Measuring Populist Attitudes

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Introduction

In recent years populism has become a buzzword around the globe. In Western Europe the rise of right-wing populist parties like the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the French National Front (FN) have led to a plethora of academic articles and books. In Latin America both neoliberal populists such as Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori, at the end of the 20th century, and the more recent socialist populists such as Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, at the beginning of the 21st century, have given new impetus to the study of populism in this region. Finally, in the United States the Tea Party movement and reactions to the economic recession have brought populism back to the center of political debate.

Despite the new academic and non-academic attention, research on the topic of populism is still limited in scope. Most of it focuses on the reasons for the electoral success of populist actors, be they parties or personalities, and some of it has proposed general theories to explain the recent rise of populist sentiments. Some research is done on the exact content of the populist discourse or ideology. However, few studies look at populism at the micro-level, i.e. the distribution of populist attitudes among the public. For all the speculation, we still have little sense of which people actually hold populist ideas, or how ideas held at the individual level might lead to mass outcomes.

In this article we develop and deploy a new, survey-based measure of populist attitudes and use it to gauge the affinity for populism in the United States. We present the results of two U.S. surveys, both conducted for the general election of 2008: the Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (hereafter CCES), a nationally-representative Internet survey designed by a consortium of political scientists from across the United States; and the Utah Colleges Exit Poll, a face-to-face survey representative of voters in a state known for its conservative bent. Each

survey incorporates a small module of questions designed to measure populist attitudes, or more specifically, an affinity for populist discourse.

After a brief explanation of our approach and an analysis of the literature, we describe our measures and analyze the results. We find that our survey questions hold together well and demonstrate that populist attitudes are in fact rather common, not only in Utah but across the entire country. We also find that our measures correlate in theoretically consistent ways with such individual-level attributes as ideology, partisanship, education, wealth, positions on immigration, and gender. Together, these findings support a model of populist attitudes as a latent disposition activated by political context.

To make certain that we are not simply tapping into a general anti-establishment sentiment, we relate our measurement model to three related concepts: pluralism, considered one of the anti-theses of populism; a standard measure of ideology derived from issue stances; and Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) related concept of "stealth democracy." We find that, at the mass level, pluralism is not the *opposite* of populism, but a set of ideas that partially intersects with populism's emphasis on popular sovereignty. In contrast, we find that populist attitudes are largely orthogonal to traditional issue positions, although populists lean towards conservatism on average. And we discover that support for stealth democracy is in fact a multi-dimensional set of attitudes, one dimension of which is largely subsumed under populism. These results help us to suggest some adjustments to the measurement model for future research.

Populism: Definition and Theory

In keeping with the emerging consensus in the literature, we treat populism as a set of ideas. Specifically, we refer to populism as a discourse or what some scholars call a thin-centered

ideology: a coherent set of basic assumptions about the world and the language that unwittingly expresses them (de la Torre 2000; Laclau 2005; for a discussion of the concept of discourse, see Alker and Sylvan 1994; Dryzek and Berejikian 1993). There are three important features of this approach.

First, we see populism as a set of ideas, not primarily as a material phenomenon. It is a fundamental way of seeing democracy (Canovan 1999; Mudde 2010). Specifically, we define populism as a Manichaean approach to the political world that equates the side of Good with the putative "will of the people" and the side of Evil with a conspiring elite (Hawkins 2010; Mudde 2007). It is the moralizing, dualistic approach to our belief in popular sovereignty, one that exalts the opinion of the majority while characterizing opposition as immoral and malevolent. It stands in opposition to the approach of *pluralism*, which emphasizes the inevitability and desirability of differences of opinion. Whereas pluralism calls for institutions that enshrine and protect minority rights in the pursuit of a majority will, populism craves moral clarity and posits a reified popular will that treats dissent as suspect and dangerous. Whereas pluralism sees political relations as essentially those of cooperation or even harmony, populism sees a world that is naturally antagonistic.

Thus, we do not see populism as some scholars and journalists have traditionally viewed it: as a kind of political coalition associated with statist projects of economic development (Cardoso & Faletto 1979; Di Tella 1965; Germani 1978; Weffort 1973), as a set of shortsighted economic policies that appeal to the poor (Dornbusch and Edwards 1991), or as a political strategy that is always associated with charismatic leadership and movement organization (see Weyland 2001; Roberts 2003). All of these material aspects can be features of populism in action, but they are corollaries that derive from the underlying ideas in different social settings. For

example, shortsighted economic policies emerge from populist movements in developing countries because the poor and propertyless constitute the vast majority of citizens; in wealthy countries, populism often takes a rightist direction that champions fiscal austerity and capitalism. And while most successful movements have charismatic leaders, this is primarily because of the role they play in coordinating a vast network based on "people power"; many other populist movements lack this kind of leadership.

Second, we see populism as a particular kind of ideas: as a discourse or a thin-centered ideology. Whereas thick (or full) ideologies, such as liberalism, socialism, and conservatism, are consciously derived systems of thought that offer specific, practical policy solutions to a broad range of aspects of life (Mullins 1972), thin-centered ideologies like populism (and pluralism) represents a more basic set of assumptions, an approach to the political world that has only limited applicability (Freeden 1996). Hence, populism can be associated with a number of different ideologies. It is certainly more likely to be associated with radical versions of a given ideology, and it predictably tacks to the left in developing countries or to the right in the advanced industrial democracies. But populism is to some extent an empty box waiting to be filled with programmatic substance.

Finally, while populism should not be reduced to a personality type or trait, it is probably influenced by basic traits such as those associated with an authoritarian disposition (Adorno et al. 1950; Altemeyer 1996; Stenner 2005) or openness to experience (Monday et al. 2010). And just as personality traits may lie dormant until activated by context, the expression of populist attitudes depends on whether or not citizens confront an environment that prompts a populist response and renders it meaningful (Hawkins 2010).

Current Research on Populist Attitudes

Scholars are already adept at measuring populist ideas at the level of political elites. Rough qualitative analyses of leaders' words undergird many existing studies of populist movements here in the United States (Kazin 1998), Latin America (Conniff 1999), and Europe (Mudde 2007). More systematic quantitative analyses of texts, including both content analysis and holistic grading, are increasingly being done on the speeches, television broadcasts, and manifestos of key leaders and their parties (Armony and Armony 2005; Jagers and Walgrave 2007; Hawkins 2009; Rooduijn and Pauwels 2010).

However, we still lack good measures for populist attitudes at the mass level, including in the United States. While a number of studies get at support for populist parties and candidates, scholars have not paid much attention to gauging populist attitudes among the public, and whether these might at least correlate with support for populist parties. Let us mention four U.S. (partial) exceptions that we think help prove the rule.

The first empirical study of populism at the mass level is undoubtedly by Robert Axelrod, who comes to his "populist cluster" rather inductively; his cluster analysis groups six questions in a highly correlated scale, which he names populism "because one of its extremes corresponds to many of the attitudes of the American Populist movement of the 1880s" (1967, 57).[1] Leaving aside the inductive approach, Axelrod's indicators are highly dated (e.g. "fire suspect Communists") and do not relate to contemporary conceptualizations of populism.

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[1] The six questions/topics are "Government aid to education," "Insure medical care," "Government guarantee of jobs," "Cut taxes," "Fire suspect Communists," and "Avoid foreign involvement."

Second, Dryzek and Berejikian (1993) analyze political discourse at the mass level using Q-method. While not a typical form of survey research, Q-method does work with carefully constructed samples of individuals who are asked to rank a series of statements in order to determine how these ideas typically hang together. Using this technique, Dryzek and Berejikian find roughly four discourses in their sample of Americans, one of these being a "disaffected populist" type that maps closely onto the definition of populism we have mentioned here. Unfortunately, their measure is never reused as the basis for any survey research into larger samples of the public, nor to assess the correlates of these attitudes. Thus, we do not know how many people actually sympathize with populism or other discourses.

Third, some analyses of authoritarian personality—most of which traditionally rely on survey measures—seem to tap into populist ideas. Most of the overlap is accidental, and the word "populist" is rarely if ever mentioned. Probably the best example is Stenner's (2005) recent study of authoritarian personality. In an attempt to more carefully model the way in which authoritarian traits are activated in different settings, she distinguishes these underlying traits from their attitudinal manifestations. Some of these measures of secondary attitudes, which Stenner derives from content analyses of respondent interviews, sound strikingly populist to us (see especially chapter 8 in her book), thus providing us with unintentional theoretical insights into the origins and nature of populist attitudes that we explore here later. But populism *per se* is not the focus of her study.

Finally, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) analysis of attitudes they associate with "stealth democracy" in the United States bear a partial resemblance to populism. Based on a combination of focus groups and survey research, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse suggest that many Americans combine a strong level of popular cynicism with a seemingly paradoxical desire for

expert management of government. Their two measures of popular cynicism—the statements "elected officials would help the country more if they would stop talking and just take action on important problems" and "what people call 'compromise' in politics is really just selling out on one's principles"—seem to nicely capture the Manichaean approach to politics that is one of populism's key elements, in fact using blunt language that is strikingly populist. We reuse these statements in our study. But Hibbing and Theiss-Morse never refer to these attitudes as populist, nor do they attempt to disentangle them from the elitist attitudes captured by their other measures.

Thus, we lack a set of survey measures that are expressly designed to get at populist attitudes, and we have yet to see an analysis of the correlates of these attitudes that would help us not only estimate the overall potential for populism in America, but eventually explore the causes and consequences of these attitudes for politics.

Our Measurement

Populism is not just an underlying argument in the abstract, but a way of seeing the world that is linked to different kinds of language. A discourse in this sense is largely discerned through subtle cues of language and diffuse attributes of text, such as tone and metaphor, rather than any specific lexicon or an overt statement of where the speaker stands on an issue. This means that in designing survey questions, we should not rely on neutral statements of ideas, but develop questions that incorporate the language of populism.

Based on this insight, we worked together with several colleagues at Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project and Brigham Young University to develop a series of four statements that capture key elements of populism, especially a Manichaean view of politics, a notion of a reified popular will, and a belief in a conspiring elite. After testing and

refining these measures in pilot surveys over the latter part of 2007 and early 2008, we deployed

them in two large, representative surveys conducted around the U.S. general election in

November 2008: the Cooperative Congressional Elections Survey (hereafter CCES) and the Utah

Colleges Exit Poll (hereafter UCEP). The statements are the same in both:

POP1 Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil.

POP2 The politicians in Congress need to follow the will of the people.

POP3 The power of a few special interests prevents our country from making progress.

POP4 The people, not the politicians, should make the most important policy decisions.

In both surveys, respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with these

statements. In the CCES, a 4-point scale was used, with labels for each response: 1=strongly

disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree. In the UCEP, respondents were given a 5-point

Likert-type scale with labels only for the extremes: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree;

In order to gauge the distinctiveness of populist discourse, we included two other

modules of questions in these surveys. The first is a series of three questions we designed to

measure *pluralist* discourse. While the results were instructive and helped strengthen our

confidence in the populism questions, this was an experimental series included only in the UCEP.

The statements are as follows:

PLU1 Democracy is about achieving compromise among differing viewpoints.

PLU2 When our opposition presents new and challenging viewpoints, there is something

we can learn by listening.

PLU3 Freedom depends on diversity.

In the CCES we instead deployed Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) stealth democracy questions, listed below. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse do not check the coherence of these questions (we do later), but in looking at their statements, we suspect that the first two are capturing elements of populism, while the latter two are tapping into a third discourse that scholars often call *elitism* (Dryzek and Berejikian 1993; Mudde 2004). We included all four measures in order to test their coherence and to see if the first two measures correlated with our own.

SD1 Elected officials would help the country more if they would stop talking and just take action on important problems.

SD2 What people call 'compromise' in politics is really just selling out on one's principles.

SD3 Our government would run better if decisions were left up to successful business people.

SD4 Our government would run better if decisions were left up to non-elected, independent experts rather than politicians or the people.

In order to make our CCES data as comparable as possible with Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's reported results, we used their original four-point scale of agreement (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree), rather than the 5-point Likert-type scale found in the UCEP, and we applied this scale to the populism questions too. Fortunately, our results across the two surveys turn out to be very similar and allow us to make sensible comparisons with moderate rescaling.

Descriptive Results

Before providing our results, let us describe the two surveys and our rationale for using them. The 2008 UCEP is a representative, statewide sample of Utah voters, who were polled on the day of the November general elections. The UCEP has been conducted regularly for over 25 years and is well known in-state for producing accurate election-day predictions (Grimshaw et al. 2004; for a recent example of research using the survey, see Hall, Monson, and Patterson 2009). It is a relatively short (5-10 minutes), face-to-face survey and is administered as an exit poll just outside the voting area. Respondents are selected by student survey workers stationed at the site and are asked to fill out their own questionnaire by hand, thus helping reduce interviewer effects. The sample design is a stratified multistage cluster sample and is patterned after the sample design developed for national exit polls (c.f. Mitofsky and Edelman 1995). The poll is designed to provide estimates for election outcomes at both the congressional district and statewide levels. In 2008, 93 polling places were sampled statewide and the cooperation rate for the poll was 58.9 percent (AAPOR Rate 2), yielding a total of 1,052 respondents.

We have included the UCEP because it covers a state with a reputation for highly conservative voters who support populist third-party candidates (XX SOURCE OMITTEDXX). It presents us with an easy case for our measures, and we expect to find strong populist attitudes here. But we also want to know how our measurement model fares in a broader, national context. If we take the literature on populist ideas at face value, populist attitudes will not really be any lower at the national level and should behave in similar ways.

Thus, our second survey is the 2008 CCES, an Internet survey designed by a consortium of political scientists from across the United States and conducted by YouGov/Polimetrix. To

achieve nationally representative results, the CCES uses matched random sampling. This technique selects respondents from the YouGov/Polimetrix database of participants by matching them with a random, stratified sample taken from the American Community Survey. The matching of potential respondents is done with a proprietary algorithm that incorporates a series of measured characteristics, including age, gender, race, education, and state of residence. Responses are subsequently weighted to adjust for minor differences between the matched sample and the target sample. Subsequent analyses show that CCES predictions for statewide electoral races are very close to those achieved with standard polling techniques (Ansolabehere 2011; see Vavreck and Rivers 2006 for a similar analysis of the 2006 round). The response rate (AAPOR Rate 2) was 59.3 percent.[2]

Our version of the CCES was conducted in October 2008. While the Common Core of the survey was administered to over 32,800 adults, nationally representative subsamples of 1,000 respondents each received an additional module of questions designed by contributing teams of scholars. The populism and stealth democracy questions were administered to one of these subsamples.

Now the results. Figure 1 reports average responses to each question in both surveys after rescaling them to a common 100-point scale, where 100 indicates the highest level of agreement and 0 the lowest. In both samples we find that the bulk of respondents agrees (strongly or mildly) with all four populism questions. The agreement is strongest for the latter three questions in the

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[2] Because of the way the matched random sampling is done, these rates include a large category of respondents with unknown eligibility who were not interviewed. Considering instead the refusal rates, the respective figure is 0.6 percent (AAPOR Rate 2).

module (POP2-POP4), with an average score between 66.9 and 83.7; it is lowest for POP1

("good and evil"), around 43.9-51.6. Thus, the affinity for populist discourse seems to be quite

high across both Utah and the United States as a whole.

[Figure 1 here]

Moreover, the results of individual questions are strikingly similar across the two surveys.

While the difference in means across the two surveys is statistically significant (p<.001 for most

questions), it is substantively small. Utah respondents appear slightly more populist on the

second and fourth questions, while the national sample is more populist on the first and third

questions. Both surveys show relatively lower agreement with the first question (POP1) than

with the other three.

Figures 2 and 3 present mean values for the questions in our other modules: the pluralism

questions and the stealth democracy questions. Again, these have been converted to a 100-point

scale (0=strongly disagree and 100=strongly agree). The Utah respondents generally agree with

the pluralist statements, yielding average scores between 68.6 and 82.3, about the same levels as

we found for the populist statements in these surveys. This could mean either that there is

support for both pluralism *and* populism among some respondents, or that some of our measures

do not clearly enough distinguish between the two. We hope to get more insights into this by

testing the correspondence between these sets of responses.

[Figure 2 here]

In the case of the stealth democracy questions (CCES only), we see results suggesting

that our intuitions about the relationship between this concept and populism might be correct.

While respondents give an average score of 72.0 for the first statement ("stop talking/take

action"), and a smaller 55.0 for the second statement ("compromise is selling out"), they score

even lower—38.1 and 40.0 respectively—on the last two statements. Note that this pattern of

responses is nearly identical to what Hibbing and Theiss-Morse found in their original study,

which used national survey data from 1998.[3] We think that this relatively wide variance in

average responses across questions suggests that the stealth democracy questions are tapping into

a more diverse set of attitudes.

[Figure 3 here]

Our next step is to determine the coherence of these measures, which we do by running

factor analyses of the populism module in Utah and the United States, together with the

pluralism questions in the UCEP and the stealth democracy questions in the CCES. For good

measure, in the CCES factor analysis we include four additional questions gauging standard

issue stances on abortion (CC310, higher numbers are more pro-choice), protecting the

environment (CC311, higher numbers mean favoring jobs over environment), privatizing social

security (CC312, higher numbers mean opposition to privatization), and affirmative action

(CC313, higher numbers mean opposition to affirmative action). Knowing that the populism

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[3] Using their original 4-point scale of agreement, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse find that the percent

who agree/strongly agree with these four statements is 86, 60, 32, and 31 percent. Converting our

own results to this scale, we get a similar 83, 56, 33, and 32 percent.

questions load onto a different factor from these issue stances will give us added confidence that

our measures are capturing a truly distinct set of attitudes. As is common for an exploratory

factory analysis, we use principal-factor estimations. And we use an orthogonal (varimax)

rotation, although the results remain essentially the same if we use an oblique rotation.

[Table 1 here]

The results of these analyses, presented in Tables 1 and 2, show that our populism

questions hang together nicely. With the partial exception of our first question (POP1, "good

versus evil"), the populism questions all load heavily onto the same factor; in fact, the loadings

are very similar across most of our questions, suggesting that no one question stands out as a

better measure of populism. In the CCES, this factor clearly stands apart from a separate factor

gauging salient issue stances.[4] This gives added reassurance that our measures are getting at a

coherent, underlying set of ideas and language that is distinct from traditional political ideologies.

[Table 2 here]

Looking more closely at the results of the CCES factor analysis (Table 2), we find that

these also confirm our predictions about the stealth democracy questions. With the partial

exception of POP1, our populism questions load heavily on the same factor as the first two

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[4] If there is any affinity between populism and this issue dimension, it is slightly towards

conservatism, as the loadings for Factor 1 in Table 2 suggest. This confirms our findings in the

next section.

stealth democracy questions, while the latter two stealth democracy questions tend to constitute their own factor (elitism?). This suggests that the concept of stealth democracy captures at least two different discourses that only partly overlap in the minds of the public, and it reaffirms the merits of a framework that can disaggregate these sets of attitudes.

The analysis of the UCEP data (Table 1) presents a somewhat more complicated picture. While the populism questions load most heavily onto a separate factor, three of the four (POP2-POP4) also load weakly onto a factor that brings together the pluralism questions; in contrast, the pluralism questions do not load onto the populism factor. We see two possible interpretations. One is that our two sets of questions perfectly capture two distinct discourses, but that there is at least some overlap between these discourses in the minds of many citizens. In particular, a number of pluralists have some sympathy for populist discourse. Or it may be that our populism measures are not as discriminating as they could be, at least in the American context, and that some of these statements (especially POP2-POP4) sound vaguely appealing to pluralists.

On both inductive and deductive grounds the second interpretation seems more plausible. Returning to the factor analysis of CCES results, we see that POP1 relates differently to POP2-POP4, but quite similarly to SD2. Both variables load strongest on Factor 1, but almost as strongly on Factor 3. Hence, they seem to tap into something slightly different than the other POP variables. POP1 ("politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil") and SD2 ("compromise is selling out") most clearly capture the Manichaean element of populism and are thus more explicitly anti-pluralist. In contrast, variables POP2-POP4 tap into the democratic aspect of populism with its affirmation of a knowable popular will, where there is a little more proximity to pluralism.

Finally, we consider the reliability of these measures. We calculate Cronbach's α for our four populism questions together, as well as for the pluralism questions (UCEP) and the stealth democracy and issues measures (CCES). These figures provide us with a test of nonsystemmatic measurement error for any linear, unweighted index created by combining each of these groups of questions. In the UCEP, $\alpha = .59$, which falls below the industry standard of .70 for large-N studies (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994, 265), but this is not uncommon for indexes based on few questions. In the CCES, however, it reaches .65, and the result increases to .73 if we include the first two stealth democracy questions with our own, a move potentially justified by the results of the factor analysis. By way of comparison, the standard issue-position questions fail to do better than our best results ($\alpha=.66$) and the stealth democracy questions fall somewhat below our lowest results, at $\alpha=.57$.

Thus, our populism questions have pretty good reliability and seem to be getting at something coherent that is distinct from other discourses and traditional issues stances. While more work is needed on these measures, we think they provide a helpful initial gauge of populist attitudes in the United States.

Modeling the Correlates

As an additional way of verifying the face validity of our measures—and as an indirect test of the ideational approach to populism—we run a short series of regressions that test whether our measures have theoretically consistent correlations with the sociodemographic and partisan attributes of survey respondents, and whether these correlations are similar across both samples. Our statistical models include a mixture of variables, some of which are not entirely exogenous

and almost certainly demand some kind of two-way modeling. Thus, we stop short of providing a comprehensive causal model and treat these results as merely illustrative.

We construct several OLS models (robust standard errors) using a simple additive index of our four populism questions as our dependent variable (POP1-POP4). Because of the different response scales used for this module in each survey, we use the 100-point index created earlier and then calculate the average value for each respondent across all four questions, thereby retaining a 100-point scale where higher values indicate stronger populist attitudes.[5] While POP1 loads less heavily than the other three items in the factor analyses, for simplicity we prefer to include all four and weight them equally; running the analysis with a weighted index does not appreciably alter the results. The earlier factor analysis suggests that we could also include the first two stealth democracy questions in our index; indeed, we did so in other versions of the model (not shown here) and achieved stronger findings for all relevant variables. But these questions are only included in the CCES, and so we leave them out of the models reported here.

Our first test indicator is a measure of *ideology/radicalism*, which we measure in terms of how the respondents place themselves on a standard conservative-liberal scale. While populism can be associated with a wide variety of ideologies, we do expect populist attitudes to be associated with monism, or the tendency to reject ideological ambivalence or dissent (c.f. Mudde 2010). And in the United States, where "the people" has increasingly become associated with a property-owning middle class, we expect populist attitudes today to lean more to the conservative side (for a similar argument, see Hawkins 2010, 197-98). The original questions in

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[5] The index has a mean of 68.4 and a standard deviation of 18.0; hence, it is skewed slightly left. Although technically interval-level, the index has 13 intervals and so we treat it here as continuous.

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both surveys use a five-point scale. We group the responses into a set of binary variables: strongly conservative, moderately conservative, moderate, moderately liberal, and strongly liberal, and omit the "moderate" category as our baseline.

Our second set of indicators is a measure of *education* and a measure of *household income*. We expect populist attitudes to be more prevalent among respondents with lower education and income. This is an old expectation in the literature on populism, although the underlying explanations vary. On the one hand, populist attitudes may be a rational response to the disadvantages of low socioeconomic status: 'I am poor, therefore I dislike the elite.' On the other hand, it may reflect socialization and genetics; political psychologists suggest that authoritarian traits—and, by implication, populist attitudes—are a byproduct of the same factors that lead to lower education and income (Altemeyer 1996; Stenner 2005).

To measure the effect of education, we recode the original set of educational measures in both the UCEP and CCES into four binary variables: high school graduate or less, some college, college graduate, and postgraduate. As for household income, we use just a single variable that is roughly continuous; the UCEP uses 8 categories, while the CCES uses 14. However, both surveys use a non-linear measure, with smaller increments of income at the lower ends of the scale, in order to generate a roughly normal distribution of responses. Thus, the results for this variable should be seen as estimating the leap across different percentiles rather than as a continuous effect of income.

Our fourth indicator is a 4-point scale of *partisan identity*, which we break down into a series of binary variables for each category: Democrat, independent, Republican, and "other." We prefer this over a sophisticated 7-point scale (indicating strength of partisan attachment) largely because we get the same results and because it simplifies the presentation. While we may

find some small association between Republican identity and populism (in that populism should be a rightist phenomenon in the United States), we consider it more likely that populist respondents will be disproportionately in the "other" category, because populist movements historically appear as third parties opposed to the traditional system.

Our fifth indicator, which we can include only in the models for the UCEP, is a measure for *stance on immigration reform*. While the connection of populist attitudes with issue positions is context specific, we know that the issue of immigration in particular is strongly associated with right-wing populist platforms in Western Europe (Ivarsflaten 2008), and anecdotal evidence indicates that this is true in the United States as well. The original question in the UCEP uses a 4-point ordinal scale to measure an increasingly friendly stance towards immigrants; we get similar results and have an easier time presenting them if we reverse the scale and treat it as a continuous variable. Thus, we expect to find a positive association between populist attitudes and a (harsh) stance on immigration.

Finally, we control for *age* and *sex* of respondents. Sex is coded so that 1=male, 0=female. A number of studies of right-wing populist parties in Europe assert that populism is predominantly a male phenomenon (Norris 2005; Givens 2005). However, we believe that this correlation is a result of these parties' association with violence (Mudde 2007, Chapter 4) and that the underlying populist attitudes can be held by both men and women alike. In contrast, we lack any strong expectations about age. Although we ran some initial models with age coded as one continuous variable, we ultimately decided to group responses into four cohorts: pre-Boomer (born before 1946), Boomer (between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (1965 and 1976), and Generation Y (after 1976). We omit the Generation Y cohort as our baseline.

The results of these three models are presented in Table 3. Because attitudes towards immigration reform tend to be strongly associated with some of our other indicators (Model 3), we present a version of the UCEP model without this variable (Model 2); the resulting specification is essentially the same as the CCES one (Model 1). In looking over these, remember that the scale for the dependent variable is 0-100, and so the coefficients for many of these variables can be interpreted roughly as percentage point shifts.

[Table 3 here]

We generally confirm our expectations and find similar results across both surveys, with some important exceptions. First, consider ideology/radicalism. In both the CCES and UCEP without immigration (Models 1 and 2), conservatives are more populist than liberals, but strong conservatives/liberals are more populist than moderate conservatives/liberals. Strong conservatives in particular are 4-7 points more populist than respondents in the middle of the scale, and they are probably more populist than moderate conservatives or moderate liberals (the latter coefficients are in the right direction, but not always statistically significant at the p<.10 level or better, so we cannot calculate a meaningful difference). Likewise, strong liberals seem to be more populist than moderate liberals (see the reversal of signs across the two coefficients), although the difference between these two groups is not statistically significant at standard levels.

Looking at education, we find an even stronger, consistent result across both surveys (Models 1 and 2). In both models, higher levels of education are associated with lower populism. The effect is strongest among postgraduates—6-7 points—although it is also statistically significant among college graduates. In the case of income, we find a clearly dissimilar effect,

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which only partly confirms our expectations. In the CCES (Model 1) the effect is statistically

significant and in the direction we expected—on average, a 0.7-point reduction in populism for

each percentile shift in income. In the UCEP without immigration (Model 2), the effect of

income is not statistically significant at standard levels, although the coefficient is in the right

direction. We do not yet know why these outcomes differ so much; the average incomes across

the two samples are very similar, and their scales differ really only in terms of the number of

intervals. Income and education do tend to be correlated across respondents. If we eliminate the

measures for education (model not shown here), income does have a stronger association.

     The effect of partisanship diverges even more sharply across the two samples, but in a

way that upholds our predictions. In all models, of course, we find that traditional partisan

identities matter very little: The statistically insignificant results suggest that Democrats,

Republicans, and independents are essentially identical in their level of populism.[6] This in itself

is a remarkable finding and is largely what we expected. However, third-party supporters are

either much more populist (in the UCEP) or much less populist (in the CCES); in the UCEP, the

difference is 8-9 points, while in the CCES it is over 10 points. Although the number of

respondents in each of these subsets is rather small in both surveys (154 in the UCEP, but only

20 in the CCES), the effect is quite strong.

     On closer examination, however, these results make sense. In Utah, third party voters are

usually from the radical right and have a strong patriotic/nationalist emphasis (Constitution Party,

etc.); these are parties that we would expect to be populist. In the national sample, in contrast,

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[6] Remember that these partisan categories are dummy variables, with Republican as the reference

category. Coefficients show the difference between these categories and a typical Republican

respondent.

respondents indicating "other" are often Libertarians, a party responding to a classic liberal ideology that seems less compatible with populist assumptions about the dualistic, Manichaean nature of politics or the need to subject our individual interests to a common will.[7] Thus, people with populist attitudes do not blindly support any outsider party; their support depends at least partly on its program.

Finally, one of the strongest associations we find—and only in the UCEP with immigration (Model 3), because the question was not included in the CCES—is between populism and position on immigration reform. The coefficient, which is statistically significant at the p<.000 level, indicates that a one-standard-deviation shift in views on immigration is associated with a 3 point shift in populist attitudes. However, the scale on immigration reform runs from 1-4, and the most extreme response is actually the second most common one; this response is associated with a shift of about 12 points. This confirms the common perception of populism as a xenophobic phenomenon associated with the radical right in the industrial democracies.[8]

As for our controls, sex of the respondent has no discernible relationship to populism in either model. This is a striking finding that may shed some light on debates over the gender bias of populism in Western Europe. It suggests that the gender composition of these parties is not a

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[7] We think it is important to distinguish between card-carrying Libertarians and voters who merely have so-called libertarian leanings, such as Tea Party activists. Journalistic accounts of the Tea Party often use the term "libertarian" loosely, in the latter sense.

[8] Because stance on immigration tends to correlate highly with a number of other indicators in our model, it depresses almost all of the other coefficients.

result of the inherent appeal of populist discourse, but comes from other context- or party-specific factors (see Mudde 2007, Chapter 4). Age does have an association, but only in the UCEP model, where populist attitudes seem to strengthen with age. The effect is nonlinear: those in the oldest cohort (pre-Boomer) are far more likely to be populist than those in the next cohort (Baby Boomers) or the others, a difference of an astonishing 11 points with the youngest cohort. We lack an explanation for this effect or why it is stronger in the Utah sample.

Conclusion

This article has presented and tested the robustness of a new measurement model of populist attitudes in the United States. The model is based on a conceptualization of populism grounded in an emerging academic consensus that sees populism first and foremost in ideational terms, as a type of moralizing approach to democracy. Using a novel set of survey measures, we are able to measure this complex and multifaceted concept on the basis of different attitudes that cluster and constitute a coherent set.

Our results show that populist attitudes are indeed very widespread in the United States. Moreover, the affinity for populism in this country varies in predictable ways: it is stronger among those with lower education, somewhat more weakly associated with low income, strongly linked to identification with third parties and ideological radicalism (particularly strong conservatism), and correlates with an anti-immigrant stance. Against some views, though in line with some recent scholarship, it is *not* consistently linked to age or gender. Importantly, we find that these results hold not only in a locale with conservative leanings, but in the country as a whole.

We suspect that what is true for the United States is largely true in other democratic countries. Populist attitudes are intrinsic to democracy. Thus, the abundance of successful populist movements in many countries of the developing world is not the result of a stronger set of attitudes among the public, but a reflection of a political context that makes populist appeals more sensible and more likely to be picked up by political entrepreneurs. We are currently engaged in comparative research that tests this conjecture.

Our findings have important methodological implications for future attempts to measure populism. The reliability of our original four questions could be improved in a theoretically responsible way; we suggest including at least the other two indicators of stealth democracy (SD1 and SD2) to achieve this. And, while the four questions are relatively coherent, they do suggest the possibility of two closely related, underlying ideational dimensions: the emphasis on popular sovereignty and a Manichaean worldview. The existence of this dimensionality can only be tested with a much larger battery of questions.

Finally, our study was aimed at the development and testing of a theoretically grounded measurement of populism, not at analyzing the causal factors giving rise to populist attitudes and their activation in actual movements, as well as their distinctly political consequences. While some of these causal questions can be answered through additional survey research employing our measurement model, the question of what activates underlying populist attitudes seems well suited to the use of experiments.

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Figure 1 Mean Responses to Populism Questions (rescaled 0-100)
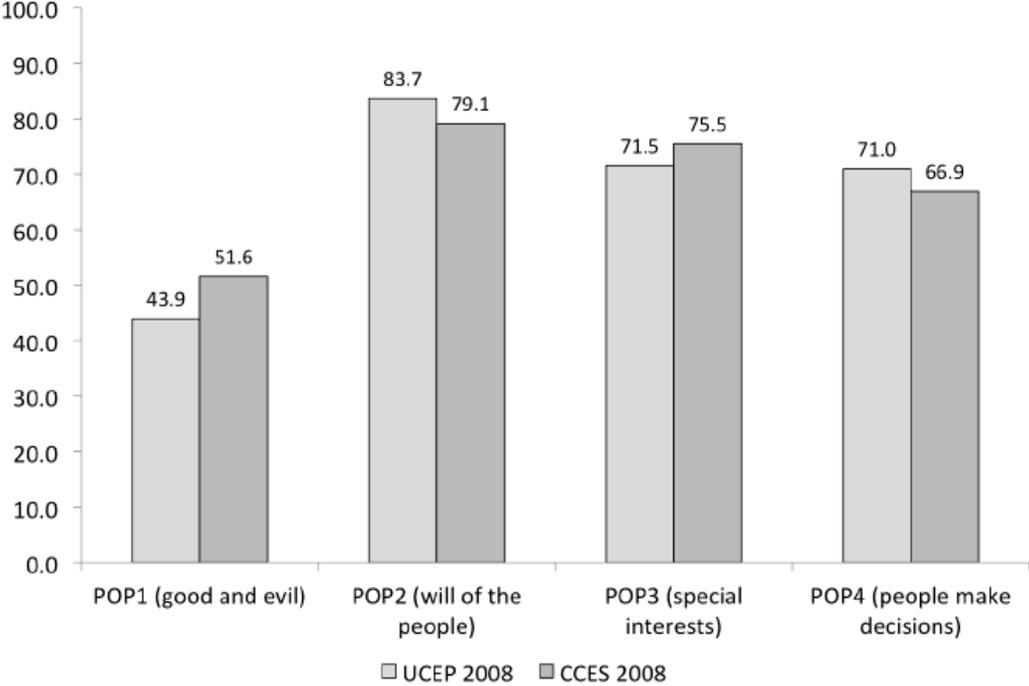
Note: N ranges from 925 to 932 in the UCEP and is 1,000 in the CCES; standard deviations range from.22.3 to 30.0.

Source: 2008 UCEP; 2008 CCES.

Figure 2 Mean Responses to Pluralism Questions (rescaled 0-100)
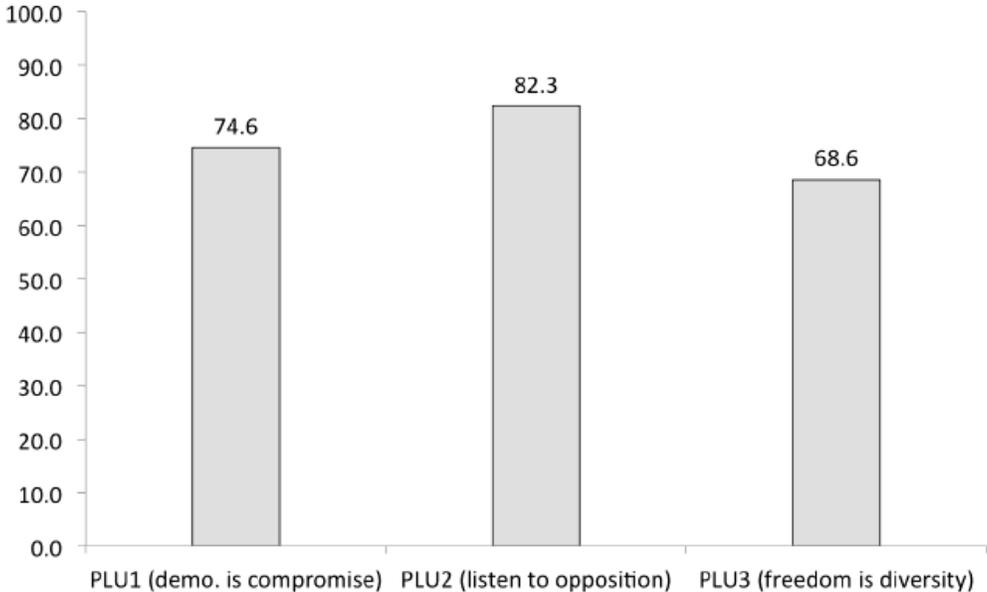
Note: N ranges from 911 to 929; standard deviations range from.20.6 to 31.2.

Source: 2008 UCEP.

Figure 3 Mean Responses to Stealth Democracy Questions (rescaled 0-100)
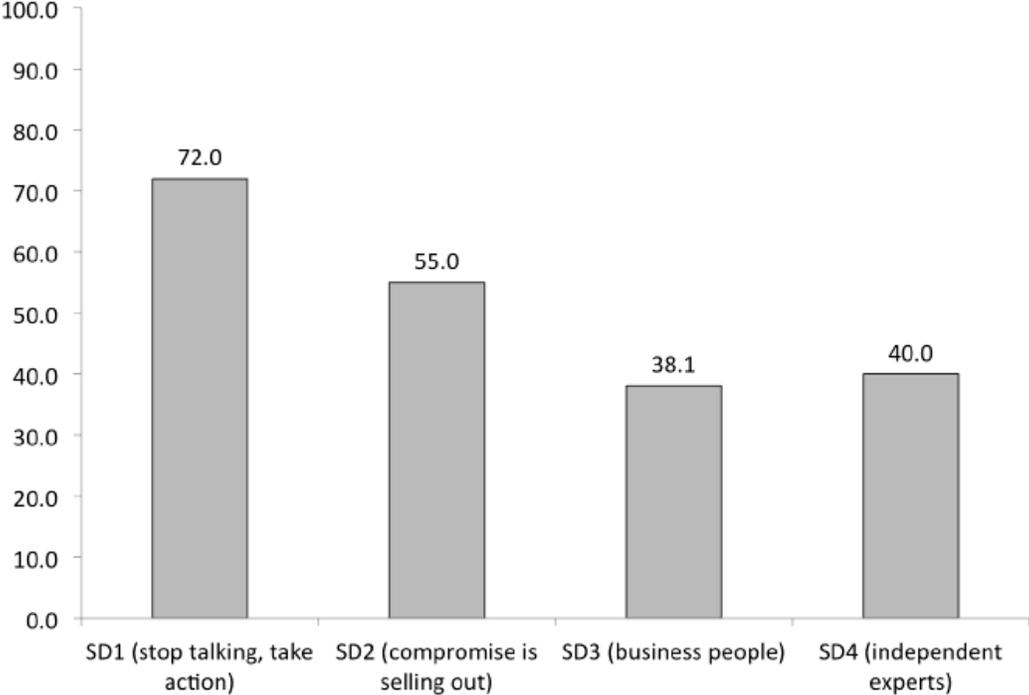
Note: N=1,000; standard deviations range from.25.9 to 29.2

Source: 2008 CCES.

Table 1 Factor Analysis of Populism Series, UCEP 2008

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Uniqueness
POP1	-.18	.37	0.81
POP2	.29	.51	0.66
POP3	.27	.42	0.74
POP4	.23	.57	0.62
PLU1	.52	.24	0.68
PLU2	.58	.16	0.64
PLU3	.54	.17	0.68
Eigenvalue	1.70	0.45	

Note: Principal component factor analysis with an orthogonal varimax rotation. 18 parameters, n = 882. Loadings over .40 are highlighted for readability. Cronbach's α for the populism items is .59 (average interitem correlation .26) and for the pluralism items is .63 (.37).

Source: 2008 UCEP.

Table 2 Factor Analysis of Populism Series, CCES 2008

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Uniqueness
POP1	.36	.19	.24	.65
POP2	.68	.09	.04	.53
POP3	.44	-.14	.07	.75
POP4	.65	.11	.09	.55
SD1	.43	.08	.20	.74
SD2	.43	.29	.25	.58
SD3	.12	.34	.48	.63
SD4	.15	-.06	.48	.73
CC310 (abortion)	-.06	-.51	-.03	.72
CC311(environment)	.13	.55	.06	.66
CC312 (Soc. Security)	-.03	-.56	-.11	.67
CC313 (affirm. action)	.16	.54	.04	.67
Eigenvalue	2.54	1.02	0.40	

Note: Principal factors analysis with an orthogonal varimax rotation. 50 parameters, n = 943. Loadings over .40 are

highlighted for readability. Cronbach's α for POP questions alone is .65 (average interitem correlation .31); for

stealth democracy questions alone is .57 (.25); and for ideology questions is .66 (.33); for POP questions with SD1

and SD2, it is .73 (.33).

Source: 2008 CCES.

Table 3 Regression Results for Individual-Level Models

	Model 1 CCES 2008	Model 2 UCEP 2008 (without immigration)	Model 3 UCEP 2008 (with immigration)
Strongly conservative	**6.86***	**4.10***	3.02
	(2.57)	(2.04)	(2.08)
(Moderately) conservative	3.20	1.59	1.20
	(1.63)	(1.71)	(1.7)
(Moderately) liberal	-2.68	-1.46	-1.07
	(1.76)	(2.11)	(2.18)
Strongly liberal	-0.53	1.56	3.29
	(2.26)	(2.93)	(2.92)
Some college	-0.90	0.31	0.12
	(1.55)	(2.04)	(2.04)
College graduate	**-3.05****	**-4.23***	-3.70
	(1.44)	(2.11)	(2.13)
Post graduate	**-7.38***	**-6.41****	**-5.57***
	(2.64)	(2.38)	(2.41)
Democrat	0.14	0.66	0.88
	(1.58)	(1.98)	(1.99)
Independent	2.06	-1.94	-1.43

	(1.70)	(1.96)	(1.97)
Third party	**-10.42***	**8.97***	**8.22**
	(3.58)	(2.52)	(2.57)
Pre-boomer (before 1946)	2.68	**11.08***	**10.50***
	(2.04)	(2.47)	(2.57)
Boomer (1946-1964)	2.88	2.84	3.02
	(1.90)	(1.65)	(1.64)
Generation X (1965-1976)	2.32	**4.93**	**4.90**
	(2.19)	(1.54)	(1.54)
Male	-2.27	-0.88	-1.57
	(1.23)	(1.17)	(1.18)
Income	**-0.71***	-0.07	-0.10
	(0.20)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Position on immigration	-	-	**-3.04***
	-	-	(0.71)
Constant	73.61*	**65.66***	**73.03***
	(2.72)	(2.58)	(2.83)
Observations	874	859	853
R-squared	0.08	0.07	0.10

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001