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ISSN 1745-8587



Department of Economics, Mathematics and Statistics

BWPEF 1707

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Raicho Bojilov
Ecole Polytechnique

Jonas A. Gunnarsson
University of Iceland

Gylfi Zoega
University of Iceland
Birkbeck, University of London
CESifo

November 2017

East versus West on the European Populism Scale

Raicho Bojilov^a, Jonas A. Gunnarsson^b and Gylfi Zoega^{b,c,d*}

^a Department of Economics; Ecole Polytechnique, Route de Saclay; 91128 Palaiseau, France.

^b Department of Economics, University of Iceland, 101 Reykjavik, Iceland

^c Department of Economics, Mathematics & Statistics, Birkbeck College, University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX

^d CESifo, Schackstrasse 4, 80539 Munich, Germany.

15 November 2017

Abstract

We study a sample of individuals in 20 European countries that includes eight East European countries in order to identify whether these eight countries differ from the Western countries in the popularity of right-wing populist parties once we have controlled for personal attributes. The results show variation among the East European countries while as a whole they are not distinct from Western Europe. In particular, in Hungary and Poland populist right-wing parties enjoy greater support once account is taken of personal attributes. We discuss the reasons for this finding. When it comes to the personal identities, we find that a right-wing identity, a negative view of immigrants, not being satisfied with democracy, being negative on homosexuality, and mistrust in both the national and the European parliament seem to be the factors heavily correlated with voting for a right-wing populist party in Europe. Men are more likely to vote for a right-wing populist party as are the old and the less educated. Having experienced unemployment also increased the probability of voting for these parties.

Keywords: Populist right-wing parties, survey evidence.

JEL Classification: P16, Z18.

*Corresponding author. Email: gz@hi.is. Tel: +354-525-5239. The authors would like to thank Sebastian Otten for valuable comments on an earlier draft. An early version of this paper was published as Gunnarsson and Zoega (2017), "East versus West on the European Populism Scale," CESifo Working Paper No. 6663.

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to use individual-level survey data to describe broad patterns and regularities in political attitudes towards right-wing populism, defined as the electoral success of populist Right-Wing (*PRW*) parties in the European Economic Area (*EEA*) between 2002 and 2014.¹ We choice to focus on the right-wing parties rather than left-wing populist parties due to the former's more sceptical view of the European Union (EU) and immigration, which makes them a greater threat to the future of the EU. We focus on both personal values, economic factors and country of residence. We include nine Eastern European countries and explore whether they differ fundamentally from the Western European ones. Our main empirical question is whether the Eastern European nations are distinct in terms of values when it comes to vote for populist right-wing parties because of their communist heritage or whether economic growth and a higher standard of living has made their value system close to what we find in Western Europe once account is taken of the attributes of individuals.

We control for several individual characteristics, including values. We focus on trust in both domestic and EU institutions; placement on the left/right scale and satisfaction with democracy as representing confidence in the political establishment. Traditional values are measured with attitudes towards homosexuals and immigrants and religiosity. Then there is the placement in the income distribution and whether the individual belongs to a minority group as well as his level of education. Personal attributes also involve gender and age and finally there is the important economic factor whether the individual has ever been unemployed for three months or more. What remains to explain is captured by country dummy variables and an objective of the paper is to compare this dummy between individual Eastern European nations and between Eastern European nations, on the one hand, and the Western European ones, on the other hand.

The main innovation of the paper over those surveyed in the following section is to include Eastern European nations, nations that turn out to be quite diverse in their propensity to vote for populist parties. The attitudes and voting patterns of these nations are important for the decision making within the European Union (EU) and it is of some interest to see whether they share a populist sentiment, which may disrupt the operations of the EU. These nations share the experience of having had communist societies that involved central planning, absence of democracy and limited human rights in the form of freedom of

¹ The European Economic Area includes the member states of the European Union as well as Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein. The latter have to abide by the rules of the single market but cannot participate in making these rules. Moreover, they are not a part of the monetary union nor the Common Agricultural Policy.

expression and freedom of movement. They may also have enjoyed more economic security since unemployment did not exist and education and health care were free of charge in the communist states. This shared history may make these nations more or less prone to vote for populist right-wing parties, which then affects collective decision making at the EU level. The question whether the economic development that has taken place is linked with changes in values, making them similar to those in the West or whether the cultural heritage of these societies, such as that left by communism, are still dominant.

1. Literature

The Brexit referendum in the UK in June 2016 as well as the election of Donald Trump as President of the US has generated an intense interest in the reasons for the success of populist politicians and parties. Below we will give a brief overview of some recent contributions.

2.1 What is populism?

According to the political scientist Cass Mudde (see Mudde, 2016), populist parties tend to challenge prevailing elites and institutions such as the media, universities, mainstream political parties and international organisations.² Populists also tend to share a tendency to claim to represent the “people” against the prevailing authorities and institutions and to be led by charismatic leaders. It follows that the populist parties tend to disregard the rights of minorities and even challenge the rule of law.

We are interested in exploring to what extent economic and cultural factors may fuel the emergence of populist parties, in particular the lingering effects of a communist past. Ingelhart and Norris (2016) propose two explanations for the rise of populism. The first is based on economic factors that create insecurity such as international trade. The other is based on opposition to progressive, or socio-liberal, values, such as feminism and environmentalism. They use the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey to identify the ideological location of 268 political parties in 31 countries – the EU member states and Norway, Switzerland and Turkey – and use the *European Social Survey* (ESS) from 2002-2014 to test whether it is economic insecurity or cultural factors that predict voting for populist parties. They control for gender, age and education, experience of unemployment, measures of feeling of income security and values that were meant to separate populist and liberal values. Their regression model that pools responses to the *European Social Survey* conducted from

² For a review of the literature on populism, see Mudde and Katwesser (2017).

2002 to 2014 tests the two hypotheses and finds more evidence for the cultural hypothesis. This would lead us to believe that past economic systems may have a long-lasting effect on values and attitudes in a country.³

2.2 Values and trust as a state variable

Inglehart and Baker (2000) use data from three waves of the *World Values Survey*, including 65 countries and 75 percent of the world's population and find evidence for economic development affecting cultural values as well as some persistence of distinctive cultural traditions. Economic development is found to be associated with shifts from absolute norms and values toward values that are more rational, tolerant, trusting and participatory. This supports what in sociology is called the modernization theory.⁴ However, cultural values do not only respond to economic development but are persistent so that the cultural heritage of a society – be it in the form of a religion or economic system – leaves an imprint on values that endure in spite of increased economic development. These cross-country differences – that is cross-cultural differences – are transmitted from one generation to the next through schools and the media. Inglehart and Baker mention the emergence of fundamentalist Islam as an example of the persistence of cultural heritage in spite of economic development. Another example is given by Fukuyama (1995) who argued that societies that suffer from low levels of trust are at a competitive disadvantage in global markets because of the difficulties of developing large and complex institutions, such as corporations.

2.3 The lingering effects of communism

Communism may have a lingering effect on values and attitudes. According to Inglehart, and Baker the former communist societies have more traditional values than Protestant European Union nations, the latter leaning away from the traditional values and towards self-expression values. They also find that the Catholic societies of Eastern Europe form a sub-cluster of the Catholic world between the West European Catholic societies and the Orthodox societies. The collapse of communism in the early 1990s brought about changes in recent decades. Following German unification and the fall of the Soviet Union both the former West Germany and the former East Germany experienced a change towards rational values and an

³ However, in a more recent paper, Guiso et al. (2017) argue that Inglehart and Norris fail to take into account the decision by voters to abstain from voting rather than voting for populist parties. They find that a combination of the inability of governments to guarantee security has shaken confidence in traditional political parties and institutions, increasing fear beyond that already created by trade and migration.

⁴ See Bell (1973, 1976).

emphasis on self-expression and away from traditional values. Another example is mentioned by Inglehart and Baker, which is that East Germany is much closer to the ex-communist countries of the Czech Republic and the Baltic States than West Germany in terms of “traditional/secular” versus “self-expression” values. Thus, the cultural heritage of a country appears to matter, in this case their communist past.

2.4 Populism and trade

Economic shocks, trade and crises have an effect on values and political development. There is a rapidly growing literature on the effect of trade on values, in particular the vote for populist parties. Clearly, a populist party that is nativist and anti-establishment may oppose free trade as recent examples show. The negative income and employment effects of trade may affect subgroups of the labour force as demonstrated in a rapidly growing literature that shows how international trade is having a negative effect on local economies. Pessoa (2014) finds that workers in the UK in industries that became exposed to Chinese import competition earned significantly less over the period 2000-2007 because of fewer years of employment and lower hourly earnings while employed. The economic effects of import competition can also have political effects by creating protectionist sentiments and increase the share of voters of populist parties. Dippel, Gold and Heblich (2015) find an effect of trade-integration with China and Eastern Europe on voting in Germany from 1987-2009. The vote share of extreme-right parties responds significantly to trade integration measured by changes in manufacturing employment. Curtice (2016) studies public attitudes to the European Union in Britain and finds concerns about the cultural consequences of EU membership but that voters are inclined to think that membership is economically beneficial. Colantone and Stanig (2016) study voting patterns in Western Europe and find that voters in Western Europe in areas more exposed to competition from Chinese imports tend to vote in a more protectionist and nationalist direction.

2.5 Populism and economic cycles

Yann et al. (2017) find a relationship between increases in unemployment and voting for populist parties. Moreover, they find a correlation between the increase in unemployment and a decline in trust in national and European political institutions. Overall, these authors find that crisis-driven economic insecurity is a driver of populism and political distrust. Frieden (2016) uses data from Eurobarometer surveys since 2004 to explore changes in attitudes before and after the recent crisis. He found that the crisis reduced trust in both national

governments as well as the EU. He also found that less educated and less skilled citizens, along with the unemployed, are particularly lacking in trust; and that those in the southern periphery – the debtor nations – are uniformly disappointed with their national political institutions. The UK is again an outlier in terms of lack of trust towards the EU. In another recent paper, Foster and Frieden (2017) analyse the responses individuals in Eurobarometer surveys conducted from 2004 to 2015, to study the reasons for changes in trust during the recent financial crisis. The authors confirm the results of previous studies that the better educated have the highest levels of trust in both their national governments and the EU, while those with lower levels of skills and education have less trust. Economic variables, such as unemployment, help explain the variation in trust among Europeans over time and across countries.

In a recent paper, Dustmann et al. (2017) find that growth in GDP per capita increases support for European integration, and trust in both European and national parliaments, while an increase in the unemployment rate have a negative effect on these same variables. The economic situation matters more in regions where people have traditional and autocratic values. Political populism is associated with less trust in parliamentary institutions and more Euroscepticism. Therefore adverse macroeconomic shocks tend to increase the demand for populist political parties. They find that the effect of macroeconomic shocks is almost twice as large on trust towards national as compared to trust towards the European parliament. Thus, citizens blame national politicians more than their European counterparts for adverse economic conditions. These authors conclude that anti-EU sentiment is more sensitive to national identity and personal attributes than economic factors so that future economic growth will not fully restore support for the European Union. The UK is again clearly an outlier in terms of lack of trust towards the EU and falling trust in recent years in this study.

2.6 Populism and financial crises

Financial crises tend to reduce trust in societies and have a greater effect on voters than ordinary recessions. Hence it is possible that they also reduce trust in domestic institutions, political parties and international institutions. Funke et al. (2016) study election data for 20 developed economies going back to the year 1870 and find that polarization rises following financial crises and that voters seem to move towards right-wing populist parties. Hernandez and Kreisi (2016) reach similar conclusions in their study of election outcomes in 30 European countries in the two elections that preceded the latest crisis and the one that followed. They find that falling output, increased unemployment and increased debt resulted

in losses for incumbent parties in Western Europe, but less so in Central and Eastern Europe. There is also the study of Bartels (2014) who found in a sample of 42 elections in 28 OECD countries before and after the Great Recession that 1% growth of GDP increased the voting share of the incumbent party by 1.2%.

2.7 Populism and the welfare state

The emergence of populism in the wake of economic recessions and financial crises may be prevented by the creation of a welfare state. Swank and Betz (2003) analysed national elections in 16 European countries from 1981-1988 and found that a welfare state weakens the link between international trade and immigration, on the one hand, and support for the populist right, on the other hand. Mayda et al. (2007) found that the population tends to be less risk averse when it comes to international trade in small countries with higher levels of government expenditures. Finally, Rodrik (1998) argued that since governments can reduce aggregate risk through redistribution and also by providing a stable provision of publicly provided goods and services there was a tendency for more open economies to have larger governments.

2 Populist parties

We are interested in the propensity of individuals and nations to vote populist right-wing parties (PRW) into power. Table 1 lists all *PRW*-parties found in 20 countries contained in the dataset.⁵ Their election results in the most recent parliamentary elections in 2002 and 2014 are also listed, showing an increase in support in 14 out of 20 countries.⁶ Hungary tops the list in terms of the share of votes in 2014 and the increase from 2002. There is also a PRW party in Greece that did not exist in 2002 and had a vote share of 20.5% in 2014. In third place, there is Finland where the “True Finns” have around a fifth of the voting share. Perhaps surprisingly, Sweden comes next with the Swedish Democrats having a vote of 12.9%. After Poland we have Bulgaria, Austria, and Lithuania. At the bottom of the list is Italy where the Lega Nord lost many votes during this period. Just above Italy, we have Belgium, the Netherlands, Slovenia, France, Estonia, and Denmark. Germany and the UK are close to the centre of the list.

⁵ The classification of the parties is based on Balcere (2011), Bakker et al. (2015), Bornschieer (2010), Inglehart and Norris (2016), Minkenberg (2002), Minkenberg (2015), Mölder (2011), and Wodak et al. (2013).

⁶ We note that some countries do not have a right-wing populist party using our definition, such as Spain, Iceland, and Ireland. These were omitted from our sample.

Table 1. Populist parties in different countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>Party name</i>	2002 % (last election)	2014 % (last election)	Change
Hungary	<i>Fidesz, Jobbik (new)</i>	41.1	69.4	28.3
Poland	<i>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS), Kongres Nowej Prawicy (KNP) (new)</i>	9.5	31.0	21.5
Greece	<i>Anexartitoi Ellines (ANEL) (new), Chrysí Avgí, LAOS</i>	-	20.5	20.5
Finland	<i>Perussuomalaiset (PS)</i>	1.0	19.0	18.0
Sweden	<i>Sverigedemokraterna (SD) (new)</i>	-	12.9	12.9
Bulgaria	<i>Ataka (AT) (new), Bulgarsko Natsionalno Dvizhenie (IMRO)</i>	3.6	11.8	8.2
Austria	<i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ)</i>	10.1	17.5	7.4
Lithuania	<i>Partija tvarka ir teisingumas (PTT) (new)</i>	-	7.3	7.3
Czech R.	<i>Úsvit (new)</i>	-	6.9	6.9
Germany	<i>Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) (new), Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD)</i>	0.1	6.0	5.9
U.K.	<i>The UK Independence Party (UKIP) (new)</i>	-	3.1	3.1
Slovakia	<i>Slovenská národná strana (SNSk), Kotleba (new)</i>	3.3	6.1	2.8
France	<i>Front National (FNf)</i>	11.1	13.6	2.5
Norway	<i>Fremskrittspartiet (FRP)</i>	14.6	16.3	1.7
Denmark	<i>Dansk Folkeparti (DF)</i>	12.0	12.3	0.3
Slovenia	<i>Slovenska Nacionalna Stranka (SNSi)</i>	4.4	2.2	-2.2
Estonia	<i>Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond (EKRE)</i>	2.4	0.0	-2.4
Netherl.	<i>Partij Voor de Vrijheid (PVV) (new), Pim Fortuyn (PM), Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP)</i>	18.7	12.2	-6.5
Belgium	<i>Vlaams Belang (VB), Front National (FNb)</i>	11.3	3.7	-7.6
Italy	<i>Alleanza Nazionale (AN), Lega Nord (LN)</i>	16.0	4.1	-11.9

Note: The table shows the support for each party in the last parliamentary election in 2014 or before that year compared to the last parliamentary election in 2002. Hence, some of the results are from a year preceding 2014 or 2002. Source: European Election Database.

3 Explanatory variables

Our data comes from the European Social Survey (*ESS*) and contains answers from individuals in 20 member countries of the *EEA* between 2002 and 2014, 11 Western European countries and nine Eastern European countries. The *ESS* is carried out every two years, measuring the attitudes and behavioural patterns for more than 295,000 persons in various European countries. We use 140,920 observations from the survey.

The names and definition of selected variables are listed in Table 2.⁷ The names of the variables are those from the *EES* with an *N_* added to indicate the normalisation from 0 to 1. The dependent variable, *pop*, takes the value 1 if an individual voted for a *PRW*-party in the last election, but 0 otherwise. Variables meant to capture cultural traits and trust in institutions are continuous variables taking a value between 0 and 1 except for the ones measuring religion. These are trust in the national parliament, trust in the EU Parliament, placement on the left/right scale of the political spectrum, satisfaction with democracy, attitude towards homosexuals, attitudes towards immigrants and place in the income distribution. Age is measured in the number of years at the time of the election.

There are several other dummy variables. These are not belonging to a minority group, gender (1 denoting females), having low education (secondary school or less), middle level or tertiary education and a dummy for those who have been unemployed for 3 months or more.⁸ In addition, we have three dummy variables for respondent not being religious, being somewhat religious or being highly religious. Finally, there is a dummy variable for each country and each wave of the *European Social Survey*, starting in 2002.

⁷ See appendix for exact definitions and sources.

⁸ The *ESS* changed its units of measurement for self-placement in the income distribution after their third survey in 2006. In order to account for that difference, the answers before and after the change were normalized.

Table 2. Definition of variables

Dependent variable:	Variable takes value 1 for:	
<i>Pop</i>	Voted for a PRW-party	
Continuous (0-1) variables	Description	Meaning of variable's highest value
<i>N_trstprl</i>	Trust in national parliament	Complete trust
<i>N_trstep</i>	Trust in EU Parliament	Complete trust
<i>N_lrscle</i>	Placement on left/right scale	Identify as far-right
<i>N_stfdem</i>	Satisfaction with democracy	Very satisfied
<i>N_freehms</i>	Attitude towards homosexuals	Very negative
<i>N_imwbcntl</i>	Attitude towards immigrants	Very positive
<i>Income dist.</i>	Placement in income distribution	In the top 10% of the distribution
<i>Age</i>	Age at the time of interview	
Dummy variables	Variable takes value 1 for:	
<i>Low-Relig</i>	Being not so religious	
<i>Mid-Relig</i>	Being somewhat religious	
<i>High-Relig</i>	Being highly religious	
<i>Not belonging to minority</i>	Not belonging to a minority group	
<i>Gender</i>	Female	
<i>Low-Educ</i>	Having less than lower secondary education	
<i>Mid-Educ</i>	Having secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education	
<i>High-Educ</i>	Having tertiary education	
<i>Unemploy</i>	Having at some time been unemployed for 3 months	
<i>Country</i>	Country of interview	
<i>Round</i>	Period of the interview	

Source: European Social Survey.

4 Empirical analysis

Pop is a dependent variable which only takes the values 0 and 1, so it does not follow a normal distribution. Therefore, a regression by least squares would produce the wrong standard errors. Running a logistic regression would counter this problem, but the interpretation of the coefficients would be more complicated. Therefore, we choose to use a least-squares regression in order to simplify the interpretation, even though the standard errors for the estimated coefficients might be wrong. We try to account for this problem by running a generalised least-squares regression and using heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors in the table below. In order to account for unequal inclusion probabilities in the survey and differences in the countries' population size, post-stratification and population weights provided by the ESS are used. The weighted dataset is considered as a random sample of the European population. The Variance Inflation factors (*VIF*) for each variable revealed that the model contained little multicollinearity.

The generic estimation equation is given by:

$$pop_{it} = \beta_0 + X'_{it}\beta_1 + Z'_{it}\beta_2 + T_t + C_i + u_{it},$$

where pop_{it} takes the value 1 if the individual voted for a PRW party; X is a matrix with the values and attitudes variables and religion listed in Table 2, Z has the demographic and economic variables (age, income distribution, education, gender, unemployment, minority group), T_t has the years of interview dummies, and C_i are country dummies.

Table 3 shows the regression results for the cultural and demographic variables along with their significance and heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors. The coefficients of the country and time dummy variables are shown in the following Table 4. The analysis of the full model contains 140,920 observations, as 90,256 observations were dropped due to one or more missing variables.

The coefficients of the independent variables are mostly as predicted. A right-wing identity, a negative view of immigrants, not being satisfied with democracy, being negative towards homosexuality, and mistrust in institutions seem to be the factors heavily correlated with voting for a PRW party. In addition, women are less likely to vote for these parties, as are the young while the low- and mid-level educated are more likely to vote for them compared to the highly educated. Having no experience of being unemployed for at least three months in the past makes one less likely to vote for a PRW party. Thus those with an experience of unemployment are more likely to vote for the PRW parties.

The only perhaps puzzling result is that individuals are more likely to vote for these parties if they place themselves higher in the income distribution. There is also the question why people with “medium religiosity” are less likely to vote for a PRW party than the group of low and high religious respondents.

The coefficients of the normalised values variables can be compared since the variables all take values from zero to one. The largest coefficient is that of being right-wing, there are the coefficients of disliking immigrants, distrusting democracy and not trusting the European parliament. Other coefficients are smaller but show that disliking homosexuals is likely to make people vote for the PRW parties as well as not trusting the national parliament. Thus the typical voter of a PRW party is an older male with experience of unemployment, leaning to the right along the political spectrum, and feeling threatened by immigrants, not trusting democracy and the EU and disliking homosexuals. Somewhat surprisingly, he is not low income according to our estimates.

Table 3. OLS Regression with sample weights. Dependent variable: *Pop*

Variables	Coef. Est.	Std. Error	T-value	
Intercept	0.0160	0.006	2.55	*
Trust in national parliament	-0.0144	0.005	-3.19	**
Trust in EU Parliament	-0.0264	0.004	-6.23	***
Placement on left/right scale	0.1300	0.004	28.95	***
Satisfaction with democracy	-0.0291	0.004	-7.30	***
Attitude towards homosexuals	0.0119	0.004	3.31	***
Attitude towards immigrants	-0.0445	0.004	-11.23	***
Placement in income distribution	0.0072	0.003	2.43	*
Age	0.0002	0.000	5.50	***
Low religiosity	<i>Reference Dummy</i>			
Medium religiosity	-0.0066	0.002	-3.70	***
High religiosity	0.0020	0.002	1.07	<i>N.S.</i>
Does not belong to a minority group	-0.0034	0.003	-1.14	<i>N.S.</i>
Female	-0.0064	0.002	-4.19	***
LowEduc	<i>Reference Dummy</i>			
MidEduc	0.0055	0.002	2.71	**
HighEduc	-0.0043	0.002	-2.28	*
Has not ever been unemployed for 3 months	-0.0035	0.002	-2.03	*

* Significant at 95% confidence level, ** significant at 99% confidence level, *** significant at 99.5% confidence level.

Table 4 shows the coefficients of the country and ESS-round dummy variables. The time dummies show that the support of PRW parties increased between 2008 and 2010 following the world financial crisis and also between 2012 and 2014, which can possibly be attributed to the euro crisis. There was also an increase between 2004 and 2006, which is more difficult to explain.

Comparing the Eastern and Western European nations, the average value of the dummy variable for the 11 West European nations is -0.011 while the average for the nine East European nations is around zero (0.0007 to be precise). So on average, the Eastern European nations have a slightly larger country effect. However, there is variation within the group. Hungary has the largest country dummy coefficient, followed by Norway, and Poland while the Czech Republic, Estonia, United Kingdom, Greece, Slovakia, and Germany have the lowest dummies. Both Hungary and Poland were in the top half of Table 1, but Finland,

Greece, and Sweden, also at the top of that table, have negative coefficients in Table 4, which suggests that the explanatory variables account for the populist sentiments in these countries.

Table 4. OLS Regression with sample weights. Dependent variable: *Pop*

Dummy variables	Coef. Est.	Std. Error	t-value	
Austria	<i>Reference Dummy</i>			
Belgium	-0,010	0,004	-2,31	*
Bulgaria	-0,036	0,006	-5,57	***
Croatia	-0,041	0,007	-5,63	***
Czech Rep.	-0,068	0,004	-16,69	***
Denmark	0,035	0,005	6,96	***
Estonia	-0,067	0,004	-15,47	***
Finland	-0,015	0,004	-3,65	***
France	-0,017	0,005	-3,82	***
Germany	-0,047	0,004	-12,41	***
Greece	-0,047	0,004	-10,63	***
Hungary	0,258	0,009	29,53	***
Italy	-0,025	0,006	-4,38	***
Lithuania	-0,021	0,007	-2,88	**
Netherlands	-0,020	0,004	-4,77	***
Norway	0,109	0,006	18,38	***
Poland	0,061	0,005	11,94	***
Slovenia	-0,036	0,004	-8,17	***
Slovakia	-0,044	0,005	-8,80	***
Sweden	-0,032	0,004	-7,93	***
United Kingdom	-0,052	0,004	-13,10	***
Round 1: 2002				
Round 2: 2004	0,001	0,002	0,52	N.S.
Round 3: 2006	0,029	0,002	12,76	***
Round 4: 2008	0,021	0,002	10,61	***
Round 5: 2010	0,031	0,002	13,80	***
Round 6: 2012	0,033	0,002	14,29	***
Round 7: 2014	0,050	0,003	18,36	***
Degrees of Freedom:	140.920	.	= signific. at 90% conf. lvl	
(90,256 observations deleted due to lack of observations)		*	= signific. at 95% conf. lvl	
Residual Standard Error:	0,186	**	= signific. at 99% conf. lvl	
Multiple R-Squared	12,85	***	= signific. at 99.5% conf. lvl	
Adjusted R-Squared	12,82			
F-Statistic:	155,9			
Note: Heteroskedasticity-consistent robust standard errors				

Generalised least-squares regression and using heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors.

Note that two Eastern European countries – Hungary and Poland – rank high in Table 1 and also have large positive coefficients of the country dummies in Table 4. The other Eastern European countries; Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Slovakia have negative country dummies, which indicates that time-constant country-specific factors are not pulling them in that direction. The average value for Eastern Europe when Hungary and Poland are omitted is -0.045, that is to say more negative than the average for the Western European countries.

We conclude that it is only in Hungary and Poland among the Eastern European nations that voters are inclined to vote for PRW parties once account has been taken of their individual values, age, gender, education and religion.

5. Specificities of Eastern Europe

Results in the existing literature would suggest that the socio-economic environment in Eastern European countries is conducive to the emergence and electoral success of populist political movements, in particular right-wing parties. For example, Inglehart and Norris (2016) suggest that countries that have been exposed to major economic displacement and change, along with countries whose culture is traditional and conservative, tend to have larger electoral base for populist right-wing parties. Eastern Europe seems to qualify on both dimensions. Yet, reality happens to be very different.

Eastern European countries are small or medium open economies that largely depend on international markets, in particular European markets, for both essential inputs and the sale of their final or intermediate products. Since the fall of the Soviet bloc they have been the recipients of major foreign direct investment and in turn have experienced at least one major episode of capital flight in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008-2009. Moreover, the structure of their economies, dependent on traditional heavy and light industry, has exposed Eastern European countries to strong competitive pressures as a result of the entry of China in the World Trade Organization. In combination, these factors have contributed to a rise in inequality on a number of dimensions: rural vs. urban areas, declining vs. emerging or growing industries, young vs. old generations, etc.

In addition, Eastern Europe also had to go through a painful transition from central planning to market- and price-based economic coordination. Eastern European countries vary considerably in the speed, dynamics, and success of their transition, but there are several common features across the region. The economic changes have led to a substantial growth in

inequality and economic displacement. Another source of social tension and bitterness is that in all countries, abuse of political power and influence has often given rise to abuse of market power. For these reasons, it is still rare that incumbents become reelected. Thus, Eastern Europe has been exposed to economic pressures that are at least as severe as those facing old EU member states.

The conservative culture and prevailing social norms in Eastern European societies also suggest that the advance and popularisation of social-liberal ideas and policies would provoke a political backlash. Dustmann et al. (2017) show how traditional values magnify the effect of economic downturns on voters – make them distrust the European Union and national parliaments more and vote for populist parties. Due to the relatively late transition to modernity and the influence of the Soviet bloc, Eastern Europeans were subject to more traditional and conservative standards of behaviour in society and in the family. Furthermore, for somewhat complex reasons, education and the mass media before 1989 emphasized patriotism and even nationalism as opposed to internationalism. Also, as pointed out by Baker and Inglehart (2000) Eastern European cultures and social norms up to the 2000s are strikingly oriented towards social survival and cohesion rather than self-expression.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern European countries have experienced major social and cultural changes: the elimination of national borders, the reduction of national sovereignty, the emigration and immigration of a great number of people, increase in the social acceptability of cohabitation without marriage, abortion, same sex relations and even marriage, etc. In other words, these societies have experienced convergence to beliefs and norms in Western Europe with an emphasis on the individual and self-expression rather than on some sort of a collective identity. In such circumstances of major and fast changes, one would expect that there would be cultural frictions and opposition that may prove beneficial to the growth of right-wing parties.

Yet, our results do not lend support to those hypotheses: They show that Eastern European countries are not more susceptible to right-wing populism than Western European countries. We believe that several factors may account for some of the discrepancy between what prior research would suggest and the estimated country effects. One of these factors is the turbulent history of the region and in particular its turbulent relation with nationalism. On the one hand, the spread of nationalism from Western Europe to Eastern Europe is largely responsible for the creation of national identities in the region, which eventually led to the demise of the four great empires of the East; the Ottoman, the Russian, the Habsburg and the German. The final result was the establishment of the modern nation states of the region by

the end of WWI. The whole process, however, turned out to be particularly violent and destructive: Both WWI and WWII were much bloodier and socially more disruptive in the East than in the West. Moreover, the events of the 20th century emphasize a key political feature of the region: Namely, economic, political and cultural life in the region is caught up in the interplay of Great Powers, specifically Germany and Russia, which cannot be opposed by any single regional nation state. For example, Germany became a major export market and creditor for most Eastern European countries in the 1930s. As a result, long before WWII, the Nazis used the resulting economic influence to promote their political agenda. Naturally, since their inception all nation states in the region have been actively looking for allies and forms of international cooperation with various degrees of success in order to offset and limit the impact of foreign interference in their own affairs.

In this context, both the Cold War and WWII remain a constant reminders what happens when chauvinism runs rampant and Eastern European countries fail to form strong international alliances. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, membership in NATO and the European Union have been the two pillars of the foreign policy of all Eastern European countries and they have enjoyed wide public support precisely because of the traumatic memories of the past. It is important to point out that even the most extreme Euroskeptics in Hungary and Poland, for example, do not question the value of membership in NATO or the EU. Instead, they defend traditional social values, the preservations of the idea of Europe of the nations rather than a federal Europe.

Other factors that limit the susceptibility of Eastern Europeans to right-wing populism are socio-economic in their origin. Many Eastern Europeans are aware that they have directly or indirectly benefited from the common EU market, mainly through foreign FDI and the opening of Western European markets to Eastern European labor. In addition, the opening of the borders has meant an increase in travel and interaction with other Europeans, intermarriages, and much a greater awareness of 'the other.' In this context, the electoral map of Poland is revealing. Eastern Poland has been and still remains the stronghold of right-wing populism, while Western Poland has been much less susceptible to right-wing ideas and much more prone to vote on the basis of economic issues. This does not seem to be a coincidence given the increasing cross-border integration of Western Poland with Germany, the great reallocation of people, mainly Poles across the border, and the influx of FDI to the region.

Last but not least, while Eastern Europeans may exhibit fear and unwillingness to accept immigrants from non-European or non-Christian countries, they seem to have no issues with

the immigration of Western European to their countries for economic and family reasons. Also, this acceptance of greater European social and economic integration can be traced back to a residual belief that some Western European countries, in particular Germany and the Scandinavian countries, and their peoples, remain role models that should be emulated. Last but not least, the Eastern European countries have a checkered state and institutional tradition. Thus, the alternative to European integration appears to the general public much less attractive than in some old European great powers, such as the UK, France, or Germany. Relatedly, political interests in Eastern Europe are not institutionalised through political parties, and political parties represent clusters around certain influential political leaders. Consequently, while authoritarian tendencies may very well be present and even accepted by much of the electorate, right-wing populists in Eastern Europe simply do not have the institutional capacity to impose total (itarian) control on political, economic, and cultural life.

6. What makes Hungary and Poland different?

On most dimensions, Hungary and Poland appear similar to most other Eastern European countries. In what follows, we explore possible explanations for the high susceptibility of Hungarians and Poles to right-wing populism. We believe that the observed patterns can be accounted for by a combination of traditional culture, strong nationalist tradition, and extremely ethnically homogenous population. We suggest that the Europeans in less ethnically homogenous societies are less prone to support right-wing populism not only because exposure to immigrants and minorities somehow makes them more enlightened. Rather, we believe that ethnic diversity and migration makes everyone aware of the economic, political and social difficulties before the implementation of a right-wing nationalist agenda. In this sense, ethnic diversity undermines the credibility of right-wing policies.

Poland and Hungary experienced high rates of economic growth in the 2000s and the 2010s. Moreover, they did not do worse than the rest of the Eastern or Western European countries during and after the Great Recession. In fact, Poland is the only European country that did not experience even a technical recession following the financial crisis of 2008-2009. While the public finances of Hungary are still a cause for concern, the Hungarian economy has also done reasonably well during the same period. In this context, it is all the more surprising that these two countries have heavily turned to the extreme right in the recent decade or so.

Another puzzling aspect is that both countries, despite some media coverage, have not borne the brunt of the migrant crisis after 2013. Poland has stayed completely away from the main channels of immigration from the Middle East and Africa to the EU, while Hungary was only briefly a transit destination in 2015-2016. Even during this period, the influx of temporary immigrants to Hungary pales in comparison with the state of affairs in Greece and Italy. Consequently, unlike in the case of Germany, it does not appear likely that the rise of right-wing populism can be traced back to the increase in immigration to the EU after the Arab Spring.

In terms of standard explanations, Poland and Hungary stand out for their traditional culture and social norms. Inglehart and Baker (2000) show that Poland and Hungary, along with Romania, are the Eastern European countries with the most traditional and conservative social norms and attitudes. It comes as no surprise, then, that large sections of these societies have felt deeply uncomfortable with the rise of social liberalism. These developments have certainly contributed to the popularity of political parties that appear to defend the certainty of established institutions, such as the church, the state, or established social norms based on (patriarchal) hierarchy, order, and the value of the community as opposed to individual expression. Nevertheless, one is bound to ask why other societies that score high on the same index of traditionalism of Inglehart and Baker (2000), such as Romania, have not experienced a similar rise in right-wing populism.

In this context, it is interesting to note that both Poland and Hungary have had a long historical tradition as regional powers. While it is true that by 1815 both countries became parts of the multinational Russian and Habsburg empires, their intellectual and political elites largely survived intact and, in turn, these Eastern European countries were the first to develop a very strong sense of national identity. The strength and popular nature of Polish and Hungarian nationalism is evident, for example, from the Polish rebellions of 1830-1, 1846, 1848-9, 1863-4 and the Hungarian revolution of 1848-9. The resistance to Soviet rule and interference after 1945 also bears a strong flavour of national resistance against the successors of the traditional imperial enemy.

There are also other 'old' Eastern European countries, but their historical tradition has either been interrupted by long foreign rule and socio-economic dominance, as in the case of Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Lithuania and Serbia, or the current states are the union of older states with distinct historical tradition, as is the case of Romania. For example, among the other Eastern European countries, Czechia and Romania also have histories that can be traced back at least to the Middle Ages through the kingdom of Bohemia, and the principalities of

Walachia and Moldova, respectively. Still, the Czech lands experienced sustained Germanization after 1620 characterized by strong influence of the central government of the Habsburgs and of the local German aristocracy. Thus, the Czech national revival only picked up pace in the 19th century. Similarly, historical differences between Walachia, Moldova and Transylvania slowed down the formation of a Romanian identity during the 19th century.

The only dimension on which Hungary and Poland are completely different from the rest of the Eastern European countries, and in fact from most Western European countries, is their ethnic homogeneity. As regional powers, both Hungary and Poland have ruled over other nations up until the 18th and the 19th century. After WWI, however, Hungary lost all regions with mixed populations under the formal jurisdiction of Austria-Hungary. While, Poland after 1920 included sizeable Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and German minorities, the end of WWII saw the creation of a displaced to the West but largely homogeneous nation state. The result is that by the early 1990s, ethnic Hungarians accounted for 98 percent of the population of Hungary, while ethnic Poles accounted for 97 percent of the population of Poland. In this respect, the only Western European countries with similar dominance of the major ethnic groups are Norway and Finland. Both of them also turn out in our statistical tests to be susceptible to right-wing nationalism.

We investigate further this issue in Figure 1 by plotting the relationship between the estimated country-specific susceptibility to right-wing populism and the share of dominant ethnic groups in the population. A visual inspection of Figure 1 confirms that the tendency to support right-wing populism does not increase in the ethnic diversity of a country. This finding contradicts the notion that ethnic differences increase social tension and the probability of civil conflict on their own. To the contrary, we find that the propensity to support right-wing populist parties increases in the ethnic homogeneity of the country both in Eastern and Western Europe. A linear regression of the susceptibility to right-wing populism on the share of the dominant ethnic groups shows a positive and statistically significant correlation between the two variables. Moreover, Figure 1 suggests that support for right-wing populism may be growing exponentially in the share of the dominant ethnic groups.

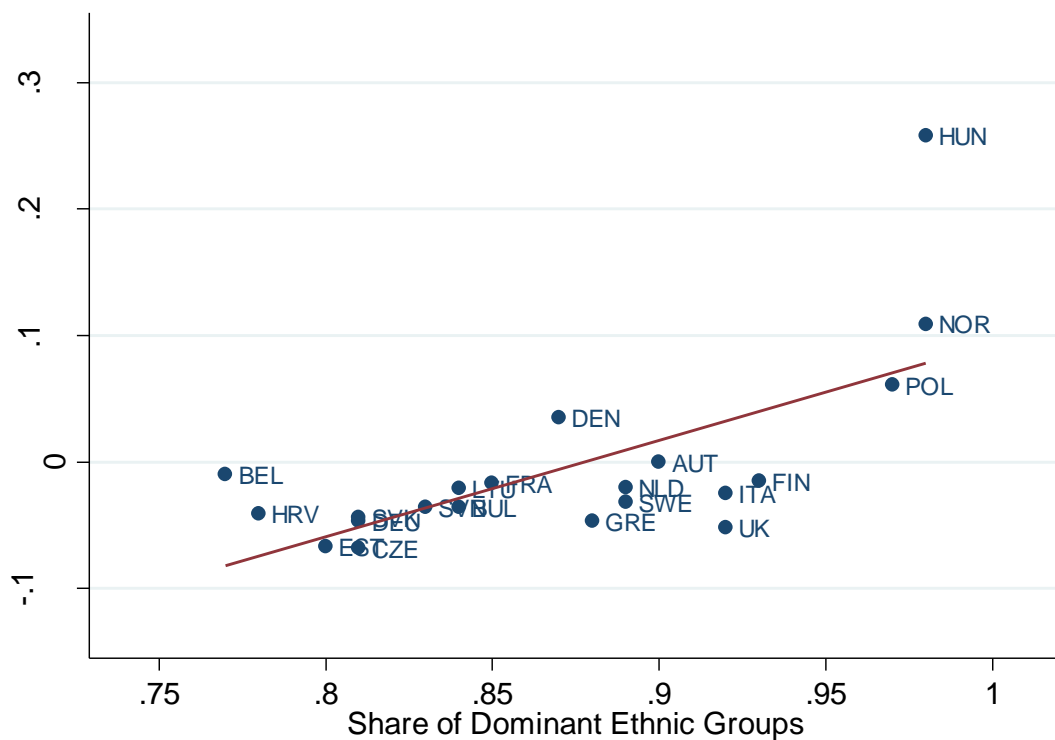


Figure 1. Relationship between country-specific susceptibility to right-wing populism and the share of dominant ethnic groups in the population. Sources: Table 4 and National statistical bureaus.

We suggest two hypotheses for the observed pattern. First, it may be that interacting a lot with people of diverse background in daily life makes it harder to demonize ‘the other’ as the source of all social evils. Thus, ethnic diversity may actually promote the (liberal) notion of common human nature and, in turn, universal human rights. Along with this optimistic hypothesis, we also consider a second hypothesis that ethnic diversity does not promote mutual understanding but its existence increases the costs and dangers associated with promoting right-wing policies. In ethnically diverse societies, potential sympathizers are practically aware that the implementation of right-wing nationalistic and populist policies is likely to increase social tension, cause social disruption, and lead to international isolation, if not intervention by more powerful neighbours. The practical difficulties in getting such policies through in diverse societies may actually undermine the electoral credibility of right-wing populism. We leave it to future research to test which of these hypotheses hold.

7. Conclusions

We have discovered that the Eastern European nations differ internally in their propensity to vote for a *PRW* party. They have a slightly higher average country effect but vary greatly internally. Thus Hungary and Poland have a greater affinity with such parties while the Baltics, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia and Slovakia have much less. But we can also find comparable countries in Western Europe such as Norway and Denmark, which also are inclined to vote for a *PRW* party. Poland and Hungary are both former regional powers with homogenous populations where individual politicians are powerful rather than organised parties as in the West. We argue that the diversity of the population of other Eastern European countries makes their culture more liberal; that is more accepting of other ethnic group and less prone to vote for right-wing populists.

The coefficients of the personal attributes have a familiar pattern. A right-wing identity, a negative view of immigrants, not being satisfied with democracy, being negative on homosexuality, and mistrust in institutions seem to be the factors heavily correlated with voting for a *PRW* party. In addition, women are less likely to vote for these parties, as are the young and the better educated. Having the experience of being unemployed for at least three months in the past makes one more likely to vote for a *PRW* party. The only surprising result is that individuals are more likely to vote for these parties if they place themselves higher in the income distribution. There is also the question why people with “medium religiosity” are less likely to vote for a *PRW* party than the group of low- and highly religious respondents.

One limitation of the study is that some political parties which are not considered *PRW* may have adopted more radical policies to win votes from *PRW* parties. Therefore, overall populism support could be underestimated. The UK is a good example where the Conservative Party became more populist as a response to the challenge presented by the UK Independence Party. In fact, in the recent study by Dustmann et al. (2017) the Conservative Party is counted among populist parties based on its manifesto.

We conclude that the supporters of free trade and immigration as embodied in the EU charters will have to address the concerns of the dissatisfied part of the population – older, less educated men with traditional values who fear the effect of immigration – as well as the apparently inherent or cultural nationalism in some member countries of the European Union.

Appendix

The data and their sources

Variable (continuous)	Question asked in the survey	Meaning of variable's highest value	Name of variable in E
Trust in national parliament	How much do you trust your county's parliament?	Complete trust	trstprl
Trust in EU Parliament	How much do you trust the European Parliament?	Complete trust	trstep
Placement on left/right scale	Where would you place yourself on the "left and right"-scale?	Identify as far-right	lrscale
Satisfaction with democracy	How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country?	Very satisfied	stfdem
Attitude towards homosexuals	Do you agree that gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish?	Refuses the statement	freehms
Attitude towards immigrants	Do you think that immigrants make your country a better or worse place to live in?	A better place to live in	inwbcnt
Placement in income distribution	Where is your household located in your country's income distribution?	In the top 10% of the distribution	hincnt and hincnta
Age	How old are you?	Oldest	agea
Dummy Variables	Question asked in the survey	Value=1 if the respondent answered	Name of variable in E
Low religiosity	On the scale 0-10, how religious are you?	0-3	rlgdgr
Medium religiosity	on the scale 0-10, how religious are you?	4-6	rlgdgr
High religiosity	on the scale 0-10, how religious are you?	7-10	rlgdgr
Does not belong to a minority group	Do you belong to a minority ethnic minority group in your country?	Yes	blgetmg
Female	Are you male or female?	Female	gndr
LowEduc	What is the highest level of education you have achieved?	Lower secondary or less	edulvla
MidEduc	What is the highest level of education you have achieved?	post-secondary, non-tertiary or less	edulvla
HighEduc	What is the highest level of education you have achieved?	tertiary education	edulvla
Has not ever been unemployed for 3 months	Have you ever been unemployed and seeking work for a period more than three months?	No	uemp3m

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