POPULISM AS DISTANT RELATIVE OF TERRORISM

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Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Political Science

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

(2018)

ABSTRACT

What is the lowest common denominator of populist voters? What unites the voter bases of populist parties? Considering populism primarily as a strategy and drawing on the grievance model of political action that is prevalent in the terrorism literature, this thesis investigates the reasons for the populist upsurge. Similarities identified between terrorism and populism contribute to a better understanding of both phenomena. By analyzing the European Social Survey Round 8 data with logistic regression, it demonstrates that perceived lack of opportunities for political participation is a strong predictor of populist voting. It further demonstrates that individuals with cultural and economic grievances are more likely to vote for right-wing and left-wing populist parties respectively.

Keywords: populist upsurge, populism, terrorism, cultural grievances, economic grievances

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

British voters' decision to leave the European Union in June 2016 marked one of the greatest populist victories of our times. The long-term effects of Brexit are not easy to predict. However, most economists are pessimistic about the effects and think that it would damage the country's growth prospects (Giles and Tetlow 2017). Ipsos MORI's online survey most clearly demonstrates that almost 90 percent of the members of the Royal Economic Society and the Society of Business Economists warns that the country's GDP growth will be lower than it would have been had it stayed in the EU, at least over the next five years ("Economists' Views on Brexit" 2016). A study by the OECD economists that aimed to quantify the foregone GDP concludes that by 2030, it will be 5 percent lower than it would be otherwise. This means British voters who voted to leave preferred Brexit over GBP 3200 per household in April 2016 terms (Kierzenkowski et al. 2016). Some economists even call Brexit "a deliberate act of economic self-harm" (Reenen 2016), perhaps something that is not qualitatively different than a suicide attack.

Before the June 7th elections in 2015 in Turkey, an auction-like competition on the minimum wage broke out between the political parties. The auction was instigated by the CHP, the main opposition party, which promised to raise the minimum wage to 1500 Turkish Liras (TL) per month. The minimum wage which was only 1000 TL back then. Following CHP, all the major parties started to announce their plans for the minimum wage with the ruling party AKP promising 1300 TL, the MHP 1400 TL and the HDP 1800 TL. The BTP, a party that gets only a fraction of total votes topped all the major parties by promising 5000 TL per month. All of the relevant opposition parties also promised comprehensive debt relief programs for individuals, a move that was not mimicked by the ruling party (Çevik 2015). At the time 17.7 million Turkish citizens had outstanding debts due to consumer credits (*T24* 2015). Yet the

AKP, the party that pledged the lowest increase in the minimum wage without any debt relief promise, won the June 7th elections and the following snap elections on the November 1st.

In August 2009, rightwing activists across the U.S. were protesting the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (commonly known as Obamacare) most vividly by disrupting the town hall meetings. At one of the town hall meetings, a black conservative activist named Kenneth Gladney and his friends from the St. Louis Tea Party took up a quarrel with the members of the Service Employees International Union. Mr. Gladney was beaten and hospitalized. He could not pay the medical bill since he was unemployed and did not have health insurance. Ironically, he could have coverage if the Affordable Care Act, which he was protesting against, had already been passed. Instead, being against government handouts, he asked for donations (Younge 2012). Mr. Gladney is not alone in rejecting the Affordable Care Act when it brings advantages to them. Clay County, a poor community in Kentucky, was named the hardest place to live in the United States by The New York Times (Lowrey 2014). The study used many metrics ranging from median household income to life expectancy. Estimates show that the percentage of Clay County residents who have health insurance rose by 17 percent between 2013 and 2016 (Krugman 2016), a success that can be attributed to the Affordable Care Act. During their election campaigns in 2016, Republican candidate Donald Trump promised to dismantle and replace the Affordable Care Act and Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton promised to enhance it. Donald Trump received 87 percent of the vote in Clay County.

These examples, which were first cited in an earlier work (Şimşek 2017), were cited here as well due to their bizarreness. Similar examples are abundant. Swiss voters, for instance, consistently rejected policy proposals that would benefit everyone in the society ranging from reduction of working hours to lower retirement age (Stephens 2016). Or, take the example of

McDowell County, which is the poorest county in West Virginia. During the primaries in 2016, it had the highest percentage of people voting for Donald Trump (The Guardian 2016). Abundancy of such examples present us with a paradox and force us to rethink the widespread claims about the material origins of voting in general and populism in particular. What makes individuals of different background interiorize populist ideas and support populist movements although doing so is ostensibly against their material interests? What forces them to vote for populist parties and thus commit these economic suicides? What explains the recent populist upsurge? Is there anything common to all populist voters? These are the questions that this thesis aims to answer.

One can try to answer these questions while still operating within the pocketbook voting paradigm. For instance, one can assert that economically stressed voters in Appalachia care more about the jobs that Donald Trump promised to bring back than having health insurance. However, this begs another question: Why do voters believe candidates or parties which promises what cannot be credibly promised instead of those who guarantee better health care and increase in minimum wage too? The obvious answer would be that people want to believe. When people are hopeless and think that their government is not doing anything for them, they may want to believe in candidates who promise to fix everything. Under such circumstances, where bold claims drive out the prudent ones, rational choice accounts are not helpful. These observations confirm Haidt's claim that politics is more like a religion than shopping (Haidt 2012). It is about believing in a vision and a narrative rather than comparisons and calculations.

The populist upsurge has taken the world by surprise. The discipline of Political Science failed to see it coming. Although some scholars claim that the populist upsurge was predictable (Rodrik 2017), nobody could have imagined ten years ago, for instance, that the United States

would choose Donald Trump as president after Barack Obama, its first black president. What Donald Trump accomplished would have been deemed impossible in the beginning of the new millennium. At the beginning of his campaign, he was not given any chance to get his party's nomination since he was not an insider and did not have the support of the influential figures inside the party (CNN 2015). The Economist evaluated the chances of outsiders in securing the nomination and concluded that "outsiders don't win presidential nominations anymore" (*The Economist* 2015). The dominant view shared by experts and many political strategists was that the GOP establishment was going to be determinative of the candidate. Sooner or later, they were going to force Trump to quit. (Jaffe 2015). Even after many Trump wins in the early primaries, senior officials were not alarmed and asserted that they "choose the nominee, not the voters" (Belvedere 2016). What they were saying was in line with what political scientists argued. Many of the arguments that Trump opposers within the GOP establishment made were supportive of a thesis called "the party decides". The thesis, which has been put forward by the book with the same name, argues that party elders serves as the gatekeepers in determining the candidates the party is going to nominate. They possess various powerful tools at their disposal, such as endorsements and financial contributions, which enable them to get their preferred candidates to win the race for nomination (Cohen et al. 2008). One cannot win the primaries without first winning the invisible primaries, that is getting the party elders on board. The 2016 US primaries showed otherwise. It demonstrated how strong a relationship can a populist leader have with voters. In spite of the efforts of the GOP establishment who did not hesitate to besmirch him and of former presidents who publicly denounced him, Donald Trump won the nomination three months before the GOP convention.

Political scientists have failed not only to predict but also adequately explain what has happened. While being able to predict is only desirable, not being able to explain is worrisome.

I argue that this inability to explain the recent populist upsurge is mainly due to the tendency to reduce political problems to economic causes. Many explanations of the populist upsurge are variations of economic insecurity theory, which emphasize the large transformations in the workforce. Although some accounts of the populist upsurge do not mainly emphasize the economic causes, such explanations are less common and indirectly, they still resort to economic explanations. Take cultural backlash theory, which considers populism as a response to progressive values, as an example. Progressive or emancipative value changes occur only after improvements in material conditions which strengthen individuals' "action resources" (Ronald Inglehart and Welzel 2005). This thesis affirms that populist revolt is not motivated by mild disagreements about tariffs or immigration policy; it runs much deeper. It stipulates that what makes people support populist movements is very similar to what makes others join a terrorist organization. Root causes of terrorism have been argued to be feelings of indignity, resentment and frustration (Krueger and Maleckova 2002) and as this thesis contends, root causes of populism are not any different. The only way to make sense of the abovementioned instances of economic suicides and the recent populist upsurge in general is to understand the resentment, frustration and indignity.

Populism is fundamentally a strategy employed by a maverick figure to mobilize such resentful and indignant masses. By extension, it is helpful to see populist actors as political entrepreneurs. Very similar to business entrepreneurs, they observe a demand in the market and act to fulfill it. It is not simply a coincidence that Donald Trump is a business entrepreneur. He considered standing as a presidential candidate as early as 1987 and even started a campaign as early as 1999 (PBS NewsHour 2016). He probably did not see much room in the market for the newcomers back then. He mounted a more serious campaign in 2016 due to the market opportunities he perceived. A frustrated electorate is fertile ground for populists. Just like

Trump, populist actors have employed narratives that appeal to frustrated identities with grievances, which in turn has resulted in a boost to their support.

This thesis set out to demonstrate that populism is a political phenomenon, not an economic one. Financial stress is not irrelevant, yet it alone is not what unites populist voters. Grievances, economic or cultural, turn into populist support only when they are combined with the perception that citizens are not allowed to have a say in the political decision-making process. Thus, this thesis argues that political impotency is the lowest common denominator of populist voters. It is organized as follows: Chapter 2 discusses the thesis's understanding of populism after visiting various definitions of populism and the approaches to study it. Chapter 3 reviews the literature on the reasons for voting populist. The next chapter lays the theoretical framework of the thesis. The following chapter makes the ambitious claim that populism is very similar to terrorism and discusses the similarities in detail. Chapter 6 discusses the grievances of populists and the trigger events that led to the populist upsurge. Next chapter empirically tests the claims made in the previous ones using European Social Survey (ESS) Round 8 data. Although populism is a global phenomenon, ESS has been preferred since it provides recent and readily-available data. The conclusion discusses the main findings and the limitations of the thesis and offers some ideas for future research.

CHAPTER 2: DEFINING POPULISM

The word populism has recently become ubiquitous in the media and in scholarly or political debates. The consensus on its importance and relevance is nowhere to be found when it comes to defining it. Although several historical movements called themselves populists, with few exceptions, political actors today do not call themselves populist anymore. Populism is everywhere one looks but nowhere to be seen. The word is frequently employed yet very few populists, most notably Steve Bannon, pick up the label. Populism nowadays is a derogatory word. In the past, various movements and leaders from various parts of the world with various different ideological orientations were called populist. Examples include Poujadist movement, Juan Perón, Kemalism, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Hugo Chavez, Geert Wilders , Silvio Berlusconi, Occupy movement, Lega Nord and Tea Party (D'eramo 2013). Although populism has been mostly referred to as a incontrovertible and self-explanatory concept by scholars, it is surely a challenging endeavor to find the commonalities between these leaders and movements. This dearth of exactness and the absence of a common definition was noted in 1967 by Richard Hofstadter who tellingly named his keynote lecture at the London School of Economics "Everyone Is Talking About Populism, but No One Can Define It" (Derbyshire 2016). More recent studies on populism consider it almost an obligation to emphasize this lack of consensus. The most commonly cited definition of populism as offered by notable populism scholar Cas Mudde is as follows:

> *A thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale of the people.* (Mudde 2004, 543)

Ideology can be defined as system of interrelated ideas. Thin-centered ideologies are the ones which do not offer comprehensive ideas to solve all the major social problems (Freeden 1996). Since they do not have a fully developed agenda of their own, they can be easily combined with other more comprehensive ideologies. Arguably, this is the reason why various different

movements and parties from any point on the ideological spectrum have been argued to be populist. Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012, 2) argue "which ideological features attach to populism depend upon the socio-political context within which the populist actors mobilize." Another approach to study populism considers it a discourse. Similarities exist between ideational and discursive approaches, but the latter puts the emphasis on the construction of "us against them" dichotomy. Laclau's (2005) theory of populism inspired many studies taking the discursive approach. Similar to ideational scholars, he also argues that the composition of "us against them" is contingent on social context. He adds thatt populist discourse is always about the conflict over hegemony and dominance between "the people" and "the dominant bloc". When social grievances, no matter how heterogeneous they are, and the demands to address them meet the same antagonistic pole, they become linked to one another and crystalize. The result is a struggle between the unified people and their antagonists.

The last approach to study populism that will be reviewed defines it as a political strategy. Acemoglu, Egorov and Sonin (2009) approach the problem from the perspective of selecting good, honest and competent politicians to public offices. Although they do not specifically talk about populism, they explain individual's incentives to support a less competent government due to the rents provided. Then, populism is a strategy that involves sacrificing long-term outcomes by responding to short term impulses. Populists advocate policies that are sure to receive support from some segments of the society but those policies are usually not sound and will lead to negative surplus in the long run. Jansen (2011, 77) defines populism as a political initiative "that can be undertaken by challengers and incumbents of various stripes in pursuit of a wide range of social, political and economic agendas". Weyland's (2001, 14) definition of populism as "a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from large numbers

of mostly unorganized followers" is the one most similar to the definition adopted by this thesis. Definitions that see populism as a strategy are perhaps the ones that are most heavily criticized. Since they tend to be broader than other types, some scholars accuse them of conceptual stretching (Hawkins 2010). As the argument goes such a strategy might be adopted by any parties or movements regardless of their ideology. Parties or movements that are not considered to be populist and any kind of community politics would have to be labelled as populist since the definition is too inclusive. Ideas that are put forward in this thesis are not in line with such criticisms. As it will be argued in the following chapters more thoroughly, there is no movement that is in and of itself populist. Populism is a strategy that movements employ in varying degrees and effectiveness. More importantly, it is available to any movements that want to pursue it.

Among the three main approaches to study populism (populism as ideology, discourse and strategy), ideational approach is the most commonly accepted and practiced. All approaches have their merits and drawbacks; yet it would be a fruitless effort to try to prove that one is actually superior to the others. These approaches are not mutually exclusive but quite compatible with each other as none them refute the others. That said, having strong doubts about the most commonly accepted ideational approach used in the literature is one of the motivations to write this thesis. A good way to check the validity of the thin-centered ideology argument would be to compare populism with other thin-centered ideologies. Freeden (1996) identifies three of such ideologies: nationalism, feminism and ecologism. Finding similarities between populism and the three other thin-centered ideologies is a difficult task but differences are not difficult to come by. First of all, Freeden defines thin-centered ideologies as the ones that keep their appeal purposefully narrow. In other words, such ideologies have limited ambitions, which is not true for populism. Secondly, as mentioned previously, populism goes largely unclaimed. It is not owned by anybody while followers of other ideologies take pride in

them. Finally, it is considerably thinner than the other three. Populist ideas do not show the same degree of cogency and consistency as the elite and the people are different in every context. There is no theoretician whose ideas inspire populists in the sense that followers of the other three are inspired; there is no book to play by. Populists improvise and play it by ear instead of having an ideology to guide them. If not ideology, what unites the voter bases of populist parties? What is the lowest common denominator of populist voters? These are the questions that this thesis set sail to answer.

Looking at the people that populist leaders and movements claim to speak for might be a good start to answer these questions. Populist entrepreneurs may not share much in common but it is possible that their targeting strategy is similar. Knowing who makes up the people allows one to compare. Simply put, democracy means rule by the people. This much is straightforward, yet the question who constitutes the people is not easy to answer. Ancient Greek philosophers did not even bother themselves with such a question; it was clear that only landed males were the demos. Since Dahl (1970) put this boundary problem forward, a variety of political theorists have tried to tackle it. Scholars up to Dahl usually have taken the territorial boundaries of states to define the people but more recent scholarship has advanced principles of affected interests or coercion to have a more inclusive definition (Song 2012).

Populism studies also suffer a similar boundary problem about the people. Populism scholars resemble the workers in the construction of Tower of Babel, each has a different definition of populism and thus cannot speak to one another. It is rare that a new work published on the issue does not offer a new and arguably distinct definition. One element is common to all definitions is the people. All of the widely used definitions of populism emphasize populists' appeal to the people (Mudde 2004; Betz and Johnson 2004; Canovan 1999). Despite this commonality, it is

surprising to see how such a fundamental concept can be used (or abused) in different settings referring to entirely different things. Most of the time, it is referred to as a self-evident concept and what it means is not clear and not explained by the authors. To speak in Gerring's (1999) terms, the concept of the people suffers from lack of coherence, differentiation and theoretical utility.

The problem with the populism literature is that it does not differentiate sufficiently between different types of people referred to by political actors. It assumes that politicians more or less refer to the same people with the same characteristics all over the world. The people is made of ordinary citizens everywhere who are in the majority. Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013) represent an exception in the literature in that they distinguish between inclusionary populism in Latin America and exclusionary populism in Europe. This distinction implicitly identifies two different kinds of people that populists appeal to in two different contexts. This thesis argues that notion of the people, as political actors refer to them, do not have to be made of ordinary citizens and they do not have to be in the majority. The people is an ambiguous concept that might have very different meanings in different settings. Jennings (1956,56) famously stated that "the people cannot decide until someone decides who are the people." This thesis argues what this quote ingeniously captures, that it is the politicians who decide who the people are. Selecting a people to which they appeal is maybe the most important part of their political strategy.

Populists often claim that they speak for the people and present themselves the sole representatives of the popular will. A lengthy discussion of the notion of popular will is not appropriate here; serious concerns can be raised about the possibility of its existence. Even if we come to accept that it is not just a romanticized idea and it can really exist, what is expressed

by populists is not the popular will. It might be what they argue to be the will of the people who they consider to be the people. In other words, it can be the will of the group that populist think to be the people. Even that is suspicious since it is not possible to confirm whether this is their true will or just some ideas made up by populists and put into the mouth of the people.

Populist roughly refer to three categories when they talk about the people: first the people as the majority of the voters, second the people as the working-class and third the people as a culturally distinct group (Brubaker 2017). It is important to make this distinction between different types of the people because it determines the key policy appeals of the populists.

When the people are defined as the majority of the voters, populists will emphasize the democratic gap. They will argue that a small but organized group has hijacked the government and they are not acting in the best interest of the people. Then, populists will label their struggle as a democratic quest to put the people in charge again. They will argue for more democracy. Although a leader or a movement that target majority of the voters will inevitably show central tendencies, such political actors may emerge from both the left and the right. For instance, Erdoğan in Turkey has been successful in mobilizing the religious majority against the secular elite. A similar process, this time in the left, has been observed in Bolivia where Morales, through a rhetoric of long injustices, was able to mobilize the indigenous people which were again the majority.

A second category that the people would fit in is the working-class. Defining the people as working class is a Marxist legacy as almost all of the socialist countries have had the word people in their names. It is usually the leaders and the movements from the left that do so today. They will argue that the wealth is concentrated at the hand of the few while the people find it

extremely difficult to make ends meet. Then, populist will label their struggle as an egalitarian quest to provide for the poor. They will argue for social justice, reducing income inequality and more redistributive policies. Such a style of populism has been abundant in Latin America and best exemplified by Syriza and Podemos in Europe.

The last broad category that is referred to as the people is a culturally homogenous group. This can be a whole nation or an ethnic group that is marked by common history. It should be noted that this group may or may not be the majority. Defining the people this way is a tendency observed in right-wing movements and leaders. They will craft their message praising the distinct lifestyle of the group and argue that it should be protected from the outsiders. Outsiders need not to be the immigrants or people from other cultures but there can be domestic outsiders as well. Such a style of populism has recently become very fashionable in Europe.

If populists' ideology depends on the target group, it is safe to assume that populism is a strategy and that there is no person or a movement that is in and of itself populist. To claim populism is an ideology necessitates the existence of a populist personality like the existence of an authoritarian personality. Populism is best understood as a strategy through which outsiders aim to carve out a place for themselves by redefining politics as a struggle between the homogeneous and unified people and the immoral and illegitimate elite. As no person or group is inherently populist, the strategy is available to anyone who wants to pursue it.

CHAPTER 3: CAUSES OF POPULIST REVOLT

The vote shares of populist parties have been on the rise globally. Although populist challenge has long been present in Latin America (Conniff et al. 2012), their stunning success in the Western world is relatively new. Not only they enjoyed consistent electoral victories, but also they have influenced the public debates disproportionately even in countries where they enjoy a very modest support. Naturally, scholars of various backgrounds and from various countries have attempted to explain their rise. Inglehart and Norris (2016) classify the literature on the reasons for the populist upsurge into three categories: the demand-side explanations that explores the motives for voting populist, the supply-side explanations that stress the agency of populist entrepreneurs and their strategies and explanations that emphasize the institutional arrangements. Their classification is also suitable for the purposes of this thesis. Demand-side explanations help us understand the stimuli to vote populist and supply-side explanations do the same for the role that populist entrepreneurs play in mobilizing the masses. The third group of explanations that stress the institutional rules of the game are not reviewed in this thesis. However, this does not mean that the thesis does not recognize their importance. Several institutional arrangements can make a difference for the populist candidates and movements. The degree of proportionality of the electoral system is always a prime suspect. It has long been established that people who are not happy with the status quo have more incentive to take action in more proportional systems (Duverger 1951). In the same vein, in disproportionate systems, voters have more incentive to vote for more established parties since doing otherwise would risk wasting their votes. Or, a high threshold would discourage some populist from undertaking a new initiative. Thus, institutional arrangements do matter, yet their effects are the same for all actors regardless of how populist they are. Restricting the scope to demand and supply-side variables would be parsimonious.

Demand-side explanations usually examines the changes in individuals' opinions, which usually come about via changes in their material and environmental conditions. As the argument goes, such changes cause reactions among the parts of the society which are negatively affected by them. The most commonly employed explanation for the populist upsurge under this category is the increasing economic insecurity. It causes a reaction among the poorer and less fortunate segments of the society. The insecurity has been the direct result of the integration of world markets, which has benefitted the capital owners and led to job losses for the working class. While the top one percent reaped the benefits extremely disproportionately, poorer parts of the society has found it increasingly difficult to satisfy their basic need. Indeed, the rising economic inequality and the problems associated with it have alarmed many social scientists across discipline. Combined with stagnating real wages, the automation process and manufacturing jobs sent to overseas, globalization has created a considerable number of losers. It has contributed to anti-establishment and nativist feelings of those who are worse off and populist movements have been successful at mobilizing groups with such feelings (Betz 1994; Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers 2002). Facing the imminent globalization threat to their lives, the poorer segments of the society have closed ranks behind a charismatic leader who would fight for them. These arguments are commonly employed when explaining the rise of rightwing populist parties especially in Europe. Such parties have attacked the governments for stagnating or even diminishing living standards, insufficient social safety nets and their "decaying" societies. They attributed the misfortunes of their constituencies to immigrants who took their jobs and contributed to the erosion of national identity. Voters across the ideological spectrum have migrated to populist parties which promised to restore the former glory and prosperity again. To summarize, the increasing insecurity argument asserts that the increasing gap between the social classes due to globalization combined with dissatisfaction with center parties and

their unwillingness to address the gap have resulted in boost to the vote share of populist candidates and movements.

Another distinct yet related explanation on the demands side is the cultural backlash theory. The thesis suggests that the rise of populism in the recent decades is a direct response to substantial cultural transformations that have taken place in Western societies. The so-called silent revolution, which refers to the shift towards post-material values in Western societies, triggered a counter-revolution among more conservative segments of these societies such as the old generations, the less educated and white men. These groups in turn have embraced the populist agenda in reaction to post-material progressive values (Ronald Inglehart and Norris 2016; Golder 2016). Data from various surveys, most notably the World Values Survey, consistently noted a trend of advanced industrial societies continuously becoming more tolerant about deeply controversial issues such abortion or gay marriage (R. Inglehart et al. n.d.). Why is this silent-revolution taking place? Enough evidence has accumulated in the psychology literature on the role of social environment one grew up shaping the future attitudes. It is almost universally agreed that the early social environment determines the limits of tolerance and open-mindedness that one will show to others. Those who are born to relatively wealthy parents in affluent societies that provide a secure environment are more likely to embrace cultural diversity than their parents themselves whose upbringing involved more hardships and marked by material concerns (Inglehart 1997). This trend has led to the displacement of traditional values by progressive ones. For instance, the notion that marital role of women is to be homemakers has been largely replaced by the notion of mutual substitution of both sexes. Moreover, young people typically value multiculturalism more and express more support for supranational institutions (Inglehart 1990). Silent revolution and the post material values it has brought about alienated the people who embrace traditional values the most: the less educated,

men and older generations. These groups feeling lost in the face of silent-revolution, in turn have embraced populist ideas and staged a counter-revolution. (Ignazi 1992).

Motivation is quite elusive; explaining why social actors behave the way they do is not easy. Above explanations both have their merits; they might explain certain amount of variation in vote choice. Parsimony is desirable when developing theories, yet such parsimonious accounts also risk being reductionist. Reducing political problems to economic causes is one of the problems that this thesis set out to emphasize. As mentioned before, for instance, the literature on the material origins of populism do not fully explain support for populists among working class people. Or the cultural backlash hypothesis does not explain the strong appeal of populists among young people. For instance, in the 2017 French Presidential Elections, Mélenchon got almost one third of the vote casted by voters who were 24 years of age or younger while an estimated 44 percent of the same age group voted for Le Pen in the run-off (*France 24* 2017). Current comparative studies do not offer comprehensive and satisfactory explanations as to why populist upsurge is running throughout the world. Singular case studies, which characterize the populism literature, also are not very useful because theoretical models they offer are not parsimonious enough. Such studies usually employ historical narratives and highlight the role played by specific events, dynamics of party competition, peculiarities of electoral system, the role of charismatic leaders and the media for each case. One can surely attribute the populist success in a particular country to events and processes that take place within that country. However, the big question remains: why populism is on the rise globally despite the peculiarities of individual cases?

Another point which is not addressed sufficiently in the literature is the interaction between demand-side and supply-side factors. Although the early studies of populism tended to focus

on demand-side factors, in the recent decades the focus has shifted to supply-side factors (Golder 2016). Studies that take both demand-side and supply-side factors into account are limited. Furthermore, studies that look at both demand and supply-side factors usually do so in an additive manner which does not capture their interaction. As the thesis aims to demonstrate, the demand for populist parties created by grievances does not mechanically translate into populist success. Demand is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. Many scholars note that variance in demand fail to account for cross-national differences in populist success (Norris 2005; Mudde 2007). Populist candidates and movements are successful in many countries where demand factors are not present or negligible. They are successful even in prosperous regions whose populations are not so economically insecure. This leaves us with a puzzle similar to the ones discussed in the introduction. While populist candidates and movements are successful in some of the most wealthy and egalitarian societies characterized by strong welfare system such as Denmark, they do not exist in some societies that provide fertile ground for them such as Portugal.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Previous chapters were intended to show that populism is not simply the cry of the culturally displaced or the financially stressed. Beliefs of cultural displacement or financial difficulties do not seem irrelevant but by themselves, they are not very useful in explaining the previously mentioned puzzles, paradoxes and anomalies. They are not wrong but incomplete. They are at best too narrow explanations. One needs to be very skeptical of monocausal explanations especially for complex phenomena such as the populist upsurge. If these two explanations hold for only certain cases but they are generalized to explain the whole phenomenon, then entertaining the possibility that these two are somehow related might be helpful. Explaining this relation, in turn, would provide us a broader perspective and might even help us find the lowest common denominator of populist voters.

Weber (1978) distinguishes three bases for social stratification: economic class, social status and political power. Economic class is determined by material resources that individuals have; social status is by the prestige they enjoy, and political power is by their ability to achieve their goals despite opposition. Economic class alone does not seem to be main motivation of populist voters, perhaps looking at the latter two, namely social status and political power, can help.

Social status, as defined by Weber (1978), refers to the relative honor, prestige and respect that individuals enjoy in a society. Weber argues that actions of groups are better explained when their styles of life are taken into account, rather than purely in economic terms, since those actions reflect a sense of belonging. Sociological literature on inequality provides ample evidence on the importance of prestige and esteem. People care deeply about being respected and valued members of a society and they want their worth to be publicly recognized (Goode 1978). Ridgeway (2014, 2) even claims that "people care about status quite as intensely as they

do about money and power. Then, social status might be key to explain many phenomena for which we have incomplete answers. It can explain motivations, thus the social action itself.

Populism scholars have recently started to pay attention to the role of group dominance in explaining the populist upsurge. Gidron and Hall (2017) consider status anxiety as a proximate factor leading to support for right-wing populist parties. They argue that economic and cultural factors interact to augment status anxiety and it is men without college education who are more likely to suffer from this anxiety. In particular, the election of Donald Trump has been explained by threats to white dominance in the United States. When the dominancy of a group is threatened, this triggers defensive reactions. The group members develop attitudes to reclaim the dominancy such as outgroup hostility (Mutz 2018). White share of the total population has declined and projected to decline further, fueling the fears that whites will be a minority in the United States in the near future. Although white Americans in general are economically better of than other ethnic groups, especially white working-class people are inclined to blame their economic misfortunes on immigrants. All of these factors, combined with progressive policies such as affirmative action have invoked fears of cultural placement. After all, such policies are perceived by white Americans as favoritism towards other ethnic groups.

With slogans such as "We will take our country back", it is not hard to see why Donald Trump was more appealing to these white working-class voters. Populism, then, can be the cry of "strangers in their own land." There is anecdotal evidence elsewhere as well that populist politicians indeed target such groups. For instance, Turkey's President Erdoğan frequently reminds the Turkish people how the Kemalist elite has despised the ordinary people of Anatolia and regarded them as "second-class citizens." while they are the true owners of the country.

Erdoğan also frequently recites verses from an influential conservative poet calling out to Sakarya River in Anatolia:

"Boil profusely, Sakarya, like a guilty conscience,
You are wretch in your native land, a pariah in your motherland!"

"The people" as the populism literature use it is associated with low economic status, social inferiority as well as political impotency (Pappas 2017). Perhaps not coincidentally, these three correspond to three bases of Weberian stratification. Yet, these bases are not so distinct but fairly interrelated. Decreased wealth very well might mean lower social status. Then, just like decreasing social status, the impulse to support populist candidates and movements for some individuals might be the perception that the inequality between social classes and groups is increasing. Social status is a more general explanatory variable than economic well-being or having traditional values. It explains the motivations of both right-wing and left-wing populist voters as they both, assumingly, care about their social status. However, if status was really key to understand their motivations, we would expect other low status individuals, such as immigrants themselves, to support populist candidates and movements. This is obviously not the case. Furthermore, status does not seem to be an end by itself. Typically, individuals do not pursue a higher status for its own sake. Rather, they think prestige is instrumental in achieving their goals. Then, we need to look at the last base of stratification, which is political power.

Power can be defined as the ability to influence the behavior of others or to achieve goals despite opposition. All three bases of Weberian stratification are highly correlated. A wealthy individual is more likely to acquire power or vice versa. Yet, power is the main base of stratification as the other two bases revolve around it. Classes determine the economic order of the society and status groups do the same for the social order. Parties, which determine the

political order according to Weber, are organizations of power. They may represent the interests of both social classes and status groups and they strive to acquire political power to influence the decision-making process in the society. Interests of the different classes and status groups interact in the political sphere. Then, it is possible to understand populism as the cry of the politically powerless. That means individuals who support populist movements are more likely to think that they are left out of the decision-making process. Indeed, many populist leaders use a rhetoric of taking the power from the corrupt elite and handing it back to the people. As discussed earlier, populism is essentially a strategy to acquire more power.

To sum up the discussion so far, I have suggested that populism is a political phenomenon that cannot be reduced to economic causes. In this regard, and so many others, populism is very similar to terrorism. It is my contention that both phenomena are caused by the same factors and motivations, which will be explained in the next chapter. One of the aims of this thesis is to broaden our knowledge on populism by applying the theories that explain terrorism, mainly grievances theory. Making an analogy between the two does not mean that populism is as dangerous and harmful as terrorism, therefore should be eliminated; or that supporters of populist movements are potential terrorists. Rather, such an analogy would help us understand how feelings of political impotency, frustration and resentment govern social action. The similarities I identify in the following chapter generate enough confidence that undertaking this endeavor will be fruitful and potentially help us overcome the stagnation in both populism and terrorism literature.

CHAPTER 5: DISTANT RELATIVES

Very much like populism, terrorism is also an essentially contested concept. Both can be anything one says they are. Especially conceptualizing terrorism is still problematic in the literature, as it is rare that scholars who write on the topic do not come up with their own definition. While having no consensus on the definitions of both phenomena definitely risk the utility of comparison, the endeavor here is not to give a final verdict but to simply entertain the possibility.

First point of comparison can be the suggested material origins of both phenomena. Material origins of populism were discussed in the previous chapters and dismissed as the primary source of motivation for populists. The empirical literature on the possible connection between poverty and terrorism is highly inconclusive. While some studies argue that the connection, if there is any, is weak (for instance Krueger and Maleckova 2002; Abadie 2004; Piazza 2006), others argue that the literature should not be so quick to dismiss poverty as a root cause and that it plays an important role (for instance Felter 2006; von Hippel 2010). Kavanagh (2011) argues that poverty increases the likelihood of joining a terrorist organization only for individuals with more than high school education. This lack of conclusiveness resembles the previously discussed literature on the material origins of populism. Then, looking at the factors that are argued to be causes of terrorism instead of poverty might give us a better explanation of the recent populist upsurge.

Krueger and Maleckova (2002) argue that terrorism can be more accurately viewed as a "response to political conditions and long-standing feelings (either perceived or real) of indignity and frustration that have little to do with economics." I argue that the same is true for

populism as well. The roles of grievances, feelings of resentment and political inefficacy and trigger events are the main similarities between populism and terrorism.

Grievances, cultural or economic, imagined or real, are crucial for the construction of "us against them" dichotomy. Laclau (2005) explains the making of "the people" by using the grievances as a starting point. First, distinct and heterogenous individual grievances, and also the demands to address them, are aggregated by creating many links between them. They become integrated with one another but not yet transformed by the populist logic. Then, these grievances and demands are met by opposition that stands in the way of satisfaction of them. Finally, this antagonism is crystallized and a hegemonic logic takes hold. Laclau argues that this hegemonic logic is present in the construction of the social and inherent to all social action. Populism is a struggle between antagonistic formulations of political life. Consequently, all politics is populism; there is no political action which is not populistic. Particular grievances that populists have will be discussed in the next chapter. The rest of this chapter is devoted to exploring more similarities between terrorism and populism, which will help us better understand the causes of the populist upsurge and distill testable hypotheses.

The role of ideology in inspiring and promoting terrorism remains controversial in the terrorism literature. While some scholars emphasize the inherently violent ideologies, such as jihadism and Marxism; especially RAND scholars see terrorism as a strategy and a tactic that cannot be attributed to any particular ideology or perpetrator (Jackson et al. 2005). Terrorism is best understood as a method of political violence and no group or ideology or even act of violence is inherently terrorist (Phillips 2015). Concepts of terrorist groups or terrorist ideologies lacks conceptual utility as being terrorist is not a binary condition. Groups decide on how heavily they will rely on terrorist tactics. In fact, the term multitactical groups is already being used in

the civil war literature to refer to insurgent organizations that resort to both terrorism and guerilla warfare (Abrahms 2012). Similarly, there seems to be a tendency in the populism literature to refer only to right-wing extremist parties as populist or reject the possibility of center-populist parties. Candidates, movements and parties decide on how heavily they will employ the populist strategy and how much populist rhetoric they will use. They are not and cannot be inherently populist. Populism cannot be attributed to a particular ideology. We observe populist actors emerging from the right, the left and the center not because populism is a thin-centered ideology that can be compatible with various host ideologies but because it is not an ideology at all. It is a strategy, a tactic, a method that can be applied by actors at any point on the ideological spectrum. Some actors may do it more effectively; some actors can resort to populism only to a limited degree. Ultimately, populism and terrorism are political strategies that can be chosen from a range of alternatives.

Terrorism actually is not qualitatively different from other instances of political violence. The reason why it is largely denounced is due to its anti-status quo characteristics. Terrorists are so extremely dissatisfied with the status quo that they believe it is legitimate to use violent means. The main purpose of their activity is to shake the status quo and tear it down. On the other hand, governments, the guardians of the status quo, claim a monopoly over legitimate use of force. Implicitly they believe that they earned this right to exercise power long ago and the struggle ended with their victory. Terrorists do not recognize that the game is over. The recent populist upsurge is similar to this phenomenon. With the weakening and the collapse of Soviet Union, liberal democracy was deemed triumphant everywhere. It is thought to be only viable model and tried to be applied, again everywhere. Populist upsurge can be read as a rejection to this fait accompli. Populists show that the game is not over. Populists everywhere reject the liberal democratic order and the hyperglobalization it brought together. Left-wing populists reject the

economic recipe of the post-Soviet era, so called Washington Consensus and right-wing populists reject cosmopolitanism and progressive values in general. As it will be discussed in the next chapter, these two are precisely the source of grievances that populists have.

Terrorism might be a result of cleavages in a society but cleavages do not result in terrorism in the absence of a committed core group who act on the behalf of larger masses (Crenshaw 1981). Elites exploit grievances of these larger masses to mobilize support from them. Typically, terrorist activity is instigated by elites who has the tacit or explicit support of marginalized groups. Elites act to remedy grievances of these marginalized groups who are either unwilling or unable to act themselves. Political entrepreneurship is also for essential to populist movements. Grievances may create demand for populist parties but demand does not always automatically translate into populist movements**.** Populism is not an automatic reaction to grievances; it is the result of a strategic thought. In order to fully understand how populist candidates and parties succeed in catering support, one must not only understand how grievances govern social action but also how political entrepreneurs take advantage of those grievances. Entrepreneurs first, bring together the unorganized individuals and coordinate the movement. Populist leaders carry utmost importance for the success prospects of their movements. Some of the definitions of populism that we reviewed, especially the ones offered by scholars of Latin American populism, emphasize the direct and unmediated relationship between populist leaders and their followers (Weyland 2001). Second, elites give unorganized masses more visibility. Again, this aspect is so crucial that some definitions of populism views it as a political style, a symbolic performance (Moffitt 2016). Without this performance marked by bad manners and threats, populists would find it very hard to get their message across. Finally, and most importantly, elites reinforce individuals' beliefs and attitudes, thus preventing

their movements from being just a flash in the pan. Political actors and institutions are not mere reflectors of social sentiments, they also shape those sentiments.

Terrorism is largely the weapon of the weak; groups who stand little or no chance in conventional fights resort to it. Extreme methods of terrorism and the fear that these methods bring along partially make up for the weak position. This argument can be challenged by suggesting that some groups resort to it even when they have other means. Indeed, terrorism is not the doing of only the weak and it is not always the case that terrorists are weaker than their opponents. For instance, some jihadi organizations see terror as an imperative regardless of the resources they have. Yet, generally speaking, terrorism emerges when frustrated groups are in a relatively weaker position than their opponents and cannot achieve their goals by conventional means due to power asymmetry. Populism is also a tool for political underdogs who want to take on the "establishment." Especially Laclau (2005) and scholars who use his framework divide the political arena between the dominant bloc and the underdogs (the people). Underdogs in this framework refer not necessarily to those who lack material resources but to those who do not have a say in the decision-making process. Underdogs are the challengers who claim not to possess the same level of political power as their opponents. Although most of the time they are indeed the less powerful and resourceful players in the game, this may not need to be the case. Populists may or may not have vast amount of resources, they may be incumbent or in opposition. Regardless of the power distribution, populists claim to be underdogs fighting against conspiring, almost omnipotent power groups.

The nexus between populism and terrorism might be stronger than it appears as several other similarities between them can be identified. Both phenomena are forms of political radicalism. Considering the fact that terrorism is usually a byproduct of protest movements, one might even

view populism as a precursor to terrorism. When the grievances are not addressed and the political participation is limited, it should be a matter of time for the hardliners in the movement to resort to more extreme measures. This argument has been put forward most notably by Martha Crenshaw (1981), who argued that grievances and lack of opportunities for political participation are the two main causes of terrorism. Similarly, populism seems to thrive when individuals or groups feel being discriminated and think that the government is not doing anything for them. In her full model, Crenshaw emphasizes the role of triggers events along with the importance of grievances and lack of political participation. The model can readily be exported to populism studies to make sense of the recent popular upsurge. Grievances would correspond to discontent generated by the "triumph" of liberal democratic order and hyperglobalization, both economically and culturally. Lastly, trigger events in the case of populism would be economic crises best exemplified by the Great Recession and identity crisis best exemplified by the Migrant crisis.

CHAPTER 6: GRIEVANCES AND TRIGGERS

Political inefficacy has consistently been found to be significant predictor of various forms of political violence ranging from terrorism to rebellions and civil war (Regan and Norton 2005; Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009). More precisely, obstacles to influence governments, formal or informal, are argued to be directly linked with the terrorist activity in many countries including Turkey, the Philippines and Sri Lanka (Choi and Piazza 2016). The literature on the topic is heavily influenced by Ted Gurr's (1970, 1993, 2000) theory of relative deprivation. Although Gurr's theory is mainly concerned with the start of mass political violence, it can readily be applied to any kind of political violence. The causal mechanism is a straightforward yet powerful one: when a group within society faces discrimination and limited opportunities in comparison to other groups, it will be more prone to use violence to remedy this situation. Relative deprivation leads to frustration, which in turn leads to formation and enhancement of grievances among the group. Enhanced grievances will result in alienation from the other groups in the society and enable the group to close ranks by strengthening the group identity. This radicalization provides the perfect opportunity for elites who exploit the grievances to mobilize the opposition. Gurr's relative deprivation theory is not the only theoretical lense through which we can analyze the frustration leading to violence. According to the theory of frustration-aggression, frustration is sure to be followed by aggression. When people experience severe frustration in achieving their goals, the resulting anger makes them more prone to violence (Dollard et al. 1939).

The concept of grievances is also used rather loosely in the literature. First point of ambiguity is that many scholars do not specify whether the grievances they refer to are at the individual or the group levels. Grievances can be at both levels though Gurr focuses on grievances at the group level (1993, 2000). Secondly, grievances can be perceived and subjective or real and

objective. Although some studies view grievances as objective (Collier and Hoeffler 2004), perception is a better variable to look at when explaining social action. The most important reason for this is that expectations of groups might differ significantly. In other words, deprivation can be relative to the different groups. In fact, groups do not need to compare themselves with other groups. The group itself at another point in time can be the base of comparison. Thus, grievances, as they are referred to in this thesis, are subjective and at the group level.

To summarize the discussion so far, grievances and feelings of resentment and frustration motivate various kinds of political violence. Grievances can be any kind of discrimination, yet above discussion has focused on grievances that stem from political exclusion. Populist voters do not suffer from the same kind of political exclusion; it is usually ethnic minorities who suffer from it. Furthermore, populist voters are abundant even in the most democratic countries in the world. Democratic institutions are argued to alleviate grievances by both enabling greater political participation and providing peaceful mechanisms to resolve conflicts instead of battling them out (Li 2005). Then, why does using this framework to explain the populist upsurge make sense? I argue that individuals or groups still can feel politically powerless even if they live in a highly democratic country. This perception of being politically impotent is not much different than political exclusion. In fact, it might even be more dangerous as having the right to participate in the decision-making process on paper but actually not being able to participate might lead to more frustration. Perception of political inefficacy is an important source of frustration and it is what unites the bases of populist movements. In other words, it is the lowest common denominator of populist voters. Frustrated social groups are called upon by the populist entrepreneurs to unite and effectively take on the establishment that stands as an

obstacle in the way of political participation. Mounting an effective campaign against the establishment would result in being able to participate in the decision-making.

What did cause people to feel that they do not have any influence in the decision-making process? To answer this question, one first need to realize the conflict between globalization and democracy. Couple of years after the socialist regimes collapsed in Eastern Europe surprisingly without a major war, Fukuyama (1993) notoriously announced "the end of history". He argued that Western-style liberalism with its capitalist mode of production won a decisive victory against its only viable alternative. As early as the mid-80s, scholars who work on transition to democracy have started to emphasize the role of political elites (O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986; Przeworski 1991). (Merkel 2010) calls such accounts that consider elites as the deciding factor in the transition "action theory." Democracy was deemed possible everywhere when elites agree to democratize. Action theory became dominant in transition research at the expense of modernization theory which emphasized the socioeconomic requisites of democracy. These ideas went beyond the academic circles and informed ambitious policies of democracy promotion (Merkel 2010). A bit more than two decades later, the optimism has faded. Populists everywhere are rioting and rejecting liberal democracy. What went wrong? Why did not the theory fit to the practice?

Globalization spreads at the expense of domestic democratic space where citizens voice their policy preferences. It also requires standardization and harmony, which means restrictions on national sovereignty. Dani Rodrik (2012) offers a political impossible trinity where it is not possible to have democracy, globalization and national sovereignty at the same time. One of them has to be sacrificed. The aggressive push for globalization in the recent decades have resulted in increasingly forgoing the other two. The reforms that globalization necessitates left

large segments of the society worse off. This can be justified in the name of greater efficiency but when the gains are not distributed fairly and those who are worse-off are not compensated, serious economic grievances emerge. In a similar vein, liberal democracy has been imposed on countries where no significant value change took place. This aggressive push for multiculturalism and diversity created cultural grievances and resulted in a backlash. What should be clear after all the populist victories is that "the people" want to be in control. They want to be bound by the rules of their making, not by the ones imposed from outside.

Crenshaw's (1981) model is not complete without trigger events. Defining populism as a strategy employed by an outsider implies a perceived opportunity that help populists to capitalize on. In the absence of such opportunity, populist entrepreneurs would be discouraged to act and simply would not waste efforts to displace the insiders, since their chances would be considerably less. The prospect of taking on the establishment motivates populist entrepreneurs; and low probability of success discourages them from undertaking a political venture in the first place. In general, the opportunities that populists wait for arise in the form of a crisis. Similar to business entrepreneurs who have made their fortunes during the times of crisis, populists can attain massive electoral gains following a crisis. As the quote attributed to Chairman Mao, "the situation is excellent" for all newcomers when "everything under heaven is in utter chaos." A crisis, regardless of its economic or political nature, is a time when new issues become more salient. As a result, new cleavages emerge, governments come under stress, and party systems become less stable. Taking the advice attributed to Winston Churchill among others, populists "never waste a good crisis."

Crises assist populists in many distinct ways. First of all, concerning economic crises, it is well documented by literature that incumbent parties that are deemed responsible for the crisis are

punished by the voters in the following elections (Duch and Stevenson 2008). The same argument holds for political crises as well. Incumbent parties are punished after political scandals, instances of political instability, or even after poor handling of natural disasters (Heersink, Peterson, and Jenkins 2017). Furthermore, crises are contagious in the sense that they can rapidly spread to other countries and other areas, triggering distinct crises. For instance, Great Recession (The 2008 financial crisis) triggered political crises and riots in many European countries. It is no surprise that populist mobilization takes place usually after a crisis (Kriesi 2015), punishment of the incumbents creates ample space for the newcomers to exploit.

Second, crises enhance the credibility anti-establishment rhetoric that populists commonly use. Populists assert that mainly due to a lack of will but also due to inability, the elites do not and possibly cannot respond to ordinary people's demands. Times of crisis produce the effect of making such appeals more reasonable in the eyes of dissatisfied individuals since their trust in political actors diminish. What is more important than the trust they vest in political actors is the feelings of being abandonment by politicians and the subsequent resentment it causes. Crises combined with the perceived unwillingness of the political establishment to find a solution, aggravate grievances and fuel feelings of resentment, and indignity. It is not a coincidence that participants of the 2011 Spanish protests named themselves "indignados" or that the Indignant Citizens Movement coordinated the 2011 Greek protests.

Finally, and more importantly, times of crisis are conducive to change the individuals' attribution of salience to different issues. As Amartya Sen (2007) notes, individuals have multiple identities that can become more or less salient at a critical juncture. Crises serve as the critical junctures, changing the salience of certain identities, thus the relevancy of certain issues and actors. Populist entrepreneurs exploit crises by employing memes that effectively connect

with the targeted individuals. Memes are defined as narratives cues and symbols that significantly change the individuals' understanding of how the world around them is organized (Rodrik and Mukand 2018). Memes work in very complicated and mysterious ways; and the precise mechanism through which they change the individuals' world view is not what this thesis aims to explain. However, the thesis puts forward that all political entrepreneurs have more incentive to construct new memes especially during times of crisis. Moreover, the thesis argues that times of crisis lead the vulnerable to seek new narratives that are in line with the identity that just has become more salient after the crisis.

It is useful to review the specific crises that have contributed to the populist upsurge. Although populism is a global phenomenon, it is useful to discuss these specific crises in the European context since the thesis tests its arguments by analyzing the European Social Survey data. First trigger event, which have galvanized cultural grievances, is the identity crisis that especially have taken hold in Europe. National identity is the aggregation of factors that creates the consciousness of "who we are" (Smith 1991). These factors can be common traumas, memories and myths as well as territorial boundaries. Recent decades have marked two challenges to national identities in globally: political integration and immigration, which have been most vividly observed in Europe. It is well-established that the aggresive push for further European integration has resulted in protest vote for Eurosceptic parties for the reasons discussed early in this chapter (Gómez-Reino and Llamazares 2013; Treib 2014). However, this thesis argues that the latter challenge to the national identity, namely immigration, has been a more significant predictor of populist vote. There exists a common European identity that consists of Greek mythology and ideas, Roman legacy and most importantly Christianity. Common European identity is not so different than the national identities while immigration from the Global South brings various races and religions to Europe and raises complex issues. Massive influx of

immigrants has fed the perception that Europe has turned into into a union of societies and caused concerns among the native populations across the continent. Using images and analogies of Europe being invaded, becoming a Muslim continent and dying slowly, populist candidates and movements have exacerbated the Europeans' feelings of ontological insecurity. This led to immigration being one of the most salient issues in the entire continent. After peaking in 2015 when 58 percent of Europeans thought it was the most important issue facing the EU, immigration still stays so according to Eurobarometer survey fielded in November 2017 ("Integration of Immigrants in the European Union" 2018). Patriotism, safeguarding the national identity and maintaining the social order are not issues of valence; they are partisan issues. Especially far-right parties outperform their competitors because they typically do not govern, thus they are not bounded by any pre-commitments and do not have to act in a responsible manner. When far-right issues become salient, it creates conditions where other parties need to fight the battle uphill and are likely to lose.

The second trigger event, which augmented economic grievances is the 2008 Financial Crisis (Great Recession). The most severe economic crisis the world has witnessed since the Great Depression, started on the other side of the Atlantic but quickly spread to Europe. The crisis consisted of three dimensions (Shambaugh 2012): a competitiveness crisis that hurts economic growth, a banking crisis which is the result of acute shortage of liquidity and sovereign debt crisis that rises the bond yields and thus pushes the government debt to unsustainable levels. Not all countries in Europe were hit by all dimensions; the crisis hit the Southern European countries the hardest. Unemployment rates in Spain and Greece reached the record levels above 25 percent. Moreover, Ireland, Portugal and Greece could not refinance their debts and required a joint effort to be bailed-out. In order to address the grim situation, governments introduced austerity policies which naturally included reducing government spending and raising taxes.

This, in turn, fueled economic grievances and provided the fertile ground that populist entrepreneurs exploited. In countries that were hit by the crisis hardest, namely Spain and Greece, economic crisis also sparkled a severe political crisis and led to the demise of the party systems, social unrest and mass mobilization. Protesters took to the streets and occupied public squares by setting up tents squares. In Spain, on top of the crises, widespread corruption scandals broke out and galvanized the resentment against the establishment, "la casta." The platform that coordinated the indignados movement, "¡Democracia Real YA!", explained this resentment as follows:

> *We are the unemployed, the poorly remunerated, the subcontracted, the precarious, the young … we want change and a dignified future. We are fed up with antisocial reforms, those that leave us unemployed, those with which the bankers that have provoked the crisis raise our mortgages or take our homes, those laws that they impose upon us that limit our liberty for the benefit of the powerful. We blame the political economic and economic powers for our precarious situation and we demand a change of direction* (quoted in Charnock, Purcell, and Ribera-Fumaz 2012, 1).

What is driving populism, the lowest common denominator of populists as referred to earlier, is political impotency. The perceived lack of opportunities for political participation and inability to influence decision-making are common to all populist voters from the left and the right. What determines the vote choice between these two then? Anxieties that left and right populism are built on are not so different. The grievances are adequately distinct yet substantially connected. Economic and cultural grievances overlap to a great extent, yet they are represented with different narratives. Memes that populist entrepreneurs employ can highlight both ethno-nationalism and economic exclusion. Individuals then choose which narrative to believe in accordance with their stances on the salient issues. Several hypotheses can be distilled from the above discussion. Some of them lend itself to quantitative analysis, some do not; some are easily testable with readily available data, some are not. Due to considerations of space and scope, this thesis will limit itself to testing of following hypotheses:

H_1: The higher the perceived lack of opportunity for political participation, higher it is the probability of voting populist.

H_2: The more unfavorably predisposed toward the immigrants, the more likely the voters will vote for right-wing populist parties.

H_3: The more individuals favor redistributive policies, the more likely they will vote for left-wing populist parties.

CHAPTER 7: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The hypotheses put forward in the last chapter were tested by relying on the European Social Survey (ESS) data, particularly the ESS Round 8 edition 1.0 which was conducted in 2016.[1] ESS is one of the most commonly used cross-national surveys in social sciences and a total of 36 European countries have taken part in it. ESS samples in each country are representative and respondents are selected with random probability. To decide which parties are populist, the thesis relies on the classification put forward by Inglehart and Norris (2016). Their study utilizes the data from 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey to locate political parties on the ideological spectrum. They compare their results with previous classifications of populist parties in order to check the reliability of their classification. Although their classification is problematic in that it rejects the whole category of center populist parties by crudely assigning parties either to the left or to the right, it is preferable to other classifications since it is more up to date.

The response variable is declared vote for populist parties, which is a dummy whose value is 1 the respondent declares voting for a party classified as populists and 0 otherwise. Likewise, additional dummies were created to test the last two hypotheses. In order to operationalize the perceived lack of opportunities for political participation, the thesis utilizes a political efficacy question which asks the respondent how much the political system allows people to have a say in what government does. To operationalize the economic grievances, the responses to a question regarding government's involvement in reducing income inequality were used. Selection of this variable is justified on the grounds that it emphasizes government's role in addressing economic grievances. Cultural grievances are more difficult to operationalize since

[1] The countries included were Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. Data from Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain had yet to be released by the time of the analysis. Estonia, Iceland, Ireland, Israel and Russian Federation were excluded from the analysis since no party from these countries made it to the classification of Inglehart and Norris.

no single question entirely captures them. Among many distinct options available for cultural grievances, a question asking whether immigrants make the country worse or a better place to live was chosen. The justification behind selecting this variable was the fact that immigration has consistently been named by Europeans as the most challenging issue facing the European Union. The last three variables described are the independent variables. In addition to those, the most commonly employed predictors of populist vote are included in the analysis as control variables: education level, age and gender. The argument that voter bases of populist parties are mostly made up of those without higher education, old people and men (Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Ronald Inglehart and Norris 2016; Gidron and Hall 2017). The analysis was carried out with complete observations after deleting all the observations with missing data in the variables of interest. Although listwise deletion may not be the most principled way to deal with missing data, large number of observations provides the liberty to apply it. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the variables (N=14910)

Variable name	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min-Max
Populist Vote	.125	.331	0-1
Right-wing populist vote	.068	.251	0-1
Left-wing populist vote	.057	.232	0-1
Political efficacy	2.473	.961	1-5
Reducing income inequality	2.247	1.045	1-5
Anti-immigrant attitudes	5.241	2.215	0-10
Gender	1.503	.500	1-2
Age	52.82	16.95	16-105
Level of Education	4.286	1.803	1-7

A logistic model was fitted to the data; Table 2 and Table 3 displays the regression coefficients and odds ratios respectively. Diagnostics showed no violations of the assumptions. Hosmer-Lemeshow test, which is a common goodness of fit test for logit models yielded a p-value higher than 0.05. This means data provided no evidence against the model, thus we cannot reject the model.

The analysis led to acceptance of the first hypothesis; perceived lack of opportunities for political participation is a strong predictor of populist vote. It is common to populist voters from the left and the right. Moreover, as hypothesized, a significant relationship found between right-wing populist vote and anti-immigrant attitudes. Perhaps not surprisingly, those who vote for right-wing populist parties have strong anti-immigrant attitudes. What is surprising is that the same is true for those who vote for left-wing populist parties as well. It is striking and thought-provoking to see that left-wing populist party supporters are as anti-immigrant as than right-wing populist party supporters. This is supportive of thesis' claim that anxieties that the left and right populism are built on are not so different but interrelated. Yet, it would be far-fetched to be definitive about this finding and claim that it is indeed the case. The extent to which the results were affected by the classification of populist parties that the thesis used is unknown. A different classification could have easily led to different results. Considering that similar results were not obtained for the third hypothesis, meaning that individuals who want the government to address income inequality are not likely to vote for right-wing populist parties, the thesis cannot credibly argue that the anxieties that the left and right populism are built on are the same.

However, these results call for further scrutiny especially when we consider that many populist parties with strong anti-immigrant credentials such as the Front National in France, also have sizable left-wing elements in their agendas. In many countries, a trend through which

substantial number of former left-wing party supporters turned devout right-wing populist party supporters has been observed (P. Stephens 2016; Lee and Sergent 2017). This was a result of another transformation through which anti-welfare populist parties have changed their policies to what the literature has recently started to call "welfare chauvinism" (Waal, Koster, and Oorschot 2013; Keskinen, Norocel, and Jørgensen 2016). Such parties are called welfare chauvinistic since they want to expand the welfare state and provide benefits exclusively to the native people, not to the immigrants. The finding that left-wing populist voters are not less anti-immigrant than their right-wing counterparts is suggestive of that welfare chauvinism is taking hold in Europe. Finally, as mentioned earlier, a statistically significant relationship was found between left-wing populist vote and support for government's involvement in reducing in income inequality. As hypothesized, individuals who favor government reducing income inequality tend to vote for left-wing populist parties.

The effect of gender on populist voting was found to confirm what the literature largely agrees on: men are more likely to vote for populist parties than women. However, the effect of age is the opposite of what is suggested by the literature: young people tend to vote for populist parties more than older people do. This is in line with the thesis' claim that populism is a similar phenomenon to terrorism as it is mainly young people who radicalize and join terrorist movements. Yet, it is advisable to take this finding with a grain of salt as the effect of age seems to be heterogenous across countries. For instance, while young people in France are more likely to vote for populist candidates and parties both from the left and the right, both qualitative and quantitative evidence demonstrate that young people in Britain overwhelmingly favored staying in the EU in the Brexit referendum (Shuster 2016; Burn-Murdoch 2016). Finally, the level of education has a significant and negative relationship with populist voting overall. The less-educated individuals are more likely to vote for populist parties.

Table 2: Regression estimates (N=14910)

Dependent variable	populist	rightpopulist	leftpopulist
Political efficacy	-0.202***	-0.0818*	-0.304***
	(.024)	(.034)	(.031)
Reducing income inequality	-0.0968***	0.00208	-0.195***
	(.022)	(.031)	(.030)
Anti-immigrant attitudes	-0.249***	-0.321***	-0.112***
	(.009)	(.011)	(.014)
Gender	-0.348***	-0.244***	-0.392**
	(.036)	(.053)	(.048)
Age	-0.0110***	-0.0095***	-0.0105***
	(.001)	(.002)	(.001)
Level of Education	-0.175***	-0.158***	-0.164***
	(.013)	(.018)	(.019)
Constant	1.714***	0.508*	0.648***
	(.917)	(.349)	(.430)
Pseudo R2	0.0861	0.0917	0.0490

standard error in parentheses; * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 3: Odds Ratios

	populist	rightpopulist	leftpopulist
Political efficacy	.817	.921	.737
Reducing income inequality	.907	1.00	.823
Anti-immigrant attitudes	.779	.725	.893
Gender	.706	.783	.675
Age	.989	.990	.989
Level of Education	.839	.853	.848
Constant	5.54	1.66	1.911

A limitation of the analysis is that it only utilizes individual level data. Considering highly possible heterogenous effects of variables and country level variables which might have a drastic impact on populist voting, this can hurt the analysis and by extension the findings. The results might be due to aggregation or there might be a possible of omitted variable bias. In order to address these possibilities, separate regression analyses for all of the 14 countries included in the study were conducted. Findings from aggregate data largely hold for a good majority of countries. For instance, perceived lack of opportunities for political participation was not a significant predictor of populist voting in only 4 countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Great Britain and Slovenia). Explaining this heterogenous effect falls outside of the scope of this thesis. Such cases can be put under greater scrutiny by in-depth studies.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The thesis first questioned the material origins of populism by introducing some puzzling cases. After reviewing the conceptual debates in the literature and the most commonly employed explanations for the populist upsurge, it aimed at offering fresh perspectives by looking at other possible factors that can motivate populist voters, most notably by bringing Weberian stratification into the discussion. Doing so, it stipulated that populism is a phenomenon that is not so different than terrorism. After discussing the similarities between the two, the thesis emphasizes the role of grievances and the perceived lack of opportunities for political participation. In a bid to find the lowest common denominator of populist voters and to understand why populism is on the rise globally, it formulates three hypotheses distilled from earlier discussion. It tests the hypotheses by relying on the ESS Round 8 data.

The analysis shows that what makes people vote for populist parties are the same with what is put forward by some scholars as the causes of terrorism in the literature. Grievances coupled with lack of opportunities for political participation and the frustration, indignity and resentment that these bring together, motivate both phenomena. Although the thesis maintains that grievances which right-wing and left-wing populists exploit are interrelated, it investigates the reasons for vote choice for different populist parties. It demonstrates that, apart from the perception that not being able participate in the decision-making process, right-wing populist voters have strong anti-immigrant attitudes. Similarly, other than this perception, left-wing populist voters have both strong anti-immigrant attitudes and a strong desire to see government taking action to reduce income inequality. While the findings that lower educated segments and men are more likely to vote for populist parties are in line with the previous literature, the conventional wisdom that young people are less likely to vote for populist parties was not found to be accurate by the thesis and needs further scrutiny. Overall, by making the comparison

between terrorism and testing the hypotheses distilled from that comparison, the thesis contributed to collective knowledge on the causes of populism.

A limitation of the thesis that needs to be recognized here is the one-sidedness of its analysis. Making the claim that populism is driven by the same grievances and feelings as is terrorism would ideally involve first showing that terrorism is indeed caused by the grievances and feelings that the thesis puts forward. This would require a dataset that includes terrorist respondents or some questions in the ESS that can help us measure respondents' support for terrorist organizations. Such questions are absent in the ESS and terrorists are not open enough about their trade to fill a survey. The thesis tried to make up for this limitation by looking at the writings of influential terrorism scholars consistently made the same arguments to support its own arguments. Far from being ideal, this approach can only lead to provisional acceptance of the arguments. A more complete and definite proof is contingent on the ability to test the other part of the story as well.

Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that the thesis's focus is narrow in that it only looks at voting behavior. The reasons the thesis specifies for explaining populist vote, namely grievances and lack of opportunities for political participation can lead to various outcomes. For instance, some individuals can abstain from voting or withdraw from politics altogether. For some others, the frustration and resentment might reach a tipping point where they find it futile to resist via conventional means and resort to more extreme measures. The futility of conventional means is one of the reasons that terrorists cite in justifying their violence. What causes the alternation between voting vs. non-voting and peaceful objection vs. violent resistance? The thesis is not equipped to answer this important question. What the thesis wanted to investigate was the vote choice of those who had already voted. That is why the dependent

variable was specified as the declared vote for populist parties. The reasons for divergent responses to the same political conditions remain to be explored and is a task for future studies.

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