

# POPULIST ATTITUDES AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: HAND AND GLOVE?

ANALYSING POPULIST CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL CLAIM-MAKING

Master thesis

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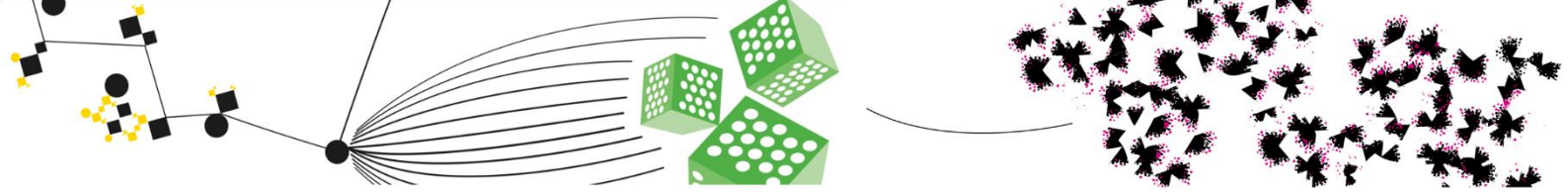
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## Abstract

In the academic and political debate on popular dissatisfaction with the functioning of representative democracy, the notions of populism and citizens' political participation surface frequently. Populist citizens have been observed to be typically discontent with democracy, while criticism on the political establishment and representative politics figures prominently in populist parties' discourse. In this context, participatory mechanisms have been noted as an adequate response to the rise of populist sentiments. Also, populist political parties explicitly advocate one mode of political participation: direct democratic devices. It is, however, not evident that populist citizens are interested in the input side of the political process. Given that academic literature on this topic is limited, this thesis explores to what extent populist citizens take part in conventional and/or innovative forms of political claim-making.

Using the 2017 national election studies administered in Great Britain (BES), the Netherlands (DPES) and Germany (GLES), populist attitudes was measured through statements that corresponded to populism's core ideas: people-centrism, a Manichean worldview and popular sovereignty. Moreover, four variants of political participation were distinguished: participation in the party-electoral arena, in the non-party arena, in referendum democracy, and in deliberative initiatives. Additionally, the control variables gender, age, education level, interest in politics and satisfaction with democracy were introduced in the regression models.

Interestingly, respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes were found to have participated less in political claim-making compared to their less or non-populist counterparts. Likewise, populist respondents were shown to have participated less in the party-electoral arena, in the non-party arena as well as in deliberative initiatives. In referendums, populist respondents were neither more nor less likely to have casted their vote. This latter finding is particularly interesting when considering that populist respondents were observed to be clearly supportive of referendums. In some instances, the influence of populist attitudes appeared to be a product of the impact of control variables. Mostly, this occurred for one dataset only and not for the others. This points to new questions about cross-country variations, an interesting topic for further research.

The outcomes of this thesis indicate that the academic and political debate would benefit from further exploring populist citizens' preferences and practices in terms of political participation. The current insistence on participatory devices to address populist sentiments might result in an opposite effect. Populist citizens are suggested not to take up participatory opportunities, and thus to remain on the sidelines of political claim-making. This dynamic would confirm, and possibly even strengthen, populism's critique on representative politics for being unresponsive to citizens' interests and demands.



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## List of abbreviations

AfD	Alternative for Germany (German: <i>Alternative für Deutschland</i> )
BES	British Election Study
BNP	British National Party
CSES	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems
DPES	Dutch Parliamentary Election Study
FN	National Front (French: <i>Front National</i> )
GLES	German Longitudinal Election Study
LISS	Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social sciences
M5S	Five Star Movement (Italian: <i>Movimento 5 Stelle</i> )
PVV	Party for Freedom (Dutch: <i>Partij voor de Vrijheid</i> )
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

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## 1. Introduction

The contemporary debate on the functioning of democracy in Western-Europe often starts with a rather negative outlook. Scholars observe an erosion of citizen support for and popular dissatisfaction with the current representative democratic system (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Dalton, Bürklin, & Drummond, 2001; Kitschelt, 2002; Webb, 2013). Indeed, one could speak of a high tide of scepticism towards political parties, politicians and governments (Dalton, 2004; Newton, 2012). In his book *Against Elections*, Van Reybrouck (2016) even signals a dual crisis of representative democracy: an efficiency and legitimacy crisis – which he illustratively terms the ‘Democratic Fatigue Syndrome’. To counter these trends, reformists – amongst whom Van Reybrouck – call for more and better citizen involvement in politics. In their eyes, the representative system would benefit from additional direct and participatory forms of democratic government (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Fischer, 2012; McHugh, 2006; Webb, 2013; Zittel & Fuchs, 2007). Pointedly, Dalton et al. (2001) note the prevalence of an ethos in which “the standard cure for the problems of democracy is more democracy” (p. 149).

This pattern is particularly interesting when related to the notion of populism. Populism and political discontent are commonly used as adjacent phenomena. In particular, the rise of populist sentiments is sometimes described as a symptom of the above-noted crises of democracy (Huber & Ruth, 2017; Mudde, 2004; Van Kessel, 2014) – whereby this rise is typically quantified by looking at the growing popularity of radical right populist parties in numerous Western-European countries. Various studies find political discontent to be strongly related to populist voting, both as a cause and consequence (Bowler, Denmark, Donovan, & McDonnell, 2017; Pauwels, 2014; Rooduijn, Van der Brug, & De Lange, 2016; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). Interestingly, devices to enhance citizen participation in politics are oftentimes portrayed as adequate measures in response to populist sentiments. As Mudde (2004) states: “Much of the academic and political reactions to the populist challenges have involved calls for ‘more’ or ‘real’ democracy” (p. 557). Fundamental to this line of reasoning is the idea that by providing additional or improved opportunities to participate in political claim-making, populist citizens’ negative stance towards representative democracy can be translated into active engagement in politics.

The adjacency of political discontent and populism manifests itself in another way, namely in the discourse of populist political parties. In fact, populist parties are said to fuel the negativity towards representative democracy by accusing the political establishment of being unresponsive to citizens’ demands (Mény & Surel, 2002; Pasquino, 2008; Spruyt, Keppens, & Van Droogenbroeck, 2016; Taggart, 2002). In that regard, populist parties frequently present themselves as ‘true’ or ‘real’ democrats – or even as the saviours of democracy – and emphasise their efforts to restore sovereignty to its ‘true owner’, namely the people (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Bowler et al., 2017; Canovan, 1999; Jacobs, Akkerman, & Zaslove, 2018; Taggart, 2000). For instance, the French National Front (French: *Front National*; FN) campaigned with the slogan “return the word to the people” (Betz, 2002; Mudde, 2007). In concrete terms, populist parties commonly explicate this promise by advocating direct democratic mechanisms, especially referendums and citizens’ initiatives (Betz, 2002; Bowler et al., 2017; Canovan, 1999; Jacobs et al., 2018; Mudde, 2004; Pauwels, 2014). Illustrative for this point is the call for ‘Direct democracy: introduction of binding referendum, citizens obtain power’ in the Dutch Party for Freedom’s (Dutch: *Partij voor de Vrijheid*; PVV) party programme (*Verkiezingsprogramma PVV*, 2017). Hence, political participation is on the political agenda to counter populist sentiments as well as due to efforts of populist parties themselves.

At first sight, the introduction of participatory mechanisms seems to set a positive tone to restore public confidence in democracy, as well as to respond to populist parties’ call for direct democracy. The nexus between

populism and political participation is, however, not as straightforward as it appears. In fact, one can notice two peculiarities. To start with, populist parties appear to favour only a limited repertoire of political participation, most importantly referendums and citizens' initiatives. This preference can be preliminarily linked to the description of the people as a 'silent majority' on which populism draws (Akkerman, Mudde, & Zaslove, 2014; Mudde, 2004; Taggart, 2000). A first route to this link is focused on the 'majority' part of the term, since a key aspect of populists' reference to the people is their implied numerousness (Taggart, 2000). This can be coupled to the fact that referendums are based on demonstrating numerical strength, i.e. on acquiring a majority of votes (DeNardo, 1985). Furthermore, the 'silent' in populism's description of the people fits the effort required to participate in referendums. Notably, referendums do not require citizens to actively deliberate upon the issue at hand, but to express their opinion in a yes-or-no manner. Besides, this yes-or-no manner suits populism's tendency to dichotomise political issues (Spruyt et al., 2016; Taggart, 2000). In sum, populism's emphasis on numerousness, political quiescence and dualism results in a positive appraisal of referendums in populists' eyes. Yet, these three facets also imply that populism is averse to deliberative initiatives, because minority opinions, reasoned discussion and pluralism typically play a key role in such mechanisms. At this point, a side note is in place. In this thesis, the focus is shifted from the supply side of populism, i.e. populist political parties, to the demand side of populism: citizens holding populist attitudes – which is not to be equated with voters for populist parties per se, as explained later. Hence, it would be interesting to find out if populist citizens are indeed in favour of direct democratic mechanisms – mirroring populist political parties – and if they are more likely to participate in these devices. Also, it would be fascinating to explore whether populist citizens are averse towards and less likely to take part in deliberation. In general terms, the question would then be: are populist citizens likely to be supportive of and take part in particular participatory mechanisms while disapproving of and foregoing others?

A second peculiarity regarding the nexus between populism and political participation rests in the doubt raised by some authors on the existence of such a link. In fact, Mudde (2004) argues that populism is focused on the output of the political system instead of on the input. In that sense, he contends that populist citizens demand a responsive government that realises policies that correspond to their wishes rather than participation in the political process. Accordingly, populist citizens "do not strongly favour any form of participatory democracy, be it deliberative or plebiscitary" (Mudde, 2004, p. 558). In line with this, Pauwels (2014) concludes that "populist voters do not want to get more involved into politics" (p. 7). In rather abstract terms, an interesting question would then be: do citizens with populist attitudes emphasise the "by" or the "for" in Abraham Lincoln's words "government of the people, by the people, for the people"? In other terms, are populist citizens likely to participate in political claim-making or do they merely demand politicians to take decisions that correspond to their wishes?

## 1.1. Research objective

In this thesis, the link between populist attitudes and political participation is explored. The two above-posed questions hint at a focus on both the attitudinal and behavioural component of political participation. Although both are explored in this thesis, the attitudinal facet is more of an ancillary theme. Instead, this thesis centres on actual political participation, understood here as the range of different manners in which citizens can raise a political issue and/or (intent to) influence the political decision-making process. Political participation thus refers to the articulation of political preferences and demands – i.e. claims – in the public sphere and is used here interchangeably with the term political claim-making (Della Porta & Diani, 1998; Lindeskilde, 2013; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). The reason for focusing on actual political participation is first and foremost substantial: to applaud, desire or intent political participation does not signify per se that one is going to take up the presented

opportunities to in fact participate (McHugh, 2006; Webb, 2013). Yet, this latter facet is of crucial importance for participatory innovations to indeed strengthen the representative democratic system. Hence, this thesis studies to what extent populist citizens actively voice their political demands and (seek to) influence the political decision-making process and, moreover, whether the form of political participation affects this activism. This leads to the following research question:

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*To what extent do citizens with a populist attitude take part in political claim-making in general, and in specific forms of political participation in particular?*

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## 1.2. Academic debate

To date, literature only sporadically examined the link between populism and political participation, albeit this latter theme figures prominently in the populist discourse. Instead, in academic studies on public opinion towards direct democracy, two hypotheses are particularly leading. On the one hand, scholars pointed to the ‘new politics’ hypothesis. Drawing on Ronald Inglehart’s emphasis on postmaterialism, these scholars noted citizens to increasingly possess the political skills and resources that enable them to comprehend the complexities of politics. This so-termed cognitive mobilisation has, in turn, led to a greater demand for citizen involvement in the political process. Citizens who are better educated, hold a greater interest in politics and are more politically engaged are thus suggested to desire greater participatory mechanisms (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Bowler, Donovan, & Karp, 2007; Dalton et al., 2001; Donovan & Karp, 2006). On the other hand, scholars used the ‘political dissatisfaction’ hypothesis, which signals citizens who feel dissatisfied or frustrated with the functioning of democracy to be enthusiastic about more direct citizen participation in politics (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Bowler et al., 2007; Dalton et al., 2001). Besides, some studies questioned citizens’ appetite for political participation (e.g. Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002; McHugh, 2006), whereas others did observe a popular willingness to become politically involved (e.g. Bowler et al., 2007). Furthermore, this academic field typically focused on referendums and citizens’ initiatives, at times adding the recall. These studies, however, seldom widened their horizon by placing direct democratic devices in a broader context of political participation.

The literature on populism is generally concentrated on a conceptual discussion and/or on the populist radical right party family (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn, 2014a; Stanley, 2008), but research on populist attitudes has recently gained momentum. One of the first studies using a survey-based method to gauge populist attitudes was the one by Hawkins, Riding & Mudde (2012). Taking this measurement as a basis, others have improved the populism index, applied it in different countries, and used it primarily to relate populist attitudes to party preferences (Akkerman et al., 2014; Esteban Pérez & Segatti, 2016; Pauwels, 2014; Rooduijn, 2014b; Schulz et al., 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016; Stanley, 2011; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). The focus of the survey items is frequently on populism’s critique on the political establishment: most politicians “talk too much and take too little action”, “only take care of themselves” and “have often betrayed the people”. Other typical items concern populism’s call for popular sovereignty, for instance: “The politicians in [country] need to follow the will of the people” or “The people, not politicians, should make the [or our] most important policy decisions” (Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins et al., 2012; Jacobs et al., 2018; Schulz et al., 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). From this, most authors constructed a unidimensional populism index, noting items to tap into multiple core ideas of populism simultaneously. In that sense, Schulz et al. (2017)

deviated from this operationalisation by differentiating between three dimensions of populism, namely anti-elitist attitudes, a demand for popular sovereignty, and a view of 'the people' as homogenous and virtuous.

At times, academic literature explored the link between populism and political participation. These scholars typically looked at the relationship between populist voting and support for direct democratic mechanisms. Pauwels (2014) found a preference for direct democratic mechanisms to be an important driver for populist voting in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. In contrast, Bowler et al. (2017) concluded that right-wing populists' stance towards referendums was not distinctive from other voters in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Yet, these scholars looked at populist voting rather than measuring populist attitudes directly. In that sense, a notable exception is a study by Jacobs et al. (2018), who researched the dynamic between populist attitudes and referendum preferences and practices. Taking the Dutch referendum on the EU-Ukraine association agreement as their case, they observed citizens with higher levels of populist attitudes to be more favourable towards referendums, but not more likely to cast their vote. Interestingly, these studies did not broaden their scope by placing direct democratic mechanisms in a wider repertoire of political participation. A study moving in this direction is the one by Webb (2013). He pointed to the populist nature of so-called stealth democratic attitudes and found that proponents of this underlying thesis embrace referendums, but do not desire widened political participation. Apart from a lower willingness to participate, he also observed respondents with a stealth democratic orientation to have participated less in conventional, mainstream forms of political participation, while such an orientation did not influence whether respondents voted in referendums. Indeed, Webb (2013) took on a broad approach by looking at willingness and actual political participation as well as by distinguishing between variants of political participation. However, by focusing on stealth democratic attitudes, he used an indirect measurement of populist attitudes. Yet another study that did, in fact, focus on populist attitudes and actual political participation is a working paper of Anduiza, Rico & Guinjoan (2016). They found populist attitudes to be positively related to political participation, though not to electoral turnout and protest. However, these latter scholars only looked at institutional and non-institutional forms of political participation, but not at innovations to enhance citizen involvement in politics. Therefore, with my thesis, I aim to contribute to the academic debate by innovatively exploring the nexus between populist attitudes and political participation, whereby I distinguish between four variants of political claim-making and which include both conventional and innovative avenues of political participation.

### 1.3. Societal relevance

Apart from its academic relevance, this thesis is moreover relevant given present-day calls for more and better citizen involvement in politics to counter the so-termed populist challenge (Mény & Surel, 2002; Mudde, 2004). In Scarrow's (2001) terms, "recurrent outbursts of populism have tended to stoke countervailing pressures for more inclusive procedures" (p. 652). Yet, little is known about populist citizens' appreciation of and participation in political claim-making. It is thus far from evident that direct and participatory devices are an adequate response to populist sentiments (Pauwels, 2014). Exploring to what extent populist citizens participate in political claim-making can shed further light on this question. Importantly, in case populist citizens are averse towards political activism, the introduction of direct and participatory mechanisms might even prove counter-productive (McHugh, 2006; Mudde, 2004; Webb, 2013). Conceivably, those already adept at voicing their political claims and influencing the political decision-making process will use the newly created participatory opportunities to press their particular interests even more (McHugh, 2006; Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer, & Sokhey, 2010). Also, this entails the possibility that populist individuals are (further) sidelined in terms of

political claim-making. When this happens, populists' critique on the functioning of democracy is legitimised and, as a result, might even be strengthened (Mudde, 2004). This liability is especially relevant when taking into account that populist citizens typically show frustration with the efficacy of the representative democratic system (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Rooduijn, 2014b; Spruyt et al., 2016).

Additionally, by distinguishing between different variants of political participation, I aim to shed light on which form(s) of political participation is (are) actively used c.q. discarded by populist citizens. This knowledge can aid policy-makers to (better) adjust the design and implementation of direct and participatory devices to the preferences of these populist citizens. This can, in turn, lower the above-mentioned risk of excluding a populist segment of society from political participation, a segment that typically already feels discontent with the political process.

#### 1.4. Outline of the thesis

This thesis will proceed as follows. The theoretical framework starts with a conceptualisation of populism, followed by an outline of political participation and the stealth democracy thesis. Next, hypotheses on the link between populist attitudes and political participation are formulated. In the data and methodology chapter, the research design, case selection, data collection and sampling method, and response rate are discussed. This is followed by the operationalisation of the relevant variables and an outline of the statistical methods. In the result section, the outcomes on the nexus between populist attitudes and political participation are presented. Finally, conclusions are drawn on the implications of these results for the academic debate, but also for designing and implementing innovations to strengthen representative democracy. This thesis will then end by identifying strengths and limitations of the approach taken and by presenting recommendations for future research.





## 2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the ideational approach taken to conceptualise populism is firstly outlined and justified. This is followed by a detailed description of the three core ideas that together constitute the populist logic, which are people-centrism, a Manichean worldview and popular sovereignty. These defining ideas are then used to stipulate outlooks and attitudes that are typical for a populist profile. In the second part of this chapter, I turn to two routes commonly presented to address the perceived disfunctioning of representative democracy: enhancing political participation versus improving the instruments of representative democracy without citizens' commitment. Afterwards, populism's vision of democracy is used to develop hypotheses concerning populist citizens' participation in political claim-making as well as in the four variants of political participation. Finally, the possibility of other variables affecting this nexus is shortly reflected on.

### 2.1. Populism and populist attitudes

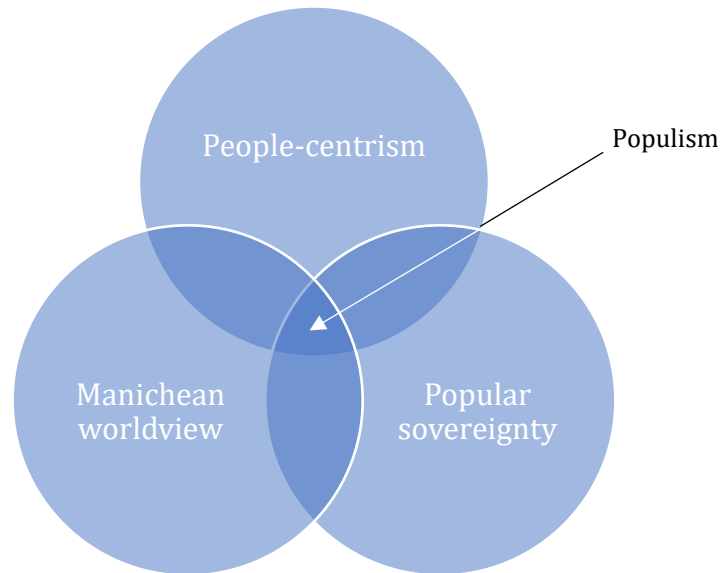
Within the academic literature, different approaches exist as to how to conceptualise populism: as a set of ideas, as a form of political mobilisation or organisation, or, alternatively, as a political communication style (Bos & Brants, 2014; Rooduijn, 2014a; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). For the purpose of this thesis, the first, ideational approach is considered particularly suitable. This approach allows to study citizens with a specific attitude or political profile, while the other conceptualisations of populism pertain to political actors only (e.g. Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). In basic terms, populism is conceptualised as a set of ideas (Hawkins et al., 2012; Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016; Van Kessel, 2014) and a populist attitude can be defined as support for this set of populist ideas. This is not to say that certain organisational and stylistic features – such as charismatic leadership and simplistic language – cannot be associated with populism. However, scholars taking an ideational approach argue that these aspects are context-contingent and “features of populism in action” (Hawkins et al., 2012, p. 3) rather than part and parcel of populism's definition (Hawkins et al., 2012; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018).

To stipulate populism in ideational terms, a useful starting point is the definition developed by Mudde (2004): populism is “*an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (*general will*) of the people.*” (p. 543, italics in original). From this definition stem three core ideas on which scholars broadly agree as constituting populism's attributes, namely: (1) people-centrism whereby the people are seen as a homogeneous and virtuous entity, (2) a Manichean worldview of ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’ and ‘dangerous others’, and (3) popular sovereignty since the will of the people is considered the key source of legitimacy (e.g. Rooduijn, 2014; Schulz et al., 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016; Stanley, 2008). From these defining ideas follow certain outlooks and attitudes that are typical for a populist profile. In this regard, the separate ideational components are important, but it is their combination that defines the populist logic (Canovan, 1999; Spruyt et al., 2016) – as illustrated in Figure 1.

Before discussing each of these core ideas in further detail, it is important to stress the flexible, chameleonic character of populism (Mény & Surel, 2002; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). Drawing on Freedman's (1998) distinction between ‘full’ and ‘thin-centred’ ideologies, populism is commonly described to be of the latter kind: it is limited in programmatic substance and scope, and often attached to or combined with a ‘full’ ideology (Canovan, 2002; Hawkins et al., 2012; Jacobs et al., 2018; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Pauwels, 2014; Stanley, 2008). For instance, populism typically takes a right-wing orientation in Western-Europe (Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn, 2014b), while it is predominantly left-wing in Latin-America (Mudde & Rovira

Kaltwasser, 2013). Adjacent to this ‘thinness’, as Esteban Pérez & Segatti (2016) point out, populism is more about the ideal working of democracy than about the specific content of politics/policies. Importantly, this leaves room for populist leaders and parties to respond to time- and context-specific concerns voiced by its constituency (Canovan, 2002; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017) – which, according to populism, is equivalent to the people. This latter point is discussed now.

**Figure 1: Visualisation of populism in the ideational sense**



*Note.* Own elaboration.

### 2.1.1. People-centrism

A first core attribute of populism is the centrality and importance of the people (Canovan, 1999; Rooduijn, 2014a; Spruyt et al., 2016; Taggart, 2000).<sup>1</sup> This people-centrism gives rise to the question: who are ‘the people’ according to populism? Interestingly, Canovan (1999) argues that the notion of ‘the people’ appears in different – but, in practice, blended – senses in the populist discourse: (1) the united people, (2) our people, and (3) ordinary people. Firstly, the populist view of the people as a unity – or, in more common terminology, a homogeneous entity – is widely recognised in the academic literature (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Canovan, 2002; Jacobs et al., 2018; Mudde, 2004; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Rooduijn, 2014a; Spruyt et al., 2016; Stanley, 2008). Besides, this understanding implies that populism perceives the people to have a common interest and shared will (Canovan, 2002). The second sense of ‘our’ people suggests a distinction between those who do and those who do not form part of the people, i.e. an ‘us’-versus-‘them’ boundary inherent in populism (Canovan, 1999, 2002; Pasquino, 2008), which is further discussed in the next section.<sup>2</sup> This exclusionary outlook implicitly points to another characteristic frequently noted in the literature: the people are intrinsically virtuous, pure and good in the eyes of populists (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Mudde, 2004; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Spruyt et al., 2016; Stanley, 2008; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). Finally, populism’s reference to the people

<sup>1</sup> As Spruyt et al. (2016) note, the people-centrism component – which in their view also entails that the will of the people is of crucial reference for politicians – theoretically differentiates populism from a broad anti-establishment sentiment or, in other words, political discontent.

<sup>2</sup> When referring to populist politicians solely, the notion of ‘our’ people is particularly manifest in the fact that populist politicians often emphasise their proximity to the people and their distance to the elites, whereby the latter is frequently denoted with the term political establishment (Stanley, 2008).

as ordinary suggests that it differs from a privileged, cosmopolitan, and clamouring elite (Canovan, 1999; Taggart, 2000). Here, Canovan (1999) also signals populism's perception of a 'silent majority'. Importantly, populism understands the people to be politically quiescent as well as to be numerous and, thereby, in the majority (Akkerman et al., 2014; Canovan, 1999; Mudde, 2004; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Stanley, 2008; Taggart, 2000).

Having defined what populists mean by the people – although one could argue that this remains rather vague – it is useful to outline an opposite interpretation of this conception. In that sense, pluralism is the antithesis of populism for several reasons. To begin with, the populist notions of homogeneity and 'us'-versus-'them' dualism conflict with pluralism's definition of society as a heterogeneous set of individuals and groups with different views and interests whereby differences are based on diverse lines of cleavage (Dahl, 1978; Hawkins et al., 2012; Mudde, 2004; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). Moreover, populism's positive valorisation of the people is contradictory to pluralism's abstention from attaching a value-judgement to any particular view, instead defending the desirability of different interests. Finally, populism's outlook of politics as a reflection of the common will of the people, and, hence, the majority's will, is clearly at odds with pluralism's view of democracy as government by minorities (Held, 2006). More specifically, pluralism asserts there is no single power centre and, instead, power is distributed among numerous groups – i.e. minorities – who compete to govern (Dryzek & Niemeyer, 2006; Held, 2006). From this follows a need to manage the plurality of ideas and interests present in society, which can be done through cooperation, compromise and consensus (Dryzek & Niemeyer, 2006; Hawkins et al., 2012; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013).

### 2.1.2. Manichean worldview

A second idea at the heart of populism is that of an antagonistic relationship between, on the one hand, 'the pure people' and, on the other hand, 'the corrupt elite' and 'dangerous others' – generally denoted as a Manichean worldview.<sup>3</sup> This idea is twofold: it entails (1) an 'us'-versus-'them' boundary, and (2) a moral facet whereby 'us' – i.e. the people – is equated with good and 'them' with bad (Akkerman et al., 2014; Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Hawkins et al., 2012; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Pauwels, 2014; Spruyt et al., 2016; Stanley, 2008; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018).

Here, a similar question as before can be raised: who are 'them' in the eyes of populists? Importantly, as populism has a clear anti-elitist character, 'them' is first and foremost equated with the elite. In line with populism's framing of the people, the elite are viewed as a homogeneous entity (Spruyt et al., 2016; Stanley, 2008). Yet, in contrast to its positive valorisation of the people, populism denigrates the elite as corrupt, betraying and deceiving the people (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Pasquino, 2008; Schulz et al., 2017; Stanley, 2008; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). More specifically, some authors indicate the elite to denote politicians or rulers, but also technocrats and proponents of globalisation (Canovan, 2002; Pasquino, 2008). Interestingly, elitism can be posited as the theoretical mirror image of populism because it asserts a reverse Manichean outlook, namely of the people as bad and the elite as good (Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Mudde, 2004). Apart from the elite, so-termed dangerous others are frequently added to the 'them'-side of the populist discourse (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Bowler et al., 2017; Jacobs, 2010; Rooduijn, 2014b). This category of outsiders is commonly distinguished on the grounds of ethnicity and/or citizenship, since the main 'others' in the

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<sup>3</sup> The term Manichean stems from a Persian religious movement named Manichaeism, which, in basic terms, advocated a dualistic cosmology of a struggle between good and evil, or, alternatively, light and dark. Hence, the term Manichean is ascribed the meaning of duality/dualism (between good and bad).

(Western-)European context tend to be immigrants (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Canovan, 1999; Mény & Surel, 2002; Pasquino, 2008).

Populism thus maintains a frame of the political world in terms of ‘us’-versus-‘them’ and good-versus-bad. Some scholars describe this political dualism as a broader tendency inherent in populism (Spruyt et al., 2016; Taggart, 2000). Notably, populists read off political issues in a similar dualist or dichotomous manner, namely in terms of pro-or-anti, yes-or-no, right-or-wrong (Spruyt et al., 2016; Taggart, 2000). Adjacent to this feature is the observation in literature that the populist discourse is largely negative and critical (Canovan, 2002), which is discussed in more detail later. In terms of solutions, this is where populism’s positive message comes in: it aims to bring power to the people.

### 2.1.3. Popular sovereignty

A third attribute of populism is the idea of popular sovereignty. In the eyes of populists, the sovereign power lies with the people and, therefore, politics should be an expression of the will of the people (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Hawkins et al., 2012; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Schulz et al., 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016; Stanley, 2008; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). This draws on the assertion that the will of the people – as a homogeneous, virtuous entity and as opposed to the views of the elite – is the ultimate source of legitimacy (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Canovan, 2002; Spruyt et al., 2016). Thus, populism’s “core belief is that the people is sovereign, *all* the people and *only* the people should determine politics” (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 83, italics in original).

Here, it should be stressed that the idea of popular sovereignty is not unique for populism: popular power is also a defining feature of democracy (Akkerman et al., 2014; Bengtsson & Wass, 2010; Canovan, 1999; Mény & Surel, 2002; Pasquino, 2008). The idea of popular sovereignty is, however, particularly prominent in the populist discourse. As pointed out before, populist leaders and parties frequently present themselves as ‘true’ or ‘real’ democrats as they aim to restore sovereignty to the people as its true owner (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Bowler et al., 2017; Canovan, 1999; Jacobs, 2010; Taggart, 2000).

### 2.1.4. Populist attitudes

From the above-discussed core ideas of populism, outlooks and attitudes that are typical for a populist profile can be delineated. Although some attitudinal aspects (implicitly) build on more than one attribute, these can roughly be arranged as follows. Starting with populism’s first key idea of people-centrism, populist individuals view the people not only as ordinary, but also to share the same values and interests as well as to be of good and honest character (Schulz et al., 2017; Stanley, 2011). Also, from populism’s anti-pluralist character stems that an aversion towards compromise – and towards deviations from the majority will in general – forms part of the spectrum of populist attitudes (Akkerman et al., 2014; Jacobs et al., 2018; Spruyt et al., 2016; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). Populism’s second core idea of a Manichean worldview entails that populist individuals regard politics as a struggle between the good, honest people and the bad, corrupt elite (Stanley, 2011). Besides, populism’s antagonistic perception of the elite and the people as two homogeneous groups is reflected in the populist position that political differences between the (ruling) elite and the people are much larger than differences among the people (Akkerman et al., 2014; Jacobs et al., 2018; Schulz et al., 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). Moreover, populism’s anti-elitism facet is embodied in a viewpoint of the elite as taking care of itself instead of looking after the interests of the people and, thereby, negatively affecting and betraying the people (Hawkins et al., 2012; Spruyt et al., 2016; Stanley, 2011; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). Turning to

populism's third core idea of popular sovereignty, a typical populist stance is that politicians should – always and only – follow the will of the people (Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins et al., 2012; Jacobs et al., 2018; Schulz et al., 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). Taken together, different facets of populism are also manifest in the fact that populist individuals typically want to be represented by an (ordinary) citizen rather than by a specialised or professional politician, since the elite do not really know what makes the world go round and they take too little action (Akkerman et al., 2014; Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Jacobs et al., 2018; Schulz et al., 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). Also, populist individuals oftentimes posit that politicians should listen (more) closely to the problems and interests of the people and/or that the people, not politicians should make the most important policy decisions (Akkerman et al., 2014; Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Hawkins et al., 2012; Jacobs et al., 2018; Schulz et al., 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). Interestingly, this latter facet hints at a conceptual proximity between populism and direct citizen involvement in political decision-making. This latter point is further discussed later.

A final side note is necessary. Returning to the previously made remark that populist attitudes cannot be equated with voting for a populist political party per se, it is important to recall populism's chameleonic character. Importantly, populist parties in Western-Europe typically adopt a radical right character that is associated with (ethno)nationalist, Eurosceptic and anti-immigrant viewpoints (Allen, 2017; Bos & Brants, 2014; Pauwels, 2014). From this it follows that populist voting is not necessarily driven by populist attitudes alone. In fact, voting for a populist party can be driven by a range of other motivations including support for other standpoints of the party concerned, to express discontent with established parties and/or being attracted to the charisma of the populist party leader (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Jacobs et al., 2018; Mudde, 2007; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018). Moreover, literature is ambiguous to what extent populist voting is related to populist attitudes. While Akkerman et al. (2014) and Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel (2018) confirm this relationship for ten European countries, Stanley (2011) points to a limited explanatory power of populist attitudes for voting choices in Slovakia. Hence, it is considered somewhat problematic to take voting for a populist party as a proxy for populist attitudes. Yet, throughout this thesis, it is recognised that those with populist attitudes are likely to vote for a populist party and, vice versa, voters for a populist party are likely to hold populist attitudes.

## 2.2. Innovations to representative democracy

As previously noted, popular sovereignty not only constitutes a core idea of populism, but is also a key characteristic of democracy. Democracy can, in basic terms, be defined as a form of government in which the people rule. Its root lies in the Greek word *demokratia* which consists of *demos* and *kratos*, meaning people and rule respectively (Budge, 2012; Canovan, 2002; Held, 2006; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). In its original meaning, democracy referred to the model of self-government that emerged in classical Athens, oftentimes also named direct democracy. In this model, citizens not only participated directly in the assembly, where major issues of public policy were deliberated and voted upon, but also filled public offices (Budge, 2012; Held, 2006). Nowadays, the term democracy commonly refers to liberal, representative democracy. In this model of democracy, sovereignty still ultimately lies with the people, though direct citizen participation is much less prominent (Held, 2006). Rather, sovereignty is vested in representatives elected by citizens who legitimately decide on public policy (Bartunek & Lewis, 2015; Dalton et al., 2001; Fuchs, 2007). In that sense, elections are an important instrument of democratic representation as to ideally ensure that politicians are responsive and accountable to citizens' interests (Budge, 2012; Fuchs, 2007; Huber & Ruth, 2017; Mansbridge, 2003). An interesting addition here is that two diverging views exist on to the degree to which representatives are bound

by the will of the people. These styles of representation are commonly denoted with the mandate-independence controversy. In basic terms, the mandate version prescribes representatives to act in conformity with the constituents' will, as if the represented were acting themselves. The independence, or trustee, version foresees representatives to have a certain degree of freedom to act on their own judgement of what is in the general interest (Mansbridge, 2003; Pitkin, 1969). In either way, representation means that political participation by citizens assumes a rather new character compared to ancient Athens. It entails first and foremost indirect involvement in political decision-making through the choice of representatives (Callahan, 2007; Fuchs, 2007).

In recent years, popular discontent with the functioning of representative democracies in Western-Europe is reported to have been growing, while, at the same time, an overwhelming majority still believes democracy is the best form of government (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Dalton, 2004; Dalton et al., 2001; Kitschelt, 2002; Newton, 2012; Van Reybrouck, 2016; Webb, 2013). As pointed out before, more and better citizen participation in the political process is oftentimes advocated as an adequate response to current dissatisfaction with representative politics (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; McHugh, 2006; Van Reybrouck, 2016; Webb, 2013). Alternatively, drawing on Hibbing & Theiss-Morse's (2002) stealth democracy thesis, others argue that citizens do not desire direct or participatory mechanisms. Instead, they contend that citizens want democracy to function better and to be hardly visible on a daily basis (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Bowler et al., 2007; Donovan & Karp, 2006; Neblo et al., 2010; Webb, 2013). Pointedly, "[d]irect democracy and stealth democracy can arguably be seen to represent two different directions when considering changes to the existing representative political system" (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009, p. 1035).

Before discussing these two routes in more detail, it is important to emphasise that both are viewed as materialising within the framework of the liberal, representative model of democracy. In contrast to scholars presenting representative and direct democracy as a dichotomy (Bowler & Donovan, 2006; Dalton et al., 2001), citizen participation in politics is seen here as complementary to current representative democratic practices (Budge, 2012; DeNardo, 1985; Mény & Surel, 2002; Neblo et al., 2010; Newton, 2012; Saward, 2006; Zittel, 2007).

### 2.2.1. Political participation

A first route to innovate the representative system is more and better citizen involvement in the political process. In other words, it is argued that the representative democratic system can be strengthened by stimulating citizen engagement with and participation in the political process – both in quantitative and qualitative terms (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; McHugh, 2006; Newton, 2012; Van Reybrouck, 2016; Webb, 2013). Democratic innovations that correspond to this route are thus focused on the inputs of citizens into the political process, and owe to the appeal of classical direct democracy (Newton, 2012). Importantly, these bottom-up, citizen-centred innovations attract a great amount of popular and government interest (Newton, 2012). Nonetheless, rather than concentrating on democratic innovations alone, the focus here is on a wide range of manners in which political participation can take place. The reason for this is as follows: stipulating populist citizens' preferences towards (specific forms of) political participation – as is the purpose of this thesis – can, as a next step, inform the introduction of such democratic innovations as well as improvements of existing instruments.

What follows from the above is the assumption that political participation is (widely) applauded among the public. Illustratively, Arnstein (1969) equates citizen participation with eating spinach: "no one is against it in principle because it is good for you" (p. 216). Here it is important to distinguish between, on the one hand, political participation in terms of attitudes or outlooks, and, on the other hand, the actual course of behaviour. In this regard, the willingness or intention to politically participate is identified as a theoretical midway between

attitudes and actual behaviour (McHugh, 2006; Neblo et al., 2010). In fact, scholars observe a gap between these notions: to be in favour of or to intent political participation does not translate per se in an actual course of action (McHugh, 2006; Webb, 2013). As explained in the research objective, this thesis primarily covers political participation in the behavioural sense, though at times also the attitudinal component is included.

#### *2.2.1.1. Conceptualising political participation*

The concept of political participation is taken here as an umbrella term to stipulate the wide range of manners through which citizens can voice their political demands and seek to influence the political decision-making process, also denoted as political claim-making (Fox, 2014; Van Deth, 2016). Importantly, political participation generally takes place in generic, standardised forms. Together, these different forms of political claim-making constitute a finite repertoire, or, in other words, a menu of alternatives – a view borrowed from social movement studies (Della Porta & Diani, 1998; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015; Van Deth, 2016). As previously noted, the main form of political participation in representative democracies is voting in elections. Interestingly, over the last decades, the political repertoire has expanded to include other forms of political participation (Fox, 2014; Newton, 2012; Van Deth, 2016). On the one hand, this encompasses protest behaviour as well as more direct, individualised forms of political expression. Well-known examples are demonstrations, petitions and boycotts (Newton, 2012). On the other hand, the repertoire of political participation has come to cover consultative and deliberative processes, e.g. citizen assemblies and deliberative polls (Beetham, 2012).

Before outlining a typology of political participation, a note on concepts close to this term is in place. In the literature, political participation is oftentimes discussed in relation to notions such as citizen empowerment, direct (or plebiscitary) democracy, and participatory democracy. Nonetheless, I contend, these latter concepts do not adequately cover the broad spectrum of manners in which political claim-making can take place. Firstly, literature is unclear about the precise meaning of the term direct democracy. While some authors indicate this concept to denote citizen involvement in the political process (Beetham, 2012; Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009) – in line with the above provided definition of political participation – others take on a more limited definition by pointing to the term ‘direct’. This latter conceptualisation only covers modes of political participation that concern the people directly making law, and, thereby, excludes forms that have no direct, or immediate, effect on decision-making (Beetham, 2012; Fuchs, 2007; Matsusaka, 2018; Scarrow, 2001). However, in this thesis, these direct mechanisms are taken as a particular form of political participation, whereas other variants also concern the aim or intention to influence the political process (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Mansbridge, 2003). Furthermore, some scholars exclude the electoral process from the definition of citizen participation (Beetham, 2012; Callahan, 2007), whereas, importantly, reformists are also concerned with this form of political participation, and in particular with addressing falling electoral turnout and growing voter alienation (Newton, 2012; Smith, 2005). Finally, some scholars contend that deliberation is a key characteristic of participatory democracy and, hence, a normative requirement of political participation (Fuchs, 2007). However, deliberation is taken here as a particular form of political participation (Webb, 2013).

#### *2.2.1.2. Typology of political participation*

Webb (2013) discerns four main variants of political participation: participation in the party-electoral arena, participation in the non-party arena, referendum democracy, and deliberation. For the purpose of this thesis, this typology proves particularly relevant for two reasons. Firstly, it is broad as it covers conventional and innovative forms of political participation as well as those forms with only an indirect effect on the political process (Newton,

2012; Smith, 2005). Secondly, the typology is not too broad as it only covers political participation and not civic activism or, more generally, participation vis-à-vis non-governmental decisions (Callahan, 2007; Verba, 1967). Consequently, this typology is taken as a starting point to categorise different forms of political participation.

The variants of political participation identified by Webb (2013) are discussed in detail below on the basis of three key criteria. Although these stem from the literature on democratic innovations as evaluation benchmarks (Beetham, 2012; Smith, 2005), the following criteria prove useful to describe and distinguish between the different variants of political participation.<sup>4</sup> Firstly, it is relevant to look at the participatory range of the political participation variant. What numbers of people are engaged? Is it open/accessible to all or is there a selection mechanism? And how representative or inclusive is it? For example, do politically-marginalised groups participate? A second facet is the deliberative mode of the participatory mechanism, which covers the degree of participants' commitment or engagement as well as the range of deliberation. For instance, does the participatory mechanism necessitate active engagement or more passive participation? To what extent do citizens debate and discuss the political issue(s) at stake? And does this occur in the private or public sphere? Finally, the degree of impact on the political process should be considered. To what extent do citizens determine the final policy outcome/decision? Do they have a final say, present a recommendation or only voice preferences (Arnstein, 1969; Beetham, 2012; Smith, 2005)?<sup>5</sup>

#### *Participation in the party-electoral arena*

The first variant of political participation corresponds to the conventional, institutional forms within the political repertoire, namely participation in the party-electoral arena (see Figure 2). First and foremost, this variant covers the form of participation that is viewed the bedrock of representative democracies: voting in elections (Webb, 2013). Besides, the institutions of the representative democratic system provide for additional opportunities for political participation. These primarily include: joining (or donating to) political parties or organisations, campaigning on behalf of a political party or election candidate, standing candidate for an elective post, and contacting a politician or government official (Webb, 2013) – as summed up in Figure 2. In attitudinal terms, the issue is whether one is favourable towards the participatory instruments provided by the representative democratic system. While this logically concerns a certain stance towards voting and elections, this attitude is also related to support for the ideal of representation in general as well as for a particular style of representation.

The participatory range, deliberative mode and degree of impact differ within this party-electoral variant. Firstly, voting in elections is inclusive and – ideally – representative, whereas other activities listed above are open to all citizens, but in practice attract a smaller number of participants. Furthermore, while voting requires passive participation only, other activities demand more active engagement of its participants and oftentimes involve some political discussion or, at least, interaction. Finally, though indirect, voting is considered one of principal manners through which citizens influence political outcomes (Callahan, 2007; Fuchs, 2007;

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<sup>4</sup> Apart from the ones listed here, Smith (2005) names scale and transferability as well as resource implications as important criteria. However, the reason for excluding these facets in this thesis is as follows: both are explicitly applicable to democratic innovations, but not so much to the full repertoire of political participation. For instance, it does not make much sense to ask what the financial, administrative and political costs are of organising elections, since these will be organised anyhow.

<sup>5</sup> Within the third dimension, Beetham (2012) furthermore includes the degree of impact on the participant and on public debate. These are excluded here, because these aspects remain rather vague and particularly difficult to gauge. Besides, the impact on the participant is (partly) covered in the extent of commitment or engagement required from the participant (the second facet).



Mansbridge, 2003). The other forms of participation listed above seek to affect the political process more directly by voicing or pursuing interests at the centres of political decision-making.

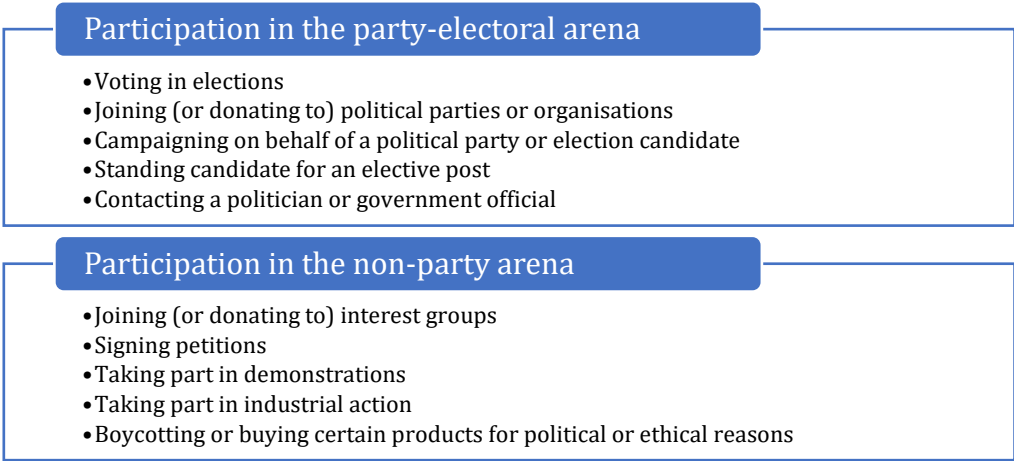
*Participation in the non-party arena*

The second variant of political participation concerns the non-party arena. This variant covers, but is not limited to, joining (or donating to) interest groups, signing petitions, taking part in demonstrations or industrial action, and boycotting or buying certain products for political or ethical reasons (Webb, 2013) – see Figure 2. Although occasionally still termed untraditional, these non-institutional forms of participation have become part of the standard, conventional political repertoire in representative democracies over the last decades (Newton, 2012; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). Interestingly, participation in the non-party arena generally suggests a search for an alternative, though conventional manner to voice political claims. Typically, citizens are inclined to take part in demonstrations and other types of protest behaviour when they have the feeling their interests are not well represented or voiced in the party-electoral arena.

The participatory range of political activities in the non-party arena is inclusive, since it is usually open to all. Nonetheless, in practice, these attract a limited number of participants, although this can vary per instance and can be dependent on the political issue at stake. Moreover, this variant entails a rather active stance of its participants, because it demands them to get into action and requires a certain drive or eagerness to politically participate outside the traditional electoral-party arena. Nonetheless, the range of deliberation is frequently low, since the focus here is on taking part rather than on political discussion. In fact, petitions and demonstrations, for instance, are based on what DeNardo (1985) identifies as the logic of numbers, namely on manifesting the numerical strength of support for a political issue. Finally, since the political activities listed here seek to affect the political process by calling for attention to their demands, the degree of impact of this variant of political participation is generally quite low.

As mentioned, participation in both the party-electoral and non-party arena form an integral part of the political repertoire in liberal, representative democracies. Importantly, the other two variants of political participation clearly constitute innovations to the representative system.

**Figure 2: Overview of the conventional variants of political participation**



*Note.* Own elaboration.

### *Referendum democracy*

The third variant of political participation, referendum democracy, largely corresponds to what is often referred to as direct democracy. Notably, referendum democracy entails citizens voting on political issues directly, thereby taking the decision-making power out of the hands of elected representatives (Budge, 2012; Webb, 2013). These public votes take place on either the initiative of the government or on that of citizens, and are termed referendums and citizens' initiatives respectively (Barney & Laycock, 1999; Canovan, 1999, 2002; Jacobs, 2010; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Taggart, 2002). Both mechanisms are based on what DeNardo (1985) terms the logic of numbers: referendums and citizens' initiatives are used to demonstrate the numerical strength of support for a political issue and, thereby, to implement the majority's decision. The nature of the decision is a zero-sum game: citizens express their opinion on a previously defined issue in a yes-or-no vote. Consequently, referendum democracy does not promote compromise-building and consensus-finding (Fuchs, 2007). Besides, referendum democracy hints at a certain outlook on democracy. Support for this participatory mode suggests some degree of distrust towards elected representatives. Referendums – when organised on popular initiative – provide citizens with a trump card to make government more responsive to public opinion and, in some cases, demand a substantial change in policies. Also, supporters of referendum democracy are usually of the opinion that the majority will should prevail, thereby hinting at an anti-pluralist attitude.

The participatory range of referendum democracy is inclusive and ideally representative, comparable to voting in elections. As regards to the deliberative mode, participants are asked to express their opinion in a passive manner, that is designed as a yes-or-no vote. Furthermore, the degree of impact on policy outcomes is typically high: referendums and citizens' initiatives concern the people directly making law. Even in case these mechanisms have a non-binding character – and can thus be disregarded by decision-makers – the outcomes are oftentimes implemented or, at least, acted upon.

### *Deliberation*

Webb (2013) identifies deliberation as the fourth variant of political participation, which he defines as “the active engagement of participants in reasoned political discussion” (p. 760). This political discussion can be divided into two main types: among fellow citizens or among citizens and their elected representatives – i.e. horizontal or vertical deliberation (Neblo et al., 2010). In practice, such deliberative mechanisms are organised in many forms and under different names. Examples include deliberative forums, citizen assemblies or panels, citizens' juries, consensus conferences, and deliberative opinion polling (Fuchs, 2007; Goodin & Dryzek, 2006; Newton, 2012; Smith, 2005; Webb, 2013). In attitudinal terms, deliberation is the opposite of referendum democracy in the sense of stressing the importance of a plurality of ideas and a reasoned debate among defenders of these views. From this it follows that deliberation is closely linked to pluralism and, thereby, a particularly suited mechanism to pursue consensus and compromise.

The participatory range of deliberation is quite narrow. Only with a limited number of participants it is possible to give them the opportunity to bring forward their point of view and further debate their arguments. For this reason, a selection mechanism is frequently applied, whereby representativeness is oftentimes strived for – hence the name 'mini-publics' used by Goodin & Dryzek (2006). Furthermore, as already mentioned, this variant requires active engagement since participants are asked to actively formulate their standpoints and take part in political discussion. Finally, the degree of impact on policy outcomes varies. Deliberative mechanisms are commonly designed to provide a recommendation to policy-makers, but sometimes also with the mere aim to provide citizens with the chance to develop their political knowledge and skills (Smith, 2005).

### 2.2.2. Stealth democracy

In the above, political participation was discussed as a first route to address popular discontent with the representative democratic system. The second route outlined here takes an opposite direction: it sharply criticises, firstly, the assertion that citizens are enthusiastic about being involved in the political process and, secondly, the insistence on political participation as the solution to political discontent. Here, the literature frequently points to Hibbing & Theiss-Morse's (2002) stealth democracy thesis (e.g. Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Bowler et al., 2007; Donovan & Karp, 2006; Neblo et al., 2010; Webb, 2013).

In broad terms, Hibbing & Theiss-Morse (2002) contend that “the last thing people want is to be more involved in political decision-making: they do not want to make political decisions themselves; they do not want to provide much input to those who are assigned to make these decisions; and they would rather not know all the details of the decision-making process” (p. 1-2). Instead, according to Hibbing & Theiss-Morse (2002), people want what they term ‘stealth democracy’. Using the analogy of stealth aircrafts and bombers, which everyone knows to exist yet remain difficult to spot with standard radar techniques, people want democratic procedures to be present but not visible on a routine basis. Furthermore, “just as stealth bombers can be made to show up on radar when desired, the people want to know that their government will become visible, accountable, and responsive should they decide such traits are warranted” (p. 2). Implicit in this view is that citizens are expected to vote in elections, and that, in principle, political participation ends there. Yet, the literature notes citizens with a stealth democratic orientation to favourably view referendums and citizens’ initiatives (Webb, 2013). In that sense, direct democratic devices are particularly suited to occasionally demand government to, figuratively, show up on the radar. In other words, these mechanisms constitute a gun behind the door, i.e. a measure of last resort to make government accountable and responsive (Bowler & Donovan, 2006; Jacobs et al., 2018).

Here it is important to stress that Hibbing & Theiss-Morse (2002) portray the ‘ordinary people’ as holding a different view of politics than elites. In their account, political elites applaud the discussion of diverse ideas and proposals, whereas political debates and compromises are not necessary in the eyes of the public. Rather, the ordinary people believe that all generally agree on overall societal goals, and that the best way to achieve these goals will be evident to those studying the issue at hand. These governing experts – who are characterised as hard-working, unbiased, and intelligent – are “to be intimately in touch with the realities of the lives of ordinary people – realities [...] believe[d] to be generally universal” (p. 157). For that reason, the public wants accountability and responsiveness to be unnecessary. Besides, governing experts will design and implement policies in an efficient and objective manner, which results in a situation wherein the people will not – and do not need to – be concerned with debates, compromises, and gridlocks (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002).

Interestingly, as pointed out by Hawkins et al. (2012) and Webb (2013), various parallels between the stealth democracy thesis and populism can be drawn. Indeed, in a similar manner as populism, the stealth democracy thesis describes the people to be different from the elite, to be negative towards political debates and compromises, and to view the interests of the people as universal. Also, both populist citizens and those with a stealth democratic orientation share the view that the politicians/elected officials need to talk less and act more (Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins et al., 2012; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002; Webb, 2013). Though recognising these resemblances, it should be emphasised that populist attitudes and stealth democratic orientations are not understood here to denote one and the same thing. In fact, a contrast can also be observed (Hawkins et al., 2012; Jacobs et al., 2018). On the one hand, the stealth democracy thesis stresses the delegation of political decision-making power to governing experts. Hereby government is understood to function better “if decisions were left up to successful business people [and/or to] non-elected, independent experts rather than politicians or the

people” (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002, p. 143). Populism, on the other hand, emphasises the importance of the will of the people in political decision-making, typically even demanding representation by ordinary citizens since the elite do not really know what makes the world go round. In populists’ eyes, government by technocrats and business people is far from desirable, since these form part of the bad, corrupt elite (Pasquino, 2008). This elite, as explained before, is viewed as taking care of its own interests instead of looking after the interests of the people.

Taking a step back, democratic innovations that can be linked to the stealth democracy thesis are generally of a top-down nature. These concern efforts to make the instruments of representative democracy work in new and improved ways, without demanding commitment or interference from citizens. These top-down innovations can be divided into two broad categories. First of all, innovations concerning vertical accountability aim to improve and refine the responsibility and responsiveness of government to citizens. Examples include the decentralisation of government, term limits for elected representatives, and the (increased) use of legal constraints on government. Secondly, innovations that address horizontal accountability focus on strengthening checks and balances between different branches of government, especially the oversight and regulation of government and other public bodies. One examples of such a measure is parliamentary oversight on the executive, constitutional courts, and independent central banks (Newton, 2012).

### 2.3. Populism vis-à-vis innovations to representative democracy

Having discussed two routes commonly proposed to address growing popular discontent with the representative democratic system, the link with populism should be made explicit. Previous theoretical considerations on the extent to which populist citizens applaud and actively take part in – or, alternatively, disapprove of and abstain from – political participation is limited. Only on referendum democracy, the literature is more elaborate. For this reason, it is necessary to broaden the discussion to include populism’s vision of democracy, both its critique and its democratic agenda. On the basis of this, hypotheses on the nexus between populist attitudes and political participation can be formulated. In that regard, it is reasoned that populist citizens act differently than non-populist citizens in terms of political participation due to this populist profile. Hereby it is considered outside the scope of this thesis to substantiate why non-populist citizens act as they do.

Starting with populism’s critical stance, Taggart (2002) notes that the “negative drive of populism is apparent [...] because populists are always much clearer about what they are against than what they are for” (p. 72). In particular, criticism on the efficacy of representative democracy is an important theme in the populist discourse, as pointed out before. Notably, populism seeks to exploit the discrepancy between the promise of democracy – i.e. popular sovereignty – and its functioning (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Bowler et al., 2017; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). In more concrete terms, populists accuse the political establishment – i.e. the elite – for their lack of responsiveness to the people’s preferences and demands (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Huber & Ruth, 2017; Mudde, 2004; Spruyt et al., 2016). Populists thus reject a trustee style of representation while also clearly denouncing politicians for taking care only of their own interests and not knowing what makes the world go round. Given this critical tone, the question then arises: how do populists aim to address or even solve the perceived disfunctioning of representative democracy? A rather straightforward answer lies in the conceptualisation of populism, namely by bringing about popular sovereignty and thus returning power to the people. Yet, scholars remain ambiguous on how populism in fact envisions this ideal to be realised. In broad terms, two opposing interpretations of populism’s democratic agenda can be discerned in the academic literature.

### 2.3.1. Populism's enthusiasm for political participation

According to the most prevailing view, populism understands “democracy [as] government by the sovereign people, *not* government by politicians, bureaucrats or judges” (Canovan, 2002, p. 33, italics in original). The people are thus ideally given the first and final word in political decision-making (Mény & Surel, 2002). This stance was also present in the conceptualisation: a populist profile is characterised by a view that the people should make the most important policy decisions (Akkerman et al., 2014; Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Hawkins et al., 2012; Jacobs et al., 2018; Schulz et al., 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018).

Central to this populist perspective on democracy is the idea that only a direct relationship between the people and government can ensure politics to be an expression of the will of the people. This populist logic thus advocates a rejection of intermediate institutions as these inevitably distort the congruence of politics and the people's wishes (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Betz, 2002; Pasquino, 2008; Taggart, 2002). This perspective suggests a certain dislike of representative politics as such, even termed hostility or rejection by some scholars (Mény & Surel, 2002; Taggart, 2002). Implicitly, this dislike pertains first and foremost to the trustee style of representation as well as to politicians acting in their own interest. Following from Canovan's (2002) definition, populism foresees direct citizen participation in politics as an – or perhaps the most – evident way of ensuring an unmediated, direct relationship between the people and their government (Akkerman et al., 2014; Bowler et al., 2017; Jacobs, 2010; Jacobs et al., 2018; Mudde, 2007; Taggart, 2002). Moreover, when briefly looking at the supply side of populism, this line of reasoning can also be observed in the discourse of the Italian populist Five Star Movement (Italian: *Movimento 5 Stelle*; M5S). Interestingly, this party upholds the slogan “participate, don't delegate” and encourages its constituency to actively take part in the political process, even providing them with an online platform to do so (Casaleggio, 2017). In sum, this populist viewpoint insists on citizen's political participation as a particularly well-suited mechanism – especially compared to representative politics – to ensure the implementation of the will of the people. Drawing on this line of reasoning, one would thus expect populist citizens to be particularly likely to participate in political claim-making themselves.

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*Hypothesis 1a* The higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the more they participate in political claim-making.

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Before continuing, it is important to clarify that, although direct democracy is sometimes seen as an inherent trait of populism, this view is not shared in this thesis. These notions are approached here as conceptually distinct (Stanley, 2008). Notably, other mechanisms to ensure the will of the people exist, including the one discussed below. Populism's emphasis on responsiveness to the will of the people and popular sovereignty is regarded more important than the mechanism by means of which this is realised. Hereby, it suffices to recognise populism's enthusiasm towards direct forms of popular expression.

### 2.3.2. Populism's reliance on representative democracy

An alternative perspective on populism's democratic agenda opposes the above-presented insistence on political participation. As a starting point, Dahl (2006) defines populist democracy as enacting policies that accord “with the preferences of the greater number of citizens”, to which he adds “voters, or legislators” (p. 44/45). From this follows an essential line of reasoning: the will of the people can be found in the people – i.e. voters – directly, but also in their representatives. In fact, some scholars contend that populists are not against the ideal or system of representation per se, but against how it currently functions, namely “representation by the wrong people”, i.e. the ‘corrupt elite’ (Mudde, 2007, p. 153). Indeed, populist citizens typically want to be represented by an ordinary citizen instead of by a politician (or another elite). From this populist viewpoint, representative democracy – in

particular through the populist leader and party – is an appropriate mechanism to ensure that politics is a reflection of the people’s wishes (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Canovan, 2002; Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008). In that sense, populism clearly insists on a mandate style of representation.

This line of reasoning is backed up by the conceptualisation of populism. On the one hand, populism’s description of the people as politically quiescent implies that the people are not usually on the forefront in terms of political claim-making. On the other hand, populism’s outlook on the people as a homogeneous, virtuous entity entails the existence of a common will of the people. This, in turn, suggests that political participation to make one’s voice heard is unnecessary, since the will of the people is widely shared. Hence, one could hypothesise that populist citizens envision popular sovereignty to be ideally realised through a responsive government, whereby the populist political party and leader are particularly well suited to take up this role. For this reason, one could expect populist individuals to abstain from political participation themselves.

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*Hypothesis 1b The higher citizens’ level of populist attitudes, the less they participate in political claim-making.*

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### 2.3.3. Populism’s outlook on different variants of political participation

Returning to the typology of political participation presented above, it is interesting to theorise whether populist citizens actively pursue or, instead, disregard political participation in a specific manner. In that sense, it is relevant to recall the three criteria used to distinguish between the different variants of political claim-making: participatory range, deliberative mode and degree of impact. Firstly, the conceptualisation of populism does not hint at an ideal participatory range, provided that the will of the people – instead of elitist views – is voiced and acted upon. As such, representativeness is a step in this direction, since populism indicates the people to be in the majority. Moreover, drawing on populism’s understanding of the people as politically quiescent, populist citizens are expected to favour and take part in participatory devices that require passive participation instead of active engagement, political discussion and deliberation. Lastly, again referring to the importance of the will of the people, populist citizens are theorised to be particularly fond of and participate in mechanisms wherein citizens have a final say or, at least, present recommendations.

As a next step, it is interesting to translate these hypothesised preferences and practices of populist citizens to the variants of political participation. For participation in the party-electoral, this is somewhat difficult due to the differences between voting in elections and the other modes of participation covered in this variant. As explained before, voting is ideally inclusive and representative while the other modes attract fewer participants, voting is passive while the other modes require more active engagement, and voting has an indirect impact on policy outcomes while the other modes pursue a more direct influence. In that sense, these criteria do not point to a clear hypothesis on populist citizens’ participation in the party-electoral arena. Rather, both populism’s anti-elitism facet – whereby the main elite identified were (established) politicians – and its critique on the representative democratic system prove particularly relevant. Indeed, drawing on the first, prevailing populist vision of democracy, populist individuals are expected to hold a general adversity towards (established) politicians and political parties as well as towards representation as such. This, in turn, suggests populist citizens to dislike the participatory opportunities that form the bedrock of representative democracy and thus forego participation in this party-electoral arena (*Hypothesis 2*).

Given populism’s dislike of participation in the institutions and devices that form part and parcel of representative democracy, one could reason that populist individuals are inclined to voice their interests via alternative, though conventional manners of political claim-making. In that sense, participation in the non-party

arena constitutes such an alternative for political participation. Furthermore, as regards to participatory range, it is relevant to note that the logic of numbers on which these modes of participation are based, matches populism's view of the people as numerous. In terms of deliberative mode, this variant of political claim-making emphasises taking part rather than political discussion, which fits populism's understanding of the people as politically silent. Following this line of reasoning, one would expect populist individuals to favourably view protest behaviour and to be likely to participate in the non-party arena (*Hypothesis 3*).

Turning to the third variant, literature points to referendums and citizens' initiatives as populist mechanisms par excellence. First and foremost, referendums fit populism's three core ideas: the people take a central role, the power of the elite is reduced and the will of the people is implemented (Jacobs et al., 2018). Also when referring to the three criteria discussed above, one could argue that referendums are an ideal device in the eyes of populists. As regards to participatory range, populists' reference to the people as being the majority fits the logic of numbers on which also referendums are based, i.e. on acquiring a majority of votes and thereby bringing forward the will of the people. Moreover, in terms of deliberative mode, referendums match populism's description of the people as silent as well as its tendency towards political dualism and its anti-pluralist character. Notably, referendums do not require citizens to actively deliberate upon the issue at hand, but to reflect their opinion in a yes-or-no vote. Furthermore, by gauging public opinion on one issue directly, referendums are particularly suited to ensure a direct, unmediated relationship between the people and government. Indeed, concerning the degree of impact, referendums typically guarantee that the will of the people is translated into concrete action (Budge, 2012). Here, literature also points to the fact that populist political parties oftentimes explicitly advocate direct democratic mechanisms (Betz, 2002; Bowler et al., 2017; Jacobs, 2010; Mudde, 2007; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Pauwels, 2014; Taggart, 2002). Hence, one could argue that populist individuals are particularly fond of direct democratic devices and likely to participate in them when presented the opportunity to do so (*Hypothesis 4*).

Finally, the opposite can be said concerning populism's stance towards deliberation. Populism's conceptual description of the people as politically quiescent suggests that populist individuals are negative towards taking part in public debates on political issues. Also, populism's emphasis on a common will of the people, its leaning towards political dualism and its anti-pluralist character imply that there is neither necessity nor room for a plurality of views, political debate and compromise. From this it follows that populist citizens are theorised to dislike and forego participation in deliberative initiatives (*Hypothesis 5*).

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*Hypothesis 2* The higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the less they participate in the party-electoral arena.

*Hypothesis 3* The higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the more they participate in the non-party arena.

*Hypothesis 4* The higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the more they participate in referendum democracy.

*Hypothesis 5* The higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the less they participate in deliberative initiatives.

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#### 2.3.4. Control variables

Before turning to the data and methodology used in this thesis, it is important to shortly reflect on the possibility of other variables influencing the hypothesised relationships between populist attitudes and (attitudes towards) political participation. In the literature, various variables have been observed to relate to both populism and political participation. In this regard, it is relevant to recall the 'new politics' hypothesis and the 'political

dissatisfaction' hypothesis outlined before. Firstly, according to the 'new politics' hypothesis, citizens' education level and political interest are positively related to political participation (Bowler et al., 2007; Dalton et al., 2001; Donovan & Karp, 2006). Interestingly, populism has been linked to a lower education level and lower political interest (Esteban Pérez & Segatti, 2016; Mastropaolo, 2008; Spruyt et al., 2016). Secondly, the 'political dissatisfaction' hypothesis describes citizens showing dissatisfaction with democracy to be supportive of direct political participation (Bengtsson & Mattila, 2009; Bowler et al., 2007; Dalton et al., 2001). Besides, literature pointed to populist voters to be typically dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy, which is not surprising given that critique on the functioning of representative democracy is an important theme in the populist discourse (Bowler et al., 2017; Pauwels, 2014; Rooduijn et al., 2016; Spruyt et al., 2016; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018).<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, the demographic variables ages and gender were also controlled for because of their observed influence on political participation. For instance, Anduiza et al. (2016) noted women to be less likely to participate in political claim-making than men, whereas Webb (2013) only found this result for participation in the party-electoral arena and additionally observes that men were more likely to have voted in referendums. Furthermore, Anduiza et al. (2016) reported age to be positively related to electoral turnout and negative to protest modes of participation, while Webb (2013) observed age to be positively related to participation in the party-electoral arena, in the non-party arena and in referendum democracy. In this context, the variable education level also surfaces. Webb (2013) showed education level to be positively related to participation in the party-electoral and non-party arena, but he did not find a significant relationship between education level and participation in referendum democracy.

In sum, the variables gender, age, education level, political interest, and satisfaction with democracy can potentially have an influence on the hypothesised relationships between populist attitudes and political participation. To gain a better understanding of this effect, it was checked whether populist attitudes remained a significant predictor of (attitudes towards) political participation after controlling for these variables.

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<sup>6</sup> Thinking ahead about the regression analyses in which both populist attitudes and satisfaction with democracy were entered as predictor variables, one might raise doubts as to problems of multicollinearity caused by the potential proximity of populist attitudes and dissatisfaction with democracy. Notably, this was checked by looking at the correlation coefficients, variance inflator factor (VIF) and tolerance statistic, as explained in Appendix B. From this, there was no indication that the introduction of both populist attitudes and satisfaction with democracy into the regression analyses caused problems of multicollinearity.



### 3. Data and Methodology

This chapter starts with a short statement on the research design of this thesis. Afterwards, the cross-national case study design is noted and the reasons for studying Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany are elaborated upon. This is followed by a discussion of the datasets, the sampling and data collection methods, and the response rates. Here, the merits and disadvantages of using existing datasets and surveys are also pointed out. Next, the operationalisation of populist attitudes and (attitudes towards) political participation is turned to. This section not only outlines the relevant survey items, but also discusses the face validity, unidimensionality and reliability of the constructed indices. Lastly, the statistical methods used in this thesis are described.

#### 3.1. Research design

The research design of this thesis is a cross-sectional survey design using quantitative data from three national election studies, namely those administered in Great Britain, Germany and the Netherlands (Fieldhouse et al., 2018; Roßteutscher et al., 2017; Van der Meer, Van der Kolk, & Rekker, 2017). The purpose of the design is to analyse the relationship between populist attitudes and political participation. A cross-sectional design allowed to explore the link between these two variables and to draw conclusions about how and to what extent these are related.

#### 3.2. Case selection

This thesis thus consists of a cross-national study of three Western-European countries: Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany. The selection of these countries was based on a most similar case study design (Seawright & Gerring, 2008), whereby the results of this thesis are interpreted to suggest a particular nexus between populism and political participation in Western-European countries in general.

The reason for selecting Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany is substantive as well as pragmatic. First and foremost, both populism and political participation are much-debated issues in these three countries. Since the study of citizens with a populist attitude has only recently gained ground, it is problematic to infer whether populist attitudes are widespread among the British, Dutch and German populations. Alternatively, to discuss the relevance of populism in the countries under study, the attention is shortly aimed at the supply side of populism, i.e. to populist political parties. For Great-Britain, the relevance of populism does not follow from electoral successes of radical right-wing populist parties. In fact, this party family remains at the fringe of British politics. Neither the British National Party (BNP) nor the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) secured a parliamentary seat in the 2017 general elections. Alternatively, the relevance of populism in the British context is typically corroborated by pointing to the Brexit (Gusterson, 2017; Iakhnis, Rathbun, Reifler, & Scotto, 2018). Interestingly, the Leave-campaign framed the Brexit as a struggle between the political establishment and the ordinary people, matching populism's Manichean outlook (Hobolt, 2016). Populism is also manifest in Brexiteers' argument that "the people have spoken" (Philips, 2017), despite the low turnout and slight majority for the leave-vote. In addition, right-wing populist sentiments as well as populist attitudes as such were shown to be predictive of support for the leave-vote (Hobolt, 2016; Iakhnis et al., 2018). The importance of populism in the Netherlands and Germany does become clear from recent electoral outcomes. The Party for Freedom (Dutch: *Partij voor de Vrijheid*; PVV) and Alternative for Germany (German: *Alternative für Deutschland*; AfD) became the largest opposition parties after the 2017 general elections in the Netherlands and Germany respectively. Both these parties are described to fit into the template of the radical right-wing populist party family (Lees, 2018; Rooduijn,

2014b), whereby, as the name suggests, populism is one of its – or even the – defining features (Mudde, 2007; Van Hauwaert & Van Kessel, 2018).

Shifting the focus to political participation, the debate on (enhanced) citizen involvement in politics is also present in Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany. In reaction to growing public discontent with representative democracy and its main political actors, the debate in the three selected countries has centred on democratic innovations. In the case of Great Britain, the Brexit-referendum has generated a stormy debate on the desirability of direct democratic mechanisms, particularly since, as mentioned, the leave-vote was endorsed by only a small majority of the British population. In Germany, the fact that referendums on the federal level are practically absent does not imply that this issue is absent from the German political agenda. Illustratively, president Frank-Walter Steinmeier recently stated that the Swiss model of direct democracy was not exportable to Germany due to, in Steinmeier's words, a different political DNA (Müller, 2018). In contrast, Dutch legislation provides for a non-binding, consultative referendum triggered by citizens' initiative (the so-called *Wet Raadgevend Referendum* of 2015). In this context, the Dutch government's stance and responsiveness to the outcomes of the – to date – two referendums organised within this framework, as well as the fact that in February 2018 a majority of the members of parliament voted in favour of repealing this law, have stirred the discussion on direct democratic mechanisms in the Netherlands. Besides referendums, deliberation figures rather prominently in the debate on democratic innovations in Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany. Notably, in these countries, deliberative initiatives have been organised on the local level on a wide variety of (policy) issues (Amelung, 2013; Bongaardt, 2018; Delap, 2001; Van Reybrouck, 2016). However, the number of deliberative initiatives on the national level remains scarce. An important exception is the Citizens' Forum Electoral System (Dutch: *Burgerforum Kiesstelsel*) organised in the Netherlands in 2006 to deliberate and advice on the Dutch voting system (Van Reybrouck, 2016). In sum, the substantive reason for studying Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany is that both populism and political participation are relevant issues in these countries. An additional reason for including these three countries is a pragmatic one: the respective national election studies contain relevant as well as comparable survey items on both variables and were carried out in a similar timeframe, namely in the year 2017.

Before continuing to the datasets, two points should be clarified. To start with, one could argue that adding France as a case to this study could be particularly interesting. The French National Front is oftentimes denoted as a classical example or prototype of (right-wing) populism in Western Europe (Mudde, 2007; Van Kessel, 2014). However, the inclusion of France is infeasible since the 2017 French Electoral Study did not contain comparable items on political participation. A second important note concerns the inclusion of Great Britain as a case. Considering the most-similar case study design, one could contend that the outcome of the Brexit-vote makes Great Britain a somewhat less suitable case for this thesis. Supposedly, a British citizen with both populist and pro-European attitudes is less likely to favourably view direct democratic mechanisms after the Brexit-referendum than prior to the vote. In that case, one instance of direct democracy is of pivotal influence on British stances towards citizen involvement in politics. Although this potentially affects the generalisability of the results, this is not considered highly likely. In fact, as previously mentioned, populist attitudes were found to be predictive for a Leave-vote, which is theorised to decrease the likelihood that British citizens with a populist profile have changed their stance towards direct democratic devices as a result of the outcome of the Brexit referendum. Moreover, this would concern only one facet of the dependent variable, namely attitudes towards referendums, but not actual political participation.

### 3.3. Datasets

The datasets used in this thesis are the following: the British Election Study (BES), the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study (DPES), and the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES). The editions used are post-election cross-sectional surveys and, thus, administered following the respective 2017 general (or federal) elections in Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Germany.<sup>7</sup> The national election studies included relevant items on populism and political participation, and which were to a large degree similar or, at least, comparable. This is partly the result of their collaboration with the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), whereby participating countries include a standardised module of survey questions in their post-election studies.<sup>8</sup>

Besides enabling a cross-national study, the use of existing data from national elections studies has additional advantages. First and foremost, the fact that the national elections studies draw on large, representative samples contributes to the external validity of this thesis, i.e. the generalisability and strength of the results. Neither a large, representative sample nor a cross-national study would have been feasible within the timeframe and resources available for this thesis. Other advantages include the use of trained and experienced interviewers, and a high response rate. However, an important disadvantage of using secondary data is that the survey items are not accustomed to this thesis. Before discussing the items in detail, the sampling design, data collection method and response rate of the included national election studies are elaborated upon.

### 3.4. Participants and sampling method

The national election studies defined their population in a largely similar manner, though these definitions differed slightly. The BES stipulated its population to all those who live in Great Britain aged above 18 years and who were eligible to vote in the 2017 general election. This latter criterion implies that the sample was not reduced to British citizens only, since Commonwealth citizens who fulfil certain requirements are also entitled to vote in British general elections. In a slightly different manner, the DPES defined its population to those with the Dutch citizenship, resident in the Netherlands, and who were of voting age, which is 18+ years according to Dutch law. Finally, the GLES indicated its population to comprise of all those with a German citizenship who live in the Federal Republic of Germany and had a minimum age of 16 years. Although some variation thus exists in terms of citizenship and age, this is not regarded problematic because these differences are minor, theoretically not likely to influence the variables under study, and age was included as a control variable.

The sampling design of the three national election studies was, as is typical for large-scale surveys, based on probability sampling (Babbie, 2013; Neuman, 2014). Yet, the mechanism through which random selection was achieved differed somewhat across the national election studies. To start with, the BES made use of a multi-stage cluster sampling design. While firstly parliamentary constituencies were selected using stratified random sampling, the second stage consisted of taking two secondary sampling units (termed Lower Super Output Areas) from each sampled constituency using probability proportional to size sampling. Next, household addresses were selected by means of systematic sampling and a participant was picked randomly by the interviewers. Besides, participants in the BES of 2015 who agreed to be re-contacted, were asked to take part in the BES of 2017. This

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<sup>7</sup> The BES was carried out between June and October 2017, while the British general elections were held on the 8th of June 2017. The DPES was administered between March and July 2017, after the Dutch general elections on the 15th of March 2017. The GLES was realised between September and November 2017, and the German federal elections were held on the 24th of September 2017.

<sup>8</sup> This thesis does not make use of the CSES because the separate national election studies are most recent. The latest CSES Module (nr. 4) covers the years 2011 to 2016, while the national election studies contain data from 2017 (to be collected for CSES Module 5). Besides, importantly, CSES Module 4 does not include items on populism.

was due to time pressure: the British elections were not scheduled for another two years. Turning to the sampling design of the DPES, it is important to note that it combined data obtained from three different groups of respondents. The first and second sample were selected on the basis of simple random sampling by Statistics Netherlands. The third group of respondents consisted of participants in the Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social sciences (LISS) panel. The panel members approached for the DPES were randomly sampled, while the LISS panel itself is also designed to constitute a representative sample. Finally, the GLES also made use of a multi-stage sampling design. It consisted of random selection of municipalities, then, household addresses, and lastly of participants. In this process, intended oversampling occurred for East Germany.

### 3.5. Data collection method

In the national election studies, the data collection method used was quantitative survey research. In basic terms, this denotes that participants were asked to respond to a set of standardised statements and questions, whereby the latter were closed or open-ended. A valuable advantage of survey research is the possibility to select a large sample, which – in combination with probability sampling – makes it a proper instrument to describe a large population. In addition, surveys are particularly suited for measuring attitudes and orientations, since these are not directly observable. Finally, the standardised format and closed-ended nature of the questions of the national election studies averts the necessity to interpret the meaning of responses and, thereby, reduces the risk of bias and misunderstanding (Babbie, 2013; Neuman, 2014). However, survey research also entails certain disadvantages. Firstly, the standardised format results in the fact that surveys are inflexible and cannot be changed once the data collection phase started (Babbie, 2013). This shortcoming is nonetheless limited for national election studies, because the survey items build on previous waves and are adapted when necessary. Another disadvantage of survey research is that it cannot directly measure behaviour or social action. Surveys can only ask respondents to self-report recalled past action or prospective action (Babbie, 2013).

The national election studies made use of a combination of face-to-face interviews and self-administered questionnaires, although these were employed in a slightly different manner. The BES primarily collected data through face-to-face interviews, using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The CSES module – which included items on populism – was administered separately to the main questionnaire. This survey was to be self-completed by the respondents after the interviewer had left, either via Pen and Paper Interviewing (PAPI) or Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI). When looking at the DPES, it should be recalled that it builds on three different groups of respondents. The first group answered to survey items during face-to-face interviews using CAPI. These respondents were, furthermore, asked to fill in a drop-off questionnaire after the interviewer left and return it per mail (PAPI) or online (CAWI). Differently, the second group of respondents was asked to self-complete an online questionnaire (CAWI), without a follow-up questionnaire. The respondents who formed part of the LISS-panel were instructed to complete an online questionnaire (CAWI) as well as a second, follow-up questionnaire. Lastly, the GLES only conducted face-to-face interviews using CAPI.

Both face-to-face interviews and self-administered questionnaires have specific merits and disadvantages. Firstly, interviews inherently entail the risk of interviewer bias: the interviewer may affect the respondent and how he or she answers through, for instance, appearance, tone of voice, or question wording (Babbie, 2013; Neuman, 2014). Notably, the national election studies provided detailed instructions and were carried out by trained and experienced interviewers, which are important facets to reduce the risk of interviewer bias and increase reliability. Adjacent to this is the notion of social desirability bias, whereby respondents tend to answer in conformity to social norms due to the presence of an interviewer (Babbie, 2013; Neuman, 2014).

This might be the case for populism, but arguably more so for voting for a right-wing populist party than for populist attitudes. In contrast to interviews, questionnaires are typically self-administered and thereby avoid interviewer bias as well as social desirability bias. Furthermore, interviews generally yield a high response rate, whereas the low response rate of questionnaires is one of its prime disadvantages (Babbie, 2013; Neuman, 2014).

### 3.6. Response rate

The response rate is defined here as the ratio between the number of respondents who completed the survey and the number of eligible or invited elements in the sample (Babbie, 2013; The American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2016). The BES sampled 4255 eligible participants and approached 249 participants in the re-contact sample, of which 984 respondents completed both the main BES study and the additional CSES module. This signified a response rate of 21.8 per cent. The DPES invited 5743 participants of which 3323 respondents completed the main interview or questionnaire. The response rate of the DPES was, therefore, 57.9 per cent. Lastly, the GLES sampled 7195 eligible addresses of which 2112 individuals were surveyed, resulting in a response rate of 29.4 per cent.

In terms of minimum or adequate response rates, there is a considerable grey area to be found in social science research. For instance, Baruch & Holton (2008) find an average response rate of 52,7 per cent for studies that collect data from individuals (with a standard deviation of 20.4 percentage points). More generally, while some point to a response rate of 80 per cent as standard, many others indicate 50 to 60 per cent to be the minimum benchmark (Draugalis & Plaza, 2009; Groves, 2006; Johnson & Owens, 2013). Based on this, one can deduce that the response rate of the DPES was relatively sound, while the response rates of the BES and GLES were comparatively low. Although these samples were still rather large in absolute terms, it is important to add that a low response rate might weaken the representativeness of the survey. Especially if those who do respond differ from non-respondents, the results of the study might not be generalisable (Baruch & Holton, 2008; Draugalis & Plaza, 2009; Groves, 2006; Neuman, 2014). To control for this nonresponse bias, one could weigh the data collected. This is, however, considered more important for descriptive than for inferential statistics. Moreover, weighting the data could affect the results in an adverse manner for inferential statistics. For this reason, no weights were applied in this thesis.

### 3.7. Operationalisation

Turning to the operationalisation of populist attitudes and political participation, the relevant survey items as well as the indices that were constructed are outlined below. For each variable, some general notes on the survey items are in place first. This is followed by a discussion of the face validity, unidimensionality and internal consistency of the items per variable, before concluding whether the listed survey items can be retained in the various composite measures. Finally, the computation of the indices is shortly commented upon.

As will become clear, the selected survey items were to a large degree similar across the national election studies, though numerous items were not included in all three. To facilitate in-text referencing to these items, both in this chapter and in the appendices, the items were given a label based on the variable and the item number, e.g. POP1 for the first item on populist attitudes.

#### 3.7.1. Populist attitudes

To begin with, the survey items on populist attitudes were formulated as statements (see Table 1). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement using a 5-point Likert item format, with the additional option “don’t know”. Agreement with the statements pointed to a populist attitude, except for the reversely phrased item

“politicians are trustworthy” (POP5). For this latter item, disagreement implied a populist attitude. Aside from POP5, the items were recoded: opposite values ranging from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (= strongly agree) were assigned so that a high value signalled a populist attitude for all items.

Zooming in on the phrasing of POP5, one could argue that balancing a survey with reverse-formulated items could encourage more careful reading/thinking and, hence, avoid an answer pattern of (dis)agreeing (Józsa & Morgan, 2017; Suárez-Alvarez et al., 2018). However, literature also points to difficulties arising from using antonymic items, including a substantial change of meaning, and the effect of respondents’ inattention on the reliability and validity of the items (Suárez-Alvarez et al., 2018; Weijters & Baumgartner, 2012). Hence, to limit response bias, it is considered opportune that only one item was reversely formulated.

**Table 1: Items on populist attitudes**

	British Election Study	Dutch Parliamentary Election Study	German Longitudinal Election Study
<b>POP1</b>	What people call compromise in politics is just selling out on one’s principles (Q2_CSES_2)	Wat men in de politiek ‘het sluiten van compromissen?’ noemt, is eigenlijk gewoon het verraden van je principes (V320)	Was in der Politik Kompromiss genannt wird, ist in Wirklichkeit nur ein Verrat von Prinzipien (Q85a)
<b>POP2</b>		De politieke tegenstellingen zijn groter tussen de elite en gewone burgers dan tussen burgers onderling (V328)	Die politischen Unterschiede zwischen Eliten und dem Volk sind größer als die Unterschiede innerhalb des Volkes (Q85d)
<b>POP3</b>	Most politicians do not care about the people (Q2_CSES_3)	De meeste politici geven niets om het volk (V321)	Die meisten Politiker interessieren sich nicht für die Meinung der Bürger (Q85g)
<b>POP4</b>	Most politicians care only about the interests of the rich and powerful (Q2_CSES_8)	De meeste politici zijn alleen maar geïnteresseerd in de belangen van rijke en machtige mensen (V326)	Die meisten Politiker kümmern sich nur um die Interessen der Reichen und Mächtigen (Q85k)
<b>POP5 (rev)</b>	Most politicians are trustworthy (Q2_CSES_4)	De meeste politici zijn te vertrouwen (V322)	Die meisten Politiker sind vertrauenswürdig (Q85h)
<b>POP6</b>	Politicians are the main problem in Britain (Q2_CSES_5)	Politici vormen het grootste probleem in Nederland (V323)	Das größte Problem in Deutschland sind die Politiker (Q85i)
<b>POP7</b>		Politici praten te veel en doen te weinig (V330)	Die Politiker reden zu viel und machen zu wenig (Q85f)
<b>POP8</b>		Politici in de Tweede Kamer moeten zich laten leiden door de mening van het volk (V327)	Die Abgeordneten des Deutschen Bundestags müssen dem Willen des Volkes Folge leisten (Q85c)
<b>POP9</b>	The will of the majority should always prevail, even over the rights of minorities (Q3_CSES_2)		
<b>POP10</b>		Ik word liever vertegenwoordigd door een gewone burger dan door een beroeps politicus (V329)	Ein Bürger würde besser meine Interessen vertreten als ein Berufspolitiker (Q85e)

#### *Item selection*

At this point, it was important to reflect upon the face-validity, unidimensionality and reliability of the items to be included in the populism indices. At face value, the listed items can content-wise be linked to populism’s core ideas as outlined in the theoretical framework. Besides, the survey items adopted the language in which these ideas are expressed in public discourse, as noted by Spruyt, Keppens, & Van Droogenbroeck (2016). To begin with, the item “compromise is selling out one’s principles” (POP1) tapped into populism’s anti-pluralist character and the related aversion towards deviations from the majority will. Also, it implicitly entailed the populist stance

that there is neither necessity nor room for compromise, since the people are understood to have a shared interest and common will. Next, the item “political differences between the elite and the people are bigger than among the people” (POP2) primarily concerned populism’s ‘us’-versus-‘them’ outlook, i.e. its understanding of the people and the elite as two antagonistic groups. This item furthermore hinted at populism’s conception of both the people and the elite as homogeneous entities. Populism’s anti-elitism facet was captured in POP3–POP7. Hereby, the elite was operationalised as politicians, and the populist idea that politicians do not (adequately) reflect the will of the people figured prominently. In fact, politicians were posited to “not care about the people” (POP3) but instead “care only for the interests of the rich and powerful” (POP4). These items reflected the populist view of politics as a struggle between the good people and the bad, corrupt elite. In that sense, these items covered the populist idea of the elite as taking care of itself rather than looking after the people, i.e. of the elite as corrupt and betraying the people. In that regard, it is important to note that the latter item spoke of the “interests of the rich and powerful” (POP4). In this manner, the elite is not only operationalised as politicians but also in broader terms, for instance referring to rulers and business people. Moreover, the negative valorisation of the elite was also captured in the items about politicians being the opposite of trustworthy (POP5) The items about politicians to be “the main problem of the country” (POP6) and to “talk too much and act too little” (POP7) clearly concerned populism’s anti-elitism aspect as well as its negative stance towards the functioning of representative democracy. Populism’s third core idea of popular sovereignty was covered in the items “politicians should follow the people’s will” (POP8) and “the will of the majority should prevail” (POP9). Rather explicitly, these items tapped into populism’s view that politics should be an expression of the will of the people, which is similar to the will of the majority since the people are understood to be in the majority. Lastly, the item about “rather being represented by a citizen than by a professional politician” (POP10) reflected populism’s view of democracy as government by ordinary citizens as well as its position that the elite do not really know what makes the world go round.

The three national election studies additionally contained two items that were excluded from the index at face value. Firstly, this concerned the statement “Having a strong leader in government is good even if the leader bends the rules to get things done”. In conformity with populism’s conceptualisation in the ideational sense, this item was not included due to its focus on populism’s stylistic aspects. Moreover, the item “The people, and not politicians, should make the most important policy decisions” was interpreted to tap into the idea of popular sovereignty as well as to hint at a preference for direct democratic mechanisms. As a result of this conceptual proximity, the inclusion of this item in the index would complicate the analysis of populist attitudes and outlooks on referendum democracy, especially since these are conceptualised here as two distinct phenomena. This item was thus excluded from the populism indices.

Returning to the listed survey items, these particularly concerned two of populism’s core ideas: its anti-elitism facet and popular sovereignty, whereby the former was rather dominant. Indeed, the observation in literature that the populist discourse is mainly negative and critical was reflected in the survey items. Yet, the positive facet of populism was also clearly present, especially in the items inquiring about the importance of the will of the people/the majority (POP8/POP9). However, populism’s first core idea of people-centrism was not explicitly covered in the items. In fact, the items did not contain a specific reference to the people as intrinsically good and pure, while populism’s understanding of the people as a homogeneous entity was implicit in various survey items, e.g. when asking about political differences between the people (POP2) or when speaking of “the people” or when referring to “a citizen”/“citizens” as a uniform object. One could argue that it indirectly follows that the people are equated with good from the combination of the anti-elitism items and the items referring to

the interests of the people (e.g. POP3 and POP8/POP9). For the BES, two additional lacunas in the items on populist attitudes can be identified. Firstly, the BES did not inquire about political differences between the elite and the people being bigger than among the people, wherein populism's 'us'-versus-'them' outlook is clearly present (POP2). As a result of the exclusion of this item, the BES does not explicitly mention the broader notion of the elite. Besides, while the anti-elitism facet as well as critique on (established) politicians was clearly present, the BES did not capture populism's preference for government/representation by ordinary citizens instead of politicians (POP4). Despite the somewhat unbalanced attention, the listed items were interpreted to adequately and sufficiently correspond to populism's conceptual core ideas and, therefore, to constitute a sound basis for a populism index at face value. Besides, the fact that the listed statements largely resembled those used in the academic literature also contributed to the face validity of the populism indices (Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins et al., 2012; Schulz et al., 2017; Spruyt et al., 2016).

The second criterion of unidimensionality of the items was checked through factor analysis, using the Kaiser criterion in determining the number of dimensions.<sup>9</sup> For the DPES and GLES, principal axis factoring confirmed the items to represent a single dimension: only one factor had an Eigenvalue bigger than 1.0 (see Appendix A; Table A1). In contrast, for the BES, the factor analysis indicated the existence of two dimensions. A second factor was primarily comprised of two items: POP1 about "compromise is selling out one's principles" and POP9 on the prevalence of "the will of the majority" (see Appendix A; Table A1 and A2). This is somewhat logical given the fact that both items tapped into to the populist idea of not wishing to take minority interests into consideration, i.e. its anti-pluralist character. The first dimension consisted of items focused on populism's anti-elitist stance, and its adversity to established politicians in particular. One could argue that the factor analysis suggested the items POP1 and POP9 to be removed from the index in order to arrive at a unidimensional composite measure. However, the theoretical linkages between these items and populism's conceptual core ideas of people-centrism, a Manichean outlook and popular sovereignty were considered strong enough to nonetheless retain all listed items. In this sense, it should again be emphasised that it is the combination of populism's core ideas that constitutes the populist logic rather than the separate ideational dimensions (Spruyt et al., 2016). There was thus no clear argument for excluding an item from the populism indices.

A last criterion to be looked at was the internal consistency, or in other words reliability, of the populist attitudes indices. This was computed using Cronbach's alpha, whereby the following guidelines were used throughout this thesis:  $\alpha > .80$  is good,  $\alpha > .70$  is acceptable,  $\alpha > .60$  is questionable, and  $\alpha > .50$  is poor, while  $\alpha < .50$  is unacceptable (Field, 2005; George & Mallery, 2016). An important addition is that the value of  $\alpha$  depends to some extent on the number of items included, whereby an increase in the number of items is generally accompanied with a rise in the value of  $\alpha$ . For all three national election studies, Cronbach's alpha of the populism items was acceptable to good ( $\alpha_{BES} = .73$ ,  $\alpha_{DPES} = .87$ , and  $\alpha_{GLES} = .87$ ). Besides, these values for Cronbach's alpha were generally above or similar to those if a particular item was deleted (see Appendix A, Table A4). Hence, the listed items were all included in the computation of the populism indices.

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<sup>9</sup> For the purpose of identifying latent dimensions (rather than to reduce the number of items), principal axis factoring was considered the most appropriate factor analytic technique (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). The rotation method used was Direct Oblimin, since it was theorised that different factors can be related (i.e. non-orthogonal) as these are expected to constitute dimensions of populism. Indeed, the factor analysis for the BES reported the two factors were in fact correlated ( $r = .36$ ; see Appendix A, Table A2). Moreover, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Barlett's Test of Sphericity verified that factor analyses could be conducted (Hair et al., 2014; Pallant, 2010).



### *Computation of the indices*

Having discussed the selection of items, several aspects of the composite measure of populist attitudes should be stressed. Firstly, indices were considered more suitable than scales because of the absence of an apparent structure or order among the items on populist attitudes. Secondly, a separate index was computed for each national election study. Furthermore, the items were assigned equal weights and the indices were computed by summing up the scores for the individual items and rescaling these to a 1 to 5 continuum. Hereby, high values signalled a populist attitude, while low values indicated a non-populist attitude – which is not to be equated with neither an anti-populist attitude nor an elitist or pluralist attitude. The option “don’t know” and otherwise not-stated answers were treated as missing values, and cases that held missing values were excluded listwise. Additionally, to validate the indices, one could reason that the criterion-related validity could be tested using voting for a populist party. However, this is not considered appropriate given that, as explained in the previous chapter, equating voting for a populist party with populist attitudes is problematic.

### **3.7.2. Political participation**

Turning to the survey items on political participation, it should be emphasised that the focus of many survey items was on the national level, which was rather logical given that the data stem from national election studies. The scope of this thesis was, however, not limited to this national level. The general formulation of numerous survey items allowed to also cover political participation at the local, European or international level. Illustratively, doing work on behalf of a political party or signing a petition does not specifically pertain to (issues on) the national level.

#### *3.7.2.1. Attitudes towards political participation*

To start with the attitudinal component of political participation, this was measured using both single survey items and indices. The concerned items were, again, formulated as statements (see Table 2). For most items, respondents were asked to specify their level of agreement using 5-point Likert items, and the option “don’t know”. These items were (re)coded ranging from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (=strongly agree). In that regard, two exceptions existed. For the reversely phrased item “going to vote is a lot of effort” (ATT2), opposite labels were defined so that a high score denoted disagreement. Moreover, for the item “government should always follow referendum outcomes” (ATT5), respondents could answer in agreement, in disagreement or in doubt. Rescaling these answer options to fit with the other items signified that disagreement was assigned a score of 1.5, in doubt of 3 and agreement of 4.5. In this manner, for all items, a high score pointed to a favourable attitude towards political participation.

#### *Attitudes towards voting*

The BES and GLES included an item that theoretically corresponded to attitudes towards voting as one – or perhaps the main – aspect of participation in the party-electoral arena. Respondents were asked whether they were supportive of participation in elections through the item “going to vote is every citizen’s duty” (ATT1). Looking at other items about attitudes towards voting, a difference was observed between the BES and GLES. The GLES did not contain additional items that theoretically pertained to attitudes towards voting, while the BES did include such items. More specifically, the BES contained the statements “going to vote is a lot of effort” (ATT2) and “I feel a sense of satisfaction when I vote” (ATT3). For these items, factor analysis pointed to one factor with an Eigenvalue bigger than 1.0 (see Appendix A; Table A5). Hence, the unidimensionality of these items was

confirmed. Yet, Cronbach's alpha is questionable ( $\alpha_{BES} = .61$ ), whereby it should be added that it would increase when deleting item ATT2 ( $\alpha_{BE} = .68$ ; see Appendix A, Table A7). Deleting this item was, however, judged inappropriate given its theoretical linkage to the other items. Therefore, despite the somewhat questionable internal consistency, an index was computed for the BES from the items ATT1-ATT3.

**Table 2: Items on attitudes towards voting and referendum democracy**

British Election Study		Dutch Parliamentary Election Study	German Longitudinal Election Study
<b>Items on attitudes towards voting</b>			
<b>ATT1</b>	It is every citizen's duty to vote in an election. (C02_3)		In der Demokratie ist es die Pflicht jedes Bürgers, sich regelmäßig an Wahlen zu beteiligen. (Q66h)
<b>ATT2</b>	Going to vote is a lot of effort. (C02_1)		
<b>ATT3</b>	I feel a sense of satisfaction when I vote. (C02_2)		
<b>Items on attitudes towards referendum democracy</b>			
<b>ATT4</b>		Over sommige voor ons land belangrijke beslissingen moet door de kiezers zelf worden gestemd door middel van een referendum. (V310)	Bürger sollten einen bindenden Volksentscheid auf Bundesebene herbeiführen können. (Q66f)
<b>ATT5</b>		Zou de regering de uitslag van een referendum volgens u altijd moeten uitvoeren, of mag de regering besluiten de uitslag naast zich neer te leggen? (V315)	
<b>ATT6</b>		Ik ben voorstander van een democratie waarbij zoveel mogelijk beslissingen worden genomen op basis van referenda. (S061)	

#### *Attitudes towards referendum democracy*

Regarding attitudes towards referendum democracy, the measurement was again not identical. To begin with, the DPES and GLES included a similar item inquiring about respondents' stance towards direct democratic mechanisms. In basic terms this item was formulated as "citizens should be able to decide on important issues through referendums" (ATT4). In the exact formulation of this item, two nuances could be observed. While the DPES did not specify the initiator of the referendum, the item in the GLES hinted at the instrument of citizens' initiatives. Besides, the DPES refrained from including a degree of impact of the referendum, whereas the GLES explicitly asked about binding outcomes. Importantly, it is argued that these slight differences did not undermine the general purpose of this item, i.e. inquiring about respondents' stance towards the use of direct democratic mechanisms for some political decisions. This, in turn, theoretically corresponded to attitudes towards referendum democracy.

For the GLES, the measurement of attitudes towards referendum democracy was based solely on the item ATT4. The reason for this is similar to the one provided above: the GLES did not contain other items that theoretically pertained to this variable. In contrast, the DPES covered the statements "governments should always follow referendum outcomes" (ATT5) and "as many referenda as possible" (ATT6), which can be theoretically grouped under attitudes towards referendum democracy. Interestingly, these items are more stringently

formulated than ATT4. While, as mentioned, the latter did not clarify a (non-)binding character of referendums, ATT5 concerned the importance of government to follow up on referendum outcomes. Also, ATT4 spoke of referendums for some political decisions only, whereas ATT6 inquired about a highly frequent use of direct democratic devices. The unidimensionality and internal consistency of these items was corroborated by factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha. Firstly, factor analysis pointed to one factor with an Eigenvalue bigger than 1.0 (see Appendix A; Table A8). Secondly, Cronbach's alpha was acceptable ( $\alpha_{DPES} = .75$ ) and it would not greatly increase when deleting a specific item (see Appendix A; Table A10). Hence, for the DPES, attitudes towards referendum democracy were measured by means of an index.

For the composite measures on both attitudes towards voting (BES) and attitudes towards referendum democracy (DPES), an index was considered most appropriate due to the lack of an apparent structure or order among the items. In that sense, it is argued that the more stringent formulation of ATT5 and ATT6 did not signify the need for a scale for attitudes towards referendum democracy. While one could contend that an order can be seen, the lack of a clear structure among the latter two items made the construction of a scale problematic. Turning to the construction of both indices, the following should be noted. As for the populism indices, equal weights were assigned and the scores for the individual items were summed up and subsequently rescaled to a 1 to 5 continuum. High values corresponded to a favourable attitude towards voting and referendum democracy respectively, while low values indicated a negative outlook. Missing values were defined as "don't know" and otherwise not-stated answers, while cases that held missing values were excluded listwise.

The main disadvantage of using secondary data became clear here. On the one hand, the national elections studies did not include items on attitudes towards other variants of political participation or other forms of participation within the party-electoral arena. On the other hand, the DPES did not ask about attitudes towards voting and the BES not about attitudes towards referendums.

### *3.7.2.2. Political participation*

As noted in the previous chapters, the focus in this thesis is on political participation in the behavioural sense. Because surveys cannot measure actual behaviour or action, respondents were instead asked to recall past action. For most items, respondents were instructed to think about their political activity and to indicate whether they had taken part in any of the listed forms of political claim-making (see Table 3). The answer option was (or recoded to be) dichotomous: affirmative or negative, with the additional option of "don't know". Logically, for each item, a value of one was assigned when a respondent indicated to have participated in the inquired form of political claim-making, and a value of zero when he or she had not. Although the exact wording of the items varied somewhat across the national election studies, the items were to a large extent comparable. A notable difference, however, could be seen in the timeframe about which respondents were instructed to refer: for the BES and GLES respondents were asked to think about the last twelve months/one year, whereas for the DPES this was extended to the past five years. Although this might result in comparably higher levels of political participation for Dutch respondents, it should be emphasised that the national election studies inquired about participation in different forms of – and not the number of times in – political claim-making. The levels of the DPES are, therefore, not expected to be highly inflated. Moreover, even when comparably higher levels of political participation for the DPES are observed, these are foreseen not to complicate the statistical analyses, since the analyses are carried out separately for each national election study.

### Item selection for indices

The statements about political participation were combined into various indices: for all items on political participation as well as for the different variants of political participation. At this point, it was important to look at the face-validity, unidimensionality and reliability of the items to be included in these indices. To start with the first variant, participation in the party-electoral arena, the listed items corresponded to the theoretically identified actions of voting in general elections, party membership, contacting a politician, doing work for a political party, and giving money to a political organisation or cause (PAR1- PAR5). The unidimensionality of the items was confirmed by factor analysis for all three national election studies (see Appendix A; Table A11). Here it should be added that the item “voted in 2017 general elections” (PAR1) consistently showed a low rotated factor loading (see Appendix A, Table A12), but that the theoretical nexus between this item and the first variant justified its inclusion. A possible explanation for this low factor loading is that voting in elections is a rather easy, widespread form of political participation, while other modes within this variant require more initiative and decisiveness. Regarding the reliability of the indices on participation in the party-electoral arena, the internal consistency of the items was rather low ( $\alpha_{BES} = .50$ ,  $\alpha_{DPES} = .35$ , and  $\alpha_{GLES} = .51$ ). Important to note here is that deletion of PAR1 would substantially increase the value for Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha_{BES} = .60$ ,  $\alpha_{DPES} = .55$ , and  $\alpha_{GLES} = .62$ ). The deletion of other items would not positively affect the reliability of these indices (see Appendix A; Table A13). Though these values for Cronbach’s alpha still indicate a poor or questionable internal consistency, it should be pointed out that only few items were included. As mentioned before, Cronbach’s alpha is likely to rise when the number of items is increased.

**Table 3: Items on political participation**

	British Election Study	Dutch Parliamentary Election Study	German Longitudinal Election Study
<b>Items on participation in the party-electoral arena</b>			
<b>PAR1</b>	Talking with people about the general election on June 8th, we have found that a lot of people didn't manage to vote. How about you, did you manage to vote in the general election? (B01)	Nu willen we ingaan op de afgelopen Tweede Kamerverkiezingen. Heeft u bij de Tweede Kamerverkiezingen van 15 maart gestemd? (V160)	Bei der Bundestagswahl am 24. September kamen viele Bürger nicht dazu, ihre Stimme abzugeben oder nahmen aus anderen Gründen nicht an der Wahl teil. Wie war es bei Ihnen: Haben Sie gewählt oder haben Sie nicht gewählt? (Q17)
<b>PAR2</b>	Are you, or have you ever been, a member of any political party? (U03)		Schauen Sie sich bitte einmal diese Liste an. Sind Sie persönlich in einer dieser Organisationen Mitglied? Partei (Q190i)
<b>PAR3</b>	Have you contacted a politician, government or local government official? (P04_01)	Heeft u contact opgenomen met een politicus of ambtenaar? (V283)	Haben Sie Politiker über das Internet kontaktiert? (Q91i)
<b>PAR4</b>	Have you done any work on behalf of a political party or action group? (P04_04)	Heeft u een politieke partij of organisatie ingeschakeld? (V281)	Haben Sie eine Partei im Wahlkampf unterstützt? (Q85h)
<b>PAR5</b>	Have you given money to a political party, organisation or cause? (P04_05)		Haben Sie an politische Parteien oder Organisationen gespendet? (Q89d)

Items on participation in the non-party arena			
<b>PAR6</b>	Have you signed a petition on the Internet? (P04_02)		Haben Sie sich an Onlinepetitionen oder Unterschriftenaktionen im Internet beteiligt? (Q91g)
<b>PAR7</b>	Have you signed a petition not on the Internet? (P04_03)		Haben Sie an einer Unterschriftensammlung teilgenommen? (Q89c)
<b>PAR8</b>	Have you taken part in a public demonstration? (P04_06)	Heeft u meegedaan aan een protestactie, protestmars of demonstratie? (V285)	Haben Sie an einer Demonstration teilgenommen? (Q89b)
<b>PAR9</b>	Have you bought – or refused to buy – any products for political or ethical reasons? (P04_07)		Haben Sie Produkte aus politischen oder ethischen Gründen konsumiert oder boykottiert? (Q89e)
<b>PAR10</b>	Have you gone on strike or taken action? (P04_08)		
<b>PAR11</b>		Heeft u meegedaan aan een actiegroep? (V284)	
Items on referendum democracy			
<b>PAR12</b>	Thinking back to the EU referendum held on June 23rd 2016, if you voted did you vote to remain in the EU or to leave the EU, or did you not vote? (P01)	De volgende vragen gaan over het referendum over het Associatieverdrag tussen de Europese Unie en Oekraïne. Dit referendum werd gehouden op 6 april 2016. Heeft u toen gestemd of niet? (V072)	
Items on deliberation			
<b>PAR13</b>		Heeft u meegedaan aan een door de overheid georganiseerde inspraakbijeenkomst, hoorzitting of discussiebijeenkomst? (V282)	Haben Sie in einer Bürgerinitiative mitgearbeitet? (Q89a)
<b>PAR14</b>			Haben Sie Bürgerbeteiligungs-Plattformen von staatlichen Stellen im Internet genutzt, z.B. Bürgerhaushalte, Liquid-Democracy-Foren o.ä.? (Q91h)

Turning to the survey items on participation in the non-party arena, these concerned the theoretically identified actions of signing a petition, taking part in a demonstration, buying or refusing to buy a product, going on strike, and joining a civic action group (PAR6-PAR11). Factor analysis confirmed the unidimensionality of these items (see Appendix A; Table A14). Besides, for the BES and GLES, Cronbach's alpha was, again, poor to questionable ( $\alpha_{BES} = .52$ , and  $\alpha_{GLES} = .67$ ). Deleting an item would, however, not (greatly) enhance the reliability of the index (see Appendix A; Table A16). For the DPES, internal consistency was not proved ( $\alpha_{DPES} = .38$ ), whereby it is important to add that this index only included two items of which one proved its reliability in the indices of the BES and GLES.

On the third variant of political participation, the BES and DPES included an item asking about respondents' participation in the referendum on the British membership of the European Union (EU) and on the EU-Ukraine association agreement respectively (PAR12). Rather logically, this item theoretically pertained to participation in referendum democracy.

Regarding deliberation, the DPES and GLES included survey items on citizens' initiatives, citizen participation platforms or meetings organised by government (PAR13-PAR14). This corresponded to the fourth variant of political participation as outlined in the theoretical framework. For the GLES, factor analysis confirmed the unidimensionality of the two listed items, whereas the internal consistency was below the accepted minimum ( $\alpha_{\text{GLES}} = .26$ ; see Appendix A; Table A17). This can possibly be explained by the fact that only few respondents participated in either form of deliberation, let alone in both. In spite of the low reliability, PAR13 and PAR14 were combined into an index.

Lastly, when including all items on political participation, the quality of the measurement appeared rather high at face value due to the forthright link between the survey items and the theorised typology of political participation. Factor analysis, however, showed a more equivocal result (see Appendix A; Tables A18-A22). Hereby, three or four separate factors were discerned. Interestingly, the pattern was not constant for the three national election studies: the items were not consistently distributed among the different factors. Although this implied that the typology used in this thesis was not corroborated by factor analysis, this was not problematic when taking the theoretical foundation of the different variants as decisive. Besides, Cronbach's alpha was acceptable for the BES and questionable for the GLES, while for the DPES it fell below what was considered acceptable ( $\alpha_{\text{BES}} = .70$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{DPES}} = .47$ , and  $\alpha_{\text{GLES}} = .68$ ). For the BES and GLES, deleting an item would not substantially contribute to a greater reliability of the index (see Appendix A; Table A23). When deleting the item "voted in referendum" (PAR12) for the DPES, Cronbach's alpha would rise to the level of acceptable ( $\alpha_{\text{DPES}} = .50$ ). Theoretically, however, the deletion of this item was judged inappropriate. Here it is important to emphasise that despite the sometimes dubious outcomes of the factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha, the link between the theoretical typology of political participation and the listed survey items was considered strong enough to compute the described indices.

At this point, a side note is necessary on the use of (social) media for political claim-making, about which survey items were included in the DPES and GLES. These items were not included in the composite measures of political participation for the following reasons. First and foremost, classifying these items to fit into the typology of political participation was dubious due to the lack of theoretical guidance. To check this line of reasoning, the following items were included in the factor analysis for the DPES: "tried to get radio, television or newspaper involved" (PAR15), "used social media like Twitter or Facebook" (PAR16), and, lastly, "used internet, email or SMS without social media" (PAR 17). According to the factor analysis, these items did not represent a separate dimension of political participation and, moreover, loaded onto two different factors. Also, when interpreting the factor loadings as a gauge of the substantive importance of the concerned item to a factor, it is important to note the comparatively low rotated factor loadings of the items PAR15-PAR17 (see Appendix A; Table A19). Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha for the political participation index was computed both with and without these three items, whereby it only increased from  $\alpha_{\text{DPES}} = .47$  to  $\alpha_{\text{DPES}} = .49$  (see Appendix A; Table 23). In that regard, it is relevant to again recall the positive effect of an increase in the number of items on Cronbach's alpha. Therefore, the outcomes of factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha, in combination with the theoretical argumentation, justified the exclusion of items on the use of (social) media in political activism from the indices on political participation.

#### *Computation of the indices*

Although one could reason that a structure was present in the items, whereby voting in elections was a somewhat obvious first step, a scale was not considered suitable due to the lack of a clear order among the rest of the items

on political participation. The items were, again, assigned equal weights, the option “don’t know” and otherwise not-stated answers were defined as missing values, and cases that held missing values were excluded listwise. Subsequently, the indices were computed by adding the number of times a respondent answered affirmative. For this reason, a value of 0 signalled that a respondent reported he or she had not been involved in (a variant of) political participation, whereas this value would increase with a value of 1 for each additional manner in which a respondent stated to have been politically active. Hence, the resulting value on the indices corresponded to the number of different ways a respondent had taken part in (a variant of) political participation. The range of the indices thus depended on the number of items included, whereby the minimum was zero and the maximum equalled the number of items.

### *Measurements using single items*

Instead of indices, individual listed items were taken for the analysis in two instances: on referendum democracy for the DPES and GLES as well as on deliberation for the DPES. The reason for this is quite straightforward: the questionnaires contained only item that suited as a measurement for these variants. Notably, the BES also inferred about casting a vote in the Scottish referendum on independence. This item was, however, excluded because it was, rather logically, asked only to respondents living in Scotland. Since no referendum on the federal level had taken place recently in Germany, the GLES did not include such an item.

In terms of validity, two limitations of the operationalisation should be stressed here. Regarding the content validity, one can assume that the repertoire of political participation was not limited to the forms covered by the survey items. A second limitation of the operationalisation was that it did not measure the number of instances a respondent had taken part in (a certain form of) political participation. These limitations are important to keep in mind when interpreting the results.

### **3.7.3. Control variables**

Before describing the statistical methods applied in this thesis, it is important to outline the measurement of the control variables, which were outlined in the theoretical framework (see Table 4). While for the variable gender the answer options rather logically corresponded to male (0) and female (1), age was measured either through age at last birthday or year of birth. This latter variable was (re)coded so that each value corresponded to a range of ten years of age, starting with the category 18-24 years old (and 16 instead of 18 for the GLES) and ending with the category 85+ years old. Regarding education level, respondents were asked to state their highest (completed) level of education for the DPES and GLES. The answer categories were arranged so that a low value corresponded to a low level of education and a high value to a high level of education.<sup>10</sup> Here it should be noted that the comparability of the categories across the DPES and GLES is problematic. For instance, the GLES only includes secondary education, whereas the DPES also inquired about tertiary education. Yet, for the analyses it suffices that the answer categories are arranged in an ascending order. For the BES, an operationalisation of education level as the highest qualification turned out complicated due to a different arrangement of answer categories. For instance, some answer options corresponded to a specific field (e.g. teaching or nursing), while others specifically

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<sup>10</sup> For the DPES, the answer categories were as follows: 1] elementary/primary school, 2] secondary lower vocational (e.g. VMBO-B, VMBO-K), 3] secondary higher vocational (e.g. VMBO-T), 4] tertiary vocational (MBO), 5] higher secondary (HAVO, VWO), 6] tertiary higher vocational (HBO), 7] university bachelor, and 8] university master. The GLES, in turn, included the following answer categories: 1] Schule beendet ohne Abschluss, 2] Hauptschulabschluss, Volksschulabschluss, Abschluss der polytechnischen Oberschule 8. oder 9. Klasse, 3] Realschulabschluss, Mittlere Reife, Fachschulreife oder Abschluss der polytechnischen Oberschule 10. Klasse, 4] Fachhochschulreife, 5] Abitur bzw. erweiterte Oberschule mit Abschluss 12. Klasse (Hochschulreife).

concerned the Scottish education system. Therefore, for the BES, education level was measured in a dichotomous manner: whether the respondent had any educational or work-related qualifications.

Finally, political interest and satisfaction with democracy were measured in a straightforward manner. Respondents were asked to what extent they were interested in politics and satisfied with democracy. For the BES, respondents were instructed to indicate their level of interest and satisfaction respectively by means of 4-point indices. For the DPES, respondents could state their interest in politics on 3-point index and their satisfaction with democracy on a 4-point index. In contrast, the GLES employed a 5-point index for both items. All items were (re)coded so that a high value corresponded to a high interest or satisfaction. Moreover, the 3-point and 4-point indices were converted in order to be able to compare the survey items. For the 3-point index of the DPES, the answer option very interested was given a value of 4.5, fairly interested of 3 and not interested of 1.5. For the 4-point indices, the answer option very interested/satisfied was assigned a value of 4.5, fairly interested/satisfied of 3.5, not very interested/satisfied of 2.5 and not at all interested/satisfied of 1.5 (see e.g. Holmes & Mergen, 2014).

**Table 4: Items on control variables**

	British Election Study	Dutch Parliamentary Election Study	German Longitudinal Election Study
<b>Gender</b>	Interviewer to observe and record: gender of respondent (Y9)	Wat is uw geslacht? (V010)	Ist die Zielperson männlich oder weiblich? (Q1)
<b>Age</b>	Please can you tell me your age at your last birthday. (Y10)	Wat is uw geboortedatum? (V011)	Würden Sie mir bitte sagen, in welchem Jahr Sie geboren wurden? (Q2a-c)
<b>Education level</b>	Do you have any educational or work-related qualifications (Y12A)	Wat is de beste omschrijving van de opleiding waar u als laatste een diploma, akte of getuigschrift heeft gehaald? (V368)	Welchen höchsten allgemeinbildenden Schulabschluss haben Sie? (Q135)
<b>Political interest</b>	How interested would you say you are in politics? (A03)	Bent u zeer geïnteresseerd in politieke onderwerpen, tamelijk geïnteresseerd of niet geïnteresseerd? (V024)	Einmal ganz allgemein gesprochen: Wie stark interessieren Sie sich für Politik? (Q60)
<b>Satisfaction with democracy</b>	On the whole, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way that democracy works in this country? (M1)	Bent u over het algemeen genomen zeer tevreden, tamelijk tevreden, niet erg tevreden of helemaal niet tevreden over de manier waarop de democratie functioneert in Nederland? (V240)	Wie zufrieden oder unzufrieden sind Sie - alles in allem - mit der Demokratie, so wie sie in Deutschland besteht? (Q124)

### 3.8. Statistical methods

The prime purpose of the data analysis was to find out if and to what extent populist attitudes were related to (attitudes towards) political participation. To examine this nexus, the statistical method used was regression analysis. More specifically, multiple regression analyses were carried out for the following dependent variables: attitudes towards voting, attitudes towards referendum democracy, political participation, participation in the party-electoral arena, participation in the non-party arena and deliberation (GLES). Differently, logistic regression analyses were performed for the variables participation in referendum democracy and deliberation (DPES). These statistical methods are now discussed in further detail.



### 3.8.1. Multiple regression analysis

Several aspects of the multiple regression analyses should be highlighted. To begin with, the predictor variables introduced were populist attitudes and the above-outlined control variables. These predictor variables were entered hierarchically into the model: populist attitudes was introduced first and, as a next step, the control variables were entered simultaneously using forced entry. Notably, these latter variables were chosen based on the theoretical underpinnings discussed before, but the literature did not hint at an order in which these were to be entered into the model. The hierarchical method of regression was considered most suited since it allowed to examine the influence of populist attitudes separately as well as to determine whether conclusions drawn from this first model could be retained after introducing the control variables. Moreover, all predictor variables were, as required, measured on either a dichotomous or interval level while the dependent variables relied upon an interval measurement. Additionally, respondents with missing values were excluded listwise.

Apart from interpreting the results provided by regression analyses, it was imperative to assess whether the regression models fit the data and if the results could be generalised. For this purpose, different assumptions were tested, as explained and reported in Appendix B. Firstly, to reflect upon the accuracy of the regression models, it was checked if the regression models were influenced by a limited number of cases (Field, 2005; George & Mallery, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Although outliers were detected in the data, these were not found to have an excessive influence on the regression parameters. From this, it was concluded that there was no clear indication for doubting the accuracy of the regression analyses. Secondly, the generalisability of the models was assessed. Hereby the assumptions of homoscedasticity, normally distributed errors and linearity were sometimes violated. As a result, some caution is necessary when generalising the results to the British, Dutch and German populations.

### 3.8.2. Logistic regression analysis

The effect of populist attitudes on participation in referendum democracy and in deliberation (DPES) was tested using logistic regression analysis. The reason for this is straightforward: the concerned dependent variables were measured on a dichotomous level. In a similar manner as in multiple regression analysis, the logistic regression analyses built on a hierarchical method of entry: the predictor variable populist attitudes was entered first and, next, the other variables were introduced simultaneously using forced entry. Differently,  $R^2$  was calculated using the following formula:

$$R^2 = \frac{\text{model chi-square statistic}}{\text{original -2Log likelihood}}.$$

In a similar manner as before, the logistic regression models were assessed for their accuracy and generalisability. Hereby, outliers were again observed, but not found to exert an excessive influence over the regression parameters. Moreover, in no instance, the assumptions used to test the generalisability of the results were violated. Hence, there is no indication that the logistical regression models were biased by a small number of influential cases or that caution is warranted when generalising the results to the British and Dutch populations.

### 3.8.3. Independent samples t-test

Apart from regression analyses, a different statistical method to examine the link between populist attitudes and political participation was explored, namely the independent samples t-test (hereafter referred to as t-test). As stated above, the validity of the regression analyses might be doubted as a result of the reported violations of the

assumptions of homoscedasticity, normality and linearity (see Appendix B). In that regard, the t-test allowed for a manner to bypass these assumptions. First off, the t-test did not presume a linear relationship. Secondly, literature reported the t-test to be robust to deviations from normality in case of large and comparable sample sizes for both groups, whereby comparable was defined as less than three times larger (Skovlund & Fenstad, 2001). In all cases, the absolute number of respondents per group was high enough to be classified as a large sample size ( $N > 250$ ). For the BES and GLES, the groups of populist and non-populist respondents fell within the limit of comparable, whereas this was not the case for the DPES. For this reason, both the t-test and its non-parametric equivalent, the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test were run for the DPES, whereby both statistical tests yielded similar outcomes. Finally, in case the assumption of homoscedasticity – i.e. of homogeneity of variances – was violated, the t-test statistics reported were those for equal variances not assumed. In this manner, the t-test was considered a suitable alternative to compare the results of the regression analyses.

The t-tests provided an answer to a somewhat different research question, namely if and to what extent populist respondents differed from non-populist respondents in terms of their (attitude towards) political participation. For this purpose, respondents were grouped based on their score on the populism index, whereby those scoring 3.3 or higher were marked as populist. The justification for this cut-off point as well as the results of the t-tests can be found in Appendix C. Importantly, when comparing the outcomes of the t-tests and regression analyses, the derived conclusions were highly similar. In that sense it should be emphasised that the conclusions drawn from the t-test statistics did not include control variables and were, therefore, compared to the regression models wherein only populist attitudes was entered.

Before continuing to the presentation of the results, a final note is necessary. For the descriptive statistics, the mean was reported together with the 95 per cent confidence interval for the mean, instead of the standard deviation, due to the above-mentioned violations of the assumption of normality.

## 4. Results

In this chapter, the results of the above-outlined data analysis are presented. To begin with, the variables under study are discussed by means of descriptive statistics. Next, the focus shifts to the link between populist attitudes and outlooks on political participation. This is followed by a discussion of the dynamics between populist attitudes and actual political participation, whereby a further distinction is made on the basis of the theorised typology of political participation. Finally, the influence of control variables is reflected upon.

### 4.1. Descriptive statistics

This section starts with a brief overview of the degree of populist attitudes among the respondents in the three national election studies. When looking at mean scores, it initially seemed that populist attitudes were neither unequivocally widespread nor absent in the samples ( $M_{BES} = 3.05 \pm .05$ ;  $M_{DPES} = 2.84 \pm .03$ ;  $M_{GLES} = 3.23 \pm .04$ ; measured on a 5-point index whereby a high score indicated a populist attitude). Yet, a different picture emerged when considering the percentage of highly populist respondents, defined here as those scoring 4 or higher on the populism index. While only 6.7 per cent of the Dutch respondents indicated to be highly populist, this proportion is substantially bigger for British and German respondents: 13.5 and 18.7 per cent respectively. Moreover, the percentage of populist respondents sharply increased when taking the score of 3.3 on the populism index as a cut-off point to denote both highly and slightly populist respondents (as explained in Appendix C). In fact, 42.1 per cent of the British respondents and 46.2 per cent of the German respondents could be classified as populist, whereas this ratio was again lower for the DPES, namely 24.4 per cent. From this it follows that a substantial group of respondents in Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany indicated to be populist. Here it should be stressed that the representativeness of these statistics for the British, Dutch and German populations is not warranted, since no statistical weights were applied. For this reason, it is not considered opportune to state if and to what extent populist attitudes were more widespread in one country than in another.

Turning to attitudes towards political participation, it is relevant to shortly describe the stances of the respondents towards voting and referendum democracy. To start with attitudes towards voting, respondents in Great Britain and Germany were on average positive ( $M_{BES} = 3.89 \pm .04$ ;  $M_{GLES} = 4.14 \pm .06$ ). While 77.3 of the British respondents viewed voting in elections as citizens' democratic duty, this percentage was slightly higher among German respondents: 78.1 per cent. Looking at the other items on attitudes towards voting included in the BES, it becomes clear that a similar proportion of respondents disagreed that going to vote is a lot of effort (79.7 per cent), whereas a smaller ratio agreed with the item inquiring about a feeling of satisfaction when voting (64.5 per cent). A possible explanation for this slight discrepancy is that one's view of something as a duty signals its importance. This, in combination with one's perception of this not being a large effort, does not imply that it is therefore satisfying in any sense. On average, 60.5 per cent of the British respondents scored 4 or higher on the attitudes towards voting index. In sum, a broad majority of respondents in the British and German sample showed a (highly) favourable stance towards voting.

Interestingly, respondents on average showed a more neutral stance towards referendum democracy. At first sight, Dutch respondents seemed rather neutral, and German respondents tended towards a somewhat more favourable stance towards referendum democracy ( $M_{DPES} = 3.04 \pm .05$ ;  $M_{GLES} = 3.60 \pm .06$ ). When considering only the item inquiring to what extent citizens should be able to decide on important issues through referendums, a comparable ratio of respondents agreed for the DPES and GLES. While 53.7 of the Dutch respondents scored 4 or higher on this item, 58.4 per cent of the German respondents did so. Towards the other items included in the index on attitudes towards referendum democracy, the Dutch respondents were more reserved. Only 35.8 per

cent of the Dutch respondents was in favour of government always following referendum outcomes and 22.7 per cent indicated to be a proponent of a democracy wherein as many decisions as possible are decided upon through referenda. Overall, 19.3 per cent of the Dutch respondents showed a favourable attitude towards referendum democracy. Thus, both Dutch and German respondents were rather favourable towards referendums as a device to decide upon important issues, but this positivism became less among Dutch respondents when the outcome and/or frequency of referenda became more prominent.

Shifting the focus to political participation, voting in the 2017 general elections turned out – one of – the most frequent forms of respondent’s involvement in politics for all three national election studies. While 79.1 per cent of the British respondents reported to have voted in the 2017 general elections, 92.1 per cent of the Dutch and 89.9 per cent of the German respondents indicated to have done so. For the BES and DPES, voting in the referendum on respectively the EU and Ukraine was another widespread form of political participation. This was true more so for the BES than for the DPES: 83.8 per cent of the British respondents stated to have voted in the referendum on the EU, whereas 56.8 per cent of the Dutch respondents reported to have casted their vote in the referendum on Ukraine. Interestingly, British respondents stated more often to have voted in the EU referendum than in the 2017 general elections. Moreover, staying with the BES, British respondents indicated relatively often to have signed a petition online (29.1 per cent), to have contacted a politician or government official (12.5 per cent), and to have bought or refused to buy a product for political or ethical reasons (11.8 per cent). Turning to the GLES, German respondents stated relatively often to have bought or boycotted a product for political or ethical reasons (24.7 per cent), and to have signed a petition both in person (18.4 per cent) as well as online (16.7 per cent). For all three national election studies, the other inquired forms of political participation were rather exceptional among the respondents (<10 per cent). Again, one should be cautious when generalising these results to the British, Dutch and German populations because nonresponse bias was not controlled for.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4.2. Populism and attitudes towards voting and referendums

Having shortly described the variables under study, the attention is now shifted to the relationship between populist attitudes and outlooks on political participation. For both the BES and GLES, populist attitudes were initially found to have a negative and significant effect on attitudes towards voting, indicating that respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes tended to have a more negative outlook on voting (see Table 5). The effect size was, nonetheless, limited: less than 3 per cent of the variance in attitudes towards voting could be explained by populist attitudes. The multiple regression model with all five predictors showed a different outcome. After entering the control variables, populist attitudes did not have significant influence on respondents’ stance towards voting. From this it can be concluded that the previously reported significant relationship appeared to be a product of the impact of other variables.

Rather than populist attitudes, the most influential predictor of attitudes towards voting was interest in politics for the BES, while satisfaction with democracy had the largest contribution in the model for the GLES. It is interesting to add that interest in politics and satisfaction with democracy were significantly correlated to both populist attitudes and attitudes towards voting. More specifically, respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes were less interested in politics, while those more interested in politics held a more positive attitude towards voting. In a similar manner, respondents who scored high on the populism index were less satisfied with

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<sup>11</sup> This was, for instance, true for turnout in the 2017 general elections. To compare, the actual voter turnout was 81.9 per cent for the Netherlands and 76.2 per cent for Germany (“Voter turnout at general elections,” 2018). This points to a discrepancy of 10.2 and 13.7 percentage points respectively. Such a comparison for the BES was difficult, since statistics on voter turnout were not widely available for Great Britain (only for the United Kingdom).

democracy, whereas those with high levels of satisfaction with democracy indicated a more favourable stance towards voting. In that regard, the variables interest in politics and satisfaction with democracy possibly had an effect on the relationship between populist attitudes and attitudes towards voting. This topic of control variables is discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter.

**Table 5: Multiple regression analyses on attitudes towards voting**

		BES			GLES		
		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$
Model 1	Constant	4.363	0.105		4.972	0.130	
	Populist attitudes	-0.100	0.033	-.100**	-0.252	0.039	-.156***
Model 2	Constant	2.571	0.229		2.327	0.316	
	Populist attitudes	-0.010	0.034	-.010	-0.016	0.049	-.010
	Gender	0.150	0.050	.096**	0.184	0.059	.075**
	Age	0.052	0.015	.117***	0.050	0.017	.075**
	Education level	0.199	0.074	.092**	0.047	0.029	.045
	Interest in politics	0.225	0.031	.242***	0.123	0.033	.095***
	Satisfaction with democracy	0.084	0.030	.092**	0.290	0.038	.218***

Note BES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .010$ ;  $F(1, 900) = 9.06$ ,  $p = .003$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .089$ ;  $F(5, 895) = 17.59$ ,  $p < .001$ .

GLES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .024$ ;  $F(1, 1653) = 41.43$ ,  $p < .001$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .057$ ;  $F(5, 1648) = 20.35$ ,  $p < .001$ .

+ $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

A different picture emerged from the regression analyses of populist attitudes and outlooks on referendum democracy (see Table 6). For both the DPES and GLES, populist attitudes turned out to be positively and significantly related to attitudes towards referendum democracy. In other words, the higher respondents scored on the populism index, the more they were in favour of referendum democracy. Not only was populist attitudes a significant predictor of outlooks on referendum democracy, it was also an influential one. While for the DPES 33.6 per cent of the variation in respondents' appraisal of referendum democracy was explained by their score on the populism index, this was 25.8 per cent for the GLES. Moreover, after controlling for the other variables, populist attitudes remained a significant and important predictor of respondents' appraisal of referendum democracy.

**Table 6: Multiple regression analyses on attitudes towards referendum democracy**

		DPES			GLES		
		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$
Model 1	Constant	0.581	0.093		0.886	0.117	
	Populist attitudes	0.866	0.032	.580***	0.841	0.035	.508***
Model 2	Constant	1.991	0.253		1.450	0.292	
	Populist attitudes	0.748	0.039	.501***	0.784	0.046	.474***
	Gender	0.012	0.042	.006	0.096	0.055	.038+
	Age	-0.048	0.013	-.084***	-0.027	0.016	-.039+
	Education level	-0.077	0.013	-.141***	-0.070	0.026	-.066**
	Interest in politics	-0.097	0.027	-.082***	0.026	0.030	.019
	Satisfaction with democracy	-0.051	0.037	-.034	-0.043	0.035	-.031

Note DPES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .336$ ;  $F(1, 1432) = 724.28$ ,  $p < .001$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .033$ ;  $F(5, 1427) = 15.04$ ,  $p < .001$ .

GLES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .258$ ;  $F(1, 1642) = 571.74$ ,  $p < .001$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .006$ ;  $F(5, 1637) = 2.47$ ,  $p = .031$ .

+ $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

### 4.3. Populism and political participation

Turning to the link between populist attitudes and political participation, an interesting dynamic can again be observed. To begin with, the relation between populist attitudes and political participation was negative and significant according to all three national election studies (see Table 7). This suggested that the higher respondents' score on the populism index, the lower their participation in political claim-making. The effect size was, nonetheless, rather limited. In this first model, populist attitudes could account for less than 5 per cent of the variance in political participation. When introducing the control variables into the model, populist attitudes remained a significant predictor of political participation for the BES and GLES, whereas this did not hold for the DPES. A consistent conclusion can, therefore, not be drawn. Nonetheless, the results suggested that *Hypothesis 1a* stating that *the higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the more they participate in political claim-making* was not supported by the analyses. In contrast, *Hypothesis 1b* denoting that *the higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the less they participate in political claim-making* appeared to be corroborated – with a side note that the importance of other variables is a point for further investigation.

**Table 7: Multiple regression analyses on political participation**

		BES			DPES			GLES		
		B	Std. Error	$\beta$	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	B	Std. Error	$\beta$
Model 1	Constant	3.730	0.215		2.349	0.093		3.300	0.176	
	Populist attitudes	-0.284	0.068	-.138***	-0.157	0.032	-.102***	-0.428	0.054	-.210***
Model 2	Constant	1.718	0.435		0.758	0.241		0.889	0.424	
	Populist attitudes	-0.206	0.064	-.101**	-0.048	0.037	-.032	-0.276	0.066	-.135***
	Gender	0.127	0.095	.040	-0.091	0.041	-.045*	0.074	0.077	.024
	Age	-0.036	0.028	-.040	0.086	0.012	.148***	-0.010	0.023	-.011
	Education level	0.380	0.140	.086**	0.093	0.013	.163***	0.273	0.037	.205***
	Interest in politics	0.768	0.059	.398***	0.266	0.026	.219***	0.472	0.043	.292***
	Satisfaction with democracy	-0.378	0.056	-.203***	-0.096	0.036	-.061**	-0.187	0.051	-.110***

Note BES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .019$ ;  $F(1, 894) = 17.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .219$ ;  $F(5, 889) = 51.21$ ,  $p < .001$ .

DPES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .010$ ;  $F(1, 2264) = 23.78$ ,  $p < .001$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .109$ ;  $F(5, 2259) = 55.77$ ,  $p < .001$ .

GLES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .044$ ;  $F(1, 1364) = 62.79$ ,  $p < .001$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .143$ ;  $F(5, 1359) = 47.73$ ,  $p < .001$ .

\* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\*\* $p < .001$

A puzzling question still to be answered is whether and how populist attitudes were of influence when distinguishing between different variants of political participation. Starting with the first variant, the analysis initially suggested that populist attitudes had a negative and significant impact on participation in the party-electoral arena (see Table 8). From this it follows that the higher respondents' score on the populism index, the lower their participation in the party-electoral arena. Again, the amount of influence of populist attitudes on participation in this first variant was minimal, explaining less than 4 per cent of the variation. Notably, when entering the control variables into the regression model, populist attitudes was still a significant predictor of participation in the party-electoral arena for the DPES and GLES, while it was not for the BES. This implies that a consistent conclusion can, again, not be derived. Yet, the results point in the direction that *Hypothesis 2* specifying that *the higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the less they participate in the party-electoral arena* was supported by the analyses.

**Table 8: Multiple regression analyses on participation in the party-electoral arena**

		BES			DPES			GLES		
		B	Std. Error	$\beta$	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	B	Std. Error	$\beta$
Model 1	Constant	1.588	0.117		1.381	0.046		1.612	0.074	
	Populist attitudes	-0.114	0.037	-.102**	-0.100	0.016	-.130***	-0.161	0.023	-.187***
Model 2	Constant	0.189	0.243		0.733	0.122		0.715	0.184	
	Populist attitudes	-0.066	0.036	-.059 <sup>+</sup>	-0.051	0.019	-.067**	-0.124	0.028	-.144***
	Gender	0.050	0.053	.028	-0.028	0.021	-.027	-0.010	0.034	-.008
	Age	0.045	0.015	.090**	0.030	0.006	.102***	0.036	0.010	.095***
	Education level	0.189	0.078	.079*	0.040	0.006	.142***	0.058	0.016	.103***
	Interest in politics	0.386	0.033	.368***	0.098	0.013	.163***	0.180	0.019	.264***
	Satisfaction with democracy	-0.162	0.032	-.159***	-0.031	0.018	-.040 <sup>+</sup>	-0.049	0.022	-.068*

Note BES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .010$ ;  $F(1, 905) = 9.58, p = .002$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .179$ ;  $F(5, 900) = 39.62, p < .001$ .

DPES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .017$ ;  $F(1, 2293) = 39.67, p < .001$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .062$ ;  $F(5, 2288) = 30.98, p < .001$ .

GLES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .035$ ;  $F(1, 1373) = 49.95, p < .001$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .102$ ;  $F(5, 1368) = 32.22, p < .001$ .

<sup>+</sup> $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Looking at the second variant, participation in the non-party arena, the outcomes were somewhat more equivocal (see Table 9). For the BES and GLES, populist attitudes had a negative and significant influence on participation in the non-party arena. This, in turn, implied that the higher respondents' score on the populism index, the lower their participation in the non-party arena. As before, a small effect size could be observed: populist attitudes explained less than 5 per cent of the variation in participation in the party-electoral arena. After entering the control variables in the regression models, a similar picture aroused. The effect of populist attitudes on participation in the non-party arena remained significant for British and German respondents. Differently, for the DPES, populist attitudes was not a significant predictor of participation in the second variant of political claim-making. As a result, drawing a univocal conclusion was, again, problematic. Looking at *Hypothesis 3* stating that *the higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the more they participate in the non-party arena*, it follows that this hypothesis was corroborated by the findings for the BES and GLES.

Zooming in on the third variant of political participation, logistic regression analyses were used to examine the influence of populist attitudes on participation in referendum democracy (see Table 10). Interestingly, the models showed that using populist attitudes as a predictor did not significantly improve the ability to explain participation in referendums for both the BES and DPES. Illustrative in this respect is that the analyses remained ambiguous whether a higher score on the populist attitudes index signalled an increase or decrease in the odds of participation in referendum democracy. This is especially true when intending to generalise the results to the British and Dutch population. Hence, populist attitudes did not make a significant contribution to the prediction of participation in referendum democracy. For this reason, *Hypothesis 4* denoting that *the higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the more they participate in referendum democracy* was not corroborated by the analyses. The results neither suggested that the higher respondents' level of populist attitudes, the less likely they were to participate in referendums.

**Table 9: Multiple regression analyses on participation in the non-party arena**

		BES			DPES			GLES		
		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	$\beta$
Model 1	Constant	1.192	0.125		0.151	0.033		1.553	0.125	
	Populist attitudes	-0.159	0.039	-.133***	-0.014	0.011	-.025	-0.250	0.038	-.171***
Model 2	Constant	0.996	0.259		0.027	0.089		0.136	0.306	
	Populist attitudes	-0.145	0.038	-.121***	0.000	0.014	.000	-0.140	0.048	-.096**
	Gender	0.073	0.057	.039	-0.014	0.015	-.019	0.099	0.056	.045+
	Age	-0.110	0.016	-.210***	0.003	0.004	.013	-0.039	0.017	-.061*
	Education level	0.131	0.083	.051	0.023	0.005	.111***	0.195	0.027	.204***
	Interest in politics	0.325	0.035	.290***	0.048	0.009	.112***	0.255	0.031	.222***
	Satisfaction with democracy	-0.211	0.034	-.195***	-0.052	0.013	-.091***	-0.115	0.037	-.095**

Note BES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .018$ ;  $F(1, 907) = 16.25, p < .001$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .179$ ;  $F(5, 902) = 40.22, p < .001$ .  
 DPES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .001$ ;  $F(1, 2303) = 1.43, p = .231$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .033$ ;  $F(5, 2298) = 15.66, p < .001$ .  
 GLES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .029$ ;  $F(1, 1400) = 42.35, p < .001$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .106$ ;  $F(5, 1395) = 34.08, p < .001$ .  
 + $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Table 10: Logistic regression analyses on referendum democracy**

		BES					DPES				
		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Exp b</i>	95 % CI for <i>Exp b</i>		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Exp b</i>	95 % CI for <i>Exp b</i>	
					Lower	Upper				Lower	Upper
Model 1	Constant	2.685	0.488				0.340	0.188			
	Populist attitudes	-0.177	0.152	0.889	0.660	1.198	0.028	0.065	1.028	0.906	1.168
Model 2	Constant	-2.701	1.098				-2.112	0.534			
	Populist attitudes	0.124	0.173	1.132	0.806	1.589	0.135	0.083	1.144	0.973	1.345
	Gender	-0.152	0.254	0.859	0.522	1.415	-0.129	0.090	0.879	0.737	1.047
	Age	0.343***	0.076	1.410	1.216	1.635	0.212***	0.026	1.237	1.174	1.302
	Education level	0.695*	0.328	2.005	1.053	3.815	0.065*	0.028	1.068	1.011	1.128
	Interest in politics	0.777***	0.147	2.175	1.630	2.901	0.305***	0.057	1.356	1.212	1.517
	Satisfaction with democracy	0.076	0.151	1.079	0.802	1.450	0.011	0.079	1.011	0.866	1.181

Note BES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .001$ ; = .001 (Cox & Snell); = .001 (Nagelkerke);  $\chi^2(1) = 0.60, p = .440$ .  
 Model 2:  $R^2 = .104$ ; = .061 (Cox & Snell); = .135 (Nagelkerke);  $\chi^2(6) = 56.28, p < .001$ .  
 DPES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .000$ ; = .000 (Cox & Snell); = .000 (Nagelkerke);  $\chi^2(1) = 0.19, p = .664$ .  
 Model 2:  $R^2 = .040$ ; = .052 (Cox & Snell); = .071 (Nagelkerke);  $\chi^2(6) = 122.25, p < .001$ .  
 + $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

A different dynamic could be observed for populist attitudes and deliberation (see Table 11). For the DPES, logistic regression analysis showed that populist attitudes was a significant predictor of participation in deliberation, whereby its impact was negative. In fact, a higher score on the populism index decreased the likelihood of a respondent having participated in a deliberative initiative. Also, after entering the control variables into the model, the influence of populist attitudes remained significant. Yet, the effect size was rather limited. For the GLES, multiple regression analysis pointed to a similar outcome. Populist attitudes were found to be negatively and significantly related to participation in deliberation. This indicated that the higher respondents' score on the populism index, the less they participated in deliberative initiatives. Moreover, the effect size was



minimal and, thus, populist attitudes only explained a limited amount of variance in participation in deliberative initiatives. In contrast to the DPES, this conclusion did not hold for the GLES after introducing the other variables into the model. Hence, *Hypothesis 5* stating that *the higher citizens' level of populist attitudes, the less they participate in deliberative initiatives* was supported by the analyses, with a side note that the influence of control variables is a point for further consideration. Rather than populist attitudes, the most influential predictor of participation in deliberation was interest in politics. As noted before, respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes were significantly less interested in politics. In turn, a high interest in politics increased the odds of a respondent having participated in deliberation.

**Table 11: Logistic regression analysis (DPES) and multiple regression analysis on deliberation (GLES)**

		DPES					GLES		
		95 % CI for Exp b							
		B	Std. Error	Exp b	Lower	Upper	B	Std. Error	$\beta$
Model 1	Constant	-0.396	0.331				0.153	0.035	
	Populist attitudes	-0.711***	0.124	0.491	0.385	0.627	-0.022	0.011	-.055*
Model 2	Constant	-3.739	0.913				-0.008	0.090	
	Populist attitudes	-0.399**	0.144	0.671	0.506	0.889	-0.011	0.014	-.028
	Gender	-0.215	0.160	0.807	0.589	1.104	-0.007	0.016	-.011
	Age	0.054	0.045	1.055	0.967	1.152	-0.003	0.005	-.019
	Education level	0.212***	0.048	1.236	1.125	1.358	0.026	0.008	.100**
	Interest in politics	0.611***	0.097	1.843	1.522	2.231	0.036	0.009	.111***
	Satisfaction with democracy	-0.232+	0.134	0.793	0.610	1.032	-0.021	0.011	-.063+

Note DPES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .026$ ; = .015 (Cox & Snell); = .034 (Nagelkerke);  $\chi^2(1) = 35.73, p < .001$ .

Model 2:  $R^2 = .088$ ; = .051 (Cox & Snell); = .114 (Nagelkerke);  $\chi^2(6) = 121.50, p < .001$ .

GLES. Model 1:  $R^2 = .003$ ;  $F(1, 1407) = 4.27, p = .039$ . Model 2:  $\Delta R^2 = .028$ ;  $F(5, 1402) = 8.01, p < .001$ .

+ $p < .10$ , \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

#### 4.4. Control variables

Lastly, it is interesting to reflect on the influence of the control variables, since these could potentially have an effect on the presented relationships between populist attitudes and (attitudes towards) political participation. The significance and size of the impact of these variables was not always consistent across the BES, DPES and GLES (see Tables 5 to 11). The instances in which the beneath presented conclusion did not hold for all national election studies, the one(s) to which the conclusion applied is named.

Gender was found to neither significantly correlate to populist attitudes nor to be a significant predictor of (attitudes towards) political participation. There are, nonetheless, two exceptions to this: gender was shown to significantly predict attitudes towards voting, whereby women tended to have a more positive opinion. Also, as regards to political participation, men were more likely to have participated in political claim-making (DPES). For age, the analyses showed a different outcome. The variable age was found to be significantly and positively related to populist attitudes (DPES, GLES), denoting that older respondents tended to hold higher levels of populist attitudes. Besides, regression analyses showed age to be a significant predictor of attitudes towards voting and referendum democracy as well as of political participation, though in different directions. The older the respondent, the more positive his/her outlook on voting and the less favourable he/she was towards referendum democracy (DPES). Furthermore, the older the respondent, the more he/she had participated in politics in general (DPES) and the more he/she had taken part in the party-electoral arena. In a similar manner, the older the respondent, the higher the likelihood that he/she had casted a vote in referendum democracy. A

reverse observation could be made for participation in the non-party arena: the older the respondent, the less he/she had participated in this second variant (BES, GLES). For deliberation, age was not found to be a significant predictor. From this it can be concluded that age possibly influenced the observed relationships between populist attitudes and (attitudes towards) political participation. In that sense, age was a potential confounding variable. This denotes that age had an impact on populist attitudes and political participation, since an opposite direction is not reasonable: populist attitudes and political participation cannot influence age.

Zooming in on education level, this variable was observed to be significantly related to populist attitudes, whereby respondents with lower education levels tended to have higher levels of populist attitudes. The regression analyses showed education to be a significant predictor for all dependent variables. While lower educated respondents were less favourable towards voting (BES), the opposite seemed true for attitudes towards referendum democracy. Respondents with lower education levels were found to be more positive towards referendums (DPES) When looking at political participation, the following could be noted. The lower respondents' education level, the less they had participated in general, in the party-electoral arena as well as in the non-party arena (DPES, GLES). Likewise, a lower education level decreased the odds of a respondent having participated in referendums or deliberative initiatives. As such, education level was another potential confounding variable in the link between populist attitudes and political participation. This means that education level had an impact on populist attitudes and political participation, whereby a reverse direction is not feasible.

As mentioned previously, interest in politics was strongly correlated to populist attitudes. Respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes tended to be less interested politics. From the regression analyses it followed that the less respondents were interested in politics, the less favourable they were towards voting and the more positive towards referendum democracy (DPES). In particular, it was observed that interest in politics had a relatively large influence on political participation. Respondents with lower levels of interest in politics had participated less in political claim-making in general, in the party-electoral arena and in the non-party arena. In a similar manner, the less respondents were interested in politics, the lower the likelihood that they had taken part in referendums or in deliberative initiatives. These results appeared to corroborate the 'new politics' hypothesis, stating that those with higher education levels and interest in politics are more keen to participate in political claim-making. From the analyses presented in this thesis, interest in politics turned out to possibly be an important variable in the observed relationships between populist attitudes and political participation. No conclusions could be drawn regarding the causal direction between, on the one hand, interest in politics and, on the other hand, populist attitudes and political participation.

The relation between satisfaction with democracy and populist attitudes was also found to be significant, whereby respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes were less satisfied with democracy. Regression analyses showed that the less respondents were satisfied with democracy, the less positive their stance towards voting. The results also suggested that the less respondents were satisfied with democracy, the more they participated in political claim-making in general, in the party-electoral arena (BES, GLES) and in the non-party arena. For attitudes towards referendum democracy, participation in referendums and participation in deliberation, satisfaction with democracy was not found to be a significant predictor. The 'political dissatisfaction' hypothesis – denoting citizens with lower levels of satisfaction with democracy to be more active in political claim-making – thus appeared to be supported by the analyses. In sum, satisfaction with democracy potentially had an effect on the presented relationship between populist attitudes and political participation, whereby the causal direction between, on the one hand, satisfaction with democracy and, on the other hand, populist attitudes and political participation remains debatable.

## 5. Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis, the topic of political participation was signalled to be present on the political agenda as a result of a dual appeal. On the one hand, political participation was advocated as a response to current popular dissatisfaction with the representative democratic system, a theme that is particularly prominent in the populist discourse. Indeed, previous research indicated political discontent to be strongly related to populist voting. Both the academic and political debate have centred on citizen involvement in the political process as a solution to the rise of populist sentiments. On the other hand, the presence of political participation on the political agenda is also due to efforts of populist political parties. Populist parties seek to fuel the negativity towards representative democracy and to present themselves as ‘true’ democrats. In more concrete terms, populist parties advocate referendums and citizens’ initiatives as mechanisms par excellence to ensure politics is an expression of the will of the people. At first sight, the introduction of direct and participatory devices thus appears to address both the so-termed populist challenge as well as populist parties’ call for such measures. Yet, when specifically looking at citizens with a populist attitude, some authors strongly doubt that populist citizens want to take part at the input side of the political process. In academic literature, the nexus between populist attitudes and actual political participation remained an unexplored area. To analyse this interesting dynamic, this thesis focused on the following research question: *To what extent do citizens with a populist attitude take part in political claim-making in general, and in specific forms of political participation in particular?*

In theorising on the nexus between populist attitudes and participation in political claim-making in general, two opposing interpretations of populism’s democratic agenda were outlined. According to one interpretation, populist citizens are actively involved in political claim-making as to realise a direct relationship between the people and government, and thereby to ensure politics is a reflection of the will of the people (*Hypothesis 1a*). In contrast, the alternative view posits that populist citizens are not keen to participate in the political process themselves. Instead, popular sovereignty is to be ideally realised through responsive government: a mandate style of representation could best ensure politics is responsive to the people’s demands, whereby the populist leader and party should play a leading role (*Hypothesis 1b*). The results indeed suggest that populist citizens do not tend to politically participate themselves. In fact, the higher respondents scored on the populism index, the less they participated in political claim-making – though for the DPES this conclusion did not hold after introducing the control variables. This finding suggests that, as Mudde (2004) noted, populist citizens are not focused on the input side of the political process and do not demand (additional) direct or participatory mechanisms. An explanation for the deviating finding for the Dutch sample is not evident. One possible clarification is the difference in index length between the national election studies. The political participation index for the DPES included seven items, while the indices for the BES and GLES both contained eleven items. This, in combination with the fact that less than 10 per cent of the Dutch respondents indicated to have taken part for five items, could have resulted in small(er) differences in political participation between respondents. This, in turn, possibly caused the differences between Dutch populist and less or non-populist respondents to be less pronounced, resulting in a non-significant result when introducing the control variables. Before denoting the implications of these outcomes for the academic and political debate on populism and participatory devices, it is relevant to distinguish between the four variants of political participation.

Starting with the first variant, participation in the party-electoral arena, populism’s adversity towards representative politics as well as its critique on (established) politicians and parties led to the expectation that populist citizens would dislike and, thus, forego participatory opportunities that form the bedrock of the

representative democratic system (*Hypothesis 2*). Looking firstly at the attitudinal component, the analyses initially showed British and German respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes to have a more negative outlook on voting. However, after introducing the control variables, populist attitudes was no longer a significant predictor of respondents' appraisal of voting, neither for the BES nor for the GLES. This finding is particularly interesting when looking at the supply side of populism. Starting with the British context, one could contend that the fact that the UKIP did not win a parliamentary seat in the 2017 general elections would have reinforced populist citizens' standpoint that the representative democratic system is not suited to reflect their interests and demands. Given that British respondents were on average positive towards voting, it would follow that British populist citizens are expected to hold a more negative stance towards voting than their less or non-populist counterparts. Yet, the analyses hinted at populist respondents' critical stance towards voting be a product of the impact of other variables rather than due to the influence of populist attitudes itself. Differently, one could reason that the AfD's recent electoral success showed or confirmed to German populist citizens that voting is an important instrument to make one's voice heard, i.e. that voting has an effect on the composition of parliament and thus constitutes an avenue to ensure the populist voice is in fact represented in the legislature. Given that German respondents were generally favourable towards voting, German populist citizens can be presumed to not largely differ from other voters because of their populist profile. This is indeed what the analyses imply, namely that populist attitudes do not have a significant influence on stances towards voting when taking other variables into consideration. As such, it is also fascinating to observe that the different electoral result for populist political parties in Great Britain and Germany did not seem to result in different outcomes for the British and German samples. Shifting the focus to actual participation in the party-electoral arena, the analyses showed respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes to have participated less in the party-electoral arena – though this did not persist for the BES after entering the control variables. One could argue that this is a somewhat logical conclusion. Considering populism's anti-elitism component and its criticism of representative democracy, populist citizens could be expected to forego the participatory instruments offered by the, in their eyes, bad and corrupt representative democratic system.

Given the above-noted populist dislike of the participatory opportunities provided by the representative system, it was theorised that populist individuals voice their demands in the non-party arena as the main alternative, though conventional form of political claim-making. Also, participation in the non-party arena fits populism's emphasis on the people as numerous and politically quiescent (*Hypothesis 3*). Nonetheless, the results presented in this thesis do not corroborate this line of reasoning. British and German respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes were shown to be less politically active in the non-party arena. For the Dutch sample, this conclusion could not be drawn. An explanation for this discrepancy in findings is, again, not evident. In a similar manner as before, the measurement of participation in the non-party arena could play a role. The index for the DPES included two items, whereas the indices for the BES and GLES were based on four and five survey items respectively. The smaller index length for the DPES possibly caused the differences between Dutch populist and less or non-populist respondents to be less pronounced and thereby to be non-significant. Returning to the finding for the British and German samples, this is particularly relevant because it signals populist citizens to disregard political claim-making in both the party-electoral and non-party arena, which were defined as the two conventional variants of political participation. In that sense, this thesis suggests populist citizens to disregard the main participatory opportunities of representative democracy.

This conclusion arouses curiosity about populist citizens' outlooks on and participation in innovative variants of political claim-making. Looking at the first innovative variant, literature pointed to referendum

democracy as a populist mechanism par excellence: the people take a central role, the power of the elite is reduced, and the will of the people is enacted upon. Besides, referendums not only ensure a direct link between the people and government, these also fit populism's emphasis of the people as a silent majority, its tendency towards political dualism and its anti-pluralist character. This led to the expectation that populist individuals are appreciative of and likely to participate in referendums (*Hypothesis 4*). Looking at the attitudinal component, this thesis showed Dutch and German respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes to indeed be more supportive of referendum democracy. Notably, this implies that populist citizens are in favour of participatory mechanisms that have a wide participatory range and a high impact on policy outcomes, yet preferring the absence of deliberation. Besides, this finding suggests that populist political parties' advocacy of referendums resonates among populist citizens. However, populist respondents' appreciation of direct democratic mechanisms did not appear to translate in actual participation in referendums. Interestingly, British and Dutch respondents with high levels of populist attitudes were not more likely to have voted in the referendum on the EU and Ukraine respectively – in fact, not more or less likely than their less or non-populist counterparts. From this it strikes one as a discrepancy in populist citizens' opinion and behaviour. Whereas populist citizens are clearly in favour of direct democratic devices, they are not more likely to participate in these devices when presented the opportunity to do so. This finding is especially relevant in light of the call for referendum democracy as an innovative mechanism in response to populist sentiments and political discontent.

Zooming in on deliberation as another innovative form of participation, it was theorised that populist citizens are not keen to participate in deliberative initiatives. Given populism's emphasis on the people as politically silent and having a common will, it was hypothesised that there is neither room nor necessity for a plurality of views, political debates and compromises in populist's eyes (*Hypothesis 5*). In conformity with this line of reasoning, Dutch respondents with higher levels of populist attitudes were less likely to have participated in a deliberative initiative. While at first German respondents holding higher levels of political attitudes also appeared to have participated more in deliberation, this did not remain the case after introducing the control variables. Before discussing the implications of these findings, it is important to add that the effect size of populist attitudes on (attitudes towards) political participation was shown to be small in all instances, apart from one. This exception regards attitudes towards referendums. Populist attitudes were found to account for roughly 25 to 35 per cent in the variation in respondent's appreciation of referendum democracy.

To sum up, this thesis suggests respondents in Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany with higher levels of populist attitudes to be less active in political claim-making, both in general and in specific variants of political participation – with the side note that populist citizens were neither more nor less likely to have casted their vote in referendums. Here one should recall the question: do populist citizens emphasise the “by” or the “for” in Abraham Lincoln's words “government of the people, by the people, for the people”? The answer provided by this thesis is, therefore, that populist individuals appear to stress the “for” and not the “by”. Thus, populist citizens, who typically feel discontent with representative politics and who fundamentally believe in popular sovereignty, are suggested to forego political participation as an avenue to make sure politics and politicians are (more) responsive to their demands. These conclusions hold not only for the conventional variants of political participation that form part and parcel of representative democracy, but also for innovative forms of political claim-making. In this regard, it should be noted that this thesis hints at referendum democracy being the variant of political participation in which populist citizens are comparatively most likely to participate. Notably, respondents with higher levels of political attitudes were not suggested to be less likely to have participated in referendums – as for the other variants – but to be equally likely to have taken part compared to their less or non-

populist counterparts. This does not strike one as very peculiar, given that referendum democracy was theorised as a populist mechanism par excellence. It would be interesting to find out if and to what extent populist citizens' participation in referendums is influenced by the topic of the referendum and/or whether it was binding or advisory, initiated by government or by citizens, and if an electoral threshold was applied. Notwithstanding, it remains surprising that the analyses showed that populist citizens were not more likely to have voted in referendums, especially when taking into account that populist citizens were shown to be clearly in favour of referendum democracy. Regarding this latter outcome, one could argue that direct democratic mechanisms constitute a sort of middle ground. While representatives ideally act in correspondence to the will of the people and without citizen's interference, the people prefer to hold a trump card which they can play when feeling the need to do so. This point is further discussed shortly.

Here it is important to stress that these conclusions hold for at least two out of three national election studies after the introduction of control variables into the model – except for deliberation, which remained true for one out of two datasets. In that sense, the analyses pointed to an (important) influence of the control variables on political participation, at times resulting in an initial relation to strike as a product of the impact of control variables. In general terms, the variables gender, age, education level, interest in politics and satisfaction with democracy were found to correlate to both populist attitudes and (attitudes towards) political participation. This gives rise to two themes for further study, as these are outside the scope of this thesis. Firstly, it is relevant to dive into the precise effect of the control variables on populist attitudes and (attitudes towards) political participation separately as well as on the nexus between these latter variables. One related question is to what extent the control variables can (theoretically) be linked to political skills and resources and, in that sense, be related to a potential discrepancy between populist citizens' willingness to participate in political claim-making and their actual political participation. Secondly, it is interesting to study the cross-country variations that become apparent when introducing the control variables, especially since the effect was not always consistent across the national election studies. To gain a better understanding of these facets, further research is necessary.

At this point, it is important to situate these conclusions in the academic literature. First and foremost, the observed negative relationship between populist attitudes and political participation is at odds with the main finding of Anduiza et al. (2016), who pointed to populist citizens' enthusiasm for political participation. In fact, Mudde (2004) appears to be right when contending that populist citizens are not focused on the input of the political system, which is further elaborated upon shortly. To relate the conclusions for populist citizens' participation in the different variants of political claim-making to the academic debate is somewhat problematic, since the state-of-the-art literature in this field seldom included forms of political claim-making apart from referendums. Yet, in terms of the nexus between populist attitudes and direct democratic devices, the findings presented in this thesis correspond to ones described by Jacobs et al. (2018): populist citizens are in favour of but not more likely to vote in referendums. When stretching the academic field somewhat to include indirect measurements of populist attitudes, the following can be noted. This thesis is in line with Pauwels' finding that populist voters do not desire involvement in the political process. Also, this thesis confirms Pauwels' (2014) observation that populist voters show a preference for direct democracy, whereas it contradicts the conclusion reached by Bowler et al. (2017) on populist voters not being more positive towards referendums than other voters. When stretching the measurement of populist attitudes even more, a study by Webb (2013) is particularly relevant. Indeed, his conclusions for stealth democratic citizens are similar to ones presented in this thesis on populist citizens: these citizens participate less in mainstream, conventional forms of political claim-making, while not differing from others in terms of voting in referendums.

The findings of this thesis have important implications for democratic reformers calling for additional participatory opportunities. The results presented in this thesis imply that measures to engage populist citizens in political claim-making might result in the opposite effect. Instead of being an adequate response to political discontent manifest among populist citizens, these individuals are suggested not to take up participatory opportunities and thereby remain on the sidelines of political claim-making. Here it should be emphasised that this appears to be true for both conventional variants of political claim-making as well as for innovative, direct or participatory mechanisms. The potential effect of this is twofold, as pointed out by McHugh (2006), Mudde (2004) and Webb (2013). On the one hand, it is likely that citizens who are already over-represented in political claim-making will take up the improved or newly created participatory opportunities to advance their particular interests even more. On the other hand, this would possibly entail the political marginalisation of a populist segment of society that typically feels dissatisfied with politics and democracy. Besides, this dynamic would in fact confirm, and possibly even strengthen, populism's critique on the functioning of representative democracy.

Having concluded that populist citizens are not inclined towards political participation as the first route typically proposed to strengthen the representative democratic system, it is relevant to reflect upon populist citizens' stance towards the second route. The conclusions presented above rather obviously correspond to the stealth democracy thesis as developed by Hibbing & Theiss-Morse (2002), implying that populist citizens are to some extent in favour of the notion of stealth democracy. In conformity with those with a stealth democratic orientation, populist citizens seem to be negative towards taking part or becoming involved in the political process. Another parallel can be drawn when looking at stealth democrats' demand that "government will become visible, accountable, and representative should they decide such traits are warranted" (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002, pp. 1–2). In this manner, populist citizens' positive appraisal of direct democratic devices can be explained as a demand for a gun behind the door, i.e. for an instrument to demand government to figuratively show up on the radar, or, in other words, to become accountable and responsive. It was, however, theorised that populist citizens are not likely to mirror those with a stealth democratic orientation in their vision on democracy. Stealth democrats are typically in favour of government by non-elected, independent experts and/or successful business people rather than politicians or the people. In contrast, populism champions popular sovereignty and describes technocrats and business people to form part of the bad, corrupt elite who it sharply criticises for taking care of its own interest rather than being responsive to the will of the people.

Differently, it is important to recall Mudde's (2004) argument of populist citizens being focused on the output instead of the input of the political system. Based on populism's vision of democracy as representative politics wherein the mandate style of representation is prominent, one could argue that populist citizens wish the representative democratic system to function better, and politicians to act in conformity with the will of the people. A typical populist stance that hints at this facet was that politicians should listen (more) closely to the problems and interests of the people. As signalled by Bowler et al. (2017) and McHugh (2006), 'solutions' to the populist challenge are thus more likely to be found in promoting the responsiveness of politics, and in particular of established political parties, to citizens' preferences and interests. For instance, this avenue can emphasise representatives' role of communicating in what ways citizens' views have been taken into account in the political decision-making process, even if – or especially if – the resulting policies do not correspond to these views. Instead of focusing on what Canovan (2002) terms "bringing the people into politics" (p. 26), it might therefore be more important for policy-makers to further explore its opposite: bringing politics to the people.

At this point, it is considered important to reflect on the merits of this thesis. First and foremost, this thesis adds to existing literature. Notably, this thesis made use of a populism index to explore attitudes and

behaviour of citizens with a populist profile, instead of further developing the populism index or analysing its correlation to populist voting. Besides, this thesis is innovative in the sense of focusing on four variants of political participation, both conventional and innovative ones, rather than examining the link between populism and direct democracy alone. In these regards, this thesis contributed to both the academic and political debate. Another merit of this thesis concerns the datasets used. The three national election studies added to the validity of the findings presented here: they provided for a large, random sample while data were collected by trained and experienced interviewers and using well-developed survey items. Besides, the fact that the BES, DPES and GLES included comparable survey items enabled a cross-national study.

Nonetheless, a critical note on the methods and conclusions presented in this thesis should be added. To begin with, although the items on populist attitudes included in the three national election studies were observed to constitute a sound basis for an index, the attention given to populism's three core ideas was somewhat unbalanced. The indices would benefit from an item that directly concerns populism's first core idea of people-centrism, i.e. a reference to the people as a virtuous and homogenous entity. For instance, the national election studies could enter items along the lines of "the ordinary people are of good character" and "the ordinary people share the same values and interests" (see, for instance, Schulz et al., 2017). Alternative – or additional – to the latter item, populism's anti-pluralist character could be further explored. For example, as a reversely phrased item, "the people are being divided by many different ideas and interests" would both cover populism's anti-pluralist facet as well as its view of the people as a homogeneous entity. Moreover, to substantiate the line of reasoning that populist citizens demand a responsive government, it would be useful to add an item stating that "politicians should listen (more) closely to the problems and interests of the people" (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016). For the BES, another useful addition would be firstly the item inquiring about political differences between the elite and the people being bigger than among the people. Herein, populism's vision of the people and the elite as homogeneous entities is covered as well as the notion of the elite as a broader entity rather than politicians only. A second addition for the BES would be an item capturing populism's preference for government/representation by ordinary citizens rather than politicians. In these manners, the battery of items on populist attitudes in the national election studies could possibly be improved.

Shifting the focus to the dependent variable, a critical note is necessary on the items on political participation. As mentioned previously, the national election studies did not inquire about attitudes towards participation in the party-electoral arena besides voting, but also not about attitudes towards participation in the non-party arena and in deliberation. Furthermore, one can assume that the repertoire of political participation was not limited to the forms covered by the survey items in the national election studies, which is especially true for the DPES. One rather obvious example here is political claim-making by involving the media or on social media. Therefore, it would be interesting to find out if the use of a more extensive political participation index or of a different typology would lead to different conclusions than presented in this thesis. Moreover, it is important to take into account that this thesis measured political participation by looking at the variety of forms of political claim-making a respondent reported to had taken part in. Nonetheless, this variety is not to be equated with instances of political participation per se. Possibly, a respondent has been fervently involved in a certain form of political participation, but not in other forms of political claim-making. As a result, it might be the case that populist citizens participate frequently in one or some ways of political claim-making, whereas non-populist citizens figuratively divide their political participation among a larger variety of forms. For this reason, it is considered particularly relevant to additionally measure the number of times a citizen participated in a particular



form of political claim-making. This would substantially further the debate on direct and participatory mechanisms as adequate measures to respond to the rise of populist sentiments.

To conclude, additional recommendations for future research are presented. Firstly, scholars could further dive into populist citizens' motivations for participating less in political claim-making. An especially relevant topic would be whether populist citizens are unwilling or uninterested to become involved in politics and/or if they perceive an absence of opportunities to politically participate. Furthermore, one may wonder whether the results presented in this thesis are time-specific: are populist citizens more or less involved in political claim-making at different points in time? Additional research could analyse this effect of time on the nexus between populist attitudes and political participation. Besides, a particularly interesting momentum and context for repeating this study would be when a populist political party takes part in government, such as is currently the case in Italy. The populist party concerned is then presented with the challenge to in fact realise the will of the people, while citizens will have the opportunity to evaluate the populist party's ability to carry out its promise of popular sovereignty. This potentially affects populist citizens' appreciation of the populist party as representing their interests and, therefore, their inclination to take part in political claim-making themselves. Finally, future research could examine if and to what extent the conclusions presented in this thesis hold for different countries and contexts. In that regard, it would be fascinating to analyse countries where populism predominantly takes a left-wing orientation (e.g. Spain or Latin-America). This would provide additional insights into the 'thinness' and, adjacently, the discourse chosen by populist leaders and parties on political participation by citizens with populist attitudes. Possibly, in these countries, populist citizens are more keen to become or already are more involved in political claim-making than their less or non-populist counterparts.

For now, this thesis suggests that the academic and political debate would benefit from a broader outlook on populist citizens' preferences and practices in terms of political claim-making. Although further research is warranted, the insistence on participatory devices to address the populist challenge might in fact result in the opposite effect and even strengthen populism's critique on the functioning of representative democracy.



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## Appendix A: Factor analyses and Cronbach's alpha

### Populism indices

**Table A1: Factor analysis for populism items**

	Eigenvalues		
	BES	DPES	GLES
Factor 1	2.68	4.50	4.41
Factor 2	1.06	.96	.96
Factor 3	.75		

\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation

\*\* BES: KMO = .78;  $\chi^2(15) = 1192, p < .001$

DPES: KMO = .93;  $\chi^2(36) = 8467, p < .001$

GLES: KMO = .93;  $\chi^2(36) = 5645, p < .001$

**Table A2: Rotated factor matrix of populism items (BES)**

	Factor loadings (BES)	
	1	2
POP1 Compromise is selling out one's principles	.27	.51
POP3 Politicians do not care about the people	.72	.26
POP4 Politicians only care for the interests of the rich and powerful	.67	
POP5rev Politicians are trustworthy	.61	
POP6 Politicians are the main problem of Britain	.53	
POP9 The will of the majority should prevail		.41

\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation; excluding factor loadings below .2

\*\* Factor correlation coefficient = .36

**Table A3: Factor matrices of populism items (DPES and GLES)**

	Factor loadings	
	DPES	GLES
POP1 Compromise is selling out one's principles	.69	.74
POP2 Political differences mostly between elite and people	.52	.54
POP3 Politicians do not care about the people	.79	.79
POP4 Politicians only care for the interests of the rich and powerful	.78	.74
POP5rev Politicians are trustworthy	.57	.54
POP6 Politicians are the main problem in [country]	.72	.77
POP7 Politicians talk too much and act too little	.74	.73
POP8 MPs should follow the will of the people	.39	.35
POP10 Rather represented by citizen than professional politician	.68	.60

\* Item not included in the national election study

\*\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation; excluding factor loadings below .2

**Table A4: Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted for populism items**

	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted		
	BES	DPES	GLES
POP1 Compromise is selling out one's principles	.68	.86	.84
POP2 Political differences mostly between elite and people	*	.87	.86
POP3 Politicians do not care about the people	.61	.85	.84
POP4 Politicians only care for the interests of the rich and powerful	.65	.85	.84
POP5rev Politicians are trustworthy	.72	.87	.86
POP6 Politicians are the main problem in [country]	.67	.85	.84
POP7 Politicians talk too much and act too little	*	.85	.84
POP8 MPs should follow the will of the people	*	.88	.87
POP9 The will of the majority should prevail	.77	*	*
POP10 Rather represented by citizen than professional politician	*	.86	.86

\* Item not included in the national election study

\*\* BES: Cronbach's alpha = .73; N of items = 6

DPES: Cronbach's alpha = .87; N of items = 9

GLES: Cronbach's alpha = .87; N of items = 9

## Index on attitudes towards voting (BES)

**Table A5: Factor analysis for items on attitudes towards voting**

Eigenvalues	
Factor 1	1.70
Factor 2	.82

\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation

\*\* KMO = .59;  $\chi^2(3) = 853, p < .001$

**Table A6: Factor matrix of items on attitudes towards voting**

	Factor loadings
ATT1 It is every citizen's duty to vote in an election	.72
ATT2 Going to vote is a lot of effort	.35
ATT3 I feel a sense of satisfaction when I vote	.71

\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation.

**Table A7: Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted for items on attitudes towards voting**

	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
ATT1 It is every citizen's duty to vote in an election	.40
ATT2 Going to vote is a lot of effort	.68
ATT3 I feel a sense of satisfaction when I vote	.41

\* Cronbach's alpha = .61; N of items = 3

## Index on attitudes towards referendum democracy (DPES)

**Table A8: Factor analysis for items on attitudes towards referendum democracy**

Eigenvalues	
Factor 1	2.01
Factor 2	.59

\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation.

\*\* KMO = .67;  $\chi^2(3) = 1353, p < .001$

**Table A9: Factor matrix of items on attitudes towards referendum democracy**

	Factor loadings
ATT4 Citizens should make important decisions by referendum	.79
ATT5 Government should always follow referendum outcome	.59
ATT6 As many referenda as possible	.76

**Table A10: Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted for items on attitudes towards referendum democracy**

	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
ATT4 Citizens should make important decisions by referendum	.62
ATT5 Government should always follow referendum outcome	.75
ATT6 As many referenda as possible	.63

\* Cronbach's alpha = .75; N of items = 3

## Indices on participation in the party-electoral arena

**Table A11: Factor analysis for items on participation in the party-electoral arena**

	Eigenvalues		
	BES	DPES	GLES
Factor 1	1.97	1.40	1.93
Factor 2	.98	.99	.99

\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation

\*\* BES: KMO = .70;  $\chi^2(10) = 1147, p < .001$

DPES: KMO = .51;  $\chi^2(3) = 524, p < .001$

GLES: KMO = .69;  $\chi^2(10) = 816, p < .001$

**Table A12: Factor matrix of items on participation in the party-electoral arena**

	Factor loadings		
	BES	DPES	GLES
PAR1 Voted in 2017 general election	.16	.08	.10
PAR2 Political party member	.64	*	.69
PAR3 Contacted a politician or government official	.39	.59	.34
PAR4 Worked for or tried to involve a political party or action group	.54	.66	.63
PAR5 Given any money to a political party or organisation	.67	*	.54

\* Item not included in the national election study

\*\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring.

**Table A13: Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted for items on participation in the party-electoral arena**

	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted		
	BES	DPES	GLES
PAR1 Voted in 2017 general election	.60	.55	.62
PAR2 Political party member	.40	*	.38
PAR3 Contacted a politician or government official	.44	.12	.48
PAR4 Worked for or tried to involve a political party or action group	.44	.07	.39
PAR5 Given any money to a political party or organisation	.39	*	.40

\* Item not included in the national election study

\*\* BES: Cronbach's alpha = .50; N of items = 5

DPES: Cronbach's alpha = .35; N of items = 3

GLES: Cronbach's alpha = .51; N of items = 5

## Indices on participation in the non-party arena

**Table A14: Factor analysis for items on participation in the non-party arena**

	Eigenvalues		
	BES	DPES	GLES
Factor 1	1.81	1.24	2.02
Factor 2	.996	.76	.77

\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation

\*\* BES: KMO = .68;  $\chi^2(10) = 781, p < .001$

DPES: KMO = .50;  $\chi^2(1) = 183, p < .001$

GLES: KMO = .72;  $\chi^2(6) = 995, p < .001$

**Table A15: Factor matrix of items on items on participation in the non-party arena**

	Factor loadings		
	BES	DPES	GLES
PAR6 Signed a petition on the internet	.53	*	.64
PAR7 Signed a petition not on the Internet	.42	*	.68
PAR8 Taken part in a public demonstration	.48	.49	.45
PAR9 Bought or refused to buy products	.59	*	.57
PAR10 Gone on strike or industrial action	.18	*	*
PAR11 Joined a civic action group	*	.49	*

\* Item not included in the national election study

\*\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring.

**Table A16: Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted for items on participation in the non-party arena**

	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted	
	BES	GLES
PAR6 Signed a petition on the internet	.44	.57
PAR7 Signed a petition not on the Internet	.46	.56
PAR8 Taken part in a public demonstration	.46	.65
PAR9 Bought or refused to buy products	.38	.61
PAR10 Gone on strike or industrial action	.55	*
PAR11 Joined a civic action group	*	*

\* Item not included in the national election study

\*\* For the DPES, the N of items was too low to compute Cronbach's alpha

\*\*\* BES: Cronbach's alpha = .52; N of items = 5

DPES: Cronbach's alpha = .38; N of items = 2

GLES: Cronbach's alpha = .67; N of items = 4

## Index on deliberation (GLES)

**Table A17: Factor analysis for items on deliberation**

Eigenvalues	
Factor 1	1.15
Factor 2	.85

\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation

\*\* KMO = .50;  $\chi^2(1) = 41, p < .001$

\*\*\* Cronbach's alpha = .26; N of items = 2

## Indices on political participation

**Table A18: Factor analysis for items on political participation**

	Eigenvalues		
	BES	DPES	GLES
Factor 1	2.79	2.03	2.72
Factor 2	1.42	1.23	1.52
Factor 3	1.14	1.16	1.03
Factor 4	1.02	.99	.92
Factor 5	.83		

\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation

\*\* BES: KMO = .75;  $\chi^2(55) = 3137, p < .001$

DPES: KMO = .67;  $\chi^2(45) = 1868, p < .001$

GLES: KMO = .77;  $\chi^2(55) = 2237, p < .001$

**Table A19: Rotated factor matrix (pattern matrix) of items on political participation**

	BES				DPES			GLES		
	Factor				Factor			Factor		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	1	2	3
PAR1 Voted in 2017 general election		.72				.53				.21
PAR2 Political party member			-.80		*	*	*		.68	
PAR3 Contacted a politician or government official	.38				.73		-.13	.32	.26	
PAR4 Worked for or tried to involve a political party or action group			-.36	.35	.56				.64	
PAR5 Given any money to a political party or organisation			-.52		*	*	*		.48	
PAR6 Signed a petition on the internet	.61				*	*	*	.60		
PAR7 Signed a petition not on the Internet	.34				*	*	*	.38		.40
PAR8 Taken part in a public demonstration	.36			.29			.51			.39
PAR9 Bought or refused to buy products	.60				*	*	*	.20		.50
PAR10 Gone on strike or industrial action				.34	*	*	*	*	*	*
PAR11 Joined a civic action group	*	*	*	*			.42	*	*	*
PAR12 Voted in referendum		.69				.50		*	*	*
PAR13 Participated in a citizens' initiative/ meeting organised by government	*	*	*	*	.40		.15	.27		
PAR14 Participated in an online citizens' initiative	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	.44		
PAR15 Tried to get radio, TV or newspaper involved	*	*	*	*	.15			**	**	**
PAR16 Used social media like Twitter or Facebook	*	*	*	*			.32	**	**	**
PAR17 Used internet, email or SMS without social media	*	*	*	*	.11		.22	**	**	**

\* Item not included in the national election study

\*\* Comparable items present, but only included for the DPES for exploratory purposes.

\*\*\* Extraction method: Principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation, excluding factor loadings below .1

**Table A20: Factor correlation matrix (BES)**

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1	1.00	.25	-.43	.40
Factor 2		1.00	-.16	.05
Factor 3			1.00	-.33
Factor 4				1.000

**Table A21: Factor correlation matrix (DPES)**

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1	1.00	.13	.46
Factor 2		1.00	.14
Factor 3			1.00

**Table A22: Factor correlation matrix (GLES)**

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1	1.00	.27	.46
Factor 2		1.00	.27
Factor 3			1.00

**Table A23: Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted for items on political participation**

	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted		
	BES	DPES	GLES
PAR1 Voted in 2017 general election	.66	.44	.69
PAR2 Political party member	.65	*	.66
PAR3 Contacted a politician or government official	.64	.40	.66
PAR4 Worked for or tried to involve a political party or action group	.65	.40	.67
PAR5 Given any money to a political party or organisation	.64	*	.66
PAR6 Signed a petition on the internet	.63	*	.62
PAR7 Signed a petition not on the Internet	.65	*	.63
PAR8 Taken part in a public demonstration	.65	.46	.65
PAR9 Bought or refused to buy products	.64	*	.64
PAR10 Gone on strike or industrial action	.67	*	*
PAR11 Joined a civic action group	*	.44	*
PAR12 Voted in referendum	.65	.50	*
PAR13 Participated in a citizen's initiative/meeting organised by government	*	.40	.67
PAR 14 Participated in an online citizen's initiative	*	*	.66

\* Item not included in the national election study

\*\* BES: Cronbach's alpha = .70; N of items = 11

DPES: Cronbach's alpha = .47; N of items = 7

DPES when including PAR15-PAR17: Cronbach's alpha = .49; N of items = 10

GLES: Cronbach's alpha = .68; N of items = 11



## Appendix B: Assumptions for regression analysis

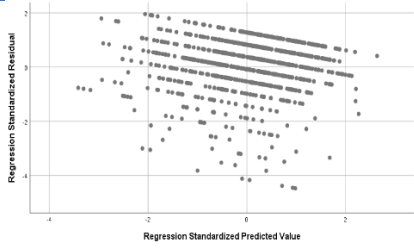
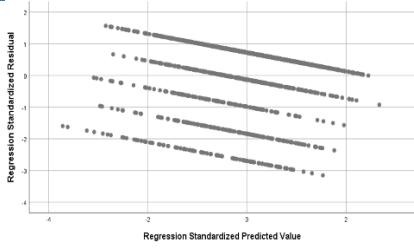
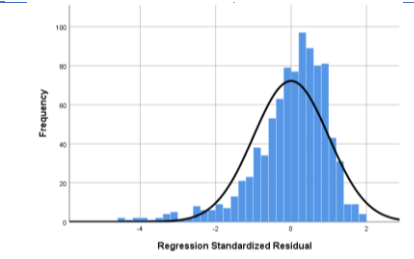
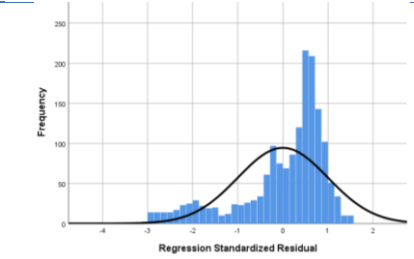
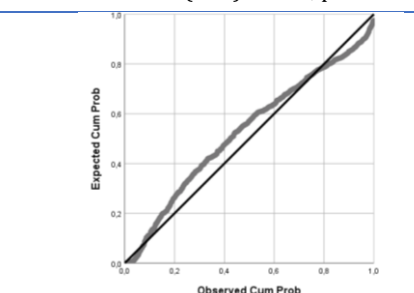
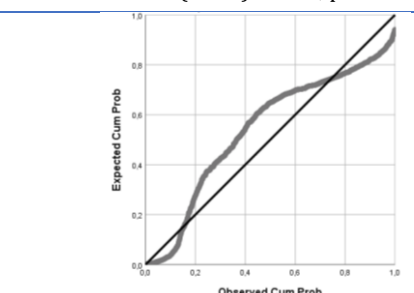
As explained in the methodology chapter, two batteries of assumptions were assessed: those pertaining to the fit of the regression models, and those concerning the generalisability of the results. To reflect upon the accuracy of the regression models, the data were examined for outliers and influential cases. In that regard, it was important to assess if the multiple regression models fit the data well or if these were influenced by a limited number of cases (Field, 2005; George & Mallery, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Firstly, to test for outliers, the standardised residual for each case was looked at. Hereby, the following guidelines were applied: (1) standardised residuals with a value greater than  $|3|$  were cause for concern, (2) no more than 1 per cent of the sample should have standardised residuals greater than  $|2.5|$ , and (3) no more than 5 per cent of the sample should have standardised residuals greater than  $|2|$  (Field, 2005; Stevens, 2009). A violation of (one of) the latter two rules pointed to a level of error that raised doubts about the accuracy of the regression model (Field, 2005). Secondly, using different indicators, it was observed whether the models were biased by a small number of influential cases. A first statistic, Cook's distance, indicated the impact of a case on the model. Here, values greater than 1 were stipulated as a cause for concern (Field, 2005; Stevens, 2009). A second statistic, Mahalanobis distance, gauged the distance between cases and the means of the predictor variables. Hereby, the following guideline developed by Barnett & Lewis was used: for large samples ( $N = 500$ ) and five predictor variables, a value above 25 implied a red flag (Field, 2005). In case of a violation of these latter indicators, it could be assumed that few cases exerted an excessive influence over the parameters of the regression model (Field, 2005). Importantly, according to Stevens (2009), outliers identified by means of the standardised residuals and/or by the Mahalanobis distance "will not necessarily be influential points" (p. 110). To determine which outliers were in fact influential, he recommended to find those with a Cook's distance greater than 1. In fact, in case Cook's distance fell within this limit, this outlier needed not to be deleted as it did "not have a large effect on the regression analysis" (Stevens, 2009, p. 111). Based on this, Cook's distance was used as the decisive statistic in the reflection on the accuracy of the regression models. Notably, in no instance Cook's distance came close to or exceeded the value of 1, whereas the above described guidelines on the number of cases with large standardised residuals and Mahalanobis distance were sometimes violated (see Tables B1-B6).

Besides reflecting on the accuracy of the regression models, it was moreover imperative to look at the generalisability of the models. To begin with, two assumptions could already be checked on the basis of previously discussed information in the methodology chapter. The assumption of independence stipulated that each value on the dependent variable was independent, i.e. stemmed from a separate entity (Field, 2005). Due to the facts that participation in the national election studies occurred on an individual basis and there was in principle no interaction among respondents, this assumption was understood to be met. Moreover, regression analyses built on the assumption that the predictor variables were uncorrelated with external variables, i.e. variables not included in the regression model (Field, 2005). The inclusion of control variables that have been connected to both populist attitudes and political participation in the literature, as discussed before, can be seen as an important step in this direction. It is, however, outside the scope of this thesis to consider or include additional variables. For reasons of practicality, therefore, it was presumed that this assumption was satisfied.

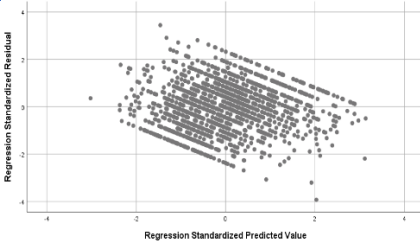
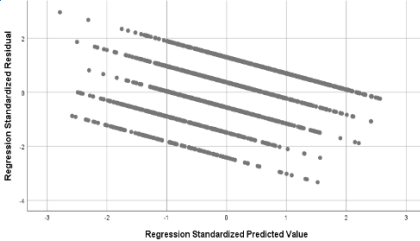
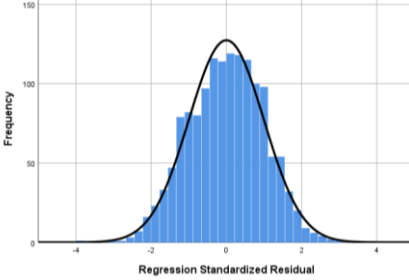
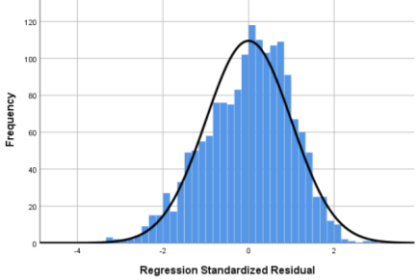
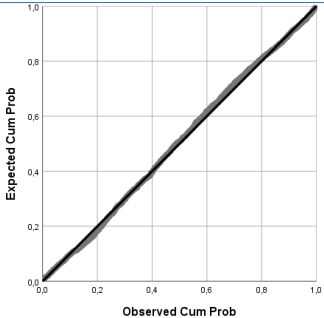
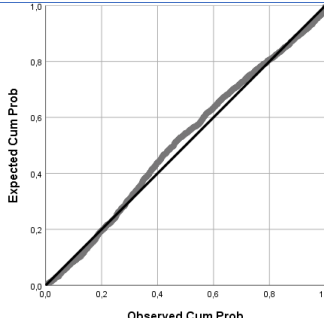
In addition, the following assumptions that relate to generalisability have been checked. Firstly, multiple regression analysis assumed the independent, predictor variables to have a non-zero variance, which was simply tested by looking at the variance of these variables (Field, 2005). Secondly, it built on the assumption that there was no multicollinearity, denoting that there was no perfect linear relationship between predictor variables

(Field, 2005; George & Mallery, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This was tested by observing if correlation coefficients exceeded the value of .8, if a variance inflator factor (VIF) was above the value of 10, if the average VIF was substantially greater than 1, and if the tolerance statistic ( $1/VIF$ ) showed values below .1. When one of these conditions was violated, the assumption of multicollinearity had not been met (Field, 2005). Next, the assumption of independent errors, also known as lack of autocorrelation, signified that residuals must be uncorrelated (Field, 2005). For this purpose, the Durbin-Watson statistic has been included, whose values vary between 0 and 4 and whereby values close to 2 indicated that residuals were indeed uncorrelated (Field, 2005). A fourth assumption imperative for generalisability was that of homoscedasticity, meaning that the variance was constant over the range of measured values of the independent variable. For this purpose, a scatter plot of the standardised residuals (y-axis) against the standardised predicted values (x-axis) was created and observed for a cone or funnel shape of heteroscedasticity (Field, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Moreover, regression analysis assumed that the residuals in the model were approximately normally distributed. This was checked by means of a histogram plotting the standardised residual and by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for residuals and standardised residuals. For the latter, a significant result ( $p < .05$ ) denoted a violation of the assumption of normality (Field, 2005; George & Mallery, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Finally, the assumption of linearity stipulated that the relationship between the variables under study was linear. This was observed using a normal P-P Plot of regression standardised residuals (Field, 2005; George & Mallery, 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). From the statistics and plots in Tables B1-B6, it follows that the assumptions of non-zero variance, no perfect multicollinearity and independent errors were satisfied in all instances. Yet, the assumptions of homoscedasticity, normally distributed errors and linearity were sometimes violated. Here it should be emphasised that the assessment of these latter assumptions was primarily based on graphics and, therefore, somewhat debatable.

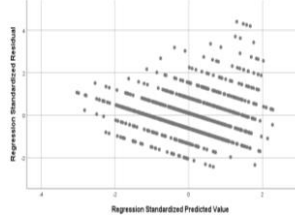
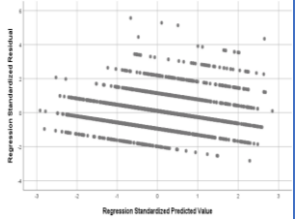
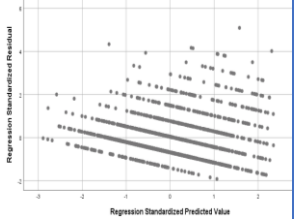
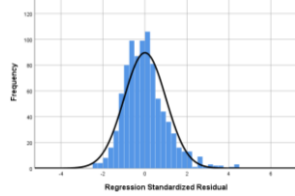
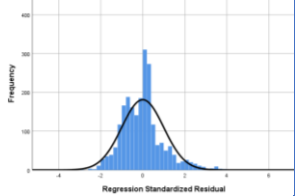
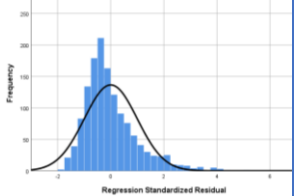
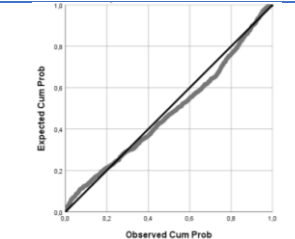
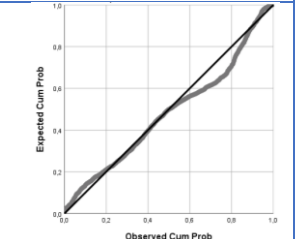
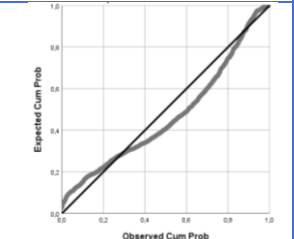
**Table B1: Assumptions for multiple regression analyses for attitudes towards voting**

		BES (N = 902)		GLES (N = 1655)	
Outliers	Cases with stand. res. > 2	42 (4.7 per cent)	✓	122 (7.4 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. > 2.5	27 (3.0 per cent)	✗	53 (3.2 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. > 3	19 (2.1 per cent)	✗	3 (0.2 per cent)	~
Influential cases	Cook's distance (max)	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.040	✓	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.009	✓
	Mahalanobis distance	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 23.3	✓	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 22.3	✓
Non-zero variance		POP: 0.61 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.51 EDU: 0.17 INT: 0.85 SAT: 0.72	✓	POP: 0.57 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.74 EDU: 1.42 INT: 0.99 SAT: 0.81	✓
No perfect multi-collinearity	Correlation coefficient (highest)	.26	✓	.56	✓
	VIF	Highest: 1.17 Average: 1.10	✓	Highest: 1.69 Average: 1.32	✓
	Tolerance (lowest)	.86	✓	.59	✓
Independent errors (Durbin-Watson test)		1.87	✓	1.82	✓
Homoscedasticity			✓		✓
Normally distributed errors	Histogram		~		✗
	K-S test	K-S test statistic (902) = .087, p < .001	✗	K-S test statistic (1655) = .159, p < .001	✗
Linearity			✓		✓

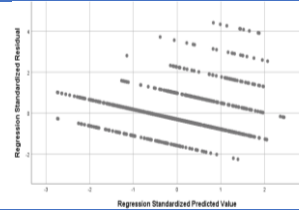
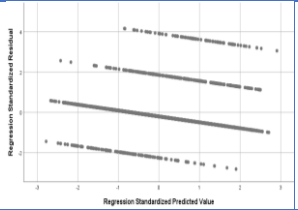
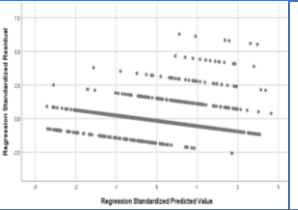
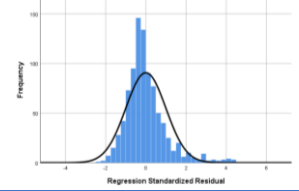
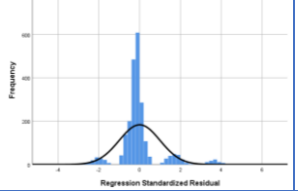
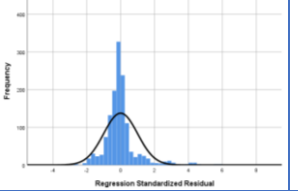
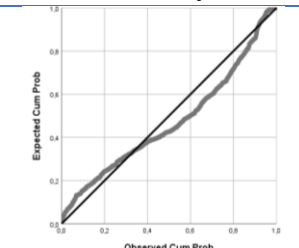
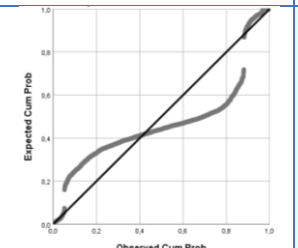
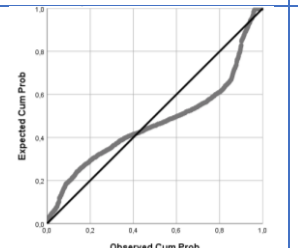
**Table B2: Assumptions for multiple regression analysis for attitudes towards referendum democracy**

		DPES (N = 1434)		GLES (N = 1644)	
Outliers	Cases with stand. res. >  2	53 (3.7 per cent)	✓	67 (4.1 per cent)	✓
	Cases with stand. res. >  2.5	13 (0.9 per cent)	✓	15 (0.9 per cent)	✓
	Cases with stand. res. >  3	4 (0.3 per cent)	~	5 (0.3 per cent)	~
Influential cases	Cook's distance	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.022	✓	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.010	✓
	Mahalanobis distance	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 24.6	✓	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 22.3	✓
Non-zero variance		POP: 0.44 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.09 EDU: 3.23 INT: 0.76 SAT: 0.41	✓	POP: 0.57 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.74 EDU: 1.42 INT: 0.99 SAT: 0.81	✓
No perfect multi-collinearity	Correlation coefficient (highest)	.58	✓	.56	✓
	VIF	Highest: 1.54 Average: 1.24	✓	Highest: 1.69 Average: 1.32	✓
	Tolerance (lowest)	.65	✓	.59	✓
Independent errors (Durbin-Watson test)		2.06	✓	1.95	✓
Homoscedasticity			✓		✓
Normally distributed errors	Histogram		✓		✓
	K-S test	K-S test statistic (1434) = .022, $p = .103$	✓	K-S test statistic (1644) = .049, $p < .001$	✗
Linearity			✓		✓

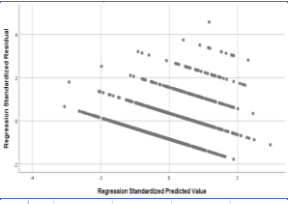
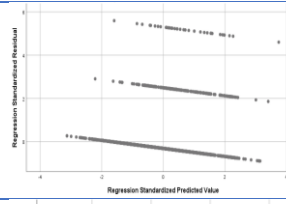
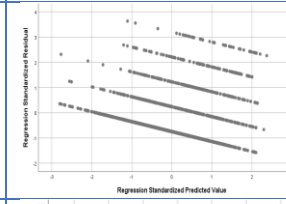
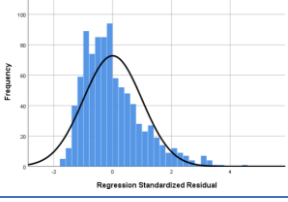
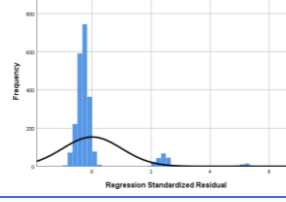
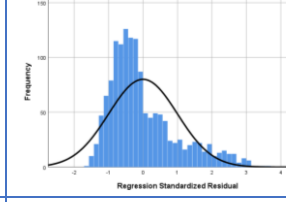
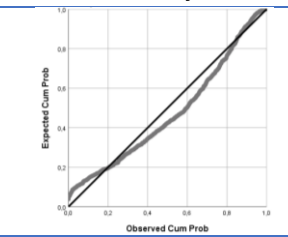
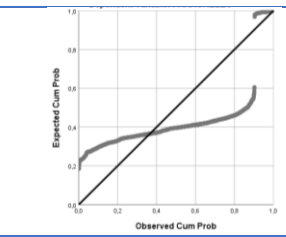
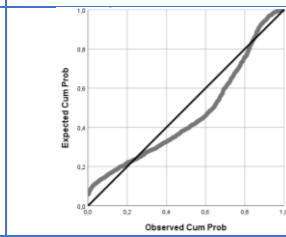
**Table B3: Assumptions for multiple regression analysis for political participation**

		BES (N = 896)		DPES (N = 2266)		GLS (N = 1366)	
Outliers	Cases with stand. res. >  2	43 (4.8 per cent)	✓	124 (5.5 per cent)	✗	72 (5.3 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. >  2.5	21 (2.3 per cent)	✗	55 (2.4 per cent)	✗	37 (2.7 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. >  3	11 (1.2 per cent)	✗	23 (1.0 per cent)	✗	20 (1.5 per cent)	✗
Influential cases	Cook's distance	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.029	✓	Mean: 0.000 Maximum: 0.016	✓	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.026	✓
	Mahal. distance	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 23.4	✓	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 25.9	✗	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 22.5	✓
Non-zero variance		POP: 0.61 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.51 EDU: 0.17 INT: 0.85 SAT: 0.72	✓	POP: 0.44 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.09 EDU: 3.23 INT: 0.76 SAT: 0.41	✓	POP: 0.57 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.74 EDU: 1.42 INT: 0.99 SAT: 0.81	✓
No perfect multi-collinearity	Correlation coefficient (highest)	.42	✓	.49	✓	.58	✓
	VIF	Highest: 1.17 Average: 1.10	✓	Highest: 1.52 Average: 1.22	✓	Highest: 1.73 Average: 1.32	✓
	Tolerance (lowest)	.86	✓	.66	✓	.58	✓
Independent errors (Durbin-Watson test)		2.06	✓	1.98	✓	1.88	✓
Homoscedasticity			✗		~		✗
Normally distributed errors	Histogram		✓		~		~
	K-S test	K-S test statistic (896) = .071, $p < .001$	✗	K-S test statistic (2266) = .106, $p < .001$	✗	K-S test statistic (1366) = .111, $p < .001$	✗
Linearity			✓		✓		✓

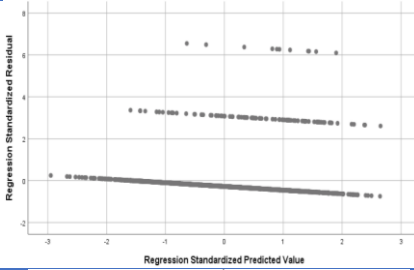
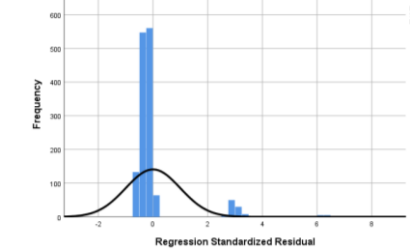
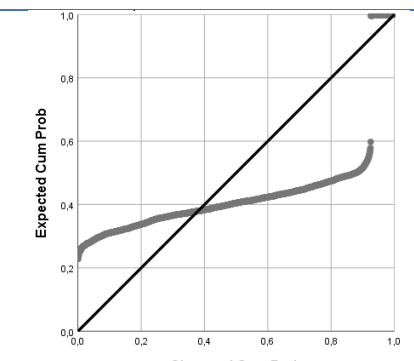
**Table B4: Assumptions for multiple regression analysis for participation in the party-electoral arena**

		BES (N = 907)		DPES (N = 2295)		GLS (N = 1375)	
Outliers	Cases with stand. res. >  2	47 (5.2 per cent)	✗	170 (7.4 per cent)	✗	67 (4.9 per cent)	✓
	Cases with stand. res. >  2.5	29 (3.2 per cent)	✗	83 (3.6 per cent)	✗	53 (3.9 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. >  3	17 (1.9 per cent)	✗	73 (3.2 per cent)	✗	32 (2.3 per cent)	✗
Influential cases	Cook's distance	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.044	✓	Mean: 0.000 Maximum: 0.015	✓	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.037	✓
	Mahal. distance	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 23.4	✓	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 26.0	✗	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 22.3	✓
Non-zero variance		POP: 0.61 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.51 EDU: 0.17 INT: 0.85 SAT: 0.72	✓	POP: 0.44 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.09 EDU: 3.23 INT: 0.76 SAT: 0.41	✓	POP: 0.57 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.74 EDU: 1.42 INT: 0.99 SAT: 0.81	✓
No perfect multi-collinearity	Correlation coefficient (highest)	.39	✓	.49	✓	.58	✓
	VIF	Highest: 1.17 Average: 1.10	✓	Highest: 1.53 Average: 1.22	✓	Highest: 1.73 Average: 1.32	✓
	Tolerance (lowest)	.86	✓	.66	✓	.58	✓
Independent errors (Durbin-Watson test)		2.05	✓	2.02	✓	1.99	✓
Homoscedasticity			✗		✓		✗
Normally distributed errors	Histogram		✓		~		~
	K-S test	K-S test statistic (907) = .108, $p < .001$	✗	K-S test statistic (2295) = .224, $p < .001$	✗	K-S test statistic (1375) = .192, $p < .001$	✗
Linearity			✓		~		~

**Table B5: Assumptions for multiple regression analysis for participation in the non-party arena**

		BES (N = 909)		DPES (N = 2305)		GLS (N = 1402)	
Outliers	Cases with stand. res. >  2	47 (5.2 per cent)	✗	221 (9.6 per cent)	✗	84 (6.0 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. >  2.5	22 (2.4 per cent)	✗	90 (3.9 per cent)	✗	39 (2.8 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. >  3	14 (1.5 per cent)	✗	36 (1.6 per cent)	✗	11 (0.8 per cent)	~
Influential cases	Cook's distance	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.021	✓	Mean: 0.000 Maximum: 0.037	✓	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.029	✓
	Mahal. distance	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 23.4	✓	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 26.0	✗	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 22.2	✓
Non-zero variance		POP: 0.61 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.51 EDU: 0.17 INT: 0.85 SAT: 0.72	✓	POP: 0.44 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.09 EDU: 3.23 INT: 0.76 SAT: 0.41	✓	POP: 0.57 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.74 EDU: 1.42 INT: 0.99 SAT: 0.81	✓
No perfect multi-collinearity	Correlation coefficient (highest)	.31	✓	.49	✓	.57	✓
	VIF	Highest: 1.17 Average: 1.10	✓	Highest: 1.52 Average: 1.22	✓	Highest: 1.72 Average: 1.32	✓
	Tolerance (lowest)	.86	✓	.66	✓	.58	
Independent errors (Durbin-Watson test)		2.04	✓	1.98	✓	1.85	✓
Homoscedasticity			✗		✓		~
Normally distributed errors	Histogram		~		✗		~
	K-S test	K-S test statistic (909) = .101, $p < .001$	✗	K-S test statistic (2305) = .367, $p < .001$	✗	K-S test statistic (1402) = .141, $p < .001$	✗
Linearity			✓		~		✓

**Table B6: Assumptions for multiple regression analysis for deliberation (GLES)**

GLES (N = 1409)			
Outliers	Cases with stand. res. >  2	105 (7.5 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. >  2.5	105 (7.5 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. >  3	49 (3.5 per cent)	✗
Influential cases	Cook's distance	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.057	✓
	Mahalanobis distance	Mean: 6.0 Maximum: 22.1	✓
Non-zero variance		POP: 0.57 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.74 EDU: 1.42 INT: 0.99 SAT: 0.81	✓
No perfect multi-collinearity	Correlation coefficient (highest)	.57	✓
	VIF	Highest: 1.72 Average: 1.31	✓
	Tolerance (lowest)	.58	✓
Independent errors (Durbin-Watson test)		1.99	✓
Homoscedasticity			✗
Normally distributed errors	Histogram		✗
	K-S test	K-S test statistic (1409) = .386, $p < .001$	✗
Linearity			~



Also, the logistic regression models were assessed if these fit the data. This was done by means of checking the cases with residuals with a value above |2|, |2,5| and |3| as well as by including Cook's value. Also, the Hosmer Lemeshow test was included, whereby an insignificant chi-square statistic ( $p > .05$ ) denoted that the model was a good fit for the data (Field, 2005). Notably, though the number of cases with standardised residuals violated the guidelines at times, Cook's distance did not exceed the value of 1. Moreover, Hosmer & Lemeshow's test showed that logistic regression was a good fit for the data, apart from one model. In addition, the following assumptions were tested with regards to the generalisability of the results: non-zero variance of predictor variables, multicollinearity, and independent errors. The manner in which these assumptions were checked was similar as described under multiple regression analyses (see above). In no instance, these assumptions were violated (see Tables B7-B8).

**Table B7: Assumptions for logistic regression analysis for referendum democracy**

		BES (N =897)		DPES (N = 2272)	
Outliers	Cases with stand. res. >  2	58 (6.5 per cent)	✗	10 (0.4 per cent)	✓
	Cases with stand. res. >  2.5	42 (4.7 per cent)	✗	None	✓
	Cases with stand. res. >  3	33 (3.7 per cent)	✗	None	✓
Influential cases	Cook's distance	Mean: 0.001 Maximum: 0.031	✓	Mean: 0.000 Maximum: 0.004	✓
Goodness of fit	Hosmer & Lemeshow's test	Model 1: $\chi^2(8) = 5.94, p = .654$ Model 2: $\chi^2(8) = 9.92, p = .271$	✓	Model 1: $\chi^2(8) = 13.60, p = .093$ Model 2: $\chi^2(8) = 3.19, p = .922$	✓
Non-zero variance		POP: 0.61 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.51 EDU: 0.17 INT: 0.85 SAT: 0.72	✓	POP: 0.44 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.09 EDU: 3.23 INT: 0.76 SAT: 0.41	✓
No perfect multi-collinearity	Correlation coefficient (highest)	.34	✓	.44	✓
	VIF	Highest: 1.17 Average: 1.10	✓	Highest: 1.52 Average: 1.22	✓
	Tolerance (lowest)	.88	✓	.66	✓
Independent errors (Durbin-Watson test)		2.02	✓	2.03	✓

**Table B8: Assumptions for logistic regression analysis for deliberation (DPES)**

DPES (N =2305)			
Outliers	Cases with stand. res. >  2	150 (6.5 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. >  2.5	120 (5.2 per cent)	✗
	Cases with stand. res. >  3	91 (3.9 per cent)	✗
Influential cases	Cook's distance	Mean: 0.000 Maximum: 0.013	✓
Goodness of fit	Hosmer & Lemeshow's test	Model 1: $\chi^2(7) = 14.33, p = .046$ Model 2: $\chi^2(8) = 11.47, p = .176$	~
Non-zero variance		POP: 0.44 GEN: 0.25 AGE: 3.09 EDU: 3.23 INT: 0.76 SAT: 0.41	✓
No perfect multi-collinearity	Correlation coefficient (highest)	.43	✓
	VIF	Highest: 1.52 Average: 1.22	✓
	Tolerance (lowest)	.66	✓
Independent errors (Durbin-Watson test)		1.98	✓

## Appendix C: Independent samples t-tests

The aim of the t-tests was to find out if and to what extent populist respondents differed from non-populist respondents in terms of their (attitudes towards) political participation. For this purpose, cases were divided into two independent samples whereby grouping was based on the respondents' score on the populism index. Those scoring 3.3 or higher were categorised as populist while those scoring below as non-populist, which is not to be equated with anti-populist. The reason for setting the cut-off point at 3.3 is as follows. This value required agreement with one-third of the populism items for all national election studies, thereby assuming the other items to average 3.0 as the middle value of the index. Notably, this middle value represented neither agreement nor disagreement with the populism statements, thus not explicitly pointing to a populist attitude. Instead, to be grouped as populist, British respondents needed to on average agree with two out of six populism items, while Dutch and German respondents with three out of nine populism items. Besides, setting the cut-off point at a more stringent value of 3.5 would both exclude slightly populist respondents from the category populist and impose unequal requirements on British vis-à-vis Dutch and German respondents in order to be classified as populist.

Some further notes on the t-test are in place. Firstly, respondents with missing values were excluded analysis by analysis. Furthermore, one-tailed testing was considered most suited, since the formulated hypotheses were directional. For this reason, the SPSS output for two-tailed significance was simply divided by two to derive the one-tailed significance (Field, 2005; Huizingh, 2007). Instead of the t-test, the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test was used for referendum democracy (BES and DPES) and deliberation (DPES). These items had an ordinal level of measurement and the t-test required interval data, whereas ordinal data were sufficient for its non-parametric alternative.

Apart from the t-test, the correlation coefficient was calculated to draw conclusions about the effect size of the differences between populist and non-populist respondents. Hereby, the following guidelines developed by Jacob Cohen were used:  $r = .10$  constituted a small effect,  $r = .30$  a medium effect, and  $r = .50$  a large effect (Field, 2005). Although literature reported the parametric Pearson's correlation coefficient (Pearson's  $r$ ) to be fairly robust to minor deviations from normality, its use was still questionable even for large sample sizes. Alternatively, in case of non-normality, the calculation of the non-parametric Spearman's rank-order correlation (Spearman's  $\rho$ ) was considered more suited for two reasons. Firstly, it was reported to better control for Type I errors and to produce a similar or higher statistical power compared to Pearson's  $r$  (Bishara & Hittner, 2012). Secondly, Spearman's  $\rho$  allowed for an ordinal level of measurement and, thus, to retain the grouping of respondents into populist and non-populist (Field, 2005).

### Populism and attitudes towards political participation

Regarding attitudes towards voting and referendum democracy, significant differences were observed for populist and non-populist respondents (see Table C1). Interestingly, British and German populist respondents were found to hold a more negative stance towards voting than their non-populist counterparts. This difference was significant according to both the BES and GLES. The effect of respondents' populist attitude on their opinion of voting was, however, small. The data analyses of populist attitudes and stances towards referendum democracy showed a reversed outcome. Both Dutch and German populist respondents were observed to be significantly more appreciative of referendums than non-populist respondents. Moreover, a populist attitude was found to have a medium effect on respondents' outlook on referendums. These conclusions are similar to those derived from the regression analyses.

**Table C1: T-test statistics for populism and attitudes towards political participation**

		Mean populist respondents	Mean non- populist respondents	Mean differ- ence	Levene's test for Equality of Variances		t-test			
					F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (one- tailed)	<i>r</i> <sub>s</sub>
<b>Attitudes towards voting</b>	BES	3.95 ± .09	4.08 ± .07	0.13	0.00	.967	2.46	967	.007**	-.099**
	GLES	4.00 ± .10	4.30 ± .07	0.30	33.22	.000***	5.01	1520	.000***	-.103***
<b>Attitudes towards referendums</b>	DPES	3.81 ± .08	2.81 ± .05	1.00	40.20	.000***	-20.76	677	.000***	.431***
	GLES	4.17 ± .08	3.13 ± .08	1.04	48.76	.000***	-18.96	1690	.000***	.422***

*Note 1* When the F-test yielded a significant value, the t-test statistics for Equal variances not assumed were reported here.

*Note 2* Means for attitudes towards voting and attitudes towards referendums range between 1 and 5.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

### Populism and political participation

Turning to the nexus between populist attitudes and political participation, an interesting dynamic can be observed (see Tables C2 and C3). Starting with political participation in general, populist respondents differed significantly from non-populist respondents according to all three national election studies. In fact, populist respondents were found to have participated significantly less in political claim-making than their non-populist counterparts. For all national election studies, the effect of respondents' populist attitude on their political participation remained rather small. Looking at the first variant of political participation, participation in the party-electoral arena, the results were again consistent across the national election studies. The analyses showed that British, Dutch and German populist respondents were significantly less active in the party-electoral arena compared to non-populist respondents. The effect size of respondents' populist attitude on their participation in the party-electoral arena was, however, small. For the second variant, participation in the non-party arena, the outcomes were more equivocal. In line with previous results, the analyses pointed out that British and German populist respondents participated significantly less in this variant than their non-populist counterparts. The negative effect of respondents' populist attitude on their participation in the non-party arena was again suggested to be small. In contrast to the BES and GLES, the analysis of the DPES did not indicate such a significant relationship between populist attitudes and the second variant of political participation. Zooming in on the third variant of political participation, the analyses showed that populist attitudes and participation in referendum democracy were not significantly related. The results thus suggested that populist respondents hardly differed from non-populist respondents in terms of their participation in referendums. Lastly, a different dynamic was noted for populist attitudes and participation in deliberation. For both the DPES and GLES, the analyses showed populist respondents to have participated less in deliberative initiatives than non-populist respondents, whereby these differences were statistically significant. Yet, the analyses indicated that respondents' populist attitude only had little effect on their participation in deliberative initiatives. When comparing these outcomes to the ones derived from the regression analyses, it became clear that the conclusions are similar.

**Table C2: T-test statistics for populism and political participation**

		Mean	Mean	Mean	Levene's test for		t-test			
		populist respondents	non-populist respondents	difference	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (one-tailed)	r <sub>s</sub>
<b>Political participation</b>	BES	2.58 ± .15	2.91 ± .13	0.33	1.97	.161	3.22	962	.001**	-.133***
	DPES	1.78 ± .09	1.93 ± .05	0.15	4.84	.028*	2.91	976	.002**	-.044*
	GLES	1.66 ± .09	2.16 ± .09	0.50	15.82	.000***	6.13	1349	.000***	-.177***
<b>Participation in the party-electoral arena</b>	BES	1.14 ± .09	1.24 ± .07	0.10	2.47	.116	1.70	979	.045*	-.072*
	DPES	1.01 ± .04	1.12 ± .03	0.11	9.27	.002**	4.66	998	.000***	-.096***
	GLES	1.01 ± .05	1.17 ± .05	0.16	13.92	.000***	4.47	1339	.000***	-.134***
<b>Participation in the non-party arena</b>	BES	0.55 ± .09	0.75 ± .08	0.20	6.03	.014*	3.35	904	.001**	-.113***
	DPES	0.10 ± .03	0.11 ± .02	0.01	3.56	.059	.994	2443	.320	-.028
	GLES	0.58 ± .08	0.88 ± .08	0.30	17.29	.000***	5.43	1423	.000***	-.149***
<b>Deliberation</b>	GLES	0.06 ± .02	0.10 ± .03	0.04	19.17	.000***	2.26	1449	.012*	-.057*

*Note 1* When the F-test yielded a significant value, the t-test statistics for Equal variances not assumed were reported here.

*Note 2* Means for political participation range between 0 and 11 (BES and GLES), and 0 and 7 (DPES); means for participation in the party-electoral arena range between 0 and 5 (BES and GLES), and 0 and 3 (DPES); means for participation in the non-party arena range between 0 and 5 (BES), 0 and 2 (DPES), and 0 and 4 (GLES); means for participation in deliberation range between 0 and 2 (GLES).

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table C3: Mann-Whitney test statistics for populism and political participation**

		Mean	Mean	Mean	Mann-	Asymp. Sig	Monte Carlo	r <sub>s</sub>
		populist respondents	non-populist respondents	difference	Whitney U	(one-tailed)	Sig. (one-tailed)	
<b>Referendum democracy</b>	BES	0.88 ± .04	0.91 ± .02	.03	109 517	.106	.123	-.040
	DPES	0.62 ± .04	0.60 ± .03	.02	518 222	.143	.157	.022
<b>Deliberation</b>	DPES	0.06 ± .02	0.10 ± .02	.04	529 498	.002**	.002**	-.058**

*Note 1* When the F-test yielded a significant value, the t-test statistics for Equal variances not assumed were reported here.

*Note 2* Means for participation in referendum democracy and deliberation range between 0 and 1.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$