

Populist Attitudes, Efficacy, and Trust: Old Wine in New Bottles?

Bram Geurkink

Department of Economics, IMR, Radboud University (NL)

Andrej Zaslove

Department of Political Science, IMR, Radboud University (NL)

Kristof Jacobs

Department of Political Science, IMR, Radboud University (NL)

Roderick Sluiter

Department of Economics/ Department of Political Science, IMR, Radboud University (NL)

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Abstract

Substantial scholarly attention has been devoted to explaining why voters support populist parties. Recently, a new concept, the populist attitude measure, has been introduced to gauge populism among voters and to explain voting for populist parties. However, some researchers regard the populist attitude measurement as simply another measurement of existing and established measures such as political trust and external political efficacy. This paper addresses the relationship between these measures, both theoretically and empirically. It examines whether political trust, efficacy and populist attitudes tap into different underlying dimensions. Using a confirmatory factor analysis we show that the populist attitude measure is not old wine in a new bottle and that it taps into different underlying attitudes than trust and efficacy. Furthermore, we show that the three measures are not only different constructs, but also relate differently to populist voting. We find that while political trust and populist attitudes are relevant for populist voting, external efficacy appears unrelated to populist voting. In sum, we demonstrate that these constructs are different (both theoretically and empirically). Moreover, we find that both populist attitudes and political trust contribute to our understanding for populist voting behaviour, while we find no effect for external efficacy.

Key words: Populism, Populist attitudes, External Political Efficacy, Political Trust, Populist Vote

Introduction

Research on populism, especially on the populist radical right, is abundant. For some time now, researchers have been interested in why voters support populist parties. With the success of not only the populist radical right, but also populist left parties, the question has become more complex. Researchers are interested in why voters support populist parties beyond their left/right ideology (Rooduijn 2017; Akkerman, Mudde, and Zaslove 2014; Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel 2018). Is there something about populism that attracts voters to parties as diverse as *Podemos* in Spain or the French *Front National*? Framing the problem as such has sharpened the focus on whether populist voters share unique attributes that capture the essential and core features of populism beyond its left and right variants.

Earlier research often conflated radical right, fascist, and extremist parties with populism (cf. Mudde 1996). More recently, increased conceptual clarity has allowed researchers to clearly identify which parties are populist and which are not (Mudde 2007; Akkerman and Rooduijn 2017). According to Mudde (2004) the core of populism can be reduced to three essential components. *First*, populism is people-centred and it is anti-elite: populism pits the pure people against the corrupt elite. *Second*, the dichotomy between the pure people and the corrupt elite is antagonistic (or what is often referred to as Manichean). *Third* and finally, populists proclaim that politics should be an “expression” of the general will of the people (Mudde 2004).

Related to these key features of populism, three perspectives explaining why some individuals support a populist party dominate the literature. The first approach argues that political trust is an important indicator for explaining populist voting. Here, the measure taps into the relationship between populist voting and a lack of trust towards political institutions.

Second, external political efficacy is perceived to be an important determinant of voting for a populist party. Those who focus on external efficacy tap into the degree to which citizens feel that their opinions are heard and whether they have an influence on politics.

More recently, scholars have developed another approach, focusing on populist attitudes (Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel 2018; Akkerman et al 2014; Akkerman et al 2017; Hawkins et al 2012). Unlike approaches that use political trust and external efficacy, the populist attitude approach argues that populism is not only a feature of political parties (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011), but is an individual attribute that can be directly measured among individuals. It argues that populism is a latent construct that can be measured through a series of questions designed to address the underlying dimensions of populism.

As we can see from this discussion, the origins of these three indicators are very different. Political trust and external efficacy are traditional measures that have been used in surveys since the 1950s to measure whether democracies are perceived as “healthy” (Craig et al 1990), while more recently they have also been used to measure populism. The populist attitude measure has been used to measure populist attitudes specifically.

To capture these elements of populism, studies have scrutinized the effects of trust, efficacy and populist attitudes on populist voting behaviour, either separately or simultaneously (Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel 2018; Akkerman et al 2017; Spruyt et al 2016). A central problem with using concepts such as trust and external political efficacy is that they are often used interchangeably – both theoretically and empirically – and they are often given different labels (Craig et al 1990). Not surprisingly, there is some debate about whether these three measures actually capture different things, or whether they overlap. For example, Van der Kolk (2018) recently suggested that populist attitudes may not be substantially different from political trust and external efficacy. In a similar vein, Rooduijn (forthcoming) proclaims that populist attitudes may be simply “old wine in a new bottle”.

In this paper, we investigate the extent to which political trust, efficacy and populist attitudes are different constructs, both on a theoretical and an empirical level. The first question we set out to answer is: “To what extent do political trust, external efficacy and populist attitudes measure something different?” Second, we ask: “To what extent do political trust, external efficacy and populist attitudes uniquely contribute to explaining populist voting?”

Our paper is organized as follows. First we outline the three perspectives used to measure populism. Next we move to our data. We use data from the Dutch *Nationaal Referendumonderzoek 2018* (NRO, 2018). To answer our first question, we perform a confirmatory factor analysis. In doing so, we examine the extent to which political trust, external efficacy, and populist attitudes measures different things. We then use these three indicators to address the second question, examining the unique explanatory power of each measurement for voting for a populist party. Our findings show that political trust, external efficacy and populist attitude indeed measure something different, and furthermore, relate differently to voting for a populist party: the likelihood to vote for populist parties is higher when political trust is low and populist attitudes are high, while it is not affected by external efficacy.

Populism, trust and efficacy

In this paper, we define populism as a thin-centred ideology (Mudde 2004). Although other definitions exist — e.g. populism as style (Canovan 1999; Moffit 2016) or populism as strategy (Weyland 2001) — we use the thin-centred ideological approach for several reasons. First, it has been the most successful in identifying and explaining populism in Europe and abroad (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012). Second, and most importantly, given that the thin-centred ideological approach argues that populism is a set of ideas, it follows that populism can be measured in various venues: party platforms, leader’s speeches, and

among individuals (Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011; Hawkins 2009; Hawkins, Riding, and Mudde 2012; Akkerman, Mudde, and Zaslove 2014).

The thin-centred ideology approach comes to several important conclusions. First, it argues that populism has a core set of ideas (ideology), i.e. it is possible to precisely indicate what populism is and what it is not. Second, even though the core ideological characteristics of populism can be clearly defined, the populist ideology itself is thin-centred. This implies that populism cannot stand on its own and it must attach to other ideologies. For this reason we encounter left and a right-wing populisms (Mudde 2004; Stanley 2008; Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017).¹

According to Mudde (2004), what populist parties, both left- and right-wing, have in common can be summed up by three essential components. As previously stated, (1) populism is people-centred and anti-elite, pitting the pure people against the corrupt elite, (2) it entails a clash between the pure people and the corrupt elite (it is antagonistic), and (3) populists proclaim that politics should be an “expression” of the general will of the people (Mudde 2004). Mudde sums up populism as follows:

*“an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people” (Mudde 2004, p. 543)*

Defining populism as such is important on two levels. First, it distinguishes populism from not only elitism but also from pluralism. The antagonistic nature of populism, with its emphasis on

¹ From this, it follows that neither political trust, external efficacy nor populist attitudes can explain why some people vote for left-wing populist parties and others for right-wing populist parties. Note, however, that the focus of this paper is not on voting for *a specific* populist party but on voting for populist parties *in general*. Hence, the attaching ideological orientations of the voters and parties is not a core concern of the paper.

the two opposing groups, i.e. the pure people and the corrupt elite (Manichean nature), implies that populism is wary of a core component of pluralism, political compromise (Mudde 2004). Second, the people-centred nature of populism distinguishes populism from simply anti-establishment and protest voting. Populism as a thin-centred ideology implies that populism posits an alternative form of political representation and cannot simply be reduced to an opposition to existing political elites.

Political Trust

In essence, political trust is the evaluation that a person gives of another entity (i.e. a political institution) (Van der Meer and Hakverdian 2016). Thus, for example, a citizen evaluates a political party, government, or the parliament. Political trust is employed to measure the extent to which individuals feel that this entity produces results that live up to their expectations, i.e. their policy expectations (Craig et al 1990). There is a long discussion and some confusion of whether political trust refers to policy outcomes (i.e. satisfaction), or whether it refers to trust in specific political institutions (Craig et al 1990). Increasingly, however, the literature makes a distinction between regime satisfaction, policy outcomes, and the functioning of political institutions; the latter being more related to the current use of political trust. Craig (1979) defines political trust as: “government action perceived as being more in the public interest than as a product of popular demand” (p. 229). In other words, political trust is the belief that the political institutions will act in the public interest: it does not necessarily measure the extent to which the institutions are responsive to public demands. Conceivably it is possible to have high levels of trust in a political institution that has very little public access (or even low levels of political accountability), such as an independent central bank.

Thus, conceptually, political trust reflects the degree to which individuals believe that political institutions, i.e. political parties, or parliament, act in the public interest. Hence,

political trust does not mean that political institutions need to be responsive to public demands: they can, but it is not necessary (Craig 1979). Rather, it refers to whether political institutions independently serve the interests of the people. This means that political institutions will function according to “expectations” and according to the “interests” of the individuals (Van der Meer 2010).

The question is, how and why should low levels tap into populist sentiments? Given that a core feature of populism is its opposition to the ‘corrupt elite’, it could be argued that the feeling that political elites no longer produce policies that serve the interests of the people taps into a core feature of populism. However, trust does not seem to address the popular sovereignty element of populism, nor does it capture its antagonistic nature.

Using trust to explain populism is common. However, findings are often inconsistent. Akkerman et al (2017) find that populist radical right and populist radical left-wing voters have lower levels of political trust, and this is particularly the case for the populist radical right. Norris (2005) also argues that lower levels of political trust correlate with voting for the populist radical right. However, she also notes that there are instances when this is *not* the case. Additionally, Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel (2018) find that left-wing voters have lower levels of trust, but right-wing voters do not. Some, such as Rooduijn (2017), even find that distrust could not explain support for either populist radical right or populist radical left parties.

External Efficacy

Political efficacy is often broken down into two different dimensions: internal and external political efficacy. The former referring to the extent to which an individual can “master his environment” or the extent to which one is “personally effective” (Craig 1979, 228). External political efficacy is slightly different. It moves from internal, or personal beliefs, to the question of institutional responsiveness. Although often conflated as a measure, external political

efficacy is conceptually different from political trust. External efficacy refers to the extent that an individual feels that he or she can exert his or her influence over the political *process*. It points to the degree to which it is believed that institutions are responsive to demands and the specific needs of citizens (Craig 1979, p. 228). In other words, the degree to which an individual feels that he or she can exert his or her influence on the political process. External political efficacy does not (necessarily) refer to an individual capacity; rather it refers to perceptions of institutional receptiveness to individual demands. It is possible to imagine a situation in which a person has low levels of external efficacy, i.e. they have little influence on the political process, but a high degree of political trust, i.e. they believe that the political institutions will produce policies for the general good of its citizens.

Lower levels of external political efficacy are also used to explain support for populist parties. Turning to our three key characteristics of populism, external political efficacy taps into the claim that the political elite is not responsive, but that the populist politicians do listen to the concerns of the people. It could also be argued that external efficacy, however, has a rather weak concept of the people. Most importantly, it tells us little about the nature of ‘the people’ (e.g. are they homogenous or not?).

Research, especially on the populist radical right, seems to support the idea that people with lower levels of external efficacy are more likely to vote for populist parties, though again the findings are not consistent. For example, Rooduijn, Van Der Brug, and De Lange (2016) demonstrate that individuals who feel that they have less influence over the political process are more likely to support a populist party. Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel (2018) find that left-wing populist voters have lower levels of external political efficacy, but right-wing populist voters do not.

In essence, however, trust and efficacy say two different things about populism. The use of political trust implies that populism is about mistrust of policy *outcomes*, while the use of

external political efficacy is about the *process* and frustration or impotence regarding the ability to influence politics.

The Populist Attitude Approach

In contrast to the aforementioned approaches, the populist attitudes measure attempts to directly measure populist attitudes among individuals, i.e. it attempts to operationalize the thin-centred ideological conception of populism. It contends that populism is a latent construct. In doing so six questions (see Box 3) have been designed to measure the three core dimensions of populism: The questions (see methods part) focus on the people-centred notion of populism in combination with the anti-elitism, on the antagonistic nature of populism, and on the notion of the direct, general will of populist political representation.

Unlike trust, which focuses on the psychological relation between an individual and a political institution (Van der Meer and Havarich 2016), and external political efficacy, which focuses on the perceptions that the individual has of the responsiveness of political institution, populist attitudes focus on the relation between the individual, citizens (or “the people”) and the political elite. The focus is on the extent to which politics represents the demands of the people. The focus is not only on the anti-elite, or on the responsiveness of institutions, but on political representation, i.e. the emphasis is on the people-centred notion of political representation vis-à-vis the elites.

The purpose of populist attitudes is to operationalize the thin-centred ideological concept of populism. Thus, six questions are designed to tap into the three core dimensions of populism: pure people vs. corrupt elite; the antagonism between the pure people and the corrupt elite; and the notion of the general will. These three dimensions constitute the latent variable: populism. It is, however, possible that populist attitudes are not distinct enough and that in the

end it does not measure substantially differ from other measures, i.e. political trust and/ or external political efficacy.

Box 1. Relating the three measure with Populism

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Relation with Populism</i>	<i>Missing dimensions</i>
Political Trust	Anti-Elite	People; antagonism
External Political Efficacy	Anti-Elite (“light” version of people)	Stronger notion of the people; antagonism
Populist Attitudes	People; elite; antagonism	-----

Methods and Data

Information on populist attitudes, voting behaviour and background characteristics was retrieved from the *Nationaal Referendumonderzoek 2018* (Abbreviation: NRO2018; SKON, 2018). This data set contains information of 2,234 respondents that participate in the Dutch LISS (Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social sciences) panel, administered by CentERdata (Tilburg University, the Netherlands). Fieldwork for this survey was carried out in March and April 2018 using computer-assisted web interviewing. Invitations to participate in the survey were send to 2,838 panel members, of which 2,234 completed the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 78.7 percent.

NRO2018 does not contain information on political trust, external efficacy and attitudes towards income redistribution, cultural inclusion and EU integration, but it includes an identifier to link it to a dataset that has such information, namely the tenth wave of *Politics and Values* (LISS, 2018). The Politics and Values survey is a key module of the LISS panel and is presented annually to all the panel members. The ninth wave of the Politics and Values was conducted in December 2017 and January 2018. 5,734 respondents completed the survey, resulting in a 77.0 percent response rate. 2,189 of the 2,234 NRO2018 respondent also participated in the ninth wave of the Politics and Values survey. From these 2,189 individuals,

1,744 individuals answered all items used for the measurements of political trust, external efficacy and populist attitudes. We continue our analysis using these 1,744 individuals.

Case

Our research focuses on the Netherlands, a country that is well-suited for our analysis for two reasons in particular. *First*, it is a country that possess multiple different populist parties. The dataset has sizeable numbers of PVV, FvD (*Forum voor Democratie*) (both populist radical right) and SP (populist radical left) likely voters. This allows us to examine the impact of trust, efficacy and populist attitudes regardless of the host ideologies of the populist parties.² *Second*, the Netherlands is a consensus democracy with a low electoral threshold and multiple parties. As such there are multiple new parties and several parties that can appeal to protest voters. As such it is an excellent testing ground to differentiate between different types of discontent and assess their impact on voting for populist parties.³

Method

To address the first research question – regarding the extent to which the three concept can be disentangled, we apply exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, using R (version 3.4.x.) with the lavaan package (Rosseel 2012). Since three of our items are binary (the external efficacy items), we used WLSMV estimation, which uses diagonally weighted least squares to estimate model parameters, but uses the full weight matrix to compute robust standard errors and the mean- and variance-adjusted test statistic (source:

<http://lavaan.ugent.be/tutorial/cat.html>).

² In a country with say only a populist radical left party, findings may simply be a result of effects that only hold for populist radical left parties, not populist parties in general.

³ This is important to keep in mind. Indeed, theoretically one can thus expect that we find a stronger and more clear-cut effect of populist attitudes, as this may be the feature that sets them apart from other ‘protest parties’.

We apply logistic regression analyses to examine to what extent political trust, external political efficacy and populist attitudes can explain populist voting behaviour. Here, we first estimate the effects of each concept separately (Model 1 to 3) and then simultaneously (Model 4). Additionally, we add attaching attitudes (income redistribution, cultural inclusion, and EU integration) to examine whether political trust, external efficacy, and populist attitudes also explain vote for populist parties, while controlling additional ideological reasons to vote for populist parties.

In addition to the logistic analyses for populist vote, we test whether political trust, external efficacy, and populist attitudes predict voting for the three populist parties in the Netherlands using multinomial regression analyses. Furthermore, in order to more clearly distinguish between voting for a populist party and a protest vote we also include non-voters.

Variables of interest

Political Trust

For the trust measurement, we asked respondents how much trust they had in political institutions. The question that was asked was: *For these institutions, could you indicate how much trust you have in them?*, for which 1 indicated “no confidence at all” and 10 indicated ‘very much confidence. This question was asked for ‘the government’ (Trust1), ‘the lower house’ (Trust2), ‘politicians’ (Trust3), and ‘political parties’ (Trust4).

External Political Efficacy

External political efficacy refers to the confidence that people have in the responsiveness of political actors. A high external political efficacy thereby indicates that individuals have the feeling that political officials care about what they think and listen to them. To measure the external political efficacy of respondents, we relied on a validated three-item measurement,

developed by Craig et al. (1990). For each of these items, respondents had to choose between 0 ‘that is true’ or 1 ‘that is not true’. The three items are presented in Box 2.

Box 2. Items used to measure external efficacy among individuals

Eff1: Politicians are not interested in what people like me think.

Eff2: Political parties are only interested in my vote, not in my opinion.

Eff3: People like me don’t have any say about what the government does.

Source: Craig et al. (1990).

Populist Attitudes

For the populist attitudes construct, we rely on the measurement of populist attitudes as constructed by Akkerman et al (2014). This measurement includes the three defining elements of populism, as defined by Mudde (2004). For each of the six items (see Box 3) respondents had to indicate to what extent they agreed with the statement whereby 1 indicates ‘totally disagree’ and 5 ‘totally disagree’.

Box 3. Items used to measure populist attitudes among individuals

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

Pop4: The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people.

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 et al., 2014.

Control variables

For all our models, we included education, gender, and age as control variables. In addition, to the standard control variables, in our last model we include a series of variables that tap into the cultural and economic attaching attitudes (ideology) of populist supporters as identified in the literature on the populist radical right and the populist radical left (Van Hauwaert and Van

Kessel 2018; Akkerman et al 2017). We use these as controls for the “thicker” ideology that attaches to populism.

Populist voting

In the second part of our analyses, we use populist attitudes, political trust and external political efficacy to explain populist voting. First, we seek to explain the populist vote. For this variable we asked respondents what they voted in the last national election. If they voted for either the PVV (*Party of the Freedom*), the SP (*Socialist Party*), or the FvD (*Forum for Democracy*), we coded them as voting for a populist party ('1'). If they voted for another party or casted an invalid or blank vote they were coded as not voting for a populist party ('0'). Those who indicated that they did not want to say what party they voted for, or did not remember, or did not vote during the previous election, they were excluded from further analyses. Second, we applied a multinomial analysis in order to understand the relationship between political trust, external efficacy and populist attitudes and voting for specific populist parties (i.e. PVV, SP or FvD). For this variable, we differentiated another category; non-voting. We did this in to see whether political trust, external efficacy and populist attitudes are not only able to differentiate between populist voting and voting for non-populist parties, but also do not explain non-voting.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Variable name	Minimum	Maximum	Mean / %	Std. Deviation	N
<u>Political Trust</u>					
<i>Trust1</i>	0.00	9.00	5.58	2.11	1744
<i>Trust2</i>	0.00	9.00	5.67	2.05	1744
<i>Trust3</i>	0.00	10.00	4.87	2.10	1744
<i>Trust4</i>	0.00	10.00	4.80	2.08	1744
<u>External Efficacy</u>					
<i>Eff1</i>	0.00	1.00	0.38	0.49	1744
<i>Eff2</i>	0.00	1.00	0.28	0.45	1744
<i>Eff3</i>	0.00	1.00	0.36	0.48	1744
<u>Populist Attitudes</u>					
<i>Pop1</i>	1.00	5.00	3.54	0.92	1744

<i>Pop2</i>	1.00	5.00	2.81	1.07	1744
<i>Pop3</i>	1.00	5.00	2.83	1.01	1744
<i>Pop4</i>	1.00	5.00	3.59	0.89	1744
<i>Pop5</i>	1.00	5.00	3.66	0.94	1744
<i>Pop6</i>	1.00	5.00	3.15	1.10	1744
Middle education	0.00	1.00	35,5%		1743
Higher education	0.00	1.00	39,3%		1743
Female	0.00	1.00	49,4%		1744
Age	18.00	100.00	55.07	16.79	1744
Income redistribution	1.00	5.00	3.88	0.96	1691
Cultural exclusion	1.00	5.00	3.63	0.92	1703
EU integration	1.00	5.00	3.54	1.14	1674
Populist vote	0.00	1.00	20,4%		1421
<u>Multinomial vote</u>					
<i>PVV</i>	0.00	1.00	6,2%		1421
<i>SP</i>	0.00	1.00	8,9%		1421
<i>FvD</i>	0.00	1.00	5,3%		1421
<i>No Vote</i>	0.00	1.00	2,3%		1421

Sources: NRO 2018; LISS-Panel *Politics and Values*, wave 10

Analyses

Political trust, External efficacy and Populist attitudes

To examine whether political trust, external political efficacy and populist attitudes are actually three distinct concepts, we first estimate an exploratory factor analysis. In so doing, we include the items for the three concepts, without specifying to which concept each item (theoretically) “belongs”. In table 2, we present the results of an exploratory factor analysis, including the political trust, external efficacy, and populist attitudes items. The results show that, as expected, and in line with other studies, the different items load sufficiently (>0.400) on the different factors. With regard to cross-loadings, we find that three of the populism items, load very weakly (<0.400) on the external efficacy scale. These items, and especially the 5th populism item (i.e. “Elected officials talk too much and take too little action”), seem to measure the anti-elite dimension of populism more than the other questions, which is in line with the original scale development (see Hawkins et al., 2012; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002; Akkerman et al., 2014). However, the external political efficacy items do not show any loading on the

populist attitudes factor. There seems to be some overlap between some items of the populism scale and external political efficacy (those who mainly measure anti-elitism), but the external efficacy items do not load on the latent construct of populist attitudes. Furthermore, the political trust items load very strongly on the political trust factor and do not show any relevant cross-loadings with either populist attitudes or external political efficacy.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis

	Factor loadings		
	1	2	3
<i>Indicators</i>			
<u>Political Trust</u>			
Trust1	0.020	0.919	-0.038
Trust2	-0.008	0.933	-0.009
Trust3	-0.005	0.932	0.007
Trust4	-0.010	0.892	0.027
<u>Political Efficacy</u>			
Eff1	-0.034	0.038	0.749
Eff2	-0.023	-0.020	0.829
Eff3	0.074	0.022	0.589
<u>Populist attitudes</u>			
Populism1	-0.715	0.079	0.043
Populism2	-0.844	-0.047	0.095
Populism3	-0.727	-0.100	0.003
Populism4	-0.442	-0.002	-0.171
Populism5	-0.441	-0.128	-0.312
Populism6	-0.454	-0.134	-0.243

Note: N=1744.

Although this exploratory factor analysis is insightful for understanding the relationship between each of the items and the different constructs, it is not a formal test of whether these construct are coherent. In order to test our first hypothesis, that political trust, external efficacy and populist attitudes are different constructs, we rely on confirmatory factor analyses.

We start by testing a single-factor model (m1 of Table 3). We hypothesize that populist attitudes, efficacy, and trust constitute different constructs. However, if a one-factor model turns out to fit the data well, there is little point in evaluation more complex models (Kline, 2011). Furthermore, this model offers a benchmark to compare the fit of the other multi-factor models

to. For assessing the fit of our CFA models, we rely on cut-off values as proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999). To say a model has a good fit, we, therefore, require a RMSEA of <0.08 , a CFI of >0.95 and a SRMR of $<0.06^4$.

In Table 3, the fit statistics of the one-factor model are presented. The results indicate that the one-factor measurement model provides a bad fit. Therefore, we continue by using the model with populist attitudes, political trust, and external political efficacy as different constructs (m2). The fit statistics of the three-factor model (RMSEA = 0.050; CFI = 0.964; SRMR = 0.031) indicate a good fit. Furthermore, Table 4 indicates that the items' standardized loading on each factor is sufficient (>0.400) and that the McDonald's Omega, indicating the internal consistency of latent constructs, reveals that each of the factors have high internal consistency (political trust = 0.954, and external political efficacy = 0.915, populist attitudes = 0.829) (McDonald 1999). The factor covariances (see Table 4) range between -0.716 and 0.681, this indicates that, as expected, there is overlap between the factors, but these values are far from problematic (1.00) and sufficiently lower than the poor discriminant validity threshold of 0.85 (Brown 2014, 32; 126)⁵. To be sure, we estimated two one-factor models in which political trust and external efficacy (m3), political trust and populist attitudes (m4), and external efficacy and populist attitudes (m5) are combined in one factor. However, none of these models provided a model fit which is acceptable⁶. Therefore, we conclude that indeed political trust, external efficacy and populist attitudes are three separate constructs. These findings confirm what Spruyt et al (2016) found, i.e. that populism constitutes a different construct than external political efficacy. In addition, we find that these findings are also extended to political trust.

⁴ Because of our large N ($N>300$), we do not rely on the X^2 -statistics. Nevertheless, we present this statistic since the other fit indices are based on this statistic.

⁵ To be sure, in later analyses we also checked for multicollinearity, no VIF-values exceeded any problematic values (>5).

⁶ We also ran six analyses in which we loaded the populist attitudes items (one per model) to the external efficacy measurement. Furthermore, we ran three models in which we included each of the external efficacy items (one per model) to the populist attitudes measurement. None of these models showed an adequate model fit (results available upon request).

Table 3. Values of Selected Fit Statistics for Measurement Models.

Model	χ^2_M	df_M	RMSEA (90% CI)	CFI	SRMR
<i>Measurement models</i>					
m1 One-factor model	2055.738 ^a	63	0.135 ^a (0.130 – 0.140)	0.722	0.099
m2 Three-factor model	320.413 ^a	60	0.050 ^b (0.045 – 0.055)	0.964	0.031
m3 Trust & Efficacy	1086.609 ^a	14	0.210 ^a (0.199 – 0.220)	0.785	0.123
m4 Trust & Populist Attitudes	747.832 ^a	33	0.111 ^a (0.105 – 0.118)	0.950	0.106
m5 Efficacy & Populist Attitudes	722.829 ^a	25	0.127 ^a (0.119 – 0.135)	0.861	0.078

Note. CI, confidence interval; N=1744.

^ap < .05; ^bp = .501.

Different concept, but how are they different and why should we care?

But does this all matter empirically? After all, although we find that populist attitudes are different from political trust and external political efficacy, this does not automatically imply that populist attitudes are better at explaining voting for a populist party. Therefore, having established that political trust, external efficacy and populist attitudes are three distinct constructs, we now model the effect of these factors on explaining a vote for a populist party.⁷

Table 4. Estimates of factor loadings, factor covariance and internal consistency for three factor model.

	Factor Loadings			McDonald's ω
	Unst.E.	Std.Error	Standardized	
<i>Indicators</i>				
<u>Political Trust</u>				0.954
Trust1	1.000 ^a	-	0.901	
Trust2	0.995	0.019	0.924	

⁷ Previous studies have already indicated the external validity of the populist attitudes measurement (e.g. Akkerman et al 2014). Moreover, using populism and trust, Akkerman et al (2017) find that voters of populist parties are more populist and have lower levels of trust. Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel (2018) control for trust and external political efficacy, finding that left-wing voters have a lower trust and a lower level of external political efficacy.

Trust3	1.028	0.027	0.931	
Trust4	0.992	0.028	0.906	
<u>External Political Efficacy</u>				0.915
Eff1	1.000	-	0.879	
Eff2	1.098	0.027	0.965	
Eff3	0.915	0.027	0.804	
<u>Populist attitudes</u>				0.829
Pop1	1.000 ^a	-	0.477	
Pop2	1.560	0.076	0.639	
Pop3	1.651	0.088	0.717	
Pop4	1.129	0.073	0.555	
Pop5	1.759	0.102	0.816	
Pop6	1.937	0.118	0.775	
<i>Factor covariances</i>				
Political trust ↔	1.140	0.052	0.681	
External political efficacy				
Political Trust ↔	-0.521	0.038	-0.625	
Populist Attitudes				
External Efficacy ↔	-0.276	0.018	-0.716	
Populist Attitudes				
<i>Error covariances</i>				
Pop1 ↔ Pop2	0.269	0.019	0.406	
Pop2 ↔ Pop3	0.255	0.019	0.440	

^aNot tested for statistical significance. For all other unstandardized estimates, $p < .001$; $N=1921$.

Table 5 present the effects of political trust, external political efficacy and populist attitudes on voting for a populist party⁸. Model 1 indicates the effect of political trust on voting for a populist party. In model two, we include external political efficacy and controls. In model 3, we include populist attitudes and controls. In model 4, we include populist attitudes, political trust, and external political efficacy simultaneously. Lastly, in model 5 we include the attaching attitudes to test the robustness of our findings.

⁸ Standardized results are presented in Appendix 1.

In Model 1, we see that those who score lower on political trust are more likely to vote for a populist party. The subsequent two models (Model 2 and 3) show that lower external political efficacy, higher populist attitudes result in a higher likelihood of voting for a populist party. These results respectively indicate that lower political trust, lower external political efficacy, and higher populist attitudes result in a higher probability to vote for a populist party.

However, to compare the relative strength of the different indicators to explain the populist vote, we have to include the indicators simultaneously. Thereby, the effect of one indicator is controlled for by the others. In Model 4, we estimate the effect of political trust, external political efficacy and populist attitudes on voting for a populist party. This model indicates that, while political trust and populist attitudes still significantly affect the likelihood to vote for a populist party, the effect of external political efficacy disappears. This effect is reproduced in the model 5 of Table 5, in which the attaching attitudes are included as predictors for populist voting. Turning to the control variables, we find that higher educated people, women, and older people are less likely to cast a populist vote. Further, people who oppose EU integration are more likely to vote for a populist party.

Figure 1 and 2 represent the average predicted probability of voting for a populist party for different levels of respectively political trust and populist attitudes. While the effect for political trust seems to be linearly negatively related to the predicted probability to vote for a populist party, the effect of populist attitudes shows a different pattern. The effect of an increase from a low level to a medium level of populist attitudes does not seem to affect the probability to vote for a populist party that much, but this effect is much stronger for an increase from a medium level to a high level of populist attitudes.

Table 5. Logistic regression estimates of the effect of populist attitudes, political trust and external political efficacy and attaching ideology on vote for a populist party.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Indicators</i>					
Political Trust	-0.468*** (0.039)			-0.172** (0.064)	-0.148* (0.068)
External Efficacy		-1.470*** (0.118)		-0.144 (0.246)	-0.139 (0.254)
Populist attitudes			2.789*** (0.214)	1.967*** (0.363)	1.682*** (0.381)
<i>Education (ref. low)</i>					
Middle	-0.354 (0.181)	-0.233 (0.183)	-0.255 (0.184)	-0.240 (0.186)	-0.251 (0.194)
High	-1.420*** (0.207)	-1.197*** (0.209)	-1.182*** (0.212)	-1.193*** (0.215)	-1.074*** (0.224)
Female (ref. male)	-0.791*** (0.154)	-0.795*** (0.154)	-0.740*** (0.156)	-0.757*** (0.158)	-0.673*** (0.163)
Age	-0.009 (0.004)	-0.010* (0.005)	-0.012* (0.005)	-0.012* (0.005)	-0.012* (0.005)
Income redistribution					0.058 (0.085)
Cultural exclusion					0.170 (0.093)
EU integration					0.265** (0.082)
Intercept	-0.108	-0.207	-0.232	-0.219	-2.056
<i>Explained Variance</i>					
McFadden R ²	0.194	0.214	0.230	0.240	0.285

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; N = 1421; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Figure 1: Predicted probability of voting for a populist party for different levels of political trust

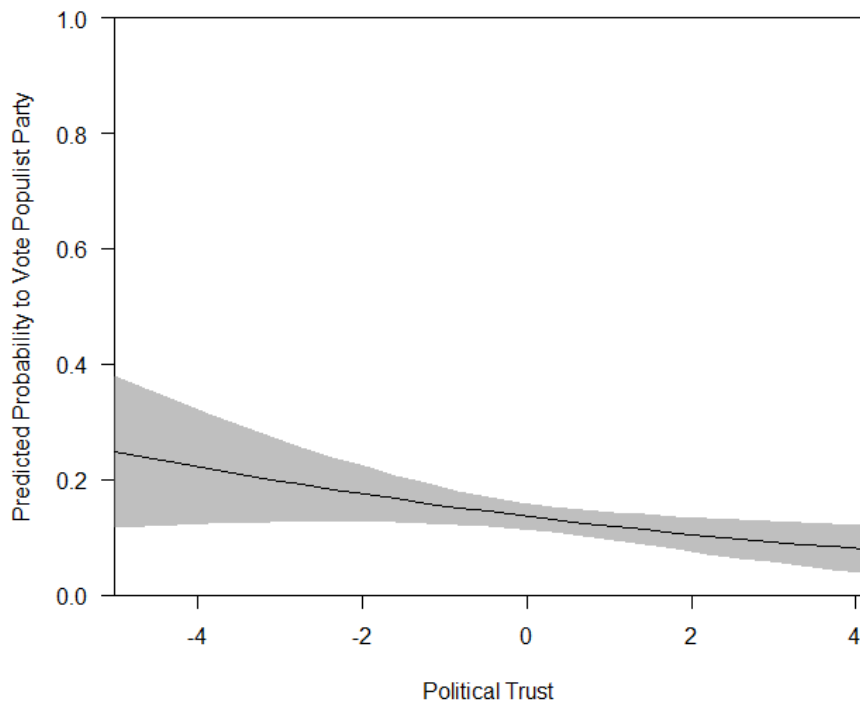
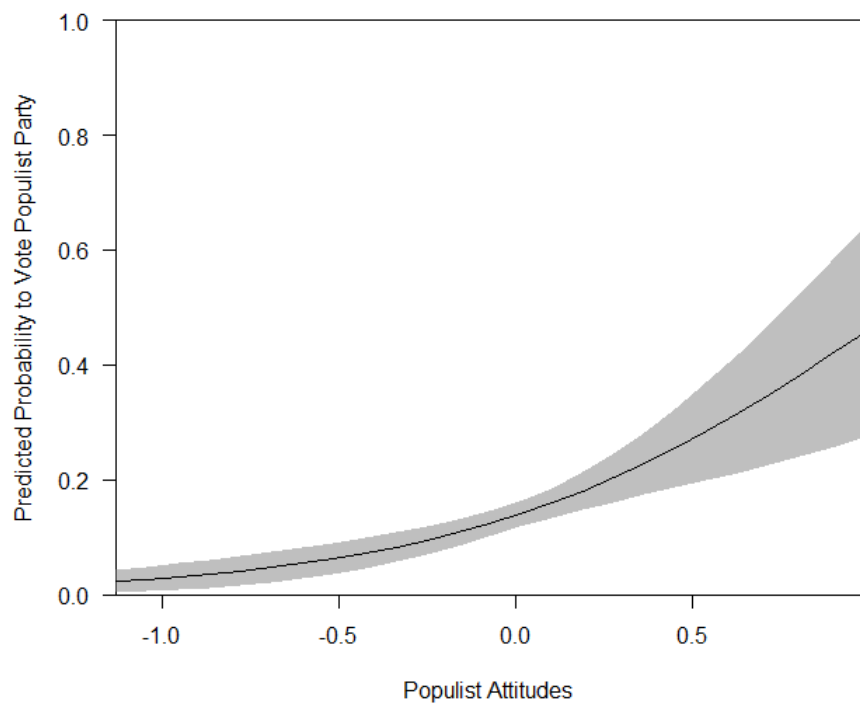


Figure 2: Predicted probability of voting for a populist party for different levels of populist attitudes



Different Effects for Different Populist Parties?

Political trust and populist attitudes are important indicators for populist voting. However, this raises the question whether this holds for all populist parties individually. To determine this we perform a multinomial analyses. In addition to splitting the three populist parties we also include a non-voting category.

The results of the multinomial analyses are presented in Table 6. Political trust explains voting for either PVV and it also has a significant negative effect on non-voting. However, the effect of trust does not significantly affect the likelihood of voting for the SP or the FvD. Although political trust explains voting for some populist parties, it does not explain all populist voting. Moreover, those who do not vote also exhibit lower levels of trust. External political efficacy has no significant effect on voting for any of the three populist parties nor does it affect those who do not vote.

Three indicators explain why individuals vote for all three populist parties: gender, cultural inclusion and populist attitudes. For gender we find that woman are less likely to vote for each of the three populist parties, but they are also less likely to refrain from voting. Thereby, gender does not seem to differentiate between populist voting and non-voting. The cultural inclusion indicator is significant for all three populist parties and not for non-voting. However, the direction of the effect is different for the SP compared to the PVV and the FvD. Where voting for the latter two is more likely among those who favour cultural exclusion, voters for the SP oppose cultural exclusion. Thus, the only indicator that has a significant and positive relationship with voting for all three populist parties and does not explain non-voting, is populist attitudes.

Table 6 Multinomial Logistic regression estimates of the effect of populist attitudes, political trust and external political efficacy on vote for a populist party.

	PVV vs. Other	SP vs. Other	FvD vs. Other	No vote vs Other
<i>Indicators</i>				
Political Trust	-0.396*** (0.123)	-0.137 (0.091)	0.112 (0.121)	-0.520*** (0.157)
External Political Efficacy	0.327 (0.436)	-0.387 (0.336)	0.186 (0.457)	-0.079 (0.603)
Populist attitudes	2.134*** (0.645)	1.041* (0.500)	2.691*** (0.687)	0.471 (0.904)
Education (ref. low)				
Middle	-0.651* (0.305)	-0.268 (0.251)	0.392 (0.362)	0.100 (0.507)
High	-2.050*** (0.434)	-1.015*** (0.286)	-0.396 (0.430)	-0.737 (0.578)
Female (ref. male)	-0.944*** (0.280)	-0.585** (0.210)	-0.737* (0.305)	-0.911* (0.418)
Age	-0.019* (0.009)	-0.003 (0.007)	-0.037*** (0.009)	-0.032* (0.013)
Income redistribution	-0.122 (0.137)	0.409*** (0.124)	-0.299* (0.142)	0.345 (0.232)
Cultural exclusion	1.063*** (0.194)	-0.302** (0.115)	0.670*** (0.192)	0.168 (0.226)
EU Integration	-0.034 (0.138)	0.200 (0.105)	1.001*** (0.219)	0.032 (0.193)
Intercept	-4.416	-2.724	-6.504	-3.737

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; N = 1421; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper we are interested in the relationship between political trust, external political efficacy and populist attitudes, and their unique effect on populist voting. We formulated two research questions: “To what extent do political trust, external efficacy and populist attitudes measure something different?” and: “To what extent do political trust, external political efficacy and populist attitudes uniquely contribute to explaining populist voting?” Regarding the first question, we argue that the three constructs, are conceptually different while they also measure empirically distinct phenomena. Concerning the second question, we show that these differences affect their explanatory power, i.e. the extent to which they explain populist voting.

Theoretically we argue that political trust, external political efficacy, and populist attitudes are constructs that reflect different aspects of populism. We argue that political trust

mainly reflects the anti-elitism of populism (i.e. lower levels of trust in elites). External political efficacy addresses the anti-elitism and to a lesser extent the people-centeredness of populism; however, the latter is not strongly nor sufficiently present in the measure. The populist measure, on the other hand, captures all three features of populism; people/ elite; antagonism, and general will. Applying exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, we show that the three concepts (trust, efficacy and the populist measure) indeed tap into different latent attitudes. However, we see that there is overlap (correlation) between populism and external political efficacy. This can be expected given that both populist attitudes and external political efficacy tap into several common features of populism: in particular its anti-elitism and to a lesser extent its people-centeredness. While this may indicate that the populist attitude measure is indeed old wine in a new bottle, we argue that the populist attitudes brings more to the table than external political efficacy does, for two important reasons. First, from a theoretical perspective, it covers additional features of populism, namely the antagonism between the elite and the people and it possess a more robust articulation of the people (or people-centeredness). Second, empirically, if we turn to the binomial model, we see that, without the presence of the populist attitude measure in the model external political efficacy does a relatively good job in explaining populist support. However, with the populist attitude in the model, we find that external political efficacy is no longer significant. In other words, even though there is some overlap between the two concepts, the populist measure is a more robust predictor of populist voting. This is most likely due to its more complete coverage of the populist attitude.

The relationship between trust and the populist attitude measure is different than the relation between populism and external political efficacy; both theoretically and empirically. Theoretically trust focuses on the perceived responsiveness of political institutions, or the degree to which political institutions are deemed to work in the interest of citizens. This is very different than a people-centred notion of political representation. Just because an individual has

lower levels of political trust, does not imply that they will strive for a people-centred notion of political representation. Unlike external political efficacy, political trust does not tap into the role of the people. Thus, an individual with low levels of trust may be supportive of an elitist solution. Empirically, we find that both political trust and the populist attitude are significant indicators for voting for a populist party. However, when we differentiate between different populist parties (i.e. the PVV, the SP, and the FvD), we see that populist attitudes are the only consistent and exclusive indicator of voting for a populist party.

In sum, we conclude that if we want to explain populist voting that the populist attitudes measure is a more robust indicator than external political efficacy and political trust. It is the only indicator that truly taps into the populist attitude and it is the only indicator that explains why individuals vote for a variety of populist parties. Although beyond the scope of this paper, we argue that these findings have important implications for the further study of populism. First, the fact that the populist attitude measure is a more robust explanation of why individuals vote for populist parties points to the importance of not only focusing on anti-elitism but also to the people-centred (in conjunction with anti-elitism) nature of populism. In other words, explanations of why voters support populist parties should focus less on mistrust or lower levels of external political efficacy and they should focus more on the people-centred nature of populism. Second, focusing on the people-centred nature of populism may also shed new light on changing notions of political representation among individuals with stronger populist attitudes (See Jacobs et al 2018; Zaslove et al 2017).

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A1. Standardized logistic regression estimates of the effect of populist attitudes, political trust and external political efficacy and attaching ideology on vote for a populist party.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<i>Indicators</i>					
Political Trust	-0.870*** (0.072)			-0.320** (0.118)	-0.273* (0.125)
External Efficacy		-1.076*** (0.087)		-0.144 (0.246)	-0.102 (0.187)
Populist attitudes			1.169*** (0.090)	0.105*** (0.180)	0.707*** (0.160)
<i>Education (ref. low)</i>					
Middle	-0.169 (0.086)	-0.111 (0.087)	-0.122 (0.088)	-0.114 (0.089)	-0.120 (0.093)
High	-0.698*** (0.102)	-0.588*** (0.103)	-0.581*** (0.104)	-0.586*** (0.105)	-0.528*** (0.110)
Female (ref. male)	-0.396*** (0.077)	-0.397*** (0.077)	-0.370*** (0.078)	-0.378*** (0.079)	-0.337*** (0.082)
Age	-0.152 (0.080)	-0.179* (0.081)	-0.201* (0.082)	-0.200* (0.083)	-0.201* (0.087)
Income redistribution					0.056 (0.083)
Cultural exclusion					0.157 (0.086)
EU integration					0.306** (0.095)
Intercept	-1.728	-1.820	-1.866	-1.865	-1.860

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; N = 1421; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.