

Patterns of Radical and Populist Voters

Democratic attitudes, political discontent and support for radical and populist parties in Europe

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Motivation & Puzzle

- Radical and populist parties embody alternative conceptions of democracy
 - Radical left parties promote the concept of *democratic socialism*
 - Radical right parties support *majoritarianism* and *authoritarianism*
 - Populist parties oppose principles of *liberal* and *representative democracy*

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- People hold different views towards democracy
 - Europeans hold coherent belief systems related to established concepts of democracy
 - Support for radical and populist parties might be instrumental (e.g. aimed at affecting the functioning of the political system)
 - Democratic attitudes are hardly included in research of (radical and populist) party support

How are citizens' attitudes towards principles of democracy related to their support for radical and populist parties?

Conceptualizing Radical and Populist Parties

- Populism defined as a set of ideas (anti-elitism, people-centrism, Manichean worldview)
- Radical left parties emphasize left-wing economic policies
(e.g. alternative redistribution policies and a strong role of the state in the economy)
- Radical right parties focus on nativism and socio-cultural authoritarianism

Support for Radical and Populist Parties

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 - (e.g. distrust of political institutions & dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy)
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- Radical and populist supporters tend to support democracy as the best form of rule
 - Indicators of general/abstract support for democracy not equivalent to support for democratic principles nor rejection of autocratic forms of government
 - Focus on how citizens view democracy and their preferences for democratic procedures

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Citizens' Democratic Attitudes and Support for Radical and Populist Parties

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- **Egalitarian democracy:** The higher support for egalitarian democratic attitudes, the more likely the support for (populist) radical left parties (H4)

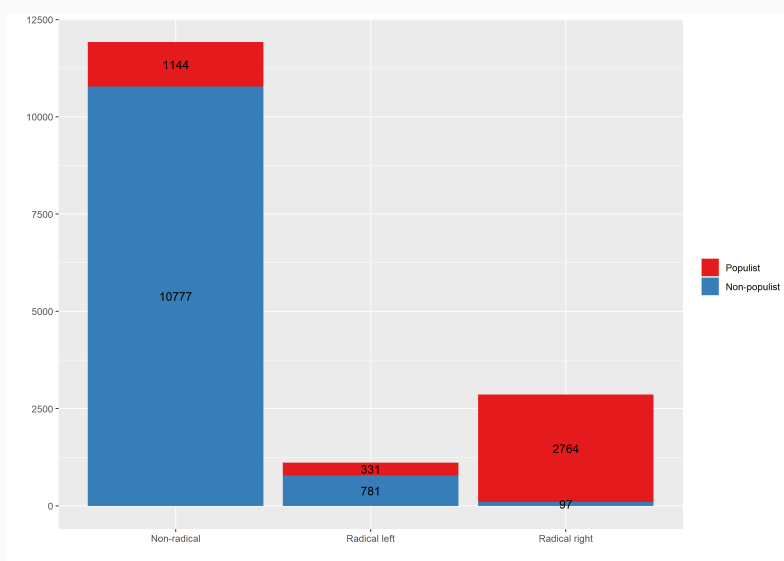
- **Data:** European Values Study 2017 (2017–2020)
 - 15.894 respondents from 19 European countries
- **Dependent variable:** Support for radical and populist parties
 - “Which (political) party appeals to you most?” (v174 & v175)
 - classification based on The PopuList
 - Non-radical (0) vs. radical left (1) vs. radical right parties (2)
 - Non-populist (0) vs. populist parties (1)
- **Independent variables:** Democratic attitudes (next slide)
- **Controls variables:**
 - Political ideology: Left-right scale, left-wing economic policy preferences, anti-immigration attitudes, socio-cultural liberalism, Euroscepticism
 - Political discontent: Political trust, evaluation of democracy
 - Socio-demographics: Political interest, education level, gender, age

Measuring Democratic Attitudes

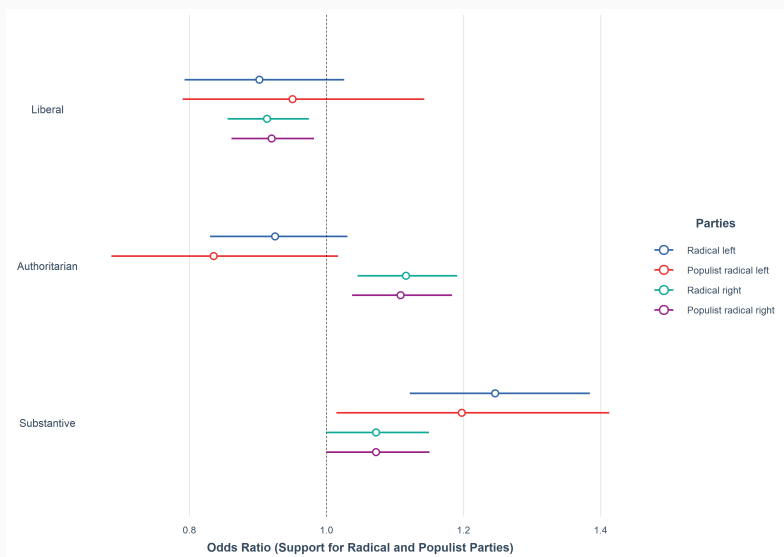
Theoretical Dimension	Item	Factor		
		1	2	3
Liberal	Women have the same rights as men	.82		
	People choose their leaders in free elections	.80		
	Civil rights protect people from state oppression	.77		
Authoritarian	People obey their rulers		.87	
	The army takes over when government is incompetent		.67	
	Religious authorities ultimately interpret the laws		.48	
Egalitarian	Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor			.82
	The state makes people's incomes equal			.69
	People receive state aid for unemployment			.64
Cronbach's alpha		.72	.50	.58
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)			.77	
Respondents (N)			15.894	

- We calculated additive indices between 0 and 1 for the liberal, authoritarian and substantive dimensions
- Democratic knowledge = support for liberal dimension * rejection of authoritarian dimension

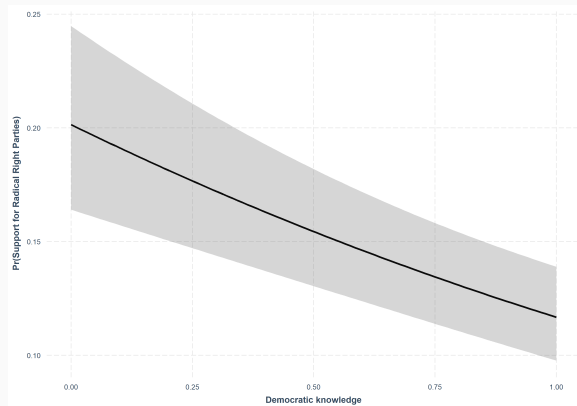
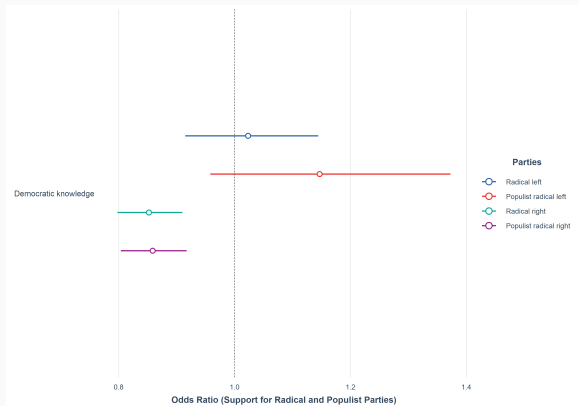
Descriptives: Dependent Variables



Results: Single Dimensions



Results: Democratic Knowledge



- **Liberal democracy:** Negative effect on support for (populist) radical right parties (H1)
- **Authoritarianism:** Positive effect on support for (populist) radical right parties (H2)
- **Democratic knowledge:** Negative effect on support for the (populist) radical right (H3)
- **Egalitarian democracy:** Positive effect on support for radical left parties (H4)
- Next step: Interactions between democratic attitudes and political discontent

Thank you!

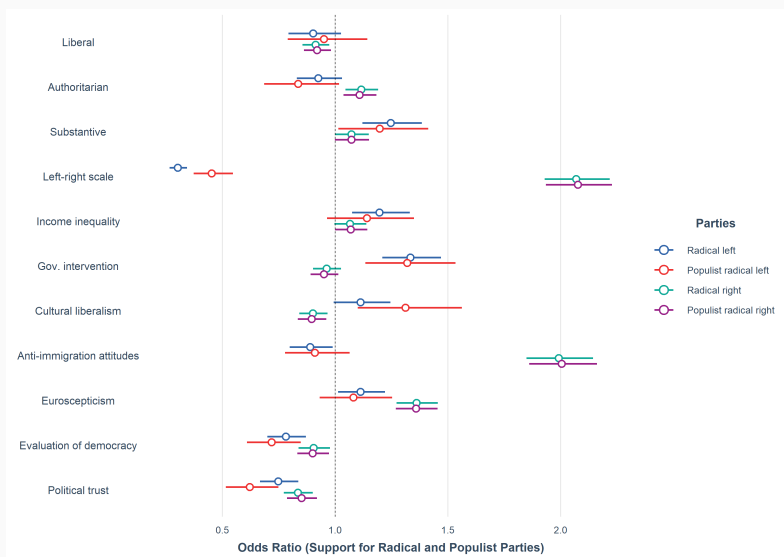
Thank you for your attention!

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Full Results: Single Dimensions



Full Results: Democratic Knowledge

