1. Abstract

This study analyzes the relationship between nostalgia and populism. Many populists around the world exploit nostalgia by referring to the good, glorious days of their country and complain about the devastating role of the establishment. By using structural equation modeling (SEM) and the survey data from Turkey, this study questions whether there is a positive relationship between nostalgic attitudes and populist values. The results confirm the expected relationship between nostalgia and populism. The findings also indicate that partisanship is the primary driving factor that shapes the attitudes and values of respondents except for nostalgia. Finally, while populists are less supportive of the European Union (EU) membership, anti-immigration appears as insignificant contrary to the European cases.

2. Introduction

“I do not want to crumble under stress, quotas, and standards, but simply to work, as did my father and grandfather before me. I need the help of Marine” says a French fisherman in one of the presidential campaign ad of Marine Le Pen. We do not know whether fishery was easier before the quotas and standards of the EU. We also do not know whether the fisherman’s father and grandfather did simply work without struggling with other events. What we know is the promise of a populist leader for taking power from the EU elites and give it back to the ordinary fishermen, as it was in the past.

One can multiply the examples of the nostalgic rhetoric of the populist leaders. Donald Trump’s slogan “Make America Great Again” implies the good, glorious days of the United States (US) and the American society “in which there was a clear order, non-whites and women ‘knew their place,’

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and white working-class males made a decent living doing an honest day’s work” (Mudde, 2016). For Prime Minister Viktor Orban, “Hungary hadn’t been able to influence the fate of the Carpathian Basin since 1920 … but now, thanks to the achievements of the last seven years, Hungary plays a central role in the region” (Kovács, 2017), implying how the Treaty of Trianon hijacked the power of Hungary. The FIDESZ government adopted the June 4 as the “Day of National Cohesion” in 2010 which is the 90th anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon to remember the glorious days of Hungary in the past. Foundation of the Trianon Museum in Várpalota and the revision of curriculum are other attempts of the Orban era’s commemoration practices (Petö, 2016).

Things are not different in Turkey. The populist Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) is dominating the Turkish politics and similar to the previous cases, they commonly exploit the nostalgic rhetoric. The AKP governments frequently emphasize the good, glorious days of the Ottoman and Seljukian Empires during the public ceremonies and as political discourse. They continuously assert the rise of “the New Turkey” with the slogans like “Resurrection once again, rise once again” (Yeniden diriliş, yeniden yükseliş) which means once the country was glorious and strong in the past and will be glorious and strong again.

Following these examples, this study questions the relationship between nostalgia and populism. Many populists around the world exploit nostalgia by referring to the good, glorious days of their country. Populists frequently emphasize the “elites” hijacked “the people’s will” a long time ago, and they offer “bringing the power back to the people.” Back in the good old days, the corrupt elites were not powerful enough to abuse the authentic people. However, now, there are many regulations and institutions hinder the people to use their authority. Populists exploit nostalgia for building their populist heartland which corresponds to a retrospectively constructed utopia on an abandoned but undead past (Taggart, 2004; Bauman, 2017).
In this study, my aim is to analyze the link between nostalgic attitudes and populist values. For this aim, I use the survey data from Turkey, a country which has been ruling by a robust populist party – AKP – for more than 15 years. I used SEM for the analysis which is a powerful tool to test the model fit, to build latent variables, and to examine the regression results all at once. Three essential results appear: Firstly, the results confirm the positive relationship between populism and nostalgia. Secondly, partisanship appears as a driving factor of the attitudes except for nostalgia. Last but not the least, while pro-EU individuals are less populist, views on immigration has no significant impact on the populist attitudes.

So far, the literature on populism covered the qualitative case studies (e.g. Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Weyland, 2001; Taggart, 1995), the populist political communication (e.g. March, 2017; Hameleers et al. 2017; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011), and the survey studies (e.g. Akkerman et al. 2013; Stanley, 2011; Rooduijn et al. 2017; van Hauwaert & van Kessel, 2017). However, there are few studies testing the psychological determinants of populism such as declinism (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016), emotions (Rico et al. 2017), personality traits (Bakker et al. 2016), societal pessimism (Steenvoorden & Harteveld, 2017), and political identities (Melendez & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). This study aims to make further contributions to the literature on psychological factors that are shaping the populist attitudes.

Previous studies touched upon the relationship between nostalgia and populism without conducting empirical tests. For Betz and Johnson (2004, p. 324) right-wing populism is “a backward-looking reactionary ideology, reflecting a deep sense of nostalgia for the good old days.” According to MacRae (1969, pp. 156 & 163), populism is against rootlessness, a belief in community, anti-elitism, and in search for a mythical past to regenerate the present. Similarly, Wiles (1969, p. 170) also argued that populism is “fundamentally nostalgic. Disliking the present and the immediate future, it seeks to mold the further future in accordance with its vision of the past.” To sum up, nostalgia appears as a substantial variable to analyze.
The following section covers the theoretical background on populism and nostalgia. The fourth section explains the dependent variable. The fifth section comprises the independent variables and hypotheses. The sixth part explains the method. The seventh and eighth sections present the results. The final part discusses the results and concludes the article.

3. Theoretical Background

**Populism**

This study adopts the ideational definition of populism. According to Mudde (2007, p. 23), populism is “a thin centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite,’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.” The ideational definition addresses that contrary to the thick-centered or full ideologies like socialism, conservatism, or liberalism, populism is “incapable of providing on its own a solution to questions of social justice, distribution of resources, and conflict-management which mainstream ideologies address” (Freeden, 1998, p. 751). Hence, populism has a symbiotic relationship with thicker ideologies which is the reason for the emergence of populist parties both from the left and right of the political spectrum (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017).

To unpack the Mudde’s definition, one can argue that populism constructs the antagonism between the people (us) and the non-people (them) in the Manichean sense by glorifying the values of the people and demonizing the elites as well as the minority groups. Populists exclude specific groups from within the people to delineate who is included to “the people” (Müller, 2014). While the horizontal exclusion from the people implies the antagonism towards the elites, the vertical one indicates the exclusion of minority groups such as immigrants (Meny & Surel, 2002; March, 2017).

“The people” as an “empty signifier” occupies the center of populism (Laclau, 2005). The people consist of “the man on the street” that are not represented by corrupt elites. Populists attach
sacredness to the values and the will of the people. Thus, the wishes of the people should be fulfilled no matter what it takes because “the voice of people is the voice of God – *Vox populi, vox Dei*” (Hawkins, 2010, p. 34). Populists reduce the political struggle to a moral antagonism between “we – the ‘nothing,’ not included in the social order – … the people;” and “others who stand only for their particular privileged interest” (Zizek, 1999, p. 27). The moral antagonism between the people and the elites is the distinctive feature of populism from other ideologies like socialism where the conflict is established on the idea of class struggle (Mudde, 2017a).

Many scholars agree that populism appears as a backlash to a sense of severe crisis (Taggart, 2004; Rooduijn, 2014). The sense of extreme crisis paves the way for the rising concerns on the present which is a breeding ground for populism (Akkerman et al. 2013). Populists blame the establishment for the decline in the economic, political, and living standards of the people (Rooduijn et al. 2016). Eventually, populists aim to reestablish the present and the future retrospectively by emphasizing the golden past of the society to cope with the contemporary challenges. Their goal is to return to a paradise lost where the life was better and more straightforward.

**Collective Nostalgia**

In line with Cheung and his colleagues (2017, p. 303) I define collective nostalgia as “a sentimental longing for the collective past and the way society used to be.” The studies during the 20th century considered nostalgia as a psychologic disorder and emphasized its negative effects such as depression and compulsive disorder (Sedikides et al., 2008a). More recently, there are many studies indicating the positive effects of nostalgia on the terror management (Routledge et al., 2008), self-continuity (Sedikides et al., 2008b; Sedikides et al., 2015), and the social identity (Wildschut et al., 2014; Smeekes et al., 2015; Smeekes, 2015; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2015; Sedikides et al., 2016).

As a group-based emotion, nostalgia is related to the social identity (Psaltis et al. 2017). According to the Social Identity Theory, identities are “part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a group (or groups) together the value and emotional
significance attached to the membership” (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). The self-categorization of “us versus them” is the heart of the social identity theory (Greene, 1999) which is the impetus of populism. When the absolute differences are salient between groups, people tend to perceive similarities of in-group (“we’re all much the same”) and exaggerate in-group’s difference from the out-group (“we’re different from them”) (Hornsey, 2008, p. 206). Nostalgia or the way we remember our past exacerbates the in-group versus the out-group distinction and intergroup relations (Martinovic et al. 2018). Nostalgia cements the shared social identity and presents the distinguishing characteristics of in-group from other groups (Brown & Humphreys, 2002; Wildschut et al., 2014).

In the process of identity construction, history becomes a useful instrument for people to understand who they are, where they come from, and where they should be going. The past emerges as a guideline during the constitution of a group’s identity, its relationship with other groups, and as a defense mechanism for external threats (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Jetten & Hutchison, 2011). According to Searle-White (2001, p. 49) the group identity “is not only its image of who it is now, but also who it has been in the past, and who its people hope it will be in the future.” References to the past and nostalgic reveries help to constitute people’s identities in the present and functions as an intermediary tool between the memory and identity (Kalinina & Menke, 2016, p. 63). According to Smeekes (2015, p. 56), collective nostalgia triggers an in-group prototype “as being part of a moral community based on shared past experiences” and out-group prejudice. The in-group and out-group stereotyping illustrate the group boundaries between authentic “us” and alien “them.”

Collective nostalgia is strongly related to both remembering and amnesia. According to Ernest Renan, in the making of “the people,” “to forget” and “to get one’s history wrong” are the essential elements (Renan, 1992; Mazrui, 2013). The failures of the imagined past are not crucial for the populists. Instead, they suppress the unwanted part of the past and focus more on its positive aspects (Mudde, 2016). It is about selection and elimination of the memories. Nostalgia is a
constant interaction between remembering and forgetting. It is a tendency to romanticization, idealization, simplification, even mythologization and symbolization of the past (Assmann, 2008; Kalinina & Menke, 2016; Mazrui, 2013; Brown & Humphreys, 2002; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2013).

**Populism and Nostalgia**

For Sullivan (2017), the rise of populism is closely related to “acute despair at the present moment and a memory of a previous golden age.” Populists aim to destroy the current status quo and “a desire to return to the past in one emotionally cathartic revolt.” The golden past corresponds to the heartland in populism literature. Coined by Taggart (2004), “the heartland is a construction of the good life derived retrospectively from a romanticized conception of life as it has been lived” (p. 278). Populists aim to reach a “retrotopia” which are “visions located in the lost/stolen/abandoned but undead past, instead of being tied to the not-yet-unborn and so inexistent future” (Bauman, 2017, p. 5). The people yearn for turning back to their safety zone, their paradise lost, their heartland by rejecting the current.

The Schmittian friend versus foe division appears as us versus them or in-group versus out-group dichotomization in the populist politics. According to Carl Schmitt (2007, p. 26), “the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.” Since Ancient Greece, when the members of demos (read: the people) ignored by the dominant elites, there has been the friend versus enemy struggle in the politics. The borders of the friends delineated with who are the enemies of the people rather than the characteristics of the people (Mudde, 2007).

The construction of the “us versus them” is a function of the crosscutting conflicts in a given society (Barr, 2009). During the construction of the antagonistic us and them, the heartland provides the raw material from which the values are collected (Taggart, 2004). Populists use the selective memory from the past for consolidating their supporters (Chiantera-Stutte, 2005). While populists utilize a selective memory to cement the community and build the people, they demonize
the enemy by delineating them with disruption and disorder. Populists “rely on representations of a them that are designated as not only not ‘the people,’ but as its film negative; an image of what society should not be” (Salter, 2016, p. 117). They draw the borders of in-group and the out-group by reconstructing the past and referring the founding moment of “the people” particularly (Cento Bull, 2016). The “founding moment” corresponds to “the point of escape from our reality” as well as “escape from some traumatic, real kernel” which is the function of populist ideology (Zizek, 2009, p. 45; Savage, 2012). It is an escape to the heartland which is “a life has already been lived and so shown to be feasible. It assumes or asserts that there was a good life before the corruptions and distortions of the present” (Taggart, 2004, p. 274), or the enemy (Bull 2016).

4. **Dependent Variable: Populist Attitudes**

The dependent variable of this study is constructed from four survey items proposed by Hawkins, Riding, and Mudde in 2012. Instead of using the party preferences, I decided to use populist attitudes as the dependent variable because one cannot reduce populism to voting for supposedly populist parties. Populist attitudes can also reveal as absolution, even support for mainstream parties (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016; Anduiza & Rico, 2016). The four items of the response variable aim to “capture key elements of populism, especially a Manichaean view of politics, a notion of a reified popular will, and a belief in a conspiring elite” (Hawkins et al. 2012, p. 7). Table 1 covers the four items and their distributions with CFA results.
According to the Table 1, last three items are negatively skewed except the item POP1. In other words, the majority of the respondents embrace the populist attitudes in Turkey. “Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil” has low variation and this item was also problematic in previous studies (Akkerman et al. 2013; Castanho Silva et al. 2017). Nevertheless, the acceptable CFI result indicates that four items can be used as a latent construct of populism.

5. Independent Variables

The relationship between nostalgia and populism is controlled with many independent variables. To locate the study to the broader populism literature and comparing Turkey with the previous studies on populism in different contexts, I used life satisfaction, economic satisfaction, democratic satisfaction, anti-immigration, support for the EU membership, and partisanship variables to control the effect of nostalgia.

Nostalgia

The primary independent variable of this study is nostalgia which is a latent construct from three survey items. Similar to the populism questions, nostalgia items are negatively skewed. These items aim to measure the importance of past values, past experiences, and the glorious past of the country. Without anchoring any particular period or group, these items aim to capture the collective

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2 I used “lavaan” (Rosseel, 2012) and “lavaan-survey” (Oberski, 2014) R packages for CFA.
nostalgia that may vary for the individuals. For example, while the CHP supporters are nostalgic to the achievements of the Kemalist era of the 1920s and 1930s (Özyürek, 2006), the AKP supporters are yearning for the glorious days of the Ottoman Empire (Ergin & Karakaya, 2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>I do not agree at all</th>
<th>I am inclined to disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>I am inclined to agree</th>
<th>I fully agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO1- We must not forget the values that possessed in the past.</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO2- I miss my country's good, glorious days.</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO3- We can get rid of today's problems as the people only by looking at our past.</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Nostalgia items (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.62)

H1: The more nostalgic are the respondents, the more the populist attitudes they express.

Satisfaction with Life, Economic Conditions, and Democracy

The second set of variables contain the subjective satisfaction of respondents with life in general, current economic condition, and democracy. Previous studies treating the (dis)satisfaction as a proxy of the expression of populist attitudes received inconclusive results (Mudde, 2007). According to the scholars that support the idea of populism as a response to the political crisis, subjective dissatisfaction with the economic, social, and political conditions lead to the increase of populist attitudes (Akkerman et al., 2017; Bowler et al. 2017; van Hauwaert & van Kessel; 2017). I expect that nostalgia still appears as a significant driving factor for the populist attitudes after controlling with satisfaction variables.

In this study, satisfaction with life measured with “Overall, to what extent are you satisfied with your life?” (M = 5.89, SD = 2.94), subjective economic satisfaction measured with “How satisfied are you with your current economic condition?” (M = 4.09 , SD = 2.68), and satisfaction with

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3 This question is adapted from Smeekes (2015). The original version of the question is “How often do you long for the good old days of the country?”
democracy measured with “Could you tell me how satisfied you are with the way democracy works in Turkey in general?” (M = 5.04, SD = 3.12). For all three items, 0 represents the lower and 10 corresponds to the higher level of satisfaction.

H2: The more the dissatisfied are the people with their lives in general, subjective economic conditions, and democracy, the more populist attitudes they have.

Attitudes towards Immigrants

Scholars from both political science and social psychology highlight the contemporary rise of anti-immigration attitudes paved the way for the rise of populist parties (Eg., Bos et al. 2018, Smeekes, 2015). According to Mudde (2012), anti-immigration appears due to the perception of immigrants as a threat to cultural, religious, security, and economic structure in a given country. From the cultural and religious perspective, immigrants are stigmatized as aliens that undermine the in-group values. While the security is related to the crime, economic dimension is linked with the welfare chauvinism.

Turkey appears as an odd case regarding immigration. While the influx of immigrants particularly following the Syrian Civil War led to the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments in economic and security perspectives, Muslim identity of the Syrian immigrants may have balanced the threat perception of the Turkish society (İçduygu, 2015). Also, the AKP adopted a pro-immigrant policy following the Syrian civil war based on a brotherhood discourse (Davutoğlu, 2013). Although the positions of other parties vary on the issue of immigration, there is no significant openly anti-immigrant party in Turkish politics.

In this study, I constructed anti-immigration as a latent variable by using three survey items. The first one is “Do you think those who come to Turkey from abroad take the locals’ jobs or do they create new job opportunities?” (M = 2.73, SD = 2.60), second question is “The people who come

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4 See the debate on populism and nativism in Mudde (2007) and Mudde (2017b).
to Turkey from abroad both work and contribute to the country in various ways while benefiting from services such as healthcare and education” (M = 2.48, SD = 2.47), and “Are Turkey’s crime issues made worse or better by people who came to Turkey from other countries?” (M = 2.96, SD = 2.56). For all three items, the range is from 0 to 10 where higher scores indicate more positive attitudes towards immigrants.

H3: The more the anti-immigration attitudes the people have, the more populist attitudes they have.

**Euroscepticism**

Euroscepticism can be defined as “the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration” (Taggart, 1998, p. 366). It is a symptom of both radical right and left parties in Europe and its periphery (Roodujin et al. 2017). The nativist and authoritarian characteristics of the right populism appear as the rejection of the power of Brussels in the policy-making (McDonnell & Werner, 2017). Since the elites in Brussels are non-native and intervene in domestic politics to protect those non-natives, right-wing populism interprets the EU as “the most proximate Western enemy and a threat to … national independence (Pirro, 2014, p. 605). For the left populists, the EU’s neoliberal economic agenda is the source of the discontent. They mostly criticise the EU on the issues like the welfare state and the market liberalization (van Elsas et al. 2016).

Likewise the anti-immigration, Turkey appears as a curious case regarding support for the EU membership and populist attitudes. Turkey is a candidate country with a predominantly Muslim population where the relations with the EU has always been unstable (Çarkoğlu & Glüpker-Kesebir, 2016). While the AKP had pursued a pro-EU policy during their first term between 2002 and 2007, the party adopted a conflictual discourse in the following period (Öniş, 2015). As the leverage of the EU over its periphery has decreased particularly following the 2008 economic crisis, Turkey gradually moved away from the EU norms (Öniş & Kutlay, 2017).
This study measures the support for the EU membership with the question “Would you vote in favor or against membership in the EU if a referendum were to be held today?”. While the support for the EU membership is 49 percent, 40 percent of the respondents are against the EU membership. Rather than treating the 11 percent of “No idea/No response” as a missing value, I coded them neutral and created a three-level index as -1 (no support), 0 (neutral), 1 (support) (M = 0.08, SD = 0.94).

H4: The higher the support for the EU membership, the lesser populist attitudes the respondents have.

Partisanship

Populism has been a prominent dimension of Turkish politics throughout years. The Russian Narodnik populism inspired the early founders of Turkish Republic and the intellectuals of the early 20th century (Toprak, 2013). Contrary to the secular modernization efforts of the Republican elites, the right-wing parties developed a conservative populism with Islamist and nativist tones. Although these right-wing parties have been dominated the ballot box since the first free and fair elections in 1950, they have always complained about the tutelary institutions of the state like the military, the judiciary, and the bureaucracy (Çınar & Sayın, 2014).

Since the 2002 elections, four parties have been dominating the contemporary Turkish politics. The ruling AKP is a right-wing party that embraces the Islamism, conservatism, and populism as its ideology (though they reject the latter characteristic) (See, Aytaç & Öniş, 2014; Dinçşahin, 2012; Taşkin, 2013; Selçuk, 2016). The Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) is the main opposition which supports the Kemalist establishment and positioned as a center-left party. The Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) has been an ultranationalist and anti-communist far-right party until the end of the Cold War. Since then the MHP softened its nationalist tone substituted the communist enemy with the EU and the PKK terror during the 1990s (Avcı, 2011). The Peoples’ Democracy Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP) is the
latest party of the Kurdish political movement. Although the party adopted the radical democracy as their ideology (Tekdemir, 2016), the HDP constituency is a curious case in the sense that whether they adopt populist attitudes.

This study measures the partisanship in two steps. The survey includes two questions as “To which party do you feel close?” and “Do you feel very close, a little close or not that close to this party?.” I created an index of closeness for each party ranges from 0 (not close) to 2 (very close) (AKP, M = 0.6, SD = 0.84; CHP, M = 0.18, SD = 0.52; MHP, M = 0.08, SD = 0.35; HDP, M = 0.07, SD = 0.32).

H5a: The AKP and the HDP supporters are supposed to have more populist attitudes.

H5b: The CHP and the MHP supporters are supposed to have less populist attitudes.

Control Variables

Control variables consist of the demographic information like sex, age, education, income, and the residence. For the sex variable females are coded as 1 (M = 0.5, SD = 0.5). Metropolis is coded as 1 for the residence of respondents located in the center of the metropolis (M = 0.39, SD = 0.49). The range of education is from 1 (no formal education) to 5 (university graduates) (M = 3.07, SD = 1.24). For the income variable, I summed the belongings and subtracted the debts of respondents for creating a wealth variable for replacing each missing of the income variable with interpolated values (Zeileis & Grothendieck, 2005). Then I took the logged version of income variable (M = 7.61, SD = 0.37). While the previous studies on populist attitudes did not report a significant relationship between gender and age, higher levels of education and income have a negative link with populist attitudes (Hawkins et al. 2012, Spruyt et al. 2016, van Hauwaert and van Kessel 2017, Rooduijn et al. 2017).
6. Method

I used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which allows researchers to use both latent and observed variables simultaneously and combines the power of CFA with the multiple regression models (Ullman, 2012). Due to the application of post-stratification weights, I used maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors, and Satorra-Bentler scaled test statistics estimation, which is suitable for the complex samples (Oberski, 2014). I used two different models to estimate the relationship between the nostalgia and populism which are the multivariate regression model and path model.

7. Analysis 1: Multivariate Regression Model

The first model was designed as a multivariate regression. Populism as the DV as well as the independent variables nostalgia and immigration are latent constructs (See Figure 1). The rest of the variables are observed variables. Table 3 illustrates the results.

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5 The survey is part of a larger project conducted by S. Erdem Aytaç, Ali Çarkoğlu, and Sedef Turper from Koç University. The sampling procedure starts with the use of Turkish Statistical Institute’s (TUIK) NUTS-2 regions. The target sample was distributed according to each region’s share of urban and rural population in accordance with current records of the Address Based Population Registration System (ADNKS). Next, TUIK’s block data were used with block size set at 400 residents. Twenty voters were targeted to be reached from each block and no substitution was used. Selection of individuals in households is done on the basis of reported target population of 18 years or older in each household according to a lottery method. If for any reason that individual could not be reached, the same household is visited up to three times until a successful interview is conducted and no substitution was applied. The interviews were conducted by Frekans Research (www.frekans.com.tr) between Feb. 17 – Apr. 2, 2017.

The original number of observations of the survey is 1954. However, the missing data caused the loss of observations up to 36 percent. Hence, amelia imputation was applied to increase number of observations (Honaker et al. 2011).

6 I used “lavaan” (Rosseel, 2012) and “lavaan-survey” (Oberski, 2014) R packages for SEM.
In line with expectations, nostalgia has a significantly positive relationship with the populist attitudes. In fact, the magnitude of nostalgia is higher than the rest of the significant independent variables. The AKP supporters are the only group that embraces the populist attitudes as expected.
Contrary to the expectations, the HDP supporters are not populist. The CHP and the MHP supporters do not show populist attitudes as well.

Contrary to expectations, the respondents who are more satisfied with their lives in general are more populist. However, satisfaction with democracy and subjective satisfaction with the economic conditions are not statistically significant. Interestingly, relative income also has a positive link with the populist attitudes. Other control variables like sex, education, and age are not statistically significant. In line with the expectations, support for the EU has a negative relationship with the populist attitudes. However, contrary to the European cases, attitudes towards immigration does not have a significant impact on populism.

Although this model provides sufficient information about the determinants of the populist values, weak fit indices which barely meet the universal cutoff criteria drives me to respecify the model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). According to Ullman (2012, p. 726), there are two reasons for modifying an SEM model: 1) to improve the model fit and 2) to test hypotheses. For Whittaker (2012, p. 26) “structural equation models are a priori models and based on hypothesized theoretical relations among observed and latent variables, poor fit of a model may be seen by some as evidence that the theoretical model is not plausible and/or poorly conceived.” Modification indices also suggest respecifying the model rather than modifying the existing model by adding or removing new parameters.7

In this case, my aim is both improving the model fit to meet the methodological criteria and to reexamine the effects of explanatory variables on the response variable. Eventually, I decided to establish a new model in which the nostalgia, satisfaction with life, satisfaction with economic conditions, satisfaction with democracy, anti-immigration, and support for the EU are treated as

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7 Lagrange multiplier (aka MI) “provides an estimated value in which the model's chi-square ($\chi^2$) test statistic would decrease if a fixed parameter were added to the model and freely estimated” (Whittaker, 2012, p. 27).
attitudinal variables that mediate the effect of demographic variables which are sex, age, education, income, and partisanship (See Figure 2).

8. Analysis 2: Path Model

![Path Model Diagram](image)

Figure 2: Path model. Latent variables are illustrated as circles, and observed variables are shown as rectangles.

According to the Table 2, the results are almost similar to the Table 1 for nostalgia, satisfaction with life, and the support for the EU membership. Satisfaction with economic conditions became barely significant but in the unexpected direction. The results of the determinants of satisfaction variables also indicate that closeness to a particular political party appears as the most important explanatory variable. For all three satisfaction variables, the supporters of populist AKP are more satisfied with their lives, economic conditions, and democracy. The CHP and the HDP supporters are consistently dissatisfied with their life, economic situation, and democracy. Still, closeness to the MHP is not explanatory for those three variables.
The picture is almost similar for the variables immigration and the support for the EU. While the populist AKP supporters are more pro-immigrant, the CHP and the HDP supporters are more anti-immigrant. I argue that this result confirms the in-group versus out-group debate where Islam is the anchor of populist identity in Turkey. Contrary to the AKP supporters, the CHP and the HDP supporters are more pro-EU.

The only variable that cannot be explained by the partisanship is nostalgia. The results show that older, less income, and non-metropolitan people are more nostalgic along with the more educated people. The previous design failed to demonstrate the effect of these demographic variables. However, I can argue that there is a path from demography to populism over the nostalgic attitudes.
Regarding the fit statistics, despite still being statistically significant, Chi-squared of the second model is lower than the first model. CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR are also within the excellent range of the universal cutoff criteria. To sum up, model specification worked in the expected direction. Path model design has more explanatory power along with a better model fit.

9. Discussion and Conclusion

“Some people insist on starting the history of this country from 1923. Someone stubbornly strives to tear us apart from our roots, our ancient values. The circle in which the head of the main opposition party also exists takes the enemy of ancestry as the criterion of loyalty to the Republic. According to this circle, Republic of Turkey is rootless, undated, and a budding state” says President Erdoğan in his address during the commemoration of Sultan Abdülhamit II. For him, “history is not only about the past of the people, but a companion to the future. History is the memory of the people at the same time. It is also impossible for a society that is not tied to its past to continue its existence as a nation.” Even from these couple of sentences from one of his speeches, we can extract how populists use nostalgia to build the people.8

This study aims to see whether nostalgic attitudes have a positive link to the populist values. To test this puzzle, I used the survey data and SEM. The results show that, in two separate models, the more nostalgic the people, the more populist attitudes they have. The AKP voters are significantly more populist comparing with the other parties’ supporters. Comparing with the European counterparts, populism in Turkey does not breed from anti-immigration. However, in line with the expectations, the EU supporters are less populist similar to the other cases in Europe. Having a dominant populist party in power for more than 15 years also shaped the attitudes of the respondents. Being close to a party emerges as a primary independent variable to explain who is more anti-immigrant, EU supporter, satisfied with life in general, subjective economic conditions,

and level of democracy. This also explains why the respondents are satisfied with their lives in general are more populist, contrary to the expectations. As the people embrace the populist attitudes, the populist political environment does not worry them. Instead, they are satisfied with the populist political structure.

This study is one of the first studies that test the items measuring the populist attitudes in Turkey. We can say that the majority of the respondents embraced the populist attitudes. 75 percent of the participants agree that the power of a few special interests prevents Turkey from making progress, which indicates the conspirational understanding of the elite minority. The will of people is the ultimate authority for the 79 percent of the respondents. Rather than the politicians, the people should make the most important decisions according to the 69 percent of the participants. Finally, 48 percent of the respondents agree that the politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil, which reflects the Manichean mindset of populism. Previous studies using these items first executed the exploratory factor analysis and argued that the item “politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil” does not fit the expected dimension (Akkerman et al. 2013; Castanho Silva et al. 2017). However, the CFA results indicate that scholars may use these four items together for measuring populism attitudes.

Yet another novel contribution of this study to the literature is the three items of nostalgia. While previous studies tried to measure the link between nostalgia and populism by using proxy variables, this study offers three new items specific to measuring collective nostalgia. For Turkey, we can say that the majority of the respondents have nostalgic attitudes. The past emerges as a key to understand today, and we should stick with the values that we have in the past. The participants also miss the good, glorious days of Turkey. However, these items should also be validated in other country studies.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


