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Analyzing the Populist Voter in Europe: The Effects of Political News and Internet Usage on Voting Behaviour

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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Abstract

Populism is one of the most researched topics in the past decade. There are many factors that can have an effect on the populist vote. It has been claimed that political news and internet use are some of them. Regarding the former, the mediatization and sensationalization of politics alongside the interdependence between political parties and the media could have an effect on people, which eventually might influence their voting behaviour. Regarding the latter, social media algorithms and unregulated content creates echo chambers and filter bubbles that are used by populists who are experts at using online tools to spread their ideas to a vast audience; which could translate into cast a vote for a populist party. Hence, this thesis analyses the effects of the media's political news (PN) and internet usage (IU) on the populist voter to try to see if their consumption could be linked to voting for a populist party. It also tries to discover if right-wing populist voters (in comparison with left-wing populist and centrist populist voters) are those who spend more time watching political news and using the internet. In order to analyze this, two sets of logistic regression were performed. The first included the main variables of the study, PN and IU, and the second model was applied with the inclusion of 10 additional demographic and attitudinal variables. Each regression was tested in 22 European countries. Depending on types of populism found in each country, the regression was tested in right wing, left wing and centrist populist scenarios. In order to see which kind of populist voter consumes more news and internet, a t-test was carried out to compare the means for the groups of voters. The overall findings showed that the PN and IU do not have a significant effect, except for what can be considered an isolated scenario. Nonetheless, the full model permits the discovery of other findings that will help to give an overview of the behavioral traits of the populist voter.

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1.Introduction.

The last decade marked a pivotal point in European politics, populist parties across the whole continent started to gain traction in an unimaginable way. A couple of factors are often cited as the catalyst for this phenomena, the 2008 financial crisis and the 2015 migration crisis (Corbet & Larkin, 2019; Jones, 2019; Sola, 2016). After those global events, populist parties in Europe stopped being a minority or opposition force, and instead, they became a relevant political force and in some cases a part of government coalitions.[1]

Populism often comes with big promises, winds of change in politics, or claims for a renewal of democracy stating that the interest of *the people* are not being represented anymore (Roberts, 2019). In our current times, this poses a colossal challenge to liberal democracies. But how can we conceptualize populism? It is one of the more in-demand topics in academia at the moment. Nonetheless, there is still no clear agreement on its causes and its definition is still puzzling (Silva & Salgado, 2018).

During the conceptualization of populism, in order to have a broader and deeper understanding, the most relevant approaches of academia will be briefly explained. Therefore, the ideational and the political-strategic approach, are going to be discussed.

In order to fully understand populism and populist parties, it is necessary to study the behavior and the attitudes of populist supporters, who, in fact, are the ones that put populists in power through their votes in elections. Thus, which are the factors that shape the mind of the populist voter, making her to cast a vote for a populist party? As previous studies already have shown, there are many. (Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins 2020). In the following research I will focus on two factors, which could be very determinants at the time of making a final decision for casting a vote.

Political news are able to create a vast and recognizable narrative, which eventually will shape the mindset of individuals who consume that kind of content. The media is suppose to be always looking for the truth, with objectivity and transparency, fulfilling a role of watchdog

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[1] EKRE in Estonia, FPÖ in Austria, FIDESZ in Hungary.

(Walter & Ghazarian, 2018), which translates into helping to spread accurate information and accountability in a society.

Nonetheless, The current state of the media differs from what it used to be, seeking the truth is not the primary goal, but rather selling the news at all cost is the new trend (Walter & Ghazarian, 2018). In addition, populists see the media as a tool to get coverage and attention (Esser et al. 2017). This plays along with the current state of mediatization and sensationalization of politics (Michailidou & Trey, 2014). Therefore, a mutual relationship between the media and political parties can be observed (Manin, 1997; Mazzoleni, 2008 ; Deacon & Wright, 2015). Hence, if the coverage of political news by the media has changed because of this relationship, this could influence the voting behavior of people who watch political news, it is thereby fair to raise the question, Do people informed about Political News tend to vote for populist parties?

Another factor that could be very influential on the vote choice of an individual is internet usage. Nowadays, when a person is using the internet, a vast amount of this time is spent on social media platforms, such Facebook and YouTube, which are used on regular basis as the main tools to access information (De Zuniga et al, 2017; Limor & Ksiazek, 2011). However, these platforms use algorithms to make personalized recommendations that end in the manifestation of filter bubbles, in which individuals see only similar information with the same viewpoints and believes that they already hold (Rochert et al, 2020 ; Pariser, 2012, as cited in Nguyen, 2014). On top of that, populist politicians know how to get the most benefits from these social tools (Mazzoleni & Bracciale, 2018). Hence, the combination of these facts could shape voting behaviour and translate into voting for a populist party. The more time a person spends on the internet, the more susceptible she is to seeing a post or ad on social media, that was actually written or promoted by a populist. The purpose of this thesis is here to find if people who spend more time on the internet tend to vote for a populist party.

Thus, the analysis of the impact of the political news of the traditional media will help to grasp its true impact on voters. Nevertheless, in order to get a more accurate and realistic result, it is crucial and necessary to include several more variables in the study. All of those mentioned above will be included, alongside others that have the same relevance. During the Methodology and Research Design chapter I will explain and justify each of these in more detail.

This thesis will also focus on different types of populism, most of the research about populism in Europe is based on right wing populism (RWP), and lesser degree on left wing populism (LWP). As a matter of fact, the latter has gained attention quite recently. RWP have been present in Europe for decades[2], which is the reason why the bulk of studies on this matter only cover the right side of the spectrum.

This research will also cover one understudied type of populism, namely centrist populism also labeled as anti-establishment parties (Engler, 2019). Not only will the theoretical part be addressed, but the data analysis will make a distinction between right-wing populist parties (RWPP), left-wing populist parties (LWPP) and centrist populist parties (CPP).

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[2] The Front National is a clear example of a RWPP party that has been taking part of European Politics for years (Papadopoulos, 2000 ; Rydgren, 2008)

2. Conceptualization and Theoretical framework

2.1 What is Populism?

The term populism seems to be everywhere. Policy-makers from different countries and scholars around the world are deeply interested in the topic, but how can we define populism? Is populism a current trend? or is it has always been with us? Populism didn't always have a pejorative connotation. In fact, the term populism can be traced back to the Roman Empire (Canovan, 2005) and it was also present in the nineteenth-century, in the United States with the US People's Party, in Tsarist Russia with the Narodniki revolutionary movement, and in France through Boulangism (Rovira Kaltwasser et al 2017). Although there are differences, all of them shared some common characteristics, notably the antiestablishment approach and the appeal to the people.

Something to note is that there was no general consensus on the exact definition of populism. This has generated a debate in which scholars are not of one mind regarding the concept and essence of the term, and hence populism is among the most contested concepts in social sciences (Mudde, 2017). Nonetheless, in recent years, something closer to a consensus seems to have been reached.

Out of all the literature regarding populism, many attempts to conceptualize the term are noteworthy, but most can be grouped into three main approaches, the ideational approach, the political-strategic approach, and the discursive approach. The first two approaches are the best fit for this particular study.

The Ideational Approach

This approach considers populism as a thin-centered ideology (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). The most accepted and widespread definition is given by Mudde (2004) who conceptualizes populism as *"an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into*

two homogenous and antagonistic groups, the pure people, versus the corrupt elite, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté general (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2004, p. 543). Thus, there are four main recognizable concepts in Mudde's vision, the people, the elite, the general will, and the thin-centered ideology. First, the people, which is a construction of populist rhetoric and is probably the most important concept, as the others take their meaning from it. Second is the elite, construed as the antithesis of *the people*. Those who constitute the elite are seen as corrupt, in contrast with the natural purity of *the people*, thereby, inserting these notions into a morality framework. The antagonism between *the people* and the *elite* (Heinisch, 2003) comes from a moral point of view. Hence, the people will necessarily be construed as pure and authentic and the elites taken to be inauthentic and corrupt. Let us move now to the third idea, *the general will*, a concept quite close in interpretation to the concept of *the people*. Populists claim that politics meant to follow the *general will* of *the people*. Thus, *the people* are always right and know best, hence why any relevant political decision should be taken by this group. Something to consider here, is that even if *the people* as a concept has been referred as an empty signifier, this is not exactly the case. Rather, the purity (even if this term is imprecise) attributed to the people can be considered as a signifier (Mudde, 2017) – not the term *the people* as a whole. Fourthly, we come to the thin-centered ideology, which means that populism cannot exists by itself, and is always in need of a host ideology, which makes it easy for populists to gain supporters from different groups. Despite this, *the people* is seen as an homogenous group, but is actually composed of heterogeneous factions.

In addition, Mudde (2018) acknowledges that populism usually involves the presence of a person (the populist leader), who possesses a vast amount of charisma, combined with organizations (the populist parties) which lack the traditional structures of an institutionalized political party. Mudde also recognizes that the charismatic leader and the lack of institutional structure cannot be considered as sufficient characteristics to define populism.

The ideational approach or conceptualization has been praised for being it's easier to analyze. thus, fitting a methodology framework (Hawking & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017), which means that scholars may find this approach to be a reliable starting point in their research. Therefore, this thesis will take Mudde's ideational approach as a conceptual reference.

The Political strategic approach

Weyland (2001, p.14) highlights leadership and mobilization of numbers in his conceptualization "populism is best defined as a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, institutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers". Personalistic and charismatic leaderships are politically elevated through the mobilization of people, thanks to an almost direct relationship between leader and followers. Hence, populism mobilizes *the people* and populism does not understand representation as an institutional process, instead taking it as that which is established through mutual recognition between the leader and *the people*. There are two core elements in Weyland's approach (Weyland, 2017), first," the type of ruler", this position having been occupied by individual personalistic leaders, informal or formal groups and organizations , and "the principal power capability", which could be exercised thanks to economic power or military force. Thus, the combination of these two core elements makes it possible -for populism- to take the shape of a strategy that it is used to achieve and maintain political hold.

Furthermore, the cornerstone of the political strategic approach is the relationship between the leader and the followers, *the people*; who, in this conception, contrary to the ideational approach, is heterogenous group, made up of people with different interests. Besides this, populist leaders often claim that the *general w*ill of *the people* is meant to be above every other concern. This creates a feeling of mutual identification and belonging, "as the leader personifies the will of the people, the relationship between the leader and followers is seen as a personal connection" (Weyland, 2017, p. 15). Just as with the ideational approach, populism is regarded as being thin-centered, however, its resistance to compromise with an ideology is praised, which gives the populist leaders and organizations room for flexibility and adjustability to make any kind of changes when needed, with the aim to gain power or stay in power. Hence, this is why the political strategic approach is vulnerable to being labelled opportunist.

The relevance of the political strategic approach has come into question. For instance, Rueda (2020) argues that Weyland's conceptualization wasn't able to stand to the test of time.

Nowadays, populist actors are more easily identifiable with an ideology on the political spectrum, and there are right-wing and left-wing populist parties alike. Besides this, most of Weyland´s work was based in Latin America. Twenty years ago, it was the only region in which Populism was very common to find, but at present time, Populism it is widely spread in the world. Nonetheless, the performance of some populist leaders in the media is linked to the success of populist parties (Bos et al, 2017). The media's coverage of populist figures helps them to spread their messages and eventually gain voters. Thus, the relevance of the relationship of the leader and the followers cannot be ignored

2.2 Sub-groups of Populism

In order to have a better defined understanding of populism I believe that it is important to differentiate the types of populism that exist. As stated by Otjes & Louwerse (2015) populism can be merged with political ideologies from opposite side of the spectrum. My approach to this typology will look into and consider ideology. Therefore, the focus of this research will be on the political spectrum, hence it is relevant to describe and attempt to signal the characteristics and similarities of right wing, left wing and centrist populism.

I must state my awareness that not only is the concept of populism is a contested one, but equally that the classification of the partitions on the spectrum is something which may be a matter of division among scholars. It is important to mention that Mudde (2007) reminds us that party ideology classifications depend on the current political culture of the country of study, meaning that what can be considered radical, extreme or antisystem in the political system of one country; could be considered mainstream in another. Besides, the degree of intensity and consistency of populist traits may differ from one party to another. Behaviour may also vary according to the context of the country and the political system in place (Hakhverdian and Koop, 2007). Hence, the idea behind the coverage of these subgroups is to render the topic more understandable and also help to recognize the traits that will permit us to find the commonalities of the subgroups without confusing them.

The demand and supply argument cannot be overlooked at this point. It can be denied that mainstream political parties have disappointed an important part of the electorate (Pauwels, 2010), which is something that populist parties are aware of. However, the background,

conditions and forces that cover the arrival and materialization of these parties will not be covered here, for the Demand and Supply sub-chapter is a more fitting place for this topic.

Nonetheless, in the Methodology and Research Design chapter, a specific classification based on the *PopuList*[3] categorization will permit the identification of the populist parties and their type of ideology in each country of study.

2.2.1 Right-Wing Populism

Right-Wing Populism (RWP) is by far the most studied and researched type of populism, although, the cliché argument of not having consensus on this sub topic rears its head again. Van Kessel (2015) and Albertazzi & McDonnell (2008) have stated that for a long time the majority of European researchers wrongly considered populism as exclusive to right-wing politics. Even Mudde raises the question on the proper way to study party ideology 'who determines the ideology and thus the categorization of a party, the researcher or the party itself?'(Mudde,2007,33).

The ideology-based criteria helps us find commonalities among parties from different political systems. Thus, it will be possible to identify traits that parties could have across Europe. Long gone is the time when right wing populist parties were considered merely opposition fringe parties, since present-day RWPP have proven to be capable to be part of coalitions governments, with parliament majority and even head of states. (Mols & Jetten, 2020).

To have a better grasp on what qualifies a political party be able to be labelled as a right wing populist party we need to take pay attention to some of the ideological features that have been highlighted as common traits of the right wing populist party approach. For instance, RWPP have been signalled as nationalist parties, 'The populist radical right is a specific form of nationalism" (Mudde, 2007, 30) and it should be noted that RWPP parties share, to different degrees, an appeal to anti-immigration sentiments, Euroscepticism, anti-Islamism, and climate change scepticism (Lockdown, 2018).

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[3] The PopuList is a trusted source used by researchers and journalist to review and study populist parties in Europe. The full classification of parties can be access in https://popu-list.org

Lastly, there is something highly relevant to be addressed in the current sub chapter; the fact that Right Wing Populist parties are those who have the most media coverage, scrutiny and attention (Boomgarden & Vliegenthart, 2007)[4] in comparison with the coverage of Left-Wing Populist parties or the consistently overlooked Centrist Populist.

2.2.2 Left-Wing Populism

Until not so long ago, populism in Europe; was associated solely with right wing politics but the past decade has seen the proliferation of left-wing populist parties. In southern European countries, several of them proved to be quite successful, notably, *Podemos* in Spain, SYRIZA in Greece and the Movimento Cinco Stelle in Italy are clear examples of this phenomena.

Thanks to the prevalence and indisputable media attention that RWPP have (Hafez, 2017), it is understandable that certain characteristics have become stereotypes that tend to be associated with populist parties , for instance, nationalism and xenophobic stances. Left Wing Populism, noticeably, takes a different turn regarding those matters. Parties like the Spanish *Podemos* and the SYRIZA promote a more politically united Europe which stands for social rights and encourages immigration (Kioupkiolis, 2016). Therefore, the ideational approach fails to give an unambiguous conceptualization of populism, which means that a populist party, can be on the right, left or even centre of the spectrum.

Thus, LWP is on the opposite side of RWP, and the parties of this variant promote and incentivize the protection and integration of immigrants groups, positioning the domestic elites as the enemy (Kioupkiolis, 2016). Regarding the elites, LWP parties are against big corporations, enterprises (business elites) and policies or ideas that embrace neoliberalism. Thus, RWP parties endorse a social populism (Venizelos, 2020) that encourages a massive structural change to the current economic system of their country.

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[4] In Boomgarden & Vliegenthart's study, it is stated that there is an appreciable relationship between the media's news and vote intention. To be more specific, their research focuses on the effect of the media's new on anti-immigrant parties. In addition, the impact of the media on populist voter will be covered on *The Role of the Media and Political News* chapter of the present research.

2.2.3 Centrist Populism

Most research and literature focus on Right-Wing Populism and to a lesser degree on Left-wing Populism. However, there is a third variant that is often overlooked or even neglected in academia: centrist populism parties also known as centrist anti-establishment parties[5]. The appearance of this type of party was first noted in Central and Eastern Europe. With the arrival of democracy in the 1990s, many political parties had no explicit or distinguishable ideological position that could have been placed on the political spectrum. Grigori Pop-Eleches (2010)[6] trying to understand protest voting in post-communist electoral systems, created a typology of so called unorthodox parties, one of them being new centrist populist parties These centrist anti-establishment parties managed to gain support across Central and Eastern Europe thanks to their anti-political establishment postures and critiques to the mainstream parties, introducing themselves as non-ideological groups that were ready to fights *the elites* on behalf of *the people* (Havlík & Voda, 2018), with the aim to be perceived as an alternative to mainstream parties while ideologically being positioned at the centre of the spectrum (Ucen, 2004).

The apparent absence of a comprehensive and consistent host ideology in these parties makes them rely on the relevance of their leader and their claims to increase *the people*'s political participation (Havlík & Voda, 2018). Besides, the voters of these parties are not necessarily people without a clear position on the spectrum, as noted by Sarah Engler (2020) electors who voted for anti-establishment centrist parties can belong to the right and left side of the political

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[5] The novelty of this subject and the limited research carried out so far has meant that some researchers do not agree on an overwhelmingly accepted categorization of these kind of parties. Hence, they are being called new centrist populist parties (Pop-Eleches, 2010; Učeň, 2007; Havlík & Voda, 2018), centrist anti-establishment parties (Sarah Engler et al, 2019) or anti-establishment reform parties (Hanely & Sikk, 2016). However, this thesis bases its party categorization on the *Populist* dataset, which labels as populist parties what some authors like to label only as anti-establishment parties, arguing that populism is always present in those parties, but in different degrees. After all, populism has a "great flexibility" and possess "highly chameleonic" characteristics (Taggart, 2004,175).

[6] Grigori Pop-Eleches categorized the unorthodox parties of his study into four groups, radical left, extreme nationalist, national populist and new/centrist populist.

spectrum, people who feel unrepresented and unsatisfied with the political panorama of their country are behind the support of these kinds of parties. Hence, this reinforces the argument of defining populism as a thin ideology.

In addition, this section could raise some questions, voters with populist attitudes from both side of the spectrum who could choose to support radical right wing or populist parties are instead choosing to cast their vote for centrist populist parties, which for the mere fact of not being on the radical extremes of the party system, do not represent a considerable danger to liberal democracy. Then, can these parties be considered a benign form of populism? Is this an example of populism already being the corrective that some authors like Rovira Kaltwasser (2012) are claiming democracy is in need of? This is clearly not the main topic of this thesis, hence, time and future research on centrist populist parties will help to answer these inquiries.

2.3 **Populist parties**

There are almost fifty populist political parties currently enjoying representation with at least one seat in dozens of European parliaments[7], a phenomenon that in the last ten years has started to become observably more and more common. Even if there have been several populist parties with representation in different countries over the twentieth century, the sudden increase could mean that now more than ever it is important to conceive, organize and stablish a sub-genre of studies under the political parties field of research because at the moment there is not enough literature dealing with it. Most research focuses around the conceptualization of populism, and the populist voter and even the populist leader has awakened the curiosity of academics and researchers. Thus, in the last decade, Populism, have proven that it can be a challenger for well-established and institutionalize political parties, which means that its study and analysis now it's linked to party politics.

It cannot be denied; that there is a current crisis of representation. Established political parties not only are struggling to gain new supporters (Bertoa & Rama, 2020) but also are losing members (Köln, 2015; Biezen & Poguntke, 2014). One can summise that the electorate feels

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[7] The *Populist* is an up to date database that has categorize as populist parties (left-wing/right wing and center).

the established political parties no longer represent them, which perfectly suits the narrative of the populist parties which casts *the elites* and *the people* as antagonistic opponents.

It has been argued (Roberts, 2017) that citizens are frustrated with the performance of well-established parties, that these citizens have concerns and feelings that they do not see represented in their countries´ political arena. This so-called crisis of representation has opened the door of party politics to populist actors that rapidly and significantly capitalized on the situation and gained supporters with their anti-establishment rhetoric. This crisis is at the foundation of any anti-system populist outbreak (Laclau, 2005). Hence, according to that, populism cannot materialize into politics without a crisis as a sort of precondition for its appearance and spread.

However, on the opposite side of Laclau's argument, Benjamin Moffit (2016) completely disregard crisis as an external agent that sparks populism. Instead, crisis is regarded as an intra populist feature "populist actors actively participate in the 'spectacularization of failure' that underlies crisis, allowing them to pit ´the people´ vs ´the elite´ or associated dangerous Others; radically simplify the term and terrain of political debate" (Moffit, 2016, 119). In addition, mainstream and long-embedded political parties are regarded as the establishment (Roberts, 2017). Therefore, crisis allows populists to set the narrative that benefits them, *the people* being not represented by *the elites* are in need of a saviour or saviours that will successfully trigger changes and "make things right". This poses a great challenge to established parties because it means that, thanks to populism, they no longer have the sole grip on their constituency.

Anti-system and anti-establishment populist parties that challenge the current political panorama and their present actors are often perceived as a threat to democracy. Nevertheless, for Katlwasser (2012) there is a different perspective to consider, for the rise of populism has exposed the failure of the political class and the mainstream parties towards a significant part of the electorate, composed of individuals who felt ignored and unrepresented. This gives to political parties a great opportunity to target the diverse range of interests of the people, who felt left behind by the establishment, and that until now were under its radar. The proliferation of populist parties was always expected to pop up in new democracies, but now it is proven that even in well-established democracies, there is a need to re-think things for a more inclusive and holistic approach.

2.4 The populist voter

Now that it is clearer what populism is and what is considered a populist party, it is apt to address the main subject of study of this research; the populist voter. As with the definition of populism, it is also quite difficult to say who exactly the populist voter is or to identify with accurate precision what makes a voter a populist voter. In the following paragraphs I will refer to certain traits, attitudes and features that have been signalled as the characteristic framework to identify the populist voter. For instance, Bakker et al. (2016) took a psychological approach, arguing that it is possible to identify certain personality traits that can be related to the populist voter. For Reidy & Suiter (2017) populist voters are people that have anti-establishment traits, strong nationalist feelings and are poorly educated. Of course, merely state that anti-system and anti-elite traits make the populist voter is somewhat broad and vague. It may help to describe the populist voter generally; but does not, delineate an explicit, specific, conceptualization of such voters.

Many authors have proposed and studied a vast number of predictors that could be directly linked to having an effect on choosing to vote for a populist party/leader or for a populist campaign instead of a mainstream one. Often, located at the top of the list, the following subjects are found: Immigration concerns and fears and anti-migrant sentiments (Mughan & Paxton, 2006; Van der Brug et al, 2000; Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017; Diehl et al., 2019), dissatisfaction with the economy (Marcos-Marne et al., 2020; Stankov, 2018; Franchino & Negri, 2020) , age and gender (Oesch & Rennwald, 2010; Spierings & Zaslove, 2017), education (Spriyt et al, 2016; Rama & Cordero, 2018) Political trust (Geurkink et al., 2020), social capital (Boeri et al, 2019), religion (Zúquete, 2017; Forlenza, 2019), political interest (Spruyt et al, 2016) and political participation (Anduiza et al, 2019). These are some, but not the only, possible predictors that can influence the decision of a person to cast a populist vote. Research on the topic is of course ongoing and the full list of possible predictors could fill pages. In addition, these characteristics or attitudes need to encompass the key features of populism, *the people* vs *the elite* and the *will of the people* to be considered populist. Therefore, the attitudes can be understood as having the belief that the politicians only care about the elites, perceived ruling parties as an issue for the country, or the belief that the people, instead

of politicians, are those who need to make the decisions in a democracy (Plescia & Eberl, 2021).

On a different note, Rooduijn (2017) even claimed that the populist voter, in fact, does not exist. The findings of his study showed that it not possible to use certain characteristic to define a populist voter, because the people who votes for a populist party tends to have different characteristics depending on their country of residence. After analysing the electoral preferences of the so-called losers of globalization or "loser of modernization" (Betz, 1993), who are supposed to have Eurosceptic attitudes and a lack of political trust, his research found no relationship between having certain well-established populist attitudes and voting choices. Thus, rather than answers, this statement brings more questions to the matter. Here lies the relevance of continued making studies about populism, especially those that take populist parties and the populist voters as their main focus. The more approaches and perspectives available to dissect this highly contested subject, the closer academia can get to a more rounded and comprehensive understanding of the matter.

2.4.1. The populist leader

Populism would not be as widespread as it is if not for one key factor, the populist leader. the populism phenomena in Latin America (O´neill, 2016; Larroulet, 2017) often labelled the populist leader as the caudillo, the saviour, or the strongman who was able to gather a vast group of individuals who were attracted by the populist discourse, these leaders are often "*monopolizing power and portraying themselves as the incarnation of the unified will of the people. In many cases the official party is nothing more than a shell, completely depended upon and subjugated to the populist leader*" (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasse, 2014, p. 381). The populist leader´s relationship to the media is of particular interest to this study. It has been signalled that populist leaders take any opportunity to gain media attention (Esser et al. 2017), which translates into free exposure of their populist speech. Right and left-wing populists leaders share a discursive style that includes the use of certain elements as "identity, rhetoric and the media" (Block & Negrine, 2017, p.189). Thus, these leaders gain supporters trough strategies that involve the creation of a common identity, vilifying the elites with a nationalistic speech and trying to create controversies to gather media attention.

Populist parties tend to differ from non-populist parties in their leadership, which for the latter tends to be more institutionalist and organized, in contrast with the personalistic leadership of the former (Van der Brug & Mughan, 2007). It used to be expected that these sorts of personalistic parties would have an ephemeral existence, therefore, disappearing after one or two electoral processes. This is explained through faith in the leader, just as the charismatic leader could gain support in a short amount of time, this same support can be lost rapidly. The leader´s luck is supposed therefore to be attached to his party. However, this is not always the rule, as parties that originated around the figure of a leader have proven to be able to become institutionalized over time (Pedahzur & Brichta, 2002) gaining constant support through several elections, at local and national levels, and even forming coalition with well-established parties, regardless of the luck or current relevance of the charismatic leader who help to make them part of the party system. Indeed, the positive results, proliferation and institutionalization of many populist parties is thanks to the role the charismatic leader. Nonetheless this phenomenona is not exclusive of populist parties, but can be also observed in non-populist parties (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasse, 2014).

In addition, populism can be leaderless, national movements in the USA are proof of it, as populist movements from both sides of the spectrum, such as like Occupy Wall Street (Aslanidis, 2016) and the Tea party (Kreiss & Tufekci, 2013) are headless movements, without a central figure leading and representing them. In summary, once again, the nature and traits of populism reveals itself to be elusive. The fact that populism can exist without perceivable leadership shows that the figure of the charismatic leader is not a definitive trait of populism. However, it may help with gaining media attention and voting support from the electorate.

2.5. Supply and demand

To comprehend the origins and the current stage of this phenomena it is crucial to address the supply and demand argument. Populist parties did not appear and spread across Europe out of the blue. There were certain preconditions and catalytic events that acted as boosters (which strategically were captured and used as a speech platform) and that eventually increased the demand, of a certain part of the electorate, for populism.

As Guiso et al (2017) stated, populist parties have a better chance to arise, flourish and multiply when certain critical evens, in this case crises, create the proper conditions for people to lose faith in mainstream parties. Hence, a disappointed electorate will create the demand for populist parties.

This is where the demand side and supply side arguments on populism come into play. '*Bottom up and bottom down explanations*' (Bernan, 2021, p. 73) respectively. The former signals the citizens as a cause for the existence of populism, namely; citizens become the actual demand for populism. Regarding the latter, the focus is placed on the elites, governments and their policies which are unable to fulfil the demands of a society (or a significant part of it). Thus, they fail to supply the demand.

After the great recession and the inability of mainstream parties in office, to reduce its negative effects on a large part of the electorate, a significant number found themselves without the security of the safety net that the government previously provided. Thus, these mixtures of issues took away the citizens´s trust on mainstream parties. In addition, this loss of trust was not towards just one side of the spectrum, but instead it affected both sides. "*Citizens lose confidence in both left (or government-based) policies and right (or market-based) policies that respect the existing institutional constraints and functioning of politics.*" *(Guiso et al, 2017, p 3.).* Therefore, with that demand in place, populist parties were able to gain sympathizers and voters. For instance, in Spain, the *Podemos* LWP *party* was able to scoop up a large amount of the electorate who felt they were left behind by the political elites and their policies after the 2008 financial crisis (Anduiza et al., 2018). On the other hand, in more wealthy nations, like Germany, the *AFD* played the nationalistic card criticizing left-leaning

migration policies when the migration crisis saw 1 million refugees enter the country (Atzpodien, 2020).

In addition, and almost showing a pattern, Caiani & Padoan (2021) made the connexion between types of crisis, types of populism and sustainably over time of populist parties. For instance, a financial crises will create a brief demand for LWPP or CPP (Lisi et al, 2019) and cultural (migration) crises will create a more prolonged demand for RWPP (Caiani & Padoan, 2021). Which creates an interesting paradox "exclusionary forms of populism may find their most fertile soil where capitalist labor markets and welfare states are more inclusive, egalitarian, and integrative, whereas inclusive forms of populism may thrive where capitalism is most exclusionary, segmented, and dualistic" Roberts (2007, 7).

In summary, an economic crisis can create the demand for inclusive populist parties that eventually, soon as the financial situation gets better, it will lost track over time, meanwhile, a cultural crisis, that has permanent effects will trigger the demand for exclusive populist parties that will likely stay around (supply side) for longer in the political panorama, in part thanks to the continued and exceptional coverage of media.(Sheets et al., 2015)

2.6 The role of the media and Political news

The media is capable of a dynamic performance in the process of generating and spreading the messages of populist actors. Institutionalized media, is not stranger to socio-economic factors (Manucci, 2017). Thus, the media as a business model is aware that by giving space to populist actors their viewership and readership, which nowadays are very hard to get and keep, will increase. Mudde (2004) acknowledges the status of the media and its constant struggle to capture more readers and viewers. To achieve that objective, the media focuses on the most sensationalist aspects of politics. Populist actors recognize the media as an instrument to reach *the people* and spread their ideas. Hence, thanks to the media, they receive attention and free coverage (Esser et al. 2017). In fact, there are even further claims in which the relationship between populists and the media is seen as interdependent (Mazzoleni, 2008).

It is understood that certain media, known as tabloids, and also called yellow press, soft news and middle-market oriented media, delivers the lion's share of populist news, mainly because

it uses colloquial language, and an accessible format and generous amount of images. This section of media generally focuses on light subjects and entertainment. Only covering sensationalist news or trying to present the news from the most lurid angle. On the contrary, hard news/ upper market -oriented media is the one that only covers relevant and serious events and news. The populist voter should prefer the news that seem to be more tailored for him. However (Roodujin, 2014) brings a new perspective, in which the so called populist content is not necessarily more abundant in midde-market oriented media, but instead some upper market media actually posses the same or even more populist content. For instance, in Roodujin's *research The Sun turned out to be less populist than the Daily Telegraph and The Guardian, and The Bild were less populist than the Frankfurter Allgemeine and the Süddeutsche Zeitung.*

It should be noted that it is no just tabloid media that delivers sensationalist political news (Mudde, 2004). This fact is backed by Hameleers et al.´s (2015) study, in which it can be appreciated that people with anti-establishment populist attitudes don't have a significant preference for either tabloid news or hard news.

Besides, political actors who receive a constant and substantial negative coverage end up capitalizing on all the attention that the media is giving to them. Even if the media is able to construct a narrative against populist parties, the message of the populist parties could still be magnified. Therefore, populist parties can use their *us the people vs the elite*, accusing the non-populist parties of being favored and highlighted by the media. Meanwhile, they see themselves as victims targeted by *the elite*. The sensationalization of political news alongside the extensive coverage of populist political actors could be altering the behavior of people who tends to watch that kind of media content. For instance, (Chen, 2020) states that the economy insecurity caused by unemployment after the Great Recession fuelled negative attitudes against elites such as a fondness for income redistribution according to peoples own wealth and making a connection to left-wing populist. In addition, Stoyanova (2016) remarks the existence of a relationship between unemployment and right-wing populism. Considering these previous studies and the facts that unemployed people spends most of their time watching television and using the internet (Andrade-Gómez et al, 2017) and that the consumption of traditional and news media increases political participation (Dilliplane, 2011) this could have a positive effect on voting for populist parties.

2.6.1 The mediatization of politics

Hellströn et al. (2013) have noted how populist right-wing parties like the Swedish Democrats (SD) have capitalized its exposure in the media, therefore allowing them to mobilize voters who have conservative traits, from both sides of the political spectrum. The news often portrait populist parties and their leaders ia a bad light, attributing to them the traits them of historical fascist ideologies and linking them to social issues such as immigration and insecurity (Snipes & Mudde, 2020).

Nonetheless, as explained by Stockemer (2017), the French media covered Jean-Marie Le Pen's radical and outrageous comments by giving him even more coverage. Holocaust denials and racist remarks often landed him on the front covers. This constant attention and interviews to Jean-Marie Le Pen translated into the popularization of his political party, Front National (FN) which, currently under the leadership of his daughter Marine (Snipes & Mudde, 2020) albeit renamed *Rassemblement National* (RN*)*. Besides, Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2007) demonstrated the existence of a relationship between the role media's news content and the rise of anti-immigrant populist parties, the coverage of immigrant related news had an effect on the success of populist parties. Therefore, Mannuci (2017) theorizes that either populist parties are the ones that are establishing the agenda or either they have mastered the ability of using and manipulating the media's agenda in order to fulfill their own electoral aspirations, which can be seen in the current affiliation between political leaders and the media (Walter & Ghazarian, 2018).

Trump in the USA and Bolsonaro in Brazil are clear examples of the media helping a populist candidate to win. For instance, Trump received a massive coverage from the American media and surprisingly, most of it can be categorized as positive or neutral coverage (Patterson, 2016).[8] Regarding Bolsonaro, a study found that Brazilian major news outlets "naturalize" and

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[8] Patterson´s study points out that compared with the rest of republican candidates, Donald J. Trump was the candidate with the most news coverage, this free coverage that news outlets gave to the former president was estimated in 55 million USD worth of ad time. In addition, the percentage of favorable coverage showed that most tone used by news outlets was either positive or neutral; liberal outlets such as New York Times, CBS and NBC presented figures above 60%, meanwhile conservative ones such as Fox had over 70%.

"normalize" (Araujo & Prior, 2021, p. 239) his candidacy in order to avoid a win by Haddad, a left wing candidate who went against the economic interests of the Brazilian media.

In addition, this relationship which also includes news outlets and populist parties is constantly changing and evolving through time (Smith et al, 2021).[9] This relationship was noted by Manin's (1997) in his audience democracy theory, which signals the connection between politics and the media, a mutually beneficial association. On one hand the media tries to get the best value for selling political news, swapping classic journalism for a more appealing and engaging output and on the other hand, political parties and their leaders will try to get the most our this situation by manipulating the political news agenda. (Michailidou & Trey, 2013)

Walter & Ghazarian (2018) also heavily criticize the current state of the mainstream media, bringing up the fact that most of it is owned by a few companies with global reach – a situation which effectively erodes the possibility for healthy debate. Such media companies tend to prefer to enlarge their audience at all costs over seeking the truth for the good of a society (Freedman, 2018). Eventually, this model could facilitate the development of echo cambers.

Hence, the coverage of political news (IV1) by the media (hard news and tabloid news) is not the same as it used to be, its mediatization and sensationalization in the current times of audience democracy could have an effect on people influencing their voting behavior. I thereby why I'm formulating the following research question: *Do people informed about Political News tend to vote for populists parties?* (RQ1). In order to find an answer to this question, the following hyphotesis is proporsed *H1: The more informed the people are about Political News, the more likely they will vote for a populist party*.

2.7 Internet usage and social media

Regarding internet usage, Kramer (2017) states that the internet has been appropriated by populists, aiding the spread of populism rhetoric. Compared with mainstream politicians, the

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[9] Smith et al (2021) combined Krämer (2014) and Stewart et al (2003) insights to determinate four phases of the relationship between news organizations (both tabloid and elite media) and populist parties. The presented phases were A) Ground-laying. B) Insurgent. C) Established and D) Decline.

populists are getting the most benefit from of all the features that social media communication tools can offer to reach an audience (Mazzoleni & Bracciale, 2018).

According to King (2019) social media was a perfect battleground for the promoters of the Brexit campaign, targeting millions of possible populist voters through ads and videos, using false arguments or misleading facts. Also, Groshek & Koc-Michalska (2017) noted the effects of social media on populist support in the 2016 United States presidential election. In addition, Schaub & Morisi (2020) stated that the expansion and availability of broadband internet is correlated with the contemporary triumphs of populist parties. Consequently, it is logical to elaborate that people who spend a significant amount of their time on the internet could be more vulnerable to the populist rhetoric.

As traditional media keeps losing its users[10], Internet and its online communications tools (social media) should be seeing as a complementary variable of the political news of the media. As I elaborated earlier, the media helps to amplify the reach of populist parties. However, the classic communication channels that dominated the XX century, printed media, radio, and tv have coverage limits on certain topics. For instance, strong anti-immigrant sentiments and xenophobic rhetoric can be found on the internet without the same restrain of the classic media channels. As Rochert et al. (2020) pointed out, RWP found in social media, specially youtube's algorithm helps to create an echochamber of RWP videos. Thus, more possible voters and more target groups[11] can be reached and influenced with the use of these online tools.

YouTube seems to be preferred by the RWPP and Twitter is used by populist parties to spread their messages regardless of their ideology (Alonso-Munoz & Casero-Ripolles, 2020)

Another matter to note here, is that the exposure to information/ misinformation available on the internet doesn't have any sort of gatekeeping function, without the gatekeep concept

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[10] In the Digital News Report 2021, a study carried out by the Reuters Institute, in the UK, Germany, France, Ireland, Spain, Norway and Denmark, the decline is very consistent for the past decade, dropping from up to 85% figures to be below 70% in each country. In 2020 and 2021 there is a slight increase on the rates, but this can be explained as a temporary effect of the global pandemic.

[11] Schaub & Morisi (2020) signal that young demographics do not use the traditional channels to inform themselves, instead, they use social media platforms to read, watch and learn about political news. Besides, audiovisual communication that can be accessed through a smartphone in a matter of seconds fits perfect with young demographics.

(Janowitz, 1975) which ensures objectivity and professionalism. Obviously, traditional media has a presence online. However, they reach can be overshadowed by the vast amount of so called internet news outlets like Rebel News, Infowars (hosted by the Alex Jones Channel), The Right Side Broadcasting Network or the interest group PragerU[12], or by YouTubers covering political topics like, Paul Joseph Watson, Mark Dice, Lauren Southern, Stephan Molyneux[13] which are among the most representative.

After Facebook, You Tube is the most used social network used in Europe, and it is also the second most preferred for users to learn about current news (Newman et al. 2021). YouTube, by all means, is the dominant video sharing platform in the world and nowadays, a significant amount of people use it as their main tool to access any kind of information (Balakrishnan, 2017), from tutorials on how to tie knot to learn about local, national and international political developments. Its availability and accessibly, certainly, were game changers.

People prefer YouTube because they can watch anything at anytime, there is no need to go to a newsstand to buy a paper, or to be available to watch the prime-time news. Thus, if all these "barriers" giving information about political news were overcome, a person can decide what to watch, when to watch it, when to pause it and even for how long. However, all these benefits have a catch, there is an absence of impartially and equilibrium among the political content that can be found on the platform. Instead, YouTube's video recommendations are based on an algorithm which amplifies the RWP echo chamber (Rochert et al, 2020). Undoubtedly, this is not something exclusive to YouTube, social media algorithms are specially designed and tailored to make personalize recommendations to the users. Algorithms, by nature, are meant to keep the user from leaving the platform (Schmitt, 2018), offering similar content, therefore, filtering what the user can watch and access through its recommendations which means that if the user does not see a different type of content in the recommended videos, then most likely they won't watch it at all. This is not exactly a novelty, it is important to consider the argument

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[12] Currently, Rebels News has 1.56 million subscribers and 645 696 429 million views, The Right Side Broadcast Network has 1.55 million subscribers and 236 6030 067 million views, Prager U has 2.94 million subscribers and almost 1.5 billion views. Infowars YouTube account was banned by the platform back in 2019, at that time it had 2.4 million subscribers.

[13] As of April 2021, Paul Joseph Watson has 1.9 million subscribers and an impressive 526 047 926 million views, Mark Dice has 1.7 million subscribers and 453 832 080 million views Lauren Southern has 677,000 subscribers and 55 764.349 millions of views, Stefan Molyneux's *Free Domain Radio* YouTube channel had nearly 1 million subscribers before getting banned from the video sharing platform.

of the "filter bubbles" (Pariser, 2012, as cited in Nguyen, 2014). The idea behind this theory is that individuals are exposed to information solely based on previous data that the algorithms use to give personalize recommendations, hence, blocking other kinds of information and eventually isolating the user and keeping him in a so-called bubble where only certain kinds of the same or similar viewpoints and beliefs are shown. It is inevitable to argue that "the internet and social media have contributed to political extremism and the polarization of attitudes" (Schaub & Morisi, (2020, p.753) and to exacerbate this issue, even professional journalists are not following faithfully their code of ethics on social media platforms (Mateus, 2014). The magnitude of the effects of the filter bubbles of social media it hasn't being widely studied yet, but it clearly could have an impact on voting behavior. In addition, I must clarify that academia still hasn't completely agreed on this topic, there are some voices who disregard the echo chambers and filter bubbles arguments. For instance, Bruns (2019) states that these arguments are causing alarm over algorithms without relevant evidence, and refers to them as "a convenient technological scapegoat" which does not address the real issue behind it, namely polarization in the political and social arenas. Nonetheless, this research will help to strengthen the links between internet usage and the populist voter, in order to lay a more coherent and unambiguous path for future research.

Taking into account the already well-known populist tactic of gaining supporters through online tools, a voter could be influenced by the amount of time of their internet usage (IV2). The more time she spends, the more susceptible she is to see a post or ad on social media, that was actually written or promoted by a populist party. That's why I'm formulating the following research question: *Do people that spend more time on the internet tend to vote for a populist party? (RQ2).* In order to find out if this question holds up, I'm proposing the following hypothesis *H2: the more people use The Internet, the more likely they will vote for a populist party*

I would also like to see if there is a difference between the right-wing populist, left-wing populist and centrist populist voter, it could be possible that the variables of this research have a stronger effect on right-wing populist voters, considering that the media pays more attention to right-wing populism (Bos et al, 2010) and that right-wing populist parties are more active on the internet (Pajnik & Sauer, 2018). That's why I'm proposing this research question: *Do people informed about Political News, who also spend the most time on the internet tend to vote for a right-wing populist party? (RQ3).* To answer this question, I'm presenting the

following hypothesis. *H3: Right-wing populist voters tend to consume more Political News and spend more time on the internet.*

2.8 Additional variables: The usual and not so usual suspects

Demographics variables Age, Gender and Education are highly pertinent variables that are often included in populist voting behavior data analysis. (Reidy & Suiter, 2017; Elchardus & Sprut 2014). These variables help to determinate many background aspect of the voter that will make it easy to understand their relationship with the attitudinal variables.

Attitudinal variables regarding the satisfaction of a citizen with the current state of the Economy, Government and Democracy, attitudes to the migrants, will also need to be considered. As it has been claimed (Bowler & Donovan, 2019) that the populist voter is a someone who is currently disappointed with the state of governmental institution and the way they are implementing laws and handling the economy. If a citizens perceives that the elites running the country have let them down, then it is expected that a relevant percentage of them will be attracted by the anti-elites and anti-mainstream ideas of populist parties and their leaders. Attachment to the EU is also relevant, one common catachrestic (not always in LWPP) of populist parties is their Euroscepticism and its disdain to Brussels administration (Harmsen, 2010; Corbet, 2016). Regarding religion, populist can take elements from it and use it for they own agenda (DeHanas, & Shterin, 2018). This fact, alongside some parallelisms between religion and populism -that have been pointed out, such as the use of an easy and understandable vocabulary and presence of s subjugated community and the need to be saved by a messianic figure (Zuquete, J. P., 2017) might have an effect on voting for a populist party.

3. Methodology and Research Design

I would like to specify that in my research, I will try to find a profile for the populist voter, demographic and social factors like age, gender, education, unemployment, among others, will be take into account. Thus, this will help to give a clearer and better understanding of the final results.

3.1 Research Design

This research is a Large-N-design in which I will try to explore if different scenarios (Western Europe, Central Europe, Northern Europe, Eastern Europe) share patterns regarding the populist voter. I will attempt to find a relationship between my two independent variables and my DV through different elections. The total number of countries that are going to be in the study is 22. The following countries will take part in the research: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom. To have a general picture of the populist parties of those countries, I'm including a table with the current classification of Populist Parties, that have seats, made by *The Populist* in 2020.

Country	Populist Parties		
	Right-wing	Left-wing	Centrist
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs		
Belgium	Flemish Interest (VD) Vlaams Blok		

Bulgaria		31	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) Grazhdani za Evropeysko Razvitie na Balgariya
	National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria (NFSB) Natsionalen Front za Spasenie na Balgariya		
	Will (Volya) Volya		
Croatia	Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja (HDSSB) Hrvatski demokratski savez Slavonije I Baranje		
			Bridge of Independent Lists (MOST) Most nezavisnih lista
			Human Shield (Zivi Zid) Zivi zid
Czech Republic			Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO) Akce nespokojenych obcanu
	Freedom and Direct Democracy-Tomio Okamura (SPD)		

	Svododa a prímá demokracie Tomio Okamura	32	
Denmark	Danish People's Party (DF) Dansk Folkeparti		
	The new Right (NB) Nye Borgerlige		
Estonia	Estonian Conservative People's Party (EKRE) Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond		
Finland	Finns Party (Ps) Suomen Maaseudun Puolue/ Perussuomalaiset		
France	Republic Arise/ France Arise (DLR/DLF) Debout la république/ Debout la France		
	National Front/Rally (FN/RN) Front National		
	France Unbowed (FI) La France Insoumise		
Hungary	Fidesz - Hungarian Civic Alliance (FIDESZ) Fidesz – Magyar Polgári Szövetség/ Keresztténydemokrata		

	Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom		
Iceland			People's Party (FIF) Flokkur folksins Centre Party (M) Mioflokkurinn
Ireland		Sinn Féin (SF) Sinn Féin	
Italy			The People of Freedom/Forza Italia (FI/PdL) Forza Italia – Il Popolo della Libertà
	Brothers of Italy (FdI) Fratelli d' Italia – Centrodestra Nazionale		
	(Northern) League (LN) Lega (Nord)		
			Five Star Movement (M5S) Movimiento 5 Stelle
Germany	Alternative for Germany (AfD) Alternative für Deutschland		
		The Left (Linke)	

		PDS/ Die Linke	
Latvia			Who owns the state? (KPVLV) Kam pieder valsts?
Lithuania			Labour Partz (DP) Darbo Partija
			Lithuanian Centre Party (LCP) Lietuvos Centro Partija
			Orden and Justice (TT) Tvarka ir teisingumas-Liberalu Demokratu Partija
Poland	Kukiz '15 Kukiz' 15		
	Law and Justice (PiS) Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc		
Slovakia			Ordinary People (OLaNo) Obycajní ludia a nezávisle osobnosti
	Slovak National Party (SNS) Slovenská národná strana		
	We are family (SR)		

	Sme Rodina – Boris Kollár		
			Direction – Social Democracy (Smer) Smer – sociálna demokracia
Spain		In Common We Can (ECP) En Comú Podem	
		Podemos (Podemos) Podemos	
	Voice (Vox) Vox		
Sweden	Sweden Democrats (SD) Sverigedemokraterna		
The Netherlands	Forum for Democracy (FvD) Forum voor Democratie		
	Party for Freedom (PVV) Parij voor de Vrijheid		
		Socialist Party (SP) Socialistiese Partij	
United Kingdom		Sinn Fein (SF) Sinn Féin	

Table 1. This table shows the countries of the study and their respective populist parties with representation. The full version of this table includes more countries and categories. The full list of populist parties is available at https://popu-list.org.

3.2. Empirical data and sources

To test my hypotheses, I will do a quantitative analysis. A logistic regression with the data gathered by the European Social Survey (ESS) is needed. To operationalize my variable *Political News (IV1)* and test my H1, I have selected *News about politics and current affairs, watching, reading or listening, in minutes*. I will be measuring and comparing the amount of time that people spent being informed about current Political News, through three differences news media formats, television, print media and radio. In order to test my H2, *Internet use, how much time on typical day, in minutes* was chosen. I believe this indicator is a good choice to operationalize my variable Internet usage, because it will allow me to look into the amount of time that individuals spend connected to the internet. To test my H3, I will separate the voters from populist right wing parties, populist left wing parties and populist parties that according to the *PopuList* are do not belong to any side of the political spectrum, thus they are just labelled as populist parties. The data that I will use to identify the populist voter can be found in the ESS, under the indicator *Party voted for in the last election.* To analyze and test my hypotheses, I will study the countries separately.

In the first step of the analysis I will a create a specific model to each country based on the presence of is populist parties. It is necessary to separate the type of populist voter from the beginning of the data analysis to have better and clear understanding of the findings. Therefore, new variables from the data will be tailored, *populistrw*, which will content the populist right-wing voters; *populistlf*, which will content the populist left-wing voters and finally *populistc* in which the centrist populist voter will be storage. Once the variables separating the type of populist voter are created, my two study variables Political News an Internet Usage will be added to the model. To have more comprehensive results, the respondent's answered for these variables must be converted to hours if it is only available in minutes and seconds. Thus, the same logistic regression will be replicated in every country included in the analysis.

The second step of the analysis will include the elaboration of a more complex model. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, there are many factors that could influence the behavior of the voter. Hence, giving her traits that can be identified in advance. For this reason, the second model that I will use in the analysis will content 10 more independent variables

besides Political News and Internet Usage. The following table presents the second model's independent variables, their code and the question used in the ESS to elaborate the variable.

Variable	ESS Code	Literal question from the ESS	Measurement scale	
News (Hours)	nwspol	On a typical day, about how much time do you spend watching, reading or listening to news about politics and current affairs?	Hours and minutes	
			Values	Categories
			7777	Refusal
			8888	Don´t know
			9999	No answer
Internet (Hours)	netustm	On a typical day, about how much time do you spend using the internet on a computer, tablet, smartphone or other device, whether for work or personal use?	Hours and minutes	
			Values	Categories
			7777	Refusal
			8888	Don´t know
			9999	No answer
stf_econ (Satisfaction with the economy)	stfeco	On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [country]?	Values	Categories
			0	Extremely dissatisfied
			1	1
			2	2
			3	3
			4	4
			5	5
			6	6
			7	7
			8	8
			9	9
			10	Extremely satisfied
			77	Refusal
			88	Don´t know
			99	No answer
			Values	Categories
			0	Extremely dissatisfied
			1	1

stf_gov (Satisfaction with the government)	stfgov	Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 77 88 99	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Extremely satisfied Refusal Don´t know No answer
gndr (Gender)	gndr	CODE SEX, respondent	Values 1 2 9	Categories Male Female No answer
age (Age)	agea	Age of respondent	Years	
educ (Years of education),	eduyrs	About how many years of education have you completed, whether full-time or part-time? Please report these in full-time equivalents and include compulsory years of schooling.	Years 77 88 99	 Refusal Don´t know No answer
trst_party (Trust in political parties)	Trstprl	Using this card, 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. Firstly... ...political parties?	Values 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 77 88 99	Categories No trust at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Complete trust Refusal Don´t know No answer
att_migrt (Attitudes to migrants)	Inwbcnt	Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?	Values 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Categories Worse place to live 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

			Values	Categories
			77	Better place to live
			88	Refusal
			99	Don´t know
				No answer
eu_uni (European Unification gone too far/go further)	Euftf	Now thinking about the European Union, some say European unification should go further. Others say it has already gone too far. Using this card, what number on the scale best describes your position?	Values	Categories
			0	Unification already gone too far
			1	1
			2	2
			3	3
			4	4
			5	5
			6	6
			7	7
			8	8
			9	9
			10	Unification go further
			77	Refusal
			88	Don´t know
			99	No answer
rlgn (How religious)	rlgdgr	Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are?	Values	Categories
			0	Not at all religious
			1	1
			2	2
			3	3
			4	4
			5	5
			6	6
			7	7
			8	8
			9	9
			10	Very religious
			77	Refusal
			88	Don´t know
			99	No answer
stf_dem (Satisfaction with democracy)	stfdem	And on the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [country]?	Values	Categories
			0	Extremely dissatisfied
			1	1
			2	2
			3	3
			4	4
			5	5
			6	6
			7	7
			8	8
			9	9
			10	Extremely satisfied
			77	Refusal
			88	Don´t know
			99	No answer

Table 2. This table includes the codes of the variables, alongside the literal question made by the ESS and its scale of measurement.

The results of the two models will be addressed and compared, to see if the findings from the first model can support a more illustrative model. Thus, reinforcing the trustworthiness of the findings.

Van Kessel (2015) makes clear that is quite difficult to use the concept of populism as a device to classify parties, populism is not always a stable attitude and many parties can be seen as borderline populist. Hence, for an optimal operationalization of populism, I decided to rely on a specialized database, which already distinguishes populist and no populist parties. *The Populist* is going to be my primary guide to categorize the parties. The *PopuList* is an online data set available to anyone interested in studying the populist phenomena. This online platform is an initiative of *The Guardian* and it was possible thanks to the cooperation between academics and journalists. The list consists of parties of thirty-one European countries. The definition used by the *PopuList* to categorize parties as populist parties is based on Mudde's (2017) concept of populism. The *PopuList* makes a disclaimer, stating that party classifications are not perfect because there isn't a total agreement in academia for the definitions and categorizations. Nonetheless, the data set is a reliable tool and T*he Guardian's prestige* makes this initiative trustworthy. Besides, the Populist is backed and used by many recognized academics.

3.3.Limitations

Regarding the limitations of the data sources, ESS doesn't specify the names or types of news outlets, neither makes a differentiation of the internet content. There aren't direct sources that have this type of data that could be correlated with the populist voter. However, I believe that the sociodemographic factors and research questions can be considered adequate material to find a detailed profile of the populist voter that will incentivize the pursuit of a deeper analysis of the relationship between political news, internet usage and the populist voter.

In addition, another possible constraint of this research could be the inequality in the availability of previous studies targeting Left Wing Populism and Centrist Populism and their relationship with the media and the internet. Much of the previous and current research on the topic covers Right Wing Populism.

4.Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Country	Right-wing Populism		Left-Wing Populism		C-Populism	
	News	Internet	News	Internet	News	Internet
AT	0	0				
BE	+	0				
BG	0	0			0	0
CZ	0	0			0	0
DE	+	0	0	0		
DK	0	0				
EE	+	0				
ES	0	0	0	0		
FI	0	0				
FR	0	0	0	0		
HR	0	0			0	0
HU	0	0				
IE			0	0		
IS					0	0
IT	0	0			0	0
NL	0	+	0	0		
LT					0	0
LV					0	-
SE	0	0				
SK	0	0			0	0
PL	0	0				
UK			0	0		

Table 3. The positive statistically significant results are marked with the (+) symbol and the negative statistically significant results have the (-) symbol. A (0) indicates that the results from the regression were not statistically significant. An empty space was left if the country of study didn´t have a party to be analyzed.

The first model, only included Political News and Internet Usage as independent variables. As it can be appreciated, the effects of Political News on the populist voter was statistically significant in Estonia, Germany Belgium, Germany and Estonia. Therefore, H1 was not rejected, the more time (hours) the respondent spent watching political news in those countries, the higher the odds of her of voting for a populist party was demonstrated.

In the case of Estonia, just one party was categorized as populist by the PopuList, Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond (EKRE) which is a RWPP. Thus, the odds for voting for EKRE are 1.26 higher for every hour the respondent spends watching political news. The null hypothesis is rejected. The p-value of 0.005 indicates that it is statistically significant. Looking at the results of Internet Usage, it is possible to corroborate that the null hypothesis is not rejected. The p-value of 0.850 shows that it is not statistically significant.

	Right-wing Populism		Left-Wing Populism		Centrist-Populism	
	P. News	Internet	P. News	Internet	P. News	Internet
Country	OR (P)	OR (P)	OR (P)	OR (P)	OR (P)	OR (P)
BE	**1.08***	0.85				
DE	**1.19***	1.01	0.99	0.99		
EE	**1.26**	0.99				
NL	1.02	**1.07***	1.14	0.97		
LT					1.06	**0.88***

Table 4. This table shows the whole results of the countries in which statistical significance was found. The odds ratios and the p-value of the not significant results are also included. More detailed results are available in the Appendix.

In the case of Germany, two parties are categorized as populist, the AFD and Die Linke, which are RWPP and LWPP respectively. Regarding political news, the odds of voting for AFD are 1.19 higher for every hour the respondent spends watching political news. The null hypothesis is rejected. The p-value of <0.001 indicates that it is statistically significant. However, for Internet usage it was not statistically significant, the p-value was 0.793 . Now, going to the other side of the spectrum, after running the regression with Die Linke, the findings showed that the null hypothesis was not rejected with both variables.

In Belgium, there is only a RWPP, Vlaams Blok. Looking at the first variable we analyzed, it can be appreciated that the odds for voting for VB are 1.08 higher for every hour the respondent spends watching political news. The null hypothesis is rejected. The p-value of 0.024 means that it is statistically significant. Now, paying attention to the second variable, it was found that it was not statistically significant. The result of the p-value ended up being 0.126

In The Netherlands, three populist parties were part of the study, Forum for Democracy (FvD), Party for Freedom (PVV), both being RWPP and Socialist Party (SP), which is a LWPP. For Political News, the odds off for voting for FyD and PVV are 1.02 higher for every hour the respondent spends watching political news. However, the null hypothesis was not rejected. As can be seen on the chat below, the p-value of 0.811 states that it is not statistically significant. Regarding Internet usage, the odds for voting for FyD and PVV are 1.19 higher for every hour the respondent spends using the Internet. The null hypothesis is rejected. The p-value of 0.044 indicates that it is statistically significant. Regarding the SP, the findings showed that the null hypothesis is not rejected with both variables.

Lastly, Lithuania was the only country that had CPP with statistically significant results. The parties analyzed in this research were the Labour Party (DP), Lithuanian Centre Party (LCP) and Order and Justice (TT). For Political News, the odds of voting for those parties are 1.06 higher for every hour the respondent spends washing political news. Nonetheless, the p-value of 0.553 clarifies that the null hypothesis was not rejected. In addition, internet usage proved to have a negative statistically significant result with a p-value of 0.016.

Right-Wing Populism

	AT	BE	BG	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT	NL	LT	LV	SE	SK	PL	UK
1.News	0	0		0	+	0	0	0	0	+		0			0	0			0		0	
2. Internet	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0			0	0			0		0	
3. Age	-	0		0	0	0	0	-	0	-		0			0	0			0		0	
4. Gender	0	0		0	-	0	0	-	-	0		0			0	0			0		0	
5. Education	-	-		0	0	-	0	-	0	-		0			0	0			0		0	
6. S. Economy	-	+		0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0			0	0			+		0	
7. S. Government	+	0		0	-	+	0	-	0	0		+			+	0			-		+	
8. S. Democracy	-	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0			-	0			0		0	
9. Trust Party	0	-		0	0	-	ß	0	0	0		0			0	-			+		0	
10. EU Unification	-	-		-	-	-	-	0	0	-		0			0	-			0		0	
11. Att. Migrants	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-			-	-			-		0	
12. Religion	-	0		0	0	0	0	+	0	0		0			+	0			0		0	
Observations	1088	832		567	1099	1030	792	535	993	587		462			408	926			1045		372	
Pseudo R2	0.259	0.212		0.105	0.376	0.259	0.122	0.227	0.170	0.319		0.265			0.479	0.207			0.062		0.453	

Table 5. Positive statistically significant results are shown with the (+) symbol and negative statistical significant results with the (-) symbol. A (0) means that the results were not statistical significant at all. A blank space was left for the countries that did not have a RWPP.

Left-Wing Populism

	AT	BE	BG	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT	NL	LT	LV	SE	SK	PL	UK
1.News					0			0		0			0			0						0
2. Internet					-			0		0			0			0						0
3. Age					-			-		-			-			0						0
4. Gender					0			0		0			-			0						0
5. Education					0			0		-			-			0						0
6. S. Economy					-			0		0			0			0						0
7. S. Government					0			0		-			0			0						0
8. S. Democracy					0			0		0			0			0						0
9. Trust Party					-			0		0			-			-						0
10. EU Unification					0			0		0			0			-						0
11. Att. Migrants					+			+		0			0			-						+
12. Religion					-			-		0			0			0						-
Observations					1030			562		587			864			926						1134
Pseudo R-2					0.259			0.119		0.319			0.125			0.207						0.067

Table 6. Positive statistically significant results are shown with the (+) symbol and negative statistical significant results with the (-) symbol. A (0) means that the results were not statistical significant at all. A blank space was left for the countries that did not have a LWPP.

Centrist Populism

	AT	BE	BG	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT	NL	LT	LV	SE	SK	PL	UK
1.News			_	0							-			0	0		0	+		0		
2. Internet			0	0							0			0	0		0	0		0		
3. Age			0	+							-			0	-		+	-		+		
4. Gender			0	0							0			-	-		0	0		0		
5. Education			0	0							0			-	0		0	-		0		
6. S. Economy			-	0							0			0	-		0	0		0		
7. S. Government			0	+							0			0	+		+	0		+		
8. S. Democracy			0	0							0			0	-		-	0		0		
9. Trust Party			0	0							0			0	0		0	0		0		
10. EU Unification			0	-							0			0	0		0	0		0		
11. Att. Migrants			0	0							0			-	-		0	0		0		
12. Religion			0	-							+			0	+		0	0		0		
Observations			236	774							594			521	625		426	269		140		
Pseudo R-2			0.143	0.148							0.068			0.096	0.380		0.075	0.219		0.097		

Table 7. Positive statistically significant results are shown with the (+) symbol and negative statistical significant results with the (-) symbol. A (0) means that the results were not statistical significant at all. A blank space was left for the countries that did not have a CP.

In Table 5 it is possible to appreciate the results of the regression of the full model, which includes a total of 12 variables. The table presents the significant statistic effects of the variables, either negative or positive, on voting for a Right-Wing Populist party. The statistically significant effects are not displayed (the tables with the full results are available in the Appendix).

The variables which are showed first are the ones that are the main focus of the research, Political News and Internet Usage. As it can be noted, the effects of the former only had a significant positive effect in Germany and France, which means that H1 was only proved in those two central European countries. Regarding the latter, there was no significant effect in any of the countries which took part of the study. Therefore, H2 was completely rejected in each single case.

Following next, are the demographic variables. Looking at Age, there were only negative significant effects in Austria, Spain and France. For Gender, negative significant effect was present in Germany, Spain and Finland. Lastly, Education, was proved to be negative significant in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Spain and France.

The next part of RWP table reveals the results of the attitudinal variables. Regarding Satisfaction with Economy, statistical significance was found in three countries, being negative in Austria and positive in Belgium and Sweden. Interestly, Satisfaction with the Government had a significant effect in 8 countries, Austria, Denmark, Hungary, Italy and Poland were the cases in which a positive result was present, which means that in those scenarios, citizens who were satisfied with the administration in power (at the time the survey was taken) were willing, most likely, to vote for a populist party.

Satisfaction with Democracy was one of the variables with less impact in this study, as it can be seen, it was negative statistically significant in just two countries, Austria and The Netherlands. Reviewing the results for Trust in Political Parties it had a positive significant effect only in Sweden, and a negative significant effect in Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands. European Unification was one the variables that presented more significant results, negative in 8 out of the 22 countries analyzed for this analysis. Almost at the bottom of the table, Attitudes to Migrants demonstrated, by far, to be the variable which had the greatest significancy of the whole study. Finally, the last variable added to the regression, Religion,

showed statistical significance in countries with a majority catholic population, in the case of Austria it was negative. However, positive significance was found in southern European countries, Spain and Italy.

Table 6 contains the results of the regression that involved Left-Wing Populist Parties. Unfortunately, for Political News, statistical significance was not found in any of the countries of the study. Taking a look at the outcome of Internet Usage, a negative significant effect was only present in Germany. Besides, contrary to the results obtained during the first regression, in the case of The Netherlands, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, H2 was rejected in every scenario.

Moving on to the demographics variables, Age was proven to have a significant negative effect in Denmark, Spain, France and Ireland. For Gender, in Ireland once again, a negative significant effect was present. Regarding Education, France and Ireland were the countries which had statistical significance, negative in both cases.

Moving forward to the attitudinal variables, differing with the RWP scenarios, were barely existing. For instance, Satisfaction with the Economy and Satisfaction with Government had only one negative significant result each, in Denmark and France, respectively, and for Satisfaction with Democracy there were none. Trust in Political Parties exerts negative significant effects in three countries, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands and European Union Unification a negative significance is only present in The Netherlands. Attitude to Migrants was the variable that had the most significant effect in this table, 4 countries proved to be statistically significant, Germany, Spain showed a positive effect and the Netherlands presented a negative effect. And at the bottom of the table, Religion had a negative significant in the Czech Republic and a positive one in Croatia and Italy.

Finally, Table 7 shows the results of the regression that included Centrist Populist Parties in the analysis. Political News presented significant results in 3 out of 22 countries of the study. There was a negative statistical significance in Bulgaria and Croatia, nonetheless, the variable had a positive significant effect on Latvia. The second main variable of this study, Internet Usage, did not have any significant result. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Following with the Interpretation of the demographics variables, Age had a statistically significant effect in 4 countries, being a positive one in Czech Republic, Lithuania and Slovakia. However, in Croatia and Latvia it was proven to be negative. For Gender, in Iceland and Italy a negative statistical significance was found. Looking at the last demographic variable, Education, it is possible to appreciate that a negative statistically significant effect was present in Bulgaria, Italia and Latvia.

Moving on to the last group, the attitudinal one, It is noticeable that Satisfaction with the Economy had a negative statistically significance in just one country, Iceland. Interestingly, Satisfaction with Government had only positive outcomes, this variable was statistically significant in the Czech Republic, Italy Lithuania and Slovakia. Satisfaction with Democracy and Trust in Political parties has a negative statistically significant effect each, in Italy and Lithuania respectively. Regarding European Union Reunification, scarcely the Czech Republic presented negative statistically results. Attitudes to Migrants only saw negative statistical significance in, Iceland and Italy. The final variable of the table, Religion, unsurprisingly just had a statistical significant effect in 3 out of the 24 cases, a negative in the Czech Republic and a positive one in Croatian and Italy.

In order to find out if H3 is true, t.tests were carried out to find the mean of time. The table on the next page contains all the details of the results, which will be addressed in the following subchapter

Country	Right-wing Populism		Left-Wing Populism		C-Populism	
	News	Internet	News	Internet	News	Internet
AT	0.8	2.2				
BE	4.0	2.3				
BG	2.2	3.7			1.7	3.1
CZ	0.8	2.8			0.7	2.4
DE	1.7	3.2	1.1	3.0		
DK	1.5	3.0				
EE	1.8	4.2				
ES	1.4	3.3	1.4	4.3		
FI	1.0	3.0				
FR	2.4	3.0	1.8	2.7		
HR	1.2	2.6			1.2	3.1
HU	2.1	2.7				
IE			1.5	2.9		
IS					0.9	3.6
IT	2.9	2.6			2.9	2.8
NL	1.2	4.5	1.4	3.6		
LT					1.5	2.6
LV					1.7	4.4
SE	1.2	4.3				
SK	1.8	3.2			1.6	2.5
PL	1.6	2.7				
UK			0.7	4.0		
	1.7	3.1	1.3	3.4	1.5	3.1

Table 6. The results of the t. tests to find the means, in every possible scenario, are shown in hours.

4.2 Discussion

As it was showed in the Results and Discussion chapter, H1 (The more informed the people are about Political News, the more likely they will vote for a populist party) was overwhelmingly rejected in most of the case studies and scenarios. A positive statistical effect significant effect was only found in Germany and France, during regression for RWPP and in Latvia in the CPP model. H2 was not proved at all, as a side note, it had a negative statistical effect in Germany during the regression which involved LWPP.

The second model had the intention to prove and maybe extend the positive significant results found during the first model regressions. As proved before, during the testing of the first model, positive statistical significance was found in Belgium, Germany and Estonia. In order to add verisimilitude to those results and to see if the insertion of other 10 relevant variables to the model were capable to reveal more positive associations.

However, the second set of results instead of being encouraging the outcomes of the first set of regressions, ended up proving that the null hypothesis was not rejected in the majority of the countries of the study. The only constant and successful of the expected results was the case of Germany, H1 hold through both stages of the analysis. Therefore, the more informed the people are about Political News in Germany, the higher the odds of voting for the AFD. Unfortunately, one single case out of 24 can only be considered as a possible anomaly, that it might need of a deeper and extended future research to find out if the results in the German scenario still prevail.

Regarding H2 (the more people use The Internet, the more likely they will vote for a populist party), the first model only obtained positive statistically significant results in The Netherlands, and when the second model was tested, it had a negative statistical effect in Germany during the regression which involved LWPP. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected which means that the amount of internet usage does not have any effect on voting for a populist party.

Now, paying attention to H3 (Right-wing populist voters tend to consume more Political News and spend more time on the internet) and looking at the outcomes of the t tests that were carried out to find the mean of time consumed by the respondents watching political news and using internet it is noticeable that H3 was partly proved. RWP voters indeed spend more time (1.7 hours) watching political news and using internet than LWP (1.3 hours) and CP (1.5 hours) voters. Contrary to what this study was expecting, LWP voters (3.4 hours) were the ones who spent the most time using the internet on daily basis. RWP voters matched the amount of time that CP voters spent using the internet (3.1 hours).

Turning to the rest of the results of the analysis, there are some interesting finding worth to mention. The second model shows that RWPP compared to LWPP and CPP are the ones that have more significant outcomes. The model for RWP proved to have 54 statistically significant results (12 being positive and 42 being negative. Surprisingly, the model for CPP was the second with most significant effects, a total of 27 (10 being positive and 17 being negative). I was expecting a different result here I made the wrong assumption that the CPP model was going to be the one with less results. However, that was the faith of the LWPP model, which presented 21 significant outcomes (3 being positive and 18 being negative).

The Findings of the CPP Model show that the variable satisfaction with the government had positive effect in each statistical significant result, Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania and Slovakia. Looking at the RWP model, the results are quite divided

Religion proved to have a significant positive effect for the CPP in Croatia and Italy, a negative one in the Czech Republic, which could be explained by its amount of non-religion population; in the RWP model in Spain and once again in Italy were positive and Austria negative. Finally, in the LWP model Germany and Spain presented negative statistically significant effects. As hinted in the literature review, Religion has an influence in populist parties. Nonetheless, with the current findings of this research future research on the evident relationship of RWP, CPP and countries with a majoritarian catholic population should be pursued in order to have a better understanding of the phenomena.

Attitudes to migrants was one of the most interesting and at the same time self-evident discovery of the data analysis. It had a negative statistical significance in 13 of the 22 countries of the RWP, which means that the odds of voting for a right-wing populist party are statistically significant lower, the more positive the person's attitude will be towards migrants.

In the same RWP model, European Union Unification, had 8 negative statistical significance, which means that in 7 countries the odds of voting for a RWPP are lower the more in favor of European unification is.

5. Conclusion

The current research is angled to finding out if political news and internet usage have an effect on voting behavior; specifically, the investigation carried out here aims to see if the variables had an impact on voting for a populist party.

In order to prove a relationship between PN, IU and the populist voter, a data set is used from the European Social Survey Round 9 (2018). Two logistic regressions were performed. The first one, which included just the two main variables of the study, showed that the odd of voting for a right-wing populist populist party are higher, the more time a person spends watching political news in Belgium, Germany and the the Netherlands. It also revealed that the odds of voting for a left-wing populist party are higher the more time a person spends using the internet in The Netherlands.

Moving on to the second model, in which 10 more variables (demographic and attitudinal) were added, the outcome showed that Germany was the only country from the first model that kept its positive statistical significance regarding the effects of political news. Besides, in this model France revealed a positive statistical significance result as well. Unfortunately, only two countries out of the 22 of the study prove H1 and none of the scenarios was able to confirm H1. However, it is necessary to take into account that the addition or deduction of further variables could bring different outcomes. At this stage, Germany could be considered an isolated case or an anomaly, as the only country, in which at least H1 was proved. Further and deeper research to understand the German populist voter will be needed to see if it´s possible to maintain H1 relevancy.

Regarding the supplementary findings of the second regression, the most interesting finding was to see that religion had a significant positive effect in countries that have a majoritarian catholic population, Spain (RWP), Italy (RWP, CPP) and Croatia (CPP). This relationship between catholic religion, right wing and centrist populist parties will need further research to determine the relevance of religion on the populist voter´s mind.

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7. Appendix

	Right-wing Populism																					
	Odds Ratio (p)																					
	AT	BE	BG	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT	NL	LT	LV	SE	SK	PL	UK
1.News	1.15	1.03	0.99	0.95	1.18*	1.05	1.23	1.05	0.94	1.10*	0.98	0.97			0.97	1.06			0.89	1.37	0.95	
2. Internet	0.91	0.88	1.10	0.99	1.03	0.95	1.03	0.98	1.05	0.99	1.07	1.06			0.96	1.05			1.05	1.33	1.04	
3. Age	0.99*	0.96	1.00	0.99	0.98	1.00	1.00	0.97*	0.99	0.93***	1.01	0.99			0.92	0.99			1.01	1.00	0.99	
4. Gender	1.07	0.76	0.47	1.03	0.39**	0.99	0.64	0.49*	0.36***	0.86	4.52	0.77			0.84	0.59			1.01	1.37	0.62	
5. Education	0.90**	0.80**	0.96	1.02	0.90	0.94**	0.98	0.93*	0.96	0.85***	1.00	1.02			0.97	0.94			0.97	1.24	1.00	
6. S. Economy	0.87*	1.38*	0.79	0.87	0.92	1.06	1.08	1.15	1.09	1.05	1.11	1.01			0.92	1.05			1.25***	1.30	0.84	
7. S. Government	1.44***	1.35	1.05.	1.16	0.78*	1.15*	0.99	0.68***	0.90	0.93	1.07	1.58			1.84***	0.97			0.79***	0.99	1.86***	
8. S. Democracy	0.82***	0.91	1.20	1.11	0.90	0.96	0.87	0.91	1.01	0.86	0.67	0.94			0.77*	1.01			1.00	0.82	1.13	
9. Trust Party	0.91	0.61**	0.99	0.85	0.89	0.84**	0.95	1.05	0.94	0.95	1.00	1.05			1.06	0.61***			1.10*	0.93	1.00	
10. EU Unification	0.92*	0.78**	0.93	0.79***	0.84**	0.72***	0.83**	0.95	0.79***	0.80***	1.02	0.93			0.90	0.83**			1.08	1.15	0.90	
11. Att. Migrants	0.69***	0.61***	0.94	0.74***	0.65***	0.70***	0.75***	0.72***	0.77***	0.66***	0.89	0.76			0.56***	0.85*			0.85***	0.96	0.78**	
12. Religion	0.93*	1.04	0.93	1.11	0.95	0.97	1.05	1.18**	1.05	1.07	1.22	1.01			1.16	0.97			1.01	0.94	1.11	
Observations	1088	832	140	567	1099	1030	792	535	993	587	494	462			408	926			1045	140	372	
Pseudo-R2.	0.259	0.212	0.069	0.105	0.376	0.259	0.122	0.227	0.170	0.319	0.026	0.265			0.479	0.207			0.062	0.097	0.453	

Table 7. Full results from second model RWP, including the odds ratio and the p-value (*)

	AT	BE	BG	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT	NL	LT	LV	SE	SK	PL	UK
										Left wing Populism												
										Odds Ratio (p)												
1.News					1.04			1.05		1.06			1.12			1.06						0.50
2. Internet					0.89*			0.98		0.94			1.03			1.05						1.03
3. Age					0.97***			0.97*		0.96***			0.97			0.99**						0.97
4. Gender					0.63.			0.49*		0.65			0.51***			0.59**						0.29
5. Education					1.01			0.93*		0.91*			0.85			0.94						0.81
6. S. Economy					0.85*			1.15		0.95			0.97			1.05						0.83
7. S. Government					0.98			0.68***		0.71**			0.91			0.97						1.19
8. S. Democracy					0.92			0.91		0.87			0.94			1.01						0.61
9. Trust Party					0.85*			1.05		1.07			0.82***			0.61***						0.88
10. EU Unification					1.07			0.95		0.96			1.10			0.83**						1.23
11. Att. Migrants					1.14*			0.72***		1.09			1.02			0.85*						1.45
12. Religion					0.84***			1.18**		0.96			1.01			0.97						1.31
Observations					1030			562		587			864			926						1134
Pseudo R-2					0.259			0.119		0.319			0.125			0.207						0.067

Table 8. Full results from second model LWP, including the odds ratio and the p-value (*)

| | | | | | | | Centrist Populism | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | Odds Ratio (p) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
	AT	BE	BG	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT	NL	LT	LV	SE	SK	SI	PL	UK
1.News			0.81*	0.95							0.74*			1.00		0.98	1.03	1.69		1.05			
2. Internet			1.00	0.95							1.02			0.98		0.99	0.93	0.95		1.12			
3. Age			1.00	1.02**							0.98**			0.99		0.97***	1.02**	0.94***		1.05***			
4. Gender			1.27	0.89							0.90			0.44*		0.91	1.68	0.59		0.77			
5. Education			1.04	0.99							1.01			0.90*		0.95	0.95	0.90*		0.91			
6. S. Economy			0.92	0.92							0.99			1.05		0.79**	1.03	1.02		0.88			
7. S. Government			1.40**	1.42***							0.91			0.83		2.05***	1.20*	1.13		1.50***			
8. S. Democracy			1.03	1.04							0.86			1.06		0.75***	0.96	0.84		0.84			
9. Trust Party			1.07	1.00							1.10			0.94		0.96	0.94	0.75*		1.01			
10. EU Unification			1.00	0.90**							0.99			1.02		1.00	0.97	1.01		0.97			
11. Att. Migrants			0.93	1.05							0.96			0.79**		0.73***	0.89	1.07		0.98			
12. Religion			0.94	0.89***							1.08*			1.05		1.11**	0.91	1.15		0.99			
Observations			236	774							594			521		625	426	269		140			
Pseudo R-2			0.143	0.148							0.068			0.096		0.380	0.075	0.219		0.097			

Table 9. Full results from second model CP, including the odds ratio and the p-value (*)