

**Online Supplementary File for Populist Party Responsiveness and Populist Party Voter Satisfaction  
with Democracy in Europe**

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## A.1. Surveyed populist parties

Country	Party original / English (abbr.)
Austria	<i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs</i> / Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)
Belgium	<i>Vlaams Belang</i> / Flemish Interest (VB)
Bulgaria	<i>Ataka</i> / Attack (Ataka)
	<i>Grazhdani za Evropeysko Razvitie na Bulgariya</i> / Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB)
Czechia	<i>Akce nespokojených občanů</i> / Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO)
	<i>Svoboda a přímá demokracie</i> / Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)
Denmark	<i>Dansk Folkeparti</i> / Danish People's Party (DF)
Estonia	<i>Eesti Keskerakond</i> / Estonian Centre Party (EK)
	<i>Erakond Res Publica</i> / Res Publica Party (ERP)
Finland	<i>Perussuomalaiset</i> / Finns Party (PS)
France	<i>La France Insoumise</i> / Unsubmissive France (FI)
	<i>Front / Rassemblement National</i> / National Front / Rally (FN / RN)
Germany	<i>Alternative für Deutschland</i> / Alternative for Germany (AfD)
Greece	<i>Laikos Syndesmos – Chrysi Avgi</i> / Golden Dawn (GD)
	<i>Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras</i> / The Coalition of the Radical Left (Syriza)
	<i>Elliniki Lisi</i> / Greek Solution (EL)
Hungary	<i>Fidesz</i> / Fidesz (Fidesz)
	<i>Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom</i> / Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik)
Ireland	<i>Sinn Féin</i> / We Ourselves (SF)
Italy	<i>Movimento 5 Stelle</i> / Five Star Movement (M5S)
	<i>Fratelli d'Italia</i> / Brothers of Italy (Fdi)
	<i>Lega (Nord)</i> / (Northern) League (Lega)
Lithuania	<i>Tvarka ir Teisingumas</i> / Order and Justice (TT)
	<i>Darbo Partija</i> / Labour Party (DP)
The Netherlands	<i>Partij voor de Vrijheid</i> / Party for Freedom (PVV)
	<i>Forum voor Democratie</i> / Forum for Democracy (FVD)
	<i>Socialistische Partij</i> / Socialist Party (SP)
Poland	<i>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</i> / Law and Justice (PiS)
Romania	<i>Partidul Socialist Democrat</i> / Social Democratic Party (PSD)
Slovakia	<i>Smer – Slovenská Sociálna Demokracia</i> / Direction – Slovak Social Democracy (Smer)
Spain	<i>Unidas Podemos</i> / United We Can (Podemos)
	<i>Vox</i> / Voice (Vox)
Sweden	<i>Sverigedemokraterna</i> / Sweden Democrats (SD)
UK	United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)
	Brexit Party / Reform (BRX / Reform)

Populist parties coded according to PopuList (Rooduijn et al., 2023):

Far right populist, populist, far left populist

## A.2. Coding Scheme

The survey item "Most Important Problem" (MIP) asks respondents about the most important political problem in a country. Question: *What is the most important issue or problem in [your country] at the moment?* (Schmitt et al., 2022). Because this is an open-ended question, there are many answers that we need to convert into a numerical variable. Table A.2 displays our assignment to the different categories / values including a short coding instruction and coding examples.

**Table A.2**

Category	Explanation / Instruction	Value	Examples
<b>Economics</b>	All mentions relating to the economic system (e.g., financial policy, economic policy) and NOT relating to inflation, taxes and the welfare state	<b>1</b>	'The economy', 'economic crisis', 'debt', 'money', 'standard of living'
<b>Education</b>	All mentions relating to education policy	<b>2</b>	'Education of young people', 'school', 'a shortage of teachers'
<b>Employment</b>	All mentions relating to labour market policy and wage policy	<b>3</b>	'The labour issue', 'unemployment', 'work force', 'wages', 'salary'
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Energy</b>	All mentions relating to infrastructure projects and energy policy	<b>4</b>	'State of roads', 'energy', 'traffic'
<b>Environment</b>	All mentions relating to environmental policy and climate protection measures, including food and animal rights	<b>5</b>	'pollution', 'climate change', 'quality of food'
<b>Foreign policy &amp; defence</b>	All mentions relating to foreign and security policy and are not part of EU policy	<b>6</b>	'Turkey', 'danger of war', 'conflict with Croatia'
<b>Health</b>	All mentions relating to the health care system, drug policy only if it does not relate to drug trafficking	<b>7</b>	'health system', 'care funding', 'emergencies in hospitals', 'illegal drugs'
<b>Immigration</b>	All mentions relating to immigration	<b>8</b>	'I think it's immigration', 'asylum seekers', 'refugees', 'integration'
<b>Inflation</b>	All mentions relating to inflation	<b>9</b>	'loss of purchasing power', 'price hike', 'cost of living', "low wages, high wages"
<b>Law and crime &amp; terrorism</b>	All mentions relating to justice policy, crime or terrorism	<b>10</b>	'terrorist attacks', 'courts', 'crime', 'justice system', 'domestic security'
<b>Social policies &amp; welfare state</b>	All mentions relating to social policy and the welfare state (pensions, poverty, housing market)	<b>11</b>	'Exorbitant rents', 'social inequality', 'housing crisis', 'homelessness', 'poverty'
<b>Taxation</b>	All mentions relating to tax policy	<b>12</b>	'That taxes in France decrease', 'VAT fraud'

<b>Socio-cultural issues</b>	All mentions relating to cultural policy and the media, traditional values, patriotism or nationalism, moral policy, religion, family, etc.	<b>13</b>	'non-Polish media', 'superiority of the Estonian language', 'cultural decay', 'moral crisis'
<b>EU</b>	All mentions relating to the EU	<b>14</b>	'Question about the EU!!!!Will it be a subsidy or a penalty? ', 'subsidies from the European Union', 'Brexit', 'Schengen'
<b>Democracy &amp; political system</b>	All mentions relating to the functioning of the political system, its institutions and the government, populist statements, human rights and freedoms, functioning of administration and bureaucracy	<b>15</b>	'elections to the parliament' 'Party political instability for real coalition solutions', 'polity', 'politics', 'we have no government'
<b>Social groups &amp; minorities</b>	All mentions relating to specific demographic groups or minorities	<b>16</b>	'LGBTQ', 'Racism', 'older people being cut from everything', 'passive youth'
<b>Country specific</b>	All mentions relating to topics that are country-specific only	<b>17</b>	'Catalonia', 'the Cyprus problem'
<b>Agriculture</b>	All mentions relating to agricultural policy	<b>18</b>	'orchards'
<b>Corruption</b>	All mentions relating to corruption	<b>19</b>	'CORRUPTION', 'nepotism', 'political crime'
<b>Social fabric</b>	All mentions relating to the social cohesion of a country	<b>20</b>	'social cohesion', 'dividing society', 'polarization', 'division into left and right'
<b>Emigration &amp; Demographic change</b>	All mentions relating to emigration and demographic change	<b>23</b>	'emigration of young people', 'ageing population'
<b>not applicable</b>	In the case of mentions that do not address any content or cannot unambiguously be assigned to a single category	<b>888</b>	'ok, 'good' // 'inequality', 'solidarity'
<b>Missing values</b>	Empty cells, no answers	<b>999</b>	For missing values

For the calculation of the index several categories were merged: 'Taxation' and 'Inflation' were included in 'Economy', 'Health' and 'Education' in 'Social policies & welfare state', and 'Social groups & minorities' and 'Agriculture' in 'Socio-cultural issues'.

### A.3. Reliability test results MIP coding

The manually coded 'Most Important Problems' were subjected to an intercoder reliability test. The entire material was coded by three coders. All calculated coefficients far exceed accepted standards (Krippendorff, 2018, pp. 324–325; Lombard et al., 2002, p. 593).

**Table A.3** Intercoder Reliability

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Cases</b>	<b>Number of disagreements</b>	<b>Agreement percentage</b>	<b>Holsti</b>	<b>KALPHA</b>
Coder 1 / 2	7486	244	96.73%	0.967	0.982
Coder 1 / 3	7486	190	97.46%	0.975	0.982
Coder 2 / 3	7486	405	94.59%	0.946	0.967

#### A.4. Control variables

The following table reports the summary statistics for all our control variables.

**Table A.4**

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	2,946	50.884	15.265	18	92
Gender (female)	2,946	0.445	0.497	0	1
Economic outlook (decline)	2,946	3.102	1.103	1	5
Education: low	2,946	0.059	0.236	0	1
Education: medium	2,946	0.425	0.494	0	1
Education: high	2,946	0.516	0.500	0	1
Living area: rural	2,946	0.229	0.421	0	1
Living area: medium town	2,946	0.409	0.492	0	1
Living area: town	2,946	0.362	0.481	0	1
Vote share increased 2019	35	1.617	9.858	-23.550	28.100
Government status	35	0.503	0.500	0	1
Rile (party left right)	35	2.361	18.771	-29.787	72.414
Age of populist parties	35	20.929	17.223	1	74
Age of democracy	21	56.261	31.565	19	139
Unemployment	21	6.505	4.132	2	17.3
Inflow of immigrants / population	21	0.956	0.354	0.129	1.746
Political corruption	21	0.162	0.163	0.002	0.547

Obs. = Observations, Std. Dev. = Standard deviation

At the individual level, we accounted for respondents' **age, gender, education, personal economic outlook, and rural vs. urban divide**, all sourced from the EES Voter Study (Schmitt et al., 2022). The binary variable **gender** measures if a respondent is female (1) or male (0). **Age** is measured as the natural age ranging from 18 to 92. **Education** is the pre-coded education variable of the EES, which measures the number of years a respondent received education (low = 15 years and less, medium = 16-19 years, high = 20 and more years). We calculated three binary variables for each value. The **personal outlook on the economy** is measured using the item "And over the next 12 months, how do you think the general economic situation will develop?". The item ranges from 1 "get a lot better" to 5 "get a lot worse". The **rural vs. urban divide** is measured using the question "Would you say you live in a...?", asking if a respondent lives in a rural area, a middle sized or a large town. We calculated three binary variables for each value.

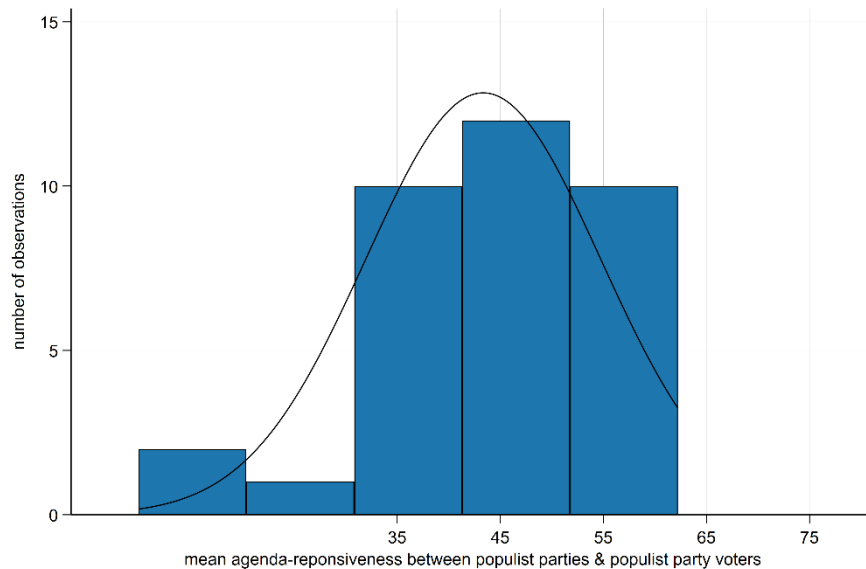
At the party level, we controlled for the **party's national government status at election time, its ideological orientation (Rile), party age, and electoral performance at the 2019 EP elections** (increased vote share). The data was also collected from the EES Manifesto Study (Reinl & Braun, 2023), the party age variable stems from the MAPP Project data (van Haute & Paulis, 2016).

At the country level, we incorporated controls for **unemployment rates and immigrant inflow** (Eurostat, 2020a, 2020b). We also included the **level of political corruption** in a country based on the V-DEM project (Coppedge et al., 2023). The index consists of several indices which measure corruption in the public sector, the executive, the legislative and judicial corruption. Finally, we added the **age of democracy**, which is measured as the last change in the political system (Marschall & Gurr, 2020). We did not include the national GDP as a control, as it correlates strongly with the personal economic outlook and the unemployment rates.

#### A.5. Descriptive analysis of agenda-responsiveness in the issue categories

Figure A.5.a. presents our independent variable, the agenda-responsiveness between populist parties and populist party voters, which can range from 0 (no issue congruence) to 100 (perfect issue congruence). The mean value is 42.28 (SD = 11.81). 90% of all surveyed populist parties display a value between 30 and 60.

**Figure A.5. a.** Distribution of agenda-responsiveness between populist parties and populist party voters

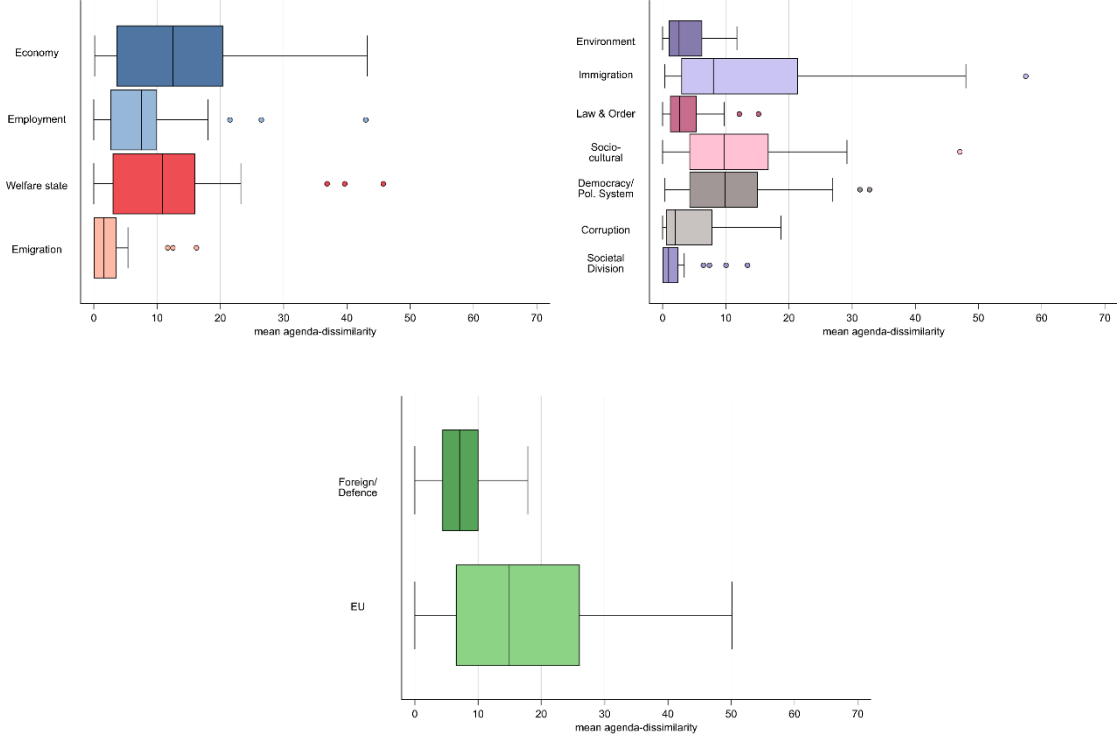


Zooming into the different issue categories (Figures A.5. b-d), we cannot look at agenda-responsiveness at that level, due to the way we measure it, but we can investigate the dissimilarity in different issue categories. It is important to note that in the following issue-specific analysis, higher values consequently indicate lower similarity, and vice versa, as we observe the untransformed dissimilarity in salience between parties and voters.

Surprisingly, we find the strongest discrepancies in some of those issues most often capitalised on by populist parties: EU, Immigration, Employment, Economics and Corruption. EU issues display the highest dissimilarity with a mean of 18.29. This finding can be explained with the low salience of the issue among populist party voters in our sample, except for UK Brexiteers. However, especially in EU election manifestos, populist parties tend to emphasise EU matters significantly, hence the discrepancy. Immigration and the Economy also emerge as areas of considerable dissimilarity, scoring mean values of 14.70 and 14.49 respectively. Another area of low responsiveness is Employment with a value of 11.57. These findings are particularly telling, as immigration, economic and job security concerns rank among the most important issues for populist party voters. Socio-cultural issues and the category Democracy/Political System also show high levels of dissimilarity, scoring mean values of 12.23 and 11.40 respectively. The high share of dissimilarity in Democracy/ Political system can be



attributed to the high salience of populist critiques of ‘the elites’ etc. in the populist party voter sample and a – comparatively – lower salience populist talking points in the party manifestos. Taken together, these findings suggest that both economic and socio-cultural issues, despite being primary concerns for populist party voters, are not as effectively addressed by populist parties as one might assume.



**Figures A.5. b-d.** Dissimilarity across issue categories

**Table A.6.** Robustness Checks with logit and ordered logit models

	(1)	(2)	(5)	(6)
	Ordered Logit	Ordered Logit, FE	Logit, binary dv	Logit, binary dv, FE
Agenda-responsiveness	<b>0.020***</b> (0.005)	<b>0.061***</b> (0.020)	<b>0.023***</b> (0.006)	<b>0.045***</b> (0.013)
Government status	<b>1.266***</b> (0.107)	<b>1.178***</b> (0.336)	<b>1.123***</b> (0.129)	<b>1.077***</b> (0.217)
Agenda-responsiveness x Gov. Status	<b>-0.056***</b> (0.009)	0.027 (0.030)	<b>-0.054***</b> (0.011)	0.020 (0.020)
Age	<b>-0.007***</b> (0.002)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.007** <b>(0.003)</b>	-0.006* (0.003)
Gender (female)	-0.127* (0.070)	<b>-0.149**</b> (0.060)	<b>-0.180**</b> (0.086)	<b>-0.219**</b> (0.090)
Economic outlook (decline)	<b>-0.757***</b> (0.041)	<b>-0.747***</b> (0.083)	<b>-0.685***</b> (0.047)	<b>-0.689***</b> (0.049)
Education: low	<b>-0.465***</b> (0.166)	-0.331* (0.180)	<b>-0.605***</b> (0.197)	<b>-0.433**</b> (0.204)
Education: medium	<b>-0.233***</b> (0.077)	<b>-0.150**</b> (0.070)	<b>-0.283***</b> (0.092)	-0.188* (0.097)
Living area: rural	-0.073 (0.098)	-0.016 (0.087)	0.024 (0.116)	0.079 (0.123)
Living area: medium town	-0.068 (0.082)	-0.052 (0.099)	-0.035 (0.099)	-0.014 (0.104)
Vote share increased 2019	-0.002 (0.005)	<b>0.071**</b> (0.030)	0.003 (0.007)	<b>0.053***</b> (0.017)
Rile (party left right)	<b>0.012***</b> (0.003)	<b>0.018**</b> (0.008)	<b>0.011***</b> (0.003)	<b>0.015**</b> (0.006)
Age of populist parties	-0.002 (0.002)	0.007 (0.006)	-0.000 (0.003)	0.011* (0.006)
Age of democracy	-0.001 (0.002)		-0.001 (0.002)	
Unemployment	<b>-0.058***</b> (0.010)		<b>-0.076***</b> (0.013)	
Inflow of immigrants / population	-0.048 (0.122)		-0.207 (0.158)	
Political corruption	<b>-2.167***</b> (0.286)		<b>-2.132***</b> (0.345)	
Constant			3.351*** (0.350)	1.832*** (0.348)
AIC	6509.546	6358.374	3212.858	3101.095
Observations	2,946	2,946	2,946	2,946
Number of countries	21	21	21	21

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1, centred independent variables in interaction terms

Our dependent variable is ordinal with four values, however, we assume it to be quasi-metric. To assess the robustness of our findings, we conducted two additional analyses: one using an ordered logit model and a logit model on the DV transformed into a binary variable. Both models were run with and without fixed effects (FE). We mirrored the structure used in our OLS model.

Our findings consistently show that our main variable of interest, agenda responsiveness, has a significant and positive effect on satisfaction with democracy. This outcome is observed across all model specifications. Similarly, government status and the interaction effect—which is significant only in the models without fixed effects—behave in the same way as in our OLS model. Thus, the robustness checks confirm our results.

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