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Populism, Nativism and Vote Choices in Five Western Democracies

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Abstract

Drawing on national surveys from the Comparative National Election Project in the U.S., France, Britain, Germany, and Italy, this study examines the populist and nativist attitudes of the electorates in their 2016-2018 national electoral contests. Relying on common questions across the five surveys, it develops parallel multiple-item measures of the populism and nativism concepts for each country, corroborating that they represent empirically-separate populism and nativism factors. Relationships between these measures were moderately strong in France and Germany, modest in the U.S. and Italy, and negligible in Britain. While they may be found together in some voters' minds, they nonetheless require separate treatment. The study then compares the relationship between these populism and nativism measures to votes for parties and candidates in each country, as well as for and against Brexit. The results identify which contestants drew the most and the least from populists and nativists in their country's electorates, thereby clarifying the voter bases for these western parties and candidates.

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1. Introduction

Powerful anti-establishment forces have roiled the electoral politics of the five most populous and economically developed western democracies in recent years. In the U.S., they led to Donald Trump's presidency. In Britain, they surfaced in the 2016 Brexit referendum and the 2017 general election. In France, neither leading parliamentary party survived the first round of its 2017 presidential election, and its May runoff was won by a newcomer to electoral politics heading a new party over the leader of the right-wing National Front. In Germany, the two leading parties lost seats in the 2017 parliamentary elections, with the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) emerging as the largest parliamentary opposition party. In Italy, two anti-establishment parties won the largest shares of the popular votes in the 2018 general election, defeating the governing party.

Underlying these forces in all five of these countries was a surge in issues of populism and nativism in their electoral contests. They surfaced initially with the Trump candidacy (Galston 2017; Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018; Oliver and Rahn 2016; Reny *et al.* 2019; Sides *et al.* 2018). They soon were followed by the Brexit vote (Clarke, Goodwin, and Whiteley 2017; Goodwin and Milazzo 2017), Trump's general election victory, the first-round defeats of France's two leading parliamentary parties (Gougou and Persico 2017), and the rise of anti-establishment parties in Italy (Gianfreda and Carlotti 2018; Schadee *et al.* 2019). In returning Angela Merkel to the chancellorship, Germany seemed to offer the greatest contrast to the other contests. Yet even there, the emergence of the AfD as the leading opposition party signaled dissatisfaction with the established order and that populism and nativism were unsettling German politics as well (Jesse 2018; Lees 2018; Siri 2018).

These electoral events raise questions about the prevalence, and interconnection, of populism and nativism in these five countries and how they affected citizen voting behavior.¹ This paper draws upon national post-election surveys of voters in the U.S. in 2016, France, Britain, and Germany in 2017, and Italy in 2018 to address these questions.² All surveys were conducted via the Internet, and their data are weighted to be nationally representative samples of the voting-age population. Using parallel questions drawn from the Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP), we are able to compare the five countries' publics and their voting behavior.³

There is a rich literature on populist and nativist attitudes in the publics of western countries. Our study adds to it in several ways: First, it focuses on recent elections in the largest western democracies, each of which experienced greater challenges to the established order than before. Second, it examines populist and nativist attitudes as separate concepts, then determines their interrelationship and how much each contributed to these challenges. Finally, by comparing voters across these elections within a common theoretical and operational framework, our

¹ For broader takes on the recent rise of populism and nativism in these and other western countries, see (*inter alia*); Bonikowski *et al.* 2018; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2018; and Norris and Inglehart 2018.

² The British survey contained questions about Brexit that allow us to compare that vote with the other contests. The British survey covered only Great Britain, as is conventional in British election studies.

³ See Appendix A for a description of the surveys. For more on CNEP, see u.osu.edu/cnep.

study is able to identify similarities and differences among them, providing the initial foundations for theories about what drives populism, nativism, and the voting choices they may foster.

2. Conceptualizing Populism

The meaning of populism is somewhat contested (Rovira Kaltwasser *et al.* 2017, Puhle 2018). Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017, p. 6) provide the widespread view of populism as “a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be separated vertically into two homogenous and antagonistic camps, the ‘pure people’ vs. the ‘corrupt elite,’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the popular will of the people.” To Norris and Inglehart (2018), populism involves two claims – that the authority of the political elites is illegitimate and that the voice of the people is the only legitimate source of authority. Populists often are seen to go even so far as to express this antagonism in Manichaeian terms as “good” vs. “evil.” Because it is thin-centered, lacking the deep rootedness of most ideologies, populism is malleable and can take on different forms on the left or the right. With its elevation of a single “people,” it poses a threat to the “elite” institutions of representative democracy as an essential part of its opposition to elites.

An additional aspect of populism is identified most clearly by Müller (2016) as anti-pluralistic in defining “the people” more narrowly than the full non-elite population and in exhibiting intolerance towards those who fall outside of it – as a horizontal rather than vertical conflict (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2018). Expressed in a populism of the “right” in contemporary western politics (Bonikowski *et al.* 2018; Brubaker 2017; Halikiopoulou and Vlandas 2019), this nativism is seen by some scholars as an integral part of present-day populism (Hobolt and Tilly 2016 and Van der Brug and Van Spanje 2009) and especially of the populist radical right (Mudde 2007; Ivarsflaten *et al.* 2019).

Each of the western countries examined in this paper has witnessed the emergence in its politics of a nativism in opposition to immigration and immigrants. They have experienced substantial immigration in recent years that has brought people different in their ethnicity, race, and/or religion from the country populations they were joining and triggered a powerful reaction. As established political leaders struggled to address it, this nativism fostered anti-establishment feelings that seem to have sometimes linked it with populism more generally (see, *inter alia*, Roßteutscher *et al.* 2019 and Barisione *et al.* 2018). How much nativism is related to populism in voters’ minds is a major question that our paper will address.

The focus of this study is on illuminating what scholars have called the “demand” sides of populism and nativism in the attitudes of national electorates. These attitudes may have been present for some time, and they may not be more prevalent now than in the past. What has moved them from latent to manifest considerations in voting decisions seems to have been their recent connection to the “supply” side as some political leaders in the elections of 2016-18 seized the

unprecedented opportunities to translate voters' populist and nativist attitudes into electoral support.⁴

3. Measuring Populism and Nativism in the CNEP Surveys

In response to the rise of populism and nativism, scholars have developed empirical measures of populist and nativist attitudes in the public. Various measures of populism have emerged (especially see Akkerman *et al.* 2014; Hawkins *et al.* 2012; Hawkins *et al.* 2018; Oliver and Rahn 2016; Rico and Anduiza 2017; Schulz *et al.* 2018; and Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel 2018). They include some common questions but have not converged on a commonly-accepted populism scale.⁵ In reviewing many of these measures, Van Hauwaert *et al.* (2019) concluded that “the research on populist attitudes is still in its infancy” (p. 143). In their comprehensive analysis of operationalizations of the populism concept, Wuttke *et al.* (2020) take this criticism one step further in contending that the measurement of populism as a non-compensatory construct⁶ has fallen short by not including all of its separate anti-elite, Manichean, and popular sovereignty parts.

Even less convergence has occurred in the measurement of immigrant and related nativist attitudes. Despite valuable insights gained from some studies of attitudes towards immigration (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Rydgren 2008; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2015; Lubbers and Coenders 2017; Sides and Citrin 2007), research on the full gamut of nativist attitudes seems even more in its “infancy.”

Our surveys took advantage of parallel questions from the Comparative National Elections Project asked in U.S., France, Britain, Germany, and Italy to capture both populist and nativist attitudes.⁷ Five questions on populism were asked in the U.S., France, and Britain; four in Germany; and three in Italy. The same three questions tapping nativism were contained in all five surveys.

Attitudes as to whether political leaders defend the rich and powerful (**Politicians defend rich**), don't care about people like them (**Politicians don't care**), and don't listen to ordinary people (**Officials don't listen**) reflect the anti-elitism of populism in complementary ways. The trust in government question (**Don't trust government**) also carries an anti-elite connotation and possibly links a long-standing concept to populism. Preferences regarding whether government decisions should be made by citizens or experts (**Citizens decide**) tap the separate popular sovereignty aspect of populism. The nativism questions include opposition to foreign influence from immigrants (**Oppose foreign influences**) and the multiculturalism they promote (**Oppose**

⁴ Sides *et al.* (2018) show how changes in voting behavior between the 2012 and 2016 U.S. presidential elections were the result of “supply side” changes in campaign rhetoric and the choices for president. For a useful distinction between demand versus supply explanations of far-right voting in Europe, see Golder (2016).

⁵ For valuable comparisons of measures across the different studies, see Castanho Silva *et al.* 2019. Van Hauwaert *et al.* 2019, and Supplement 6 of Wuttke *et al.* 2020.

⁶ When a construct is compensatory, multiple measures of the same “dimension” can substitute for one another. When a construct is non-compensatory, by contrast, each of its parts needs to be measured separately and cannot substitute for other parts; higher values on one component cannot offset lower values on another.

⁷ For the English-language wording of the specific questions, see Appendix B.

multiculturalism) as well as the underlying question of whether immigrants should stay in the country or be deported (**Deport immigrants**).

Responses to these populism and nativism questions were factor analyzed in each of the countries to determine whether they could be employed cross-nationally as comparable multiple-item measures of the two concepts. Their principal component loadings (column 1 of Table 1) show that the items could not be combined into a single dimension in any country. Instead they defined separate dimensions, especially after a Varimax rotation (columns 2 and 3 of Table 1), measuring different concepts. The populism items (X indicates absence from the survey) load well on the first Varimax dimension for all five countries, justifying characterizing it as populism. The three nativism items load well on the second Varimax dimension for all five, justifying labeling it as nativism. The factor loadings for the two dimensions are similar enough across the five countries to treat each concept as comparable cross-nationally in capturing separate attitude syndromes in each country. Populist and Nativist indexes were created by summing the scores for each of their constituent variables as defined by Varimax dimensions 1 and 2 respectively.⁸

Our measures have several advantages. Because the two concepts are similarly measured across countries and load satisfactorily on their respective factors, they facilitate cross-national comparisons. Their principal strength is that they include populist and nativist attitudes in the same study, enabling us to determine how much modern-day populism is connected to a horizontal, anti-pluralist nativist dimension in popular attitudes. The measures are continuous, registering degrees of populism or nativism, rather than requiring arbitrary distinctions between populists and non-populists, nativists and non-nativists. They provide barometers of populism and nativism sentiment in recent western elections, when these two sentiments seem to have played a more important role than before. Moreover, the measurement of nativism captures key underlying issues in the immigration debate.

These measures, however, are far from ideal. Our measurement of populism is not nearly as broad as that of Akkerman *et al.* 2014, Castanho Silva *et al.* 2019, Schulz *et al.* 2018, and Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel 2018 in particular. Like many others, it is overloaded towards anti-elite attitudes and contains only a single item tapping popular sovereignty. Nor does the index capture populism's "Manichaeian outlook," appropriately we think.⁹ Finally, because some populism items were not contained in the German and Italian surveys, their comparisons are somewhat restricted.

⁸ To maintain comparability across countries, we have not weighted the items by their factor scores in each country. When such weights were employed, the results were virtually the same. See online Appendix B for more details on the constructions of these indexes. The part-whole correlations between each of our populism and nativism items and their respective summary indexes are consistently high across all countries: average $r = .69$ and $r > .54$ for each populism item, average $r = .62$ and $r > .47$ for each nativism item. By contrast, they are consistently low between the items and the opposite index.

⁹ The Manichaeian component, seeing our side as good and the other as evil, often is not included in the measurement of populism (see Hawkins *et al.* 2012, and Akkerman *et al.* 2014; but see Van Hauwaert *et al.* 2018 and Castanho Silva *et al.* 2019 for results more supportive of including it). Wuttke *et al.* (2020) did not involve it in their tests of populism operationalizations. In our view, Manichaeian views should not be treated as a defining component of populism. Rather, as a characteristic of political polarization, they cannot distinguish populists from non-populists, especially in partisan polarized societies.

Table 1: Principal Component and Varimax Loadings of First and Second Dimensions of Populist and Nativist Items in Five Western Elections

	U.S. 2016	France 2017	Britain 2017	Germany 2017	Italy 2018
Don't trust government	.67 .62 .27	.65 .66 .12	.75 .74 -.15	.71 .75 .12	X
Politicians don't care	.76 .79 .01	.74 .69 .28	.76 .79 .15	.81 .83 .18	.76 .85 .11
Politicians defend rich	.67 .73 -.11	.76 .72 .26	.84 .83 -.08	.81 .83 .17	.74 .83 .10
Officials don't listen	.57 .58 .03	.63 .72 -.11	.54 .55 -.02	X	.40 .47 .02
Citizens decide	.43 .47 -.03	.25 .49 -.57	.50 .50 .00	.53 .61 .00	X
Oppose multiculturalism	.05 -.08 .47	.30 .11 .54	-.10 -.01 .55	.34 -.04 .75	.33 -.08 .70
Deport immigrants	.37 .18 .73	.56 .43 .44	-.14 -.01 .83	.66 .43 .60	.56 .28 .59
Oppose foreign influences	.21 -.01 .81	.38 .16 .65	-.17 -.04 .81	.5 .14 .79	.51 .09 .77
Variance explained	27% 18%	32% 15%	30% 21%	42% 17%	33% 20%

Note: For each country panel, the unrotated principal components factor loadings are in the first column and the factor loadings for the first and second dimensions of the rotated Varimax analysis are in the second and third columns. The variance explained percentages, based on the eigenvalues, apply to the first and second dimensions of the principal components analysis. The Varimax loadings that best define the Populist and Nativist factors are bolded.

Despite these limitations, the predictive power in subsequent analysis of these two indexes is greater than that of any of the single item alone, which is a strong justification for employing a multiple-item measure of each. More important, our Populism and Nativism indexes exhibit considerable validity. As we shall see in Tables 2 and 3, they are related as one would expect to voting for recognizably populist and nativist candidates and parties in the five western democracies.

4. Is Nativism an Integral Part of Populism?

Up to this point, we have treated populism and nativism as separate concepts. Yet, the two often have been connected in recent election campaigns (de Cleen 2017; Halikiopoulou and Vlandas 2019). We agree with Rooduijn (2018) that they should be conceptualized as different “antagonisms”: populism as a vertical conflict between elites and people, nativism as a horizontal conflict between the in-group and outsiders. As Rooduijn (in Bonikowski *et al.* 2018), de Cleen (2017), and Halikiopoulou and Vlandas (2019) suggest, however, it is important to examine how much they are related to each other in the minds of voters.

Scores on the Populism Index and the Nativism Index are significantly correlated in each country, but with substantial differences among them in the strength and even direction of these correlations. Britain shows a small, yet significant, **negative** correlation of $-.05$. The correlation rises to a meager $r = .10$ in the United States, then jumps to $.23$ in Italy, $.30$ in France and $.37$ in Germany. This variation in the strength of their relationships, in addition to their contrasting dimensionality in the initial factor analysis, justifies continuing to treat them as separate variables in the analysis that follows. Nativism may be connected to the populism syndrome at least in Italy, France, and Germany, but it requires separate measurement.

Overall, then, populism and nativism were not natural partners for voters across these western elections. Instead, the positions of party leaders and their campaign themes seem to have mattered in how much populism and nativism were linked in voters’ minds. Where a populist, nativist candidate faced a non-populist, non-nativist candidate in the French presidential run-off, for example, the two attitudes were reinforcing. Where an anti-establishment, nativist party offered a home for Germans, its presence as a choice seemed to accentuate the pairing of populism and nativism there. The divergent populist and nativist clienteles of Italy’s two most successful anti-establishment parties suggest that they would not be easy partners in forming a government, as was borne out in subsequent events. In the U.S., what started as conflict over populism and nativism in its Republican primaries morphed into a more traditional inter-party contest by the time of the general election, thereby depressing the correlation between populism and nativism. In Britain, as the opposition party with a left-wing leader, Labour may have been a better home for populists,¹⁰ but Labour was not an attractive home for nativists. Nor was the more populist Left in Germany a welcome home for its nativists. Nativism can be found in company with populism, in short, but only under certain conditions on the supply side.

¹⁰ Labour is not classified as a naturally populist party in scholarly analyses (Rooduijn *et al.* 2019; Norris and Inglehart 2018, Chapter 7).

5. The Prevalence of Populist and Nativist Attitudes

How widespread were populist and nativist attitudes in these five countries? The mean values for the five-item Populism Index are: 18.6 for the U.S, 18.7 for France, and 17.2 for Britain. The comparable means are 18.0 for Germany and 18.7 for Italy. The means for the three-item Nativism Index are 16.8 for the U.S., 19.8 for France, 17.3 for Britain, 18.9 for Germany, and 19.2 for Italy.¹¹ The range of the Populism Index is 4.5 to 25; the range of the Nativism Index is 3 to 30. Two conclusions are warranted from these comparisons. First, while both populism and nativism are widespread in each country, they are by no means dominant. Second, the countries do not differ much in their overall levels of populism and nativism. The different electoral outcomes across the five countries, consequently, do not owe to noticeable differences in the levels of either populist or nativist sentiment among their voters.

6. Populist Attitudes and Vote Choices

What did differ among these five countries were the responses of their voters to the various electoral contestants. Table 2 presents the bivariate Logit coefficients between levels of the Populism Index, arrayed from most to least populist, and vote choices in the five countries.¹² The Logit coefficients square with recent designations of populist parties. The authoritative Populist (Rooduijn *et al.* 2019) identifies seven parties as populist in our four Western European countries among those receiving significant voter support in the 2016-18 elections: France's National Front/National Rally and Mélenchon's party; Germany's AfD and The Left; and Italy's Forza Italia, League (Liga), and Five Star Movement. Oliver and Rahn (2016) and Norris and Inglehart (2018) add Trump's candidacy to the populist list. Significant relationships between votes for these parties and the Populist Index are achieved by all of them.

Unsurprisingly, voters for Germany's AfD, France's Le Pen (in both rounds, but more sharply for the binary choice in round two), Italy's 5-Star Movement, and Trump in the Republican primaries evince relatively high levels of populism. Italian League (Liga) party support also is associated significantly with populism, though the relationship is very weak. There are signs of a left-oriented populism here as well. Britain's Labour Party candidates drew considerable support from populists, as did Sanders in his nomination contest with Clinton. Support for Mélenchon in France and The Left in Germany showed lesser, though still significant, relationships with populism. Notably, the Brexit vote showed no hint of populism. When controls for major predictors of the vote were imposed, the coefficients typically were reduced as would be expected – except for Mélenchon (where they almost doubled) and Brexit – and moved into insignificance for many of the smaller coefficients (see Table D1 in Appendix D).¹³ That so many of the coefficients remained significant, and often sizable, is testimony to the importance of populism in the vote.

¹¹ The Populism Index for the U.S., France, and Britain is based on the sum of scores from a low of 0 to a high of 5 on each populist attitude for a range from 0 to 25. To compute comparable means for Germany and Italy, their original score was rescaled to take into account fewer constituent items: 14.5 times 1.25 for Germany and 11.2 times 1.67 for Italy. The Nativism Index for each country is scored from a low of 1 to a high of 10 in each nativist attitude for a range of 3 to 30

¹² To simplify the presentation, only the contestants drawing at least 8.9% (for the German Greens) of the vote are included. Except where noted, the vote for the party of interest was contrasted with all other votes.

¹³ Controls included age, gender, education, ideology, and satisfaction with the national economy in all five countries and religiosity except in Italy where church attendance was used instead. Income was not included as a control in Germany and Italy and subjective class was not included

Of special interest is the relationship between populist attitudes and presidential votes in the U.S. The Logit coefficient was higher for Trump in the primaries when he was running against mostly establishment Republicans than in the general election contest with Clinton. In the contest for the Democratic nomination, Sanders fared significantly better among populists.¹⁴ Both relationships were reduced considerably for the party nominees in the general election as Democratic and Republican identifiers returned to their respective parties. In short, the populism in the 2016 U.S. elections that distinguished candidates' supporters **within** each party was relatively muted by the time of the general election as voters at various populism levels generally supported their party once the choice was **between** parties.

Across these five western countries, while populist attitudes (demand) were present at somewhat similar levels, the populist alternatives supplied by the party systems differed. The Trump candidacy in the U.S. drew populists to him disproportionately in the nomination contest against establishment Republicans, but his supporters overall were less likely to be populists in the general election once he faced a Democratic opponent and traditional Republican partisans returned to the fold. The right-wing Le Pen candidacy in France was buoyed by populists in both election rounds, especially with the binary runoff choice between Le Pen and Macron. In Italy, the presence on the ballot of the avowedly populist 5-Star Movement drew populists disproportionately to it.

Britain and Germany provide an interesting contrast. A pre-election governing coalition of the leading parties in Germany led many anti-establishment populists to seek an alternative outside of the mainstream, with the AfD drawing heavily on them for its support. In Britain, while populists failed to divide over the Brexit vote, they preferred the opposition Labour Party in the subsequent general election. Unlike in Germany, the two major British parties accentuated the differences between them in populist appeal beyond their traditional ideological positioning by one serving as the government, the other as the opposition.

in Italy because they were not measured. Party identifications were so powerfully correlated with votes that they were not included as controls in our modelling.

¹⁴ With controls, the relationship remains robust for Clinton vs. Sanders but falls to insignificance for Trump vs. his Republican opponents.

Table 2: Logit Coefficients of Vote on Populism Index

	Logit Coefficient	S.E.	95% Confidence Interval	Predicted Probability
GE AfD	.381	.024	.334 - .428	.068
FR round 2 Le Pen	.314	.021	.273 - .355	.073
FR round 1 Le Pen	.199	.019	.162 - .236	.041
GB Labour	.199	.016	.168 - .230	.048
US Dem primary Sanders	.188	.032	.125 - .251	.046
IT 5 Star	.146	.021	.105 - .187	.034
US Rep primary Trump	.146	.036	.075 - .217	.036
GE The Left	.105	.020	.066 - .144	.016
IT League	.087	.027	.034 - .140	.015
US Trump	.085	.022	.046 - .124	.021
FR round 1 Mélenchon	.077	.016	.046 - .108	.017
IT Forza	.022	.021	-.047 - .091	.003
GB Brexit	-.006	.013	-.031 - .019	.002
GE SDP	-.031	.016	-.062 - .000	.006
FR round 1 Fillon	-.053	.021	-.094 - -.012	.009
GE FDP	-.072	.021	-.113 - -.031	.011
GE Green	-.135	.024	-.182 - -.088	.018
IT Democrat	-.168	.022	-.211 - -.125	.034
FR round 1 Macron	-.244	.019	-.281 - -.207	.050
GB Tory	-.272	.017	-.305 - -.239	.065
GE CDU/CSU	-.283	.019	-.320 - -.246	.056

Note: The vote variables are dichotomies of the named party/candidate/position vs. all other votes, except third party candidates are eliminated in the US general election and the US Democratic primary vote is for Clinton vs. Sanders. Predicted probabilities are based on +/- one standard deviation from the mean.

7. Nativism Attitudes and Vote Choices

Table 3 presents the bivariate Logit coefficients between levels of the Nativism Index, arrayed from most to least nativist, and votes in the five countries' elections. There is no comparable listing to the PopuList (Rooduijn et al. 2019) for Nativist voting options, but Trump, Le Pen, AfD, Forza Italia, Liga, and Brexit (Leave) would qualify based on their campaign positions. Votes for these six show highly significant relationships with the Nativist Index in Table 3. By contrast, support for parties/candidates not conspicuously associated with nativist positions is not significantly related to the Nativism index. When the same controls as before for major predictors of the vote were imposed, the coefficients were reduced in every case but 5 Star – and moved into insignificance for many of the smaller coefficients (see Table D2 in Appendix D). That so many of the coefficients remained significant, and often sizable, is testimony to the importance of nativism in the vote.

Leading the way in their nativism were voters for Trump in the Clinton vs. Trump matchup. This relationship easily eclipses the association between a Trump general election vote and populism. By contrast, nativism is a less powerful predictor than populism in the U.S. Republican nomination contests. That Trump's nativist support base strengthened in the general election suggests that many Republicans were nativist all along but had no opportunity to express it in their voting until Trump was the party nominee. It also is indicative of the importance of nativism to Trump's general election voter base.

Nativism proved to be related to British voting too, in both the Brexit referendum and the general election a year later. Those voting to leave the European Union expressed decidedly nativist views (see also Clarke, Goodwin, and Whiteley 2017; Goodwin and Milazzo 2017). These differences were muted, though still relatively strong, in the 2017 general election voting. While the two mainstream parties did not oppose one another **as parties** regarding Brexit, nativism divided British voters by party one year later, with a substantial share of the Tory base possessing nativist sentiments.

Nativism proved to be a polarizing force in the other countries as well. It was strongly related to 2017 French votes, especially in round two. In Germany, although with less force than populism, it was a vehicle for the AfD. There is no significant difference in the relationships between the Nativism Index and the CDU/CSU or SPD votes. They shared coalition-government responsibility for a controversial German migrant policy, leading many nativists to turn to the Alternative for Germany (Schmitt-Beck 2017; Schmitt-Beck *et al.* 2017; Pesthy *et al.* 2021). Even the strong association between nativism and AfD voting, however, was not sufficient to fuel as strong an electoral challenge to the leading parties in Germany as it had in the first and second rounds in France. German and French "demands" for nativism were similar and both the AfD and Le Pen supplied it, but many German nativists resisted going so far in 2017 as to cast an AfD vote.

Table 3: Logit Coefficients of Vote on Nativism Index

	Logit Coefficient	S.E.	95% Confidence Interval	Predicted Probability
US Trump	.305	.020	.266 - .344	.076
GB Brexit	.242	.011	.217 - .267	.060
FR round 2 Le Pen	.237	.020	.210 - .264	.056
GE AfD	.221	.013	.217 - .267	.041
FR round 1 Le Pen	.172	.012	.148 - .196	.036
IT League	.168	.012	.144 - .192	.030
GB Tory	.162	.011	.140 - .184	.040
IT Forza	.114	.015	.085 - .143	.015
US Rep primary Trump	.101	.021	.060 - .142	.025
FR round 1 Fillon	.071	.013	.046 - .096	.012
IT 5 Star	.033	.009	.015 - .051	.008
GE FDP	.007	.013	-.018 - .012	.001
GE SDP	-.029	.010	-.049 - -.009	.006
GE CDU/CSU	-.032	.010	-.052 - -.012	.007
US Dem primary Sanders	-.050	.018	-.085 - .015	.012
GE The Left	-.067	.013	-.092 - -.042	.011
FR round 1 Macron	-.073	.011	-.095 - -.051	.015
IT Democrat	-.110	.011	-.132 - -.088	.023
FR round 1 Mélenchon	-.114	.011	-.136 - -.092	.025
GB Labour	-.130	.010	-.150 - -.110	.032
GE Green	-.139	.017	-.172 - -.106	.019

Note: The vote variables are dichotomies of the named party/candidate/position vs. all other votes, except third party candidates are eliminated in the US general election and the US Democratic primary vote is for Clinton vs. Sanders. Predicted probabilities are based on +/- one standard deviation from the mean.

In Italy's multi-party contest, nativism was associated significantly with votes for all of the leading parties. The principal divide was between the governing Democrats, who had struggled in responding to migration, and its major opposition parties. Nativists were most likely to be supporters of the anti-immigrant League. While the 5-Star Movement also attracted nativist voters, it was much more the home of populists than nativists. With nativists as significant portions of the 5-Star and League electoral bases, it is not surprising that anti-immigrant policies emerged as a common bond between them in their post-election governing coalition. Nor should it be surprising that the decidedly populist 5-Star Movement and the decidedly nativist League made them uncomfortable bed-fellows in governing (Gianfreda and Carlotti 2018).

8. Conclusion

This paper has focused on recent elections in five western democracies. The politics of each was roiled in its 2016-2018 national elections by the rise of populist and nativist forces. Many previous studies of populism and nativism have focused on the supply side, their expressions in the policies and rhetoric of political parties and candidates. Our study joins an increasing number of studies with a focus on the demand side, the populist and nativist attitudes of national electorates. It examines recent electoral contests in which the forces of populism and nationalism challenged the established political order.

What differentiates our study most from the stream of demand-side research is that it considers populism and nativism separately to determine how connected they may be empirically, and whether nativism belongs as a part to the populist syndrome. Our empirical measurement of populist and nativist public attitudes shows that they represent distinctly different attitudinal dimensions, as would be expected conceptually. The relationship between them varies considerably by country, reflecting the differing political contexts and themes articulated by political leaders in governing and in the electoral campaigns. Should nativism be considered a part of populism? Our answer is: not naturally, but they can be coupled on the supply side.

Our analysis compares how populist and nativist attitudes were related to voting. Overall, the results illustrate how much the prevailing electoral choices in a country affect the electoral expression of both populist and nativist attitudes.¹⁵ Although the distributions of populism and nativism were similar across the five electorates, their connections to voting choices were not. The electoral options offered in the different elections provided dissimilar "supply-side" opportunities for the expression of public "demand" for populism and nativism. The AfD, Le Pen, Britain's Labour Party, and Sanders (in his nomination contest with Clinton) drew populists the most; the British Conservatives, and Germany's CDU/CSU the least. Differences in voter nativism across the available electoral options were substantial as well. Votes for Trump, Brexit, Le Pen, the AfD, the League, and the Tories were most tied to nativism. By contrast, few supporters of Clinton in the general election, of Labour and the Remain option in Britain, and of the Italian Democrats were nativists.

There is a tendency among voting behavior scholars to focus narrowly on explaining votes in particular contests without appreciating how those choices and their predicting factors can vary

¹⁵ For similarly contrasting results in Chile and Greece see Hawkins *et al.* (2018).

depending upon the ballot alternatives. No better evidence of this can be found than in the contrast for populist and nativist expression between Britain's Brexit and 2017 general election votes. Populism did not seem to matter in guiding the Brexit choice, but it clearly separated Conservative from Labour voters in the subsequent general election. Instead, it was nativism that differentiated Brexit voters most, and that association carried over to nativist support for the Tories a year later. Similarly, having Trump and Le Pen on the ballot brought to the fore populist and nativist impulses that probably would have been submerged in contests among more establishment candidates. In Germany, a major-party governing coalition blamed for a controversial migration policy created an opening for an extreme right-wing party to emerge as the principal opposition party. In Italy, the 5-Star Movement brought a latent populism into electoral politics on the heels of EU-fostered austerity and a deep economic recession, and it was clearly manifested in the 2018 contest. Italy's migrant crisis provided an opening for the anti-immigrant League, drawing a substantial influx of nativist voters.

Even though both populist and nativist attitudes are common in the publics of the U.S., France, Britain, Germany, and Italy, nowhere do they dominate. They were widespread enough in each country, though, to fuel anti-establishment responses that threatened to redefine each country's politics. All attest to the disruptive effects on established western politics in the 2016-18 period. Is it only temporary, a brief detour before a return to a less divisive, more traditional politics? Unless establishment elites are able to address their challenges, populism and nativism seem sufficiently rooted in the electorates and in the calculations of aspiring political leaders that they are likely to endure as powerful electoral forces in these five western countries for the foreseeable future.

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Appendix A: Descriptions of the Surveys

All five surveys were conducted via the Internet and weighted to make them representative of the national electorate.

U.S. 2016. Conducted by YouGov from December 5, 2016, to January 6, 2017, after the November 8, 2016 general election. Initial interviews of 2,991 voting age citizens were matched down to a weighted sample of 1,600 following propensity matching procedures, with a response rate of 36%.

France 2017. Conducted by YouGov from May 11 to 16, 2017, after the May 7, 2017, second round presidential election. Initial interviews of 2,151 voting age citizens were matched down to a weighted sample of 2,000 following propensity matching, with a response rate of 40%.

Britain 2017. Conducted by YouGov from June 15 to 27, 2017, after the British general election on June 8, 2017. Initial interviews of 2,266 voting age citizens were matched down to a weighted sample of 2,000 following propensity matching procedures, with a response rate of 27%.

Germany 2017. Conducted by IPSOS from September 29 to October 2017 after the German parliamentary election on September 24. Representative samples of 2257 voting-age citizens in the West and 979 in the East were interviewed, with the data weighted by demographics and an overall response rate of 51%.

Italy 2018. The Italian survey was the 2018-election wave of an 11-wave panel study started in 2013 and refreshed in 2018. It was conducted by SWG from April 12 to April 27 after the March 4, 2018, Italian general election. A representative sample of 3005 voting-age citizens was interviewed, with the data weighted by demographics.

Appendix B: Survey Questions and Coding for Populism, Nativism Measures

Populism

Populism was measured with the following 5 questions (English versions) in the US, France, and Britain. **Officials don't listen** was omitted from the German survey, leaving Germany with only four items populism items. **Don't trust government** and **Favors citizens deciding** were from the Italian survey, leaving the Italian index with only three populism items.

1. "How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in ___ to do what is right – just about always, most of the time, some of the time, or hardly ever?" (**Don't trust government**)

"Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that ..."

2. "Politicians don't care much about what people like me think" (**Politicians don't care**)
3. "Our elected officials are only interested in defending the interests of the establishment, the rich and the powerful" (**Politicians defend rich**)

4. “Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that when people assemble to demand change, government officials listen” (**Officials don’t listen**)
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, where “a score of 1 represents complete agreement with the first phrase and rejection of the second phrase” and “conversely, a 10 indicates that you prefer and completely agree with the second phrase and scores in between represent intermediate opinions ...” what is your position between “Increase citizen participation in decision-making” VS “Government should make decisions based on the knowledge of experts” (**Favors citizens deciding**)

The **Populism Index** is the sum of scores on each of the populism items for all countries – five items in the U.S., France, and Britain, four items in Germany, and three items in Italy. The response options for **Don’t trust government** were scored 1, 2, 4, and 5, while those for **Favors citizens deciding** were divided by two to range from 0.5 to 5.0. This measure, ranging from 4.5 to 25, was used for Tables 2, 3, D1, and D2. In calculating the means for comparisons across the five countries, the Italian score (based on two fewer items) was multiplied by 1.67 and the German score (based on one fewer item) was multiplied by 1.25.

Nativism

Nativism was measured by three questions: On a scale of 1 to 10, where “a score of 1 represents complete agreement with the first phrase and rejection of the second phrase” and “conversely, a 10 indicates that you prefer and completely agree with the second phrase and scores in between represent intermediate opinions ...” what is your position between

1. “It is a good idea to copy good practices from other people all over the world” VS. “Our country should defend our way of life instead of becoming more and more like other countries” (**Oppose foreign influences**)
2. “It is better for society if different (racial, religious, ethnic) groups maintain their distinct customs and traditions” VS. “It is better if these groups adapt and blend into the larger society” (**Oppose multiculturalism**)
3. “Migrants are welcome and we should allow more to enter the country” VS. “Migrants are not welcome in this country and as many as possible should be sent back to where they came from” (**Support deporting immigrants**)

The **Nativism Index** is the sum of scores on each of the nativism items for all countries. This measure, ranging from 3 to 30, was used for Tables 2, 3, D1, and D2 and in calculating the means for comparisons across the five countries.

Appendix C: Coding of Table 2 and Table 3 Predictors

Age: Age at last birthday.

Gender: 2=female, 1=male.

Education: 0=no formal education, 1=some primary education, 2=completed primary education, 3=some secondary education, 4=completed secondary education, 5=some university education, 6=university education completed, 7=some or completed post graduate education. For Tables 2 and 3, education was dichotomized into less than university degree (0) versus completed university or more (1).

Ideology: ranges from 1 to 10, with 1=left to 10=right, with Italians who did not think of themselves in left, right terms scored 5.5. For Tables 2 and 3, ideology was “folded” at its midpoint of 5 or 5.5 so that it varied from none (0) to extreme (5).

Income: ranges from \$6025 to \$466,194, adjusted for purchasing power parity in 2005 US dollars.

Social class: 1=lower-working, 2=lower-middle, 3 =middle, 4=upper-middle, 5=upper. None was excluded as missing data.

Religiosity: 0=not religious, 1=not very religious, 2=somewhat religious, 3=very religious in 4 countries. Based on church attendance in Italy: 0=never; 1=one, two, or three times a year; 2=more than three times up to once a month; 3=two-three times a month; 4=at least once a week.

Satisfied with economy: economy is 1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=average, 4=good, 5=very good.

Appendix D: Logit Analyses of Vote on Populism and Nativism with Controls

Table D1: Logit Coefficients of Vote on Populism Index with Controls

	Logit Coefficient	S.E.	95% Interval	Confidence	Predicted Probability
GE AfD	.361	.030	.302 - .420		.066
FR round 2 Le Pen	.260	.040	.182 - .338		.061
FR round 1 Le Pen	.099	.025	.050 - .148		.020
GB Labour	.095	.025	.046 - .144		.023
US Dem primary Sanders	.188	.040	.110 - .266		.046
IT 5 Star	.121	.023	.076 - .166		.028
US Rep primary Trump	.063	.045	-.025 - .151		.016
GE The Left	.128	.026	.077 - .179		.021
IT League	.048	.033	-.017 - .113		.009
US Trump	.042	.038	-.032 - .116		.010
FR round 1 Mélenchon	.134	.023	.089 - .179		.029
IT Forza	-.029	.038	-.103 - .045		.004
GB Brexit	.112	.023	.067 - .157		.028
GE SPD	-.037	.019	-.074 - .000		.008
FR round 1 Fillon	-.121	.027	-.174 - -.068		.020
GE FDP	-.041	.024	-.088 - .006		.006
GE Green	-.099	.029	-.156 - -.042		.013
IT Democrat	-.112	.026	-.156 - -.042		.023
FR round 1 Macron	-.207	.022	-.250 - -.164		.043
GB Tory	-.204	.028	-.259 - -.149		.050
GE CDU/CSU	-.264	.022	-.307 - -.221		.053

Note: The vote variables are dichotomies of the named party/candidate/position vs. all other votes, except third party candidates are eliminated in the US general election and the US Democratic primary vote is for Clinton vs. Sanders. Controls were employed for age, gender, education, ideology, and satisfaction with the national economy in all five countries and for religiosity except in Italy where church attendance was used instead. Income was included for all countries except Germany and Italy, and subjective class was not included in Italy. Predicted probabilities are based on +/- one standard deviation from the mean.

Table D2: Logit Coefficients of Vote on Nativism Index with Controls

	Logit Coefficient	S.E.	95% Interval	Confidence	Predicted Probability
US Trump	.202	.027	.149 - .255		.051
GB Brexit	.175	.017	.142 - .208		.044
FR round 2 Le Pen	.148	.023	.103 - .193		.035
GE AfD	.165	.017	.132 - .198		.030
FR round 1 Le Pen	.070	.021	.029 - .111		.015
IT League	.080	.015	.049 - .107		.014
GB Tory	.110	.017	.077 - .143		.027
IT Forza	.037	.019	.000 - .074		.005
US Rep primary Trump	.069	.026	.018 - .120		.017
FR round 1 Fillon	.026	.018	-.009 - .061		.004
IT 5 Star	.053	.011	.031 - .075		.013
GE FDP	.005	.016	-.026 - .036		.001
GE SPD	-.013	.012	-.037 - .011		.003
GE CDU/CSU	-.044	.013	-.069 - -.019		.009
US Dem primary Sand- ers	-.033	.025	-.082 - .016		.008
GE The Left	-.011	.015	-.040 - .018		.002
FR round 1 Macron	-.035	.018	-.070 - .000		.007
IT Democrat	-.045	.014	-.072 - -.018		.009
FR round 1 Mélenchon	-.031	.015	-.060 - -.002		.007
GB Labour	-.048	.016	-.079 - -.017		.012
GE Green	-.098	.019	-.135 - -.061		.013

Note: The vote variables are dichotomies of the named party/candidate/position vs. all other votes, except third party candidates are eliminated in the US general election and the US Democratic primary vote is for Clinton vs. Sanders. Controls were employed for age, gender, education, ideology, and satisfaction with the national economy in all five countries and for religiosity except in Italy where church attendance was used instead. Income was included for all countries except Germany and Italy, and subjective class was not included in Italy. Predicted probabilities are based on +/- one standard deviation from the mean.