

The Ins and Outs of Measuring Populism

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Outline of Presentation

1. Defining populism
2. Why is a measure needed?
3. Measuring populism
 1. Internal validity
 2. External validity
4. New wine in an old bottle?: does it say anything new?
5. Who cares? What can we do with it? Does it help us explain the rise of populism?
6. One example: voting left and right populism
7. Future research

Defining Populism

- Thin-centered ideology
- Cannot stand alone: attaching ideology
- Four core characteristics:
 - People centered (pure people)
 - Anti elite (corrupt elite)
 - Antagonistic (Manichean)
 - Will of the people
- Cas Mudde (2004; 2007)

Why thin ideology approach?

- Others exists;
 - Style
 - Strategy
 - Discourse (ideational too)
- They bring things that the thin centered ideology/ ideational approach do not...
- But....for us
 - Travelling (countries, continents; ideologies)
 - Measuring (platforms, speeches; attitudes)

Why is a measure needed?

- Populism to date has been measured by proxy or by attaching ideology
 - 1. trust; satisfaction; efficacy
 - 2. immigration; EU attitudes etc.
- But... these are not a direct measure of populism

Measuring Populism

POP1 The politicians in the Dutch Parliament need to follow the will of the people.

POP2 The people, and not the politicians, should make the most important political decisions.

POP3 The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people.

POP4 I would rather be represented by an ordinary citizen than by a professional politician.

POP5 Elected officials talk too much and take too little action.

POP6 What people call 'compromise' in politics is really just selling out on one's principles.

- Source: Akkerman, A. Mudde, C. Zaslove, A. (2014) and Akkerman, A., Zaslove, A., & Spruyt, B. (2017).

Internal Validity

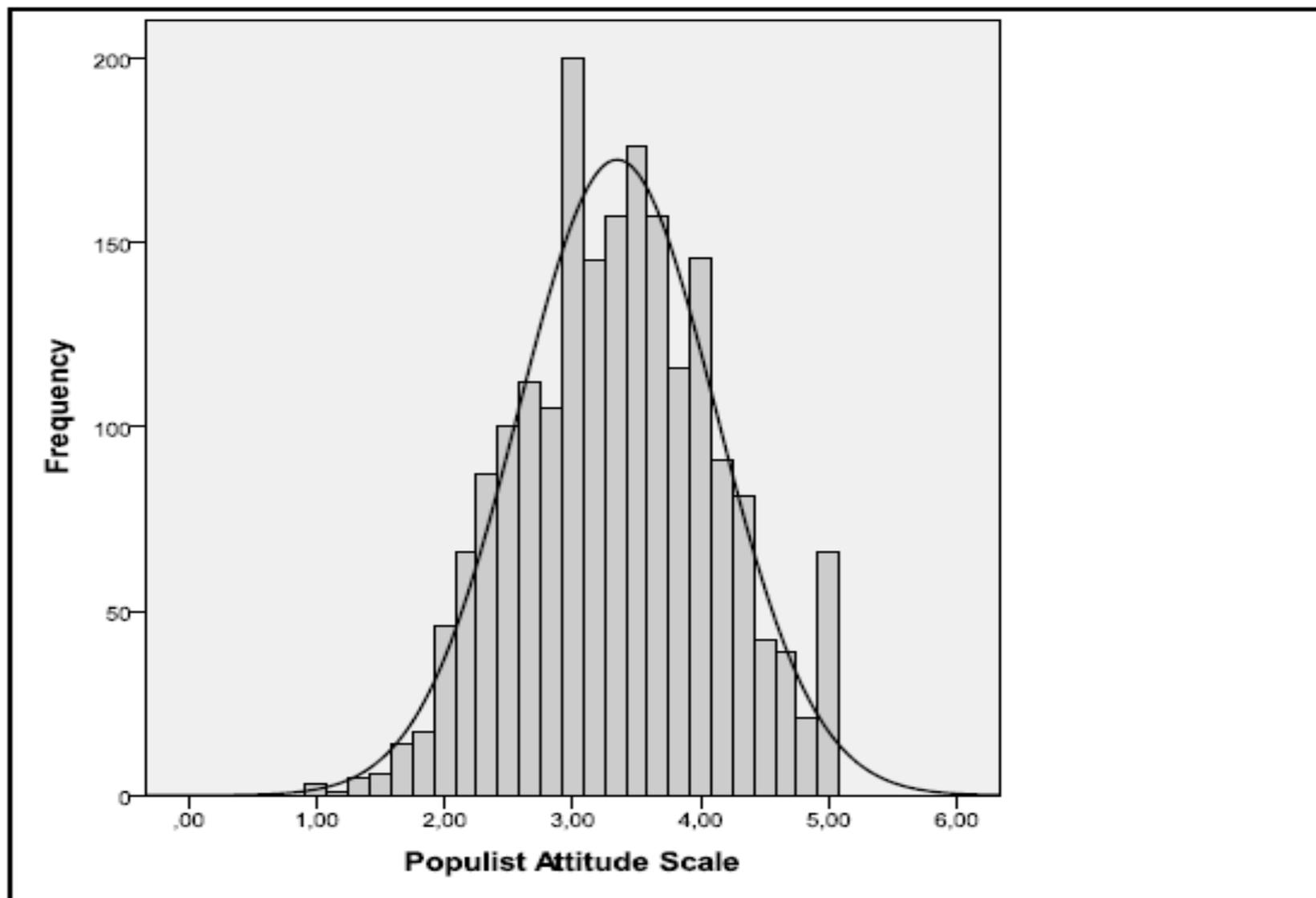
- Cronbach's alpha ,81 (Akkerman et al 2017) Netherlands
- Cronbach's alpha ,82 (Akkerman et al 2014) Netherlands
- Cronbach's alpha ,86 (Spruyt et al 2016) Belgium
- Cronbach's alpha ,88 (Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel, 2017); 9 European countries (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, United Kingdom)
- Similar results in Chile, United States

Table 1. Descriptives of populist attitudes

Item	N	Min-Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Factor loading [#]
Elected officials talk too much and take too little action	2294	1-5	3,74	,95	,798
The politicians in the Dutch parliament need to follow the will of the people.	2315	1-5	3,68	,87	,692
The people, not the politicians, should make the most important policy decisions	2305	1-5	2,96	1,07	,820
Political differences are larger between the elite and the people than they are among the people.	2125	1-5	3,49	,96	,705
I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a professional politician.	2261	1-5	2,82	1,04	,794
What people call 'compromise' in politics is really just selling out one's principles	2203	1-5	3,32	1,10	,782

[#]: Chronbach's alpha .86 ; *Source*: NRO 2016

Figure 1. Distribution of the Populist Attitude Scale



External Validity (other concepts)

- Populism; pluralism; elitism

Appendix Table A: Results of factor and reliability analysis

Source: Akkerman and Mudde, 2014 We the People or We the Politicians? A Comparison of Left- and Right-Wing Populists, ECPR, 2014, p. 17.

	Factor I Eigenvalue 4.21		Factor II Eigenvalue 1.67		Factor III 1.27 Eigenvalue	
Item loadings (after rotation) Cum. 51.05%	29.4%		11.9%		9.1%	
The politicians in the Dutch Parliament need to follow the will of the people.	.701	Populist Attitude scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$)	.275		-.111	
The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions.	.806		-.061		.206	
The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people.	.583		.180		.126	
Politicians would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialized politician.	.677		-.137		.132	
Elected officials talk too much and take too little action.	.627		.211		.083	
What people call 'compromise' in politics is really just selling out.	.696		-.003		.523	
Freedom of expression is a principle that should be protected in a democracy it is important to make compromises among conflicting viewpoints.	-.131		.795	Pluralist Attitude scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.63$)	.032	
It is important to listen to the opinion of other groups.	.153		.832		.083	
Freedom depends on diversity	.116		.531		.110	
Politicians should lead rather than follow the people.	-.558		.225		.657	Elitist Attitude scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.44$)
A country would be governed better if important decisions were made by successful business people.	.112		-.148		.704	
A country would be governed better if important decisions were made by independent experts.	.278		.168		.448	
Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil.	.151		-.050		.430	
Interest groups have too much influence over political decisions	.256		.395		.366	Excluded from scale

Populism and Trust

Appendix

Table A: PCA of Populism, Trust and Satisfaction with Democracy Items

Item:	Factor I Eigenvalue 4.12	Factor II Eigenvalue 1.67	Factor III Eigenvalue 1.27	Factor III Eigenvalue 1.00
Item:				
Explained loadings (after rotation) Cum. 62.23	34.5	14.1	7.3	6.3
POP1 The politicians in the Dutch Parliament need to follow the will of the people.	.017	.745	-.332	.056
POP2 The people, not the politicians, should make the most important political decisions.	.072	.826	-.010	.159
POP3 The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people.	-.338	.554	-.096	-.241
POP4 I would rather be represented by an ordinary citizen than by a professional politician.	-.325	.595	-.107	-.075
POP5 Elected officials talk too much and take too little action.	-.325	.595	-.107	-.075
POP6 What people call 'compromise' in politics is really just selling out on one's principles.	-.338	.554	-.096	-.241
Trust in:				
Government	.807	-.141	-.161	.086
Parliament	.771	-.091	-.186	.011
Civil Servants	.509	-.055	.089	-.381
Political Parties	.694	-.067	-.047	-.132
European Unions	.749	-.065	.037	-.048
Police	.076	-.047	-.034	-.808
Law (Judges)	.091	-.156	-.085	-.754
Satisfaction Dutch Democracy	.374	-.130	-.619	.027
A democracy is the best form of government ^a	-.042	.086	-.865	-.122
Trust in Large Enterprises	.561	.261	.083	-.192

The text in bold highlights the factor loadings.

^aDue to theoretical considerations we do not use this item in the model.

erman, A., Zaslove, A., & Spruyt, B. (2017). 'We the People' or 'We the Peoples'? A Comparison of Support for the Populist Radical Right and Populist Radical Left in the Netherlands. *Swiss Political Science Review*.

External Validity (populist parties)

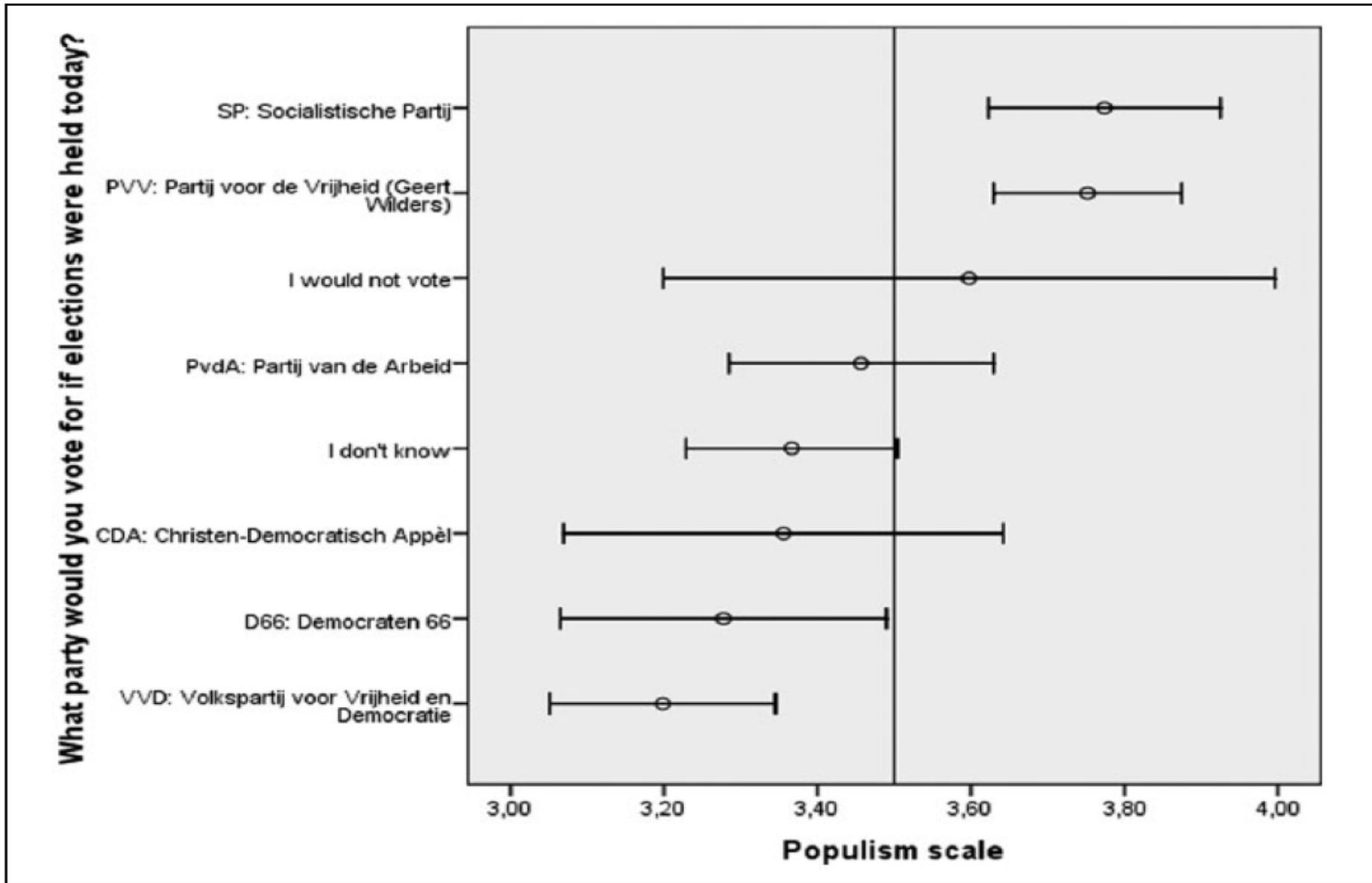
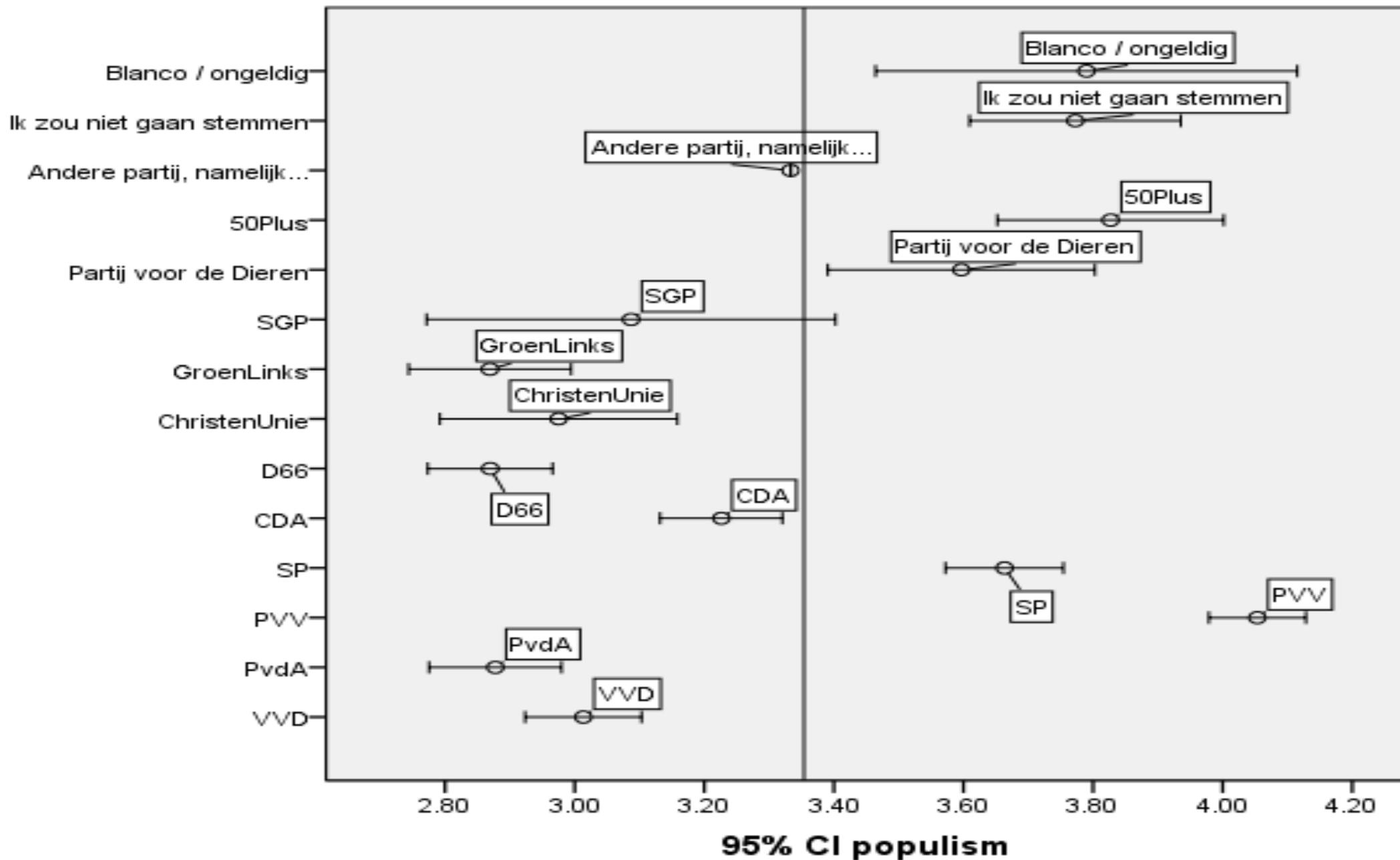


Figure 1. Populist attitude by party preference (reference line is total mean).

Als er vandaag Tweede Kamer verkiezingen zouden worden gehouden, op welke partij zou u dan stemmen?



NRO 2016

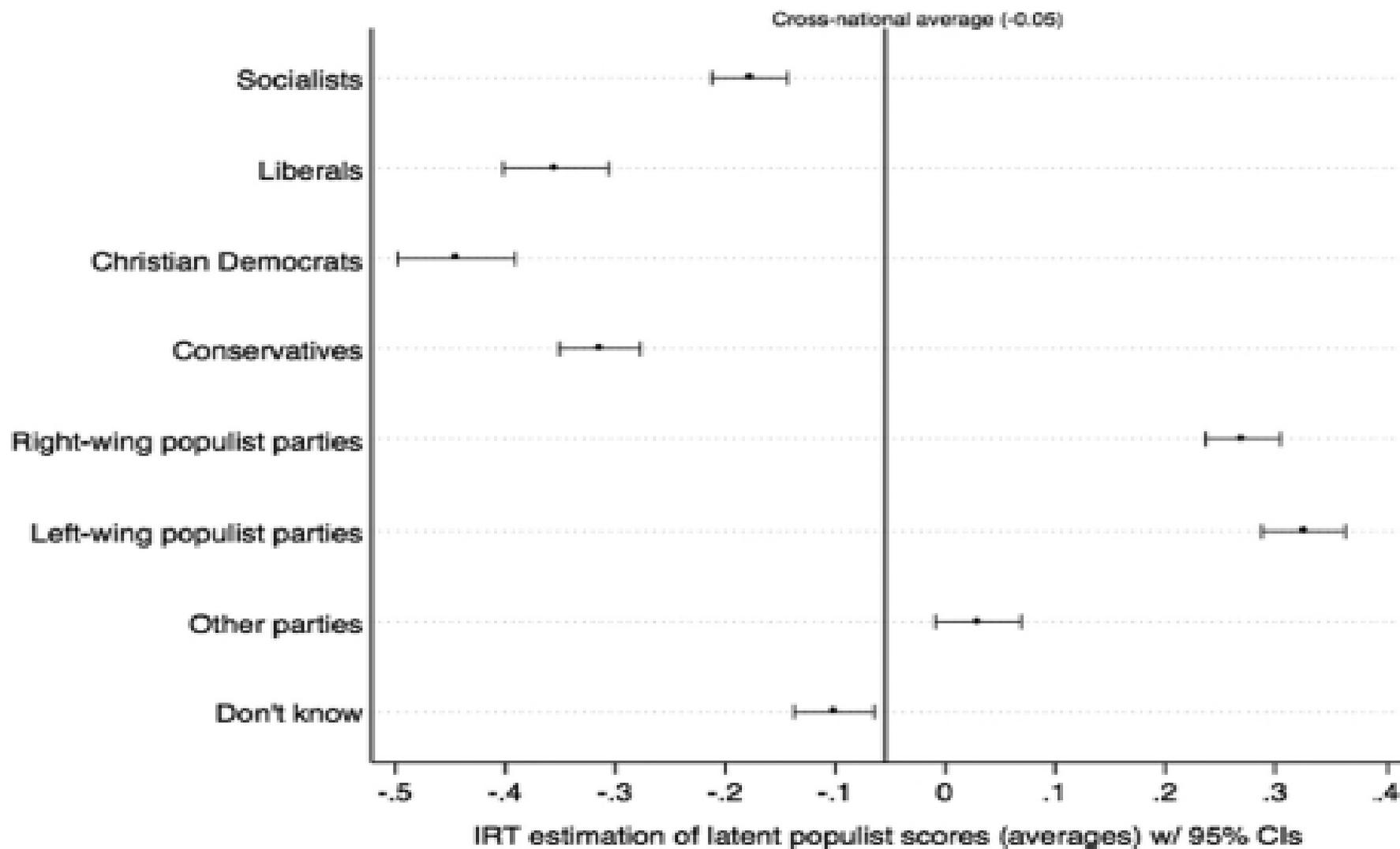


Figure 1. Average IRT estimation of populist attitudes, per party family.

What do we do now?

- **Further measurement research:**

- Different contexts
- Distribution (extremes) (Van Hauwaert, currently busy here)
- Different scale (Levante Littvay)
- Further research on links with other attitudes (trust, satisfaction, efficacy)

- **Empirical Research:**

- Does it explain populist voting?
- Characteristics of populists
- Populism and democracy
- Personality characteristics of populists
- How much does populism actually explain?

Voting for Populist Parties (left and right)

- 'We the People' or 'We the Peoples'? A Comparison of Support for the Populist Radical Right and Populist Radical Left in the Netherlands.
- 2013 Work and Politics Survey (Radboud University, The Netherlands)
- Internet survey 1,005 (final sample)
- This sample is representative of the Dutch labor force with regards to age, gender and geographic region
- Akkerman, A., Zaslove, A., & Spruyt, B. (2017). 'We the People' or 'We the Peoples'? A Comparison of Support for the Populist Radical Right and Populist Radical Left in the Netherlands. *Swiss Political Science Review*.

Voting for Populist Parties (left and right)

- To date: left and right populist parties very different (Rooduijn, 2017)
- Or there are some commonalities regarding trust etc. (Norris, 2004)
- Perhaps a movement towards the demarcation corner (Kriesi, 2012)

Voting for Populist Parties (left and right)

- What do populist parties have in common?
- Expectations (voters):
 - 1. both will be populist (higher on the populist scale)
 - 2. right will be more oppose immigration
 - 3. left will favour income (economic) equality
 - 4. trust as controls: (political trust, economic trust; law and order trust)

Methods

- multinomial logistic regression
- PRR vs. mainstream (PVV vs. mainstream)
- PRL vs. mainstream (SP vs. mainstream)
- PRR vs. PRL (PVV vs. SP)

- Four models:
- Base model; immigration model; authoritarian model; economic model

	Base model		
	PVV-mainstream	SP-mainstream	PVV-SP (SP ref.)
Populist attitude	+	+	N.S.
Gender (0=man)	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Age	--	--	N.S.
Primary education	+	N.S.	+
Middle secondary	+	N.S.	+
Upper secondary	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Political trust	--	--	--
Large enterprise trust	N.S.	--	+
Law & order trust	N.S.	+	--
Identified with dem.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.

van der Meer, A., Zaslove, A., & Spruyt, B. (2017). 'We the People' or 'We the Peoples'? A Comparison of Support for the Populist Radical Right

	Economic Model		
	PVV-mainstream	SP-mainstream	PVV-SP (SP ref.)
attitude	+	+	N.S.
(D=man)	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
	--	--	N.S.
education	+	N.S.	+
secondary	+	N.S.	+
secondary	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
trust	--	N.S.	--
enterprise trust	N.S.	--	+
order trust	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
with democracy	--	N.S.	N.S.
control vs. more control of es	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
differences more equal	N.S.	+	--
benefits restricted vs. increased	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.

..., A., Zaslove, A., & Spruyt, B. (2017). 'We the People' or 'We the Peoples'? A Comparison of Support for the Populist Radical Right and

	Immigrant Model		
	PVV-mainstream	SP-mainstream	PVV-SP (SP ref.)
Rightist attitude	+	+	N.S.
Age (0=man)	--	--	--
	--	--	N.S.
Primary education	+	N.S.	+
Below secondary	+	N.S.	+
Over secondary	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Political trust	--	--	--
Confidence in enterprise trust	N.S.	--	+
Confidence in law & order trust	N.S.	+	--
Identified with democracy	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.
Immigrant Tolerance	--	N.S.	--

van der Meer, A., Zaslove, A., & Spruyt, B. (2017). 'We the People' or 'We the Peoples'? A Comparison of Support for the Populist Radical Right and Populist Radical Left in the Netherlands. *Swiss Political Science Review*.

Paper Conclusions

- Populist parties are very different: left and right
 - Left more economic (but not that radical), right more culture
 - Also the make up of who votes for the (socio-economic characteristics)
 - **But they share populists (those who score higher on the populist scale)**
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- What does the measure do? What can it help us to explain?
 - 1. the broader phenomenon of populism (something larger going on)—something about democracy and representation?
 - 2. but also that the causes may be different
 - there is something larger going on (demarcation/ integration) but it is not clear if there is as much overlap as is often claimed (attaching ideology)

Way forward

- More data, from more countries (Italy is a perfect case)
 - Ideally more data with similar questions (right now lots of data but it is fragmented)
 - But we have to be careful; what does a measure like this add to the discussion
-
- Why Italy?
 - Different types of populist parties (especially Five Star Movement)
 - Anti-politica
 - High general populist attitudes?

Sources and Work in Progress

- Akkerman, A. Mudde, C. Zaslove, A. (2014) How Populist are the People? Measuring Populist attitudes in Voter. *Comparative Political Studies*, 47:9, 1324-1353.
- Akkerman, A., Zaslove, A., & Spruyt, B. (2017). 'We the People' or 'We the Peoples'? A Comparison of Support for the Populist Radical Right and Populist Radical Left in the Netherlands. *Swiss Political Science Review*. Online first.
- Jacobs, K, Akkerman, A. Zaslove, A. (2016) The Voice of the People? Referendum Preferences, Practices, and Populist Attitudes, ECPR Prague, under review.
- Zaslove, A, Akkerman, A, Geurkink, B., Jacobs, K. (2017) Populist Citizens attitudes towards Democracy. A sleeping volcano waiting to erupt?, ECPR, Oslo.