# The implications of how we are feeling

## *Exploring the relationship between well-being and populism*

*Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Political Science (MSc)*

Author: Flip Zandanel
Student number: 1083494
Specialisation: Comparative Politics
Supervisor: dr. S.P. Ruth-Lovell
Nijmegen School of Management
Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands
Submission date: 23 June 2023
Word count: 18540

## ABSTRACT

Previous research has established that discontent related to economic uncertainty and sociocultural phenomena partially explains populist party support. The present thesis builds on an emergent third strand of research that investigates well-being as an additional explanation. Where previous research used measures such as life satisfaction and happiness as explanatory variables, the present study understands well-being as a complex multidimensional concept encompassing elements of hedonic, eudaimonic and evaluative understandings of well-being. By conducting a factor analysis, an index of subjective individual well-being is built and by using data from the European Social Survey it is investigated whether individuals with a low well-being are more likely to support a populist party. The results of logistic regression analyses show that well-being is indeed negatively correlated with populist party support. Furthermore, it is found that the eudaimonic dimension of well-being is most important in explaining populist party support and that people who are concerned about the life situation of fellow citizens are more inclined to opt for this support. Finally, avenues for further research are presented and implications for scholars as well as non-scholars are given.



Keywords: populism, well-being, composite measure, factor analysis, logistic regression analysis, survey data, Europe



## *KORTE SAMENVATTING* (Dutch - *Nederlands*)

*Eerdere studies hebben aangetoond dat ontevredenheid gerelateerd aan economische onzekerheid en sociaalculturele verschijnselen een van de verklaringen is voor steun aan populistische partijen. Deze scriptie bouwt voort op een opkomende derde onderzoekslijn die welzijn onderzoekt als mogelijke verklaring. Waar eerder onderzoek maten als levenstevredenheid en geluk als verklarende variabelen gebruikte, wordt welzijn in de huidige studie opgevat als een complex multidimensionaal concept dat elementen van hedonische, eudaimonische en evaluatieve interpretaties van welzijn omvat. Aan de hand van een factoranalyse wordt een index van subjectief individueel welzijn gecreëerd en met behulp van data uit de European Social Survey wordt onderzocht of personen met een laag welzijn eerder geneigd zijn een populistische partij te steunen. De resultaten van logistische regressieanalyses laten zien dat welzijn inderdaad negatief gecorreleerd is met steun voor populistische partijen. Voorts blijkt dat de eudaimonische dimensie van welzijn het belangrijkst is in het voorspellen van steun aan populistische partijen en dat de groep die zich zorgen maakt over de levenssituatie van landgenoten extra geneigd is voor deze steun te kiezen. Tenslotte worden er suggesties gedaan voor toekomstig onderzoek en worden implicaties voor de wetenschap en andere velden gegeven.*



*Trefwoorden: populisme, welzijn, samengestelde maatstaf, factoranalyse, logistische regressieanalyse, enquêtedata, Europa*

# Table of contents

# Overview of tables and figures

*Tables**



*Figures**



*The titles of many tables and figures are made shorter on this page to save space.

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Introduction

Populism is on the rise and has been for a some time now. In the past 25 years, populist political parties have become significant players in the political landscape of many countries. Up to now, they have seen great electoral success and participated in various government coalitions. In these years, populist parties' total vote share in Europe has risen from just over five per cent to over a quarter of the total vote share now (Leiniger & Meijers, 2021; Lewis et al., 2018). This rise in vote share won by populist parties has been accompanied by a surge in scholarly attention to populism. Whereas in 2012, only around 40 scientific articles within the field of political science on the topic were published, this number has risen to over 200 per year by 2018. Especially since the Brexit referendum, the amount of scientific articles has skyrocketed. Simultaneously, media attention for the phenomenon has gone up as well (Hunger & Paxton, 2022; Rooduijn, 2019).

A substantial amount of studies so far has focussed on the demand-side of populism and has aimed to explain why it is that people support political parties. It is often claimed that people vote for populist parties out of a feeling of discontent. Two popular explanations are the 'economic uncertainty' and 'cultural backlash' theories. The former puts emphasis on deprivation and economic insecurity with the 'left-behinds' in a changing economic system and the latter explains the populist party vote as resulting from progressive value change and a conversion to post-materialism (Inglehart & Norris, 2016).

This thesis builds on an emergent third strand of discontent-related explanations for populist party support: well-being. It investigates the relationship between well-being and support for populist parties and seeks to understand how strong the relationship between these variables is. Previous research focussed on several aspects of well-being (e.g. happiness, life satisfaction or social inclusion) in association with support for populist parties, but never explored the possibility of well-being as a comprehensive, multi-dimensional concept and related this to the probability of supporting a populist party. This study focusses on subjective individual well-being. The concept encompasses self-assessments that have to do with both feeling good and functioning well. It includes elements of hedonic, eudaimonic as well as evaluative well-being. The former concept relates to the experience of pleasure and absence of pain, whilst the second is about self-realisation and the third concerns satisfaction with various domains of life.

*Scientific relevance*

Increasingly, attention from populism scholars is going out to different aspects of well-being such as health, social inclusion, personality traits, loneliness, feelings and emotions as possible explanatory or associative variables for populist attitudes or support for populist parties. According to Erisen et al. (2021), "studies of demand-side populism with a focus on attitudinal and behavioral factors are becoming more popular, but only a few have explored the phenomenon's psychological determinants." (p. 149). An association is found by multiple studies between some aspects of well-being on the one hand and support for populist parties on the other hand. Salmela and Von Scheve (2017) investigate the emotional origins of voting for right-wing populist parties, finding that multiple emotional processes underlie this. Shame and insecurity lead to negative feelings towards out-groups. Some studies focus on the association between self-rated general health and support for right-wing populist parties. (Backhaus et al., 2019; Kavanagh et al., 2021). Other studies use a more comprehensive concept instead of general health, or look at different aspects. Langenkamp and Bienstman (2022) find that weak social belonging, which in their definition encompasses frequency and quality of social contacts, leads to an increased probability to vote for populist parties. Nowakowski (2021) finds that happiness, life satisfaction and self-rated health together can explain voting for populist parties.

These studies are inspiring for further research. Their findings indicate that well-being is a viable terrain to explore in relation to the field of populism, in addition to commonly-investigated explanations for populism support. What is left to explore more, however, is how the concept of well-being should be exactly defined and measured. The studies mentioned in the previous paragraph explore various aspects of well-being, but do not capture a comprehensive account of this concept, even though it is widely accepted amongst scholars of well-being and related fields that the concept is comprehensive and multidimensional and should be measured as such (McGillivray & Shorrocks, 2005; Wills-Herrera, Islam & Hamilton, 2009; Huppert & So, 2013).

Not only is subjective well-being "a relative newcomer in terms of its relevance politically and its robustness empirically." (Dolan & Metcalfe, 2012, p. 411); Little is known yet about the relationship between populism and well-being in general, instead of only different aspects or sentiments. Lindholm and Rapeli (2023) note that subjective well-being is an understudied topic in relation to support for populism, but only include 'life satisfaction' in their framing of this concept. This thesis takes up their recommendation of exploring the

concept further. The present study will improve on previous studies mainly by using a comprehensive conception of 'well-being', instead of measuring only a few of its constitutive parts. It will also, to current knowledge, be the first paper to link such a conception of subjective individual well-being to populist party support.

*Societal relevance*

Populism is widely seen as a threat to the stability of societies (e.g. Rummens, 2017; Nowakowski, 2021) and the growth of populism can be seen as an important cause of polarisation (e.g. Schulze, Mauk & Linde, 2020; Roberts, 2022). In an attempt to counter increased polarisation in societies – between populists and non-populists – it may be valuable to gain a better understanding of the origins of support for populism, including helping non-populists to nuance their view of populist party supporters and gaining more knowledge about how people develop populist views.

Important to consider is that populism can be seen not only as threat, but also as a corrective. It can bring issues to the fore that are overlooked or neglected by mainstream parties (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Vittori, 2022). Support for populist parties can be an indication of something not being right. It can be argued for that a state should be in charge of caring for the well-being of its citizens (Diener & Seligman, 2004; Helliwell & Huang, 2008). If people support populist parties and if there turns out to be an association between low well-being and support for populist parties, it could be concluded that their government is not performing this task adequately.

When it comes to well-being, especially the recent pandemic and its aftermath have shown how the occurrence of low well-being is an issue that needs to be dealt with. Moreover, Langenkamp and Bienstman (2022) state that "[F]or decades, sociodemographic trends such as rising individualism, aging societies, shrinking social networks, and widespread loneliness" will, according to experts, "become a growing issue for democracies." (p. 931).

For policy-makers, gaining knowledge about well-being may be helpful as well, as they let themselves be guided by traditional measures (such as GDP) still often instead of subjective well-being (Nowakowski, 2021). Should populism and polarisation wanted to be prevented, policy-makers could look into preventing different dimensions of low well-being from occurring. Furthermore, by sustaining a good citizen well-being, incumbent politicians of mainstream parties might not only be able to prevent populists from getting into power and forestall further polarisation, but also increase their chances of getting re-elected (Ward, 2019).

*Research question*

Central to the thesis is the following research question, on the basis of which the literature review in the next chapter will be conducted: *To what extent does well-being lead to support for populist parties?*

*Structure of the thesis*

This thesis is structured as follows: in chapter 2, a review of the extant scholarly literature will be carried out, followed by the formulation of a number of hypotheses that will later on be tested. Next, in chapter 3, it will be explained what data are part of this study and how these are analysed. Then, chapter 4 is devoted to the data analysis and an evaluation of the earlier-stated hypotheses. Chapter 5 has the purpose of drawing conclusions on the basis of the results of the data analysis and in light of the theory. It also includes a discussion and suggestions for further research. Finally, after the reference list, an appendix is presented containing additional tables, figures and information.

# Theory and expectations

This chapter consists of two parts. First, the core concepts of this thesis – populism and well-being – are discussed through means of a literature review and the utilised conceptualisation of both concepts will be made clear. Secondly, a number of hypotheses will be presented against the backdrop of this discussion.

## Theory

In this part of the chapter, an overview of previous literature on the topics of populism and well-being is presented.

### Populism

*Populism and populist parties*

In political science, no absolute consensus exists on what populism actually entails. However, there is to some extent agreement on a number of features that the concept of populism bears. Populism is a thin-centred ideology, which means that it can be coupled with a variety of so-called 'thick' ideologies. Because populism is not a comprehensive ideology, it can be mixed with various political positions and ideologies (Mudde, 2004; Otjes & Louwerse, 2015). Abts and Rummens (2007) assert that populism is a "thin-centered ideology concerning the structure of power in society." (p. 408). This 'structure of power' relates to three important dimensions that are by many scholars agreed upon to be part of the concept: an anti-elitist view, a Manichaean outlook on the world and the belief in the unconstrained sovereignty of the people as a homogenous entity (Mudde, 2004; Wuttke, Schimpf & Schoen, 2020; Schulz et al., 2018). This is in line with the commonly-used 'ideational approach' to studying populism (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017).

Although the focus of this study will be on the demand-side of populism, as it "alludes to the empirical study of the individuals prone to hold the populist worldview." (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2021, p. 1), it is useful to briefly address the supply-side, in order to clarify what populist parties are. 'Populist party support' is the dependent variable of this study. What these political parties share, is a thin-centred ideology consisting of the three previously-described features. However, populism being a thin-centred ideology also means that populist parties come in a number of different varieties, as the populist ideology is nearly always supplemented with at least one other ideology. The literature often distinguishes left- and right-wing

populism. These variants differ mostly in their framing of who the people and the elite are. Left-wing populist parties position the working class or the poor against the political elite class which listens only to the interests of the business elite. Left-wing populism is related to socioeconomic issues. Right-wing populist parties, on the other hand, juxtapose the people and the elite along a nativist and cultural dimension. 'The people', in this case, are members of the nation who seek protection from non-natives. Right-wing populism has an exclusive view on society, whilst its left-wing counterpart has an inclusive view (Otjes & Louwerse, 2015; Huber & Schimpf, 2017). It should be mentioned that populist parties can also take centrist positions that are less clearly tied to some 'thick' ideology. Parties like these have emerged in Central Europe, claim to be non-ideological and promise direct democracy or a competent leader to represent the will of the people. They may also pledge to manage the state in a better way than the political elite is doing now. Centrist populist parties appear to position the people against a corrupt and incompetent establishment (Havlík & Voda, 2018). Based on this, centrist populist parties adhere to the core of the populism concept. All types of populist parties are part of this study.

*Explanations for populist party support*

A multitude of studies have sought to explain why it is that people support populist parties. Commonly-investigated explanatory factors have to do with sociocultural aspects and economic uncertainty (Nowakowski, 2021). Sociocultural explanations mostly relate to the cultural backlash theory, which posits that people vote for populist parties as a reaction to part of the population holding progressive values (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). Scholars who focus on sociocultural explanations argue that support for political parties is caused by, amongst other causes, "rising immigration, the decline of traditional values, and the mobilization of women and minority groups." (Berman, 2021, p. 75). The economic-uncertainty explanation "emphasizes the consequences of profound changes transforming the workforce and society in post-industrial economies." (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 1). This explanation concentrates on how major changes such as globalisation lead to distrust and uncertainty with the lower educated, the working class and residents of rural areas. Worry about one's future financial situation also plays a role (Berman, 2021). Economic uncertainty can drive distrust, which is in turn often found to be predictive of support for populism (Algan et al., 2017).

What these two explanations appear to have in common, is discontent with some type of situation or aspect of life. Under this umbrella of 'discontent', one more type of explanation

for populism support can be placed. In recent years, a growing body of literature has looked into discontent that has to do with factors such as life satisfaction, social inclusion and emotions. Nowakowski (2021) finds happiness, subjective health and life satisfaction to be predictive of populist party voting, whilst other studies include items of social inclusion or belonging (Rettberg, 2020; Langenkamp & Bienstman, 2022; Manunta et al., 2022). Other research finds a correlation between self-rated health and support for populism (Backhaus et al., 2019; Kavanagh et al. 2021). Finally, a number of studies find an explanation for populist party voting in emotions. Salmela and Von Scheve (2017) find that fear and shame, resulting from a failure to live up to society's expectations, are transformed into anger and hatred towards out-groups. Rico, Guinjoan and Anduiza (2017) argue that anger and fear are important in explaining populist attitudes.

Lindholm and Rapeli (2023) suggest that subjective well-being is a missing explanation for populist party supoort. However, these authors include only 'life satisfaction' in their conceptualisation of subjective well-being. The other studies discussed in this section so far also focus on just one or a small number of items that could be part of a multidimensional conception of well-being, which will be further explored in the next section of this chapter.

*In sum*

This section has focussed on the dependent variable of this thesis: populist party support. The present study will take up the ideational approach to defining populism. Because populism is a thin-centred ideology, populist parties can take different 'host ideologies'. However, they can be studied as one category of political parties, because their core is the same. Recently, psychological and well-being items have emerged as a new set of explanations, besides sociocultural and economic accounts. What these three main explanations have in common is that they are about discontent. This thesis seeks to expand both scientific and societal knowledge about the well-being explanation by focussing on the multidimensionality of the concept, which will be further elaborated upon in the next section.

## Well-being

### *Subjective individual well-being*

The focus of this thesis with regards to well-being is on how people evaluate their own well-being, whence the label 'subjective individual well-being' (SIWB). In recent years, multiple studies have investigated the relationship between various parts of the well-being concept and support for populism (e.g. Backhaus et al., 2019; Kavanagh et al., 2021; Nowakowski, 2021; Langenkamp & Bienstman, 2022; Oude Groeniger et al., 2022; Lindholm & Rapeli, 2023). These studies measure only part of what SIWB as a concept actually is. This thesis will acknowledge SIWB as a complex, multidimensional concept. In this section, it will be clarified what this concept does and does not entail.

Before discussing in detail what SIWB is, it is necessary to distinguish it from objective well-being. Objective well-being includes factors such as life expectancy, income and educational attainment (VanderWeele et al., 2020, p. 1). Subjective well-being results from internal influences, such as personality and attitude. Objective well-being results from external influences, such as indicators of success, income stability, education, safety and the quality of the environment. It is also about expectations of what basic human needs are (Atkinson et al., 2019; Alatartseva & Barysheva, 2014; Dolan & Metcalfe, 2012). Objective well-being will remain beyond the scope of this study. SIWB should also be set apart from preference satisfaction, which is explained by Dolan and Metcalfe (2012) as another approach to well-being. Preference satisfaction is associated with a normative discovery of what someone would need to satisfy their desires. Because the present study does not have a normative aim, this approach will be left out of the scope as well. Dolan and Metcalfe state that subjective well-being is an account of well-being that is "a relative newcomer in terms of its relevance politically and its robustness empirically." (ibid., p. 411).

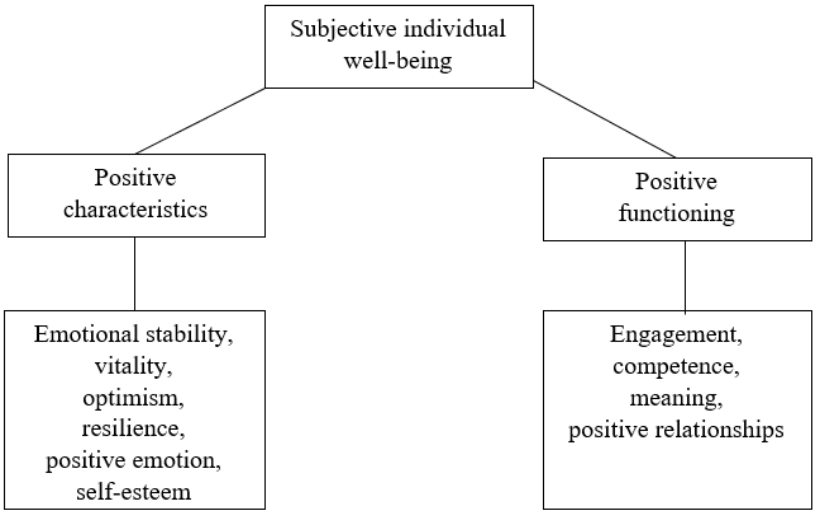
Topp, Østergaard and Søndergaard (2015) conceptualise 'well-being' as mostly relating to people's moods, e.g. "feeling cheerful and in good spirits" and daily life being "filled with things that interest me." (p. 167-168). Atkinson et al. (2019) differentiate between individual and collective well-being, with the former pertaining to the own levels of happiness and stress, and to how people feel about their own job and house. The latter has to with feelings about e.g. the local economy, safety and local social factors. The authors also define a third type of well-being that has to do with shared community values and belonging to a community. Diener and Ryan (2009) argue that SIWB has to do with subjective evaluations of people's lives. This

includes “judgments and feelings about life satisfaction, interest and engagement, affective reactions such as joy and sadness to life events, and satisfaction with work, relationships, health, recreation, meaning and purpose, and other important domains.” (p. 391). In their review of the extant literature, the authors also report correlations with social inclusion, health and happiness, as well as with some demographic factors such as age, gender, education and income (ibid., p. 393-399). Toma, Hamer and Shankar (2015) and VanderWeele et al. (2020) distinguish three commonly-used conceptual approaches to SIWB, which these authors view as a multidimensional concept. The hedonic perspective understands well-being as the experience of pleasure and the absence of pain, whilst the evaluative perspective approach defines the concept as satisfaction with different domains of life. Finally, the eudaimonic perspective assesses self-realisation and purpose in life. Some caution is needed regarding the use of this division in science. Drawing a too sharp line between these three perspectives can cause problems, as a conceptual overlap exists between eudaimonic and hedonic well-being and clear measurement of eudaimonia is lacking. Psychological phenomena can be hard to understand and disentangle, and mechanisms might operate together. Correlations between the perspectives exist. However, they can exert different effects (Waterman, 1993; Deci & Ryan, 2006; Kashdan, Biswas-Diener & King, 2008; Turban & Yan, 2016). Deci & Ryan (2006) note that research has traditionally mostly shown interest in the hedonic view, but recommend involving the eudaimonic view as well when talking about SIWB. The evaluative aspect has been proven to be important by multiple studies as well (e.g. Miret et al., 2017; Kieny et al., 2022). What can be said to be the most important feature of SIWB is that it relates to how life is experienced by people themselves (Charalampi, Michalopoulou & Richardson, 2018; Tov, 2018).

After having reviewed the literature, it can be established that this thesis’ conception of SIWB contrasts itself from its objective counterpart by focussing on internal processes, moods and feelings that are related to the self. Objective well-being is more related to material goods such as income, good residence conditions, education and the quality of the environment one lives in. Collective well-being will also not be part of the conceptualisation, for it relates mostly to an assessment of other people instead of the self. As discussed before, previous studies focussed only on parts of well-being in association with populism support, even though it is a multidimensional concept. In contrast, all of the three conceptual approaches to well-being as identified by Toma et al. (2015) and VanderWeele et al. (2020) – hedonic, eudaimonic and evaluative – will be incorporated in this thesis’ conceptualisation. SIWB is about “feeling good and functioning well” (Ruggeri et al., 2020, p. 1). It is a complex, multidimensional concept.

The exact conceptualisation of SIWB that this thesis takes up as a starting point is a comprehensive definition of well-being that was developed by Huppert and So (2013) and build upon and tested further with more recent data by Ruggeri et al. (2020). Their conceptualisation of SIWB – Huppert and So refer to it as 'flourishing' – consists of ten dimensions (see Figure 1). This approach "produces more insight into well-being and its components than a single item measure such as happiness or life satisfaction." (ibid., p. 10-11). Even though the ten dimensions used in this conceptualisation are shown to belong to the overarching concept of well-being, Huppert and So (2013) argue that the concept can be divided into two subconcepts, with six of the dimensions belonging to what the authors call 'positive characteristics', and the remainder of the dimensions belonging to the subconcept 'positive functioning'. The measurement of these separate dimensions will be addressed later on. Expectations with regards to the subconcepts will be stated in the Hypotheses subchapter. It should further be noted that this conceptualisation is only tentatively used in this thesis and that several tests, see the 'Data, methods and additional analyses' chapter, will have to assess it.

**Figure 1.** The tentative concept structure of subjective individual well-being, as developed by Huppert and So (2013).




*Society-centred discontent and relative deprivation*

As explained before, what unites the well-being, sociocultural and economic-uncertainty explanations for populism support, is that these can all be placed under the umbrella of 'discontent'. Specifically, the type of discontent examined in this chapter so far can be referred

to as ‘self-centred discontent’. What has been discussed up to now, is discontent with the own personal situation as a possible predictor for populist party support.

Signalling a gap in the literature, Giebler et al. (2021) differentiate between self-centred and society-centred discontent, with the latter referring to “a group-centered evaluation that concerns the society as a whole and relates strongly to […] declinism as well as notions of societal pessimism.” (p. 901). Society-centred discontent can be defined as a sense of crisis i.e. “the perception that various relevant aspects of society are about to break down.” (ibid., p. 905). Giebler et al. include four of these aspects or domains of society in their conceptualisation: culture, economy, safety and income (in)equality. It resembles the notion of ‘declinism’, which is “a negative view of the state of society” (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016, p. 117) or “the idea of a deep internal and external crisis” (Slačálek & Svobodová, 2018, p. 482). Elchardus and Spruyt (2016) use a broader conceptualisation, also including the perceived decay on terrains of social relations, the composition of society and the environment.

Earlier in this chapter, it is explained that two main streams of explanations for populism support can be identified in the literature: sociocultural (or ‘cultural backlash’) and economic-uncertainty explanations as types of discontent. Between self- and society-centred discontent, sociocultural theories are mostly associated with the latter. People have the feeling society is getting worse, because of e.g. the rise of postmaterial values and decline of traditional values in post-industrial states. This decline is perceived especially by “the older generation, white men, and less educated sectors” (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 2-3). The economic-uncertainty thesis can relate to both self- and society-centred discontent. This type of explanation for populism support focusses on how major changes in society, such as globalisation, technological changes and neoliberalism, have created divisions and discontent amongst citizens and have made life more insecure for these people. This insecurity is mostly felt by the working and middle classes, the less-educated and residents of rural areas (Berman, 2021). How society-centred discontent and well-being are related to each other is examined later on, when discussing a hypothesis related to this concept. The economic-uncertainty explanation relates to self-centred discontent in the sense that individuals might be worried about their financial situation, at the moment or in the future. However, Berman (2012) argues that populist party support is more strongly determined by society-centred discontent in the sense of an individual’s perception of the current and an expectation of the future state of the economy, or more broadly, the society. Berman also notes that evidence concerning this statement is rather mixed. In sum, society-centred discontent can be seen as the perceived decline of society in comparison to its current state, by an individual, on a variety of terrains.

The final concept that this study will touch upon is relative deprivation (RD), which again connects more to the notion of self-centred discontent, but is in some sense similar to the aforementioned notion of society-centred discontent.

RD can be described as "the judgment that one is worse off compared to some standard accompanied by feelings of anger and resentment." (Smith et al., 2012). Whereas the earlier-discussed SIWB is a judgement about the self only and society-centred discontent is a judgement about the state of society, RD is a judgement about the self in relation to this perceived state of society. According to RD theory as defined by Smith et al., two steps must be present for there to be RD: there must be a perceived comparative disadvantage, and this disadvantage must be perceived as unfair. (ibid., p. 204). The authors distinguish multiple types of RD. The first category is individual-RD, where individuals compare their own situation with either in-group or out-group individuals. Secondly, in group-RD, individuals compare either their in-group with the out-group, or compare their in-group's present with their in-group's past or future. (ibid., p. 205). Runciman (1966, as cited in Yitzhaki, 1979) uses a more unambiguous and clear-cut definition: someone is "relatively deprived of X when (i) he does not have X, (ii) he sees some other person or persons [...] as having X (whether or not this will be in fact the case), (iii) he wants X, and (iv) he sees it as feasible that he should have X." (p. 321). RD should be distinguished from absolute deprivation. Whilst the former is associated with (a feeling of) inequality between one's own situation and that of someone else, the latter refers to "access to economic resources that is insufficient, or barely adequate, to meet basic needs" (Messner, Raffalovich & McMillan, 2001, p. 593). It accentuates "the absolute amount of hardships or criminogenic life conditions suffered by the poor and oppressed" (Sun, Chu & Sung, 2010). Some scholars, such as economic anthropologist Karl Polanyi, have argued that, in determining quality of life, relative deprivation is more important than absolute deprivation (Schulze & Krätschmer-Hahn, 2014).

Connecting RD to the previously-mentioned sociocultural and economic-uncertainty explanations, sociocultural explanations state that the emancipation of minority groups results in "a sense of loss and disempowerment by white working-class voters" (Abramowitz & McCoy, 2019, p. 137) who fail to maintain their once-dominant status in times of growing diversification of society and amidst a globalising economy (Berman, 2021), i.e. this group feels relatively deprived. They do not recognise their country anymore and feel like they do not have the resources other groups in society do have. Economic-uncertainty explanations focus on "grievances arising from structural changes transforming post-industrial economies" (Inglehart & Norris, 2016, p. 10). These changes cause a division between so-called 'haves'

and ‘have-nots’. Societal economic transformations such as globalisation and neoliberalism can be explained as causes of relative deprivation amongst for example low-skilled workers (Inglehart & Norris, 2016).

*In sum*

This section has focussed on the independent variable of this thesis: individual subjective well-being. After reviewing the literature, it has been made clear that this thesis will take up the multidimensional conceptualisation of Huppert and So (2013) and Ruggeri et al. (2020). Well-being consists of ten dimensions that belong to either the ‘positive characteristics’ class or the ‘positive functioning’ class. Furthermore, two other concepts have been discussed. Society-centred discontent is the perceived decline of society on a variety of terrains and relative deprivation is the feeling that one does not have something that someone else has, i.e. one’s situation is worse than someone else’s situation.

So far, all of these concepts have in the greatest part been discussed in isolation from one another. In the remainder of this chapter, the concepts will be related to each other, hypotheses will be stated on the basis of literature discussed thus far and additional research that will be presented.

## Hypotheses

In this subchapter, several hypotheses will be introduced and theoretically substantiated against the backdrop of the discussed theory. First, a hypothesis on the general relationship between the main dependent and independent variable of this study will be formulated. This is the core hypothesis and the most important contribution of this thesis to science. Next, a hypothesis concerning an expectation about the two subconcepts of subjective individual well-being (SIWB) will be introduced. The third hypothesis relates to society-centred discontent. The final two hypotheses are linked to relative deprivation.

*The relationship between well-being and populist party support*

The main expectation of this study concerns the association between SIWB on the one hand, and support for a populist party on the other. It is expected that SIWB is negatively correlated with populist party support.

As stated in the introduction, this thesis is innovative in the sense that it is – to current knowledge – the first to investigate the relationship between SIWB as a comprehensive multidimensional concept and populist party support. Even though this has not been done before, expectations can be supported by empirical and theoretical findings in the extant body of research. Several recent studies found an association between concepts that are associated with well-being and support for populism. Backhaus et al. (2019) and Oude Groeniger et al. (2022) find an association between health and voting for populist parties. Lindholm and Rapeli (2023) find a relationship of populist attitudes with life satisfaction, as Langenkamp and Biestman (2022) do with social belonging. Furthermore, some studies show how emotional processes lead people to support populist parties (Salmela & Von Scheve, 2017; Abadi et al, 2020), and Nowakowski (2021) finds an association between happiness, life satisfaction and health, and populist party support.

As for theoretical reasons and expectations concerning the association between SIWB and populist party support: as became clear in the 'Theory' part of this chapter, core explanations for populist party voting can be placed under the umbrella of 'discontent', and so does well-being. People feel a threat or a vulnerability and feel like they are in a weak position. They consequently support a party that promises to improve or recover their position, and want to express their discontent by giving their support. What could also be the case, is that they

blame their misery on the political establishment and seek to achieve change in the present state of affairs. This "draw[s] them toward parties that campaign for a fundamental restructuring of a 'biased and broken' system." (Kavanagh et al., 2021, p. 1104). They feel like the system has let them down (Oude Groeniger et al., 2022). Lindholm and Rapeli (2023) argue that demanding change can be cued by life dissatisfaction and that it also produces in-/outgroup-thinking, which is one of the core characteristics of populism. Furthermore, a low well-being can lead to negative emotions such as insecurity and fear. In following the argument of Salmela and Von Scheve (2017), these emotions turn into repressed shame, and are followed up by anger, resentment and then hate towards perceived enemies.

Although this thesis is not able to test for causality directly, it does not seem very likely that the causal arrows runs from populist party support to SIWB. Besides the arguments presented above, Lindholm and Rapeli (2023) – using a measure of life satisfaction to measure well-being – tested for the possibility of reversed causation and concluded that it is less strong. A low SIWB "is first and foremost a source rather than an outcome of populist sentiment." (p. 11). An argument against this expected causal direction, or rather an argument in favour of causation in both directions, is given by Rooduijn, Van der Brug and De Lange (2016). They find that discontent is not only a cause, but also a consequence of populist party support. The authors state that people usually show support for a populist party because of one issue that attracts them (e.g. an anti-immigration stance), but that these voters later on become susceptible for the party's other standpoints as well, therefore generating more discontent with people supporting the party. This way, support for a populist party would lead to fuelling discontent. However, this can be doubted upon. Evidence contradicting this pattern exists (see e.g. Ward et al., 2021; Mosca & Quaranta, 2021). Goodger and Harvey (2021) argue that people develop their political viewpoints first and only "subsequently evaluate actors on proximity with these." (p. 63). In other words: mixed evidence exists on the existence of reverse causation.

Another argument in favour of the expected causal direction can be taken from other types of discontent, as discussed in the 'Theory' subchapter. It has often been argued that discontent with one's own economic situation, along with a lack of prosperity and security and resulting from far-reaching changes in society (e.g. globalisation or the financial crises), leads to support for populist parties (Berman, 2021). Changes like these cause a decline of trust in the political system and lead individuals hit negatively by the changes to support populist parties, because these parties appeal to them by offering a solution for their problems and by moving away from the status quo (Margalit, 2019). Because SIWB also fits under the umbrella

of discontent, the same mechanism could be present. People with low SIWB could find a perceived solution to their problems in populist parties.

Hypothesis 1 can be found below. It will test whether or not low SIWB, like the other types of discontent, leads to populist party support.

H1 Subjective individual well-being is, *ceteris paribus*, negatively correlated with populist party support.

SIWB has been discussed and established as a multidimensional concept. It has been mentioned before in this thesis that SIWB can be split into two subconcepts, referred to as 'positive characteristics' and 'positive functioning'. Each of these are then split into several dimensions (see Figure 1). Hypothesis 2 of this study is an expectation regarding these subconcepts.

The subconcept 'positive characteristics' mostly has to do with internal feelings that relate to the self and do not involve a clear object or action. 'Positive functioning', on the other hand, relates more to objects and actions. The former can also be called 'hedonic well-being' and the latter can be named 'eudaimonic well-being' (Ryan & Deci, 2001; McMahan & Estes, 2011; Ryff, Boylan & Kirsch, 2021). The distinction between 'positive characteristics' and 'positive functioning' will become more evident when connecting these concepts and their dimensions to measurable items in the 'Data, methods and preparatory analyses' chapter.

Traditionally, the hedonic view has received more attention by scholars (Deci & Ryan, 2006), but an expectation can be made that 'positive functioning' predicts populist party support more strongly than 'positive characteristics'. If an individual has low positive relationships, which is one of the dimensions of the former, a populist party's message might be appealing. Pasquino (2008) argues that "in the absence of horizontal ties among their peers, individuals are left to rely on vertical ties with a leader, and they will long for a sense of, otherwise impossible, belonging to a community." (p. 19). This populist leader offers "an experience of, albeit subordinate, involvement and participation." (ibid.). Apart from that, people who have low positive relationships might feel a sense of inclusion in the populist concept of 'the people'. This reasoning shows similarities with the previously-discussed notion of 'relative deprivation' as in Runciman's definition (see Theory chapter). Someone is relatively deprived of positive relationships. An argument can be made for the other dimensions of 'positive functioning' ('engagement', 'competence' and 'meaning') to predict populist party support more strongly as well. These three dimensions all relate to having meaningful and

worthwhile activities in life, or the eudaimonic aspect of well-being. Extending Pasquino (2008)'s argument, people who do not have meaningful activities in their lives might get this sense through the feeling of involvement and participation that populist leaders offer. It could be the case that 'positive functioning' has to be accomplished first in order to have 'positive characteristics', i.e. that having meaningful activities and relationships in life and a sense of accomplishment thereof result in positive feelings. According to Starossom (2019, p. 10), a meaningful life is "one that is actively and at least somewhat successfully engaged in a project (or projects) of positive value." (p. 10).

This discussion results in the following hypothesis:

H2 Populist party support is, *ceteris paribus*, predicted more strongly by low positive functioning than by low positive characteristics.

*The role of society-centred discontent*

Earlier on, the concept 'society-centred discontent' has been discussed. Whereas SIWB concerns self-centred discontent, the former concept can be defined as dissatisfaction with the direction society is going. It is a perceived decline of various aspects of society.

Multiple studies have investigated the role of society-centred discontent as a predictor for populism support. Lindholm and Rapeli (2023) mention that several previous studies have found that society-centred discontent is a more important predictor than self-centred discontent. They argue, however, that the former has often been measured on a specific domain only. The authors find self-centred discontent to be a more important predictor. It should be mentioned that the authors test this for populist attitudes and not party support. The expectation that society-centred discontent plays an important role in explaining populist party support is appealing, for 'the people' is one of the most important concepts of populism. Contrary to Lindholm and Rapeli, Giebler et al. (2021) conclude that society-centred discontent, measured in the domains of economy, society and culture, matters more than its self-centred counterpart. Evidence from Elchardus and Spruyt (2014) supports this. They conclude that "support for populism appears foremost as a consequence of a very negative view of the evolution of society – declinism – and of the feeling of belonging to a group of people that is unfairly treated by society." (p. 125-126). Additionally, in a case study on populist parties in the Netherlands, Van

der Bles et al. (2018) find that – in comparison to mainstream parties – individuals who are more discontented with society's state are more likely to vote for populist parties.

What does this mean for SIWB? It can be argued for that society-centred discontent is an in-between step in the relationship between SIWB and supporting a populist party. When an individual feels bad about their own personal situation, it is likely that they will project this situation onto their perception of society. They make generalisations. This expectation can be made on the basis of spillover theory. Hooghe (2012) finds that "a positive assessment of one's own life tends to have a spill-over effect on one's view on society in general." (p. 25). Lindholm (2021) argues that "subjective wellbeing equally affects our perceptions about the surrounding society and influences how we process information and interpretate it." (p. 81).

Whether these findings apply to this study's conception of SIWB and support for populist parties as well will be put to the test in the expectation that SIWB leads to populist party support through the intermediate step of society-centred discontent.

H3 The relationship between subjective well-being and the likelihood to support a populist party is, *ceteris paribus*, mediated by society-centred discontent.

*The role of relative deprivation*

The phenomenon of 'relative deprivation' is discussed on p. 18-19. Relative deprivation is defined broadly as the event that an individual's situation is bad in comparison to a certain standard. This standard can be an other individual or a group of individuals.

Kavanagh et al. (2021) argue that someone's low self-assessed health "produces frustration with one's physical and emotional limitations, and it prompts people to compare themselves with their healthier neighbors." (p. 1104). This comparative misfortune may in turn be blamed on e.g. the political elite, turning into fury and an anti-establishment sentiment, leading to the expression of support for a populist party (Kavanagh et al., 2021; Cena, Roccato & Russo, 2023). The political elite can be framed as a scapegoat for people to blame their frustrations on (Bos et al., 2020). This scapegoat can also be societal outgroups. People can get the feeling that they are relatively deprived in comparison to outgroups that they perceive to be favoured by society, such as immigrants or refugees (Hameleers, 2019). Gidron and Hall (2017) find that populist party support is predicted by a decline in social status, which ties into the same argument. Previous research has shown that status threat "can lead voters to support politicians and parties that promise to protect their group's status and identity" (Berman, 2021,

p. 75). In general, relative deprivation "has been found to be a key trigger for the rise of populist movements." (Obradović, Power & Sheehy-Skeffington, 2020, p. 127).

Relative deprivation theory and these findings lead to the formulation of the final two hypotheses that are part of this study. Hypothesis 4a will compare SIWB to the country aggregate. Hypothesis 4b is formulated around the concept of 'status threat'.

H4a When an individual's well-being is lower than the aggregate well-being of their country, the relationship between SIWB and populist party support becomes, *ceteris paribus*, stronger.

H4b The negative correlation between SIWB and populist party support will, *ceteris paribus*, be stronger, the higher an individual's status threat is.

The aim of the current chapter has been to give an overview of the state of the art when it comes to the scholarly literature on well-being and populism, and to specify a number of hypotheses. In the next chapter, it will be established how the data analysis will be performed and how the hypotheses will be evaluated. It will become clear which methods will be used, which cases are selected and how the discussed concepts will be measured.

## Data, methods and preparatory analyses

In the previous chapter, theory on subjective individual well-being (SIWB), populism and other relevant topics has been discussed and hypotheses have been formulated. In the current chapter, it will be established how these concepts are measured and how the hypotheses will be tested. First, the cases and data sources will be introduced. Second, the concepts as discussed in the 'Theory and expectations' chapter will be translated into measurable items. This part also includes a thorough explanation of how the SIWB concept is constructed and measured, through scale reliability assessments and factor analyses. This is necessary, because of the relative novelty of measuring SIWB as a complex multidimensional concept, which has not been established and tested by a sufficient amount of previous studies. Third and finally, it will be explained which methods are used to conduct the analyses.

### Case selection and data sources

*Case selection*

Most data that this study analyses is taken from either of two datasets. The first is Round 6 of the European Social Survey (ESS), which was conducted between August 2012 and December 2013. Data to measure SIWB, society-centred discontent, relative deprivation, status threat as well as a number of control variables are drawn from the ESS. Secondly, the PopuList dataset will be used to determine whether a political party that is part of the ESS shall be coded as a populist party or not.

Although Round 6 of the ESS includes data from 54.673 cases (surveyed individuals) divided over 29 countries, eight countries will not be part of the analysis. The countries that are part of the analysis are Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia and Slovakia. The deletion of the remaining countries reduces the number of cases to 39.851. These 21 countries are selected because the main datasets used for the analysis – Round 6 of the European Social Survey and the PopuList – have these in common. The eight excluded countries are excluded for either of two reasons: they are either not included in the PopuList dataset or no populist parties existed at the time of the fielding of the ESS. Countries outside of Europe could not be included,

because of the lack of availability of suitable datasets. Furthermore, Huppert and So (2013) and Ruggeri et al. (2020) only tested their framework, which this study builds upon, in European countries.

*Data sources*

Populist party support cannot be measured without establishing how to define 'populist party'. For coding populist parties, the PopuList will be used. This dataset was created by Rooduijn et al. (2019) and adopts Mudde's (2004) definition of 'populist'. The dataset consists of political parties of 31 European countries that are considered populist, far-right, far-left and/or eurosceptic, providing that the party has held at least one seat or two per cent of the vote in a national parliamentary election since 1989. This thesis will only include populist parties and only those that are also part of Round 6 of the ESS. These parties are coded with either '0' (not populist) or '1' (populist). The coding was peer-reviewed by multiple scholars. For the countries that are part of this study's analysis, the PopuList has coded over 90 parties as 'populist'. When excluding parties that did no longer or not yet exist in 2012, a total of 36 political parties are coded as 'populist', an average of 1,71 parties per country (The PopuList, 2022). See Table 1 on the next page for an overview of all parties that are designated 'populist' and are included in this study.

**Table 1.** Overview of populist parties included in the analysis.

| Countries | Populist parties |
|---|---|
| Belgium | *Vlaams Belang (VB)* |
| Bulgaria | *Grazhdani za Evropeysko Razvitie na Balgariya (GERB)* |
| Switzerland | *Eidgenössisch-Demokratische Union (EDU)* |
| | *Lega dei Ticinesi (LdT)* |
| | *Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP)* |
| Czech Republic | *Věci Veřejné (VV)* |
| Germany | *Die Linke (LINKE)* |
| Denmark | *Dansk Folkeparti (DF)* |
| Estonia | *Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond (EKRE)* |
| Finland | *Perussuomalaiset (PS)* |
| France | *Front National (FN)* |
| United Kingdom | *Sinn Féin (SF)* |
| Hungary | *Fidesz Magyar Polgári Párt (FIDESZ)* |
| | *Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom (JOBBIK)* |
| | *Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja (MIÉP)* |
| Ireland | *Sinn Féin (SF)* |
| Iceland | *Borgarahreyfingin (B)* |
| Italy | *Fratelli d'Italia (FdI)* |
| | *Lega Nord (LN)* |
| | *Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S)* |
| | *La Destra (LD)* |
| Lithuania | *Darbo Partija (DP)* |
| | *Lietuvos Centro Partija (LCP)* |
| | *Tvarka ir Teisingumas (TT)* |
| | *Drąsos Kelias (DK)* |
| | *Jaunoji Lietuva (JL)* |
| Netherlands | *Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV)* |
| | *Socialistische Partij (SP)* |
| Norway | *Fremskrittspartiet (FrP)* |
| | *Kystpartiet (Kp)* |
| Poland | *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS)* |
| Sweden | *Sverigedemokraterna (SD)* |
| Slovenia | *Slovenska Demokratska Stranka (SDS)* |
| | *Slovenska Nacionalna Stranka (SNS)* |
| Slovakia | *Obyčajní L'udia a Nezávislé Osobnosti (OLaNO)* |
| | *SMER – Slovenská Sociálna Demokracia (SMER – SSD)* |

Source: Rooduijn et al. (2019)

The main data source used in this study is Round 6 of the European Social Survey (ESS), fielded in 2012 and 2013. The ESS is a biennial cross-national survey conducted in a number of European countries, monitoring values and attitudes of general people. Respondents

are aged fifteen and over and the response rate by country in Round 6 is between 33% and 76%. The total sample includes 54.673 cases. (European Social Survey, n.d.; Koch, 2016). Measures for the dependent as well as the independent variables and all but three control variables will be taken from this dataset. Because the cases of the ESS are individuals who answer survey questions according to their subjective assessment or judgement, the data is suitable for utilisation in this thesis, which almost exclusively uses concepts that have to do with subjective assessments of individuals, either about themselves or about others. Elaborate information about all of the variables will be displayed in the section below.

## Variables

In this section, it is explained how the variables that are part of this study are measured. This explanation will start with the dependent variable (populist party support). Secondly, the construction process of the SIWB variable will be covered. It will also become clear what has changed compared to the initial conceptualisation of that concept. Thirdly, the variables that measure relative deprivation and society-centred discontent will be discussed. Finally, it is mentioned which control variables are part of the analysis.

### *Populist party support*

As explained earlier on in this chapter, political parties in the ESS dataset are coded dichotomously as either '0' (non-populist) or '1' (populist). Whether or not an individual supports a populist party will be determined using Round 6 of the ESS. The variable that will be used to measure the dependent variable of this study is the one labelled *'Which party feel closer to, *country name*'*. In the survey, the specific question that was asked is *'Is there a particular party you feel closer to than all the other parties?'*. Those who answer 'yes' are being asked the follow-up question *'Which one?'*. (European Social Survey, 2012). The reply to this question is subsequently used in this study.

The ESS also contains a variable that measures which party an individual has voted for in the last national election. The reason that this variable will not be used in the main analyses, is that not all countries have held national elections immediately before the fielding of the ESS and thus to reach time consistency in the measurement. Even though this variable is not part of the main study, it will be used as a robustness check on the results.

*Subjective individual well-being: on constructing the SIWB Index*

The main independent variable of this study, SIWB, will be measured with data from Round 6 of the ESS as well. In first instance, as mentioned in the 'Theory and expectations' chapter, the conceptualisation and measurement of Huppert and So (2013) and Ruggeri et al. (2020) are intended to be used in this study. Their measurement of the concept includes ten variables – one for each dimension. Table 2 shows an overview of these variables and the ESS items used for measurement. Later on in this chapter, it will be explained how multiple measures are aggregated into an index, in achieving one single measurement for SIWB. Based on scale reliability and factor analyses, it is determined that the conceptualisation and measurement strategy both need tweaking.

**Table 2.** ESS survey questions and statements used to assess the ten tentative dimensions of subjective individual well-being, based on Ruggeri et al. (2020).

| Dimension | ESS survey question or statement |
|---|---|
| Competence (F) | Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do. |
| Emotional stability (C) | How much time in the past week did you feel calm and peaceful? |
| Engagement (F) | How much time would you generally say you are absorbed in what you are doing? |
| Meaning (F) | I generally feel what I do in my life is valuable and worthwhile. |
| Optimism (C) | I am always optimistic about my future. |
| Positive emotions (C) | Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are? |
| Positive relationships (F) | To what extent do you receive help and support from people you are close to when you need it? |
| Resilience (C) | When things go wrong in my life, it generally takes a long time to get back to normal. |
| Self-esteem (C) | In general I feel very positive about myself. |
| Vitality (C) | How much time in the past week did you have a lot of energy? |

Source: Huppert and So (2013); Ruggeri et al. (2020).
Note: '(F)' indicates that the dimension belongs to the subconcept 'positive functioning'. '(C)' indicates that the dimension belongs to the subconcept 'positive characteristics'.

A scale reliability analysis and a factor analysis were carried out to assess the accuracy of the measurement. This was done in order to know whether or not the measurements as shown in Table 2 adequately measure the underlying concept of SIWB. As the outcomes of these analyses were not satisfactory due to weak factor loadings and cross-loadings, the measurement of Huppert and So (2013) and Ruggeri et al. (2020) is discarded for utilisation in this study and a new solution has to be found, without deviating too much from the conceptualisation of SIWB as established before. This is done by considering all relevant variables in ESS Round 6, which

is the approach taken by Charalampi et al. (2018). The authors take into consideration all ESS variables that are related to evaluative, hedonic or eudaimonic well-being. These are, by the authors, all placed under one of six subconcepts: evaluative well-being (abbreviated as Evwb), emotional well-being (Emwb), functioning (Fun), vitality (Vi), community well-being (Comwb) and supportive relationships (Sur). An overview of all of the 35 items, including information on the scales, is provided by Charalampi et al. on p. 79 of their article.

The next step is to conduct a scale reliability analysis on each of these proposed subconcepts. Before doing this, all of the items that were not reverse-scaled in Charalampi et al.'s study (indicated by 'R' in their table on p. 79) were reverse-scaled. The reason for this is that the authors are interested in measuring high well-being, whilst the present study is interested in low well-being, considering the expected negative correlation with populist party support. By reverse-scaling certain items, all items end up being coded in the same way (i.e. the scales run from 'positive' to 'negative' or 'high' to 'low'), providing for an easier interpretation of the results as well.

The outcomes and descriptive information of the scale reliability analysis on the proposed subconcepts are provided in Table A1a through Table A1f (appendix). The analysis yielded mixed results, with a standardised Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha$) of at least 0,8 for the 'evaluative well-being', 'emotional well-being' and 'functioning' subconcepts, 0,68 for the 'vitality' and 'community well-being' scales and 0,6 for 'supportive relationships'. Going by commonly-used criteria, a reliable scale should have an $\alpha$ of at least 0,7 (Bland & Altman, 1997; Gliem & Gliem, 2003). For consistency reasons, the 'Community well-being' scale is deleted. On theoretical grounds (see the 'Theory and expectations' chapter), this does not belong to the SIWB concept. Because of the occurrence of alphas of <0,7 for two remaining scales, a factor analysis is conducted to gain more confidence in the accuracy of the measures and to be able to say something about the amount of variance explained by the different scales. The latter will later on be important for constructing the SIWB Index.

With a total of 30 items on five scales (i.e. five subconcepts of SIWB), a factor analysis is conducted. Following Charalampi et al. (2018), robust weighted least squares is used as the factor extraction method, with oblique rotation as rotation method. Because of weak factor loadings (<0,3) or cross-loadings (a loading of >0,3 on one factor and >0,22 on another), some items were dropped from the analysis. Items Fun2, Fun8, Fun12, Fun13, Sur1, Sur2, Sur3 and Sur5 were deleted on the basis of these criteria. Specifics of these items can be found in Charalampi et al. (2018, p. 79). Finally, 22 items divided over five scales were confirmed in a second run. See Table 3 for the results. The final results are different from the initial expectation

of Charalampi et al. The five extracted factors (i.e. scales) together explain 60,1% of the variance. Factor 1, 'negative characteristics', explains 34,37% of the variance. The other factors explain 9,73%, 5,91%, 5,3% and 4,77% respectively. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy resulted in the value 0,93. This indicates that reliable and distinct factors are extracted (see Díaz et al., 2010; Field, 2018). The Bartlett test of sphericity and the goodness-of-fit test were both significant. These results affirm that it is appropriate to conduct a factor analysis (Field, 2018). Following the factor analysis, final scale reliability checks were performed. See Tables A2a through A2e (appendix) for the results. The $\alpha$ scores generally improved, all falling between 0,77 and 0,9 and therefore meeting the aforementioned criterion.

Now solid measurements have been confirmed, a final concept map of SIWB is created and displayed in Figure 2. All of the five subconcepts of SIWB consist of a number of ESS items that measure these. The five subconcepts are labelled 'general functioning', 'positive functioning', 'evaluative well-being', 'negative characteristics' and 'positive characteristics'. The labelling is based on previous theorising, the initial conceptualisation of SIWB and the analysis by Charalampi et al. (2018). Unlike the initial conceptualisation (see Figure 1) and to achieve simplicity, no specific dimension labels are created. See Table A3 (appendix) for an overview of the subconcepts and survey items used to measure these subconcepts.

Most hypotheses speak of SIWB as one single concept. An aggregation rule of the items must therefore be selected. By recommendation of Ruggeri et al. (2020), the computed factor scores are used to construct the five indices based on the SIWB subconcepts. Factor scores are "individual scores computed as weighted combinations of each person's response on a given item and the factor scoring coefficients." (ibid., p. 3). This approach takes into account the different variabilities amongst the items and "avoid the propagation of measurement error in subsequent analyses" (ibid.). Furthermore, factor-scoring is used because a normalisation procedure is needed to account for different scales across the items. (Mazziotta & Pareto, 2013; Pinar, 2018).

To facilitate an easier interpretation of the data, the factor scores are transformed into a 0-100 index – see Krishnan (2010) for the formula. Now the five subindices of SIWB have been created, the following procedure is used to create the final SIWB Index: in following Antony and Visweswara Rao (2007), for each factor, each individual's factor score is multiplied by the proportion of variance explained by said factor. This results in five weighted scores that are added up. Finally, this index is transformed into a 0-100 scale as well. The SIWB Index is now fully prepared for analysis in the next chapter. For overview purposes, Table A4

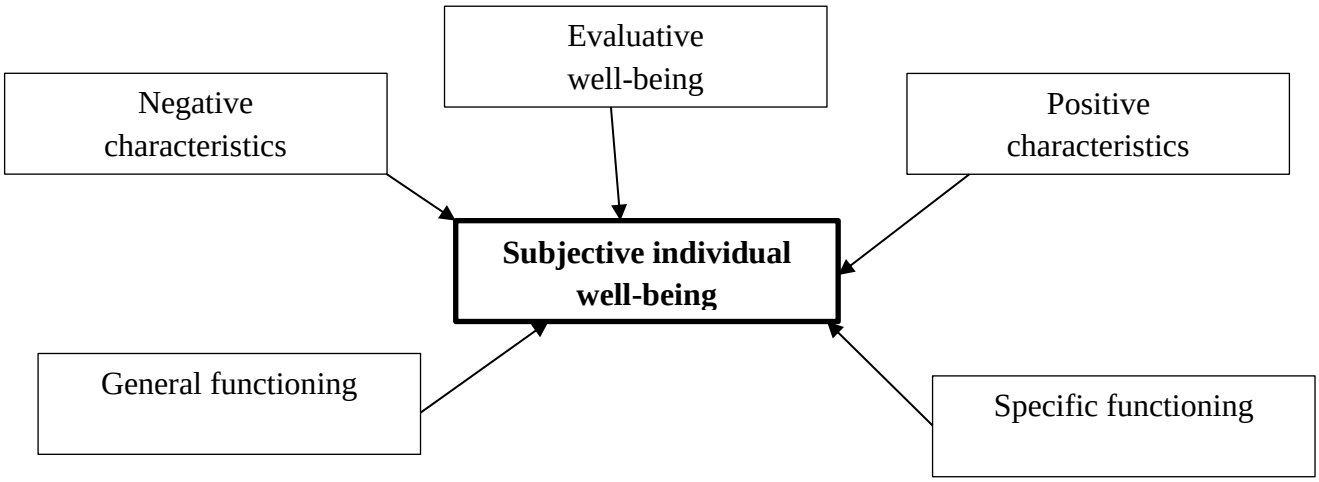
in the appendix summarises the steps that have been taken from the initial conceptualisation to the establishment of the SIWB Index.

**Table 3.** Results of the factor analysis conducted on European Social Survey Round 6 items.

| ESS item | Factor loading | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| *Factor 1: Negative characteristics* | | | | | |
| Emwb1. Felt sad.* | **,76** | ,11 | -,06 | -,05 | -,02 |
| Emwb2. Felt depressed.* | **,68** | ,02 | -,05 | -,02 | -,07 |
| Emwb5. Felt anxious.* | **,63** | ,03 | -,04 | ,05 | ,03 |
| Vi1. Felt everything I did was an effort. | **,62** | -,01 | ,01 | -,02 | -,02 |
| Vi2. Sleep was restless.* | **,57** | ,03 | ,06 | ,02 | -,03 |
| Vi3. Could not get going.* | **,64** | -,05 | ,05 | ,05 | -,01 |
| Sur4. Felt lonely.* | **,58** | -,04 | -,10 | -,01 | ,01 |
| *Factor 2: Specific functioning* | | | | | |
| Fun4. Interested in what I am doing. | ,04 | **,82** | -,06 | ,03 | ,00 |
| Fun5. Absorbed in what I am doing. | -,00 | **,91** | ,01 | -,03 | -,00 |
| Fun6. Enthusiastic about what I am doing. | -,03 | **,81** | -,02 | ,06 | -,07 |
| *Factor 3: Evaluative well-being* | | | | | |
| Evwb1. How satisfied with your life as a whole. | ,09 | -,04 | **,72** | ,06 | -,03 |
| Evwb2. How happy would you say you are. | ,07 | -,08 | **,75** | ,07 | -,08 |
| *Factor 4: General functioning* | | | | | |
| Fun1. Free to decide how to live my life. | ,04 | -,01 | -,05 | **,42** | -,03 |
| Fun3. Feel accomplishment from what I do. | ,05 | -,11 | -,03 | **,48** | -,04 |
| Fun7. Feel what I do in life is valuable. | -,00 | -,15 | -,01 | **,52** | ,00 |
| Fun9. Always optimistic about my future. | -,05 | -,09 | -,09 | **,69** | -,07 |
| Fun10. There are lots of things I feel I am good at. | ,04 | -,08 | ,05 | **,49** | ,04 |
| Fun11. Feel very positive about myself. | ,00 | -,09 | ,01 | **,74** | -,01 |
| *Factor 5: Positive characteristics* | | | | | |
| Emwb3. Enjoyed life.* | -,04 | ,00 | -,09 | -,00 | **,76** |
| Emwb4. Was happy.* | -,03 | ,00 | -,12 | -,03 | **,76** |
| Emwb6. Felt calm and peaceful.* | ,17 | -,00 | ,05 | ,03 | **,52** |
| Vi4. Had a lot of energy.* | ,06 | -,08 | ,12 | ,10 | **,56** |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6; Charalampi et al. (2018).
Notes: Rotated solution. *: followed by 'How often past week'. Factors were labelled post-analysis. Items labelled following Charalampi et al. (2018). Item descriptions according to European Social Survey Round 6.

**Figure 2.** Final concept map of subjective individual well-being, building on Charalampi et al. (2018) and loosely building on Huppert and So (2013) and Ruggeri et al. (2020).




*Other main variables*

In order to evaluate Hypothesis 2, a number of indices of the subconcepts of SIWB will be used. It will be tested whether the 'functioning' indices or the 'characteristics' indices are better predictors of support for populist parties. Because changes in the conceptualisation and measurement of SIWB led to there now being two indices of both 'functioning' and 'characteristics', the effect of these indices on populist party support will be tested for each index separately. As stated before, the indices all run from 0 ('high') to 100 ('low').

To answer Hypothesis 3, the ESS item *'For most people in the country life is getting worse'* will be used as a measure of society-centred discontent. The answer is given on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 'Agree strongly' to 'Disagree strongly' (European Social Survey, 2012). The item is reverse-scaled so that 1 = 'Disagree strongly' and 5 = 'Agree strongly'.

To answer Hypothesis 4a, an individual's SIWB Index score will be compared to the country mean. The individual's SIWB score is subtracted from their country's mean score to determine which cases have a lower SIWB score than the mean of the country. These cases are coded '1', whilst the other cases are coded '0'. By doing this, a distinction is made between individuals with a lower and individuals with a higher SIWB than the mean SIWB of their country. In order to answer Hypothesis 4b, the answer to the ESS question '*There are people who tend to be towards the top of our society and people who tend to be towards the bottom. [...] Where would you place yourself on this scale nowadays?'* will be used for people's

assessment of their own relative position in society ('status threat'). The item is measured on a 0-10 scale (European Social Survey, 2012) and is reverse-scaled for the analysis, which means that '0' is 'the top of society' and '10' is 'the bottom of society'.

*Control variables*

A series of commonly-used individual-level control variables that are part of Round 6 of the ESS will be included: age, gender, education, employment status, household income, religion, residential area and ideology. Country-level control variables included are GDP, Gini coefficient and net migration. It should the mentioned that many of these variables are recoded dichotomously for the purpose of the analysis. Gender is coded as 0 'female' and 1 'male'. Education is coded 0 'other' and 1 'less than tertiary education'. Employment is coded 0 'not in paid work' and 1 'in paid work'. Religion is coded 0 'non-religious' and 1 'religious'. Residential is coded 0 'non-rural' and 1 'rural'. Furthermore, GDP is measured in U.S. dollars.

*Overview*

An overview of all variables is provided in Table 4 on the next page.

**Table 4.** Variables included in the study.

| Variable name | Description | Scale | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| Populist party support | Answer to *'Which party do you feel closer to?', if yes 'which one?'*, ref non-populist | 0-1 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| SIWB Index | Factor-based index of subjective individual well-being. | 0-100 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Positive Characteristics Index | Factor-based index. One of the constitutive indices of the SIWB Index. | 0-100 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Negative Characteristics Index | Factor-based index. One of the constitutive indices of the SIWB Index. | 0-100 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| General Functioning Index | Factor-based index. One of the constitutive indices of the SIWB Index. | 0-100 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Specific Functioning Index | Factor-based index. One of the constitutive indices of the SIWB Index. | 0-100 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Society-centred discontent | Response to '*For most people in the country life is getting worse'* | 1-5 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| | | | European Social Survey (2012) |
| SIWB Index country score | Country mean for the SIWB Index | 0-100 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Status threat | Answer to '*There are people who tend to be towards the top of our society and people who tend to be towards the bottom. [...] Where would you place yourself on this scale nowadays?'* | 0-10 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Age* | Age | N/A | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Gender* | Gender, ref female | 0-1 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Education* | Highest level of education reached, ref tertiary | 0-1 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Employment* | Employment status, ref non-unemployed | 0-1 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Income* | Net household income in deciles | 1-10 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Religion* | Whether or not respondent has a religion, ref 'no' | 0-1 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Residential* | Rural, ref urban | 0-1 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| Ideology* | Self-placement on left-right scale | 0-10 | European Social Survey (2012) |
| GDP* | GDP per capita | N/A | World Bank (2012a) |
| Gini* | Gini coefficient | N/A | World Bank (2012b) |
| Net migration* | Migration minus immigration | N/A | World Bank (2012c) |

**Table 4 (cont.).** Variables included in the study.

Source: European Social Survey (2012), World Bank (2012a, 2012b, 2012c).
Note: * indicates a control variable. N/A indicates non-applicable: Age, GDP and Gini can take any positive value. Net migration can take any value.

## Methods

The hypotheses will be evaluated by using binary logistic regression models. It is not desirable for this study to utilise an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis, for the data violate a number of assumptions that are implied with OLS: additivity and linearity, independent errors and normally distributed errors (Field, 2018). These are violated as a consequence of using a categorical binary dependent variable, which contains the answer to whether someone supports a populist party, which can be only 'yes' or 'no' and is therefore binary. To solve this problem, logistic regression can be used. A logistic regression model uses a logarithmic transformation, which is "a way of expressing a non-linear relationship in a linear way." (Field, 2018, p. 1116). The logistic model includes the log-odds that Y=1.

Two hypotheses require a further specification of the analysis technique. Hypothesis 3 calls for a mediation analysis, because it is expected that the relationship between SIWB and populist party support runs through the intermediate step of society-centred discontent. The initial relationship is expected to become less strong when including society-centred discontent as a mediator. A mediation analysis is suitable when it is suspected that the independent variable (SIWB) leads to the mediator variable (society-centred discontent), which in turn leads to the dependent variable (populist party support) (MacKinnon, Fairchild and Fritz, 2007).

In order to evaluate Hypotheses 4a and 4b, a moderation analysis will be conducted. A moderation analysis is appropriate when the relationship between the independent (SIWB) and dependent (populist party support) variable is expected to be stronger for a certain group (individuals with a lower SIWB than the country mean for H4a and individuals with a low self-perceived societal status in the case of H4b) (Musairah, 2015). It is worth noticing that all analyses will be conducted on all countries grouped together. There will be no country-specific analyses, for none of this study's hypotheses specify country effects.

All models will be estimated with the statistical software package SPSS. The general logistic regression models are estimated via the 'Binary Logistic' procedure. For the mediation and moderation analyses, a macro plugin for SPSS called PROCESS is used (see Hayes, 2022)

to allow for logistic regression with an ordinal mediator or moderator, which is not supported by a main function of SPSS.

*In sum*

In this chapter, it has been explained that cases from Round 6 of the European Social Survey will be used to measure SIWB and other variables, and that the PopuList will be used as a source for party coding. SIWB will be understood as a multidimensional concept consisting of five subconcepts, the accuracy of which has been tested and confirmed through scale reliability and factor analyses. Method-wise, all hypotheses are evaluated by means of binary logistic regression analyses, for the dependent variable is categorical. It measures the log-odds of supporting a populist party. Furthermore, Hypothesis 3 will be evaluated using a mediation analysis and Hypotheses 4a and 4b is evaluated using a moderation analysis.

In the next chapter, the data are analysed and the results will be presented on the basis of which it is decided whether the hypotheses can be supported or not. The chapter consists of a descriptive and an explanatory part.

# Analysis and results

Now that relevant literature has been reviewed, hypotheses have been stated and it has been clarified how the analysis will be conducted and with which data, this chapter will describe the conduct of the analysis and present the results. This chapter is split in two parts: the first part focusses on the descriptive analysis, with the aim of giving an insight into core descriptive statistics, such as the sample size, mean, distribution, variance and standard deviation of all of the variables that are used in the subsequent explanatory analysis, which constitutes the second part of this chapter. The second part is when the hypotheses will be tested by means of performing regression analyses. It will also be stated how to interpret the results.

## Descriptive analysis

This part of the current chapter will present the results of the descriptive analysis of all of the variables that are involved in this study. Note that all of the information given below includes valid cases only. Round 6 of the European Social Survey (ESS) includes a total of 54673 cases, but not all cases have a recorded valid response on each variable. The *n* mentioned is always the valid *n*. The number mentioned (13840) is 54673 minus the missing or otherwise designated invalid cases. All analyses will be performed on 13840 cases, because cases that have a missing value on at least one of the variables are filtered out and thus excluded from the analysis. A missing case occurs when a response on a certain survey item is not present for some individual. This could be due to any reason, such as a refusal to answer the question or because of giving the answer "don't know".

*Populist party support*

The dependent variable, 'populist party support', is a dichotomous categorical variable. The only possible values that this variable can take are '0' – indicating that the respondent feels closest to a non-populist political party, and '1' – indicating that the respondent feels closest to a populist party. Table 1 gives an overview of the parties in the 21 countries that are part of this study that are coded as 'populist'. Out of all valid responses, 16,2% states to feel closest to a populist party than all other parties. Table 5 below includes descriptive information about this variable.

**Table 5.** Descriptives and frequencies of 'Which party do you feel closer to?'

| | | Frequency | Percent | *N* | Range | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | | | | 13840 | 0-1 | 0,16 | 0,37 | 0,14 |
| | Populist | 2237 | 16,2 | | | | | |
| Party | Other | 11603 | 83,8 | | | | | |
| | Total | 13840 | 100,0 | | | | | |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

*Subjective individual well-being*

The main independent variable of this thesis, 'subjective individual well-being' (SIWB) is an index variable. The index runs from 0 to 100. Because what will be tested is an expected negative correlation between SIWB and populist party support, the value '0', perhaps counterintuitively, indicates the highest recorded SIWB and the value '100' indicates the lowest recorded SIWB. Table 6 shows the descriptive information about the SIWB Index and the indices of the subconcepts. The indices of the subconcepts are ordered based on how large of a proportion of the variance in SIWB they explain, indicated by the factor analysis results. From the table, it is visible that all means are between 20 and 35. As the indices run from 'high' to 'low', it can be concluded that e.g. the average respondent reports a higher well-being for 'negative characteristics' (mean = 20,73) than for 'positive characteristics' (mean = 33,23). In Table A5 (see appendix), it is visualised for every index how many cases are in which decile of the index. By dividing the indices into deciles, a more compact view and easier understanding are guaranteed.

**Table 6.** Descriptive information about the SIWB Index and the five subindices.

| Index | *N* | Range | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SIWB | 13840 | 0-100 | 23,23 | 13,10 | 171,74 |
| Negative Characteristics | 13840 | 0-100 | 20,73 | 15,06 | 226,84 |
| Specific Functioning | 13840 | 0-100 | 27,06 | 15,08 | 227,34 |
| Evaluative well-being | 13840 | 0-100 | 30,64 | 14,73 | 217,00 |
| General Functioning | 13840 | 0-100 | 27,95 | 12,67 | 160,57 |
| Positive Characteristics | 13840 | 0-100 | 33,23 | 17,87 | 319,45 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

Frequency distributions for the SIWB Index as well as its subindices can be found in the appendix as well (Figures B1 through B5). Finally for this part on SIWB, a bivariate Pearson correlation coefficients (*r*) matrix between the SIWB Index and its constitutive subindices can be found as Table A6 in the appendix. A very strong correlation ($r = 0,95$) is obtained for the SIWB and Negative Characteristics indices. Various other correlations can be labelled either strong or moderate. Weak correlations are obtained between the Negative Characteristics and Specific Functioning indices ($r = 0,31$) and between the latter and the Evaluative Well-being Index ($r = 0,22$). The designation of labels such as 'weak' and 'strong' are somewhat arbitrary, but conventional for use in research (Schober, Boer & Schwarte, 2018).

*Society-centred discontent and relative deprivation*

Society-centred discontent will be measured in order to test Hypothesis 3. It will be done so on a Likert scale that runs from 0 ('Disagree strongly') to 5 ('Agree strongly') and is a record of the answer to the statement *'For most people in the country life is getting worse'*. 38,4% of respondents answered this question with 'Agree'. However, the mean respondent indicated to neither agree nor disagree. See Table 7 for descriptive information and Table A7 in the appendix for the frequency distribution.

Status threat, a measure of relative deprivation, will be used in order to test Hypothesis 4b. Responses to the question '*There are people who tend to be towards the top of our society and people who tend to be towards the bottom. [...] Where would you place yourself on this scale nowadays?'* are recorded on a scale that runs from 0 ('Top of our society') to 10 ('Bottom of our society'). The largest category (23,2%) is the one that consists of people seeing

themselves exactly in the middle of the societal ladder, and slightly more people consider themselves to be at the top of society (1,1%) than at the bottom (1,0%). The mean respondent is located slightly below the middle of the scale (4,12). See Table 7 for descriptive information and Table A8 in the appendix for the frequency distribution.

**Table 7.** Descriptive information about the variables 'Society-centred discontent' and 'Status threat'.

| Index | *N* | Range | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Society-centred discontent | 13840 | 1-5 | 3,47 | 1,07 | 1,153 |
| Status threat | 13840 | 0-10 | 4,12 | 1,73 | 2,99 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

*Control variables*

Some analyses will also include a number of control variables. Descriptive information about these control variables is displayed in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Descriptive information about the control variables.

| Variable | *N* | Range | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 13840 | 15-99 | 51,97 | 17,45 | 304,65 |
| Gender | 13840 | 0-1 | 0,52 | 0,50 | 0,25 |
| Education | 13840 | 0-1 | 0,73 | 0,44 | 0,20 |
| Employment | 13840 | 0-1 | 0,46 | 0,50 | 0,25 |
| Income | 13840 | 1-10 | 5,58 | 2,82 | 7,97 |
| Religion | 13840 | 0-1 | 0,55 | 0,49 | 0,25 |
| Residential | 13840 | 0-1 | 0,36 | 0,48 | 0,23 |
| Ideology | 13840 | 0-10 | 5,16 | 2,54 | 6,43 |
| GDP | 13840 | 16327,86 - 65354,78 | 40186,13 | 12251,11 | 150089808,29 |
| Gini | 13840 | 25,60-36,00 | 29,96 | 3,24 | 10,48 |
| Net migration | 13840 | -24664 - 317082 | 68214,01 | 101929,03 | 10389526640 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6; World Bank (2012a; 2012b; 2012c)

*Additional information*

Finally, Table 9 shows the correlation matrix between the main variables that are part of this study.

**Table 9.** Correlation matrix between the variables SIWB Index, Populist party support, Society-centred discontent and Status threat.

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. SIWB Index | – | | | |
| 2. Populist party support | 0,08*** | – | | |
| 3. Society-centred discontent | 0,27*** | 0,16*** | – | |
| 4. Status threat | 0,43*** | 0,14*** | 0,31*** | – |

***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6

*In sum*

The purpose of this subchapter has been to give descriptive information about the variables that are part of the analyses that will be conducted in the next subchapter. Its aim has been to give an insight into various descriptive statistics of these variables. This can be helpful with interpreting the results of the analyses. In the next subchapter, 'Explanatory analyses', the analyses will be conducted and the results are presented. This will be done hypothesis-by-hypothesis.

## Explanatory analysis

The main purpose of this subchapter is to report the results of the regression analyses that are used to evaluate this study's hypotheses. The models with which the hypotheses are evaluated are specified, the analyses are conducted and the results will be reported and interpreted. Models will be run and presented for each hypothesis. As mentioned earlier, all analyses will be performed with a sample size of 13840 cases. Missing cases on any of the variables are excluded prior to analysis.

Before conducting any analyses, it is crucial to check the assumptions of logistic regression. The specific assumptions that are tested are taken from Stoltzfus (2011) and Field (2018). A brief explanation and the result of each assumption test can be found in part C of the appendix. All assumptions have been met after deleting a few outliers, which means that no further adjustments have to be made to the data and the analyses can be conducted as planned.

Throughout this subchapter, it should be kept in mind that all non-control explanatory variables are scaled as running from high to low (e.g. a '0' on the SIWB Index indicates a very high SIWB). Therefore, a positive coefficient denotes a negative effect, and vice versa.

### *Evaluating Hypothesis 1: SIWB and populist party support*

Hypothesis 1 states the expectation that subjective individual well-being (SIWB) is negatively correlated with populist party support. In Table 10, the results of this binary logistic regression analysis (Model 1) are presented. This model does not include control variables. In the table, the coefficients, their standard errors and the odds are reported. At the bottom of the table, three additional statistics are presented. First are the Cox & Snell and Nagelkerke versions of the pseudo-$R^2$. This statistic is used as a substitution to the $R^2$ measure used in OLS models, which cannot be estimated in logistic regression. However, the pseudo-$R^2$ should be interpreted together with other measures (Peterson, 2023). Besides this measure, the log-likelihood is reported for each model. This statistic assesses the model's predictive accuracy, just like the pseudo-$R^2$ does (Healy, 2006). The results of Model 1 are displayed and explained below.

**Table 10.** Logistic regression analysis on populist party support, for evaluation of Hypothesis 1.

| Model | 1 | |
|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Odds |
| Constant | -2,030*** | 0,131 |
| | (0,047) | |
| SIWB | 0,016*** | 1,016 |
| | (0,002) | |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 0,6% | |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 1,1% | |
| Log-likelihood | 12155,249 | |

*N* = 13840
Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6

Now, the results of the first model will be interpreted. Model 1 shows pseudo-R-squared values of 0,6% (Cox & Snell) and 1,1% (Nagelkerke). This means that, depending on which value is looked at, the model explains 0,6% or 1,1% of the variance in the dependent variable. The pseudo-R-squared statistics should be interpreted with some caution, but give a rough notion of the total predictive power of the model. Both the constant (or 'intercept') and SIWB are shown to be statistically significant at the p<0,01 level, indicating that it is highly unlikely that there is no effect whatsoever. The null hypothesis that no effect is present at all can be rejected. The coefficient of SIWB is 0,016. This value represents the log-odds of supporting a populist party. The value can be made more easy to interpret by transforming it into odds. The odds of supporting a populist party increase 1,016 times (1,6% as expressed in likelihood) for every unit increase in SIWB. Because SIWB is measured on an index that runs from 0 to 100, one unit increase in this case is e.g. moving up from 0 to 1. The odds of supporting a populist party for someone with an SIWB of 0 (i.e. a very high SIWB) is 0,131, because this is the value of the constant expressed in odds.

Additionally, it can be said that for an individual that is right in the middle of the index, the odds increase 1,8 times or 80 per cent. For individuals that have a score of 100, the predicted odds increase 2,6 times or 160 per cent. This supports the expectation that SIWB is negatively correlated with populist party support. A certain effect is present. However, caution is needed with regards to making far-reaching claims. Model 1 is able to explain only a low amount of variance in the dependent variable.

As mentioned in the 'Data, methods and preparatory analyses' chapter, there will be models with control variables included. The results of an analysis of the relationship between

SIWB and populist party support which includes the control variables can be found as Model A1 in Table A9 (see the appendix). This table compares Model 1 with Model A1.

What follows now is a brief explanation of how to evaluate this model which includes control variables: The coefficients and odds should be interpreted as the predicted effects when all other variables are 0. For example, being a male increases the odds of supporting a populist party 1,137 times or increases the probability by 37%, providing that the individual's score on SIWB and the control variables are 0. When the scores on other variables are higher up, the odds will increase further. The effect of SIWB becomes smaller in Model A1. The R-squared values are higher. Lastly, the log-likelihood is smaller in this model. It could therefore be said that Model A1 fits the data better than Model 1, although it should be said that the value of the log-likelihood also depends of the number of variables included.

*Evaluating Hypothesis 2: functioning and characteristics*

It is expected that populist party support is predicted more strongly by low 'positive functioning' than by low 'positive characteristics'. Because of the altered conceptualisation, Hypothesis 2 will be tested by constructing separate models for four subindices of SIWB: 'general functioning', 'specific functioning', 'positive characteristics' and 'negative characteristics', and a final model that includes all of these subindices together. The hypothesis can be considered supported when both of the 'functioning' indices predict populist party support more strongly than the characteristics indices. The results of Models 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are reported in Table 11. To ensure a compact view, the odds are not displayed for these models. The odds can be calculated by taking the exponent of the coefficient value.

**Table 11.** Logistic regression analyses on populist party support, for evaluation of Hypothesis 2.

| Model | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Coeff. | Coeff. | Coeff. | Coeff. |
| Constant | -1,737*** | -1,658*** | -1,872*** | -1,954*** | -1,776*** |
| | (0,056) | (0,047) | (0,050) | (0,040) | (0,059) |
| General F. | 0,006*** | | | | -0,004 |
| | (0,002) | | | | (0,003) |
| Specific F. | | 0,000 | | | -0,002 |
| | | (0,001) | | | (0,002) |
| Positive C. | | | 0,007*** | | -0,004* |
| | | | (0,001) | | (0,002) |
| Negative C. | | | | 0,014*** | 0,020*** |
| | | | | (0,001) | (0,002) |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 0,1% | 0,0% | 0,2% | 0,7% | 0,8% |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 0,1% | 0,0% | 0,3% | 1,2% | 1,4% |
| Log-likelihood | 12234,820 | 12244,656 | 12217,674 | 12150,150 | 12132,826 |

*N* = 13840
Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6
Note: F. = Functioning; C. = Characteristics

In assessing the first four models first, a number of interesting results are worth mentioning. Firstly, it appears that the Specific Functioning Index on itself is not significant, whilst the others are. Secondly, the Positive and Negative Characteristics indices individually predict populist party support better than the other indices. The effect is larger. The coefficient of the Negative Characteristics Index is 0,014. The odds of supporting a populist party therefore increase 1,014 times (the probability increases with 1,4%) for each unit moving up on the Negative Characteristics Index. Thirdly, assessing the model fit, it is shown that the Negative Functioning Index has the lowest log-likelihood and therefore can be said to have the best fit. The $R^2$ values are zero or very close to zero for both 'functioning' indices and higher for the 'characteristics' indices.

Next, in Model 6, the four indices are entered at the same time and thus all included in the same model. In this model as well, the Negative Characteristics Index turns out to be the strongest predictor of populist party support. Compared to Model 5, its coefficient has increased to 0,020 with odds of 1,021. The other three indices now show a non-significant effect and/or an effect that runs in the opposite direction.

Taking all of this together, it can generally be concluded that Hypothesis 2 is not supported by this evidence. It is actually the other way around: the 'characteristics' indices are better predictors, and the Negative Characteristics Index in particular. This index measures experiences related to e.g. depression, anxiety and loneliness. Again, models with the control variables included can be found in the appendix (Model A2 through A6 in Table A10).

*Evaluating Hypothesis 3: society-centred discontent as a mediating variable*

Hypothesis 3 expects that the relationship between SIWB and populist party support is mediated by society-centred discontent. In order to evaluate this hypothesis, three models are estimated. Model 7 shows the direct relationship between SIWB and populist party support, which is the same as Model 1, as the same variables and effect are tested for. Model 8 estimates the relationship between SIWB and society-centred discontent, with the latter replacing populist party support as the dependent variable. Finally, Model 9 first tests the relationship between society-centred discontent – this time as independent variable – and populist party support, and secondly it tests the indirect relationship between SIWB and populist party support. The results are displayed below in Table 12. Models A7 through A9, which include the control variables, can be found as Table A11 in the appendix and will not be discussed here.

**Table 12.** Logistic regression analyses on populist party support (Models 7 and 9) and society-centred discontent (Model 8), for evaluation of Hypothesis 3.

| Model | 7 | | 8 | | 9 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Odds | Coeff. | Odds | Coeff. | Odds |
| Constant | -2,030*** | 0,131 | 2,953*** | 19,163 | -3,332*** | 0,036 |
| | (0,047) | | (0,018) | | (0,095) | |
| SIWB | 0,016*** | 1,016 | 0,022*** | 1,022 | 0,008*** | 1,008 |
| | (0,002) | | (0,001) | | (0,002) | |
| Society-centred discontent | | | | | 0,412*** | 1,510 |
| | | | | | (0,022) | |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | | | | | 2,8% | |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | | | | | 4,8% | |
| Log-likelihood | | | | | 11851,986 | |

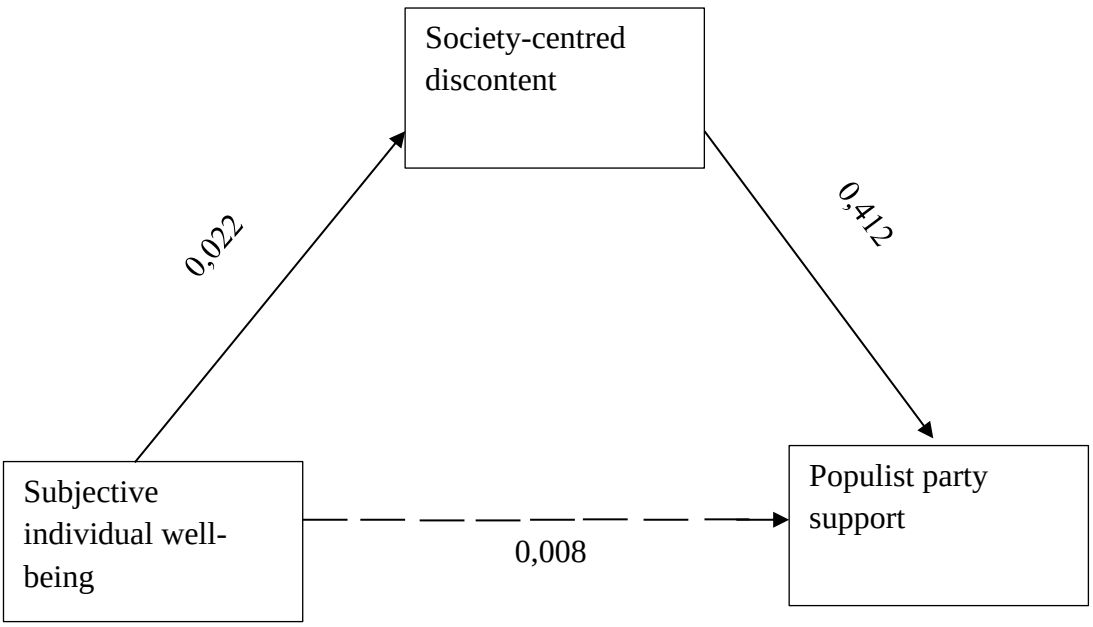
*N* = 13840
Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6

Model 7 shows the simple – or unmediated – relationship between SIWB and populist party support. As already became clear with the assessment of Hypothesis 1, a significant

coefficient of 0,016 is visible. Next, Model 8 shows the second path of this mediation analysis – a significant effect of SIWB on society-centred discontent of 0,022. Finally, Model 9 estimates two paths. First, the indirect effect of SIWB on populist party support is 0,008. Secondly, the effect of society-centred discontent on populist party support is 0,412.

The mediation is assessed by four necessary conditions (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The initial effect of SIWB on populist party support (Model 7), the effect of SIWB on society-centred discontent (Model 8) and the effect of society-centred discontent on populist party support (Model 9) should be significant. As these three paths are all significant, three of the four conditions are fulfilled. The fourth and final necessary condition is that the effect of SIWB on populist party support in Model 9 should be smaller than that in Model 7. Because 0,008 is a smaller value than 0,016, this condition is met as well. It can furthermore be said that the indirect effect of SIWB, via society-centred discontent, on populist party support is 0,022*0,412 = 0,009. By means of performing a Sobel test, this latter effect is judged to be significant. The null hypothesis can now be rejected and the results of the analysis can be said to support Hypothesis 3. A schematic summary of the results is displayed as Figure 3.

**Figure 3.** Schematic mediation model with coefficients.



*Evaluating Hypothesis 4a: relative deprivation*

This thesis' penultimate hypothesis is about relative deprivation. It is expected that the relationship between SIWB and populist party support is stronger for individuals with a lower well-being than the aggregate of their country. Model 10, see Table 13, is estimated to show this moderated relationship.

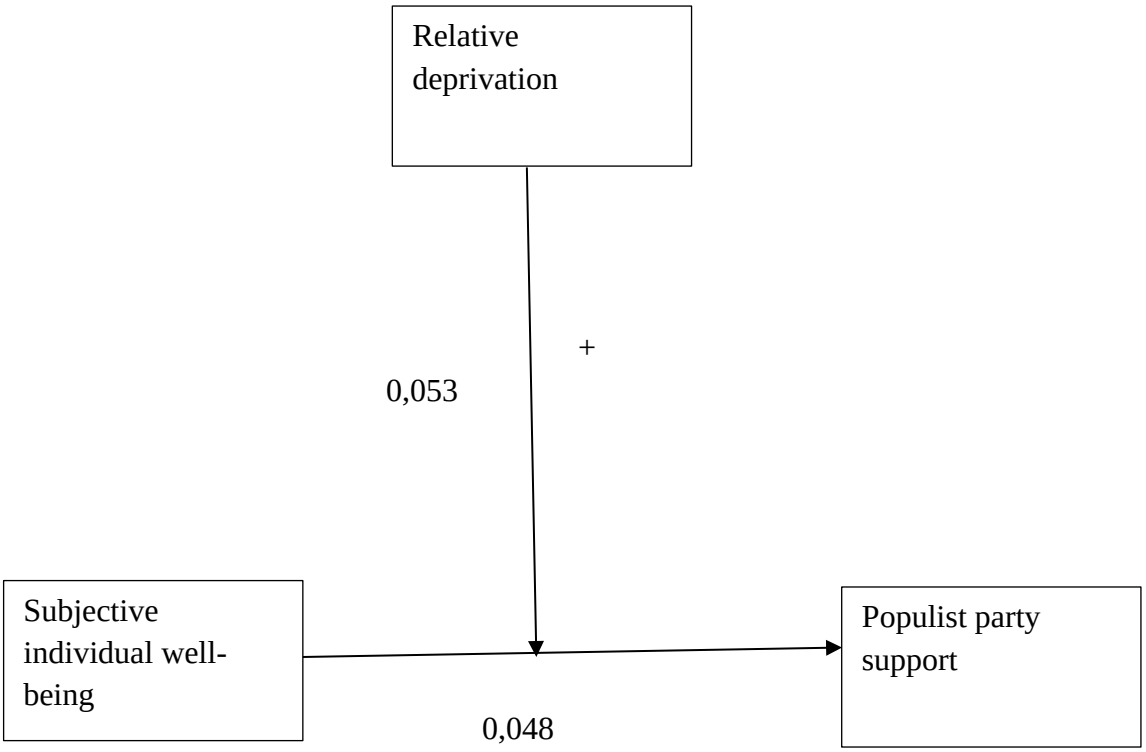
The coefficient of SIWB in this model is 0,048. It can also be seen that with one unit increase on the SIWB Index, the odds of supporting a populist party increase 1,049 times (or the probability goes up by 4,9%). Then, the coefficient of relative deprivation is 0,051 and the odds of supporting a populist party increase 1,052 times for individuals who have lower SIWB than their country's average as compared to those who have a lower SIWB than the country average. The third and final coefficient that needs to be interpreted for this model is that of the interaction between SIWB and relative deprivation, which is shown to be 0,053, with odds of 1,053. This means that the correlation between SIWB and populist party support is stronger for individuals with a lower SIWB than their country's mean, expressing support for Hypothesis 4a. Figure 4 displays a schematic summary of the model, and a version of this model with control variables included can be found in the appendix in Table A12 (Model A10).

**Table 13.** Logistic regression analyses on populist party support, for evaluation of Hypothesis 4a.

| Model | 10 | |
|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Odds |
| Constant | -2,426***<br>(0,090) | 0,088 |
| SIWB | 0,048***<br>(0,005) | 1,049 |
| Relative deprivation | 0,051*<br>(0,041) | 1,052 |
| SIWB*Relative deprivation | 0,053***<br>(0,009) | 1,053 |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 1,2% | |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 2,0% | |
| Log-likelihood | 12082,862 | |

*N* = 13840
Standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Figure 4.** Schematic moderation model with coefficients (Model 10).




*Evaluating Hypothesis 4b: status threat*

Hypothesis 4b states the expectation that the negative correlation between SIWB and populist party support becomes stronger, the higher the value of status threat is. This hypothesis is evaluated by conducting a moderation analysis (Model 11), the results of which can be observed in Table 14. Again, Table A13 in the appendix represents the same model, but with the control variables included.

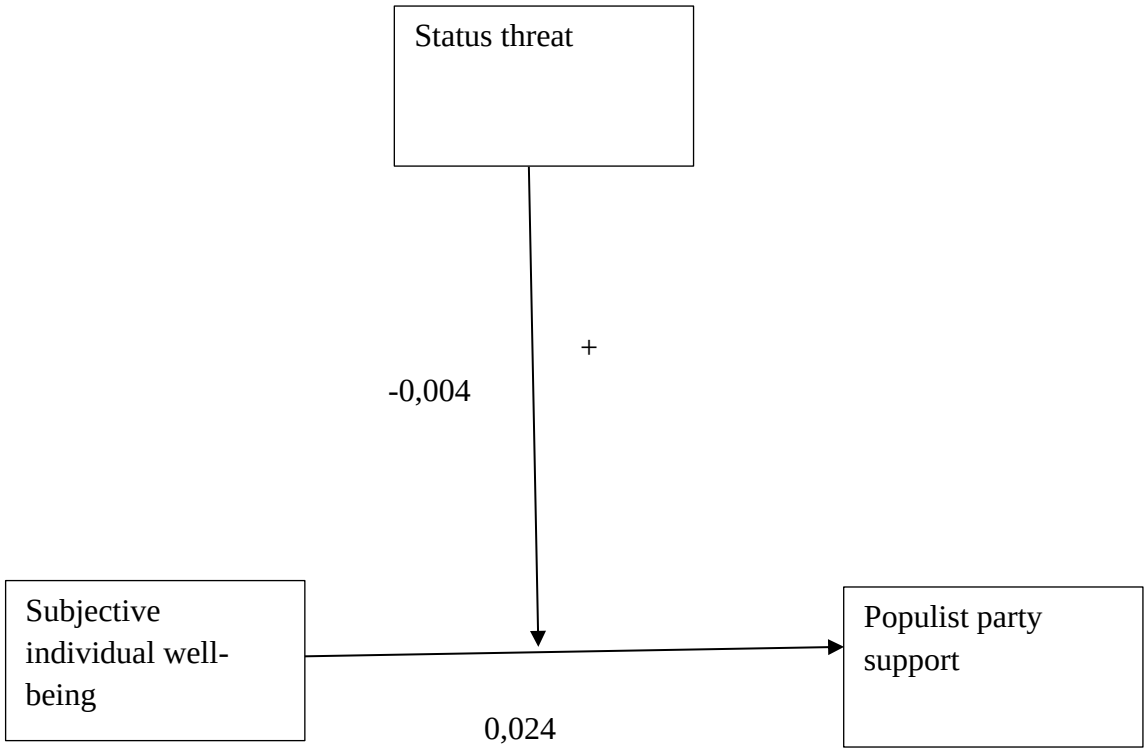
**Table 14.** Logistic regression analyses on populist party support, for evaluation of Hypothesis 4b.

| Model | 11 | |
|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Odds |
| Constant | -3,116*** | 0,044 |
| | (0,130) | |
| SIWB | 0,024*** | 1,024 |
| | (0,005) | |
| Status threat | 0,303*** | 1,353 |
| | (0,027) | |
| SIWB*Status threat | -0,004*** | 0,996 |
| | (0,001) | |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 2,2% | |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 3,7% | |
| Log-likelihood | 11943,639 | |

*N* = 13840
Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6

In Model 11, it can be seen that the coefficient for status threat is 0,303. The odds are 1,353. This means that the probability of supporting a populist party increases with 35,3% for every unit increase on the 11-unit status threat variable. However, in order to evaluate the hypothesis at hand, the effect of the interaction between SIWB and status threat is what should be looked out. The interaction coefficient is -0,004. This means that, contrary to what was expected, the correlation between SIWB and populist party support becomes slightly weaker as the value on status threat becomes higher. Therefore, even though all of the coefficients are significant, no support for Hypothesis 4b is found. A schematic summary of this model is shown below in Figure 5. The model with control variables can again be found in the appendix (Table A13, Model A11).

**Figure 5.** Schematic moderation model with coefficients (Model 11).




*Additional analyses and robustness check*

An additional logistic regression analysis has been conducted on a model that includes all separate ESS survey items that have been used to construct the SIWB Index. The results are shown in de appendix (Table A14). What already became clear in the evaluation of Hypothesis 2 is visible in the results of this analysis as well: the items of the Negative Characteristics Index have the strongest effects, although not all items are found to be significant on their own. The item Emwb5 (*"How much of the time during the past week you felt anxious?"*) has the strongest effect of all significant items, with a coefficient of 0,208. For every unit moving up on the 4-point scale, the odds of supporting a populist party increase 1,231 times.

Furthermore in the appendix, two models have been estimated in an alternative assessment of Hypothesis 2. The two 'characteristics' indices and the two 'functioning' indices have been averaged. The consequence of doing this is that Hypothesis 2 is still supported. The results of these additional regression analyses can be found in Table A15 (Models A13a and A13b with, and Models A14a and A14b without control variables).

Finally, it is useful to perform robustness checks on the results to assess the structural validity of the results (Lu & White, 2014). A robustness check will be performed by changing the measurement of the dependent variable. Populist party support will now be measured using the ESS item *"What party did you vote for?"*. The results of this analysis can be inspected in Table A16 in the appendix. This particular analysis is conducted with a smaller *n* of 11690, out of which 16,5% states to have voted for a populist party in their country's most recent national election. This is comparable to the 16,2% that states to feel close to a populist party (which is the ESS item that is used to measure populist party support in the main analyses). The analysis only checks the robustness of the results of Hypothesis 1. A negative correlation between SIWB and populist party support remains.

*In sum*

This subchapter has provided a hypothesis-wise analysis of the data and a display of the results of these analyses, and has furthermore given a description of how to interpret the results. Based on these results, it has been decided whether or not it is appropriate to reject the null hypotheses and assume the hypotheses to be true. A compact overview of the final judgement per hypothesis is shown in Table 15.

In the next and final chapter of this thesis, everything that has been discussed before comes together. It will be explained what conclusions can and cannot be drawn from the results and what meaning they have for the hypotheses and the previously-discussed theory. Furthermore, drawbacks of this study will be discussed and suggestions for future research will be made. After the conclusion and discussion, a reference list is added from which all mentioned literature in this thesis can be consulted. Finally, an appendix with additional tables and figures, as being referred to throughout this study, is added – together with the assumption checks.

**Table 15.** Judgement per hypothesis.

| Hypothesis | Judgement |
|---|---|
| H1. Subjective individual well-being is, ceteris paribus, negatively correlated with populist party support. | Supported |
| H2. Populist party support is, ceteris paribus, predicted more strongly by low positive functioning than by low positive characteristics. | Not supported |
| H3. The relationship between SIWB and the likelihood to support a populist party is, ceteris paribus, mediated by society-centred discontent. | Supported |
| H4a. When an individual's SIWB is lower than the aggregate SIWB of their country, the relationship between well-being and populist party support becomes, ceteris paribus, stronger. | Supported |
| H4b. The negative correlation between SIWB and populist party support will, ceteris paribus, be stronger, the higher an individual's status threat is. | Not supported |

# Conclusion and discussion

In the previous chapter, the data analysis has been conducted and the results have been presented. The purpose of the current chapter is threefold: in the conclusion, the main results will be discussed and evaluated. The most important insights are distilled and connections are made to the literature. In the discussion, the shortcomings of this study will be addressed and implications for further research and for society are discussed. The discussion furthermore includes suggestions for future studies.

## Conclusion

This thesis has connected the fields of political science and psychology. It has discussed previous research on well-being and populism and has tested and verified a comprehensive measure of subjective individual well-being (SIWB). Subsequently, it assessed its working in relation to populist party support. It has done so with individual-level survey data from Round 6 of the European Social Survey.

The research question of this thesis is: *To what extent does well-being lead to support for populist parties?* The answer is: to some extent, SIWB is negatively correlated with populist party support. This is the most important finding of the thesis and is congruent with Hypothesis 1. The lower an individual's SIWB is, the greater the likelihood that they support a populist party. Analyses with control variables included (see appendix) show that gender, religion and especially education are important covariates in this association. Men, people who say to belong to a religion or denomination and those who have not been in tertiary education are more likely than others to support a populist party. These control variables explain an additional part of the variance in the dependent variable.

Furthermore, contrary to what was expected, the SIWB subconcept 'negative characteristics' more strongly predicts populist party support than other constituent concepts of SIWB. The experience of e.g. anxiety, depression, loneliness and restless sleep are therefore deemed more important explanatory factors than e.g. being enthusiastic about activities in life and being optimistic about one's future. This result is however consistent with the results of the factor analysis (see Table 3), as 'negative characteristics' explains over one third of the variance in SIWB. This implies that the hedonic aspect of well-being is of larger importance than eudaimonia. It contradicts the expectation expressed in Hypothesis 2, but might explain

why SIWB research traditionally mainly focusses on hedonia or could be the reason for it, as well as consequence: as mentioned in the 'Theory and expectations' chapter, the measurement of eudaimonia might need further development. What can be concluded as well, is that – in concordance with relative deprivation theory – the effect of SIWB is stronger for individuals with a lower SIWB than their country's mean. This adheres to the 'healthier neighbours' argument (see the Theory chapter). If an individual's situation is worse than that of other inhabitants of their country, they are more likely to support a populist party.

Finally, it was found that society-centred discontent significantly mediates the correlation between SIWB and populist party support, providing some evidence for the expectation that an individual's discontent with their own life situation can spill over to their perception of society. Per Berman's (2012) expectation, society-centred discontent is a stronger determinant of populist party support than self-centred discontent. As stated before, the evidence of this is mixed. This thesis contributes to supporting this expectation.

Overall, it can be concluded that SIWB as a whole, some of its constituent parts, society-centred discontent and relative deprivation all have an effect on the likelihood of supporting a populist party. These findings should, however, be interpreted with some caution. As become clear in the 'Analysis and results' chapter, the amount of variance explained by each model is not high. More research is needed to discover what else is important in explaining populist party support. Recommendations for future research are given in the next section, after discussing more shortcomings of this study.

## Discussion

Despite the fact that this study contributes to scientific knowledge in ways described in the section above, a number of shortcomings shall be mentioned. Following this, implications for science and other fields are given, as well as tips for future research.

### *Shortcomings*

Although this study adds to scientific knowledge, a number of shortcomings should be addressed. First, one should be cautious about generalising the results to other geographical regions. In this study, data from 21 European countries have been analysed. Therefore, the results can only be assumed to hold true for these exact countries and especially not for

countries outside of Europe. Based on previous research as well, this cannot be assumed. Populism in Latin America, for example, manifests itself differently than in Europe (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013) and different factors may be important for the construction of SIWB in different regions.

Secondly, strong causal claims cannot be made. Even though arguments can be made in favour of the hypothesised causal direction (see the 'Theory and expectations' chapter), reverse causation is hard to completely exclude with this type of data, as respondents are only surveyed on one point in time and not on multiple occasions.

Thirdly, this study does not investigate the possibility of cross-country differences in the captured effects. It is not unimaginable that these differences could exist. By investigating only individual data, it might be unjustifiably assumed that observed relationships are on the individual level, whilst these are actually at play at the country level. It is possible that cross-country differences exist, based on findings from research on populism (see e.g. Van Kessel, 2015; Rooduijn & Burgoon, 2018; Vachudova, 2021) as well as from the field of well-being (see e.g. Pedersen & Schmidt, 2009; Ruggeri et al., 2020). This thesis has not taken into account country-level differences, because the prime task of this thesis has been to explore the relationship between SIWB and populist party support and to test a framework for SIWB as a starting point for further research. Apart from that, it turned out not to be feasible to investigate these possible differences within the duration of this project.

Finally, Hypotheses 2 and 4b are not supported. The former has been discussed before. The latter expected that status threat, measured as an individual's perceived placement on the societal ladder, would moderate the relationship between SIWB and populist party support. The expected effect runs in the opposite direction, though it is very small. Future studies should experiment with other measures for status threat.

In the next and final section, the implications of the results for science and society are given, and more avenues for further research are suggested.

*Implications and future research*

The findings of this thesis have implications for the scholarly fields of well-being and populism. It is valuable for scholars of well-being, and psychology in general, to know that it is mostly hedonic measures ('negative characteristics') that are important in assessing SIWB. Future studies are encouraged to further develop SIWB as a multidimensional concept, to test the framework that this study used further and to experiment with the measurement of

eudaimonic well-being, as this aspect turned out to be a less significant contributor to overall SIWB. This might as well be because it was not measured correctly.

For political scientists interested in SIWB and psychological factors that could contribute to populist party support, it can be interesting to know that SIWB as a composite measure – and especially hedonic items – significantly predicts populist party support. A welcome contribution would be, as discussed earlier on, to investigate cross-country differences or to apply the methods used in this study to non-European countries. Secondly, as society-centred discontent proved to be a relatively strong predictor, studying this topic on its own and experimenting with different ways to measure it could be very worthwhile. Furthermore, different methods and data approaches might be considered in future studies, such as multilevel models and time-series to discover how the relationship between SIWB and populist party support manifests itself across space and time. Measuring cases on multiple time occasions could also help to improve the causality argument. Importantly, future studies should work with more recent data. Round 6 of the European Social Survey is a good starting point, but in ten years a lot can happen. The effect might have become stronger. Another reason to do this is the opportunity to include major contemporary populist parties that did not exist yet when Round 6 was fielded, such as *Alternative für Deutschland* (Germany) and *Vox* (Spain).

Not only can the results of this study be of interest to scientists, but also to others. For citizens in general, knowing that a low SIWB is associated with populist party support is valuable. It may become more understandable why it is that people choose for populist parties. For policy-makers, because hedonic measures explain a bigger part of the variance in SIWB than eudaimonic and evaluative measures, the former can be effective for them to target policy on. Furthermore, should governments want to prevent people from supporting populist parties, SIWB is certainly a terrain to explore and supporting heightening the SIWB of their citizens could be a way to go. Especially in the wake of the corona crisis and current cost-of-living crisis, this is important. As mentioned before, future research is encouraged to work with more recent data to investigate how SIWB develops over time and how its effect on populist party support changes accordingly. There is still a lot left to explore.

*This page intentionally left blank*

# List of references


Abadi, D., Cabot, P. L. H., Duyvendak, J. W., & Fischer, A. (2020). Socio-economic or emotional predictors of populist attitudes across Europe. Archive for Legal and Social Sciences, 89-108. http://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/gtm65

Abts, K., & Rummens, S. (2007). Populism versus democracy. *Political studies, 55*(2), 405-424. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2007.00657.x

Abramowitz A., & McCoy, J. 2019. United States: racial resentment, negative partisanship, and polarization in Trump's America. *Ann. Am. Acad. Political Soc. Sci. 681*(1):137–56. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716218811309

Alatartseva, E., & Barysheva, G. (2015). Well-being: subjective and objective aspects. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 166*, 36-42. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.479

Algan, Y., Guriev, S., Papaioannou, E., & Passari, E. (2017). The European trust crisis and the rise of populism. *Brookings papers on economic activity, 2017*(2), 309-400.

Antony, G. M., & Visweswara Rao, K. (2007). A composite index to explain variations in poverty, health, nutritional status and standard of living: Use of multivariate statistical methods. *Public Health, 121*(8), 578-587. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2006.10.018

Atkinson, S., Bagnall, A. M., Corcoran, R., South, J., & Curtis, S. (2020). Being well together: individual subjective and community wellbeing. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 21*(5), 1903-1921. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-019-00146-2

Backhaus, I., Kino, S., La Torre, G., & Kawachi, I. (2019). Right-wing populism and self-rated health in Europe: a multilevel analysis. *J Epidemiol Community Health, 73*(12), 1116-1121. https://doi.org/10.1136/jech-2018-211995

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. Journal of personality and social psychology, 51(6), 1173.

Berman, S. (2021). The causes of populism in the west. *Annual Review of Political Science, 24*, 71-88. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041719-102503

Bland, J. M., & Altman, D. G. (1997). Statistics notes: Cronbach's alpha. *Bmj, 314*(7080), 572. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.314.7080.572

Bos, L., Schemer, C., Corbu, N., Hameleers, M., Andreadis, I., Schulz, A., … Fawzi, N. (2020). The effects of populism as a social identity frame on persuasion and mobilisation: Evidence from a 15-country experiment. *European Journal of Political Research, 59*(1), 3–24. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12334

Cena, L., Roccato, M., & Russo, S. (2023). Relative deprivation, national GDP and right-wing populism: A multilevel, multinational study. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 33*(1), 32-42. https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2636

Charalampi, A., Michalopoulou, C., & Richardson, C. (2018). Validation of the 2012 European Social Survey measurement of wellbeing in seventeen European countries. *Applied Research in Quality of Life, 15*, 73-105. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-018-9666-4

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Hedonia, eudaimonia, and well-being: An introduction. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 9*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9018-1

Díaz, S. R., Swan, K., Ice, P., & Kupczynski, L. (2010). Student ratings of the importance of survey items, multiplicative factor analysis, and the validity of the community of inquiry survey. *The Internet and Higher Education, 13*(1-2), 22-30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2009.11.004

Diener, E., & Ryan, K. (2009). Subjective well-being: *A general overview*. *South African Journal of Psychology, 39*(4), 391-406. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/008124630903900402
Diener, E., & Seligman, M. E. (2004). Beyond money: Toward an economy of well-being. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 5*(1), 1-31. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2004.00501001.x
Dolan, P., & Metcalfe, R. (2012). Measuring subjective wellbeing: Recommendations on measures for use by national governments. *Journal of Social Policy, 41*(2), 409-427. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279411000833
Elchardus, M., & Spruyt, B. (2016). Populism, persistent republicanism and declinism: An empirical analysis of populism as a thin ideology. *Government and Opposition, 51*(1), 111-133. https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2014.27
European Social Survey. (n.d.). ESS round 6 - 2012. Personal wellbeing, Democracy. Retrieved April 4, 2023, from https://ess-search.nsd.no/en/study/7ccf7f30-fd1a-470a-9b90-4c91b0bc7438
European Social Survey, (2012). ESS Round 6 Source Questionnaire. London: Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University London. Retrieved April 4, 2023, from https://stessrelpubprodwe.blob.core.windows.net/data/round6/fieldwork/source/ESS6_source_main_questionnaire.pdf
European Social Survey Round 6 Data (2012). Data file edition 2.4. Sikt - Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS6-2012.
Field, A. (2018). *Discovering Statistics using SPSS. Fifth edition.* London: Sage.
Gidron, N., & Hall, P. A. (2017). The politics of social status: Economic and cultural roots of the populist right. *The British Journal of Sociology, 68*, S57-S84. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12319
Giebler, H., Hirsch, M., Schürmann, B., & Veit, S. (2021). Discontent with what? Linking self-centered and society-centered discontent to populist party support. *Political Studies, 69*(4), 900-920. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720932115
Gliem, J. A., & Gliem, R. R. (2003). Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-type scales. Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education. Retrieved May 20, 2023, from https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/344/Gliem%20&%20Gliem.pdf?s..
Goodger, E., & Harvey, W. (2021). Policy and Populism: Explaining Support for the Radical Left in Contemporary Western Democracies (Doctoral dissertation). Retrevied from: http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/14235/1/Edward_Goodger000878962_-_PhD_Thesis.pdf
Hameleers, M. (2019). Putting our own people first: the content and effects of online right-wing populist discourse surrounding the European refugee crisis. *Mass Communication and Society, 22*(6), 804-826. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2019.1655768
Havlík, V., & Voda, P. (2018). Cleavages, protest or voting for hope? The rise of centrist populist parties in the Czech Republic. *Swiss Political Science Review, 24*(2), 161-186. https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12299
Hawkins, K. A., & Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2017). The ideational approach to populism. *Latin American Research Review, 52*(4), 513-528. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26743761. Accessed 30 March 2023.
Hayes, A. (2022). *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis - A Regression-Based Approach*. New York and London: Guilford Publications.

Healy, L. M. (2006). *Logistic regression: An overview*. Eastern Michighan College of Technology.

Helliwell, J. F., & Huang, H. (2008). How's your government? International evidence linking good government and well-being. *British Journal of Political Science, 38*(4), 595-619. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123408000306

Hooghe, M. (2012). I'm happy, hope you're happy too. Examining the different dynamics of individual subjective well-being and view on society. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 13*, 17-29. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-011-9247-9

Huang, F. L. (2022). Analyzing cross-sectionally clustered data using generalized estimating equations. *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, *47*(1), 101-125. https://doi.org/10.3102/10769986211017480

Huber, R. A., & Schimpf, C. H. (2017). On the distinct effects of left-wing and right-wing populism on democratic quality. *Politics and Governance, 5*(4), 146-165. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v5i4.919

Hunger, S., & Paxton, F. (2022). What's in a buzzword? A systematic review of the state of populism research in political science. *Political Science Research and Methods, 10*(3), 617-633. https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2021.44

Huppert, F. A., & So, T. T. (2013). Flourishing across Europe: Application of a new conceptual framework for defining well-being. *Social Indicators Research, 110*, 837-861. https://doi.org/10.1007%2Fs11205-011-9966-7

Inglehart, R. F., & Norris, P. (2016). Trump, Brexit, and the rise of populism: Economic have-nots and cultural backlash. Faculty Research Working Paper Series. Retrieved from: https://formiche.net/wp-content/blogs.dir/10051/files/2017/01/RWP16-026_Norris.pdf

Kashdan, T. B., Biswas-Diener, R., & King, L. A. (2008). Reconsidering happiness: The costs of distinguishing between hedonics and eudaimonia. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 3*(4), 219-233.

Kavanagh, N. M., Menon, A., & Heinze, J. E. (2021). Does health vulnerability predict voting for right-wing populist parties in Europe?. *American Political Science Review, 115*(3), 1104-1109.

Kieny, C., Flores, G., Ingenhaag, M., & Maurer, J. (2020). Assessing and decomposing gender differences in evaluative and emotional well-being among older adults in the developing world. Review of Economics of the Household, 19, 189-221. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-020-02515-4

Koch, A. (2016). Assessment of socio-demographic sample composition in ESS Round 6. In European Social Survey. GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences. Retrieved April 4, 2023, from https://stessrelpubprodwe.blob.core.windows.net/data/round6/methods/ESS6_sample_composition_assessment.pdf

Krishnan, V. (2010). Constructing an area-based socioeconomic index: A principal components analysis approach. Edmonton, Alberta: Early Child Development Mapping Project. Retrieved from: https://www.ualberta.ca/community-university-partnership/media-library/community-university-partnership/research/ecmap-reports/seicupwebsite10april13-1.pdf

Langenkamp, A., & Bienstman, S. (2022). Populism and layers of social belonging: Support of populist parties in Europe. *Political Psychology, 43*(5), 931-949. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12827

Leininger, A., & Meijers, M. J. (2021). Do populist parties increase voter turnout? Evidence from over 40 years of electoral history in 31 European democracies. *Political Studies, 69*(3), 665-685. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720923257

Lewis, P., Clarke, S., Barr, C., Holder, J., & Kommenda, N. (2018, November 20). Revealed: one in four Europeans vote populist. The Guardian. Retrieved April 8, 2023, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2018/nov/20/revealed-one-in-four-europeans-vote-populistteractive/2018/nov/20/revealed-one-in-four-europeans-vote-populist

Lindholm, A. (2021). Subjective wellbeing and the political citizen (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://serval.unil.ch/resource/serval:BIB_55B3165D0789.P002/REF

Lindholm, A., & Rapeli, L. (2023). Is the unhappy citizen a populist citizen? Linking subjective well-being to populist and nativist attitudes. *European Political Science Review, 1-17*. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773922000583

Lu, X., & White, H. (2014). Robustness checks and robustness tests in applied economics. *Journal of Econometrics, 178*, 194-206. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeconom.2013.08.016

Luke, D. (2004). The Need for Multilevel Modeling. In D. Luke (Ed.), *Multilevel Modeling* (pp. 2–9). Thouand Oaks: Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412985147

MacKinnon, D. P., Fairchild, A. J., & Fritz, M. S. (2007). Mediation analysis. *Annu. Rev. Psychol., 58*, 593-614. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085542

Manunta, E., Becker, M., Easterbrook, M. J., & Vignoles, V. L. (2022). Economic Distress and Populism: Examining the Role of Identity Threat and Feelings of Social Exclusion. *Political Psychology*, *43*(5), 893-912. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12824

Margalit, Y. (2019). Economic insecurity and the causes of populism, reconsidered. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 33*(4), 152-170.

Mazziotta, M., & Pareto, A. (2013). Methods for constructing composite indices: One for all or all for one. *Rivista Italiana di Economia Demografia e Statistica, 67*(2), 67-80.

McGillivray, M., & Shorrocks, A. (2005). Inequality and multidimensional well-being. *Review of Income and Wealth*, *51*(2), 193-199.

McMahan, E. A., & Estes, D. (2011). Hedonic versus eudaimonic conceptions of well-being: Evidence of differential associations with self-reported well-being. *Social Indicators Research, 103*, 93-108. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1007/s11205-010-9698-0

Messner, S., Raffalovich, L., & McMillan, R. (2001). Economic deprivation and changes in homicide arrest rates for white and black youths, 1967-1998: a national time-series analysis. *Criminology, 39*, 591–614. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2001.tb00934.x

Miret, M., Caballero, F. F., Olaya, B., Koskinen, S., Naidoo, N., Tobiasz-Adamczyk, B., ... & Ayuso-Mateos, J. L. (2017). Association of experienced and evaluative well-being with health in nine countries with different income levels: a cross-sectional study. *Globalization and Health, 13*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-017-0290-0

Mosca, L., & Quaranta, M. (2021). Are digital platforms potential drivers of the populist vote? A comparative analysis of France, Germany and Italy. *Information, Communication & Society, 24*(10), 1441-1459. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1894211

Mudde, C. (2004). The populist zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition, 39*(4), 541-563. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x

Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser, C. R. (2013). Exclusionary vs. inclusionary populism: Comparing contemporary Europe and Latin America. *Government and Opposition, 48*(2), 147-174. https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2012.11

Musairah, S. K. (2015). Mediation and moderation analysis from the perspective of behavioral science. *Jurnal Intelek, 10*(1), 1-11.

Nowakowski, A. (2021). Do unhappy citizens vote for populism?. *European Journal of Political Economy, 68*, 101985. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2020.101985

Obradović, S., Power, S. A., & Sheehy-Skeffington, J. (2020). Understanding the psychological appeal of populism. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 35*, 125-131. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.06.009

Otjes, S., & Louwerse, T. (2015). Populists in parliament: Comparing left-wing and right-wing populism in the Netherlands. *Political studies, 63*(1), 60-79. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12089

Oude Groeniger, J., Gugushvili, A., de Koster, W., & Van der Waal, J. (2022). Population health, not individual health, drives support for populist parties. *PNAS Nexus, 1*(3), pgac057. https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgac057

Ozili, P. K. (2023). The acceptable R-square in empirical modelling for social science research. In P. K. Ozili (Ed.), *Social Research Methodology and Publishing Results: A Guide to Non-Native English Speakers* (pp. 134-143). IGI Global.

Pasquino, G. (2008). Populism and democracy. In D. Albertazzi, & D. McDonnall (Eds.), *Twenty-First Century Populism* (pp. 15-29). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Pedersen, P. J., & Schmidt, T. D. (2009). Happiness in Europe: Cross-country differences in the determinants of subjective well-being. *IZA Discussion Papers, No. 4538.* Retrieved from: http://hdl.handle.net/10419/35927

Pinar, M. (2019). Multidimensional well-being and inequality across the European regions with alternative interactions between the well-being dimensions. *Social Indicators Research, 144*(1), 31-72. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-2047-4

Rettberg, K. (2020). Socioeconomic Declinism and Right-Wing Populist Support. *Res Publica-Journal of Undergraduate Research, 25*(1), 17.

Rico, G., Guinjoan, M., & Anduiza, E. (2017). The emotional underpinnings of populism: How anger and fear affect populist attitudes. *Swiss Political Science Review, 23*(4), 444-461. https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12261

Roberts, K. M. (2022). Populism and polarization in comparative perspective: Constitutive, spatial and institutional dimensions. *Government and Opposition, 57*(4), 680-702.

Rooduijn, M. (2019). State of the field: How to study populism and adjacent topics? A plea for both more and less focus. *European Journal of Political Research, 58*(1), 362-372.

Rooduijn, M., & Burgoon, B. (2018). The paradox of well-being: do unfavorable socioeconomic and sociocultural contexts deepen or dampen radical left and right voting among the less well-off?. *Comparative Political Studies, 51*(13), 1720-1753. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017720707

Rooduijn, M., Van der Brug, W., & de Lange, S. L. (2016). Expressing or fuelling discontent? The relationship between populist voting and political discontent. *Electoral studies, 43*, 32-40.

Rooduijn, M., Van Kessel, S., Froio, C., Pirro, A., De Lange, S., Halikiopoulou, D., … & Taggart, P. (2019). The PopuList: An Overview of Populist, Far Right, Far Left and Eurosceptic Parties in Europe. Retrieved from https://www.popu-list.org.

Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2012). The ambivalence of populism: threat and corrective for democracy. *Democratization, 19*(2), 184-208. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2011.572619

Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2021). Bringing political psychology into the study of populism. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B, 376*(1822), 20200148. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2020.0148

Ruggeri, K., Garcia-Garzon, E., Maguire, Á., Matz, S., & Huppert, F. A. (2020). Well-being is more than happiness and life satisfaction: a multidimensional analysis of 21 countries. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes, 18*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12955-020-01423-y

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*(1), 141-166. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.141

Ryff, C. D., Boylan, J. M., & Kirsch, J. A. (2021). Eudaimonic and hedonic well-being. *Measuring Well-being*, 92-135. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197512531.003.0005

Salmela, M., & von Scheve, C. (2017). Emotional roots of right-wing political populism. *Social Science Information, 56*(4), 567–595. https://doi.org/10.1177/0539018417734419

Schober, P., Boer, C., & Schwarte, L. A. (2018). Correlation coefficients: appropriate use and interpretation. *Anesthesia & Analgesia, 126*(5), 1763-1768. https://doi.org/10.1213/ane.0000000000002864

Schulz, A., Müller, P., Schemer, C., Wirz, D. S., Wettstein, M., & Wirth, W. (2018). Measuring populist attitudes on three dimensions. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 30*(2), 316-326. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edw037

Schulz, A., Müller, P., Schemer, C., Wirz, D. S., Wettstein, M., & Wirth, W. (2018). Measuring populist attitudes on three dimensions. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 30*(2), 316-326. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edw037

Schulze, M., Krätschmer-Hahn, R. (2014). Relative Deprivation Theory. In: Michalos, A.C. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. Dordrecht: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_2457

Slačálek, O., & Svobodová, E. (2018). The Czech Islamophobic movement: beyond 'populism'?. *Patterns of Prejudice, 52*(5), 479-495. https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2018.1495377

Smith, H. J., Pettigrew, T. F., Pippin, G. M., & Bialosiewicz, S. (2012). Relative deprivation: A theoretical and meta-analytic review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 16*(3), 203-232. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868311430825

Starossom, H. J. From Populism to People. Retrieved April 5, 2023, from https://starossom.com/from-populism-to-people/

Stoltzfus, J. C. (2011). Logistic regression: a brief primer. *Academic Emergency Medicine, 18*(10), 1099-1104. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1553-2712.2011.01185.x

Sun, I. Y., Chu, D. C., & Sung, H. E. (2011). A cross-national analysis of the mediating effect of economic deprivation on crime. *Asian Journal of Criminology, 6*, 15-32. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11417-010-9099-y

The PopuList. (2022, May 23). About. Retrieved April 4, 2023, from https://popu-list.org/about/

Toma, A., Hamer, M., & Shankar, A. (2015). Associations between neighborhood perceptions and mental well-being among older adults. *Health & Place, 34*, 46-53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2015.03.014

Topp, C. W., Østergaard, S. D., Søndergaard, S., & Bech, P. (2015). The WHO-5 Well-Being Index: a systematic review of the literature. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, 8*4(3), 167-176. https://doi.org/10.1159/000376585

Tov, W. (2018). Well-being concepts and components. In E. Diener, S. Oishi, & L. Tay (Eds.), *Handbook of Subjective Well-being* (pp. 1-15). Salt Lake City: Noba Scholar.

Turban, D. B., & Yan, W. (2016). Relationship of eudaimonia and hedonia with work outcomes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 31*(6), 1006-1020.

Vachudova, M. A. (2021). Populism, Democracy, and Party System Change in Europe. *Annual Review of Political Science, 24*(1), 471–498. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci041719-102711

Van der Bles, A. M., Postmes, T., LeKander-Kanis, B., & Otjes, S. (2018). The consequences of collective discontent: A new measure of zeitgeist predicts voting for extreme parties. *Political Psychology, 39*(2), 381-398. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12424

VanderWeele, T. J., Trudel-Fitzgerald, C., Allin, P., Farrelly, C., Fletcher, G., Frederick, D. E., ... & Kubzansky, L. D. (2020). Current recommendations on the selection of measures for well-being. *Preventive Medicine, 133*, 106004. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1016/j.ypmed.2020.106004

Van Kessel, S. (2015). *Populist parties in Europe: Agents of discontent?* New York City: Springer.

Vittori, D. (2022). Threat or corrective? Assessing the impact of populist parties in government on the qualities of democracy: A 19-country comparison. *Government and Opposition, 57*(4), 589-609. https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2021.21

Ward, G. (2019). Happiness and Voting: Evidence from Four Decades of Elections in Europe. *American Journal of Political Science, 64*(3), 504–518. http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/QWLGGN

Ward, G., De Neve, J. E., Ungar, L. H., & Eichstaedt, J. C. (2021). (Un) happiness and voting in US presidential elections. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 120*(2), 370. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/pspi0000249

Waterman, A. S. (1993). Two conceptions of happiness: Contrasts of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64*(4), 678. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.64.4.678

Wills-Herrera, E., Islam, G., & Hamilton, M. (2009). Subjective well-being in cities: A multidimensional concept of individual, social and cultural variables. *Applied Research in Quality of Life, 4*, 201-221. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11482-009-9072-z

World Bank. (2012a). World Bank Data - GDP (current US$) [Data file]. Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD

World Bank. (2012b). World Bank Data - Gini index [Data file]. Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI

World Bank. (2012c). World Bank Data - Net migration [Data file]. Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.NETM

Wuttke, A., Schimpf, C., & Schoen, H. (2020). When the whole is greater than the sum of its parts: On the conceptualization and measurement of populist attitudes and other multidimensional constructs. *American Political Science Review, 114*(2), 356-374. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000807

Yitzhaki, S. (1979). *Relative deprivation and the Gini coefficient. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 93*(2), 321-324. https://doi.org/10.2307/1883197

# Appendix

## A: Additional tables

**Table A1a.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Evaluative well-being' subconcept and items as proposed by Charalampi et al. (2018).

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Evaluative well-being | 0,84 | | 5,80 | 4,04 | 13840 |
| | | Evwb1 | 3,04 | 2,32 | 13840 |
| | | Evwb2 | 2,77 | 2,02 | 13840 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A1b.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Emotional well-being' subconcept and items as proposed by Charalampi et al. (2018).

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emotional well-being | 0,82 | | 11,00 | 3,34 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb1 | 1,56 | 0,69 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb2 | 1,48 | 0,69 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb3 | 2,07 | 0,85 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb4 | 2,09 | 0,81 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb5 | 1,62 | 0,73 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb6 | 2,19 | 0,83 | 13840 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A1c.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Functioning' subconcept and items as proposed by Charalampi et al. (2018).

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Functioning | 0,86 | | 35,34 | 11,09 | 13840 |
| | | Fun1 | 1,95 | 0,87 | 13840 |
| | | Fun2 | 2,74 | 1,07 | 13840 |
| | | Fun3 | 2,19 | 0,82 | 13840 |
| | | Fun4 | 2,51 | 1,83 | 13840 |
| | | Fun5 | 2,64 | 1,91 | 13840 |
| | | Fun6 | 2,81 | 1,95 | 13840 |
| | | Fun7 | 2,03 | 0,75 | 13840 |
| | | Fun8 | 2,93 | 2,09 | 13840 |
| | | Fun9 | 2,26 | 0,93 | 13840 |
| | | Fun10 | 2,10 | 0,71 | 13840 |
| | | Fun11 | 2,15 | 0,80 | 13840 |
| | | Fun12 | 2,41 | 1,10 | 13840 |
| | | Fun13 | 2,60 | 1,04 | 13840 |
| | | Fun14 | 4,02 | 2,02 | 13840 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A1d.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Vitality' subconcept and items as proposed by Charalampi et al. (2018).

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vitality | 0,70 | | 7,42 | 2,33 | 13840 |
| | | Vit1 | 1,69 | 0,79 | 13840 |
| | | Vit2 | 1,77 | 0,85 | 13840 |
| | | Vit3 | 1,60 | 0,73 | 13840 |
| | | Vit4 | 2,35 | 0,86 | 13840 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A1e.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Community well-being' subconcept and items as proposed by Charalampi et al. (2018).

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community well-being | 0,68 | | 18,68 | 6,62 | 13840 |
| | | Comwb1 | 4,83 | 2,40 | 13840 |
| | | Comwb2 | 4,27 | 2,25 | 13840 |
| | | Comwb3 | 4,91 | 2,27 | 13840 |
| | | Comwb4 | 2,25 | 1,53 | 13840 |
| | | Comwb5 | 2,41 | 0,95 | 13840 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A1f.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Supportive relationships' subconcept and items as proposed by Charalampi et al. (2018).

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Supportive relationships | 0,60 | | 11,01 | 4,22 | 13840 |
| | | Sur1 | 3,22 | 1,44 | 13840 |
| | | Sur2 | 2,15 | 1,73 | 13840 |
| | | Sur3 | 0,97 | 1,18 | 13840 |
| | | Sur4 | 1,43 | 0,72 | 13840 |
| | | Sur5 | 3,24 | 1,59 | 13840 |

Note: item 'Sur5' (*"How often socially meet with friends, relatives or colleagues?"*) was added in trying to improve Cronbach's alpha for this scale.
Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A2a.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Negative characteristics' subconcept and items.

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Negative characteristics | 0,84 | | 11,38 | 3,78 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb1 | 1,61 | 0,71 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb2 | 1,51 | 0,71 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb5 | 1,65 | 0,75 | 13840 |
| | | Vi1 | 1,74 | 0,82 | 13840 |
| | | Vi2 | 1,77 | 0,85 | 13840 |
| | | Vi3 | 1,63 | 0,74 | 13840 |
| | | Sur4 | 1,46 | 0,74 | 13840 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A2b.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Specific functioning' subconcept and items.

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Specific functioning | 0,91 | | 7,97 | 5,51 | 13840 |
| | | Fun4 | 2,54 | 1,95 | 13840 |
| | | Fun5 | 2,62 | 2,00 | 13840 |
| | | Fun6 | 2,81 | 2,06 | 13840 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A2c.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Evaluative functioning and characteristics' subconcept and items.

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Evaluative functioning and characteristics | 0,83 | | 6,11 | 4,17 | 13840 |
| | | Evwb1 | 3,23 | 2,40 | 13840 |
| | | Evwb2 | 2,88 | 2,10 | 13840 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A2d.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Negative characteristics' subconcept and items.

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| General functioning | 0,76 | | 12,75 | 3,41 | 13840 |
| | | Fun1 | 1,98 | 0,89 | 13840 |
| | | Fun3 | 2,23 | 0,85 | 13840 |
| | | Fun7 | 2,04 | 0,78 | 13840 |
| | | Fun9 | 2,26 | 0,95 | 13840 |
| | | Fun10 | 2,11 | 0,75 | 13840 |
| | | Fun11 | 2,11 | 0,81 | 13840 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A2e.** Scale reliability analysis results on the 'Negative characteristics' subconcept and items.

| Scale | Cronbach's α (standardised) | Item (var. name) | Mean | Std. Deviation | Valid N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive characteristics | 0,79 | | 8,82 | 2,64 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb3 | 2,13 | 0,86 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb4 | 2,11 | 0,82 | 13840 |
| | | Emwb6 | 2,21 | 0,83 | 13840 |
| | | Vi4 | 2,36 | 0,87 | 13840 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A3.** ESS survey questions and statements used to measure subjective individual well-being.

| Subconcepts and ESS items | Scale |
|---|---|
| *Negative characteristics* | |
| How much of the time during the past week you felt sad? | 1-4 |
| … you felt depressed? | 1-4 |
| … you felt anxious? | 1-4 |
| … you felt that everything you did was an effort? | 1-4 |
| … your sleep was restless? | 1-4 |
| … you could not get going? | 1-4 |
| … you felt lonely? | 1-4 |
| *Specific functioning* | |
| How much of the time would you generally say you are interested in what you are doing? | 0-10 |
| … absorbed in what you are doing? | 0-10 |
| … enthusiastic about what you are doing? | 0-10 |
| *Evaluative well-being* | 0-10 |
| All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays? | 0-10 |
| Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are? | 0-10 |
| *General functioning* | |
| I feel am free to decide for myself how I live my life. | 1-5 |
| Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do. | 1-5 |
| In generally I feel that what I do in my life is valuable and worthwhile. | 1-5 |
| I'm always optimistic about my future. | 1-5 |
| There are a lot of things I feel I am good at. | 1-5 |
| In general I feel very positive about myself. | 1-5 |
| *Positive characteristics* | |
| How much of the time during the past week you enjoyed life? | 1-4 |
| … you were happy? | 1-5 |
| … you felt calm and peaceful? | 1-5 |
| … you had a lot of energy? | 1-5 |

Source: European Social Survey (2012)

**Table A4.** Steps taken in the conceptualisation and measurement of subjective individual well-being.

| Step | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | The initial SIWB conceptualisation, its measurement and two subconcepts 'positive characteristics' and 'positive functioning' are established based on the work of Huppert and So (2013) and Ruggeri et al. (2020). |
| 2 | Scale reliability checks and factor analyses are conducted. The conceptualisation and measurement mentioned in Step 1 are rejected following these tests. |
| 3 | Following Charalampi et al. (2018), all relevant items in Round 6 of the European Social Survey are considered. Charalampi et al. test over 30 items that are expected to belong to six scales ('subconcepts' in the wording of this thesis). |
| 4 | Scale reliability check on the six scales. The results are not satisfactory enough. |
| 5 | The scale 'Community well-being' is dropped for theoretical reasons. |
| 6 | A factor analysis is conducted on the five remaining scales. This results in eight items being dropped. |
| 7 | Another factor analysis confirms the loading of the 22 items on 5 scales. |
| 8 | The in Step 7 created scales are subjected to a scale reliability check, which yields stable results. |
| 9 | Loosely based on Huppert and So (2013), Ruggeri et al. (2020) and Charalampi et al. (2018), the five subconcepts of SIWB are labelled. |
| 10 | Factor scores are extracted for each factor (subconcept, scale) to create an index for each subconcept. |
| 11 | The indices of the subconcept are all rescaled to a 0-100 index. |
| 12 | The factor scores are multiplied by the proportion of explained variance of its factor to create the SIWB Index. |
| 13 | The SIWB Index is rescaled to a 0-100 index as well. |

**Table A5.** Number of cases per decile in the SIWB Index and the five subindices.

| Index | Decile | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| SIWB | 1643 | 5048 | 3690 | 1988 | 869 | 337 | 179 | 64 | 16 | 6 |
| Negative Characteristics | 3807 | 4086 | 2693 | 1880 | 676 | 354 | 193 | 95 | 42 | 14 |
| Specific Functioning | 1517 | 2867 | 4287 | 2722 | 1372 | 668 | 243 | 108 | 30 | 26 |
| Evaluative well-being | 392 | 2847 | 4838 | 2817 | 1421 | 822 | 411 | 185 | 87 | 20 |
| General Functioning | 858 | 2472 | 5546 | 2990 | 1273 | 534 | 177 | 62 | 20 | 8 |
| Positive Characteristics | 1366 | 1882 | 3109 | 3248 | 1670 | 1446 | 685 | 283 | 118 | 33 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A6.** Correlation matrix for the SIWB Index and the five subindices.

| Index | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. SIWB | – | | | | | |
| 2. Negative Characteristics | 0,95*** | – | | | | |
| 3. Specific Functioning | 0,53*** | 0,31*** | – | | | |
| 4. Evaluative Well-being | 0,58*** | 0,47*** | 0,22*** | – | | |
| 5. General Functioning | 0,74*** | 0,60*** | 0,56*** | 0,41*** | – | |
| 6. Positive Characteristics | 0,83*** | 0,75*** | 0,38*** | 0,51*** | 0,68*** | – |

***p<0,01

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A7.** Frequency distribution for 'Society-centred discontent'.

| | Disagree strongly | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Agree strongly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *N* | 320 | 2934 | 2916 | 5310 | 2360 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A8.** Frequency distribution for 'Status threat'.

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *N* | 159 | 336 | 1880 | 3011 | 2806 | 3210 | 1165 | 758 | 312 | 138 | 65 |

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A9.** Logistic regression analyses on populist party support, for evaluation of Hypothesis 1, with control variables included.

| Model | 1 | | A1 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Odds | Coeff. | Odds |
| Constant | -2,030*** | 0,131 | -0,855*** | 0,425 |
| | (0,047) | | (0,351) | |
| SIWB | 0,016*** | 1,016 | 0,005*** | 1,005 |
| | (0,002) | | (0,002) | |
| Age | | | -0,012*** | 0,988 |
| | | | (0,002) | |
| Gender | | | | |
| Female | | | Reference | |
| Male | | | 0,137*** | 1,147 |
| | | | (0,049) | |
| Education | | | | |
| Tertiary | | | Reference | |
| Other | | | 0,637*** | 1,891 |
| | | | (0,066) | |
| Employment | | | | |
| Other | | | Reference | |
| Unemployed | | | -0,036 | 0,965 |
| | | | (0,058) | |
| Income | | | -0,061*** | 0,941 |
| | | | (0,010) | |
| Religion | | | | |
| Other | | | Reference | |
| Religious | | | 0,147*** | 1,158 |
| | | | (0,052) | |
| Residential | | | | |
| Other | | | Reference | |
| Rural | | | 0,101** | 1,106 |
| | | | (0,051) | |
| Ideology | | | 0,129*** | 1,138 |
| | | | (0,010) | |
| GDP | | | 0,000*** | 1,000 |
| | | | (0,000) | |
| Gini | | | 0,008 | 1,008 |
| | | | (0,009) | |
| Net migration | | | 0,000*** | 1,000 |
| | | | (0,000) | |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 0,6% | | 8,4% | |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 1,1% | | 14,3% | |
| Log-likelihood | 12155,249 | | 11032,783 | |

*N* = 13840
Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6; World Bank

**Table A10.** Logistic regression analyses on populist party support, for evaluation of Hypothesis 2, with control variables included.

| Model | A2 | A3 | A4 | A5 | A6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Coeff. | Coeff. | Coeff. | Coeff. |
| Constant | -0,621* | -0,609* | -0,728** | -0,869** | -0,636* |
| | (0,352) | (0,349) | (0,350) | (0,349) | (0,351) |
| General F. | -0,001 | | | | -0,006** |
| | (0,002) | | | | (0,003) |
| Specific F. | | -0,002 | | | -0,002 |
| | | (0,002) | | | (0,002) |
| Positive C. | | | 0,001 | | -0,002 |
| | | | (0,001) | | (0,002) |
| Negative C. | | | | 0,006*** | 0,011*** |
| | | | | (0,002) | (0,002) |
| Age | -0,012*** | -0,012*** | -0,012*** | -0,012*** | -0,012*** |
| | (0,002) | (0,002) | (0,002) | (0,002) | (0,002) |
| Gender | 0,128*** | 0,129*** | 0,130*** | 0,143*** | 0,149*** |
| | (0,049) | (0,049) | (0,049) | (0,049) | (0,049) |
| Education | 0,651*** | 0,652*** | 0,646*** | 0,636*** | 0,642*** |
| | (0,066) | (0,066) | (0,066) | (0,066) | (0,066) |
| Employment | -0,022 | -0,021 | -0,026 | -0,039 | -0,025 |
| | (0,058) | (0,058) | (0,057) | (0,058) | (0,057) |
| Income | -0,067*** | -0,067*** | -0,065*** | -0,061*** | -0,060*** |
| | (0,010) | (0,010) | (0,010) | (0,010) | (0,010) |
| Religion | 0,145*** | 0,147*** | 0,147*** | 0,146*** | 0,144*** |
| | (0,052) | (0,052) | (0,052) | (0,052) | (0,052) |
| Residential | 0,095* | 0,093* | 0,097* | 0,102** | 0,091* |
| | (0,051) | (0,051) | (0,051) | (0,051) | (0,051) |
| Ideology | 0,125*** | 0,125*** | 0,127*** | 0,129*** | 0,125*** |
| | (0,010) | (0,010) | (0,010) | (0,010) | (0,010) |
| GDP | 0,000*** | 0,000*** | 0,000*** | 0,000*** | 0,000*** |
| | (0,000) | (0,000) | (0,000) | (0,000) | (0,000) |
| Gini | 0,009 | 0,009 | 0,009 | 0,008 | 0,007 |
| | (0,009) | (0,009) | (0,009) | (0,009) | (0,009) |
| Net migration | 0,000*** | 0,000*** | 0,000*** | 0,000*** | 0,000*** |
| | (0,000) | (0,000) | (0,000) | (0,000) | (0,000) |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 8,3% | 8,3% | 8,3% | 8,4% | 8,5% |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 14,2% | 14,2% | 14,2% | 14,3% | 14,5% |
| Log-likelihood | 11040,379 | 11039,477 | 11039,944 | 11027,790 | 11107,288 |

*N* = 13840
Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6; World Bank
Note: F. = Functioning; C. = Characteristics

**Table A11.** Logistic regression analyses on populist party support (Models A7 and A9) and society-centred discontent (Model A8), for evaluation of Hypothesis 3, including control variables.

| Model | A7 | | A8 | | A9 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Coefficients | Odds | Coefficients | Odds | Coefficients | Odds |
| Constant | -0,855** | 0,425 | 2,973*** | 19,550 | -1,853*** | 0,157 |
| | (0,351) | | (0,120) | | (0,359) | |
| SIWB | 0,005*** | 1,005 | 0,011*** | 1,011 | 0,002*** | 1,002 |
| | (0,002) | | (0,001) | | (0,002) | |
| Society-centred discontent | | | | | 0,303*** | 1,354 |
| | | | | | (0,027) | |
| Age | -0,012*** | 0,988 | 0,003*** | 1,003 | -0,013*** | 0,987 |
| | (0,002) | | (0,001) | | (0,002) | |
| Gender | 0,137*** | 1,147 | -0,023 | 0,977 | 0,140*** | 1,150 |
| | (0,049) | | (0,016) | | (0,050) | |
| Education | 0,637*** | 1,891 | 0,254*** | 1,289 | 0,571*** | 1,770 |
| | (0,066) | | (0,120) | | (0,067) | |
| Employment | -0,036 | 0,965 | 0,008 | 1,008 | -0,032 | 0,969 |
| | (0,058) | | (0,019) | | (0,058) | |
| Income | -0,061*** | 0,941 | -0,031*** | 0,969 | -0,051*** | 0,950 |
| | (0,010) | | (0,003) | | (0,010) | |
| Religion | 0,147*** | 1,158 | 0,012*** | 1,012 | 0,133** | 1,142 |
| | (0,052) | | (0,017) | | (0,052) | |
| Residential | 0,101** | 1,106 | 0,102*** | 1,107 | 0,074 | 1,077 |
| | (0,051) | | (0,017) | | (0,051) | |
| Ideology | 0,129*** | 1,138 | -0,030*** | 0,970 | 0,138*** | 1,148 |
| | (0,010) | | (0,003) | | (0,010) | |
| GDP | 0,000*** | 1,000 | 0,000*** | 1,000 | 0,000*** | 1,000 |
| | (0,000) | | (0,000) | | (0,000) | |
| Gini | 0,008 | 1,008 | 0,038*** | 1,039 | -0,001 | 0,999 |
| | (0,009) | | (0,003) | | (0,009) | |
| Net migration | 0,000*** | 1,000 | 0,000*** | 1,000 | 0,000*** | 1,000 |
| | (0,000) | | (0,000) | | (0,000) | |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | | | | | 9,2% | |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | | | | | 15,8% | |
| Log-likelihood | | | | | 10901,4155 | |

*N* = 13840

Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses.

*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01

Source: European Social Survey Round 6; World Bank

**Table A12.** Logistic regression analyses on populist party support, for evaluation of Hypothesis 4a, with control variables.

| Model | A10 | |
|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Odds |
| Constant | -1,962***<br>(0,391) | 0,141 |
| SIWB | 0,011**<br>(0,005) | 1,011 |
| Relative deprivation | 0,369**<br>(0,061) | 1,446 |
| SIWB*Relative deprivation | 0,004***<br>(0,002) | 1,045 |
| Age | -0,011***<br>(0,002) | 0,989 |
| Gender | 0,147***<br>(0,050) | 1,158 |
| Education | 0,605***<br>(0,066) | 1,831 |
| Employment | -0,044<br>(0,058) | 0,957 |
| Income | -0,028**<br>(0,011) | 0,972 |
| Religion | 0,144***<br>(0,052) | 1,155 |
| Residential | 0,109**<br>(0,051) | 1,115 |
| Ideology | 0,133***<br>(0,010) | 1,142 |
| GDP | 0,000***<br>(0,000) | 1,000 |
| Gini | 0,005<br>(0,009) | 1,005 |
| Net migration | 0,000***<br>(0,000) | 1,000 |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 8,8% | |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 14,9% | |
| Log-likelihood | 10968,579 | |

*N* = 13840
Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6; World Bank

**Table A13.** Logistic regression analyses on populist party support, for evaluation of Hypothesis 4b. Model A11 includes the control variables.

| Model | 11 | | A11 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Odds | Coeff. | Odds |
| Constant | -3,116*** | 0,044 | -1,722*** | 0,179 |
| | (0,130) | | (0,378) | |
| SIWB | 0,024*** | 1,024 | 0,020*** | 1,020 |
| | (0,005) | | (0,005) | |
| Status threat | 0,303*** | 1,353 | 0,195*** | 1,215 |
| | (0,027) | | (0,001) | |
| SIWB*Status | -0,004*** | 1,000 | -0,004*** | 0,996 |
| threat | (0,001) | | (0,001) | |
| Age | | | -0,012*** | 0,988 |
| | | | (0,002) | |
| Gender | | | 0,134*** | 1,143 |
| | | | (0,050) | |
| Education | | | 0,579*** | 1,784 |
| | | | (0,067) | |
| Employment | | | -0,039 | 0,962 |
| | | | (0,058) | |
| Income | | | -0,049*** | 0,952 |
| | | | (0,010) | |
| Religion | | | 0,155*** | 1,168 |
| | | | (0,052) | |
| Residential | | | 0,099* | 1,104 |
| | | | (0,051) | |
| Ideology | | | 0,135*** | 1,145 |
| | | | (0,010) | |
| GDP | | | 0,000*** | 1,000 |
| | | | (0,000) | |
| Gini | | | 0,003 | 1,003 |
| | | | (0,009) | |
| Net migration | | | 0,000*** | 1,000 |
| | | | (0,000) | |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 2,2% | | 8,7% | |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 3,7% | | 14,9% | |
| Log-likelihood | 11943,639 | | 10981,275 | |

*N* = 13840

Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses.

*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01

Source: European Social Survey Round 6; World Bank

**Table A14.** Logistic regression analysis results with all ESS items used to construct the SIWB Index. Model A12.

| Variables | Coeff. | Odds |
|---|---|---|
| Constant | -1,640*** | 0,194 |
| | (0,306) | |
| Emwb1 | 0,018 | 1,018 |
| | (0,047) | |
| Emwb2 | 0,121** | 1,128 |
| | (0,047) | |
| Emwb5 | 0,208*** | 1,231 |
| | (0,039) | |
| Vi1 | 0,007 | 1,007 |
| | (0,036) | |
| Vi2 | -0,007 | 0,993 |
| | (0,032) | |
| Vi3 | 0,112*** | 1,119 |
| | (0,039) | |
| Sur4 | -0,043 | 0,958 |
| | (0,040) | |
| Fun4 | -0,052** | 0,950 |
| | (0,021) | |
| Fun5 | 0,068*** | 1,071 |
| | (0,021) | |
| Fun6 | 0,009 | 1,009 |
| | (0,021) | |
| Evwb1 | -0,065*** | 0,937 |
| | (0,015) | |
| Evwb2 | -0,110*** | 0,896 |
| | (0,019) | |
| Fun1 | 0,064** | 1,067 |
| | (0,030) | |
| Fun3 | -0,046 | 0,955 |
| | (0,037) | |
| Fun7 | 0,004 | 1,004 |
| | (0,039) | |
| Fun9 | -0,014 | 0,986 |
| | (0,032) | |
| Fun10 | -0,083** | 0,920 |
| | (0,039) | |
| Fun11 | -0,103*** | 0,902 |
| | (0,037) | |
| Emwb3 | -0,046 | 0,955 |
| | (0,038) | |
| Emwb4 | 0,075* | 1,078 |
| | (0,041) | |
| Emwb6 | 0,120*** | 1,127 |
| | (0,036) | |
| Vi4 | 0,141*** | 1,151 |
| | (0,034) | |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 2,4% | |

**Table A14 (cont.).** Logistic regression analysis results with all ESS items used to construct the SIWB Index. Model A12.

| | |
|---|---|
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 4,1% |
| Log-likelihood | 11900,547 |

*N* = 13840
Coeff. Unstandardised coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Table A15.** Logistic regression analyses on populist party support, for evaluation of Hypothesis 2. Robustness check. Averaged indices.

| Model | A13a | A13b | A14a | A14b |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Coeff. | Coeff. | Coeff. |
| Constant | -1,737*** | 0,218 | -1,995*** | -0,011 |
| | (0,062) | (0,384) | (0,052) | (0,382) |
| Functioning | 0,004* | -0,002 | | |
| | (0,002) | (0,002) | | |
| Characteristics | | | 0,013*** | 0,006*** |
| | | | (0,002) | (0,002) |
| Age | | -0,017*** | | -0,017*** |
| | | (0,002) | | (0,002) |
| Gender | | | | |
| Female | | Reference | | Reference |
| Male | | 0,147*** | | 0,152*** |
| | | (0,054) | | (0,054) |
| Education | | | | |
| Tertiary | | Reference | | Reference |
| Other | | 0,619*** | | 0,608*** |
| | | (0,070) | | (0,070) |
| Employment | | | | |
| Other | | Reference | | Reference |
| Unemployed | | 0,057 | | 0,046 |
| | | (0,066) | | (0,066) |
| Income | | -0,065*** | | -0,061*** |
| | | (0,011) | | (0,011) |
| Religion | | | | |
| Other | | Reference | | Reference |
| Religious | | 0,201*** | | 0,201*** |
| | | (0,057) | | (0,057) |
| Residential | | | | |
| Other | | Reference | | Reference |
| Rural | | 0,051 | | 0,055 |
| | | (0,055) | | (0,055) |
| Ideology | | 0,123*** | | 0,127*** |
| | | (0,010) | | (0,010) |
| GDP | | 0,000*** | | 0,000*** |
| | | (0,000) | | (0,000) |
| Gini | | 0,002 | | 0,002 |
| | | (0,009) | | (0,009) |
| Net migration | | 0,000*** | | 0,000*** |
| | | (0,000) | | (0,000) |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 0,0% | 9,8% | 0,6% | 9,8% |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 0,0% | 16,6% | 1,0% | 16,6% |
| Log-likelihood | 10387,079 | 9188,152 | 10324,219 | 9185,630 |

$N$ = 13840

Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses.

*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01

Source: European Social Survey Round 6; World Bank

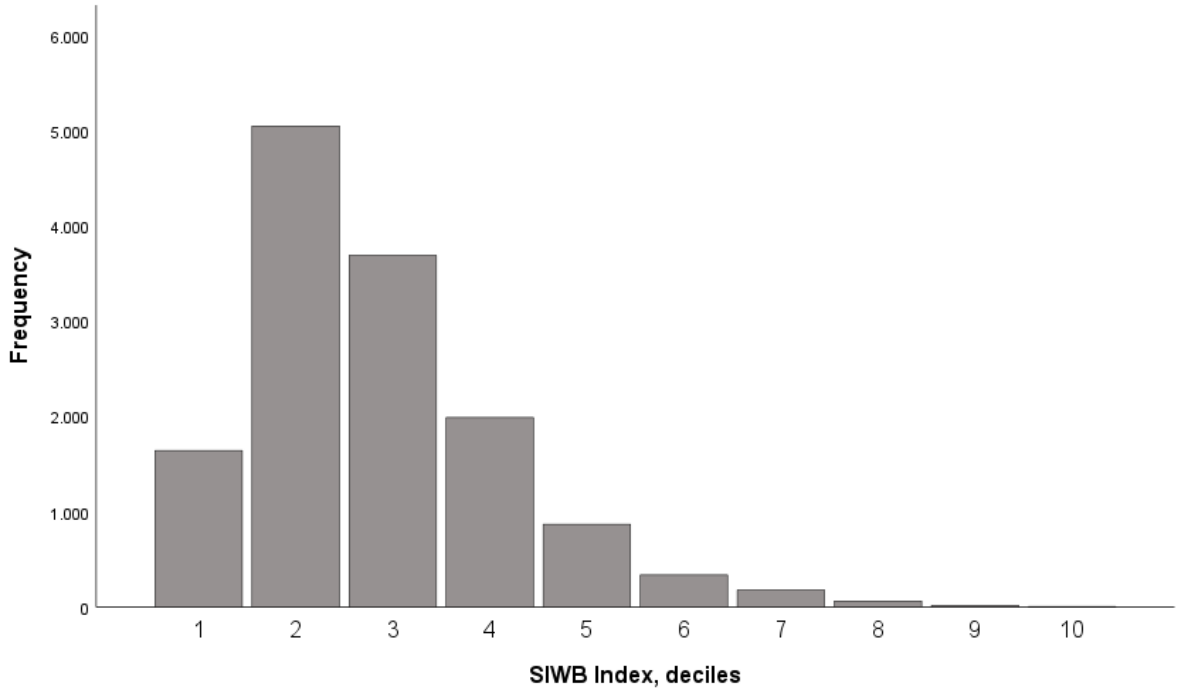
**Table A16.** Logistic regression analyses on voting for a populist party (robustness check).

| Model | A15a | | A15b | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Coeff. | Odds | Coeff. | Odds |
| Constant | -2,099*** | 0,123 | 0,415** | 1,514 |
| | (0,051) | | (0,185) | |
| SIWB | 0,020*** | 1,020 | 0,006*** | 1,006 |
| | (0,002) | | (0,002) | |
| Age | | | -0,016*** | |
| | | | (0,002) | |
| Gender | | | | |
| Female | | | Reference | |
| Male | | | 0,222*** | |
| | | | (0,054) | |
| Education | | | | |
| Tertiary | | | Reference | |
| Other | | | 0,550*** | |
| | | | (0,070) | |
| Employment | | | | |
| Other | | | Reference | |
| Unemployed | | | 0,028 | |
| | | | (0,067) | |
| Income | | | -0,069*** | |
| | | | (0,011) | |
| Religion | | | | |
| Other | | | Reference | |
| Religious | | | 0,195*** | |
| | | | (0,058) | |
| Residential | | | | |
| Other | | | Reference | |
| Rural | | | 0,077 | |
| | | | (0,056) | |
| Ideology | | | 0,127*** | |
| | | | (0,011) | |
| GDP | | | 0,000*** | |
| | | | (0,000) | |
| Gini | | | -0,003 | |
| | | | (0,009) | |
| Net migration | | | 0,000*** | |
| | | | (0,000) | |
| $R^2$ (Cox & Snell) | 1,0% | | 11,1% | |
| $R^2$ (Nagelkerke) | 1,7% | | 18,7% | |
| Log-likelihood | 10341,362 | | 9088,273 | |

*N* = 11690.
Coeff. unstandardised coefficient; Standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Source: European Social Survey Round 6; World Bank

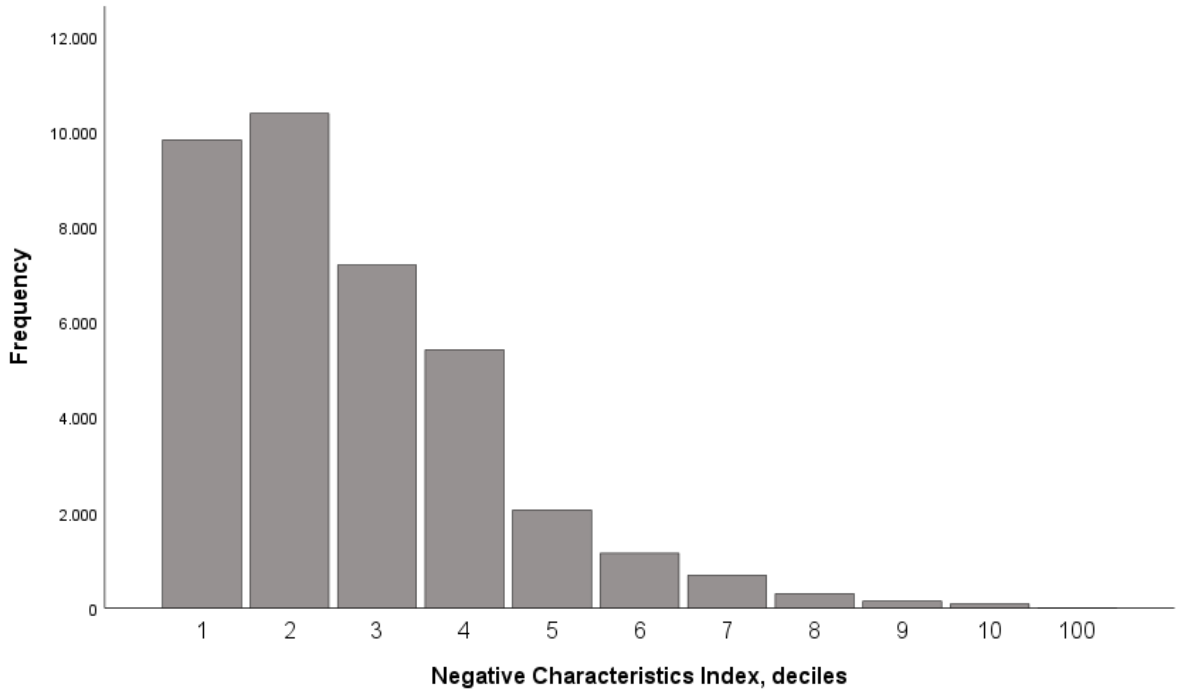
## B: Additional figures

**Figure B1.** Frequency table for the SIWB Index (deciles).



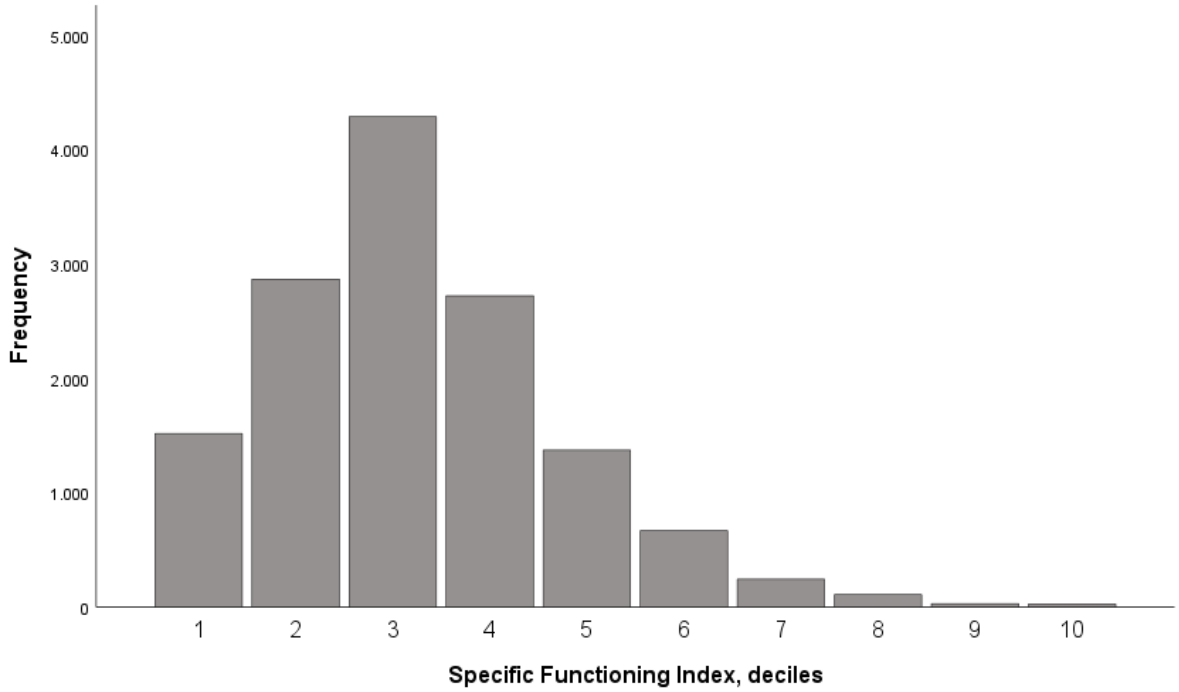

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Figure B2.** Frequency table for the Negative Characteristics Index (deciles).



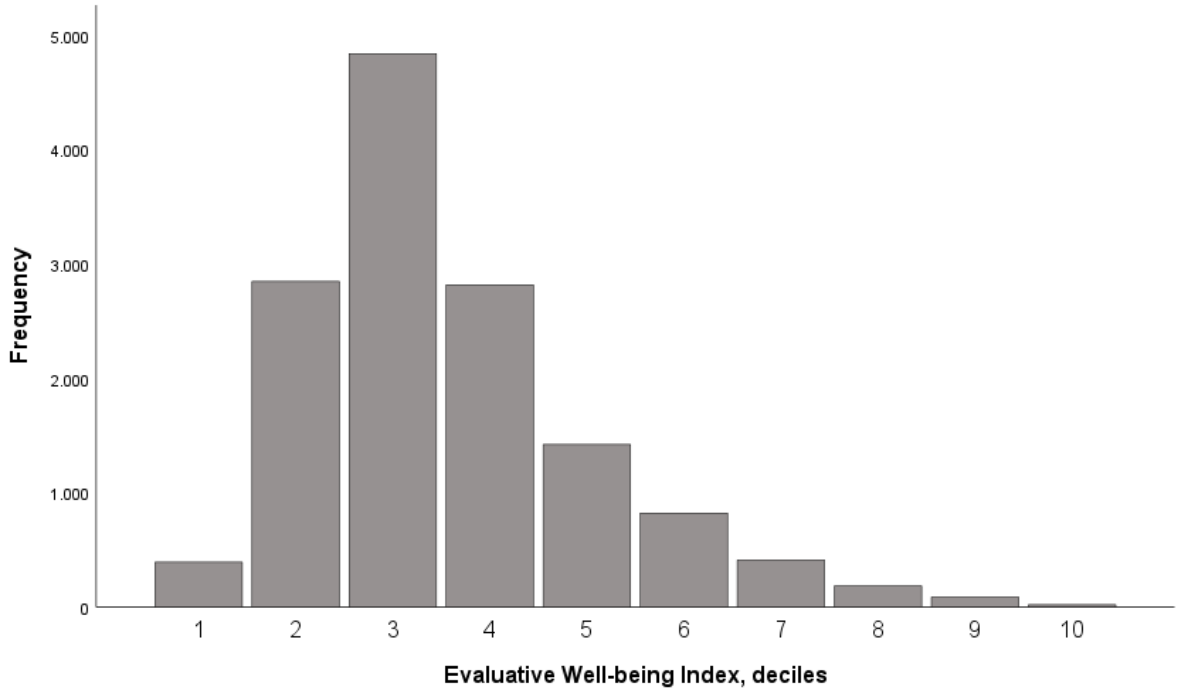

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Figure B3.** Frequency table for the Specific Functioning Index (deciles).



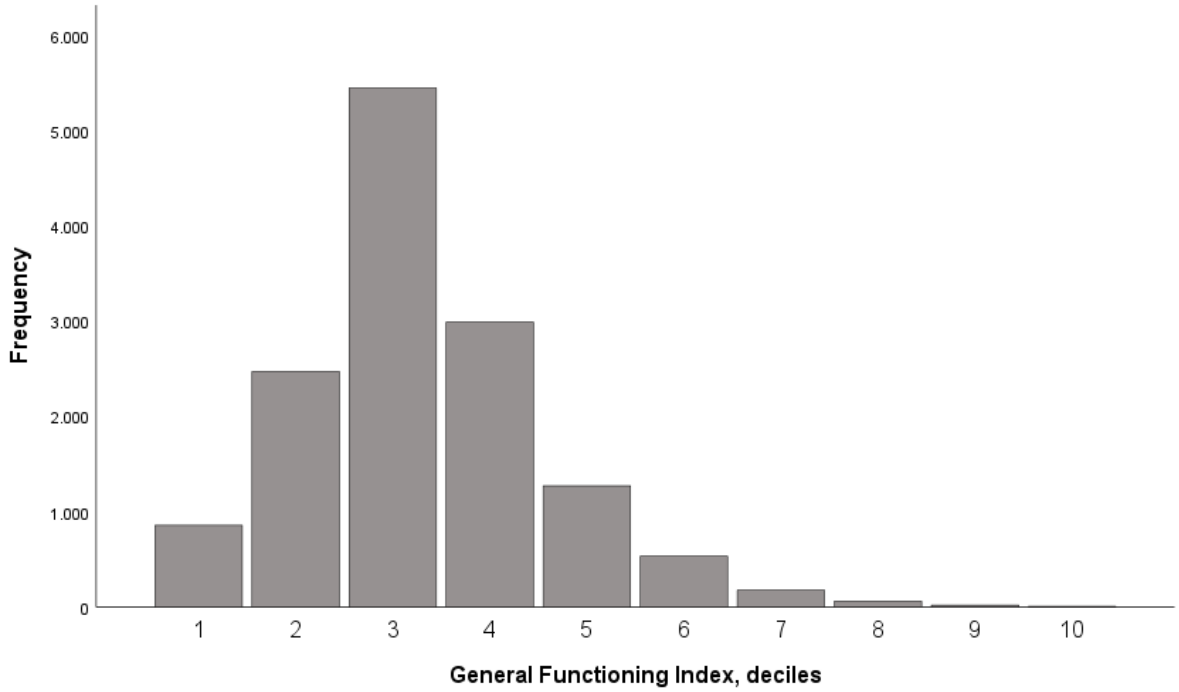

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Figure B4.** Frequency table for the Evaluative Well-being Index (deciles).



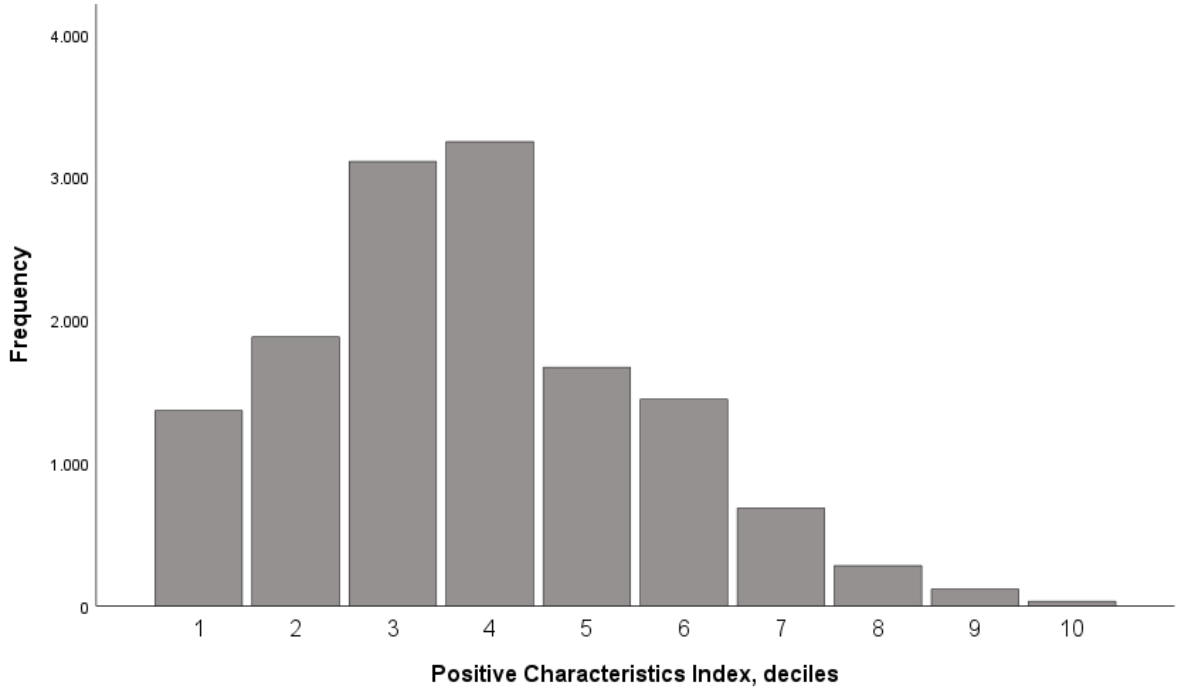

Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Figure B5.** Frequency table for the General Functioning Index (deciles).




Source: European Social Survey Round 6

**Figure B6.** Frequency table for the Positive Characteristics Index (deciles).




Source: European Social Survey Round 6

## C: Assumption checks

In this part of the appendix, the assumption checks are conducted and the results presented.

The first assumption is independence of errors. It can be assumed that this assumption is not violated, because the data used by this study is not measured across several time-points and neither does the European Social Survey survey the same individual multiple times.

The second assumption is that of the existence of linearity to the logit. This assumption is tested by performing a Box-Tidwell test on the continuous predictor variables used in this study. This is done by transforming these variables. The logarithm of a variable is taken and multiplied by the original variable. Because the transformed variables are non-significant, the assumption is met.

The third assumption is that no issues with multicollinearity are present. The results are presented in Table C1 (all variables) and Table C2 (four SIWB subindices together for assessing Hypothesis 2). As no VIF scores exceed 5, it can be assumed that no problematic multicollinearity is likely to be present in the independent and control variables.

**Table C1.** Multicollinearity diagnostics (VIF scores) for all of the variables.

| Variable | VIF |
|---|---|
| | Main independent variables |
| SIWB Index | 3,070 |
| Positive Characteristics Index | 3,066 |
| Negative Characteristics Index | 3,249 |
| General Functioning Index | 2,462 |
| Specific Functioning Index | 1,564 |
| Society-centred discontent | 1,354 |
| Status threat | 1,600 |
| | Control variables |
| Age | 1,271 |
| Gender | 1,039 |
| Education | 1,186 |
| Employment | 1,457 |
| Income | 1,445 |
| Religion | 1,092 |
| Residential | 1,040 |
| Ideology | 1,071 |
| GDP | 1,843 |
| Gini | 1,599 |
| Net migration | 1,209 |

*N* = 13840

Source: European Social Survey Round 6; World Bank

**Table C2.** Multicollinearity diagnostics (VIF scores) for all of the variables that are used to assess Hypothesis 2.

| Variable | VIF |
|---|---|
| Positive Characteristics Index | 2,800 |
| Negative Characteristics Index | 2,374 |
| General Functioning Index | 2,368 |
| Specific Functioning Index | 1,454 |

*N* = 13840
Source: European Social Survey Round 6

The fourth assumption is that no extreme or influential outliers are present. This is done by creating box plots and investigating the values. The assumption is met after excluding a small amount of outliers from the analysis.

Finally, because the survey data used in this study consists of individuals in several countries, the possibility of having clustered standard errors is something to look out for. To account for this potential issue, the generalised estimating equations approach is used (see Huang, 2021). This will be done exclusively for the analysis of Hypothesis 1 – the main association between subjective individual well-being and populist party support, as this is the most important hypothesis. The results are displayed in Table C3 below (Model C1). It can be concluded that the expected statistically significant correlation between SIWB and populist party support has remained. However, the effect has become less strong. Re-stating one of the recommendations for further research: future studies should focus on cross-country differences.

**Table C3.** Logistic regression analysis on populist party support, estimated with Generalised Estimating Equations (GEE). Model C1.

| Variables | Coeff. | Odds |
|---|---|---|
| Constant | -1,531*** | 0,216 |
| | (0,345) | |
| SIWB | 0,007*** | 1,007 |
| | (0,007) | |

*N* = 13840
Coeff. Unstandardised coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses.
*p<0,1 **p<0,05 ***p<0,01
Log-likelihood and $R^2$ statistics not available for this model.
Source: European Social Survey Round 6