Explaining vote for populist parties: the impact of the political trust, the economic and the political context

Danilo Serani

Department of Political and Social Sciences

Universitat Pompeu Fabra

danilo.serani@upf.edu

Abstract

Over the last decades, the uneven electoral success of populist parties in Europe sparked the interest of many scholars. Until now, special attention has been devoted only to radical (especially right-wing) populist parties, at the same time as the impact of political trust on the vote for these parties has not been sufficiently addressed. In this paper, I focus on the direct and conditional effects of the trust in the main political actors on the vote for radical and non-radical populist parties. By using data from the European Social Survey (2004-2014), this paper investigates the association between political trust and the Great Recession, as well as with the ideological convergence of the establishment parties. The results seem to confirm that political (dis)trust has a direct impact on the vote for a populist party, and its effects are accentuated during a crisis and when the establishment parties converge to the center.

Key words

Political trust, voting behavior, populism, multilevel analysis, economic crisis

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Introduction

Over the last three decades, Europe witnessed the spread of the third wave of populism (Mudde, 2007). Far from being a transitory anomaly of liberal democracies, populist challengers of the establishment parties managed themselves to consolidate their position in the party systems. Since their presence in the political arena narrow the options that are available to established parties and they promote a system without any intermediary between the citizens and the policy-makers, they are often considered as a threat to representative democracy and an obstacle to the formation of governments (Abedi, 2004). Despite their increasing electoral success in most countries, it is important to highlight that while in some countries they become extremely popular (such as France or Italy), in other (for example, Ireland) they have only enjoyed modest success.

Under which conditions people vote for a populist party in national parliamentary elections? Why do they enjoy an uneven success between countries? Leaving aside the explanations related with the leaders' charisma -which are tautological and difficult to operationalize (Van der Brug et al., 2005)-, there are two groups of factors that have been traditionally used to explain these cross-national differences (Mudde, 2007). On the one hand, the demand-side argument relates their success with the voters' features (such as gender, age or attitudes). This approach argues that these parties are more successful among a given group of people rather than another. In this sense, the protest voting model argues that people vote for a populist party in order to express their distrust towards the political elite (Bergh, 2004). On the other hand, the external supply-side explanations focus their attention on the country-level factors, by arguing that the characteristics of the external environment -such as the country economic conditions, the institutional settings or the dynamics of party competition- ease or hinder their rise and success. A well-established theory of the latter argues that populist parties are more successful when the establishment parties converge towards the center (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). These parties have been also theoretically linked with crises (Surel & Mény, 2002), but the empirical evidence is still scarce. In hard times, the estrangement between citizens and the elite is expected to increase, making more appealing populists' anti-elite discourse.

Since 2008, the increasing trend of voting for a populist party has been observed in presence of the Great Recession. In Europe, this strong exogenous shock has worsened the economic conditions of most countries, and it was particularly severe in Southern Europe, where it developed to a severe political crisis (Bosco & Verney, 2012). National governments came under great stress, as supranational institutions required them to implement harsh austerity measures in order to tackle the sovereign debt crisis. This process increased the perception that the political elite is more worried to respond the external demands than the citizens' need (Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014). At the same time, political distrust dramatically increased in Southern and Eastern Europe. The erosion of trust has been especially evident in the case of political parties and politicians

(Torcal, 2016). In response to this situation, people mobilized to express their grievances and incumbents suffered a severe electoral punishment in the first post-crisis elections in most countries (Kriesi, 2012).

Both the demand and the supply-side explanations have been mostly applied to explain vote for populist radical right-wing parties (see Mudde, 2007), especially in Western Europe. However, much less empirical efforts have been devoted to those populist parties that do not challenge the status quo in terms of political system issues, but rather present themselves as a challenger to the party system (Pauwels, 2010; Učeň, 2007). Additionally, previous studies did not pay the sufficient attention to the role of political trust, and they found contradictory results (Bergh, 2004; Norris, 2005). They also overlooked the fact that the impact of trust might depend on the characteristics of the context. Moreover, the relationship between trust and vote has not been sufficiently controlled by other explanatory factors, which may have overestimated the impact of trust. Finally, while there exists some empirical studies that address the impact of the Great Recession (Hernández & Kriesi, 2016; Kriesi & Pappas, 2015), they are mainly focused on the economic consequences of the crisis. In this research I intend to fill in these gaps by assessing the impact of the Great Recession, by including in the analysis non-radical populist parties, by focusing on the role of political trust and controlling its impact including other explanatory variables.

In this paper, I argue three things. Firstly, distrust in the main actors of political representation (politicians and political parties) is one of the strongest predictors of the populist vote. Second, the strong economic shock (although relevant) is insufficient *per se* to explain the populist vote, but it has to be linked to the crisis of representation of the main political actors. Finally, the impact of political (dis)trust on the vote depends on the context, and it is higher during the Great Recession and when then establishment parties converge. The latter can be considered as a failure of the electoral market (Lago & Martinez, 2011). For this purpose, I perform a multi-level logistic regression using the European Social Survey (2004-2014), covering 21 countries in both Western and Eastern Europe.

Defining and selecting populist parties

Defining populism is not an easy task, since the term is widely used by mass media and politicians as an insult implying demagoguery or opportunism (Taggart, 2002). There is no consensus among scholars either (Mény & Surel, 2002; Mudde, 2007). Depending on the focus, populism has been considered as an organizational form, as a political style or as an ideology (Pauwels, 2014).

My research will draw on the Mudde's definition of populism, understood as 'a thin-centered 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* of the people' (Mudde, 2007, p. 35). Unlike a full ideology, a thin-centered ideology is unable to offer an all-inclusive worldview, but it is limited to a specific set of issues (Freeden, 1998). Anti-elitism is one of the clearest elements of populist parties (Surel & Mény, 2002). They accuse the elites of standing in the way of

the centrality of the people, by claiming that they are arrogant, selfish and incompetent. In this sense, the political establishment is depicted as the enemy of the people, and establishment parties have no idea of what ordinary people find important or what policy reforms they would like to see implemented. Establishment parties can be considered 'all those parties that have participated in government or that the governing parties regard as suitable partners for government formation; those parties that are willing to cooperate with the main governing parties by joining them in a coalition government' (Abedi, 2004, p. 6).

Given its 'chameleonic nature' (Taggart, 2002), populist parties may be found across the whole political spectrum. Radical right-wing parties are the most studied and the most successful party family to have emerged in post-war Europe (Mudde, 2007). These nativist, authoritarian and populist parties accuse all the other parties to collude and focus on obsolete issues, instead of addressing the real conflict between national identity and multiculturalism. They also present themselves as the true champions of democracy (Mudde, 2007). Front National in France and Jobbik in Hungary are some of the most known parties.

Neo-liberal populist parties occupy the center-right spectrum. Neoliberal populism can be defined as 'a core ideology of neoliberalism (primarily in terms of economy) and populism' (Mudde, 2007, p. 30). These parties 'argue that the generosity of the average taxpayer is increasingly undermined by bureaucratic and political elites while advocating a reverse in the trend towards big government and state intervention' (Pauwels, 2014, p. 27). Forza Italia and LPF in the Netherlands (among others) belong to this category.

Social populist parties are located on the left of the ideological scale (March, 2016; Mudde, 2007; Pauwels, 2014). Although left-wing populism is not a new phenomenon, it has been relatively recently analyzed (March, 2016). Unlike right-wing populism, left wing populism is mainly focused on the economic issues and it is primarily inclusionary. Despite these differences, both populist party families share their attack on the elites, their distrust of liberal democracy, and their preference for mechanisms of plebiscitary democracy such as referenda (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2011). Syriza in Greece and the Socialist Party in the Netherlands can be considered as socialist parties.

Populist parties can also be found in the center. The centrist populist parties in Eastern Europe are not anti-democratic, but 'in a true populist vein, their though anti-establishment appeal is directed against all previous configurations of the ruling elite' (Učeň, 2007, p. 54). These parties are characterized by 'a politics of mainstream reformism; usually framed in terms of anti-establishment appeal; and genuine organizational newness' (Hanley & Sikk, 2013, p. 2). ANO in Slovakia is the typical example. In Western Europe, the anti-parties (Kriesi, 2012) pose a challenge in terms of their placement in the ideological scale, since they are transversal organizations whose purpose is to make fun of all the other parties. The *M5S* is the biggest one.

Theoretical arguments

Demand-side explanations and APEP vote

In the literature, the demand-side approach has been one of the two major traditional schools of thoughts on the APEP vote (Mudde, 2007). This branch of the literature is focused on the individual-level explanations, and it argues that vote for these parties is driven by the social background, the attitudes or the sentiments of the individuals in a given society. Among this kind of explanations, the theory of the resentment relates citizens' (lack of) political trust with the vote for a populist party (Bergh, 2004; Betz, 1993).

Political trust is an essential element of the political systems and it is considered as a measure of citizens' support for the regime (Easton, 1965). It refers to the faith that citizens place in political actors and institutions not to act in ways that will do them harm (Levi et al., 2000). Political trust requires that there is an agreement of the norms that constitute an institution, and institutions are actually perceived to work according to these norms. In this sense, the institutional actors can be trusted 'as far as the normative idea of the institution is widely accepted and there are good reasons to believe that institutional actors follow these norms' (Warren, 1999, p. 348–349). In other words, political trust is related with the normative expectation that 'the system is responsive and will do what is right even in the absence of constant scrutiny' (Miller & Listhaug, 1990, p. 358). High levels of trust constitute a reservoir of favorable attitudes that can help citizens tolerate a certain level of dysfunction or under-performance within the political system. Conversely, low levels of trust have been considered as a symptom of the bad health of a democratic system (Easton, 1965).

Political trust may be oriented towards the main actors of political representation, i.e. political parties and politicians (Torcal, 2014). After all, contemporary representative democracy can be considered as party democracy (Mair, 2009). Political parties are the core linkage between society and the state and they play two major roles in the development and organization of modern democracies. Firstly, they represent. They articulate interests, aggregate demands, and translate collective preferences into distinct policy options, linking civil society to the polity. Second, they govern. They organize and give coherence to the institutions of government, select the demands formulated by the citizens and they sought to build the policy programs that would serve the interests of their supporters and of the wider polity (Mair, 2009).

Traditionally, parties had to reconcile the demands for responsiveness with the demands of responsibility which are at the basis of party government. As actors of representation, they are expected to listen to and then respond to the demands of citizens, and to act in their best interests. On the other hand, as responsible actors, they are expected 'to act prudently and consistently and to follow accepted procedural norms and practices, which implies living up to the commitments that have been entered into by their predecessors in office' (Mair, 2009, p. 12). However, over the last two decades, the representative function has been eroded in favour of the governmental function, at the same time as governing became more and more difficult.

On the one side, the increasing shift of traditional parties (in Western Europe) from the civil society to the state and the low institutionalization of the party system (in Central and Eastern Europe) hindered their capacity to

give voice to the citizenry. On the other hand, the increasing importance of the European level in the multilevel governance structures increased the tension between the role of parties as representatives and as responsible actors. Parties still represent the interest of national citizens, but their room for manoeuvre has been drastically limited (Mair, 2009). In short, 'they are not only less capable of listening to and representing their voters, but also when in office they are unable to craft and implement the policies their voters asked for, since governments' freedom is severely constrained' (Bosco et al., 2012, p. 132).

The decline of the representative function of the main political actors contributed to the alienation of the voters from the traditional political process, since people 'get the impression that the parties that habitually govern are all alike, that they all betray the public behind the scenes, and that they all deserve to be sanctioned by a popular vote in the upcoming elections' (Kriesi, 2014, p. 367). At the same time, they may be perceived as unable to govern, since once elected they do not implement those policies which citizens signaled as preferred through the vote. Thereby, distrust in the political actors can be viewed as resulting from their failure to accomplish the democratic functions of linking citizens to the state, to respond to the citizens' demands, and of effectively representing people's interests (Torcal, 2014).

The protest vote theory relates these attitudes with the APEP vote (Bergh, 2004; Passarelli & Tuorto, 2016). According to this model, protest voters are rational individuals who vote 'with the boot' and use their ballots for those parties that are an outcast in the political arena in order to express their discontent with the traditional political parties, as well as to scarce the political elite. Thereby, a vote for an APEP can be considered as a vote against the main political actors, rather than a vote motivated by policy-driven factors. In this sense, 'the party is not chosen for its program or its policy potential, but for the pain it causes the established parties' (Mudde, 2007, p. 227). Put differently, 'distrust would act as a motivating factor drawing people towards new party alternatives and away from traditional parties' (Bélanger et al., 2005, p. 127).

Although the protest theory has been the standard explanation, there may be another potential mechanism linking political (dis)trust with the APEP vote. Since citizens are dissatisfied with the traditional mechanisms of political representation, they may be demanding more participatory and direct decision-making processes. In this sense, distrust in the main political actors constitutes the perfect breeding ground for the APEP discourse, which characterizes itself for the people-centrism, the claim of a 'democratic regeneration' of the system, the promise of a 'clean-up of the institutions', as well as the willingness to reform a corrupted and malfunctioning political system (Conti & Memoli, 2015). Thereby, distrustful people may somehow cast a "policy-driven" vote for their proposals regarding the mechanisms of political participation, and APEP may be "representing" the interests of those who are tired of the traditional parties (Bélanger & Aarts, 2006).

Supply-side explanations and APEP support

The external supply-side approach has been the other major explanation of the vote for an APEP. This branch of the literature argues that a demand for a populist party in the society does not necessarily translate in its

success, but it depends on the political opportunity structure (POS). POS can be defined as 'consistent, but not necessary formal or permanent, dimensions of the political environment' that are external to the party in question and provide it incentives for its success or failure (Tarrow, 1998, pp. 19–20; see also Mudde, 2007). This model is focused on the country-level explanations, by arguing that the differences between countries are explained by factors that are exogenous to the APEP. Among them, the theory of convergence relates the dynamics of party competition on the issue space with the APEP vote (Kitschelt et al., 1995).

The theory of party competition starts from the Downsian rational choice axiom, which stated that voters and parties are rational actors located at ideal points along an issue space. The Downsian proximity model predicted that voters, who aim to maximize their own utility, compare parties' positions on the issue space. They will subsequently vote for the party whose position on a given issue is the closest to their interests. Political parties (which are vote-seeking actors) are aware of this behavior and aim to maximize their own utility (gain votes). Thus, they situate themselves as close as possible to the majority of the voters. This model assumes that citizens' preferences follow a normally distribution with a single peak in the center, and most citizens prefer a moderate policy proposal (Downs, 1957). So, assuming that political parties aim to maximize their utility, they tend to converge to the center, where is situated the median voter.

Although the original model has been reformulated by competing theories (Adams et al., 2005; Rabinowitz et al., 1989), the argument that the strategic positions adopted by parties on the policy or ideological space are related with the success or failure of populist parties is well-established in comparative politics (Abedi, 2004; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). In this regard, Kitschelt'(1995) and Abedi' (2004) convergence thesis claims that support for APEP is fueled by the convergence on the left-right scale of the establishment parties.

A polarized party system has more intense partisan competition and produces clearer and more party choices. This stimulates participation by helping people find the closest party to their position and improves representation. Conversely, convergent parties fail to present voters with an identity that distinguish themselves from the other competitors. Therefore, voters are not able to appreciate any difference between them, making the party system less responsive and representative (Dalton, 2008) and voters more miserable (Laver, 2011). The lack of a recognizable difference between the traditional parties may also contribute to the growing discontent that voters feels towards these parties (Mair, 1995). Since populist parties claim that all the other parties are essentially the same, the more the traditional parties converge, the more citizens perceive that APEP "are right", which in turn may fuel their success. Another possible mechanism explaining the relationship between the convergence of the establishment parties and the vote for an APEP would be the fact that a converging party system is unable to absorb new conflicts arising from society, which facilitates the emergence of niches within the political space (Kriesi, 1999). Following this argumentation, the incapacity of the established parties to satisfy new demands arising from globalization (Kriesi et al., 2012) and modernization provided the chance for the populist radical right parties to rise.

One of the main consequences of the convergence of the establishment parties is the dramatic reduction of the party supply. If parties are not able to distinguish themselves from their competitors in the political arena, they focus on the same issues and they are unable to transmit a markedly different message to their constituency and population in general, the options available for the voters in a given election are scarce, even if the number of parties standing for elections is high. This scenario may lead to a failure of the electoral market, which occurs 'when a significant number of individuals are left dissatisfied by the partisan choices available to them' (Lago et al, 2011, p. 7). As in the markets of goods, the equilibrium in the electoral market might fail apart in situations where a large number of voters may not find any party able to respond to their demands or to implement a policy to solve a given problem, making 'the number of parties that voters are willing to vote lower than the number of parties competing' (Lago et al, 2011,p. 7).

In an electoral market failure context, the impact of the political distrust on the APEP vote may be higher than in a context in which this situation does not exist. In democratic regimes, a clear distinction among parties improves the functioning and performance of the whole political system (Przeworski, 2010). Conversely, the lack of a clear ideological difference may lead to a system-level programmatic decay, which occur 'when people reject the status quo and at the same time do not see meaningful distinctions between the major parties' policy offerings. Under such arrangements, people translate one party's policy failing to the other parties, and all share the blame' (Morgan, 2009, p. 11). According to Hirschman (1970), when traditional parties fail in presenting themselves as a clear and credible option of government and they are perceived as unresponsive, citizens may react in two different ways. They may 'exit', by abstaining in the elections (Grönlund & Setala, 2007), or they may 'voice' their discontent with the existing political alternatives by casting a populist vote (Bélanger & Nadeau, 2005), fuelling the protest vote mechanism. In other words, the convergence of the establishment parties may leave a large number of individuals dissatisfied with the existing political alternatives, which in turn may increase the impact of the distrust on the vote for an APEP. They may be perceived as the only valid electoral alternative and can be seen as a security valve to express the discontent towards all the other political parties.

APEP and crises

Some authors claim that populism simply cannot emerge without crisis (Laclau, 2005; Moffitt, 2015), but the empirical evidence is very scarce. According to Taggart, 'populist parties exist as a reaction to certain systemic and political factors that appear to be manifest as crises' (2002, p.50). As it has been argued, 'in hard times there seem to be many good reasons to distrust political parties and none to like them' (Bosco & Verney, 2012, p. 150). When "things go wrong", their core belief that the system has failed and that the elite is the main responsible is expected to take root. For example, Go Italy arose just after the collapse of the Italian party system in the early 1990s. In 1994 (few months before the parliamentary elections), the tycoon Berlusconi announced that he will "take the field" for the good of Italy, obtaining a landslide majority.

That said, we should distinguish between an economic and a political crisis (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015; Mudde, 2007). An economic crisis is the result of a bad economic performance, such as the drop of the macroeconomic indicators (Shambaugh, 2012). Conversely, a political crisis results from poor governance in general, failure of party supply in channeling citizens' interests, as well as the citizens' perception of a general ineffectiveness of the political elite in providing an answer to their demands (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015). In short, a political crisis can be considered as a crisis of political representation. It is driven by the increasing malfunctioning of the representative democracy, and particularly by the deficiencies of the party system to accomplish its central task to link society and the state (Morgan, 2011; Pappas, 2014).

Both crises are closely correlated, but they may interact in different ways: 'a political crisis may occur independently of an economic crisis, but the political crisis may also co-occur with an economic crisis; the political crisis may precede the economic crisis and contribute to it, or a deep economic crisis may serve as a catalyst for the development of a political crisis' (Kriesi & Pappas, 2015, p. 9). A severe economic hardship may lead to a political crisis situation, which takes place when 'routine incremental problem solving no longer works, when institutions are no longer taken for granted and self-reinforcing, when compliance of the citizens is no longer guaranteed, and when positive feedback processes are set in motion that accentuate the emerging crisis'(Kriesi, 2016, p. 5). In this sense, an economic crisis can be seen as a stress test to evaluate the responsiveness of the main actors of political representation, since it 'demands a response and oblige them to step out of their comfort zone and consider policies beyond their normal repertoire' (Morgan, 2009, p. 9). So, in order to evaluate the magnitude of a crisis, it is more important to focus on how the political elite respond to the economic hardship and how their decisions are perceived by the people, rather than focus on the economic consequences *per se*.

Following this argumentation, an economic crisis may reshape an irresolute conflict in the society, or it may create new ones (Kriesi, 2016). An economic crisis may also exacerbate the struggle of the political parties between their role as responsive and responsible actors, especially in a context of multilevel governance (Mair, 2009; Morgan, 2009). On the one hand, since they have "the hands tied" in some key policy areas (such as the monetary policy), they may not react to the crisis as expected by the citizens, increasing the perception that political parties are not listening and responding to their demands. This situation puts parties in a 'lose-lose situation': they 'may either attempt a response, thereby abandoning their ideological identity and alienating supporters; or they may stay true to its ideological position, ignoring the crisis and frustrating people for failing to address the country's problems' (Morgan, 2009, p. 10). Both options are detrimental for traditional parties: people will reject them either because of their ideological consistencies or because of its unresponsiveness (Morgan, 2009). On the other hand, they may also be considered as irresponsible actors that, once in government, they do not respect the mandate awarded by citizens. These mechanisms may fuel the crisis of representation of the political actors, which has been considered as a potential factor leading to a collapse of the party systems (Morgan, 2011). Under these circumstances, the impact of the distrust on the APEP vote may be higher. Since traditional parties failed in solving citizens' problems and they could be blamed for it,

their most critical alternative might be seen as the only way to revert the situation. Or, at least, distrustful people could be more likely to give them a chance. On the basis of the arguments presented above, I formulate the following hypotheses on the populist vote:

H[1]: High levels of distrust in the actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) are associated with a higher likelihood to vote for a populist party;

H[2]: The impact of the distrust in the actors of political representation is higher when the establishment parties converge towards the center;

H[3]: Political distrust has a higher impact on the populist vote in a period of crisis.

Vote for populist parties in hard times: the Great Recession

The Great Recession can indeed be considered as a severe economic crisis, the worst in decades. In terms of magnitude, duration and effects, it can be compared with the Great Depression of the '30s (Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014). Between 2008 and 2009, all the European countries (with the exception of Poland) entered in recession, experiencing at least two consecutive quarters of negative economic growth (Eurostat, 2016). However, unlike other crises, the Great Recession was 'not merely a period of slow economic growth, attempting to recover from a financial crisis; it was a full-fledged existential crisis, provoked by a banking crisis, a sovereign debt crisis, and a macroeconomic crisis' (Shambaugh, 2012, p. 158).

The Great Recession has had an uneven effect among countries. Figure 1 displays the Economic Performance Index (Khramov & Ridings Lee, 2013)- which has the advantage to capture the ups and downs of the whole state of the economy- of the European countries between 2004 and 2014. As we can observe, some countries (such as Poland) actually did not experience a crisis at all. Others (such as Estonia) experienced a V-shaped trend: national economies suffer a sharp but brief period of economic decline with a clearly defined trough, followed by a strong recovery. Hungary experienced a double-dip recession, with the first strong contraction in 2009, a short recovery, a second recession in 2012 and then an economic recovery. Finally, in Greece there has been a clear L-shaped trend, or depression. It is the worst-case scenario, since economy drops very quickly and then it is unable to return to trend line growth for many years.

[Figure 1 almost here]

In some countries, 'the economic downturn has left government parties stuck between the devil and the deep blue sea, squeezed between the demands of their voters and those of a whole bunch of external actors such as the EU institutions, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), bond markets, and the European Central Bank (ECB)'(Bosco & Verney, 2012, p. 133). In response to the sovereign debt crisis, Southern Europe governments implemented tough austerity measures and structural reforms to their welfare programs and the labor market. To a large extent, these policies were imposed by the Troika -formed by the EU, the IMF and the ECB- in return for the credit necessary to repay their public debt. The external constraints on domestic policy making dramatically reduced the power and credibility of national governments. In no stage of this process did anyone

ask citizens their opinion about those measures that affected them directly. People 'did not have a say in the matter; they simply had to accept the deal' (Armingeon & Guthmann, 2014, p. 424).

In other words, the economic crisis 'has brought all the failings of the national political systems into sharp relief. Voters distrust their political class not only because of the economic pain they are going through, but also because the crisis has brought a realization of the economic mismanagement of their governments' (Bosco & Verney, 2012, p. 134). As expected by the economic voting theory, between 2011 and 2012 these circumstances led to a severe electoral punishment or government reshape in most European countries (Hernández & Kriesi, 2016). However, the Great Recession has done much more than showing the incumbents' mismanagement of the economy: it has shown that traditional parties and the political elite did not respond to the citizens' demands, making them less credible as actors of representation of interests (Kriesi et al., 2015; Pappas, 2014; Torcal, 2014). According to Hernández & Kriesi (2016), the Great Recession can be considered as a critical juncture. Unlike in 'normal times', during the crisis not only incumbent parties, but also all the mainstream parties as a whole suffered important electoral losses. The severity of the long-lasting crisis not only led people to distrust in the governing parties, but it also rose the perception that the whole party system was failing in dealing with the citizens' requests. This process might have provoked a destabilization and change in the European party systems, giving rise to realignment/dealignment processes. As predicted by the literature on party system change (Morgan, 2011), the increasing distrust in the main political actors might be behind the collapse of the party system. At aggregate level, Hernández & Kriesi (2016) have found that during the Great Recession populist radical right parties, radical left and non-mainstream parties benefitted the most from the economic hardship, while support for the mainstream parties decreased further. However, they have taken into consideration only the impact of the economy.

In order to study the relationship between the Great Recession and the attitudes towards the main actors of political representation, Figure 2 displays the evolution of political trust between 2004 and 2014. To begin with, we should observe that the levels of trust in the political actors are quite low (the maximum value is 5.64 in Denmark), which confirms that people trust much less in the actors of political representation than in representative or impartial institutions (Torcal, 2014). As can be observed, the erosion of political trust has been dramatic in Greece, the country most affected by the economic crisis. The opposite is also true: political trust increased (or showed a trendless fluctuation) in some of the countries which did not experience an economic crisis at all or there has been a rapid recovery (such as Denmark and Estonia). However, we should focus on other cases. One of them is Poland. It was the only European country which has not suffered a GDP recession but, after an initial increase, political trust dropped, reaching similar levels to Greece. Conversely, there are countries where political trust increased during the (strong) economic downturn, such as Hungary. As we can see, the association between political trust and economic conditions is not as strong as some scholars argued (Miller & Listhaug, 1999; Polavieja, 2013), despite the existence of similar trends.

[Figure 2 almost Here]

Data and methods

In order to test my hypotheses, I rely at individual level on the European Social Survey (ESS) data. It is a cross-national survey that has been conducted with high-quality standards in survey methodology across Europe since 2001. Every two years, the survey measures citizens' attitudes and behavior in more than 30 countries. Individuals are selected by strict random probability methods at every stage. In order to achieve the optimal comparability over time and across countries, all the countries adopt the same questionnaire, following the same procedures during all the stages of the process.

The use of the ESS has advantages and disadvantages. The main drawback is the fact that, unlike national election studies, it has been conducted at a time that is varyingly distant from the date of the national general elections. The major advantage is that, unlike national election studies, it includes all the variables necessary to test my hypotheses. Even more importantly, they have been asked by using the same phrasing and they are measured in the same scale over time and across countries. Since in this study I am interested in studying the impact of political trust after and before the Great Recession, the preferred choice was to maximize the possibilities for the cross-national and over-time comparison of identical questions for a long period of time (2004-2014), rather than to limit my analysis to the socio-democratic characteristics (as done by Arzheimer & Carter, 2006), to exclude some variable due to the change of the scale or to cover a reduced timespan.

In order to assess the impact of the crisis on the populist vote, the cases to be included are the countries where the survey covered at least one election after and one before the Great Recession. This criterion allows me to study the vote for an APEP in 21 countries. They are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and Ukraine. In this study, I will exclude those countries where populist parties enjoyed very modest success or even none at all, as well as those countries where populist parties became stronger or rose after the Great Recession. The countries excluded for these criteria are: Cyprus, Iceland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Although at aggregate level the exclusion of those failed cases may lead to a selection bias (Golder, 2003), at individual level the problem is less straightforward and the inclusion of those countries where vote for a populist party is extremely low may even distort any analysis of individual voting decisions (Arzheimer et al., 2006; Arzheimer, 2009). First of all, in countries where these parties are very weak, there may be a strong social desirability bias, and the number of respondents who reported having voted for a tiny APEP in a survey is even less than the electoral results suggest. Second, tiny parties will not field candidates in most constituencies, preventing voters from them. This mechanism is not reflected in the surveys, and their supporters are often coded in the "other" category.

The dependent variable is the declared vote for an APEP in the latest national elections. It is a dummy variable, which takes value 1 if the respondent reported having voted for an APEP and 0 if him/her voted for any other party. It is true that political (dis)trust might be also associated with abstention in national elections (Bélanger et al., 2005; Grönlund et al., 2007). However, following previous studies (Anduiza, 1999; Blais, 2000), in this

research I consider the act of voting as a two-step process: people first decide whether to cast a vote or not, and then which party to pick for. Since I am interested in explaining party choice and, more specifically, vote for a populist party, in this study I focus only on the last stage of the voting decision process, excluding the abstainers (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers et al., 2002; Rooduijn et al., 2016).

In this study, I rely on previous classifications of the different APEP categories (Hanley & Sikk, 2013; March, 2011; Mudde, 2007; Učeň, 2007). They are: populist radical right-wing, social populist, centrist and neo-liberal populist parties. The list of the parties included in the analysis may be consulted in the Annex. It is true that, because of the differences among populist parties (in terms of ideology, issues and policy proposals), a multinomial strategy might represent the best approach. However, the problem with this technique is that 'the cross-national comparison makes it impossible to distinguish the same party families in each country without too many empty cells' (Lubbers et al., 2002, p. 374; see also Kehrberg, 2014). So, in line with previous studies (Abedi, 2004; Meguid, 2005; Rooduijn et al., 2016; Van Spanje, 2011), in this research I focus on explaining the support for a populist party vs support for non-populist parties.

The independent variables used in this study are measured at two different levels of analysis. At individual level, the main explanatory variable is the trust in the main political actors. It is an additive scale created from the average of trust in political parties and trust in politicians. The scale is a very reliable indicator (Crombach's alfa=0.933) of the citizens' support for the main actors of political representation. For the sake of interpretability, the scale has been reverted: higher values mean high levels of distrust.

Recent panel-data analyses have raised a potential problem of endogeneity between vote for populist parties and political trust (Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2016; Rooduijn et al., 2016; Van der Brug, 2003). Although it has been claimed that distrustful people are more likely to vote for a populist party, it has been also demonstrated that it might be the other way around, and that voting for a populist party contributes to fuel the distrust towards the political system or the political actors. Put simply, political distrust may be not only the cause, but also the consequence of the APEP support. In this context, the 'expressing discontent logic' and the 'fueling discontent logic' may affect each other mutually, leading to an increasing 'spiral of distrust' mechanism (Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2016; Rooduijn et al., 2016). Conversely, other panel data studies argued that 'such criticisms are unwarranted and, while discontent attitudes are not impervious to change, there exists an important element of exogeneity to them' (Bélanger & Aarts, 2006, p. 16). As can be seen, the direction of the relationship between political trust and populist voting is still a disputed topic. While this issue is quite hard to address with post-electoral cross-sectional data, in this research I consider that populist parties need a fertile breeding ground in order to rise and grow, and their anti-elite discourse is more successful among those who are already discontent with the traditional political actors. People' distrust towards the main political actors exists before that populist parties join in the electoral arena. Under these circumstances, populist parties might be considered as able political entrepreneurs taking advantage of a pre-existing pool of distrustful citizens (Bélanger & Aarts, 2006). In absence of these attitudes, I find quite hard that people start distrusting

in their representatives and vote for a populist party just because of its harsh criticism towards the political elite. In fact, even some supporter of the endogeneity issue recognizes that the 'spiral of distrust' mechanism starts from a pre-existing set of distrustful attitudes (Hooghe et al., 2016).

Added to the model are those variables that have been considered by the demand-side literature as the most relevant alternatives to the protest model theory. The support thesis argues that a vote for a populist party is driven by the same factors that explain vote for other parties. In this sense, people vote for populist parties because they feel closer to their position on a given issue or they want their policy proposals to be implemented, rather than to express their discontent against the traditional parties (Givens, 2005; Van der Brug, 2003; Van der Brug, Fennema, & Tillie, 2000). The scarce analyses that included both the protest and the policy voting mechanisms have actually demonstrated that the impact of political (dis)trust on the populist vote is reduced when the other mechanism is controlled for (Bélanger et al., 2006; Passarelli & Tuorto, 2016).

Applying this argumentation to radical right-wing parties, it has been demonstrated that anti-immigrants attitudes are the strongest predictor for the vote for these parties (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Norris, 2005; Van der Brug et al., 2000). Although to a less extent, these attitudes are also a good predictor for the vote for neo-liberal populist parties (Pauwels, 2010). The anti-immigrant scale has been created from the average of three items tapping attitudes towards the immigrants (Crombach's alpha=0.852). On the other hand, populist left-wing parties are mainly focused on the economic inequality and they are strongly in favor of an active role of the governments to reduce it (March, 2011; March & Mudde, 2005). Therefore, it should be expected that those who agree with this economic policy perspective are more likely to vote for a populist left-wing party.

The partisan voting mechanism (which has not been sufficiently tested in the support for populist parties) is another well-established approach used to explain the voting behavior. Following the seminal work of Campbell et al. (1960), it has been demonstrated (both in the U.S. and in Europe) that partisan loyalties and the attachment to a political party are some of the strongest predictors of the voting behavior (Bartels, 1998, 2000; Campbell et al., 1960; Thomassen, 2005). Over the last decades, the explanatory power of this model has been challenged by the argument that advanced industrial democracies are undergoing an intense process of dealignment, which implies a strong reduction of the linkages and the affective ties between voters and parties (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002; Dassonneville & Hooghe, 2016). Under these conditions, the inclusion of partisanship could be useful to assess whether people keep voting for a party because they feel identified with it. In order to control for it, a dummy variable will be added (1=APEP partisans, 0 otherwise).

The sociological approach represents another strong alternative to the protest model thesis. This branch of the literature argues that populist (radical right) parties are more successful among a given social-demographic group rather than other. For instance, it has been argued that these parties are more successful among lower social strata, formed by manual and low-skilled workers, unemployed and lower educated people. Their social margination may make them more vulnerable to the discourse that politicians do not care about them

(Arzheimer & Carter, 2006). Gender and age are other two potential explanatory variables. Thus, the necessity to introduce them in the model. Occupation has been measured by adding to the traditional Goldthorpe scheme unemployed, housewives, students and retired people (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006).

Finally, the sociotropic evaluation of the economy is an essential control variable in an analysis covering a period dramatically disrupted by one of the worst-ever economic shocks. At individual level, there is scarce empirical evidence of the impact of the economy on the populist vote. One of the very few exceptions is the Ivarsflaten' (2008) paper, who found a limited impact of the economy. However, she limited her analysis to the vote for radical right-wing parties in 7 Western Europe countries in 2003.

At country level, I am interested in analyzing the characteristics of the party system competition. Thus, I introduce in the model the change in the convergence score, calculated by the difference between the establishment parties' convergence score in the election held at the time in which I am studying the vote for the APEP and the election held at time *t-1*. The convergence score has been calculated by the difference (in absolute values) of the ideological position on the Left-Right scale of the leftmost from that of the rightmost establishment party (Abedi, 2004). Positive values mean that establishment parties converged towards the center compared with the previous election, whereas negative values reflect a divergence. The party position on the Left-Right scale has been obtained by using the Comparative Manifesto Data Project[1].

At the same time, there is a need to address the effects of the Great Recession also at country level. Previous studies have already addressed the relationship between economic conditions and APEP vote (only at this level), but it has been exclusively analyzed the impact of the unemployment, with contradictory findings (Jackman & Volpert, 1996; Arzheimer & Carter, 2006). In this case I use the Economic Performance Index (EPI) to assess the role of the whole state of the economy. More precisely, I computed the difference of the mean EPI score between the incumbents' term in office at the election t and the election t-1. Positive values mean a deterioration of the economic conditions.

It has been also demonstrated that the institutional settings play a role on the electoral success or failure of populist parties. Among them, the permissiveness of electoral system is the most important one. Given both mechanical and psychological effects, previous studies have demonstrated that APEP flourish best under Proportional Representation systems with low disproportionality (Norris, 2005). In the paper, the impact of the electoral system on the vote has been controlled by the Gallagher's least square index. The descriptive of all these variables are displayed in Table 1. Further information may be found in the Annex.

[Table 1 About Here]

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[1] The original left–right scale ranging from -100 to 100 has been recoded to match the other scales used in the paper from 0 to 10. For this purpose, I applied the formula used by Camia & Caramani (2012). There is a perfect correlation (r=1.0) between the new and the original scale.

Given the hierarchical structure of the data and the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, I perform a multilevel logistic model with cross-sectional data, with individuals clustered in countries. It has been claimed that omitting a random effect for a relevant level in the multilevel modeling may lead to downward biases of the standard error of the level 2 covariates, which may increase the risk of making type 1 errors (Schmidt-Catran & Fairbrother, 2015). It is also true that the level 2 covariates (which should be constant within clusters, in this case countries) are actually time variant, since they are measured at country-year level. Therefore, a three-level model (with individuals nested into country-years, nested into countries) or a cross-classified model (with individuals nested into country-years, cross-classified within countries and years) may represent better the hierarchical structure of the dataset and it may lead to more accurate estimates. That said, given that these models are much more complex than the one I chose, they face problems of convergence. This issue is especially relevant taking into account that I am dealing with a dichotomous dependent variable, a logistic regression model, a large number of individuals, an uneven number of country-years within countries, as well as a relatively reduced number of countries (21). So, although it is not the best model, a two-level model is simpler, more feasible, it is easier to interpret the fixed part of the model and, above all, it does not face problems of convergence. I discarded the alternative to perform a two-level model with individuals clustered in country-years, since in this case I will violate the basic multilevel assumption of the independence between clusters. So, the preferred choice was to perform a model with a random effect (random intercept) at the country level. In order to control for the aforementioned problems, I introduce the time in the models through a dummy wave variable, which somehow captures the effects of the heterogeneity within countries.

On the other hand, there is also a necessity to take into account the contextual effects of the level 1 variables, by distinguishing between the within and between effects. For this purpose, the standard procedure is to introduce in the model the cluster mean of the level 1 variables (to take into account the between group regression), as well as the within-group deviation score (Snijders & Bosker, 2012). Otherwise, it is impossible to disentangle the within from the between effects of a given variable, which implies the assumption that the two regression coefficients are essentially the same. Since it may not be the case (and the two effects could even go in the opposite direction), the interpretation of the coefficients without taking into account the between-group regression could lead to wrong conclusions. Previous analyses of the vote for a populist party by using a multilevel technique fail to take into account this relevant aspect (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2000; Ramiro, 2014), which may lead to a misspecification of the model, as well as an erroneous interpretation multilevel regression coefficients. Although the ideal approach should be to introduce as many aggregate variables as the number of level 1 covariates (Snijders & Bosker, 2012), in this case I refrain from doing it and I will introduce only the cluster mean of the political distrust. The relatively limited number of countries poses a severe constraint in terms of degrees of freedom at level 2, which implies a parsimonious approach when building the model at level 2.

In this study, I am interested in analyzing both the direct effect of the political trust on the populist vote and its conditional effect, depending on the context (and, more specifically, the convergence of the establishment

parties and the Great Recession). For this purpose, I perform a pool analysis by introducing an interaction between the trust in the main political actors, the change in the convergence score and a dummy wave variable gauging the effects of the Great Recession (2008-2014=1; 2004-2006=0). In this way, although I am assuming (by introducing in the model the time fixed effects) that the Great Recession has had, on average, the same impact on the vote for a populist party in all the countries, I can disentangle this "constant" effect from the differences at cross-national level via the interaction with the political trust (which varies at individual level, but it also contributes to explain the variance at country level). The introduction, at the country level, of the economic variables is another way to assess the uneven impact of the Great Recession on the populist vote.

Results

Table 2 contains the parameters for all the models estimated. To begin with, model 1 displays that the 23% of the total variance in the populist vote is explained at country level, showing the necessity to perform a multilevel analysis. Before addressing this issue, model 2 displays the parameters of the individual-level model. As can be observed, the most relevant alternatives to the protest voting model have been empirically confirmed as predictors of the vote for a populist party. In line with previous findings, support for a populist party is partly motivated by the same pragmatic considerations that explain vote for other parties. More specifically, the attitudes towards one of the core issues of populist parties play a role in determining the vote for them. On the one hand, anti-immigrant attitudes are positively associated with the vote for a populist party. On the other hand, people who consider that governments should take an active role to reduce the economic inequality are more likely to vote for a populist party. These findings seem to suggest that a vote casted for these parties can be also considered as a policy-driven vote (Van der Brug, 2003). Likewise, party identification keeps playing a significant role in explaining the decision to vote for a party, despite the increasing process of dealignment. As predicted by the partisan voting model, those who feel closer to a populist party are much more likely to vote for it.

[Table 2 almost here]

The social background is another important explanatory factor. As it has been claimed, there is a gender gap in the populist vote, and men are more likely to vote for these parties. Age has a statistically significant impact as well, and older people have a less likelihood to cast a populist vote than younger people. At the same time, these parties flourish among the lower social strata. Highly educated people are much less likely to vote for an APEP than those who have a very low educational level. In line with previous findings (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006), manual workers and unemployed show the highest propensity to vote for a populist party, compared with the service class. The latter can also be seen as a social consequence of the Great Recession.

Model II shows also that the relationship between economy and vote is empirically confirmed at individual level. The higher the dissatisfaction with the state of the economy, the higher the propensity to cast a vote for a populist party. However, it is worth observing that, while economy plays a role, there are other factors with

a higher impact. Political (dis)trust is one of the most relevant. Even controlling by the most important rival explanations, not only it is still significant, but its impact on the vote is far from negligible.

In order to show more clearly its effect, Figure 3 shows the comparison between the impact of the attitudes towards the main political actors and the economic evaluations. As can be seen, the probability to vote for a populist party increases from 0.13 in case of political trust to 0.26 when there is no trust at all in the main political actors. On the other hand, the probability to cast a populist vote increases from 0.18 when the perception of the economy is good to 0.22 when people think that the economy goes bad. In other words, political distrust is associated with a 13-point increase in the probability to vote for a populist party, whereas in the case of the economy we can observe a 4-point increase in the probability. These results seem to suggest that, even if economy plays a (minor) role, a populist vote is mainly driven by the distrust in the main political actors, controlling by the relevant alternative explanations. The impact of the policy-driven attitudes is high as well, but it is still lower than the effect of the political trust.

[Figure 3 Almost Here]

In model 3 I added the characteristics of the party system polarization, the electoral system, the cluster means of the political trust and a dummy wave variable gauging the effect of the Great Recession. As can be observed, the findings described in the model 2 still hold in this model. Focusing on the level-2 predictors, the between-groups regression coefficient of the political trust shows that there is a strong and highly significant impact of the differences among countries (in terms of average levels of trust) on the vote for a populist party. In other words, the contextual effect of mean distrust in the country gives an additional contribution to the vote for a populist party over and above the effect of the individual attitude. Conversely, the permissiveness of the electoral system does not affect the individual decision to cast a vote for a populist party. This finding is in line with the Arzheimer' (2009) analysis of the vote for radical right parties. Thus, it seems that the relationship between electoral systems and vote for populist parties found at aggregate level (Norris, 2005) is not confirmed at individual level. On the other hand, as expected by the convergence thesis, the convergence of the establishment parties fuels the APEP vote (Abedi, 2004). More precisely, the more the establishment parties converge between the election held in time *t* and the election held in time *t-1*, the higher the probability to cast a populist vote[2]. Finally, it should also be observed that the vote for a populist party increased since 2008, compared to the pre-crisis period. In other words, it seems that the likelihood of voting for a populist party is higher in those elections held in the whirlwind of the economic crisis.

In order to investigate with more details this finding, in model IV I included at aggregate level the effect of the economic crisis. The coefficient of the change in the EPI score is statistically significant and positive. It means that the higher the deterioration of the country economic conditions compared with the previous term in office

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[2] Similar results have been found by using the absolute range of the establishment parties. In that case, the coefficient was negative, which means that the more the establishment parties are different in ideological terms, the less the likelihood to vote for a populist party.

(i.e., the stronger the economic crisis), the higher the likelihood to vote for a populist party. This finding seems to provide empirical support to the economic-crisis-thesis (Jackman & Volpert, 1996). It should also be observed that, even controlling by the objective economic indicators, the probability to vote for a populist party is still significantly higher in the Great Recession. In a similar way, political distrust keeps being a significant predictor.

In model 5, I assessed the impact of the political (dis)trust on the vote for a populist party as the convergence increases. As I argued before, my expectation is that its impact is higher when the establishment parties converge. In order to test this hypothesis, I added a cross-level interaction between the political trust and the convergence score. As can be observed, the interaction is statistically significant. That said, for the sake of interpretability, I computed and graphed the average marginal effects of the political trust on the APEP vote as the change in the convergence score increases. I also report the confidence interval for pair-wise comparisons. Following previous studies, 'these intervals are centered on the predictions and have lengths equal to 2 X 1.39 X standard errors' (Baizan et al., 2016, p. 17). As showed by Goldstein & Healy (1995), this is necessary in order to have an average level of 5 % for the Type I error probability in pair-wise comparisons of a group of means. Figure 4 shows the results. Although the difference is not very high, we can observe that, on average, one-point increase in the level of political trust (which means a more distrustful attitude) has a higher impact on the vote for a populist party in a situation of convergence of the mainstream parties towards the center. These results seem to provide empirical support of the H_2.

[Figure 4 Almost Here]

Finally, there is a need to address the last issue. As I said before, even controlling by the objective and subjective conditions of the economy, the political distrust and the dummy wave variable are still significant. But, does it means that the individual attitude has a higher impact on the populist vote in a context of crisis, compared with a less turbulent period? In order to address this issue, in model VI I introduced a cross-level interaction between the political distrust and the dummy variable. As it can be observed, the coefficient is significant, which confirms that there is an interactive effect between this attitude and the Great Recession. Moreover, the coefficient is positive, which means that political (dis)trust had a higher impact on the populist vote during the Great Recession than before it. For the sake of interpretability, Figure 5 shows the marginal effects of the impact of political trust after and before the Great Recession. As we can see, a one-point increase in the scale has, on average, a higher effect on the vote for a populist vote after the Great Recession. Although the change in not very high, this finding provides the sufficient empirical support to my initial expectation that populist parties took advantage of the crisis, and distrustful people are more likely to vote for them when things go wrong. So, it seems that support for these parties is higher when the responses provided by the political elite to manage a crisis situation are considered insufficient by the citizens. It also implies that traditional parties suffer a crisis of credibility and populist parties are considered as a valid alternative.

[Figure 5 almost here]

Conclusions

In this article I set out to explain why people vote for a populist party in national parliamentary elections, at the same time as I focus on analyzing why these parties show an uneven success between countries. Unlike previous studies, in this one I focused on the direct and conditional impact of the trust in the main political actors on the vote for populist parties, as well as the impact of the Great Recession on their success.

It was first argued that political trust has a direct impact on the vote for populist anti-establishment parties, and distrustful people are more likely to vote for them. Their focus on the people as the center of their political project, combined with their anti-elite orientations and the persistent accusation of the traditional parties are more likely to take root among those who are discontent with the existing political organizations. In this sense, a vote casted for a populist party is driven by the crisis of representation of the main political actors. That said, the vote for a populist party is not purely a matter of protest against the traditional actors, but also a vote in favor of their positions on their core issues. As I demonstrated, these parties are more than mere 'agents of discontent'; they are also policy actors, and this factor drive people to vote for them. If this aspect is not taken into account, the risk to overestimate the effect of the protest voting mechanism is high. Nevertheless, it should also be observed that political (dis)trust is the second most relevant predictor for the populist vote, even after controlling by the most relevant alternative explanations.

I have also demonstrated that the impact of political (dis)trust depends on the context. First of all, it has a higher impact in those countries with a higher average level of political distrust, which means that people who live in a more distrustful country have a higher probability to support a populist party. In other words, the between-countries differences are a strong predictor of the populist vote and contribute to explain the differences among countries. Secondly, the impact of this attitude is higher when the establishment parties converge towards the center. In an electoral market situation, which may be provoked by the failure of the establishment parties to present themselves as a clear alternative to the other competitors, political distrust may increase, since people are unable to find a party that represent their interests and parties are perceived to be essentially the same. In this context, populist parties emerge as the only valid alternative to them, and they may act as a "security valve" for the political discontent. Political distrust has also a higher impact on the populist vote in the whirlwind of an economic crisis, when the estrangement between people and their elite increase. However, the Great Recession was more than an economic crisis. It reshaped the relationship between citizens and the main political actors in most European countries; it acted as a strong stress test, showing the incapacity of the mainstream political actors to respond to the citizens' demands and needs; and it contributed to a strong electoral realignment, changing the composition of the party systems in some European countries. In this context, the anti-elite message of the populist parties could be heard more clearly, and people considered them as a possible solution to the failure of the traditional actors.

This paper has contributed to a consolidation of the existing literature on the voting behavior and the relationship between political attitudes and political behavior, extending and modifying the previous findings

on these topics to other populist parties that have not been sufficiently studied yet. At the same time, I established a relationship between crisis and populist vote, a relationship that has been extensively formulated in theoretical terms, but much less empirically tested.

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Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the variables included in the analyses

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Dependent variable					
Vote for populist anti-establishment parties	0.21		0	1	82.770
Level 1 predictors					
Distrust in the actors of political representation	6.60	2.29	0	10	130.546
Dissatisfaction with the economy	5.66	2.55	0	10	131.345
Anti-immigrant attitudes	5.01	2.13	0	10	121.343
Attitudes towards redistributive policies	3.88	1.06	1	5	131.681
APEP Partisanship	0.10		0	1	124.428
Educational level (1-4)	2.91	0.84	1	4	133.679
Male	0.46		0	1	134.040
Age of respondent	48.78	17.77	18	105	133.733
Occupation (1-9)	4.94	2.88	1	9	131.404
Level 2 Predictors					
Change in the convergence score	-0.06	0.954	-3.34	2.2	21
Least square index	5.22	3.73	0.42	21.95	21
Distrust in the political actors (Cluster Mean)	6.60	0.99	4.47	8.1	21
Change in the economic performance index	-0.52	4.87	-14.23	11.962	21
Great Recession	0.61		0	1	21

Table 2: Explaining vote for populist anti-establishment parties (regression estimates)

Independent variables	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V	Model VI
Level-1 Predictors						
Distrust in political actors		0.153***	0.115***	0.116***	0.115***	0.092***
		(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.011)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dissatisfaction with the economy		0.041***	0.025***	0.023***	0.024***	0.023***
		(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Attitudes towards a redistributive policy		0.053***	0.043**	0.042**	0.043**	0.043**
		(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Anti-immigrant attitudes		0.087***	0.103***	0.104***	0.103***	0.103***
		(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
APEP Partisanship		4.337***	4.118***	4.122***	4.118***	4.123***
		(0.039)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)
Educational level						
Less than lower secondary (ref.)						
Lower secondary education		0.075	0.079	0.076	0.080	0.074
		(0.062)	(0.068)	(0.068)	(0.068)	(0.068)
Upper and post-secundary education		-0.101	-0.103	-0.107	-0.104	-0.109
		(0.058)	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.066)
Tertiary education		-0.309***	-0.401***	-0.398***	-0.402***	-0.402***
		(0.063)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.071)	(0.071)
Male		0.068*	0.067*	0.067*	0.067*	0.067*
		(0.026)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Age		-0.011***	-0.012***	-0.012***	-0.012***	-0.012***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Occupation						
Service class (reference)						
Routine non-manual workers		0.157**	0.214***	0.214***	0.213***	0.213***
		(0.052)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Self-employed		0.124*	0.162*	0.159*	0.161*	0.157*
		(0.060)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)
Manual worker		0.467***	0.421***	0.420***	0.421***	0.419***
		(0.043)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)
Students		-0.193**	-0.107	-0.108	-0.108	-0.109
		(0.073)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.078)
Unemployed		0.346***	0.421***	0.414***	0.422***	0.414***
		(0.060)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)
Disabled/Other		0.274**	0.258**	0.263**	0.260**	0.262**
		(0.089)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.094)
Retired		0.303***	0.177***	0.177***	0.178***	0.176***
		(0.047)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Houseworks		0.053	0.080	0.084	0.080	0.081
		(0.055)	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.060)
Level-2 Predictors						
Change in the convergence score			0.105***	0.095***	0.009	0.097***
			(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.047)	(0.016)
Gallagher's Least Square Index			0.003	0.007	0.003	0.009
			(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Great Recession (2008-2014)			0.205***	0.163***	0.208***	-0.086
			(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.092)
Change in the EPI score				0.020***	0.019***	0.019***
				(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Distrust in the political actors (CM)			0.426**	0.443**	0.445**	0.444**
			(0.159)	(0.157)	(0.158)	(0.158)
Convergence#Distrust					0.014*	
					(0.007)	
Crisis#Distrust						0.037**
						(0.013)
Constant	-1.339***	-3.985***	-5.311***	-5.405***	-5.309***	-5.230***
	(0.216)	(0.106)	(1.066)	(1.056)	(1.062)	(1.062)
Residual Intraclass Correlation	0.228		0.143	0.140	0.140	0.140
Number of individuals	82770	71012	65526	65526	65526	65526
Number of countries	21		21	21	21	21
σ country	0.987***		0.741***	0.733***	0.738***	0.737***
	(0.152)		(0.115)	(0.114)	(0.115)	(0.114)

Entries are logistic regression coefficients with standard error in parenthesis. σ Standard deviation of the country random effects

Figure 1. Evolution of the Economic Performance Index (2004 - 2014)
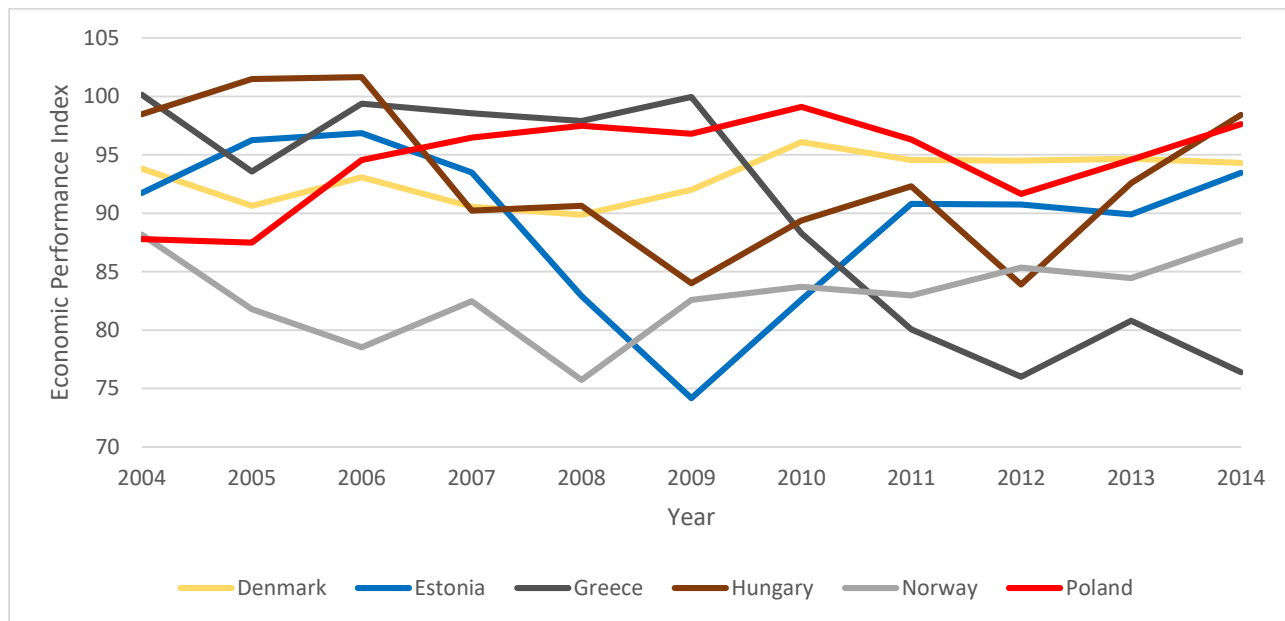
Source: Own Elaboration based on the Eurostat and International Monetary Fund data (2004 - 2014).

Figure 2. Trust in the actors of political representation (2004 - 2014)
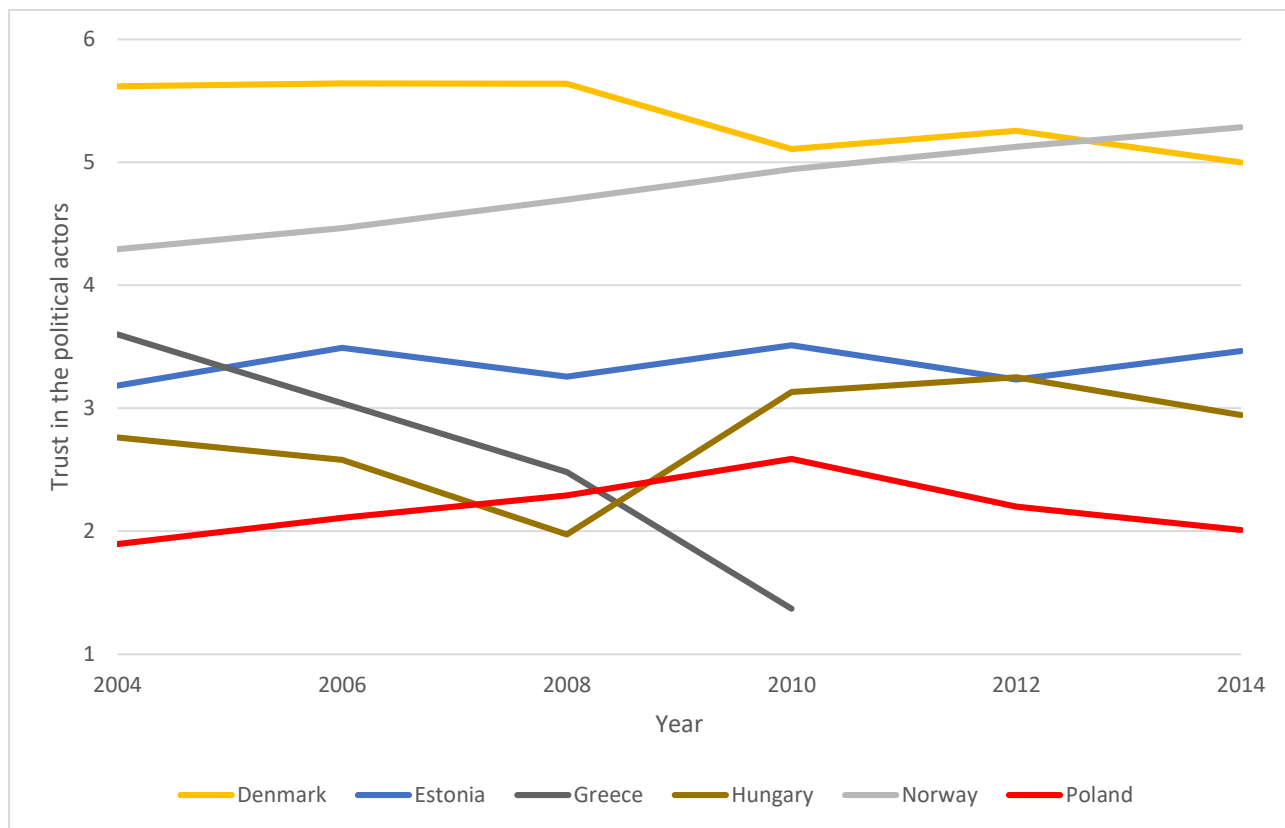
Source: Own Elaboration based on the ESS data (Waves 2-7). Data from Greece refer to Waves 2 (2004); 3 (2006) and 5 (2010)

Figure 3. Political trust, satisfaction with the economy and vote for populist anti-establishment parties
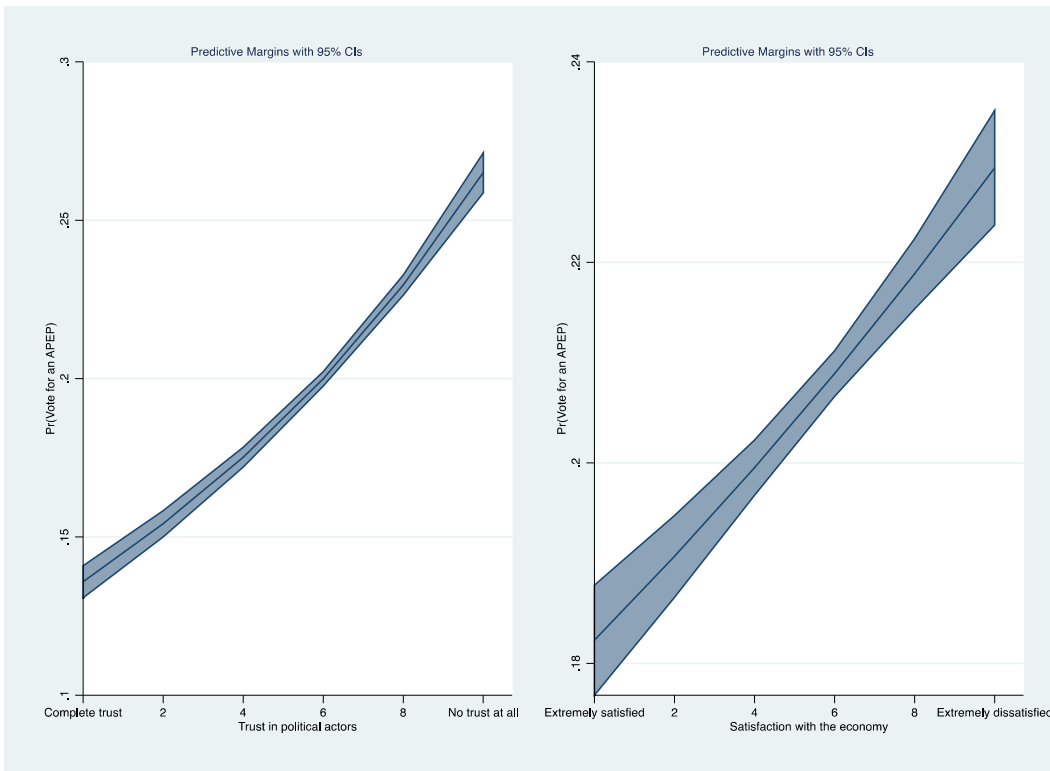
Source: Own Elaboration. The probabilities have been predicted according to the coefficients in model II.

Figure 4. Average marginal effects of the political distrust as the convergence score increases. Confidence intervals are centered on the predictions and have lengths equals to 2 X 1.39 X standard errors to have an average level of 5 % for the Type I error probability in the pair-wise comparisons of a group of means.

Figure 5. Marginal effects of the political distrust after and before the Great Recession Confidence intervals are centered on the predictions and have lengths equals to 2 X 1.39 X standard errors to have an average level of 5 % for the Type I error probability in the pair-wise comparisons of a group of means.
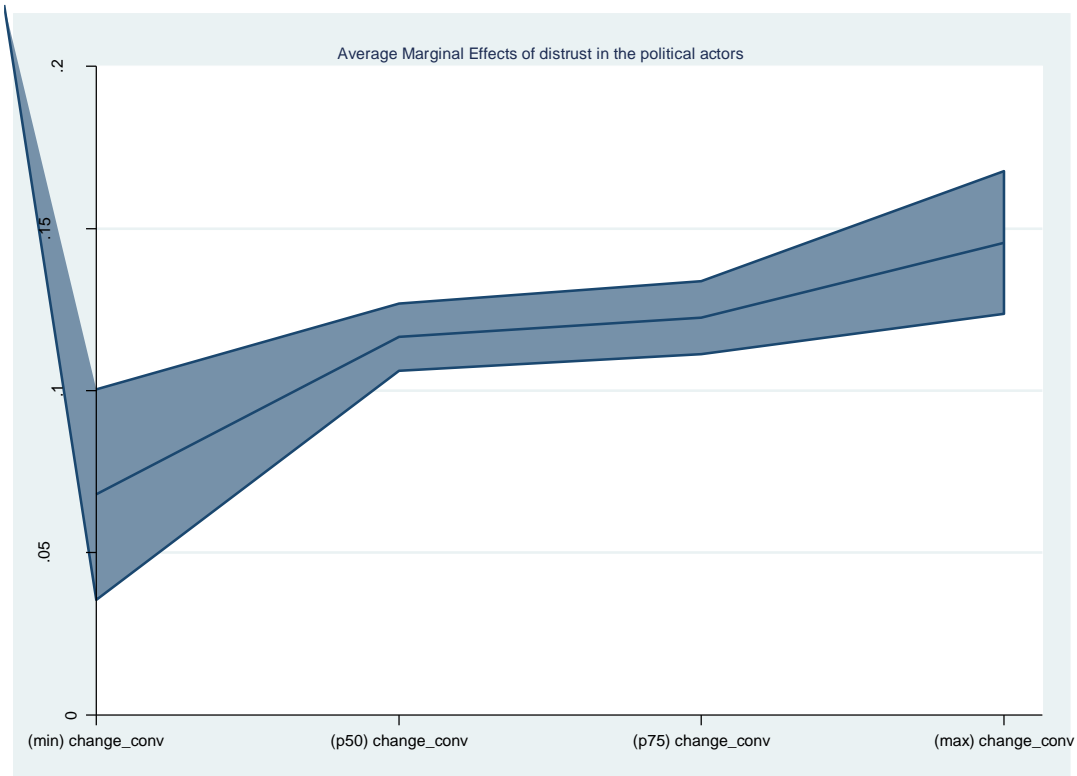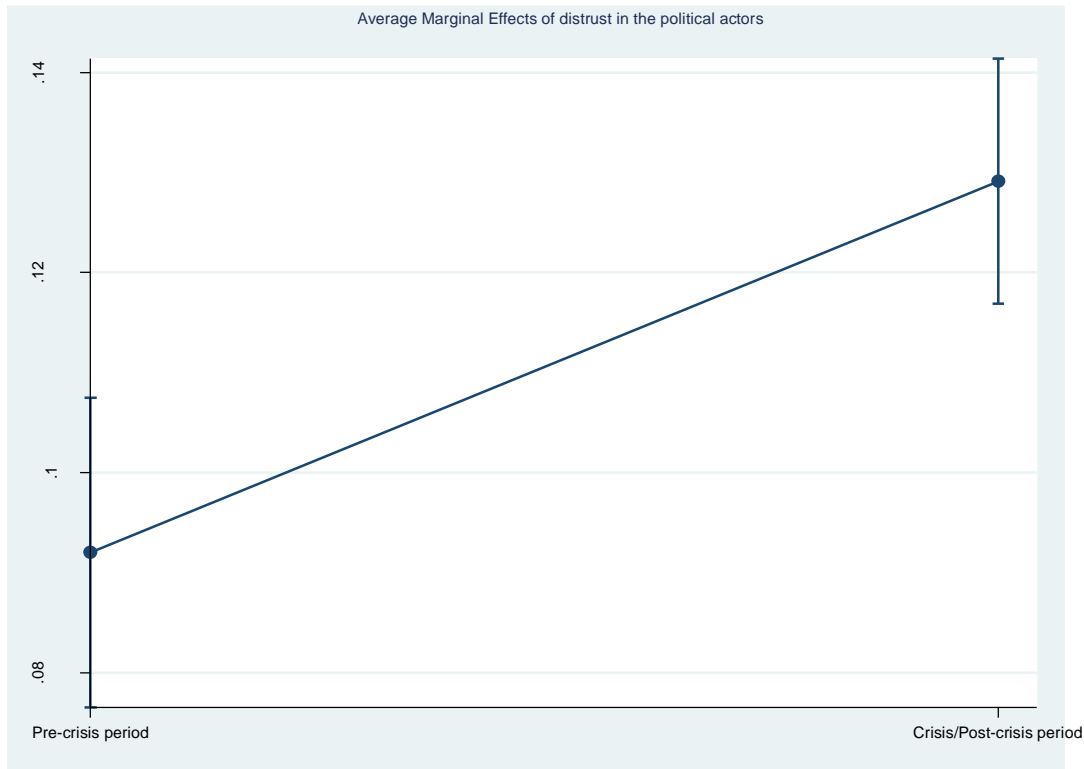
Source: Own Elaboration. The marginal effects have been computed according to the coefficients in model VI.

Appendix A: question wording and variable coding.

Party voted in the latest general election: "Which party did you vote for in the latest general election in [Month/Year]?" (0) Vote for an establishment party; (1) Vote for a populist anti-political establishment party.

Distrust in the actors of political representation: Additive scale created from the average of trust in political parties and trust in politicians. "Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust". (A) Politicians; (B) Political parties. The scale has been reverted. (0) Complete trust; (10) No trust at all.

**Dissatisfaction with the state of the economy:** "On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [COUNTRY]?" (0) Extremely dissatisfied; (10) Extremely satisfied. The scale has been reverted. (0) Extremely satisfied; (10) Extremely dissatisfied.

Party identification: Two questions: (A) "Is there a particular political party you feel closer to than all the other parties?" (B) "Which one?" Recoded into two categories: (0) Non APEP partisan; (1) APEP partisan.

Anti-immigrants attitudes: An additive scale has been created from the average of three different questions on the attitudes towards immigrants: (A) "Would you say it is generally bad or good for [COUNTRY]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries?" (0) Bad for the economy; (10) Good for the economy. (B) "And, would you say that [COUNTRY]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?" (0) Cultural life undermined; (10) Cultural life enriched; (C) "Is [COUNTRY] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?" (0) Worse place to live; (10) Better place to live. The scale has been reverted. (0) Tolerant attitudes towards immigrants; (10) Anti-immigrant attitudes.

Attitudes towards redistributive policies: "Using this card, please say to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels" (1) Agree strongly; (2) Agree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Disagree; (5) Disagree strongly. The scale has been reverted. (1) Disagree strongly; (5) Agree strongly.

Educational level: "What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?" Recoded into (1) Less than lower secundary education; (2) Lower secundary education completed; (3) Upper and post-secundary education completed; (4) Tertiary education completed.

Gender: (0) Female; (1) Male.

Age: Age of respondent between 18 and 105.

Class scheme / Occupation: An adaptation of the classic Goldthorpe class scheme has been created by using the iskoegp programme in Stata. The following questions have been used. (A) "Using this card, which one of these descriptions best describes your situation (in the last 7 days)? Please select only one" (1) In paid work; (2) In education; (3) Unemployed and actively looking for job; (4) Unemployed, wanting a job but not actively looking for a job; (5) Permanently sick or disabled; (6) Retired; (8) Doing housework, looking after children or other persons; (9) Other; (B) In your main job are/were you" (1) An employee; (2) Self-employed; (3) Working for your own family's business; (C) "In your main job, How many people are you responsible for?"; (D) "What is the name or title of your main job? In your main job, what kind of work do you do most of the time?" The categories created are the following: (1) Service class; (2) Routine non-manual workers; (3) Self-employed; (4) Manual worker; (5) Students; (6) Unemployed; (7) Sick/Disabled/Other; (8) Retired; (9) Houseworks.

Change in the convergence score of the establishment parties: Change in the establishment parties' convergence score between the election held in time *t* and the election held in *t-1*. The establishment parties' convergence score has been computed by subtracting the position on the Left-Right (Comparative Manifesto Project data) scale of the leftist establishment party with the position on the same scale of the rightist establishment party (in absolute values) in a given election. Following the Camia & Caramani' (2012) formula, the original scale (which goes to -100 from 100) has been rescaled into a 11-points scale (from 0 to 10), in order to match it with most variables used in the analysis at individual level. There is a perfect correlation (r=1.0) between the new and the original scale. The formula used was the following: $\frac{((Rile+100))/2}{100}$ (-3.34) Maximum divergence of the establishment parties compared with the previous election; (2.2) Maximum convergence of the establishment parties compared with the previous election.

Change in the Economic Performance Index: Change in the average Economic Performance Index between the election held in time t and the election held in t-1. The index has been calculated as it follows: "100% minus the absolute value of the inflation rate, minus the unemployment rate, minus the budget deficit as a percentage of GDP, plus the percentage change in real gross domestic product, all as deviations from their desired values" (Khramov & Ridings Lee, 2013, p. 8). The average EPI for a given election has been calculated by the average EPI in the years in which the incumbents were governing. For instance, if elections were held in 2007 in Belgium and the previous ones were held in 2003, I calculated the average EPI for the years 2004-2005-2006 and 2007; (-14.23) Maximum rise of the EPI compared with the previous election (the country economic conditions improved); (11.96) Maximum drop of the EPI compared with the previous election (the country economic conditions worsened).

Gallagher Least Square Index: Index generally used in comparative politics to measure the disproportionality of an electoral outcome. The index has been calculated by Michael Gallagher as it follows:

$$\text{LSq} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^{n} (V_i - S_i)^2}$$

0.42=Minimum disproportionality of the electoral system. 21.95= Maximum disproportionality of the electoral system.

Great Recession: Year of the ESS wave. (0) Pre-crisis period (2004-2006); (1) Crisis/Post Crisis Period (2008-2010-2012-2014).

Appendix B: List of APEP included in the analysis, number and percentage of respondents declaring their vote and electoral results

Country	El. Year	APEP	Party_Family	Nº	%	Vote
Austria	2002	FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria)	Radical right-wing party	59	5.5	10.0
	2006	FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria)	Radical right-wing party	93	7.0	11.0
		BZÖ (Alliance for the Future)	Radical right-wing party	25	1.9	4.1
	2008	FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria)	Radical right-wing party	162	13.2	17.5
		BZÖ (Alliance for the Future)	Radical right-wing party	42	3.43	10.7
	2013	FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria)	Radical right-wing party	153	13.9	20.5
		BZÖ (Alliance for the Future)	Radical right-wing party	13	1.1	3.5
		TS (Team Stronach)	Radical right-wing party	10	0.9	5.7
Belgium	2003	VB (Vlaams Blok)	Radical right-wing party	127	9.8	11.6
		FN (Front National)	Radical right-wing party	22	1.7	2.0
	2007	VB (Vlaams Belang)	Radical right-wing party	97	7.5	12.0
		FN (Front National)	Radical right-wing party	6	0.5	2.0
		LDD (Lijst Dedecker)	Neo-liberal populist party	31	2.4	4.0
	2010	VB (Vlaams Belang)	Radical right-wing party	61	4.9	7.8
		FN (Front National)	Radical right-wing party	1	0.1	0.4
		PVDA / PTB (Workers' Party of Belgium)	Radical left-wing party	13	1	1.6
		PP (People's Party)	Neo-liberal populist party	8	0.6	1.3
		LDD (Lijst Dedecker)	Neo-liberal populist party	5	0.4	2.3
	2014	VB (Vlaams Belang)	Radical right-wing party	29	2.1	3.7
		PVDA / PTB (Workers' Party of Belgium)	Radical left-wing party	50	3.6	3.7
		PP (People's Party)	Neo-liberal populist party	14	1.0	1.5
Bulgaria	2005	NDSV (National Movement Simeon II)	Centrist populist party	63	8.6	19.9
		Ataka (Coalition Attack)	Radical right-wing party	72	9.8	8.1
	2009	NDSV (National Movement Simeon II)	Centrist populist party	21	1.4	3.0
		Ataka (Coalition Attack)	Radical right-wing party	61	4.0	9.4
		GERB (Citizens for European Development)	Centrist populist party	827	53.9	39.7

		RZS (Order, Law and Justice)	Centrist populist party	15	1.0	4.1
Czech Republic	2002	RMS (Republicans of Miroslav Sladek)	Radical right-wing party	6	0.5	0.9
		KSCM (Communist Party of Bohemia & Moravia)	Social populist party	216	16.7	18.5
	2006	KSCM (Communist Party of Bohemia & Moravia)	Radical left-wing party	110	11.0	12.8
	2010	KSCM (Communist Party of Bohemia & Moravia)	Radical left-wing party	138	10.5	11.3
		TOP 09 (Tradition Responsibility Prosperity 09)	Centrist populist party	198	15.0	16.7
		VV (Public Affairs)	Centrist populist party	143	10.8	10.9
	2013	KSCM (Communist Party of Bohemia & Moravia)	Radical left-wing party	124	11.1	14.9
		TOP 09 (Tradition Responsibility Prosperity 09)	Centrist populist party	121	10.8	12.0
		ANO 2011 (Action of Dissatisfied Citizens)	Centrist populist party	299	26.7	18.7
		UPD (Dawn of Direct Democracy)	Radical right-wing party	44	3.9	6.9
Denmark	2001	DF (Danish Peoples Party)	Radical right-wing party	88	7.5	12.4
		FrP(Progress Party)	Radical right-wing party	9	0.8	0.6
	2005	DF (Danish Peoples Party)	Radical right-wing party	97	7.8	13.3
	2007	DF (Danish Peoples Party)	Radical right-wing party	129	9.6	13.9
	2011	DF (Danish Peoples Party)	Radical right-wing party	117	8.8	12.2
Estonia	2003	RP (Party Res Publica)	Centrist populist party	220	24.3	24.6
		ERL (Estonian's People Union)	Social populist party	95	10.5	13.0
		K (Estonian Centre Party)	Social populist party	277	30.6	25.4
		EURP (Estonian United People's Party)	Social populist party	3	0.3	2.2
	2007	ERL (Estonian's People Union)	Social populist party	46	5.3	7.1
		K (Estonian Centre Party)	Social populist party	237	27.2	26.1
		EIP (Estonian Independence Party)	Radical right-wing party	2	0.2	0.2
	2011	K (Estonian Centre Party)	Social populist party	331	26.0	23.3
		ERL (Estonian's People Union)	Social populist party	24	1.9	2.1
Finland	2003	PS (True Finns)	Radical right-wing party	12	0.9	1.6
	2007	PS (True Finns)	Radical right-wing party	54	3.9	4.1
	2011	PS (True Finns)	Radical right-wing party	202	13.5	19.1

France	2002	FN (Front National)	Radical right-wing party	82	7.8	11.3
		LO (Workers' Struggle)	Social populist party	28	2.6	1.2
		LCR (Revolutionary Communist League)	Social populist party	16	1.5	1.3
	2007	FN (Front National)	Radical right-wing party	31	2.5	4.3
		LO (Workers' Struggle)	Social populist party	23	1.8	0.6
		LCR (Revolutionary Communist League)	Social populist party	24	1.5	0.6
	2012	FN (Front National)	Radical right-wing party	126	10.0	13.6
		NPA (New Anticapitalist Party)	Social populist party	15	1.2	1.1
		LO (Workers' Struggle)	Social populist party	13	1.0	1.0
Germany	2002	PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism)	Social populist party	149	8.7	4.0
		Republican Party (Republikaner)	Radical right-wing party	20	1.2	0.6
		NPD/DVU (National Democratic Party)	Radical right-wing party	7	0.4	0.4
	2005	PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism)	Social populist party	166	9.4	8.7
		Republican Party (Republikaner)	Radical right-wing party	6	0.3	0.1
		NPD/DVU (National Democratic Party)	Radical right-wing party	14	0.8	1.6
	2009	The left (Die Linke)	Social populist party	201	10.7	11.9
		Republican Party (Republikaner)	Radical right-wing party	2	0.1	0.1
		NPD/DVU (National Democratic Party)	Radical right-wing party	16	0.9	1.8
	2013	The left (Die Linke)	Social populist party	222	10.6	8.6
		AfD (Alternative for Germany)	Radical right-wing party	97	4.6	4.7
		NPD/DVU (National Democratic Party)	Radical right-wing party	15	0.7	1.3
Greece	2004	SYRIZA (Left wing coalition)	Social populist party	53	3.9	4.2
		LAOS (Popular Orthodox Rally)	Radical right-wing party	20	1.5	4.1
	2007	SYRIZA (Left wing coalition)	Social populist party	84	6.4	5.0
		LAOS (Popular Orthodox Rally)	Radical right-wing party	49	3.8	3.8
	2009	SYRIZA (Left wing coalition)	Social populist party	63	5.0	4.6
		LAOS (Popular Orthodox Rally)	Radical right-wing party	53	4.2	5.6
Hungary	2002	FKgP (Independent Small Holders Party)	Social populist party	4	0.4	0.75

		Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance)	Neo-liberal populist party	427	46.5	42.5
		MIEP (Hungarian Justice and Life)	Radical right-wing party	10	1.1	4.4
	2006	Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance)	Neo-liberal populist party	416	47.1	42.0
		MIEP–Jobbik (Third Way Alliance of Parties)	Radical right-wing party	6	0.7	1.7
	2010	Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance)	Neo-liberal populist party	559	63.5	52.7
		Jobbik (Movement for a Better Hungary)	Radical right-wing party	101	11.5	16.7
		LMP (Politics can be different)	Centrist populist party	56	6.4	7.5
	2014	Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance)	Neo-liberal populist party	832	48.6	44.9
		Jobbik (Movement for a Better Hungary)	Radical right-wing party	318	18.6	20.2
		LMP (Politics can be different)	Centrist populist party	96	5.6	5.3
Ireland	2002	SF (Sinn Fein)	Social populist party	96	5.9	6.5
	2007	SF (Sinn Fein)	Social populist party	64	5.2	6.9
	2011	SF (Sinn Fein)	Social populist party	138	8.9	9.9
		PBPA (People Before Profit Alliance)	Radical left-wing party	3	0.2	1.0
		SP (Socialist Party)	Radical left-wing party	5	0.3	1.2
Italy	2001	LN (Northern League)	Radical right-wing party	39	4.7	3.9
		FI (Go Italy)	Neo-liberal populist party	215	26.0	29.4
		FT (Tricolour Flame)	Radical right-wing party	4	0.4	0.3
	2013	PdL (The People of Freedom)	Neo-liberal populist party	87	16.2	21.6
		M5S (Five Star Movement)	Anti parties	126	23.5	25.6
		LN (Northern League)	Radical right-wing party	8	1.5	4.1
Lithuania	2008	TPP (National Resurrection Party)	Centrist populist party	53	6.7	15.1
		DP (Labour Party)	Centrist populist party	103	13.1	9.0
		TT (Order and Justice)	Neo-liberal populist party	78	9.9	12.7
		LVLS (Lithuanian Peasant Popular Union)	Other	37	4.7	3.7
	2012	DK (The Way of Courage)	Centrist populist party	22	2.1	8.0
		DP (Labour Party)	Centrist populist party	275	25.6	19.8
		TT (Order and Justice)	Neo-liberal populist party	123	11.5	7.3

		LVZS (Lithuanian Peasant and Greens Union)	Other	13	1.2	3.9
Netherlands	2003	LPF (List Pim Fortuyn)	Neo-liberal populist party	41	2.9	5.7
		SP (Socialist Party)	Social populist party	108	7.7	6.3
		LN (Liveable Netherlands)	Other	6	0.4	0.4
	2006	LPF (List Pim Fortuyn)	Neo-liberal populist party	22	1.6	0.2
		PVV (Party for Freedom)	Radical right-wing party	35	2.5	5.9
		SP (Socialist Party)	Social populist party	176	12.6	16.6
	2010	PVV (Party for Freedom)	Radical right-wing party	181	12.7	15.5
		SP (Socialist Party)	Social populist party	133	9.3	9.8
	2012	PVV (Party for Freedom)	Radical right-wing party	96	6.8	10.1
		SP (Socialist Party)	Social populist party	142	10.1	9.7
Norway	2001	FrP (Progress Party)	Radical right-wing party	196	15.0	14.7
	2005	FrP (Progress Party)	Radical right-wing party	227	17.4	22.1
	2009	FrP (Progress Party)	Radical right-wing party	184	16.0	22.9
	2013	FrP (Progress Party)	Radical right-wing party	136	12.5	16.3
Poland	2001	SRP (Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland)	Social populist party	82	11.0	10.2
		PiS (Law and Justice)	Centrist populist party	61	8.2	9.5
		LPR (League of Polish Families)	Radical right-wing party	53	7.1	7.9
	2005	SRP (Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland)	Social populist party	84	9.1	11.4
		PiS (Law and Justice)	Centrist populist party	407	43.9	27.0
		LPR (League of Polish Families)	Radical right-wing party	21	2.3	8.0
	2007	SRP (Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland)	Social populist party	19	1.9	1.5
		PiS (Law and Justice)	Centrist populist party	313	31.8	32.1
		LPR (League of Polish Families)	Radical right-wing party	10	1.0	1.3
	2011	PiS (Law and Justice)	Centrist populist party	340	31.6	29.9
		RP (Palikot Movement)	Centrist populist party	48	4.5	10.0
		KNP (Congress of the New Right)	Radical right-wing party	14	1.3	1.1
Slovakia	2002	HZDS (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia)	Centrist populist party	229	27.3	19.5

		SMER (Direction -- Third Way)	Centrist populist party	148	17.6	13.5
		ANO (Alliance of a New Citizenry)	Centrist *populist* party	63	7.5	8.0
		KSS (Communist Party of Slovakia)	Social populist party	36	4.3	6.3
	2006	HZDS (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia)	*Centrist populist party*	77	7.8	8.8
		SMER-SD (Direction -- Social Democracy)	Social populist party	395	40.1	29.1
		SNS (Slovak National Party)	Radical right-wing party	105	10.7	11.7
	2010	SNS (Slovak National Party)	Radical right-wing party	37	3.3	5.1
		SMER-Social Democracy	Social populist party	510	45.9	34.8
		SaS (Freedom and Solidarity)	Centrist populist party	92	8.3	12.1
	2012	OL'aNO (Ordinary People and Indipendent Personalities)	Centrist populist party	62	5.6	8.6
		SMER-Social Democracy	Social populist party	585	52.5	44.4
		SaS (Freedom and Solidarity)	Centrist populist party	71	6.4	5.9
Slovenia	2004	SNS (Slovene National Party)	Radical right-wing party	39	5.3	6.3
	2008	SNS (Slovene National Party)	Radical right-wing party	46	6.2	5.4
	2011	PS (Positive Slovenia)	Centrist populist party	159	24.7	28.5
		DL (Civic List)	Centrist populist party	31	4.8	8.4
		SNS (Slovene National Party)	Radical right-wing party	10	1.6	1.8
	2014	PS (Positive Slovenia)	Centrist populist party	1	0.2	0.6
		DL (Civic List)	Centrist populist party	13	2.3	3.0
Switzerland	2003	SVP (Swiss People's Party)	Radical right-wing party	273	26.7	26.7
		LdT (Ticino League)	Radical right-wing party	1	0.1	0.4
		SD (Swiss Democrats)	Radical right-wing party	2	0.2	1.0
		FPS (Freedom Party)	Radical right-wing party	1	0.1	0.2
	2007	SVP (Swiss People's Party)	Radical right-wing party	273	26.7	26.7
		LdT (Ticino League)	Radical right-wing party	1	0.1	0.4
	2011	SVP (Swiss People's Party)	Radical right-wing party	131	17.6	26.6
Ukraine	2002	BJUT (Julia Tymoshenko Bloc)	Other	46	3.6	7.3
		PSPU (Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine)	Social populist party	49	3.9	3.2

2006	BJUT (Julia Tymoshenko Bloc)	Other	289	18.5	22.3
	PSPU (Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine)	Social populist party	24	1.5	2.9
2007	BJUT (Julia Tymoshenko Bloc)	Other	370	27.8	30.7
	PSPU (Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine)	Social populist party	18	1.4	1.3

Source: (Abedi, 2004; March, 2011; Mudde, 2007; Učeň, 2007); European Social Survey; Webpage "Parties and Elections in Europe"