

Young and Temporary: Youth Employment Insecurity and Support for Right-wing Populist Parties in Europe

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Abstract

The recent success of right-wing populist parties (RPPs) in Europe has given rise to different explanations. Economic factors have proven to be significant mainly at the aggregate level. As for the individual level, it has been argued that the so-called 'losers' of globalization –the less educated and skilled, profiles with higher job insecurity- are more prone to support RPPs. Nevertheless, RPPs perform strikingly well in countries less affected by the Great Recession, gathering high levels of support among profiles not considered the losers of globalization. Moreover, the effect of age on RPPs' support is not clear, as, on the one hand, the young are better educated and skilled, but, on the other, they suffered more the effects of the economic crisis. To address this puzzle, we focus on the impact of unemployment and employment insecurity among the youth on RPPs' voting in 17 European countries. We find that youth support for RPPs can be explained by the precariousness of the youth labour market.

Keywords

Populism, Employment Insecurity, Youth, Right-wing Populist Parties, Europe, Voting Behaviour

During the last decade, right-wing populist parties (RPPs) have been very successful in Europe (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). According to the previous literature, this growth has been mainly caused by the effects of the Great Recession (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015). The chain of events that made possible this phenomenon seems clear. In the first instance of the economic recession, voters would have punished the incumbent in those contexts most affected by the economic crisis. Following a direct interpretation of the literature on economic voting (Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck, 2000), voters would have chosen not to reward the incumbent, producing extraordinary high levels of volatility in Europe (Emanuele, 2015). In the second instance, after verifying that the effects of the crisis would not revert with a change of government, these voters would have opted for parties in the margin of the supply side - among these, those located in the populist right (Zaslave and Wolinetz, 2018; Hernández and Kriesi, 2016).

However, and despite these convincing arguments, some of the best results of this set of parties¹ have taken place in Poland (PiS 38%), Austria (BZÖ 24%), Denmark (DP 17%), and Finland (FS 18%), four of the European countries least affected by the crisis. How is it possible that where the effects of the crisis have been more superficial it is precisely where a higher number of citizens have opted for fringe parties such as RPPs, while in some of the countries where the effects of the crisis have been deeper (Ireland, Portugal or Spain, for instance), these parties have not achieved good results?

If, at the contextual level, the previous literature pointed out to the effects of the economic crisis as the main reason behind the success of right-wing populist parties (Dalio *et al.*, 2017; Funke *et al.*, 2015), who (at individual level) are more prone to vote for these parties? According to some of the most popular theories, the populist and nationalist discourse of these parties, which defends national interests against free trade, would have attracted mainly the so-called 'losers of globalization', that is, those profiles most affected by global trade and offshoring (Kriesi *et al.*, 2006; 2008; 2012). The typical profile of this loser is that of a low-skilled citizen with low levels of education and income (Inglehart and Norris, 2016: 33). However, there is no consistent proof that voters supporting RPPs are more likely to be unemployed, have lower incomes, come from lower classes, or hold a lower education (Rooduijn, 2018a: 364). Moreover, it is not clear whether RPPs gain higher levels of support

among the old (Inglehart and Norris, 2016) or among the young (Arzheimer 2018), although most studies seem to confirm the latter.

In this paper, focusing on the behaviour of the youth, we show that these two explanations (at the micro and at the macro level) are correlated and complementary to the assessment of the rise of RPPs in Europe. The youngest are who vote the most for these parties in those contexts in which their job prospects are less promising. This is, in those countries where the levels of youth temporary employment are higher young voters tend to support RPPs to a greater extent than older voters. Therefore, these results suggest that the employment insecurity of a segment of the population that has been habitually not very active in electoral contests, such as young people (Blais, 2007), could be explaining the success of parties which develop populist and nationalist discourses. Their defence of the national economy, criticism of the corrupt elite and attacks on immigration could be appealing for those who see their economic and job prospects at risk. These findings are especially suggestive if we consider the cohort regeneration of the electorate and the relevant effects of the electoral behaviour during the formative years throughout the adult life.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

Populism, populist parties, and the reasons behind their rise

Given the success of populist parties around Europe since the Great Recession, the number of academic articles that include the word ‘populism’ has increased from 76 to more than 300 between 2010 and 2017 (Rooduijn, 2018b). It is not surprising that ‘populism’ was declared in 2017 word of the year by the Cambridge Dictionary. However, and despite the study of populism started in the 1960s (Ionescu and Gellner, 1969), it is not clear what populism really means and which parties should be classified in this category. There are three main approaches to the analysis of populism. First, some scholars define populism as a (thin) ideology (Mudde 2004, Stanley 2008); second, other consider populism as a political style (Moffitt, 2016); and third, there are studies which refer to populism as a discursive frame (Hawkins 2010). Notwithstanding the fact that populism is a controversial concept, most of the scholars share the ideational approach, which stresses the importance of the following three characteristics of populism: ‘1) a

Manichean and moral cosmology; 2) the proclamation of the people as a homogenous and virtuous community; and 3) the depiction of “the elite” as a corrupt and self-serving entity’ (Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2018: 3).²

RPPs can be characterized by the priority they give to sociocultural issues, with a special focus on attitudes towards immigration, considering it a threat to national identity and values (Rydgren 2007: 244). Besides their anti-establishment stances related to populism, one of the main features of these parties is their nationalist and nativist profile. Mobilizing grievances over immigration makes these parties successful (Ivarsflaten 2008; Hobolt and Tilley 2016) and it is the anti-immigration attitude what unites their electoral bases (Rooduijn 2018a). Furthermore, as many RPPs reject the existence of a plurality of interests and checks and balances between powers as necessary elements for liberal democracies, authoritarianism is also a significant characteristic defining these parties (Mudde, 2007: 15-20).

Most scholars have explained the recent rise of RPPs by macroeconomic factors, specifically by the global financial crisis that started in 2007 (Funke *et al.*, 2015; Dalio *et al.*, 2017; Kriesi and Pappas, 2015).³ For some others, it is not so much about the economic downturns but rather the perception that the national economy is performing poorly (Anduiza and Rico, 2016; Mols and Jetten, 2017). Still for certain academics, cultural – rather than economic – factors are behind the current wave of support for populist parties, which represent a backlash against post-materialist values (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). According to the *globalization thesis*, the processes of denationalization, as well as the political and economic integrations, have produced a divergence between the *winners* and the *losers* of globalization. The *losers* (low-skilled and less educated) are supposed to be mobilized by RPPs, whereas the *winners* (the high-skilled and better educated) by left and green -populist or not- parties (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016: 208).

In a similar vein, the *material deprivation* theories affirm that changes in the occupational structure that derive from the knowledge-driven economy raised economic insecurity and social deprivation among the most vulnerable citizens (Oesch and Rennwald, 2018). Feeling that traditional parties on the left and the right are no longer able or willing to improve their situation

(McGann and Kitschelt, 2005), the losers of the occupational structure are more prone to listen to whoever promises to address their concerns. In this sense, RPPs' leaders have proven to deliver particularly successful discourses among this population, by focusing on restrictions to the mobility of goods (protectionism) and labour (control of immigration). As Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2018:13) summarize: 'the rise of populist radical right parties is linked to mass immigration and multiculturalism, and support for these parties is mostly an expression of nativism'. Consequently, in Western European countries, millions of voters have abandoned their traditional parties and embraced RPPs (de Lange, 2007; Ivarsflaten, 2005).

Who are the 'losers' of globalization that support RPPs?

Nevertheless, the profile of supporters of RPPs is not that clear. What are the socio-demographic characteristics of those most affected by the changes in the structural occupational market, and consequently, those more exposed be lured by the populist promises of RPPs? It is well established that *men* have a higher propensity to vote for RPPs than women and that *education* has a negative effect upon RPPs support (van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2018: 12; Werts et al: 2013, 194-195; Arzheimer and Carter 2006: 428f; Lubbers et al 2002: 362). However, with regard to variables related to the *globalization thesis*, the empirical evidence is inconclusive. Although *manual workers* seem to be more prone to vote for RPPs (Werts et al. 2013: 194-195; Arzheimer and Carter 2006: 438-439; Lubbers et al 2002: 362;), *unemployment* often does not affect RPPs' voting significantly (Rooduijn 2018a; van Elsas 2017: 74).

With regard to *age*, a key variable in the analyses that follow, it has been put forth that the RPPs' voters are to be found among the older generations, resentful of rapid social change (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). In line with the *modernization* theory (Inglehart, 1997), younger cohorts with post-materialist values replace their parents and grandparents, who grew up in less secure surroundings, and thus are less open-minded and tolerant. It also could be argued that, as older citizens are less educated and have more traditionalist views compared to the younger generations, they form part of the losers of globalization -those unqualified and also strongly identifying with their national community (Kriesi *et al.* 2008: 8)- and thus they are more likely to feel appealed by the discourses of and vote for RPPs.

On the other hand, the young have less clear political preferences, weaker party identification, and thus due to the high volatility of their vote, together with a tendency to experiment, they will have higher propensity to vote for RPPs (Arzheimer 2018). Moreover, ‘youth are increasingly vulnerable to uncertainty’ that ‘materializes in increasingly more precarious and lower-quality employment such as fixed-term contracts, part-time or irregular work hours’ which ‘makes them the “losers” of globalization’ (Mills, Blossfeld and Klijzing, 2005: 438-439).⁴ Many studies find a negative effect of age upon the support of RPPs or other closely related parties (van Elsas 2017: 74; Werts et al. 2013: 194f; Lubbers et al 2002: 362, Allen 2017: 110; Rooduijn, 2018a: 363), while other scholars argue that this effect is positive (Inglehart and Norris, 2016: 33; Rooduijn et al. 2017: 549; Greven, 2016: 6), and still others find a U-shaped correlation, whereby the youngest and eldest citizens vote for RPPs more than those aged between 35 and 64 years (Arzheimer and Carter 2006: 428f).

Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that some recent studies found that the profiles of RPPs’ voters differ between countries (Rooduijn, 2018a). In some countries, the main electoral base of these parties is to be found among the oldest and those without university education (Denmark and the United Kingdom, see Rooduijn, 2018a; Ford and Goodwin, 2014: 270). While in other countries, the young and best educated are the main supporters of these parties (as in Greece and France, see Teperoglou *et al.*, 2016: 348-350; Stockemer, 2017)⁵. Thus, the social profile of RPPs’ supporters seems to be context dependent.

Hypotheses: The combination of the macro and micro explanations

According to Mudde (2007: 201), in order to avoid problems of ecological fallacy, the combination of macro and micro explanations is particularly necessary for explaining the success of RPPs. In fact, the diverse effects of the Great Recession among the European countries could generate a different set of losers depending on their socioeconomic environment. That is why we find necessary to combine contextual and individual variables to analyze the success of RPPs.

At the contextual level, one of the key variables to understand the success of these parties is the rate of unemployment (Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Golder, 2003). Some studies have

pointed out that there is a positive relationship between growth in unemployment rates and support for new (Tavits, 2007), anti-immigration (Boomgaarden and Vliengenthart, 2007) and far-right parties (Vlandas and Halikiopoulou, 2018). The meta-analysis conducted by Sipma and Lubbers (2018) for 49 studies shows that the effect of aggregate unemployment on the vote for radical right parties is positive in Western and Eastern Europe after 2008.

Interestingly, some contributions have combined macro and micro explanations to shed light on the effects of socioeconomic characteristics on RPPs voters' profile. Han (2016: 63) has shown that when economic inequality increases, the *poor* become more likely to vote for radical right parties, whereas the *rich* become less likely to support this set of parties. His findings suggest that 'macro-level phenomenon may alter not only the overall level of support for RPPs, but also the compositional structure of party's support'. With similar reasoning, Rooduijn and Burgoon (2017: 18) argue that those who experience economic difficulties are only more likely to vote for a radical right party if the unemployment rate of a country is low, the GDP per capita is high and if inequality levels are low.

In sum, although some contributions have highlighted that economic contextual factors condition the voter's profile of RPPs (or closely related parties), it is not clear which group of voters is affected by them and in which direction. In this sense, the young were among the social groups hardest hit by the economic crisis (Marx, 2014). Although some countries experienced different economic difficulties during the Great Recession, in general terms the percentage of unemployed among the youth was exceptional. Thus, if we assume that those belonging to the young cohorts were the most affected by the economic crisis, it is plausible to argue that, under high levels of aggregate youth unemployment rates young voters would be more prone to support RPPs. Therefore, we expect that:

H1: The higher the levels of youth unemployment in a given country, the higher the vote for RPPs among the young.

Most of the works analysing the causes of support for RPPs have focused on the effects of unemployment as a proxy for economic insecurity (Rueda, 2007; Arzheimer, 2009; Inglehart

and Norris, 2016). Nevertheless, given the recent liberalization of the job markets, which aimed at increasing the flexibility of contracts, unemployment does not show the whole picture with regard to economic insecurity. Among different measures of economic insecurity, Marx (2014: 137) finds that one of the reasons to study ‘temporary employment is that it has turned into a major societal concern (...), particularly given its prevalence among young citizens’. Thus, if we consider alternative measures to economic insecurity, like the one proposed by this author, we will be able to better identify the profile of RPPs’ supporters. Temporary employment has potential repercussions on those who suffer it, such as ‘political disenchantment or radicalization’ (Marx, 2014: 137). In this sense, as recently stated by the International Monetary Fund Staff Discussion ‘today, the young are the age group most at risk of poverty. This generation has been adversely affected by economic stagnation and labour market developments, (...)’ (Chen *et al*, 2018: 5). This report shows that, for most of the European countries, those belonging to the 15-24 age cohort have faced higher unemployment rates, the higher levels of poverty, they have been more often employed part-time and they have faced job insecurity in a higher proportion than other cohorts during the economic crisis (Chen *et al*, 2018: 9).

Siedler (2011: 754), focusing on the German case, finds that the unemployed youth is actually less likely to support far-right parties. However, young people who ‘express economic worries’ are more likely to identify themselves with this set of parties. In other words, following Siedler, while unemployment itself does not predict youth far-right party identification in Germany, a sense of economic insecurity does. The best way to measure economic insecurity is by using temporary employment indicators. Guest and collaborators (2010: 2) said that ‘from a worker’s perspective, temporary employment, with its implied uncertainties about continuity of employment, is perhaps the most precarious form of employment flexibility’. Therefore, our second hypothesis will take the following form:

H2. The higher the levels of youth temporary employment in a given country, the higher the vote for RPPs among the young.

Data and measurement

At the individual level, we use data from the 2016 European Social Survey (ESS Round 8).⁶ Country-level data are taken from Eurostat.⁷ The dependent variable considers voting in last parliamentary elections and it is binary, coded 1 for having voted for a right-wing populist party and 0 for casting a ballot for another party. Abstainers, those who do not know whether they voted or not, and those not answering the question, are omitted from the analysis (following, among others, Rooduijn and Burgoon, 2017). We followed the main contributions on the topic to classify parties as RPPs. Overall, we assess the vote for 34 RPPs in 17 European countries (see table A1 in the Appendix).

The key independent variables measure age, youth unemployment, and temporary youth employment. At the individual level, as the focus is set on the young, we code age as a dichotomous variable, with those between 18 and 29 years old taking the value of 1, and those older 0. All variables at the contextual level are lagged (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2013), meaning that we use values from a year before the parliamentary election took place (ranging from the year 2012 to 2016 – see table A1). Youth unemployment is measured as the unemployment rate among those aged 20-29 (in percentages, [lfsa_urgan]). Temporary youth employment is measured as the ratio of temporary employees among the total number of employees aged 20-29 (in percentages, [yth_empl_050]).

The following variables perform as controls in our models: gender, education, anti-immigration attitudes, ideology, unemployment and temporary employment (all at the individual level).⁸ Table 1 shows the summary statistics for all the variables.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of all variables

	<i>Obs.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
<i>Individual-level variables</i>					
Voted for a right-wing populist party (ref. other parties)	18,986	0.17	0.38	0	1
Aged 18-29 (1=Yes)	31,028	0.16	0.37	0	1
Unemployed (1=Yes)	32,108	0.04	0.20	0	1

Temporary employment or no contract (ref. unlimited)	26,036	0.24	0.42	0	1
Gender (Female=1)	32,099	0.52	0.50	0	1
University education (1=Yes)	31,931	0.22	0.41	0	1
Anti-immigration attitude	31,114	5.10	2.37	0	10
Placement on the left-right scale (0=Left; 10=Right)	28,401	5.01	2.21	0	10
<i>Contextual-level variables</i>					
Youth unemployment (age 20-29, percentage)	17	12.99	5.70	5.7	23.4
Temporary youth employment (age 20-29, percentage)	17	29.51	12.50	5.3	52.6

Source: Own elaboration, ESS8 and Eurostat

Note: Design and population size weights have been applied.

Results

Due to the limited number of clusters (17 countries) – despite we cover all of the European countries with RPPs included in the ESS – we opted for single-level models, although we rely on multi-level models to check for the robustness of our findings (results in Table A2 in the Appendix show robust findings). Table 2 shows the coefficients of logistic regression with voting for RPP as the dependent variable. The first model is an ‘empty’ one, covering the individual and control variables at the individual level. As expected, those with tertiary education show a lower propensity to support RPPs. The discourses of RPPs tend to address those who have suffered the consequences of globalization in a greater extent, being those less educated and trained the most hardly stricken by delocalization (Werts *et al.* 2013; Lubbers *et al.* 2002). Not surprisingly, the effects of an anti-immigration attitude and right-wing ideology upon voting for RPPs are also positive and significant. As the previous literature has discussed (Rooduijn 2018a), one of the most differentiating features of RPPs is how predominant in their discourses is the idea of immigration as a threat for the national interests and/or culture. In this sense, supporting the statement that ‘people from other countries make their country worse’ explains significantly the vote for RPPs.

However, there are no significant effects for females on voting for populist parties (see also Werts *et al.* 2013; Lubbers *et al.* 2002). Neither there are for being unemployed or on a temporary contract. Despite we would expect that those in a position of vulnerability would be

more inclined to support fringe political options such as RPPs, as the previous literature has shown, not having a job does not make voters more prone to opt for these parties (Rooduijn 2018a; van Elsas 2017: 74). In sum, we find that education, attitudes towards immigration and ideology are important variables explaining the vote for RPPs while, in line with previous studies, work status is not a relevant individual characteristic explaining why some voters opt for RPPs.

Table 2. Explaining youth support for RPPs: unemployment and temporary employment

	Empty model (1)	Country youth unemployment (2)	Country youth unemployment (3)	Country youth temporality (4)	Country youth temporality (5)
Female	-0.02 (0.07)	-0.03 (0.07)	-0.03 (0.07)	0.00 (0.07)	0.00 (0.07)
Young (aged 18-29)	0.46*** (0.11)	0.50*** (0.11)	0.28 (0.25)	0.43*** (0.11)	-0.90* (0.39)
University Education	-0.43*** (0.09)	-0.43*** (0.09)	-0.43*** (0.09)	-0.44*** (0.09)	-0.46*** (0.09)
Anti-immigration attitude	0.24*** (0.02)	0.21*** (0.02)	0.21*** (0.02)	0.26*** (0.02)	0.26*** (0.02)
Placement on left right scale	0.45*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.02)	0.44*** (0.02)
Unemployed	0.25 (0.31)	0.07 (0.35)	0.07 (0.35)	0.24 (0.34)	0.26 (0.34)
Temporary or no contract	0.09 (0.10)	0.05 (0.10)	0.05 (0.10)	0.05 (0.10)	0.01 (0.10)
Country youth unemployment		0.10*** (0.01)	0.09*** (0.01)		
Young # Country youth unemployment			0.02 (0.02)		
Temporary youth employment				0.04*** (0.00)	0.04*** (0.00)
Young # Temporary youth employment					0.04*** (0.01)
Constant	-5.50*** (0.15)	-6.46*** (0.17)	-6.43*** (0.17)	-6.75*** (0.19)	-6.61*** (0.20)
Observations	15241	15241	15241	15241	15241
Pseudo R^2	0.191	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.223
Log likelihood	-5252.55	-5064.28	-5063.67	-5062.13	-5044.99
aic	10521.10	10146.55	10147.33	10142.25	10109.97

Source: Own elaboration, ESS8 and Eurostat

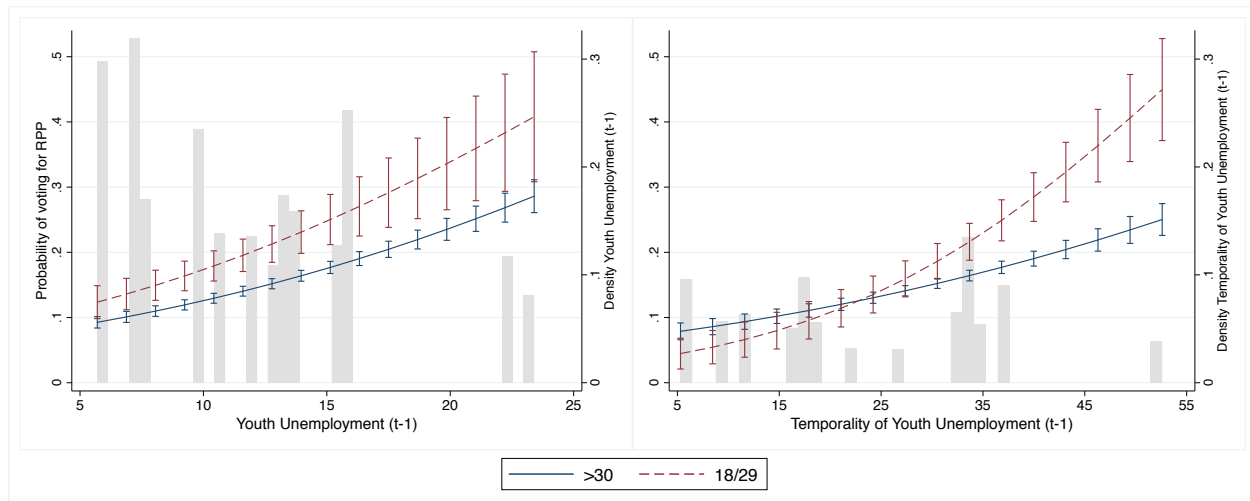
Notes: Coefficients of logistic regression where voting for RPPs is coded as 1 and voting for other parties as 0. Standard errors in parentheses; + $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Design and population size weights applied. Contextual level variables are lagged.

Now, focusing on our main individual-level independent variable, which in the previous literature showed a debated effect, we find a strong positive influence of being young on RPPs' voting. It seems that, in those national elections that took place between 2012 and 2016 in Europe (including Western, Central and Eastern countries), those aged 18-29 had more propensity to vote for RPPs when compared to older voters. Why does the youth choose to support RPPs to a greater extent than the older?

In order to shed light on the debated effect of age on voting for RPPs, it seems crucial to analyze the effects of the context, given that the age profile of RPPs' voters is diverse in different contexts. More specifically, in this paper we are interested in the analysis of the impact of the labour market on the youth vote choice. We address this issue in models 2 to 5. Firstly, in models 2 and 3 we account for the country-level youth unemployment rates to study to what extent the job market in a specific country has an impact on the probability to opt for RPPs among the youngest. The coefficients demonstrate that the higher the youth unemployment rates, the higher the chances of voting for RPPs. However, youth unemployment does not affect the propensity of the youth to support RPPs in any particular way, as the insignificant interaction term in model 3 and the left panel of figure 1 show. Thus, we reject H1. It may sound counterintuitive at first, but as Marx (2014) has pointed out, it is not unemployment *per se* which throws young voters into the arms of RPPs. It is mainly temporary employment which has the potential to do just that.

Consequently, in models 4 and 5 the effect of the temporality of youth employment at the country-level is assessed. Our goal here is to test, given the liberalization of the job markets, to what extent it is the precariousness, which particularly affects the youngest segments of the population, that explains RPPs voting. Our models show that in those countries where the rate of youth temporary employment is higher, the propensity to support RPPS is also greater. Furthermore, its effects are substantially higher for the young. As demonstrated by the interaction term in model 5 and shown in the marginal effects plot in the right panel of Figure 1, in those countries where the contracts are less stable for the younger, the younger are more prone to vote for RPPs.

Figure 1. Marginal effects of youth unemployment and temporary youth employment on RPPs' voting by age



Source: Own elaboration, ESS8 (2016) and Eurostat

Note: Coefficients of the interaction terms in models 3 (left) and 7 (right) from Table 2.

Interestingly, after controlling for the interaction of temporality of youth employment and age (model 5), the coefficient of being young flips to negative. To put it differently, if we take into account youth temporality of employment and its effects for the youth voting behaviour, significantly, it is not the youngest ones that are more prone to support RPPs anymore, but the citizens over 30 years old. This finding points out the need for combining the explanations at the micro and macro levels, not only for methodological reasons but also for conceptual purposes. Young voters have higher propensity to support right-wing populist parties only in those countries where the job market is less promising and stable for their segment of the population.

We checked for the robustness of these main findings using multilevel logistic regression models with random intercepts by countries (see Table A2 in the Appendix). The results are similar to the ones of single-level models. The country-level variables and the interactions are introduced in a similar fashion to the ones from Table 2, finding the same significant effect (although this time with a 0.1 margin of error) of the interaction term between being young and aggregate temporality of youth employment (model 4).⁹

To sum up, the results obtained in this analysis point towards the importance of contextual effects of the economic variables on RPPs' vote. We showed that those aged 18-29 are more prone to support RPPs than older citizens, mainly due to employment insecurity. In line with other studies on populist parties, we find that the economic variables affecting the propensity to vote RPPs operate rather at the aggregate level. Youth temporality of youth employment on the country-level is by far more important for the youth to support RPPs than if the young person in question actually is unemployed or employed on a temporary contract. Furthermore, we argue that when debating about the positive or negative effect of being young on RPPs the consideration of the context is crucial. Younger voters are more prone to vote for RPPs only in those countries where the job perspectives are poorer and job precariousness is more present among their peers.

Conclusions

Since the Great Recession, right-wing populist parties (RPPs) have experienced prompt electoral growth in Europe. Some examples of this rapid electoral success are the North League in Italy, the Fidesz in Hungary or the Danish People's Party, although right-wing populist vote share has risen in almost every European country during the last decade. Some of the most relevant contributions to the study of voter bases of these parties have pointed to the effects of the crisis as the main factor explaining this unprecedented advance. The economic crisis would have accentuated the social inequalities that affect especially certain sectors of the population -the less educated and manual workers (i.e., the so-called 'losers of globalization')- who would have found in these parties a response to their frustrations and demands, not addressed by mainstream parties.

However, the electoral results of RPPs have been especially good also in countries less affected by the economic crisis, such as Austria, Denmark, Finland, and Poland. Nor does it seem to be true that those individuals most affected by delocalization and globalization have been the main electoral base of these parties in many countries. For instance, in France and

Greece, the youngest and best educated also voted for the National Front and the Golden Dawn, respectively.

In this paper, we have focused on the young voters in order to analyse to what extent the labour insecurity triggered (or at least accentuated) by the Great Recession has affected the vote choice of the youth. We have focused on a specific population segment -the youth- somehow neglected by the previous literature linking populist voting to the Great Recession. We also have used the temporality of employment as an alternative measure of employment security. We argue that it captures the precariousness of youth employment better than the conventionally used measure of (youth) unemployment.

Our results show that, in the case of parliamentary elections that took place between 2012 and 2016 in 17 European countries, young voters have greater propensity to vote for RPPs. However, it is only true in those contexts where economic prospects of the youth are more adverse, especially where the labour market is precarious for the youngest segment of the population. In other words, the higher the temporality of youth unemployment in a given country, the higher the support for RPPs among the youth. In contexts of high insecurity, young citizens seem more likely to be attracted by the nativist discourse of these parties.

From the methodological point of view, these findings underscore the need to combine explanations at the micro and macro level when carrying out comparative analyses of the electoral sociology of populist parties. Voter profiles are context-dependent. In this sense, it seems particularly relevant to highlight the role of economic explanations at the macro level (sociotropic voting) during the Great Recession, combined with the individual characteristics of the voter (in this article, age) to explain the rise of populist parties in Europe.

With regard to the policy implications, our findings point to the importance of paying greater attention to the economic security of the youth – a sector of the population that has been especially affected by the economic crisis and has seen its labour prospects as particularly unstable. The attraction of young people towards these parties and their nativist discourses is of special relevance, since the political boundaries and values, with a huge impact on future

electoral attitudes and behaviour, are formed in these years. Providing a more secure employment environment to the young could be a measure to counteract the rise of right-wing populist parties in Europe.

Endnotes

¹ Although some studies consider all populist parties as belonging to the same family (Inglehart and Norris 2016), most of the literature on the topic divides them according to the thick ideology that serves as a host for populism and focuses on populist radical right parties (Mudde 2007). There are some studies that distinguish radical left-wing populist parties (March and Mudde 2005; March 2011), and even centrist populist parties (Havlík and Stanley 2015, Pop-Eleches 2010). We use the term right-wing populist parties -RPPs- (Betz and Meret 2013, Gidron and Hall 2017) as the link between populism and radicalism is weaker in most Central and Eastern European countries (Bustikova 2018, Minkenberg 2017), and our focus is on all countries of the European Union. It is important to clarify that we do not take sides on the debate on whether RPPs qualify as a ‘party family’. Rather, we use the RPPs label to refer to a set of parties that share both a rightist and an anti-elite leaning. They emphasise that immigrants are a threat to national identity (Rydgren 2007: 244) and claim that political elites only look after business’ interests while neglecting the common working man’s interests (Mudde, 2007).

² In spite of the fact that most of the scholars of populism share the ideational approach, there is a lot of confusion around this notion. Scholars tend to place parties challenging the *status quo* under different labels. Sometimes the very same parties are labelled as ‘anti-establishment’ (Schedler, 1996; Abedi, 2004), ‘radical’ (Funke *et al.* 2015), ‘populist’ (Inglehart and Norris 2016), ‘challenger’ (Hobolt and Tilley 2016), ‘extreme’ (Carter 2005), ‘anti-system’ (Zulianello, 2019) or ‘protest’ (Morlino and Raniolo 2017). All these, in many cases interchangeable, labels have introduced a noticeable level of noise in studies of populist parties.

³ Some studies trace the origins of this phenomenon to the globalization of trade that had occurred even before the Great Recession (Colantone and Stanig, 2018)

⁴ Note that these shifts have begun already before the Great Recession.

⁵ In other countries, such as Germany, age does not result statistically significant to explain the vote for AfD, whereas the less educated are the main supporters of this party (Giebler and Regel, 2018: 17-18)

⁶ ESS8 edition 2.0 (published 30.05.18) available online: <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data>

⁷ Employment and Unemployment (LFS) database available online: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/data/database?p_p_id=NavTreeportletprod_WAR_NavTreeportletprod_INSTANCE_IFjhoVbmPFHt&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-2&p_p_col_count=1 [data extracted in November 2018]

⁸ Gender is coded 1 for female. Education is coded 1 for having a university degree (ES-ISCED V1 and V2) and 0 for lower levels of education. Anti-immigration attitudes are coded as 0 for those who think that immigrants make their country a better place to live and 10 for those that, contrarily, think that people from other countries make their country worse (we inverted the original 11-point scale). Ideology is measured by the self-placement on the left-right scale (0=Left; 10=Right). Unemployment is coded 1 for those who report being unemployed and actively looking for a job in the last 7 days. Temporary

employment is coded 1 for those that have limited employment contract or no contract at all, and 0 for those that have contracts of unlimited duration.

⁹ This lack of statistical significance could be explained by the change in the statistical technique (from simple logistic regression to a multilevel one). These estimates have limited accuracy, given the low number of cases on the upper level.

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Appendix

Table A1. List of Right-wing Populist Parties by country

Country (election year)	Right-wing Populist Parties (RPPs) (English)	References
Austria (2013)	Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ); Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZO); Team Stronach	Mudde (2007); Mair (2013); Schmuck, Matthes and Boomgaarden (2016)
Belgium (2014)	Libertarian Direct Democratic (LDD); Flemish Interest (VB)	Pauwels (2010); Mudde (2007); Rooduijn (2018a)
Czech Republic (2013)	Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO 2011); Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)	Havlik and Voda (2018); Kriesi and Pappas (2015: 315)
Estonia (2015)	Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE); Estonian Independence Party (EIP)	Petsinis (2016); Madisson and Vetsel (2016)
Finland (2015)	True Fins (FS)	Rooduijn (2018a); Rensmann, de Lange and Couperus (2017)
France (2012)	National Front (FN)	Mudde (2007); Rooduijn (2018a)
Germany (2013)	Alternative for Germany (AfD); National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD)	Rensmann, de Lange and Couperus (2017); Nociar and Thomeczek (2018)
Hungary (2014)	Hungarian Civic Alliance (Fidesz); The Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik)	Kriesi and Pappas (2015: 315); van Kessel (2015: 50); Minkenberg (2017: 124); Pirro (2015)
Iceland (2013)	People's Party (FX); Icelandic National Front	Fontaine (2017)
Italy (2013)	The People of Freedom (PdL); Northern League (LN); Brothers of Italy (Fdl)	Pappas (2016); Bobba and Roncarola (2018); Rensmann, de Lange and Couperus (2017)
Lithuania (2012)	Party Order and Justice (TT)	Aleknonis and Matkeviciene (2016)
Netherlands (2012)	Party for Freedom (PVV); 50PLUS	Rooduijn (2018a); Rensmann, de Lange and Couperus (2017); Hamelers, Bos and de Vreese (2017)
Norway (2013)	Coastal Party (KYST); Progress (FRP)	Schultheis (2017); Jupskås (2013)
Poland (2015)	Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic – Liberty and Hope (KORWiN); Kukiz'15; Law and Justice (PiS)	Kriesi and Pappas (2015:315); Sztompka (2016); Minkenberg (2017:124)
Sweden (2014)	Sweden Democrats (SD)	Rooduijn (2018a); Rensmann, de Lange and Couperus (2017)
Switzerland (2015)	Swiss People's Party (SVP); Ticino League	Rooduijn (2018a); Bernhard (2017)
United Kingdom (2015)	British National Party (BNP); United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP); Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	van Kessel (2015); Rensmann, de Lange and Couperus (2017)

Source: Author's elaboration

Table A2. Multilevel logistic regression models with random intercept by country

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Female	-0.19*** (0.05)	-0.19*** (0.05)	-0.19*** (0.05)	-0.19*** (0.05)
Young (aged 18-29)	0.26** (0.09)	0.25 (0.24)	0.26** (0.09)	-0.04 (0.19)
University Education	-0.58*** (0.07)	-0.58*** (0.07)	-0.58*** (0.07)	-0.59*** (0.07)
Anti-immigration attitude	0.44** (0.16)	0.44** (0.16)	0.44** (0.16)	0.45** (0.16)
Placement on left right scale	0.28*** (0.01)	0.28*** (0.01)	0.28*** (0.01)	0.28*** (0.01)
Unemployed	0.36*** (0.01)	0.36*** (0.01)	0.36*** (0.01)	0.36*** (0.01)
Temporary or no contract	0.04 (0.08)	0.04 (0.08)	0.04 (0.08)	0.02 (0.08)
Country youth unemployment	0.02 (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)		
Young # Country youth unemployment		0.00 (0.02)		
Temporary youth employment			0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Young # Temporary youth employment				0.01+ (0.01)
Constant	-5.50*** (0.78)	-5.50*** (0.78)	-5.76*** (0.64)	-5.73*** (0.64)
Variance at the country level	1.46** (0.51)	1.46** (0.51)	1.39** (0.48)	1.39** (0.48)
Observations	15241	15241	15241	15241
Log lik.	-4614.32	-4614.32	-4613.91	-4612.23
aic	9248.64	9250.64	9247.83	9246.46

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001; Number of clusters: 17.