social Survey (ESS) from 2002 to 2014 to show that crisis-driven economic insecurity significantly increased support for anti-establishment parties and decreased trust for national and European institutions. Guiso, Herrera, Morelli and Sonno (2024) also find that economic insecurity shocks increased the populist vote in Europe from 2002 to 2018 using ESS data.

Another strand of literature argues that economic factors alone do not fully explain the rise of populism, and that cultural aspects also play a role. Margalit (2019), reviewing the empirical literature on the economic drivers of populism, asserts that while economic insecurity may have had an impact at the margin (thus having ‘outcome significance’), the ‘explanatory significance’ resides in the cultural grievances of voters, which cannot be reduced to by-products of economic concerns. Inglehart and Norris (2016) use ESS data to analyze both economic and cultural drivers, though they stress that this distinction may be somewhat artificial, and that interactive effects may be at play. They find that the most convincing evidence is in favor of the ‘cultural backlash’ thesis. This thesis argues that populism arose as a backlash against the ‘Silent Revolution’, the development of Western societies during the postwar decades towards more progressive values, such as multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. Such a development brought about a counter-revolutionary movement led by previously ‘dominant’ social groups, threatened by the loss of identity and traditional values caused by cultural globalization (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). In this context, anti-establishment parties become platforms to address these identity-related grievances (Fukuyama, 2018).

2.2 Populism and social capital

A cultural explanation of populism relates to social capital. Since its introduction in the social sciences literature in the 1970s, this concept has been widely used across several disciplines, including economics (Guiso, Sapienza & Zingales, 2011). Putnam (2000) argues that the key idea behind social capital is that social networks are valuable, defining it as ‘connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them’ (p. 19). This conception of social capital is closely related to what Tocqueville called the ‘art of association’ in *Democracy in America*, referring to the propensity of Americans to engage in civil association compared to his native France, which was more individualistic (Fukuyama, 2018). As noted by Boeri et al. (2021), Tocqueville stressed that this art – or science, as he

also calls it – is pivotal in modern liberal democracies. Associations create a space for the aggregation of plural interests and values, independent from the state. They allow individuals to pursue common goals, fostering social cohesion and trust, ensuring the healthy functioning of democracy (Tocqueville, 2016).

This view holds that social capital generates positive group externalities, while its absence can lead to negative social outcomes. In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (2000) already noted that the decline in associational activity in America was associated with lower levels of trust and political participation. At the same time, these developments also correlate with populism. Dustmann et al. (2017) use ESS data to find a negative correlation between populist support and trust in national and European institutions. Studying the 2017 presidential elections in France, Algan, Beasley, Cohen and Foucault (2018) use questionnaire data to analyze various predictors of voting behavior, showing that low levels of inter-personal trust predict right-wing populism, but not left-wing populism. They find that while economic shocks drive populism, deeper cultural factors direct vote to either extreme left or right-wing parties.

A possible relationship between social capital and populism is that a high level of social capital helps cope with economic shocks, thereby decreasing populist support (Guriev & Papaioannou, 2022). Giuliano and Wacziarg (2020) find a negative correlation between preference for Donald Trump in the 2016 U.S. elections and measures of social capital, such as the density of associations at the county-level and indicators of generalized trust at the individual level. Similarly, Boeri et al. (2021) focus on the role of civil society, measured by membership in civil associations, as a countervailing mechanism to populism. Using ESS individual data for 17 European countries from 2002 to 2016, they find that participating in a civil association reduces the probability of voting for a populist party.

Social capital, however, may also have a dark side. Putnam (2000) observes that while it can have positive effects for those inside the network, there may be negative consequences for those outside of it, stemming from group-thinking and antisocial behavior. Putnam distinguishes between bridging (inclusive) and bonding (exclusive) social capital, viewing them not as mutually exclusive categories but as dimensions that can apply more or less to each social network. Bridging social capital refers to outward-looking networks that encompass different socio-demographic groups, enhancing reciprocity and information diffusion. In contrast, bonding social capital concerns networks that tend to reinforce identities and whose members pertain to more homogeneous groups. While the bonding type strengthens in-group reciprocity and

loyalty, it may also provoke out-group antagonism and generate negative externalities.

Some empirical evidence supports this view. Rodríguez-Pose, Lee and Lipp (2021) study the determinants of the 2016 election of Donald Trump. In contrast to Giuliano and Wacziarg (2020), they find that areas with relatively strong social capital were more likely to vote for Trump, as a consequence of long-term declines in population and employment. Social capital would then work as a transition mechanism for discontent, where individual losses are more strongly identified with collective ones. Furthermore, against Tocqueville’s idea that civil society is fundamental for democracy, Satyanath, Voigtländer and Voth (2017) use the historical case of Nazi-fascism to show that a strong civil society may undermine democracy and provide a basis for authoritarian regimes. They show that association density predicts higher entry rates in the NSDAP, indicating the importance of face-to-face interactions in the spread of radical movements. This result applies to both bridging and bonding types of associations.

2.3 Hypotheses

Given the controversial theory and contradicting empirical evidence on the political consequences of social capital, Boeri et al. (2021) stress that the question concerning the role of associations on populist support demands an empirical answer. They identify two alternative hypotheses. First, civil society may provide an ideological anchor contrasting the temptation of voting for non-mainstream parties or may promote social responsibility, providing a protective shield against populism. Conversely, associations may become vehicles of populism. The authors find empirical support for the first hypothesis. Since this is the only study using individual data currently available, I use it both as a theoretical and empirical reference. I aim to replicate its analysis and extend it when allowed by the different datasets used. Therefore, my primary hypothesis is that social capital, measured by participation in civil associations, negatively correlates with populism:

H1: Participation in civil associations lowers the probability of supporting populist parties.

The ESS dataset used in the reference article limits further exploration of this question as it lacks additional information on the variety and intensity of engagement in associations. The IVS dataset used in this paper, on the other hand, provides such information, allowing me to test two additional hypotheses. The first additional hypothesis concerns the number of association types individuals belong to. Intuitively, joining more types of associations leads to greater

participation in civil society and thus higher social capital. Membership in multiple association types exposes individuals to a broader range of people and values compared to participating in fewer association types. This intuition is supported by the practice of measuring the level of bridging social capital of an association by the average number of additional memberships its members have, thus measuring the broadness of the external network of an association (Geys & Murdoch, 2010). Within the theoretical framework of this study, I expect that participation in a greater variety of associations leads to a stronger negative effect on populism:

H2: The effect of association membership on populist support is greater when participating in more types of associations.

The second additional hypothesis allowed by the IVS dataset concerns the intensity of membership. While participating in many associations increases the amount and variety of engagement, it can also reduce its intensity, as the time available for each association likely decreases with more memberships. For a sub-sample, the survey used asks individuals whether they are active or inactive members of these associations. This distinction is important because the ‘membership status’ is very broad, and may include different levels of engagement. I expect that a stronger level of participation in associations, measured by its intensity rather than by its number or variety, also results in a stronger negative relationship with populism:

H3: The effect of association membership on populist support is greater when individuals are active members than when they are inactive ones.

I have earlier presented a large body of empirical literature evidencing the role of the global financial crisis in contributing to the rise of populism. If civil society serves as an intermediating body that mitigates the effects of negative economic shocks, then one would expect the role of associational activity to be even more pronounced after the crisis. Boeri et al. (2021) test this hypothesis in the European context, and find that the relationship between social capital and populism was stronger in the post-crisis period. I test the same hypothesis with global data:

H4: The effect of association membership on populist support is greater in the period after the global financial crisis than in the pre-crisis period.

3 Data and methodology

3.1 Data Sources

I use survey data from the World Values Survey (Haerpfer et al., 2022) and the European Values Study (2021) datasets for information on the political preference and socio-demographic characteristics of individuals. These datasets survey individuals' preferences and values since 1981 and include 7 and 5 survey waves, respectively. While starting as separate projects, they have been cooperating since 1990, aligning many survey questions to make the answers comparable. These datasets now offer a merged option of the two surveys' trends based on a common dictionary, resulting in the Integrated Values Survey (IVS) (European Values Study, 2021; Haerpfer et al., 2022), covering the period 1981-2022 for a total of 120 countries. Since not the same countries and not the same individuals participate in all the waves, the IVS is a repeated cross-section and not a panel.

For information regarding political parties, I primarily use the Varieties of Party Identity and Organization (Lindberg et al., 2022b; Pemstein et al., 2020), also known as V-Party, which is part of the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), a leading project in the classification of country regimes and parties. The V-Party dataset contains expert-coded assessments of most parties in 178 countries for the period 1970-2019. V-Party experts code all the parties that reached more than 5% of the vote share in a given election (Lindberg et al., 2022a), and provide an index measuring the extent to which a party is populist. Unlike many other expert surveys on parties, which only focus on specific regions (especially Europe) and cover a limited period, V-Party is the only well-established dataset that covers parties globally and for such a long time range.

Furthermore, Celico, Rode and Rodriguez-Carreño (2024) have also recently addressed the lack of datasets covering large temporal and geographical horizons. Using a machine learning model based on the V-Party and other expert-coded surveys, they combine the extensive time and country coverage of V-Party while addressing its potential limitations. They provide two continuous measures for populism (Random Forest Populism Indicators, or RFPOPI) based on populist ideology and rhetoric, respectively.

3.2 Defining liberal democracies

While the IVS provides data for a large set of countries, I restrict my analysis only to those that respect a minimal requirement of liberal democracy. This is because liberal democracies

protect civil society associations, where individuals can express and share their opinions freely, thus acting as pluralism-enhancing organizations, against the populist antagonistic division of ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’. In other types of regimes, associations may be subject to suppression and control from the state, and elections may not be completely free.

To select liberal democracies, I rely on the V-Dem dataset (Pemstein et al., 2024; Coppedge et al., 2024), which is widely used for classifying varieties of democracies worldwide and is also the parent project of V-Party, the dataset used for defining populist parties. V-Dem provides the Liberal Democracy index, called `v2x.libdem`, which ranges from 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest) and measures the extent to which the ideal of liberal democracy is achieved in a given country and year. This ideal emphasizes ‘the importance of protecting individual and minority rights against the tyranny of the state and the tyranny of the majority, [...] achieved by constitutionally protected civil liberties, strong rule of law, an independent judiciary, and effective checks and balances that, together, limit the exercise of executive power’ (Coppedge et al., 2024).

The division between liberal democracies and other regimes requires an arbitrary cutoff point in the Liberal Democracy index, above which countries are considered liberal democracies. Lührmann, Tannenberg and Lindberg (2018), providers of the V-Dem, suggest 0.5 as the cutoff point for the Electoral Democracy index, a V-Dem index that is also used to construct the Liberal Democracy index; clearly, the two highly correlate (Nakai, 2023). This, however, is an arbitrary choice (Lührmann et al., 2018), with no theoretical or empirical basis (Nakai, 2023). Kasuya and Mori (2019) revise this cutoff point, comparing the dichotomous outcome stemming from V-Dem with that of other indexes, based on the definition of democracy of Boix, Miller and Rosato (2013). They find that a cutoff point of 0.42 is ‘better’ as it reduces the number of mismatches compared to the other indicators. Nakai (2023) uses the Kasuya-Mori criterion and extends it to the Liberal Democracy index.

Besides the stronger theoretical and empirical basis, I decide to follow this criterion as it is also less restrictive, allowing for a larger sample. Indeed, the purpose of this paper is not to define exactly liberal democracies, but to identify the minimal requirements for civil associations to flourish in a country. To guarantee that each country is representative enough of the entire population, I exclude those with less than 500 observations summing all the waves. Table A1 in the Appendix lists the countries used in the main sample and the survey waves in which each of them appears. The main sample comprises 44 countries in the period 1995-2022.

3.3 Measuring populism

The ideational definition of Mudde (2004) presented in the Introduction suggests that, apart from pluralism, the other opposite of populism is elitism. Both populism and elitism have a Manichean view of society, divided between the ‘good’ and the ‘evil’, but with opposite interpretations. For elitism, the people are vulgar and dangerous, and the elite is morally, culturally, and intellectually superior. Conversely, populism views the ‘true people’ as the ultimate holders of political power, excluded from its control by the corrupt elite (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

According to Celico et al. (2024), V-Party measures populism according to the ideational definition, thus focusing on anti-elitism and people-centrism. To measure these elements, V-Party experts rate from 0 (lowest) to 4 (highest) the extent to which anti-elite rhetoric is important for a party (variable ‘Anti-elitism’), and the frequency of leaders of a party glorifying the ordinary people and identifying themselves as part of them (variable ‘People-centrism’). The harmonic mean of these two variables results in the Populism Index (variable ‘v2xpa_popul’), ranging from 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest).

While using a continuous index allows for a greater precision in the estimates, it complicates their interpretation. To simplify this, I recode the Populism Index into a binary variable, indicating 1 if the party is populist and 0 otherwise. In this way, I can use a linear probability model and interpret the estimated coefficients as a change in the probability of preference for populism, given a change in the independent variable. This transformation, however, is subject to arbitrariness, as it requires a cutoff point in the index that distinguishes between populist and non-populist parties. Following Nemčok, Bosancianu, Leshchenko and Kluknavská (2023), I define parties as populist if one of the two dimensions (Anti-elitism and People-centrism) is rated at least 3 out of 4, and the other is rated at least 2. The resulting minimum value of the Populism Index is 0.6 out of 1, thus, I consider populist every party scoring above this threshold.

Aside from the V-Party measure, I also use RFPOPI, whose indicators are constructed using V-Party as input (for a detailed comparison of the two, see Celico et al., 2024). Using a multidimensional approach, the authors create two populist measures, RFPOPI_IDE (ideational), and RFPOPI_RHET (rhetoric). Considering that the V-Party indicator is close to the ideational definition, for comparative reasons, I only use the RFPOPI_IDE, which ranges from 0 (lowest) to 10 (highest). Due to the recency of RFPOPI, there is no existing approach in the literature suggesting a cutoff point to construct a binary variable. I propose to use a threshold that determines a share of populist parties that is close to the one identified for V-Party, while allowing

for differing classifications between the two. The resulting splitting point is 6.2.

I use these two measures to compare and validate my results. Due to V-Party’s wider usage in the literature, I present the results using its measure in the Results section and include those using RFPOPI as a robustness test.

3.4 Main Dependent Variable: Populist Preference

The main dependent variable indicates whether the party preferred by the respondent is populist or not. This variable is constructed as follows. First, respondents of the IVS answer the following question: “If there were a national election tomorrow, which party would you vote for?”. I only include individuals with the right to vote and that indicate a specific party or alliance. Then, I match respondents’ preferred parties with the populism measures of V-Party and RFPOPI, using the PartyFacts unique party ID (Döring & Regel, 2019). Unfortunately, not all parties listed in the IVS voting options are present in the PartyFacts, V-Party, and RFPOPI lists, reducing the number of observations. Furthermore, I exclude parties that received less than 2% of preferences in a specific country-year, due to their limited observations.

The effect of associational activity on populism is relevant only insofar as individuals have the choice to vote for both populist and non-populist parties. For this reason, I exclude the country-waves for which either V-Party or RFPOPI indicate that all parties are populist or that no party is populist. While this filtering option is quite restrictive, it also presents several advantages. First, by using both indicators equivalently, I do not arbitrarily prioritize a single approach. Secondly, this approach allows me to analyse the same sample for both indicators, enabling a direct comparison. Thirdly, using a different strategy that would maintain the same sample, such as only excluding country-waves for which both indicators agree that no party or all parties are populist, would preserve some observations for which, in either one or the other indicator, the dependent variable is necessarily either populist or non-populist, thus not allowing for an ‘association effect’.

Compared to other articles that use repeated survey data to investigate the drivers of populism (Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Guiso, Herrera, Morelli, Sonno et al., 2017; Boeri et al., 2021), this paper presents two differences in the main dependent variable. First, to capture political preference, these articles use the European Social Survey (ESS), which asks retrospectively whether individuals voted in the last parliamentary elections, and for which party. Instead, I use the IVS question which is hypothetical, thus measuring political preference, appeal, or

intention to vote, rather than actual vote. While successfully capturing party preference, this measure is less relevant in terms of actual political outcomes. Nevertheless, it has the advantage of gaining observations for individuals who may not have voted in the last elections, but are potential voters in future ones, and who participate in social life, sharing and discussing their ideas and affecting public discourse.

Secondly, the above-mentioned articles use the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) to categorize parties as populist or not. While CHES employs a time-invariant classification of parties, V-Party and RFPOPI provide repeated observations for each party, thus offering a time-varying classification. This allows to capture the evolving characteristics of each party, whose ideology and rhetoric may change over the decades. To leverage this advantage, I match the survey year of each respondent with the closest available year of V-Party and RFPOPI observations. Since these datasets do not have yearly observations but one every few years, this matching method ensures that the classification of the party reflects its most recent features. If the survey year is equally distant from both the past and future observations, I prioritize the latter, given that it better captures the evolving populist traits rather than the past ones.

3.5 Main Independent Variable: Association Membership

The main independent variable is membership in civil associations. The IVS asks for which of the listed voluntary organizations (such as sport, charity, youth associations, etc.) individuals are members or voluntary workers. In the regressions, I drop observations with membership in eight or more different types of associations, given the unlikeliness of individuals taking part in such a great variety and number of associations simultaneously. I identify the threshold at eight because, although observations decrease with the number of reported memberships, they start increasing again above eight memberships, indicating a potential anomaly.

Furthermore, among the various types of associations, I drop individuals reporting to be part of either political parties or local political action groups. Including them may introduce bias, as membership in these groups is likely correlated with political ideologies, rendering it difficult to isolate the effect of associations from that stemming from values. In the case of labor unions, while they can have political affiliations, they do not necessarily have an ideological component. Considering that labor unions are important organizations in civil society and that excluding them would further reduce the sample, I include them in the main analysis and provide additional examination in the Robustness tests section.

3.6 Baseline specification

To estimate the effect of association membership on populist preference, I use the following linear probability model (LPM):

$$P_{ict} = \beta_1 Member_{ict} + \beta_2 HighIncome_{ict} + \beta_3 LowIncome_{ict} + \beta_4 Gender_{ict} + \beta_5 Young_{ict} \\ + \beta_6 Old_{ict} + \beta_7 SecondaryEduc_{ict} + \beta_8 TertiaryEduc_{ict} + s_c + \gamma_t + s_c * \gamma_t + \epsilon_{it}$$

Where P_{ict} is a binary variable taking value 1 if the respondent i in country c in year t would vote for a populist party, and 0 otherwise. $Member_{ict}$ takes value 1 if the respondent indicates to be either a member or a voluntary worker in a civil association. The control variables $HighIncome_{ict}$, $LowIncome_{ict}$, $Gender_{ict}$, $Young_{ict}$, Old_{ict} , $SecondaryEduc_{ict}$, $TertiaryEduc_{ict}$ take value 1 if the respondent indicates to be in the higher 30th income percentile in their country, to be in the lower 30th income percentile in their country, to be female, to be younger than 30, to be older than 65, to have completed secondary education, and to have completed tertiary education (according to the ISCED categories), respectively. The variables s_c and y_t indicate country and year-fixed effects, respectively. The first controls for country-specific, time-invariant unobserved heterogeneity, such as cultural and institutional factors, which are highly persistent. The second controls for global events or trends that affect all countries in a given year. I also include an interaction term of the two, $s_c * y_t$, to account for time- and country-varying observed and unobserved factors. ϵ_{it} is the error term. Standard errors are clustered at the country-level.

This model is identical to the baseline equation of Boeri et al. (2021), with the only difference that, due to different survey questions, I use dummies for high and low income, instead of those for ‘sufficient income’ and ‘difficult income’, where both approaches aim to capture the role of economic (in)security in preferring a populist party.

4 Empirical results

4.1 Baseline model: association membership (H1)

This section presents the results for *Hypothesis 1*, the main hypothesis. By replicating the results of Boeri et al. (2021) as presented in the baseline specification, I test whether participation in a civil association lowers the probability of preferring a populist party. The sample includes

44 countries from 1995 to 2022, for a total of 86,612 observations. Column (1) in Table 1 presents OLS estimates for the baseline regression. The coefficient for association membership is negative and statistically significant at the 1% level, indicating that individuals belonging to civil associations are less likely to prefer a populist party. The magnitude of -2.37 indicates that participation in associations decreases this probability by 2.37%. Given the average preference share for populist parties of 23% in the sample, this decrease represents approximately a 10% reduction.

The coefficients for being female and having attained tertiary education are negative and highly significant, meaning that females and the highly educated are less likely to support populist parties. The coefficients for young (< 30) and old (> 65) age brackets are both significant, at the 5% and 1% significance level, respectively. Being younger than 30 positively correlates with populism, while being older than 65 presents a strong negative association with populist preference. Looking at the income variables, the estimate for being in the lower 30th percentile is positive and significant at 10% level, while the one for belonging to the higher 30th income percentile is negative, with $p < 0.05$. These results are consistent with the explanation that economic insecurity positively correlates with populist preference (Guiso et al., 2017).

4.2 Number of association types (H2)

While the binary distinction of membership/non-membership can be a good proxy for social capital, it does not capture whether there is heterogeneity in the effects of association membership in terms of number of memberships and intensity of participation within them. This section presents and discusses the results for *Hypothesis 2*, which posits that a higher level of social capital, measured by a greater number of association types, leads to a stronger negative effect on populism. To do so, I create a four-categories variable, representing membership in 0, 1-2, 3-4, and 5-7 association types. These categories aim to capture low, medium, high, and very high levels of social capital, respectively.

Column (2) in Table 1 shows the estimates for the regression testing this hypothesis. The coefficients for 1-2, 3-4, and 5-7 memberships are all negative and significant at the 1% significance level. The magnitude of the coefficients increases with the number of membership types, being -1.80 for 1-2 memberships, -4.29 for 3-4 memberships, and -4.59 for 5-7 memberships. These results suggest that while moderate participation (1-2) in civil society lowers populist preference, greater participation (3-4 or 5-7 association types) results in an effect that

Table 1: OLS estimates of causes of populism (V-Party Indicator)

	(1) Baseline model	(2) N. of Associations	(3) Active/Inactive
Member	-2.37*** (0.63)		
N. Memberships (= 0)			
1-2		-1.80*** (0.56)	
3-4		-4.29*** (0.99)	
5-7		-4.59*** (1.38)	
Inactive Member			-1.25 (0.82)
Active Member			-2.20** (0.92)
High Income	-1.61** (0.69)	-1.58** (0.69)	-3.15*** (0.90)
Low Income	1.91* (0.99)	1.87* (0.98)	3.04** (1.40)
Female	-2.81*** (0.59)	-2.79*** (0.58)	-1.99** (0.71)
Young	1.80* (0.76)	1.77** (0.77)	2.62** (1.08)
Old	-3.44*** (1.07)	-3.44*** (1.07)	-3.09*** (1.48)
Secondary Educ	-0.55 (1.01)	-0.49 (1.01)	-0.31 (1.50)
Tertiary Educ	-3.74** (1.70)	-3.48** (1.66)	-3.22 (2.46)
Country X Year FE	Y	Y	Y
Observations	86,612	86,612	48,244
R-Squared	0.18	0.18	0.24

Notes. In all regressions, the dependent variable is a dummy taking value 1 if the preferred party is populist, and 0 otherwise. ‘Member’ takes value 1 if the individual is a member of a civil association, and 0 otherwise. ‘N. of Memberships’ is a four-categories variable indicating 0, 1-2, 3-4, 5-7 memberships. ‘Inactive Member’ takes value 1 if the individual reports to be an inactive member of at least an association (but not an active one), and ‘Active Member’ takes value 1 if the individual is an active member of at least an association; both variables take value 0 if the individual is not a member. ‘High Income’ takes value 1 if the individual is in the higher 30th income percentile, and 0 otherwise. ‘Low Income’ is 1 if the individual is in the lower 30th income percentile, and 0 otherwise. ‘Young’ takes value 1 if the individual is less than 30 years old, and 0 otherwise. ‘Old’ is 1 if the individual is older than 65, and 0 otherwise. ‘Secondary Educ’ takes value 1 if the individual has attained secondary education, and 0 otherwise. ‘Tertiary Educ’ takes value 1 if the individual has attained tertiary education, and 0 otherwise. The estimates are to be interpreted as percentage changes (LPM coefficients multiplied by 100). Robust standard errors (in parentheses) are clustered at the country level. *, **, *** indicate statistical significance at the 10%, 5%, 1% level, respectively.

is more than double, consistent with the idea that a higher level of social capital, proxied by more membership types, further prevents populism. All the other coefficients maintain the sign, magnitude, and significance of the baseline model.

4.3 Active and inactive membership (H3)

In the previous section, I have provided evidence that a greater number of membership types increases the negative effect on populism. However, the individual intensity of participation in these associations is also important in determining the degree of engagement in civil society. For example, continuously participating in a single association type may imply a greater civic engagement than sporadic participation in more than one organization. In *Hypothesis 3*, I ask whether the ‘association effect’ is stronger for active members of associations compared to inactive ones. The IVS distinguishes between active and inactive members for a sub-sample comprising waves 3, 5, 6, and 7 of the World Values Survey, resulting in 48,244 observations across 34 countries.

Column (3) in Table 1 shows that introducing the active/inactive distinction renders the coefficient for individuals that are inactive members (but not active ones) of at least an association type statistically insignificant. In contrast, the estimate for active membership (for those actively participating in at least an association type) is negative, significant at the 5% level, and with a magnitude (-2.20) that is close to the baseline coefficient. These results suggest that the intensity of participation is a relevant aspect of the effect of associational activity on populism, as inactive membership appears to be a form of civic engagement that is too weak to negatively affect populist preference. All the other coefficients maintain the sign of the other models, and similar statistical significance, except for tertiary education, which becomes insignificant.

4.4 Effect of the global financial crisis (H4)

The 2008-2009 financial crisis affected most countries worldwide, and the consequent economic insecurity shocks likely contributed to the rise of populism. In this section, I investigate *Hypothesis 4*, namely, that the effect of associations increased after the crisis. I divide the sample into two: the pre-crisis (1995-2008) and the post-crisis (2009-2022) periods. I choose the dividing year in the middle of the crisis because of the prospective nature of the IVS question, which may capture changes in voting behavior due to the crisis already in 2009. This division also splits the number of observations and the period evenly (14 years span each).

Table 2: OLS Estimates of causes of populism, pre- and post-crisis (V-Party indicator)

	(4) Pre-Crisis (1995-2008)	(5) Post-Crisis (2009-2022)
Member	-1.15 (0.89)	-2.75*** (0.83)
High Income	-1.44 (0.87)	-1.20 (0.89)
Low Income	1.76 (1.35)	1.76* (0.92)
Female	-2.76*** (0.55)	-2.44*** (0.89)
Young	0.98 (0.69)	2.61** (1.21)
Old	-2.74* (1.38)	-4.03*** (1.25)
Secondary Educ	-1.93 (1.31)	0.30 (1.28)
Tertiary Educ	-5.07** (2.07)	-2.88 (2.19)
Country X Year FE	Y	Y
Observations	42,722	43,890
R-Squared	0.19	0.23

Notes. See Table 1.

Column (4) in Table 2 shows that in the pre-crisis period (1995-2008), civil association membership did not significantly lower the likelihood of preferring a populist party, while being female ($p < 0.01$), being older than 65 ($p < 0.1$), and having completed tertiary education ($p < 0.05$) all have statistically significant negative effects on populism. Conversely, Column (5) illustrates that the effect of associations in the post-crisis period is negative, strongly significant, and with a magnitude of -2.75, larger than the baseline estimate (-2.37). This means that, in the period 2009-2022 of the sample, members of civil associations were 2.75% less likely to prefer a populist party. Compared to the pre crisis, the estimate for having a low income is negative and becomes weakly significant; the coefficients for being younger than 30 and older than 65 re-acquire the sign and statistical significance of the baseline model, with increased magnitudes. Having completed tertiary education becomes insignificant, while being female remains highly significant, and of similar sign and magnitude as in the pre-crisis period. In general, the model appears to be better at explaining post-crisis political preferences than pre-crisis ones.

4.5 Robustness tests

4.5.1 RFPOPI indicator

To validate the results found using the V-Party measure, I test the same hypotheses using the RFPOPI indicator. Table 3 displays results for *Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3*. All the regressions confirm the results already presented. The coefficient for association membership in Model (1) is negative and highly significant, with a slightly smaller magnitude compared to the one for V-Party: -1.98 against -2.37. The regression also confirms the signs, significance levels, and magnitudes of the other coefficients, with the greatest differences in the estimates for High Income, which increases in magnitude and significance, and Tertiary Education, which decreases in both.

In Model (2), the coefficients for 1-2, 3-4, and 5-7 membership types are all negative and highly significant. Reflecting the difference found in Model (1), the magnitudes are slightly smaller compared to the V-Party regression, but they still show an increasing trend, implying that participation in a greater number of association types results in a stronger negative effect on populism. The RFPOPI Model (3) is the most similar of the three to its respective V-Party model. The coefficient for ‘Inactive’ is again insignificant, while that for ‘Active’ is negative and significant, showing a magnitude close to the one in Table 1 (-2.22 against -2.20). The other coefficients are also identical in the sign, and similar in terms of magnitude and significance.

In Table 4, I present results for the RFPOPI regressions for *Hypothesis 4* – the pre and post crisis comparison. In both the regressions, the coefficients are largely consistent with those of V-Party. For the pre-crisis period, the estimate for association membership remains insignificant, while those for Female, Old, and Tertiary Education maintain their significance and sign, with small changes in terms of confidence level and magnitude for the latter two. For the post-crisis period, the RFPOPI regression confirms that participation in civil associations reduces the likelihood of preferring a populist party, with a smaller magnitude compared to the V-Party counterpart (-2.28 against -2.75), and with a smaller significance (5% level against the 1% level for V-Party). The other estimates are very similar in terms of significance, sign, and magnitude to those of V-Party, with the greatest change in the one for Low Income, which increases in both magnitude and significance.

Table 3: OLS estimates of causes of populism (RFPOPI indicator)

	(1) Baseline model	(2) N. of Associations	(3) Active/Inactive
Member	-1.98*** (0.71)		
N. of Memberships			
1-2		-1.41** (0.66)	
3-4		-3.85*** (1.05)	
5-7		-4.27*** (1.52)	
Inactive Member			-0.81 (0.75)
Active Member			-2.16** (1.01)
High Income	-2.17*** (0.78)	-2.14*** (0.77)	-3.32*** (1.03)
Low Income	1.95* (1.02)	1.90* (1.02)	3.05* (1.43)
Female	-2.84*** (0.61)	-2.82*** (0.60)	-1.96*** (0.72)
Young	1.83** (0.78)	1.81** (0.79)	2.90** (1.10)
Old	-3.35*** (1.09)	-3.35*** (1.09)	-2.78* (1.51)
Secondary Educ	0.45 (1.06)	0.39 (1.06)	-0.25 (1.61)
Tertiary Educ	-3.17* (1.83)	-2.90 (1.80)	-2.11 (2.63)
Country X Year FE	Y	Y	Y
Observations	86,612	86,612	48,244
R-Squared	0.18	0.18	0.24

Notes. See Table 1.

Table 4: OLS estimates of causes of populism, pre- and post-crisis (RFPOPI indicator)

	(4) Pre-Crisis (1995-2008)	(5) Post-Crisis (2009-2022)
Member	-0.96 (0.98)	-2.28** (0.89)
High Income	-1.53 (0.92)	-1.52 (0.90)
Low Income	1.76 (1.34)	2.40** (1.06)
Female	-2.74*** (0.62)	-2.55*** (0.89)
Young	1.20 (0.77)	2.59** (1.19)
Old	-3.18** (1.43)	-3.48*** (1.19)
Secondary Educ	-1.08 (1.31)	-0.46 (1.37)
Tertiary Educ	-3.92* (2.01)	-2.83 (2.32)
Country X Year FE	Y	Y
Observations	42,722	43,890
R-Squared	0.18	0.24

Notes. See Table 1.

4.5.2 Excluding labor unions

The ESS dataset used in Boeri et al. (2021) asks two different questions for membership in civil associations and membership in trade unions (denominated ‘labor unions’ in the IVS dataset). Considering that the latter is more at risk of endogeneity than other types of associations, the authors exclude trade union membership from the main analysis and include it in a robustness test. I have so far included labor union membership in my analysis, arguing that they present an important organization in civil society and that their political affiliation is not as straightforward as political parties, a type of membership I have omitted. Furthermore, the exclusion would have resulted in a loss of observations.

Here I also present results for regressions excluding labor union membership. Table 5 shows the coefficients for civil association membership (excluding labor unions) for *Hypotheses 1* and *4*, using both V-Party and RFPOPI. This exclusion results in larger coefficients for association membership in Models (1), (4), and (5), for both indicators. The coefficient for the pre-crisis period becomes significant for the V-Party regression, but not for the RFPOPI regression ($p = 0.102$). These changes may suggest that the effect of associations on populism is more strongly driven by other types of organizations than by labor unions.

Table 5: OLS Estimates for Models 1, 4, and 5 excluding labor unions (V-Party and RFPOPI)

	V-Party	RFPOPI
(1) Member	-2.79*** (0.59)	-2.38*** (0.66)
(4) Pre-Crisis	-1.79** (0.83)	-1.53 (0.91)
(5) Post-Crisis	-2.86*** (0.79)	-2.44*** (0.88)

Notes. See Table 1 and Table 2. Number of observations excluding labor union membership: (1) = 75,263; (4) = 36,830; (5) = 38,433.

4.6 Comparison with Boeri et al. (2021)

In this section, I compare my coefficients for association membership with the simple OLS estimates of Boeri et al. (2021). Considering the different samples and minor discrepancies in the survey questions, the comparison is not meant to be direct, but only to provide a reference to assess my results. I present the coefficients for Models (1), (4), and (5) in Table 6. For the main hypothesis, I find an estimated effect between -1.98 (RFPOPI) and -2.37 (V-Party) percent, larger than the one found by the authors (-1.88). When excluding labor union membership, my coefficient is larger, between -2.38 and -2.79, consistent with the -2.53 of the reference article.

Looking at the pre-crisis coefficients, none of the two studies find a significant effect when including unions in the analysis. In contrast, when unions are excluded, the coefficient is significant for Boeri et al. (2021) and V-Party, but not for RFPOPI, which coefficient has a p-value of 0.102. For the post-crisis period, the coefficients are always significant for both V-Party and RFPOPI, and the reference article. In this instance as well, the estimates are larger when unions are not included.

Table 6: Comparison of OLS Estimates for Models (1), (4,) and (5) with Boeri et al. (2021)

	Boeri et al. (2021)	V-Party	RFPOPI
Unions Included			
(1) Member	-1.88** (0.71)	-2.37*** (0.63)	-1.98*** (0.71)
(4) Pre-Crisis	-1.47 (0.85)	-1.15 (0.89)	-0.96 (0.98)
(5) Post-Crisis	-2.51*** (0.61)	-2.75*** (0.83)	-2.28** (0.89)
Unions Excluded			
(1) Member	-2.53*** (0.59)	-2.79*** (0.59)	-2.38*** (0.66)
(4) Pre-Crisis	-2.06** (0.82)	-1.79** (0.83)	-1.53 (0.91)
(5) Post-Crisis	-3.24*** (0.68)	-2.86*** (0.79)	-2.44*** (0.88)

Notes. See Table 1 and Table 2.

5 Discussion

5.1 Summary and interpretation

The empirical results strongly indicate that civil associations decrease populist support. Boeri et al. (2021) suggest that this negative correlation can be interpreted as associations providing an ideological anchor that prevents vote for outsiders or acting as protective shields against populism, offering psychological and social support in the face of economic and cultural insecurity shocks. This interpretation is further supported by comparing the coefficients for the pre- and post-crisis periods, with the latter being more significant and having larger magnitudes in every specification. Indeed, the role of associations may be more important in the moments of greater necessity, showing that social capital can help in facing periods of crisis. Excluding labor unions from the analysis increases the magnitude and, in some models, the significance of the estimates, suggesting that other types of associations primarily drive the negative relationship with populism.

In addition to these results, I find that participation in a greater number of association types has a stronger negative correlation with populism. This finding suggests that the quantity and variety of memberships is a relevant element in explaining the relationship between social capital and populist support, with a broader and more diverse civic engagement possibly further enhancing social cohesion and trust. Furthermore, I have argued that the intensity of engagement in associations is also an important aspect of social capital. While active participation in associations appears to be a significant driver of reduced populist support, inactive membership seems to be a too weak form of engagement to have a significant effect. We should, however, be careful in straightforwardly interpreting this result. There is a risk of measurement error, because respondents decide autonomously whether they can be considered active or inactive members. Individuals could either exaggerate their reported effort or may have different dividing lines in evaluating whether they are active or inactive members, possibly leading to an imprecise measurement of respondents' intensity of participation in associations.

Looking at the other explanatory variables, being female is negatively and significantly associated with populism in all regressions. Having attained secondary education is never significant, while the coefficient for tertiary education is negative and sporadically significant, but never in the post-crisis period. Consistent with the literature, High Income is negatively associated with populism, although it loses its significance when the sample is split into pre- and post-crisis.

Similarly, Low Income positively correlates with populist support, being significant in all regressions, except for the pre-crisis period. This latter finding might suggest that the global financial crisis provided populists an unprecedented occasion to exploit economic grievances to obtain electoral support.

Being younger than 30 is positively associated with populist preference, and is significant in all regressions, except for the pre-crisis period. Conversely, the coefficient for being older than 65 is significant in all regressions, and strongly negative. These estimates, however, may benefit from the inclusion of a proxy for social media usage. In fact, due to their ability to convey simplistic messages in an immediate manner, their low barriers to entry, reliance on user-generated content, and promotion of the idea of people's homogeneity caused by the capacity of algorithms to create echo chambers, social media have suitably served populist rhetoric (Zhuravskaya, Petrova & Enikolopov, 2020; Guriev & Papaioannou, 2022). Accounting for their recent spread could disentangle the effect of social media usage (more frequent among the young than among the old) from that of age. Considering that social media have grown mostly after the global financial crisis, this could also explain why the positive correlation between being younger than 30 and populism is significant exclusively in the post-crisis period.

5.2 Causality

Despite controlling for several socio-demographic variables and country and year-fixed effects, OLS estimates for repeated cross-sectional data do not allow me to make causal claims on the effect of associations on populism. Endogeneity may result due to omitted variable bias, reverse causality, and measurement errors. Omitted variable bias may remain due to unobserved individual characteristics influencing both association membership and preference for populism. To address this concern, future research could employ pseudo-panels (Deaton, 1985), as used by Guiso et al. (2017) with ESS data. There could be reverse causality because, while I hypothesise that participation in civil associations reduces populist preference, the relation may also run in the opposite direction. Using instrumental variables affecting the decision to join associations but not that of supporting populist parties could solve this issue, although it would be difficult to implement such a method in a cross-country setting spanning decades. Measurement error is possible due to self-reported survey data. Respondents of the IVS may not report accurately or their judgments on key variables may differ, potentially introducing bias. However, this predicament is true for any study using this type of data.

Another concern is selection bias. Guiso et al. (2017) argue that this bias can occur if one ignores that the populist vote only applies to those who voted. Disregarding this overlooks that disappointment with traditional politics can lead to both voting for populists and abstention, which in turn increases the support for populists among voters. They address this by using a two-step Heckman correction, where they first estimate the probability of voting with an instrument that affects this probability but not the probability of voting for populists. Then, they predict the probability of populist vote among those who do vote. Boeri et al. (2021) also recognize this issue and use the same approach.

While this correction is important, it is less applicable here due to the hypothetical nature of the IVS question, which asks which party the respondent *would* vote for, rather than their actual voting behavior. Thus, applying the correction would require an instrument able to predict whether the individual marked a preference in the survey, but also that is not correlated with populist vote, which is difficult to find. However, selection bias is less problematic in this study because the IVS question results in relatively more observations: more people express their political preference in a survey than would actually vote, as demonstrated by the lower share of respondents answering ‘white ballot’, ‘none’, ‘I would not vote’ in the sample (16%) compared to the average actual abstention rate in the same countries and period, which is around 34% (IDEA, 2024). This is because individuals bear little cost in expressing their political preference in the survey, compared to going to vote. Therefore, while a Heckman correction would be beneficial, it is less necessary for this study.

6 Conclusion

This thesis examined how participation in civil society, through membership in associations, impacts populist support. The findings indicate that involvement in civil associations significantly reduces the likelihood of supporting a populist party by roughly 2-2.8%. Given that the average support for populist parties in the sample is around 23%, this reduction translates to an effect size of approximately 10%. The effect intensifies in the years following the financial crisis. Furthermore, participation in multiple types of associations further strengthens this result. Additionally, active membership in associations proves to be a more robust form of civic engagement compared to inactive membership, which has an insignificant impact on populism. These findings support the hypothesis that civil society mitigates the spread of populism,

with civil associations acting as protective shields or providing ideological anchors that inhibit populist appeal.

From the perspective of defending liberal democracies' principle of pluralism, which is threatened by populism, this finding aligns with Putnam's and Tocqueville's idea that social capital, measured by engagement in civil society, yields 'positive social outcomes'. This argument is further reinforced when examining the consequences of populist leaders once elected. A recent article by Funke et al. (2023) studies 1,853 populist leaders spells in 60 countries from 1900 to 2020, providing causal evidence that these spells led to significant declines in medium and long-term real GDP, as well as in election quality, judiciary independence, and press and media freedom.

Future research could address several gaps and shortcomings of this study. First, employing methods such as pseudo-panels and instrumental variables could help address the endogeneity concerns discussed earlier. Secondly, new data sources could allow for a similar analysis using actual voting outcomes instead of reported political preference. Thirdly, future studies could use principal component analysis to integrate various characteristics of participation in civil society, such as the number of memberships and the intensity of engagement, which I have studied separately. Additionally, exploring whether different types of associations (e.g., religious, charity, cultural, etc.) have varying effects on populism would be valuable. Classifications based on Putnam's bridging and bonding categories appear promising, given their theoretical soundness and frequent use in the social capital literature. Finally, considering the spread of social media could capture unobserved heterogeneity and identify the role of 'digital social network capital', which effect on populism is theoretically ambivalent, given that populists effectively exploit social media to spread their message.

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A Additional tables

Table A1: Country coverage by wave

Country	1995-1998	1999-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014	2017-2022
Argentina	X			X	X
Australia					X
Austria		X	X		X
Belgium		X	X		
Brazil	X		X	X	X
Bulgaria			X		X
Canada			X		X
Chile				X	X
Colombia	X			X	X
Cyprus			X	X	X
Czechia	X	X	X		X
Denmark		X	X		
Estonia					X
Finland			X		X
France		X	X		X
Georgia				X	X
Germany				X	X
Great Britain					X
Greece		X	X		X
Hungary		X	X		
India	X	X	X	X	
Indonesia			X		X
Italy		X	X		X
Japan		X	X	X	X
Latvia	X	X	X		X
Lithuania			X		X
Luxembourg			X		
Mexico		X	X	X	X
Netherlands			X	X	X
New Zealand	X	X		X	X
Norway	X		X		X
Peru			X		X
Philippines				X	
Poland		X	X	X	X
Romania	X	X	X	X	X
Serbia		X	X		
Slovakia	X	X	X		X
Slovenia		X	X	X	X
South Africa	X			X	
South Korea			X	X	X
Spain			X		X
Sweden			X	X	X
Switzerland	X		X		X
Turkey		X	X		

Notes. Years are clustered according to the WVS and EVS waves.

Table A2: Descriptive statistics

Variable Name	Mean	Standard Deviation
Populism (V-Party)	0.23	0.42
Populism (RFPOPI)	0.23	0.42
Member	0.57	0.49
High Income	0.16	0.36
Low Income	0.34	0.47
Female	0.52	0.49
Young	0.20	0.40
Old	0.17	0.37
Secondary Educ	0.45	0.50
Tertiary Educ	0.28	0.45