



Democratic Efficacy and the Varieties of Populism in Europe

Working Paper

Group Norms and Policy Preferences

From Bullying to Populist Attitudes

February 2022

Author(s)

Tamás Keller, Béla Janky, and Zsolt Boda (Centre for Social Sciences, Budapest)

Contact Information

contact@demos.tk.hu



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 822590. Any dissemination of results here presented reflects only the consortium's view. The Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Abstract

This working paper focuses on some of the individual level factors of populist commitment. Building on previous DEMOS research, the research explores a typical problem in many schools: bullying. We assume that bullying and populism may be connected; that is, those who accept or practice bullying in schools are more prone to agreeing with exclusionary populist policy statements. Conversely, those who reject bullying and show more empathy towards victims of bullying are less supportive of populist statements. The assumption is based on the hypothesised structural similarity between the exclusionary nature of (at least: certain types of) populism and bullying. The research also assumes that anti-bullying empathy treatment will decrease the appeal of exclusionary populist statements.

The research conducted an online survey experiment with 500 respondents aged 16 to 25 years. The design included an empathy treatment (a vignette about a victim of bullying) and for the control groups either no treatment or an anger treatment (a vignette about injustice and power abuse). Based on previous results on the role of anger in spurring populist sentiments, we assumed that while the empathy treatment would decrease, the anger treatment would increase the support of exclusionary populist statements.

Our basic assumption proved to be correct: those who accept more bullying expressed a stronger support for the exclusionary policy positions. Our hypothesis on the role of anti-bullying empathy treatment in decreasing this support seems to be supported as well. Interestingly, our anger treatment did not work the way we expected: it did not induce more support for exclusion, on the contrary. It seems that provoking the feeling of injustice may also have a positive effect in terms of solidarity with the excluded and a rejection of exclusionary populism. These results have potentially important practical implications: they suggest that anti-bullying programmes in schools building on either empathy or injustice may form the political attitudes of youth and decrease the populist appeal.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
1.1 Setting the problem	4
2. Design of the fieldwork	5
2.1 The dependent variables.....	6
2.2 Explanatory variables and manipulation check.....	7
2.3 Experimental design.....	8
2.4 Analytical strategy.....	9
2.5 Results	10
3. Conclusion	13
References.....	15
Appendix.....	17

1. Introduction

In this working paper, we focus on some specific aspects of the populist mindset. One strand of research under DEMOS focuses on the role of schools in developing democratic efficacy and countering populism, the assumption being that school environment may have a lasting effect on the political attitudes and behaviour of youth. The present working paper describes research which explores a specific aspect of this problem: the possible linkage between school bullying and populist attitudes. The research has been organised around the hypothesis that the rejection of bullying predicts a rejection of exclusionary populist views; and if so, anti-bullying programmes at schools may help prevent the development of populist attitudes.

1.1 Setting the problem

The initial hypothesis builds on the assumption that bullying and populism may have something in common; that those who accept or practice bullying are more prone to agreeing with exclusionary populist policy statements. Conversely, those who reject bullying and show more empathy towards victims of bullying are less supportive of those statements. The question is, what may ground the similarity between bullying attitudes and populist attitudes? In the following, we shortly present the arguments for this similarity referring to two well-known approaches of defining populism: the ideational and the communicative, both of which has been used in previous DEMOS research.

The ideational approach of populism is widely used in the literature and its empirical relevance has been demonstrated recently by Hawkins et al. (2019). This approach defines populism as a thin ideology without an elaborate ideological and programmatic core that expresses a heavily moralising Manichean worldview and considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ and ‘the corrupt elite’, arguing that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* of the people (Mudde, 2004). This definition implies a heavily moralizing approach to socio-political problems by populists; as well as a radical majoritarianism and anti-pluralism. These features point to the potentially exclusionary and polarising nature of populism (Somer et al. 2021): minority groups which do not fit into the homogenized definition of ‘the people’ are not only excluded from it, but are often portrayed as potential enemies of the people.

It is debated whether the penchant for exclusion is a general feature of populism: the literature distinguishes between exclusionary (mainly right-wing) and inclusionary (mainly left-wing) populism (Mudde and Rovira Katlwasser 2013). We believe that the above characteristics imply an exclusionary approach, but it is certainly true that the extent and the targets of exclusion might be very different depending on the specific nature of the populism in question. In our research we focus on the exclusionary aspect of populism, and whether it is a universal phenomenon. It is certainly an important feature of the right-wing populism which is dominant in Europe.

Social exclusion is an important feature of bullying on both sides: by defining the members of in-group and out-groups bullying functions to strengthen group identity; while the suffering of victims is to a large extent linked to the feeling of being excluded from the community (Killen

and Rutland 2013, Søndergaard 2014). That is, the exclusionary aspect of both populism and bullying signals a structural similarity between the two phenomena.

Populism is also often defined as a political style (Moffitt and Tormey, 2014) characterised by a Manichean logic ('elite' vs. 'people'), adversarial narratives targeting the 'enemies of the people' as well as the depiction of crises that justify immediate political action. Empirical analyses of political communication have demonstrated that the communication of populist actors is more hostile and negative than that of non-populists (e.g. Jagers and Walgrave 2007). Bullying has also been conceptualized as a communicative phenomenon characterised by negative, aggressive, humiliating content and hurtful intentions (Pörhölä et al. 2006). We argue that the hostile and negative communication style is a feature of both populism and bullying and provides a further structural similarity between the two. While this is not necessarily true for each and every populist politician, some of them are real bullies targeting women, LGBTQ people, immigrants, or drug addicts, as illustrated by several statements of Donald Trump, Jair Bolsonaro, Rodrigo Duterte, Viktor Orbán and others.

Based on the above considerations the research question leading our investigation is the following: Is there a link between the evaluation of micro-level aggression (school bullying) and the perception of macro-level politics?

The question is important, because an affirmative answer to it naturally leads to a second one with clear practical implications: Does sensitising students to micro-level aggression change the way populist adversarial discourse is evaluated? In other words: May anti-bullying programmes in schools have the side-effect of decreasing the appeal of populism?

Based on our research questions we generated the following hypothesis:

H1. There is a positive association between the acceptance of bullying and the support for exclusionary policy statements.

H2. Empathy treatment concerning bullying decreases the support for exclusionary policy statements.

H3. Anger treatment increases the support for exclusionary policy statements.

The last hypothesis is not derived from our research questions: it is based on previous DEMOS research on the role of anger in predicting populist attitudes (see Abadi et al., 2020). Since we followed an experimental design it allowed us to include anger treatment as well and study its hypothesised effect on populist attitudes.

2. Design of the fieldwork

We developed a detailed research design of an experiment to be conducted among Hungarian high school students. We intended to treat 11th and 12th grade students in classroom settings, and after completing an online pilot questionnaire survey, also carried out pilot studies in two elite high schools in Budapest. The results of the pilots were promising. However, lockdowns in the first, second and third waves of the 2020-21 Covid-19 pandemic inhibited the completion of the fieldwork: in Hungary high schools were closed from November 2020 till May 2021.

Eventually, we decided to develop a different design of the fieldwork. We opted for conducting an online survey-experiment. One way to carry out the fieldwork is to approach the high

schools originally selected for the classroom experiments and deliver the questionnaire with the help of cooperating teachers. However, lessons learned from the pilots warned us about potential biases stemming from the (online) communication between respondents (who were aware that they were collectively involved in a survey).

Therefore, we asked a professional online polling firm to carry out the fieldwork on a quota sample based on their respondent panel. We approached the pollster with the largest representative respondent panel. Still, conducting a survey on a large enough sample of 11th and 12th graders wasn't feasible. Hence, we expanded the target population to include all 16-25 years old internet users. Our aim was to secure a large enough sample for reasonable statistical power, while keeping the age-range narrow enough to exclude those for whom memories of the conflicts in high school life have faded. We collected the answers of 500 respondents. The sample quotas included sex, region of residence and educational level. The fieldwork was carried out in May 2021.

2.1 The dependent variables

Our scope is to explain the effect of empathy towards the abused in small scale setting on attitudes towards public policies. In particular, we are interested in the effects on attitudes towards populist policies and approaches.

A major challenge of such an investigation in Hungary is that there has been a populist government in the months (and years) before the survey. This government has put forward a populist agenda in many domains of public policy (Waterbury, 2020). Thus, asking subjects about major policy dilemmas with questions commonly used in surveys may risk triggering pretreatment effects (Druckman & Leeper, 2012). Namely, respondents tend to answer questions in accordance with their political preferences (following the party lines), suppressing the effects of the experimental treatments (for recent results from Hungary see Janky 2018, 2019).

Hence, we tried to avoid topics that had been high on the public agenda in the two-three years before the survey, like, for instance, immigration which has been in the focus of governmental communication since 2015. As a result, some of the proposals raised in the questions seem weird from the perspective of contemporary liberal democracies. Note, however, that several of the actual proposals of the existing populist political forces around the world seemed similarly weird at first for those thinking within the ideological framework of liberal democracies.

In the questionnaire, we measured the level of agreement with the following statements on a seven-point scale. The statements were presented in a random order (Answers for the individual survey items are shown in Table A1 in the Appendix. The distribution of the composite index is shown in Figure A1 in the Appendix.)

- The government should not spend money on the entertainment of detainees (TV, library, shows, celebrations).
- The government should not spend money on the healthcare of detainees.
- The government should not spend money on the health care of serious alcohol addicts (ambulance, detoxication, rehabilitation).
- It should be allowed that in the case of illegal intrusion, people can defend their own property (apartment, house, garden) with any means

- Commuters' rights to clean streets are stronger than the homeless people's rights to live in the streets
- A country has the right to decide about immigration based on the religion of the potential immigrants.
- A night club has the right to refuse to accept Roma visitors.
- A town should have the right to refuse an open institution for people with mental illness.
- If an abused wife stands by her husband, public authorities have nothing to do with this family's issues.
- It should not be expected that one labels certain groups in the presence of members of those groups as they prefer to label themselves (that is, one could talk about Gypsies even if a person who labels themselves as Roma is present, or faggots even if a person who labels themselves as gay is present).

We created a composite variable, a populist attitude index to filter out the impacts of domain-specific preferences. Note, however, that a separate analysis of the different variables could provide important information for further research on the connection between the empathy with the abused ones and attitudes toward certain populist measures and policies.

2.2 Explanatory variables and manipulation check

The explanatory variables are operationalised as vignettes presenting a bullying or abuse of power situation. The questionnaire also included a list of questions concerning attitudes about bullying. (Answers for the individual survey items are shown in Table A2 in the Appendix. The distribution of the composite index is shown in Figure A2 in the Appendix.)

Our design of the treatments relies on the ones of earlier experiments aimed at triggering empathy (Berenguer 2010) and investigate reactions to bullying stories (Byers et al. 2011). The vignettes are introduced by the following short paragraph:

You may read a short story below. We ask you to read the story and try to imagine the feelings of the protagonist in the presented situation. Try to empathise with the feelings of this young person.

The first version of the vignettes presents a bullying situation from the perspective of a bullied teenager. Respondents were asked to read the following short story:

Everybody in the school has eventually entered the Facebook group 'Silly clothes and shoes'. At the beginning, they posted photos downloaded from the internet. Then, one day somebody posted a shot about guy from the school. And the post become popular. And a week ago it happened. Somebody secretly took a photo of my shoes, and the posted it in the group. It soon become the most popular post, everybody laughed at it. I could not wear other shoes. I felt really cold in my summer shoes, in the rainy weather. When we bought it, I told my mother that it was very uncool, but she refused to by what I choose ('we do not by such an expensive stuff for such a short time'). The day after the post was horrific. I heard the laughs and knew people are staring at me already outside the school. I put on my summer shoes inside – this made me even more ridiculous. I stayed at my desk in the breaks between the classes. Everybody knew why. I become even more humiliated. Nobody came up to me. And I have to go home somehow. And the cold, rainy weather has not been improving in recent days. It is hopeless at home: you

don't have fever, you have to go to school, it is a ridiculous excuse. I'm alone. A box of sleeping pills on the table. I'm crying.

The second version of the vignettes presents an abuse of power situation from the perspective of abused teenagers. We expected this treatment to spur anger and indignation. Respondents were asked to read the following short story:

Everybody in the club was enthusiastic about the trash collection competition. We were inspired by the perspective of foreign travel as a prize. During a one-month period, we devoted several days a week to walking and collecting recyclable trash of acquaintances and strangers. We explained enthusiastically about the importance of selecting recyclable waste and the new selective waste collection station in the town. Andrew and his pals laughed at us, but also told us that they could not participate because the daughter of the mayor is in their club, so they were excluded. By the end of the month, we were completely exhausted, but we had collected a huge amount of selective waste. The guys who took the trash at the station were astonished and told us that we should listen to the results of the competition. And the news has just arrived: the winner is the club of the mayor's daughter with an incredibly huge amount of collected trash! It was only possible if they brought waste from the mayor's factory plant – if they collected anything at all. Everybody was shacked. What is more, Frank writes that our club is expected to visit the final ceremony to celebrate the winner! It is hard to describe the humiliation that I feel.

After reading one of the vignettes, the respondents in the treatment groups were asked to remember for an event when they were in a similar situation as the protagonist of the story.

A randomly selected half of the respondents in the treatment and control conditions were asked about their emotional states. Those assigned to one of the treatment conditions had to report their emotional states during reading the vignette. Those in the control group simply reported their current emotional state. Subjects had to report about nine types of emotions. This battery serves as a manipulation check for the treatments. Since this manipulation check separated the treatments from the dependent variables, we adopted it only in one half of the sample to control for any moderating effect of those items on the revealed attitudes.

At the end of the questionnaire a set of questions mapped the respondents' attitudes about bullying, measuring the agreement with statements on a 7-point Likert-scale. Statements included:

- There is nothing wrong in students' name-calling each other for fun.
- I am very embarrassed if no one defends a classmate being bullied.
- The one offending others is in fact a coward.
- It is funny to see how people can crack up because of some jokes.

We created a composite variable as the average of the single items.

2.3 Experimental design

The questionnaire started with a couple of basic demographic questions. Then, the experiment started without discussing other issues. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the following control/treatment groups (see also Table 1):

- In the basic control group only the policy questions (dependents) are presented.

- In the treatment group T1, respondents read a vignette about a bullying situation, asked to remember similar situations in their life, and the policy questions (dependents) are presented afterwards.
- In the treatment group T2, respondents read a vignette about an abuse of power situation, asked to remember similar situations in their life, and the policy questions (dependents) are presented afterwards.
- In the expanded control group respondents are asked about their current emotional states before the policy questions (dependents) are presented for them.
- In the expanded treatment group T1*, respondents read a vignette about a bullying situation, asked to remember similar situations in their life and reveal their emotional state (manipulation check), and the policy questions (dependents) are presented afterwards.
- In the expanded treatment group T2*, respondents read a vignette about an abuse of power situation, asked to remember similar situations in their life and reveal their emotional state (manipulation check), and the policy questions (dependents) are presented afterwards.

Further questions to create control variables were presented after the experiment. No other issue was presented to the respondents in the questionnaire.

Table 1. The structures of the questionnaire and the experimental design

Standard demographic + socioeconomic controls/1					
Random assignment					
Control group	Treatment 1	T 2	Control + emotions	T1+ emotions	T 2 + emotions
-	VIG-A	VIG-B	-	VIG-A	VIG-B
-	-	-		Emotional states (random order)	
			Policy questions (random order)		
Standard demographic + socioeconomic controls/2					
Bullying: attitudes					

2.4 Analytical strategy

There is still no consensus about the use of multiple regression models for testing treatment effects in experiments (Ansel et al. 2018, Freedman 2008, Lin 2013). Due to the lack of a perfect control for treatment-dependent nonresponse bias in our online survey, multivariate regression models for testing were used. Nonetheless, this choice does not change the

qualitative findings. In these models, gender, education, residence (settlement type) and attitudes towards bullying were controlled for. We estimated linear regression models with the populism index as dependent variable.

2.5 Results

First, we were interested in how the treatment influenced participants' emotions. Note that we designed two treatments. Treatment 1 is designed to increase empathy. Treatment 2 is designed to increase anger.

Table 2 shows the mean value of nine emotions that the treatment could induce. Column 1 shows the mean value of each of the nine emotions in the group of people who received Treatment 1 (empathy). Column 2 shows the mean difference between those who received Treatment 1 (empathy) and Treatment 2 (anger). In Column 3, however, the reference category is those who have not received any treatments (neither Treatment 1 nor Treatment 2).

We find that Treatment 1 induced participants' emotions more efficiently than Treatment 2. Thus, this treatment satisfied its purpose.

Treatment 2 was, however, not more efficient in increasing participants' anger than Treatment 1. As the table shows, there is no difference in the induced anger among those who received Treatment 1 and Treatment 2. Nevertheless, both treatments induced anger relative to the control group, e.g., relative to those who have not received any treatment.

In general, Treatment 1 increased most of the participants' emotions more efficiently than Treatment 2. Treatment 2 was solely more efficient than Treatment 1 in increasing participants' disgust. Therefore, we concluded that Treatment 2 is not suitable to increase participants' anger. It rather increases their disgust. More substantially, a short story about a controversial situation that describes that people have an unfair advantage if they are close to those with political power evokes disgust from people.

Table 2. The average of induced emotions in Treatment 1 (empathy) and the difference relative to Treatment 1 in Treatment 2 and the no-treatment conditions.

	Mean in Treatment 1	Mean differences relative to Treatment 1...	
		in Treatment 2	in no treatment
Regret	5.413	-0.750**	-2.120**
Empathy	5.733	-1.081**	-0.774**
Sympathy	4.747	-1.040**	-0.181
Anger	4.813	0.111	-2.147**
Joy	1.693	0.633*	3.165**
Emotion	3.96	-0.971**	-0.606*
Fear	3.133	-0.959**	0.079

Sadness	5.76	-1.173**	-2.578**
Disgust	3.12	1.152**	-0.837**

N=266

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

Second, we were interested in how the populism index is associated with various background variables. Table 3 demonstrates a weak correlation between the populism index and the demographic background variables. Notably, females incline to populism more than males. Furthermore, relative to those who live in the capital, people in small-town and villages accept populism more.

In general, the relatively low correlation between the demographic background variables and the populism index is due to our homogenous sample containing young adults between the age of 16-25 who are available online. Since this group of people might be homogeneous, it is not surprising that the demographic variables have little explanatory power.

Interestingly, the bullying acceptance index correlates positively with the populism index. Those who accept more bullying (and thus exclude the less powerful) in the school also tolerate more populism. Since our populism index measures the acceptance of attitudes that excludes the less powerful people at the macro-level, our findings suggest an interplay between the same attitudes concerning the exclusion of the less powerful at the macro and micro levels. This finding corroborates our first hypothesis (H1).

Table 3. Multivariate associations between the populism index and various background variables, unstandardized regression coefficients

	Populism index
Female	0.067** (0.020)
Highest level of education	
<i>Primary school</i>	Ref.
<i>Vocational</i>	0.092 (0.175)
<i>High-school final exam</i>	-0.014 (0.125)
<i>Tertiary</i>	-0.240 (0.190)
Type of settlement	
<i>Budapest</i>	Ref.
<i>County seat</i>	0.257

	(0.161)
<i>Town</i>	0.322*
	(0.143)
<i>Villages</i>	0.419**
	(0.147)
Bully acceptance index	0.200**
	(0.051)
Constant	1.416**
	(0.406)
Observations	500
R-squared	0.080

Standard errors in parentheses

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.1$

Third, we estimated how our two treatments targeting people's emotions affect the populism index. In general, we observed that the manipulation check had attenuated the treatment effect. Any question that is included between the treatment and the outcome measures weaken the treatment effect. Therefore, in the further interpretation, we focus on those who have not received the manipulation check, e.g., who after the treatment have not received questions about their emotions. It should be noted that this reduced the sample size.

Table 4 shows that those who received Treatment 1 (empathy) display lower values in terms of the populism index. The effect is not significant in statistical term, but this is due to the small sample: the effect size is still notable. Table 4 also shows that Treatment 2 (disgust) had an even larger negative effect on the populism index.

At this point, it is noteworthy to point out the differences between the two treatments. Treatment 1 and 2 did not only induced different emotions (empathy and – as it has to turn out – disgust), but they have also alluded to different contexts. Treatment 1 has deployed a story from the micro or private life (unfair/unjust treatment due to the lack of economic/social power). By contrast, Treatment 2 used a story that connotes the macro or social/political life (unfair/unjust treatment due to the lack of political power).

Therefore, we can conclude that inducing people's disgust by stories about abusing political power decreases the populism index, e.g., it decreases the acceptance of the exclusion of less powerful social groups. These findings provide support to our second hypothesis (H2) on the role of anti-bullying empathy treatment in reducing the appeal of exclusionary populist policy statements.

At the same time, our findings do not support our third hypothesis (H3) on the role of anger in spurring populist sentiments. This might be due to the fact that as our manipulation check revealed, the vignette about an unjust situation, abuse of power did not provoke anger, but disgust, repugnance. But we can also speculate that the negative effect of the perceived

injustice and the negative feelings spurred by it reduce the populist appeal because our policy statements were very much concerned with the exclusion of powerless groups. Perceived injustice generated feelings of solidarity with the victims of exclusion. Our results indicate that the negative effect of perceived injustice on exclusionary attitudes might be even stronger than that of empathy. This opens further avenues for research.

Table 4: Treatment effect on the populism-index, Cohen's effect sizes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Whole sample	Whole sample	Without manipulation	With manipulation
Treatment 1	-0.079 (0.112)	-0.147 (0.162)	-0.147 (0.157)	-0.024 (0.157)
Treatment 2	-0.032 (0.106)	-0.250 (0.156)	-0.250+ (0.151)	0.155 (0.149)
Manipulation check	-0.013 (0.090)	-0.189 (0.149)		
Treatment 1 × Manipulation check		0.123 (0.223)		
Treatment 2 × Manipulation check		0.406+ (0.213)		
Constant	0.041 (0.089)	0.137 (0.110)	0.137 (0.106)	-0.052 (0.103)
Observations	500	500	234	266
R-squared	0.001	0.009	0.012	0.006

Standard errors in parentheses

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.1$

3. Conclusion

The research explored the possible link between bullying attitudes and exclusionary populist attitudes, building on the assumption that those who accept bullying are more supportive of exclusionary policy statements targeting vulnerable social groups, like homeless people, prison inmates or immigrants. The assumption is based on the hypothesised structural similarity between the exclusionary nature of (at least: certain types of) populism and bullying. The research also assumed that anti-bullying empathy treatment will decrease the appeal of exclusionary populist statements.

The research consisted of an online survey experiment with 500 respondents aged 16-25. The design included an empathy treatment (a vignette about a victim of bullying) and for the control groups either no treatment or an anger treatment (a vignette about injustice and power abuse). Based on previous results on the role of anger in spurring populist sentiments we assumed that while the empathy treatment will decrease, the anger treatment will increase the support of exclusionary populist statements.

Our basic assumption proved to be correct: those who accept more bullying expressed a stronger support for the exclusionary policy positions. Our hypothesis on the role of anti-bullying empathy treatment in decreasing this support seems to be supported as well. These results have potentially important practical implications: they suggest that anti-bullying programmes in schools may form the political attitudes of the youth and decrease the populist appeal. Of course, at this stage this is speculative, but the observed effects point to this direction.

Interestingly, our anger treatment did not work the way we expected: it did not induce more support for exclusion, on the contrary. It seems that provoking the feeling of injustice may also have a positive effect in terms of solidarity with the excluded and a rejection of exclusionary populism.

References

- Abadi, D., Cabot, P.-L. H., Duyvendak, J. W., & Fischer, A. (2020). *Socio-economic or emotional predictors of populist attitudes across Europe* (DEMOS Working Paper). <https://openarchive.tk.mta.hu/483/>
- Ansel, J., Hong, H., & Li, J. (2018). OLS and 2SLS in randomized and conditionally randomized experiments. *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, 238(3–4), 243–293.
- Berenguer, J. (2010). The effect of empathy in environmental moral reasoning. *Environment and Behavior*, 42(1), 110–134.
- Byers, D. L., Caltabiano, N. J., & Caltabiano, M. L. (2011). Teachers' attitudes towards overt and covert bullying, and perceived efficacy to intervene. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(11), 8.
- Druckman, J. N., & Leeper, T. J. (2012). Learning more from political communication experiments: Pretreatment and its effects. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(4), 875–896.
- Freedman, D. A. (2008). On regression adjustments to experimental data. *Advances in Applied Mathematics*, 40(2), 180–193.
- Hawkins, K.A., Carlin, R.E., Littvay, L. and Rowira Kaltwasser, C., eds. (2019). *The Ideational Approach to Populism. Concept, Theory, and Analysis*, Routledge.
- Jagers, J., & Walgrave, S. (2007). Populism as political communication style. *European journal of political research*, 46(3), 319–345.
- Janky, B. (2018). *Saliency of political identity and social attitudes*. Paper prepared for the ECPR General Conference, 2018, Hamburg.

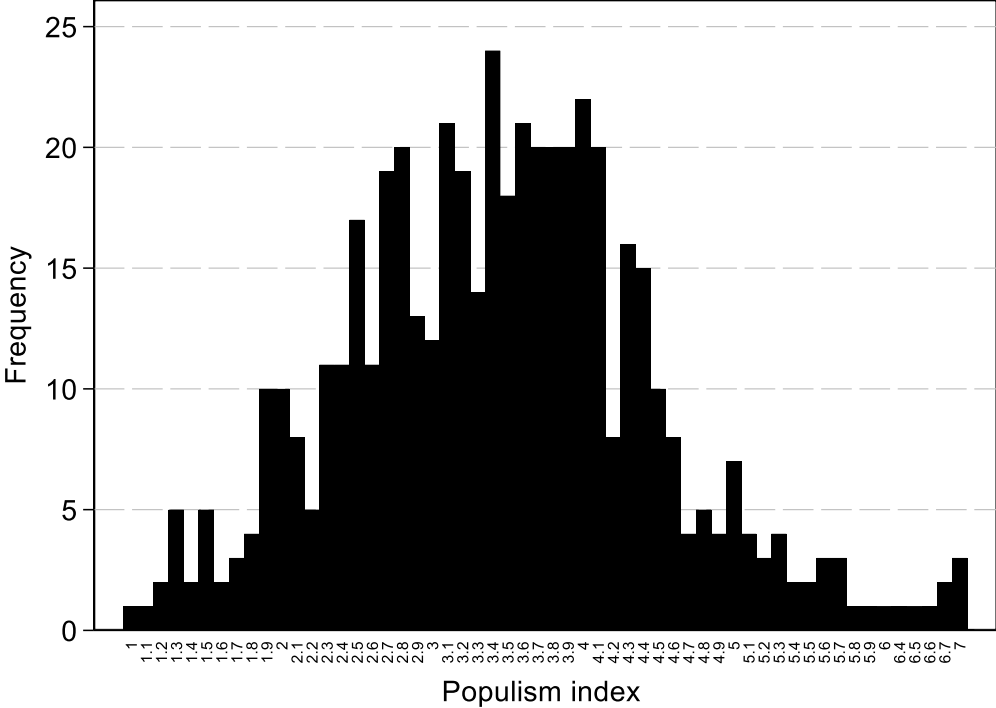
- Killen, M., & Rutland, A. (2013). *Children and social exclusion: Morality, prejudice, and group identity*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Lin, W. (2013). Agnostic notes on regression adjustments to experimental data: Reexamining Freedman's critique. *Annals of Applied Statistics*, 7(1), 295–318.
- Moffitt, B., & Tormey, S. (2014). Rethinking Populism: Politics, Mediatisation and Political Style. *Political Studies*, 62(2), 381–397.
- Mudde, C. (2004). The populist zeitgeist. *Government and opposition*, 39(4), 541–563.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x>
- Mudde, C., & Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2013). “Exclusionary vs. inclusionary populism: Comparing contemporary Europe and Latin America”, *Government and Opposition*, 48(2), 147–174.
- Pörhölä, M., Karhunen, S., & Rainivaara, S. (2006). Bullying at school and in the workplace: A challenge for communication research. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 30(1), 249–301.
- Rigby, K. and Slee, P. T. (1991). Bullying among Australian school children: Reported behavior and attitudes toward victims. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 131, 615–627.
- Somer, M., McCoy, J. L., & Luke, R. E. (2021). Pernicious polarization, autocratization and opposition strategies, *Democratization*, 1–20.
- Søndergaard, D. M. (2014). Social exclusion anxiety: Bullying and the forces that contribute to bullying amongst children at school. In R. M. Schott & D. M. Søndergaard (Eds.), *School bullying: New theories in context* (pp. 47–80). Cambridge University Press.
- Waterbury, M. A. (2020). Populist nationalism and the challenges of divided nationhood: The politics of migration, mobility, and demography in post-2010 Hungary. *East European Politics and Societies*, 34(4), 962–983.

Appendix

Table A1: The items used to construct the Populism Index and the distribution of answers in the answer-categories (%)

	I do not agree at all	I do not agree	I tend to disagree	I agree and I disagree	I tend to agree	I agree	I fully agree	Total
The state should not spend money on entertainment for prisoners in prisons (TV, library, cultural events, celebrations)	10.8	15.4	13.6	23.2	12	9.6	15.4	100
The state should not spend money on treating illnesses of prisoners	31	26.8	13.8	16.6	3.8	3	5	100
The state should not spend money on the care of serious alcoholics (ambulance transport, detoxification, rehabilitation programs)	24.2	23.4	19	19	6.2	2.8	5.4	100
People should be allowed to protect their own homes (house, garden) from unauthorized intruders by any means	4.6	7.6	9.2	18.2	14.2	16.4	29.8	100
The right of working people to a clean street takes precedence over the right of homeless people to be on the streets	11.2	13.2	14.8	32.6	12.6	6.4	9.2	100
A country has the right to decide people from which religion they accept as migrants	23.8	18.2	9.2	23.6	10.4	5.6	9.2	100
A nightclub should have the right to decide not to admit Roma guests	30.4	17.4	13	18.2	8	5.4	7.6	100
A municipality should have the right to decide not to accept institutions for the mentally ill people	18.4	16.6	12	27.2	11.4	6	8.4	100
If an abused wife stands up for her husband, public authorities should be not involved in the family-affairs	22.6	23	14.2	22.4	7.6	5	5.2	100
People should not be expected to talk about certain groups in the presence of their members in the way these people want to call themselves (for example, we can say <i>gypsy</i> even if a person wants to hear <i>Roma</i> , or we can say <i>fag</i> if a person wants to hear <i>gay</i>)	24.2	14.6	9.8	24.6	11.6	5.2	10	100

Figure A1: The distribution of the Populism Index



Note: Mean = 3.45, SD = 1.05
The Populism Index is the average of the 10 items.

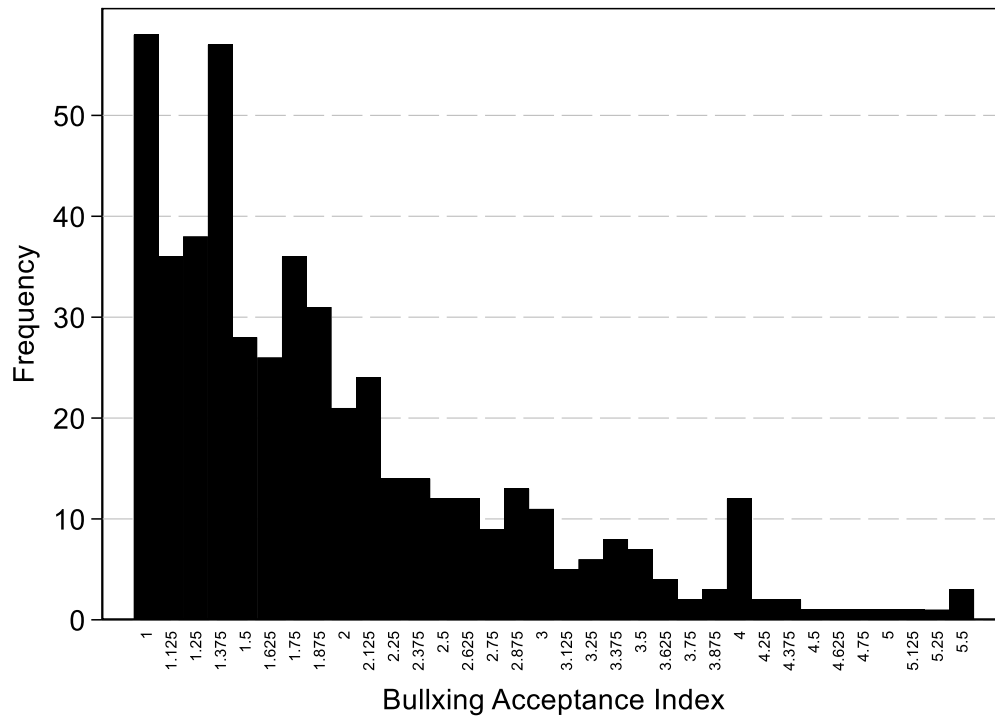
Table A2: The items used to construct the Bullying Acceptance Index and the distribution of answers in the answer-categories (%)

	I do not agree at all	I do not agree	I tend to disagree	I agree and I disagree	I tend to agree	I agree	I fully agree	Total
It is okay to call some kids nasty names	38.4	23.6	11.2	18.6	3.2	1.6	3.4	100
* It irritates me when nobody defends a bullied child	2.4	1.4	0.8	5.4	13.4	16.4	60.2	100
* A bully is really a coward	2.4	4.2	5	22.2	13.4	18.2	34.6	100
* It is a good thing to help children who can't defend themselves	1.2	0.4	1.6	4.8	12.4	13.8	65.8	100
* It is a wrong thing to join in bullying	2	1.8	1.4	4.8	7.2	9.2	73.6	100
It is funny to see kids get upset when they are teased	52.4	20.4	8.6	12.4	2.8	1.8	1.6	100
* I feel bad seeing a child bullied	1	1.6	1.6	6.8	11.6	14.2	63.2	100
* I like it when someone stands up for kids who are being bullied	0.8	1	0.4	4.2	7.8	11	74.8	100

Note: Based on the Provictim Scale of Rigby & Slee (1991).

* The item was reversely coded in the Bullying Acceptance Index

Figure A2: The distribution of the Bullying Acceptance Index



Note: Mean = 1.95, SD = 0.90

The Bullying Acceptance Index is the average of the eight items.