

All Bark No Bite? Systematic Analysis of Populism and Foreign Policy in the European Union

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Abstract

Populists mobilize against elites, protest against globalism, and employ belligerent rhetoric. As a result, academic and popular media associate populist leaders with international belligerence, a shift in networks towards other populist states, and protectionist economic measures. We argue that radical right populists (RRP) in government do not change a state's perception of the best policies to promote core interests of security and prosperity, and thus states will not significantly change their foreign policy behavior under populist governance. Two mechanisms are responsible for this outcome. First, security and prosperity are achieved through interdependence, making changes to states' international policies costly. Second, populism is an inward-focused thin ideology that does not have prescribed foreign policies. We test our theory on paired cases of populist and non-populist led states; and on a pair of similar populist-led states that differ in their strategic interests. We find that populist and non-populist states that share socio-economic and geo-political characteristics have remarkably similar security and economic foreign policy outcomes. Moreover, in similar populist governments, foreign policy outcomes differ dramatically where strategic goals differ.

1 Introduction

Populists employ belligerent rhetoric, foment hatred toward real and perceived enemies, issue threats, protest against globalism, and undermine rule of law institutions (Levitsky and Loxton 2013; Mudde 2004; Muller 2016; Urbinati 2019). As a result, academic and popular media associate populist leaders with international belligerence, a shift in networks towards other populist led states, and the implementation of protectionist economic measures.

This paper questions these broad assumptions. We argue that populists in government do not change a state's perception of the best policies to promote core interests of security and prosperity, and thus states will not significantly change their foreign policy behavior under populist governance. This is the result of interdependence in the international system and the inward focus and thin nature of populism itself. First, in today's globalized system, security and prosperity are achieved through interdependence. The implication is that the international sphere shapes many foreign policy decisions rather than the other way around (Gourevitch 1978; Waltz 2010; Holsti and Holsti 1972). In this paper we limit our discussion to small and medium powers, for which constraints of interdependence are more limiting. Under bipolarity there were few possibilities for dramatic change in alliances. Though the multipolar system is more flexible, it is also more difficult for a state to fundamentally replace its trade and alliance partners. Second, populism itself is unlikely to invest in significant foreign policy changes. Populism is an inward-focused mobilization strategy sustained through a variety of economic and ideational means. Populist mobilization includes rhetoric and policies intended to weaken the opposition and reinforce populist rule. Building and supporting this domestic mobilization usually does not require a shift in or even an emphasis on foreign policy. In this paper we develop a theory that

applies specifically to radical right populists (RRP). RRP mobilize primarily on identity-based cleavages that have few implications for foreign policy. Populism is a thin ideology that is agnostic on economic and security issues. It does not set out to change the economy in any particular direction, and cannot serve as a basis for meaningful networks with likeminded leaders. In this regard, populism is different from socialism or fascism that do have prescribed views on core state interests and the means to achieve them.

We test our theory on paired cases of populist and non-populist led states; and on a pair of populist-led states that differ in their strategic interests. Previous works have theorized on the relationship between foreign policy and populism (Chrysogelos 2017; Verbeek and Zaslove 2017), and empirically examined individual cases of populists in office (Varga and Buzogány 2020), but without controls for the policies of non-populists leaders in states with similar strategic goals. Alternatively some scholarship addresses rhetoric and beliefs, but not foreign policy behavior (Boucher and Thies 2019). In this paper, we add controls for strategic goals, and are thus able to demonstrate that they are the determinate of foreign policy outcomes rather than populists in government.

We compare a broad set of foreign policy indicators in Hungary and Croatia, and Poland and Lithuania, between cases and within case over time. Our analysis supports our theory. We find that populist and non-populist states that share socio-economic and geo-political characteristics have remarkably similar security and economic foreign policy outcomes. We also compare the similar populist governments of Hungary and Poland in policy areas where strategic goals differ, and demonstrate that accordingly, foreign policy outcomes also differ.

Our paper makes a novel contribution to the debate on populism and foreign policy and the existing literature in several respects. First, we offer much needed systematic empirical evidence for foreign policy behavior of RRP led states compared to non-populist states, and between similar populist governments. Second, we make a clear distinction between rhetoric and policy outcomes, two dimensions that are often conflated in the discussion on populism. Though in the long run, populist rhetoric can lead to a change in international norms and thus international behavior, we show that in the short term it has little influence on international outcomes. Our work thus contributes to literature on the effect of social pressures on international change. Third, our analysis distinguishes between domestic and foreign policies. We find that while radical right populists make significant domestic changes that erode rule of law norms and institutions, they remain committed to consistent security and economic international norms and practices. This suggests that RRP states are compliant actors on the global stage, which facilitates the freedom to pursue radical domestic policies while avoiding international condemnation. Finally, our work suggests that viewing populism as an anti-establishment ideology is less useful for analyzing the impact of populism on international outcomes. Instead it may be more useful to define populism as a form of political mobilization and analyze the steps leaders take to sustain this mobilization once in power.

The paper proceeds as follows: we first review existing assumptions about populist foreign policy and outline our theory of the strategic interests and inward focus that determines foreign policy behavior of RRP. The following section tests our theory on three sets of paired cases: populist Hungary and non-populist Croatia; populist Poland and non-populist Lithuania; and

energy security and immigration policies in populist Hungary and Poland. Finally, we discuss the implications of our research.

2 Populism and Foreign Policy

As populism has become increasingly influential in politics, a vast body of literature developed to define and analyze the concept and the causes for its increasing popularity. Though there is no consensus on a single definition, scholars often define populism as a thin ideology that views society as divided into two distinct groups – the people and the elite, and believes politics ought to be an expression of the people’s will (Mudde 2004; Stanley 2008). This definition includes various historical and geographic populist occurrences under one umbrella. The assumption is that these occurrences have unique characteristics, but also share a basic Manichean view of the world that is meaningful for political processes (Hawkins 2010).

In this paper we examine a subsection of this broad definition – radical right populism (RRP) (Betz 1993; Mudde 2007; Norris 2005; Kitschelt and McGann 1997; Pirro 2014). According to Mudde (2007), RRP is an ideology characterized by antiestablishment sentiment, authoritarianism, and nativism. RRP views establishment elites—including political, cultural and economic gatekeepers--as detached from the will of the people or subverting it to serve their own purposes. RRP are authoritarian in the sense that they favor strong charismatic leaders. Nativism is a preference for native born, but also for traditionally dominant groups in society in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and others. Authoritarianism and Nativism generate a majoritarian tendency – a preference for forms of direct democracy such as referenda, and disdain for checks and balances (Inglehart and Norris 2016). Accordingly, some populists in

office, including in Hungary and Poland, act to dismantle checks and balance norms and institutions (Urbinati 2019; Levitsky and Loxton 2013).

RRP is often discussed in both literature and popular discourse as having an impact on the current international system (Cooley and Nexon 2020; A.-S. Chrysogelos 2010; Boucher and Thies 2019). We analyze these assumptions in two areas: security, and openness of the economic system.

Security

Populist leaders are generally outspoken and take pride in “authentic” rhetoric that sets them apart from traditional politicians. This type of rhetoric is used to frame the populist agenda (Mudde 2007; Boucher and Thies 2019). Right wing populists in particular are nationalist in the sense that they stress the importance of sovereignty of the nation vis-à-vis rivals and the international system, evoke national glory, trigger animosities between what they define as the nation and its enemies: rival ethnic groups, other states, or international and transnational organizations; and issue a myriad of threats to these enemies.

By making threats, populist leaders may be more prone to conflict than non-populists: threats may tie their own hands, limiting their ability to back down because they fear electoral punishment at the hands of domestic audiences (Fearon 1994; Kertzer and Brutger 2016; Tomz 2007). Similarly to audience costs, populist leaders might use their rhetoric to sway public opinion in favor of conflict (Krebs and Jackson 2007; Snyder 1993). Another possibility is that

since populists issue rhetorical threats, they reduce their own ability to send credible signals, risking attacks by other states or spiral conflicts (Fearon 1995; Jervis 2015; Lake and Powell 1999).

Another assumption about populists is that they are likely to form non-traditional networks with like-minded populist leaders. Cooley and Nexon (2020) argue that increasing populist alignment with Russia and China is dismantling the Western international order from below (Cooley and Nexon 2020). According to such theories, populists are likely to align with Russia because of crony capitalism, and an ideological affinity with Putin's resistance to liberal hegemony and leadership style (Cooley and Nexon 2020; Diesen 2018). Others point to China as an alternative model of leadership for states in regions including Latin America and Africa, but also for illiberal leaders like Hungary's Viktor Orbán (Cooley and Nexon 2020; Jakupc and Kelly 2019). On a more region-specific level, the burgeoning relationship between populist Poland and Hungary in opposition to the EU is notable, as was the relationship between populist-led Bolivia and Venezuela.

System Openness

Many scholars attribute the rise of populism to a backlash against disruptions of globalization (Hadiz and Chryssogelos 2017; Kriesi et al. 2006; Rodrik 2018; Colantone and Stanig 2018; Guiso, Herrera, and Morelli 2017). According to these accounts, globalization significantly altered the structure of national economies, leaving unskilled workers in developed states in a perilous position. Losers of globalization, who lack the market skills to adapt to a changing

economy, vote for populists because they have a preference for policies that protect them from global forces by closing the state to foreign investment, cheap foreign products, or foreign workers. Accordingly, populists often mobilize against international interference in state affairs. The literature on populism and foreign policy therefore expects populists to lean toward protectionist economic policies like barriers to trade and investment; and aversion to international institutions (Chrysosgelos 2017; Verbeek and Zaslove 2017).

For RRP led states, a closed system also implies a preference for limited immigration. Immigration policy is not in itself foreign policy, but does have international implications. Immigration policy in one country can have spillover effects in other regions by exacerbating conflict (Greenhill 2016; Byman and Speakman 2016). In addition, immigrants can assist their home economies by sending remittances (Bodomo 2013), and thus restrictive immigration policies can have economic spillover effects. Within the context of the EU, decision-making in one member state will influence the rest of the members. Lenient immigration policy creates more EU citizens, and restrictive immigration policy can block immigrant flows to other member states. Moreover, a state can block a joint immigration policy if it manages to sway the opinion of more states in the union.

2.1 Geopolitics over Populism: Determinants of Foreign Policy

Scholarship on populism argues that populists employ belligerent rhetoric, align with like-minded populists, and seek to close their systems. Despite these assertions, we argue that under populism states do not significantly change their foreign policy, both because of the high level of

interdependence in the current global system and because populism is inherently domestically focused and does not prescribe a particular foreign policy orientation.

Interdependence

States are dependent on international supply chains and labor as well as multilateral and bilateral security arrangements, and are vulnerable to sanction by multilateral trade organizations, great powers, and alliance partners. Globalization further increased state interdependence, which Keohane and Nye (1977) argue has two components. *Sensitivity* is the extent to which an economic, political or social change in one country leads to a change in another country. The 1973 oil crisis demonstrated how a decision by one group of states had significant implications for other states. *Vulnerability* is the varying cost for a state to adjust to changes imposed by another state. In the 1973 oil crisis, vulnerability was the extent to which it was feasible to diversify energy supplies. The implication is that a highly interdependent system makes it more difficult for states to alter its foreign policies, and reinforces system compliance because of state sensitivity.

In the EU, members do not independently control their trade policy, and many states also do not control their monetary policy. This was evident in the ongoing Greek debt crisis. In 2015, Greeks elected populist Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras on the platform of wresting back control of the Greek economy from the Troika. Though the Greek people voted in a referendum to reject continued austerity, Tsipras was forced to accept the Troika's conditions because the alternative

was bankruptcy. Of course, more powerful states are also more independent, but even for powerful states the global supply chain is highly constraining.

Extensive globalization of the international system has increased interdependence for most states, making complete foreign policy restructures nearly impossible. Kalevi Hoslti (2015) described restructures as shifts that encompass all aspects of foreign policy, manifested in changes in indicators including trade partners and volume, formal alliances, aid donor states, and diplomatic relations. During the Cold War, Holsti found that such restructures were rare, and generally applied to small developing countries that had transitioned to or away from isolationism, or replaced one patron state with another. In the current system complete isolationism is virtually impossible. Moreover, in the context of the multipolar power distribution that developed after the Cold War, states are unlikely to completely replace dependence on one patron state with another. However, great and regional powers have strategies that can shape the interest of smaller powers and hence their foreign policies. China has invested resources in Latin and America, which led to increased diplomatic and trade relations, while not completely replacing existing commitments. This highlights the importance of examining state foreign policy within a regional context rather than according to the type of political leadership.

Though interdependence is often discussed from an economic perspective, it is a key component of state security. Formal security arrangements are deeply entrenched and thus very costly to alter. For example, for most states, leaving NATO is far too costly to account for the meager rhetorical benefit it might provide. Moreover, the most populist members of NATO are in fact the least likely to withdraw from the alliance, because of their regional security interests. Eastern

European countries like Poland are the most ardent and contributing members of NATO as they identify Russia as a major security threat. The U.S. is a notable exception because of its hegemonic position in the international system and because it contributes far more resources to collective security organizations than any other member state. As a result, a focus on security isolationism should be much higher there than in other populist led states. Nevertheless, the U.S. has not altered NATO security arrangements or even reduced funding, despite rhetorical threats to the contrary, as it is not in its interest. In this paper, we limit the scope of our analysis to states that are not great powers because great powers play a disproportionate role in shaping the international system, and thus their ideologies are more influential. However, we believe that great powers are still subject to the interdependent constraints of the international system. Moreover, as we discuss below, the nature of populism still implies that great powers are unlikely to significantly change foreign policies under populist governance.

Populism as a Domestic Mobilization Strategy

One conceptualization of populism is as a political strategy or form of political mobilization rather than an ideology. According to these views, populism mobilizes masses not through traditional party organization, but rather through charismatic leadership, anti-establishment appeals, and clientelist practices (Barr 2009; Levitsky and Roberts 2011; Jansen 2011; Taggart 2002). To generate and sustain mass mobilization, populists employ rhetoric and different forms of direct or plebiscitarian linkages between leader and masses. This type of political strategy can have a transformative effect on domestic politics: it breaks down traditional coalitions, political parties, and other oversight institutions; increases corruption; and redefines acceptable political

discourse. Despite these significant domestic changes, we argue populism has little direct effect on foreign policy.

Once in power, populists sustain mass mobilization by attacking rival politicians, minorities, immigrants, the media, and others. When populist rhetoric is turned outward, it usually targets transnational actors such as human rights organizations, or international economic institutions like central banks or the IMF, and domestic “collaborators”. For RRP, this outward rhetoric is rarely associated with specific international economic and security policies. Most commonly, such rhetoric has been used to crack down on domestic human rights organizations, This was the case in Hungary, including a campaign against Hungarian American philanthropist George Soros and the Central European University. Indeed, populist governments have implications for domestic and international human rights norms and practices (Cooley and Nexon 2020), but not for economic and security policies.

In some cases, populists rely on clientelism to support domestic mobilization, which may lead to an inflated budget and thus have an effect on the global economy. This particular strategy was common in Latin America in the 20th century, but it is limited to both the region and to left wing populism. As discussed above, when Greek left wing populists attempted the same strategy they failed due to Eurozone limitations. RRPs in government generally do not employ this mobilization strategy, and instead rely on identity cleavages. Ideologically, the economic positions of many RRP parties in Europe are vague, combining an aversion to taxation with welfare chauvinism. In Poland and Hungary, RRP governments did use economic transfers in

addition to identity mobilization to crystalize the populist coalition, but these were financed by EU structural funds and economic growth rather than inflated budgets.

Few populist leaders have prioritized external security goals over domestic issues even beyond the EU. The most notable cases are Russia and Turkey, which were either habitually involved in conflicts prior to the rise of populism or drawn into a regional conflict as in the case of Turkey in the Syrian civil war. As conflict in general is rare, and very rare in EU members, we do not test conflict directly but instead examine states' belligerent stances in the international system through defense budgets.

Some domestic issues that are the focus of populist mobilization can have international implications. First, shifts in rhetoric can have long term effects, particularly that of great powers (Cooley & Nexon). Second, as noted above, immigration policy is a major focus of RRP mobilization, and can affect foreign relations. Although many RRP mobilize on limits to immigration, this preference does not necessarily accompany other closed system preferences like restrictions on the movement of goods and capital. Peters (2017) shows that there is in fact a tradeoff between immigration policy and other aspects of globalization. The more borders are open to trade and capital, the less there is need for low-skilled labor, and thus firms have fewer incentives to lobby for expansive immigration policies (Peters 2017). Thus, while closing the border to trade and capital is met with extreme resistance, strict immigration policy is far easier to implement. We argue that as a result, populists are far more likely to achieve strict immigration policies than a reversal of other globalization measures. However, if strong

domestic interest groups are in favor of immigration, core interests should still prevail, and populists will not close their borders in spite of anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Populism as a Thin Ideology

Collective security organizations, formal alliances, and informal networks are unlikely to shift under populist governance. Populism is a thin ideology in the sense that it does not prescribe coherent programs as solutions to political problems (Stanely 2008) and different types of populists do not share a strategic worldview. Even populists that share a worldview may find that this shared ideology forms little common ground on which to base a formal alliance or create a new network (Voeten 2020). In 2018-2019, Hungary and Italy both had RRP governments that opposed immigration and promoted Euroscepticism. However, their vastly different positions within the EU in terms of budget allocation, immigration, and divergent threat perceptions of Russia would have made a joint informal network challenging. Populism cannot generate meaningful relationships if it does not also alter core strategic and economic interests. Even in terms of rhetoric, populists are far more prone to constructing enemies than to emphasizing the commonalities between themselves and other populists (Kaltwasser and Taggart 2016). We argue that this creates a systemic barrier to the creation of sustainable cross-border networks, formal or informal.

These three mechanisms—interdependence, populism’s innate inward focus, and its thin nature—suggest that populists will base their foreign policies on core strategic interests rather than the shifts that their rhetoric implies. We thus argue that RRP in government will not

demonstrate a “populist” foreign policy orientation, nor will they differ significantly in their international security and economic behavior from non-populist states with similar core interests and geopolitical circumstances. Moreover, similar populist states with different strategic interests will display different foreign policy behavior.

Our theory generates a set of testable hypotheses in the areas of international security and economic policies:

H1: Populist led states are no more likely to alter their security arrangements than are non-populist led states.

H2: Populist led states are no more likely to alter their foreign economic arrangements than are non-populist led states.

H3: Populist led states that differ in strategic interests will implement different international policies.

Although we argue that populism has a limited effect on foreign policy outcomes, domestic politics still plays a role in foreign policy making (Gilpin 2016, Simmons 2020). The extent to which domestic demands will translate to policy depends on states’ level of integration into international arrangements. In this paper we do not test the importance of domestic constraints but instead hold them constant as much as possible. Both of our test cases are populist governments that hold absolute majorities in parliament and have actively sought to eliminate other constraints on policy-making, including the court system. Though interest groups will still play a role, domestic political constraints in both cases are minimal.

3 Scope Methods and Data

The research design of this paper is intended to evaluate our argument that RRP led states do not have a fundamentally different security and economic foreign policies than similar non-populist states. We selected pairs of countries that share security and economic interests (region, military capacity, GDP trends, economic structure, historical experience), but differ on the type of leadership (populist vs. non-populist). We thus employ the ‘most similar cases’ selection method (Seawright and Gerring 2008) as much as possible, though we expand on the limitations we faced below. For each pair, we compare a set of foreign policy indicators over time between cases, and within case before and after populists take office. Using the same method, we also compare a set of cases that share the same type of RRP leadership but differ on key strategic issues.

Table 1 Strategic Interests, Populism, and Foreign Policy

	Share Core Strategic Interest	Do not Share Core Strategic Interests
Share Populist Leadership	Our Expectation: Similar international policies	Our Expectation: Different international policies Cases: Hungary & Poland on energy and immigration
	Literature Expectation: Similar international policies	Literature Expectation: Similar international policies
Do not Share populist Leadership	Our expectation: Similar international policies Cases: Hungary & Croatia; Poland & Lithuania	Our expectation: Different international policies
	Literature Expectation:	Literature Expectation:

	Different international policies	Similar international policies
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We first determined whether populists were in government during the examined period based on information garnered from several sources (Kyle and Gultchin 2018; Huber and Ruth 2017; Norris 2020; Bakker et al. 2015). These datasets classify Hungary's Fidesz and Poland's PiS as populist or RRP where such classification is available. In Lithuania, the Labor Party (Darbo Partija, DP) which is sometimes classified as centrist populist, but is largely an ethnic party representing the Russian population, was a coalition member under the leadership of the non-populist social democratic party in 2004-2006 and 2012-2016. In Croatia, the major conservative party, Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) was mildly populist in some measures,¹ but was for the most part classified as a Christian Democratic party (Bakker et al. 2015). Below, we elaborate on the selection of each dyad of cases. *Table A1* in the Appendix summarizes our case selection.

Hungary and Croatia

RRP Fidesz has had a super-majority in Hungarian parliament since 2010. Since most Central and Eastern European states are currently led by populist governments, we were unable to choose a non-populist comparator like the Czech Republic, Slovakia, or Bulgaria. We chose Croatia because although it had a different socialist experience, it has a similar GDP and population size to Hungary, is a member of the EU, shares a border, and faces similar international challenges.

¹ for example in scored 6.1 out 10 for populist rhetoric in the Norris (2000) Global Party Survey compared to Hungarian Fidesz's 9.5 score.

Poland and Lithuania

Poland's RRP Law and Justice Party (PiS) was in government between 2005 and 2007, and again since 2015. Poland and Lithuania are similar in several crucial indicators (GDP trends, EU membership, long-term historical experience, Russian threat assessment). One significant difference between the two states is population size, which should make the much smaller Lithuania's dependence on the EU and NATO greater.

Poland and Hungary

Poland and Hungary's RRP regimes have garnered significant attention for their strong nationalist rhetoric, attacks on oversight institutions, and calls for increased sovereignty away from regional bodies. Most recently, Poland and Hungary threatened to veto the EU COVID-19 relief package if fund disbursement was contingent on rule of law practices. However, Poland and Hungary differ on the perception of the security threat posed by Russia, the structure of the energy sector, and their immigration needs. We exploit these key differences to compare policy outcomes in these areas.

Data

In addition to fieldwork conducted in Hungary, Poland, and Lithuania (2014-2019), to evaluate security related hypotheses, we rely on Jane's Defense Budgets², which covers budgets for defense departments. To assess international networks, we examine congruency in UN General Assembly voting on all resolutions in a given session within each dyad. We selected sessions

² Jane's UK. *Jane's Defense Budgets*, Accessed May-June 2020.

every five years from 1993 to the 2018.³ The UN General Assembly votes on approximately 100 resolutions, most of which are ratified every session, which makes voting patterns consistent over time. Many states vote in blocs according to their longstanding relations with great powers and similar states. The EU for example, votes as a bloc on most resolutions and votes in accordance with the U.S. on most issues. Conversely, China has an almost mirror image voting pattern to that of the U.S. Russia has an increasingly divergent voting pattern from the U.S. since the late 1990s. Therefore, UN voting patterns are a useful signal of network affiliation over time.

To assess the level of economic system openness, we qualitatively analyze government economic policy using a variety of sources including the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), news outlets, and secondary sources. We used infringements of EU law;⁴ the KOF Globalization Index, which measures the economic, social and political dimensions of globalization (Gygli et al. 2019); and World Bank Data for Tariffs, Trading Partners, and share of natural resource exports in GDP.⁵

4 Empirical Analysis

4.1 Hungary and Croatia

In the decade since taking office, Viktor Orbán's populist government transformed Hungarian institutions and society. Orbán's RRP party Fidesz won a decisive super-majority in parliament and wrote and instituted a new constitution in 2012 without input from opposition or civil society

³ Available at: <http://research.un.org/c.php?g=98268&p=636558>.

⁴ Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2018-commission-report-and-factsheets-monitoring-application-eu-law_en

⁵ <https://databank.worldbank.org/home.aspx>

(Tóth 2012). Fidesz significantly reduced the role of the constitutional court (Scheppelle 2015), restricted independent civil society, eliminated all but loyal print and broadcast media, and targeted academic freedom through both legislation and structural reforms. In 2020 Freedom House lowered Hungary's Global Freedom score to 'Partly Free', rendering it the only non-democracy in the EU.⁶

Orbán has consistently employed 'us vs. them' rhetoric that casts a variety of domestic and external actors as 'Them' – foreigners to the Hungarian nation who threaten its existence and strive to suppress its greatness. Orbán's populist rhetoric did not translate into economic and security foreign policies. While Hungary's democratic indicators have declined significantly over the past decade, it remains a staunch member of both the EU and NATO, and is highly constrained by and dependent on both institutions. In the following sections we analyze Hungary's populist rhetoric and foreign policies in comparison to the actions of neighboring non-populist Croatia.

Rhetoric

In an infamous 2014 speech, Viktor Orbán declared Hungary an illiberal democracy, and named Singapore, China, India, Russia, and Turkey as models of successful governance in a changing world.⁷ This speech was only the most prominent of a number of rhetorical steps aimed at distinguishing the Hungarian nation and distancing it from the West. In 2010, Orbán declared a new approach in foreign policy emphasizing increased economic ties with the non-Western

⁶ Freedom in the World 2020. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/freedom-world/2020>

⁷ Available at: <https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-25th-balvanyos-summer-free-university-and-student-camp>

world (notably Asian markets) to counterbalance Hungary's strong linkages to the West. Orbán, a liberal dissident in communist Hungary, also changed his position on Russia after 2010, growing increasingly friendly with Vladimir Putin.

Orbán's government has campaigned strongly against 'Brussels' though not against the EU, and Orbán and Fidesz have also taken a hard line on immigration, arguing, "all the terrorists are basically migrants".⁸ Both have consistently addressed the issue of 'Greater Hungary' – the territory of Hungary up to 1920 that is now under the sovereignty of neighboring countries. In 2011, Hungary passed a law allowing Hungarian speakers from 'Greater Hungary' to obtain Hungarian citizenship without residency in Hungary. Some neighboring states reacted negatively to this action, which was further politicized by Orbán.

Orbán's populist foreign policy rhetoric was a break with previous Hungarian regimes that had placed Hungary firmly in the Western world. Despite this radical rhetoric, which garnered significant public attention as the canary in the coalmine for European liberalism, these ideas rarely translated into security and economic foreign policy outcomes.

Security

Hungary and Croatia's most significant international commitments are their membership in NATO and the EU. Both countries are dependent on NATO for their security. In accordance with our expectations, populist Hungary continued to stress the importance of NATO

⁸Matthew kaminski, "All the terrorists are migrants" Politico, November 23, 2015. <https://www.politico.eu/article/viktor-orban-interview-terrorists-migrants-eu-russia-putin-borders-schengen/>

membership as the cornerstone of its security strategy, and did not seek alternative security arrangements either rhetorically or through policies. Neither Hungary nor Croatia was involved in armed conflict in the past decade. Both states decreased their defense budgets after the 2008 financial crisis, Hungary budgeting 1.13% of GDP in 2009, and falling to a low of 0.72% of GDP in 2015 before rising to 1.1% of GDP in 2019.⁹ During that same period, Croatia's defense budget was 1.52% of GDP in 2009, falling to 1.15% in 2016 before rising to 1.27% in 2019. Both countries significantly increased their defense budgets from 2016 to the present-- the 2020 Hungarian Defense budget represents the fifth consecutive year of 20% annual budget increases in line with the country's goal to achieve 2% of GDP by 2026. Croatia also aspires to 2% defense spending but due to financial pressures is only likely to recover to 2009 levels from 2031 onwards. The economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis are further likely to delay these objectives in both countries.

Under populism, Hungary did not alter its commitment to the EU. Despite Orbàn's vocal anti-Brussels rhetoric, Fidesz has been a reliable member of the European People's Party (EPP) in the European Parliament.¹⁰ Hungary is dependent on EU funding and its economy relies on German trade and investment. As such, it benefits greatly from complacent behavior in the EU and by fostering a close relationship with Germany's Christian Democratic party (CDU), the leading member of the EPP. These strategic partnerships continue to shape Hungary's foreign policy behavior.

⁹ 2020 Dollars. *Jane's Defense Budgets*.

¹⁰ Fidesz has been suspended from EPP since March 2019 because of its erosion of democracy and the rule of law and its anti-EU rhetoric but has not joined a different bloc.

Another measure of networks is UN General Assembly voting. Hungary and Croatia have voted very similarly in the UN, echoing the voting patterns of other EU members (*Table 2*). EU members vote together as a bloc in the overwhelming majority of cases. One prominent exception was the 2008 vote on Status of Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees from Abkhazia and Georgia, where Central and Eastern European states voted for the rights of these refugees, whereas Western European states abstained. Like many other UN resolutions, this vote was political and indicated broader support for or against Russian interests. Importantly, states did not vote according to the preferences of their leader, populist or otherwise, but rather according to their geopolitical interests.

Table 2: UN Voting Congruence Hungary & Croatia

UN Session	Congruency of Voting
1992-1993	0.72
1997-1998	0.920454
2002-2003	0.952830
2007-2008	0.913978
2012-2013	0.988636
2017-2018	0.962896

Economic Openness

Hungary is one of the largest net beneficiaries of EU budgetary spending. In 2018, total EU spending in Hungary was €6.298 billion, equivalent to 4.97% of the Hungarian economy, whereas its total contribution to the EU budget was €1.076 billion, equivalent to 0.85% of the Hungarian economy. EU spending in Croatia was far lower and amounted to 2.2% of the Croatian economy.¹¹

Hungary relies heavily on intra-EU trade — 82% of exports, and 75% of imports are with other EU states. As *Figure 1* demonstrates, Germany is Hungary's most significant trading partner. Like other Central and Eastern European countries, Hungary's industrial sector is also highly dependent on Germany. In 2017, German car manufacturing comprised nearly 30% of Hungarian industrial production.

Hungary's trading partners have remained relatively constant over the past 25 years. The changes observed in *Figure 1* do not correlate with changes in government, but rather with external forces shaping the state's strategic interests. One notable example is the decline in trade volume with Russia after 2014, due to sanctions imposed post-Crimea, and a dramatic decline in oil prices. This finding is a hard test of our theory, as Hungary both expressed support for and has an interest in cultivating greater economic ties with Russia yet fell in line with EU policies on trade with Russia (as did Croatia, *Figure 2*) as the EU remains Hungary's most important strategic commitment.¹² A rise in trade with China, which reflects the growth of the Chinese economy, occurred prior to Orbán's election in 2010, and was reflected in most EU states, populist and non-populist alike.

¹¹ Data available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries/member-countries_en

¹² Croatia has had far more volatile trading partnerships in the past two decades. Lithuania and Poland are better comparators here, both show very similar trade partner patterns.

Figure 1: Hungary Trading Partners (Share of Import %)

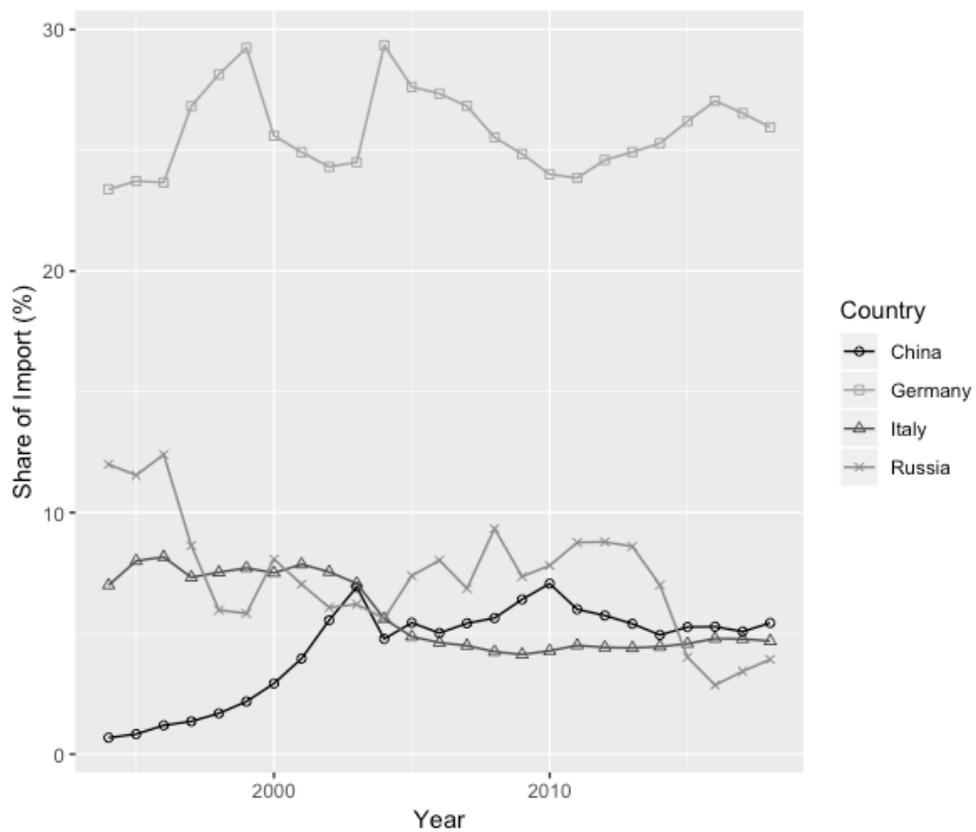
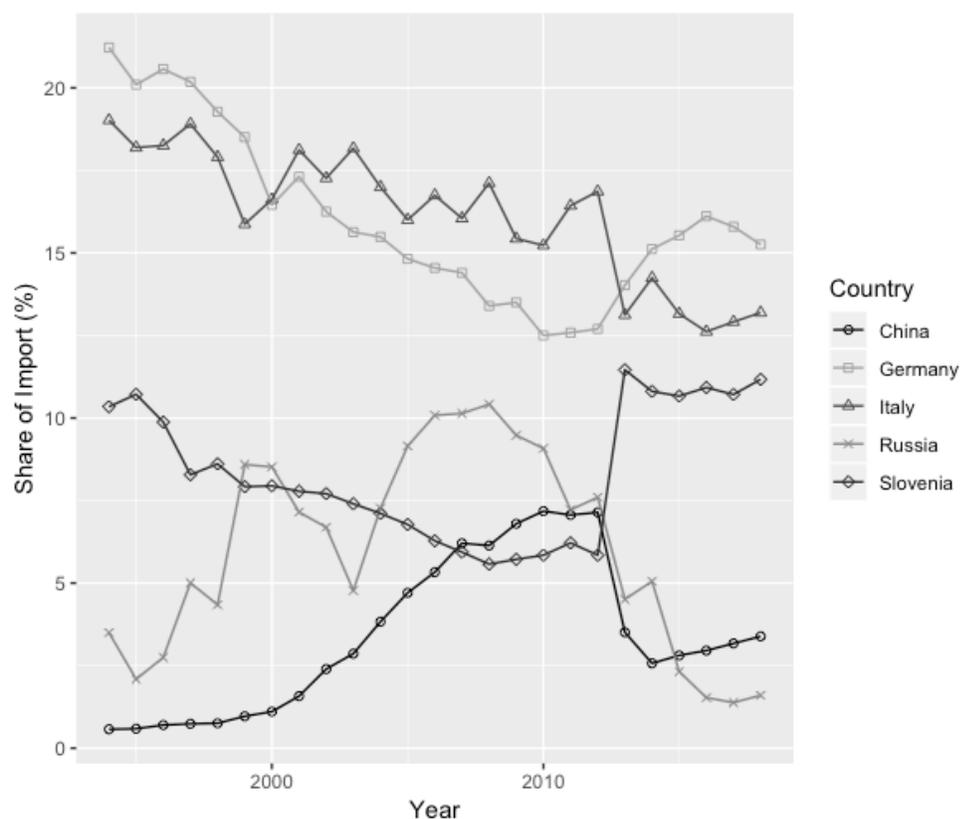


Figure 2: Croatia Trading Partners (Share of Import %)



Hungary was a leader in East and Central Europe in trade and diplomatic relations with China. In the past decade China invested in a strategic relationship with East Central Europe, viewing the region as a potential zone of influence. The result was the China's 17+1 initiative to strengthen cooperation with the region. Though the initiative was founded in Budapest, all countries in the region, including Croatia are a part of this partnership group and have signed intergovernmental cooperation agreements as part of the Belt and Road initiative.

As a member of the EU, Hungary's ability to alter its overall trade liberalization orientation is limited. However, since 2010 Hungary has made minor alterations to its regulatory environment

on foreign investment, instituting a national security review on potential FDI in 2018. The new regulation requires investors from outside the European Economic area to obtain government approval to buy more than twenty five percent of private companies and ten percent of public companies. The new regulations do not apply, however, to manufacturing, the biggest attractor of FDI in Hungary. The new law is similar to legislation passed in both Poland and Lithuania under non-populist governments, and to ten other EU member states that have similar review mechanisms in place. This law as well as a few other regulations¹³ had no discernable effect on foreign direct investment inflows.

Unlike domestic policy reform, where Hungary frequently violates EU laws and norms, it rarely does so in trade and investment policy. We believe the reason for this is twofold. First, the EU is far more likely to sanction Hungary for policy violations with international significance. Although popular accounts focus on the failure of the EU in enforcing rule of law principles, the European Commission's main areas of enforcement are economic and environmental. In 2018 for example, the top infringement areas were environment, mobility and transport, internal market, industry, and business practices.¹⁴ The number of Hungary's open infringement investigations was below average.¹⁵ Second, maintaining a stable investment environment is a top priority for Hungary, a state that relies on FDI for economic prosperity. The encouragement of FDI is evident in Hungary's low corporate tax rate of 9% (the lowest in Europe) making it

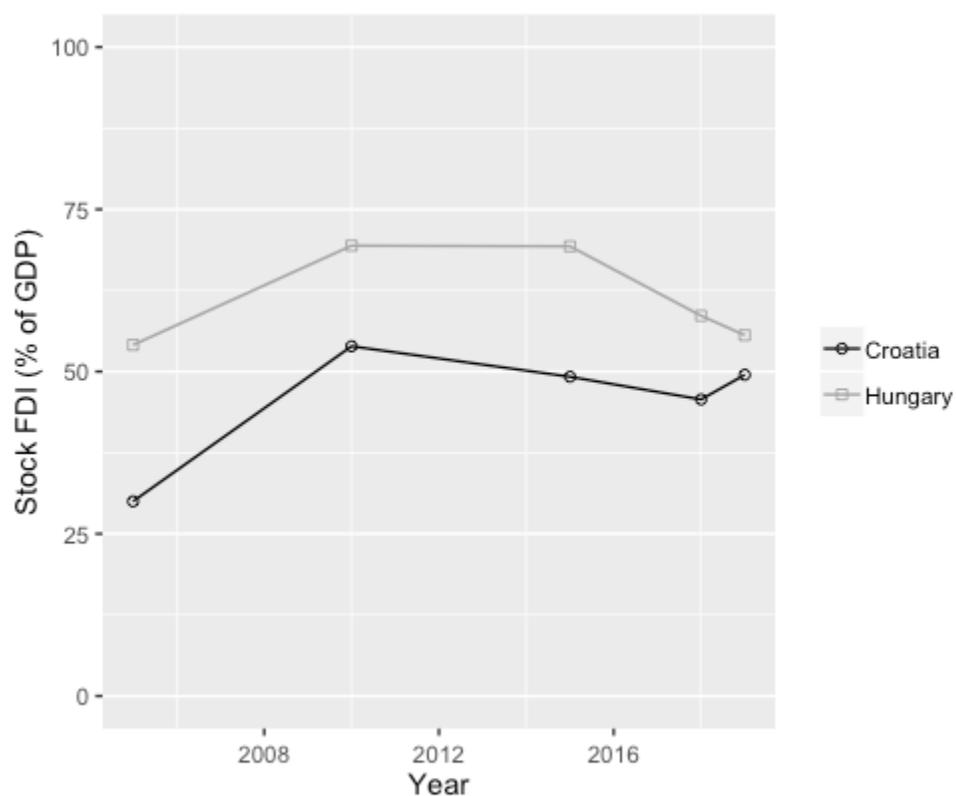
¹³ This includes a law limiting land ownership to those cultivating the land, that is still debated in European courts.

¹⁴ Annual report on monitoring the application of EU law in 2018 available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2018-commission-report-and-factsheets-monitoring-application-eu-law_en

¹⁵ In 2018, Spain, Germany, and Belgium had the highest number of open cases concerning compliance with EU law.

highly attractive for investors. Over the past decade, Hungary's stock FDI trend has remained similar to that of Croatia (*Figure 3*).

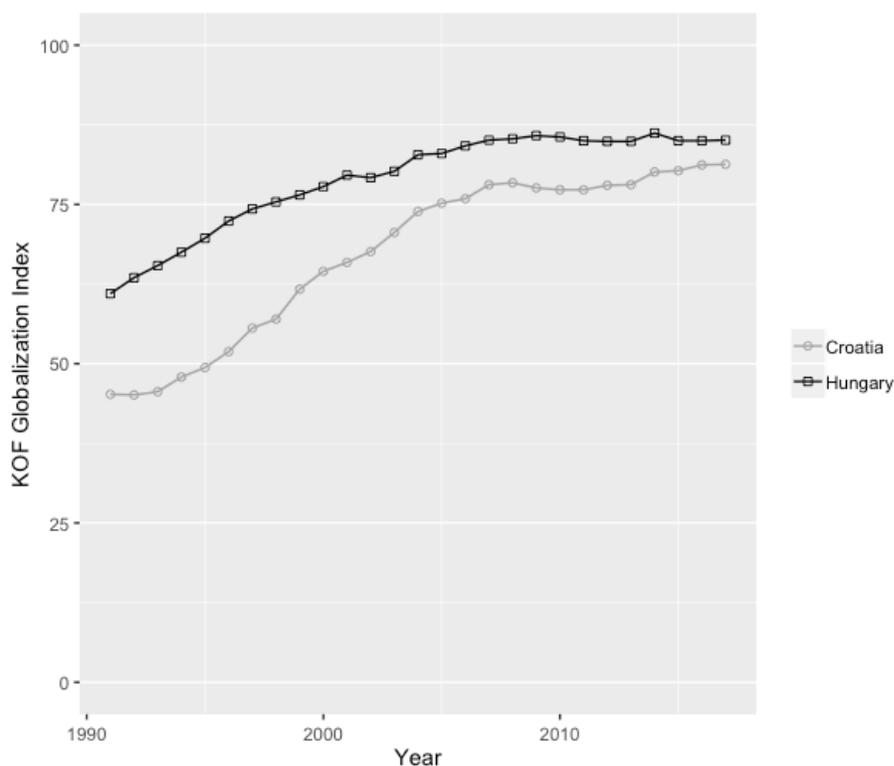
Figure 3: Stock FDI (% of GDP)



Over the past several decades, Hungary has viewed economic openness as the primary means to achieve prosperity. This view did not alter after 2010. The KOF Index, an overall measure of economic globalization, shows that Hungary and Croatia have very similar trends of integration over time. Moreover, both states have high scores of economic openness: Hungary was consistently one of the top fifteen most integrated countries in the world, including after 2010,

and Croatia is in the top 30. As evidenced in *Figure 4*, Hungary was already extremely open when Orbán took office in 2010, making it highly costly to change directions.

Figure 4: KOF Globalization Index, Hungary & Croatia



Under populist governance, Hungary made significant domestic changes that demonstrate the inward focus of populism. Despite aggressive international rhetoric, Hungary continued to act according to state core interests, which did not alter under populism: it did not alter its security commitments (*H1*), nor did not alter its foreign economic policies (*H2*).

4.2 Poland & Lithuania

Poland's right-wing populist ruling party, Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość: PiS), won the presidency and an absolute majority in parliament in 2015. PiS is a radically socially conservative and religious party with demonstrated authoritarian tendencies that employed “us versus them” rhetoric to identify threats to the Polish Catholic nation.

Since taking office, PiS has aggressively targeted the judicial branch, including replacing judges and changing appointment and court procedures in a manner that significantly curtailed the constitutional court's powers (Kelemen 2016). The most recent of these measures is a 2020 law that assigned politicians the power to fire judges whose decisions and actions they consider harmful. The legislation, nicknamed the “muzzle law” by civil society and opposition, also bars judges from questioning presidential judicial appointments.¹⁶

PiS attempted to bring the media under state control through ownership restructuring and limitations on freedom of press. Though these measures were not as successful in Poland as they were in Hungary due to the larger size of Poland's media market, between 2015 and 2020, Poland fell from #18 to #62 in the Reporters without Borders World Press Freedom Index, giving it the worst ranking in EU after Hungary.¹⁷

PiS' radical attack on domestic liberal Polish institutions has garnered significant attention and condemnation from EU bodies. But the party's populist rhetoric did not translate into changes in

¹⁶ “In Poland, Controversial Legislation Restricting Judiciary is Signed Into Law” NYT, February 4, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/04/world/europe/Poland-judiciary-law.html>

¹⁷ Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/Poland>

economic and security foreign policies. Poland remains a loyal EU member and a staunch defender of NATO, partly due to its long-standing anti-Russian agenda. Below, we analyze Poland's populist rhetoric and foreign policies, in comparison to the policies of neighboring non-populist Lithuania.

Rhetoric

Under PiS, Poland has dramatically changed its foreign policy rhetoric from previous regimes. In 2012, the government, led by the liberal Civic Platform, adopted the “Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy” (Bieńczyk-Missala 2016). The document emphasizes cooperation and identifies Poland's main strategic goal as its membership in a strong EU.¹⁸ Five years later under PiS, a new long-term strategic document portrays the world in vastly different terms: identifying a “deep and multifaceted crisis of the Western world.”¹⁹ The document identifies Russia as Poland's most significant threat. Other notable threats to the Polish nation are economic crisis, terrorism, and “uncontrollable migration flows”, which are inextricably connected. The solution to this grim situation is self-reliance rather than cooperation.

PiS emphasizes principles of sovereignty and finds itself in frequent rhetoric skirmishes with its neighbors Russia and Germany. In 2020 Polish president Andrzej Duda accused Vladimir Putin of spreading historical lies in an attempt to “erase the responsibility of Stalinist Russia for the

¹⁸ *Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy 2012-2016*, Council of Ministers

¹⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland. *Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017-2021*

start of World War II together with Nazi Germany.”²⁰ Poland also passed a law banning the use of the term ‘Polish death camps’ when referring to Nazi concentration camps that operated in occupied Poland during WWII. Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the leader of PiS, demanded that Germany pay Poland reparations for losses incurred during WWII, blamed Germany for interfering in the 2020 elections in favor of the opposition, and accused the opposition of treating Poland as an “appendage of Germany”, instead of a “great European nation”.²¹

Despite this significant rhetorical shift under populism, Poland’s foreign policy is largely continuous from previous non-populist regimes, and very similar to that of neighboring non-populist Lithuania.

Security

Like Hungary, populist Poland stresses the roles of NATO and the EU as cornerstones of its security strategy. This is a continuation of a strategy under the previous non-populist government of increased engagement with the West to counter a perceived increased Russian threat. In 2011, Poland proposed hosting NATO ballistic missile defense, and it has continued to push for this installation after PiS took power. Most recently, Poland lobbied for an increased U.S. troop presence on Polish territory: in 2018, Duda offered \$2b to defray costs of housing a full US Army division. Poland also acquired two major U.S. weapons systems.

²⁰ Mark Santora, “75 Years After Auschwitz Liberation”. NYT, January 25, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/25/world/europe/auschwitz-liberation-75th-anniversary.html>

²¹ Kaczynski in an interview to Radio Maryja, July 9, 2020. Citations in English are available at: <https://notesfrompoland.com/2020/07/10/opposition-president-would-mean-lgbt-offensive-and-poland-being-a-german-appendage-warns-kaczynski/>

Both Poland and Lithuania (and the other Baltic states) are among the few NATO member states that consistently meet the required contribution of 2% of GDP.²² In the period between 2008-2017, both populist-Poland and non-populist Lithuania experienced a growth in military spending. Poland's defense budget grew from 1.89% of GDP in 2008 to 1.97% in 2019, and Lithuania's grew from 1.13% in 2008 to 1.96% of GDP in 2019.²³ Prior to the invasion of Crimea, Lithuania's attempts to meet NATO's 2% guideline were lackluster, but after 2014, its budget increased yearly, with over 20% increases in 2017 and 2018.

Poland's other significant commitment is its EU membership. Following the 2019 EU parliamentary elections, PiS (27 MEPs) is the largest party in the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), a Eurosceptic parliamentary group. This marks a change toward Euroscepticism, though the 25 Polish opposition MEPs belong to the pro-European bloc.

In application of EU law, Poland did have a high number of open infringement cases in 2018 (70), but this marked an ongoing decline in infringement cases since 2014. In 2016 Poland had more new infringement cases than in other years, but this was not the case in the following years under populist governance.

Poland's UN voting record similarly indicates continuity in network affiliation under populism. Poland and Lithuania have voted almost identically in the UN since the mid-1990s (*Table 3*), and Polish populist governments did not alter the vote pattern. In all the key votes we examined since

²² 2019 NATO member states that meet the 2% GDP guideline: The United States, Bulgaria, Greece, UK, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania & Poland. Source: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_11/20191129_pr-2019-123-en.pdf

²³ Jane's Defense Budgets

1997 they voted together (see Table A3 in Appendix) and congruous with all other EU member states.

Table 3: UN Voting Congruency, Poland & Lithuania

UN Session	Congruency of Voting
1992-1993	0.853333
1997-1998	0.954545
2002-2003	0.962264
2007-2008	0.967742
2012-2013	0.977273
2017-2018	0.983871

System Openness

Poland is one of the fastest growing economies in Europe, yet remains dependent on its two key economic relationships, the EU and Germany, for continued prosperity. In 2018, Poland was the largest net beneficiary of EU funds, receiving €16.34b, about €11b more than it paid into the EU, which comprises approximately 3.4% of its economy.²⁴ Lithuania received €2.071b in 2018, about 4.8% of its economy. Both Poland and Lithuania rely largely on intra-EU trade (80% of Poland's exports and 59% of Lithuania's). In terms of trading partners, populist Poland shares an extremely similar trend with non-populist Lithuania. The most notable shift in trade partners in

²⁴ Data available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries/member-countries_en

both Poland and Lithuania is a decline in trade with Russia, the result of regional and European shift toward Russia due to the war in Georgia in 2008, Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Figures 5 and 6).

Figure 5: Poland Trading Partners (Share of Import %)

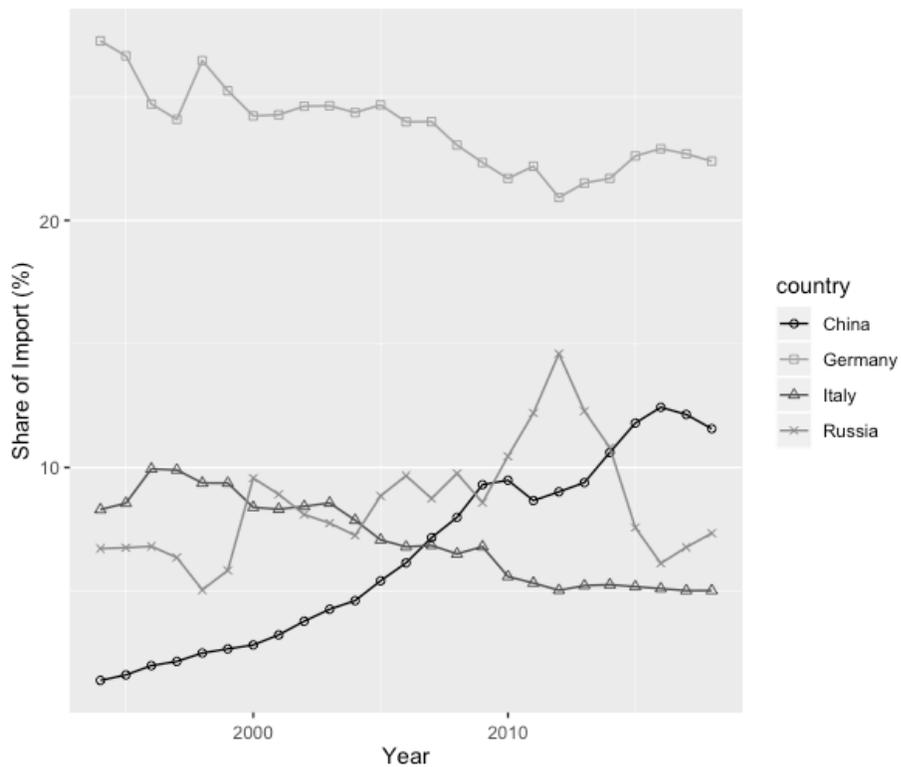
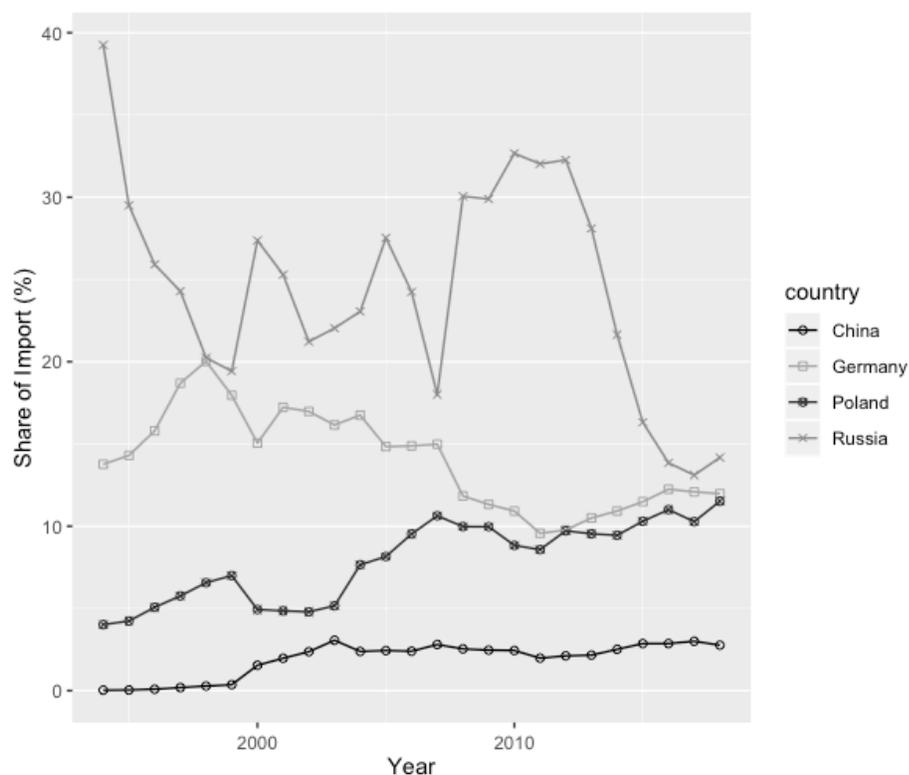


Figure 6: Lithuania Trading Partners (Share of Import %)

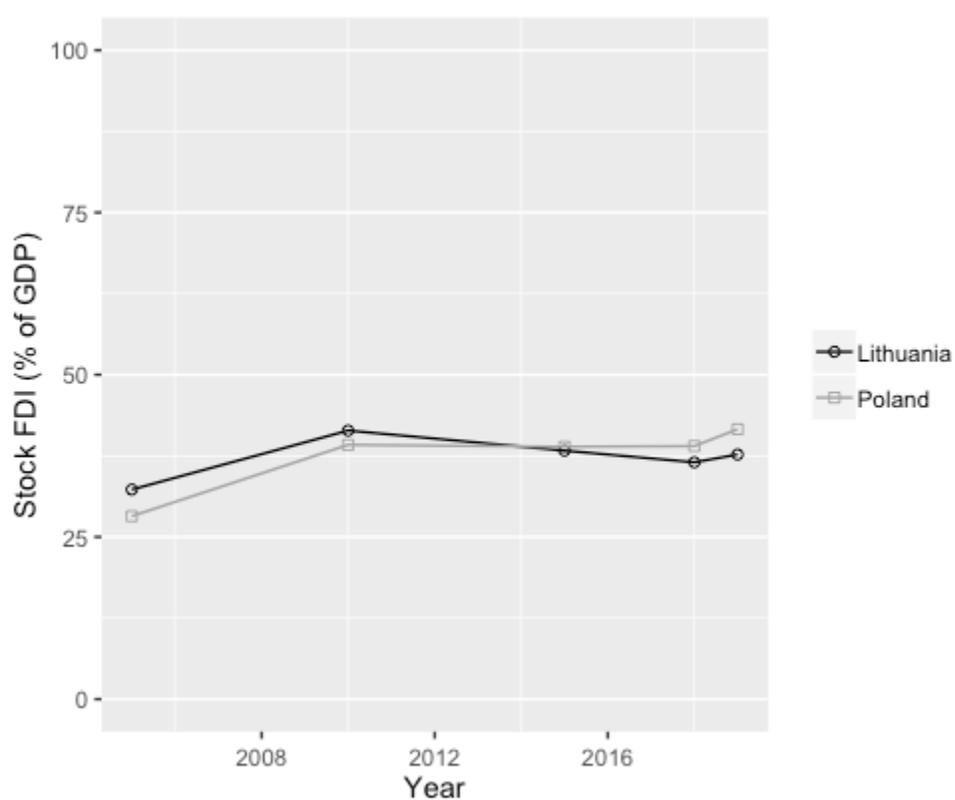


We discuss Poland's relationship with Russia, which is very similar to that of Lithuania, in the following section. In regards to China, like other Central and Eastern European states, both Poland and Lithuania joined the Belt and Road Initiative and have increased trade with China since 2015. In sum, the changes in trading partners can be entirely attributed to external global and regional events rather than populism in government.

As Poland views foreign investment as a priority, it passed several regulations to encourage foreign investment both before and after 2015. In 2015, Poland's liberal government adopted legislation increasing government discretion in strategic sector foreign investment. In 2018,

Lithuania passed a law that similarly allows the government discretion in cases of investment in security related sectors.²⁵ As discussed above, many states, populist and non-populist alike, sought to exert increased control over FDI in strategic sectors. Poland and Lithuania have nearly identical stock FDI trends (*Figure 7*).

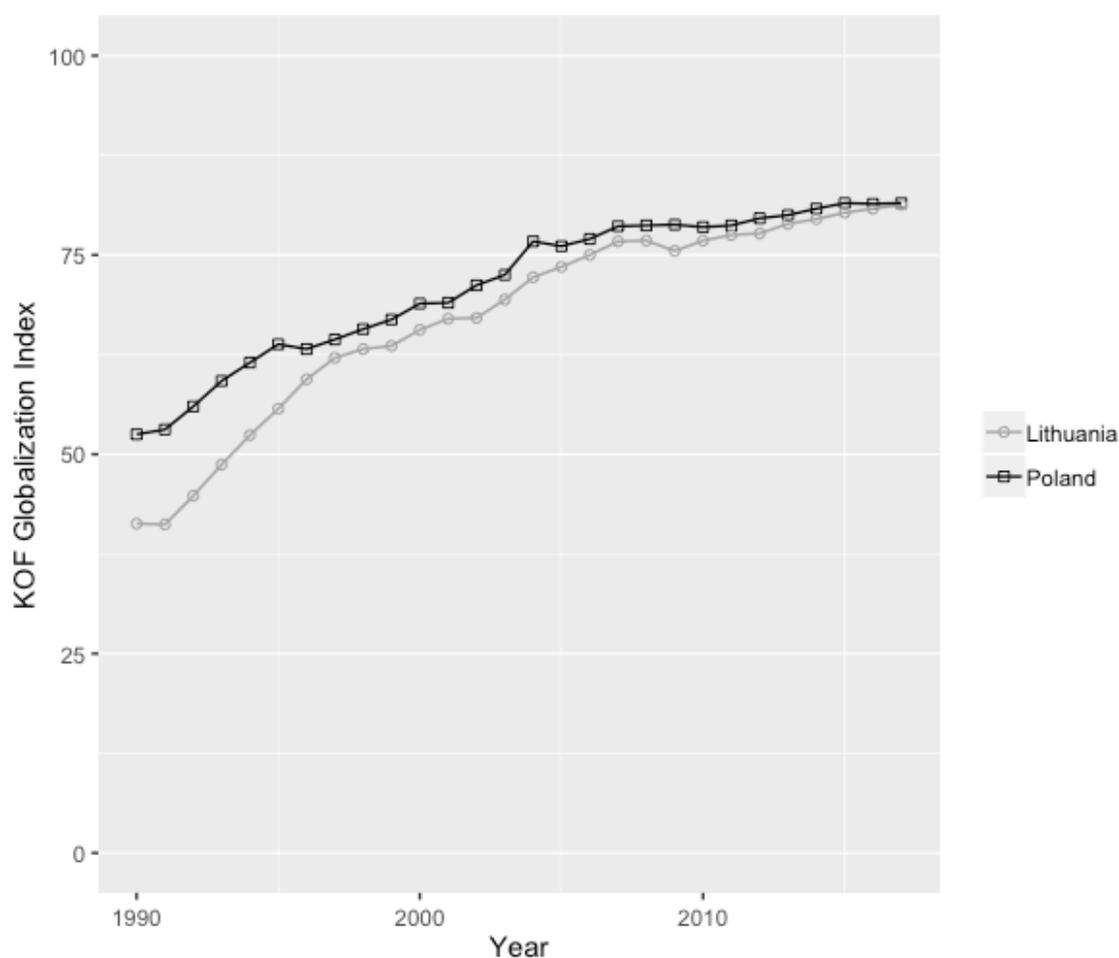
Figure 7: FDI Stock, Poland & Lithuania



²⁵ UNCTAD Investment Policy Hub: <https://investmentpolicy.unctad.org/country-navigator/171/poland>; <https://investmentpolicy.unctad.org/country-navigator/124/lithuania>

Poland views economic openness as a mean to achieve prosperity. The KOF index shows that both Poland and Lithuania are extremely economically open and have similar trends over time, despite populist governance in Poland since 2015 (*Figure 8*).

Figure 8: KOF Globalization Index, Poland & Lithuania



The populist iteration in Poland is extreme, but largely because of its attack on liberal domestic institutions. We do not find evidence for a populist change in foreign policy behavior in Poland.

Poland did not alter its security commitments, in fact, like Lithuania, it increased them (*H1*). Poland did not alter its trading partners or limit FDI compared to Lithuania (*H2*). The analysis again demonstrates the inward focus of populism, and the interdependent means by which both states sought to achieve their strategic core interests.

4.3 Hungary & Poland

Populist Hungary and Poland share similar rhetoric and political style, including a set of domestic policies intended to marginalize political rivals and undermine checks and balance institutions. In this section we examine energy security and immigration, two policy areas on which Hungary and Poland have different strategic preferences that predate the rise of populism. Through this comparison we demonstrate that strategic interests rather than populist ideology best explain both states' international behavior.

Energy Security

The EU relies on Russia for approximately a third of total energy needs, but many states in Central and Eastern Europe are highly or even completely dependent on Russian energy imports. Although the issue of European energy security did not become a major focus of Brussels' agenda until after the 2006 Ukrainian gas crisis, for years Eastern European states had warned about the security risk inherent in Russian market domination.

Theoretically, states have a choice in their pursuit of energy security. Most choose supply diversification, but others foster a close relationship with a dominant supplier to ensure a stable supply of energy. In the context of the EU, transit infrastructure set up during the Soviet period

and geographic constraints has made diversification difficult for some states. For example, states with port access can invest in liquefied natural gas (LNG) infrastructure and import from suppliers including Norway and Qatar. States without access to ports could still choose to invest in strategic storage facilities or multiple interconnectors, but they cannot turn their back on Russian supplies altogether. Because of long-term divergence in assessment of the overall Russian security threat as well as divergent structural factors, particularly after the 2009 Ukrainian gas crisis, Poland and Hungary chose opposite energy security strategies: populist Poland maintained the post-independence energy strategy, investing heavily in both supply and fuel diversification, while populist Hungary chose to strengthen its relationship with Moscow to ensure continued Russian energy supplies.

Since independence, Hungary has been energy insecure, with an overly developed heavy industrial sector, depleted domestic reserves of natural gas, and a residential sector highly dependent on gas. By 1991, natural gas constituted 35% of its primary energy share, nearly all of which was supplied by Russia. Adding to Hungary's energy insecurity was the fact that it was not a transit state for suppliers but a "dead end". Poland too was locked into energy dependence on Russia by Soviet infrastructure. However, several structural factors contributed to Poland's favorable energy situation vis-à-vis Hungary. Poland is a key transit route for Russian gas and oil supply to lucrative Western markets and thus has more leverage in contractual negotiations, it has well developed port infrastructure, and large domestic deposits of hard coal. Despite these advantages, since 2008, Poland's energy dependency rate²⁶ for all energy products increased from approximately 30% to under 50% in 2018, largely due to its rapidly declining coal industry.

²⁶ % of net imports in gross available energy, based on tonnes of oil equivalent. Source: Eurostat

Initially, both Poland and Hungary focused on diversification away from Russian imports. The 1992 Hungarian Energy Policy highlighted reducing dependency on Russia, and increasing strategic storage capacity.²⁷ Upon its accession to the EU in 2004, Hungary embraced opportunities that were emerging as the result of Union-wide energy security policy including instituting the most advanced green energy legislation in Eastern Europe. Poland, which was struggling with managing the transition away from its politically important domestic coal sector, resisted EU green energy legislation, but did focus on supply diversification. In 2007, Poland's then state owned gas conglomerate, PGNiG, initiated the construction of an LNG terminal that would allow Poland to purchase natural gas from a variety of suppliers including Norway.

In 2006 Russia turned off gas supplies to Ukraine during a contractual dispute. This frightened European consumers, some of whom were affected during the four-day shut-down. The crisis prompted the socialist-liberal Hungarian government to further invest in diversification, most notably expressing support for the Nabucco Pipeline, a pipeline project framed as a competitor to Russia's Gazprom South Stream pipeline project. Although both Nabucco and South Stream were eventually cancelled, Hungarian support for Gazprom's rival project was a major indicator of the government's energy priorities. Warsaw saw this disruption as further evidence of Russia's nefarious influence, and became one of the fiercest critics of Gazprom's Nord Stream project, which would establish a direct gas link between Russia and Germany.

²⁷ The Government of the Hungarian Republic. "The Hungarian Energy Policy," Budapest, 1992.

In November 2007 Poland's new liberal government announced that it would continue to support diversification projects, while simultaneously improving relations with Russia. The rapprochement effort was halted by the 2010 Smolensk air disaster, which killed the President of Poland Lech Kaczynski and a number of senior government officials. This incident greatly increased Warsaw's anti-Russian rhetoric, and sped up diversification projects.

The 2009 Ukrainian gas crisis caused large-scale disruptions to East and Southern Europe's natural gas supply, and highlights the structural differences between Hungary and Poland that ultimately led them to choose different energy security policies. Poland, whose supply was cut 33% during the 13-day interruption, was able to replace some lost volumes through alternative pipelines. In contrast, Hungary, who lost 45% of its supply, did not have alternative transmission systems, or even access to ports that could replace significant volumes. Moreover, Hungary's residential sector was already more dependent on natural gas for home heating, and did not have a viable domestic alternative like Poland's coal deposits.

After 2009, Hungarian energy policy shifted away from diversification. Hungarian policy makers recognized the limits of diversification: while Hungary could invest in increased interconnections to other states and increase storage and green energy capacity, they could not feasibly transition away from Russian gas in any significant quantities due to infrastructure and geographic constraints. In March 2009, just two months after the 2009 gas crisis, Hungarian PM Ferenc Gyurcsany, reversed course, expressing support for Gazprom's South Stream over the Nabucco project, arguing that Russia had sufficient gas reserves to meet Hungary's growing demands for the next 100 years. Populist Fidesz, which took power in 2010, came into office on

a platform of Euroskepticism and increased Hungarian nationalism: both of which made cooperation with EU led energy directives that would have increased Brussels' control over domestic Hungarian affairs rhetorically difficult.

Hungary adopted the *National Energy Strategy for 2030*, which placed a strategic emphasis on a special relationship with Moscow. The document states that Russia is Hungary's most important energy partner," and that Hungary should seek closer relations with Central European states that act as a buffer against Brussels.²⁸ This position took place in the context of upcoming renegotiations of Hungary's long-term gas contract (LTC) with Gazprom, scheduled for 2015.

In 2015, Russian president Vladimir Putin visited Budapest (his first visit to the EU since Russia's annexation of Crimea) to renew Hungary's LTC. As a result of the negotiations, Hungary reduced its gas costs, and increased guaranteed volumes. Controversially, Moscow also agreed to finance the \$12 billion expansion of Hungary's Paks nuclear power plant, a project that was awarded, without tender, to Russia's state atomic agency Rosatom.

In contrast, the 2009 crisis hardened Warsaw's stance on diversification and encouraged more investment in alternative fuel supply arrangements, and rhetorical position against the Russian threat. Poland completed construction of its LNG terminal in 2015. Warsaw justified the significant cost of the project (€950m) as a necessary investment to protect Polish energy security, despite the fact that imported LNG was more expensive than the pipeline gas Poland

²⁸ Hungarian Ministry of National Development, *National Energy Strategy 2030*, p. 27.

was purchasing from Gazprom. Increases in Polish utility prices were justified to the public as a necessary security investment, especially after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Prior to PiS' electoral victory in June 2015, an agreement to build Gazprom's controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline was concluded, Warsaw, which had long and vocally opposed the project, formally blocked the creation of a joint venture between Gazprom and several European energy firms, claiming that it would violate EU anti-trust laws. The project was forced to proceed under a different contractual arrangement.

Once in government, PiS maintained the key priorities of Poland's post-independence energy security strategy: it sought to continue Poland's opposition to EU climate and energy policies while simultaneously reducing dependence on Russian supplies. The main energy priority of the PiS government was opposition to Nord Stream 2 and diversification of Poland's gas supply by increasing LNG capacity and interconnectors. In 2019 PGNiG announced that it would not renew its gas supply contract with Gazprom upon its expiry in 2022, stating that its contracted LNG volumes would guarantee security of supply after 2022.²⁹

Immigration

Hungary's most significant policy change under populism has been on the issue of immigration and refugee resettlement. In 2015, a record number of over 1.3 million refugees sought asylum in Europe. Due to its geographic position on the South-East border of the EU, Hungary received the second largest number of asylum applications in Europe. In response, Hungary implemented a

²⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/pgnig-gazprom/update-1-polands-pgnig-tells-gazprom-it-plans-to-end-gas-supply-deal-in-2022-idUSL8N27V469>

series of aggressive immigration policies: migrants were held in substandard detention centers, harassed, and denied legal representation.³⁰ Hungary led Central European opposition to the EU initiative to distribute migrants across member states. Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic all voted with Hungary against the plan, arguing that it infringed on their sovereignty.

Immigration policy is a top priority for RRP as it relates to the nativist definition of the in-group and the othering of minorities, immigrants, and the liberals who support them. Hungary could implement a restrictive immigration policy because it did not threaten its strategic interests. The EU did not formally sanction Hungary's highly restrictive immigration policies, demonstrating that immigration policy is not subject to the same constraints of interdependence as other economic and security policies. As there was a general lack of consensus over immigration policy in Europe, by implementing these policies Hungary did not risk its relationship with the European Union. Second, Hungary's economy does not rely on immigration and thus unlike the Polish case below, there is no contradiction between the state's material interests and populist views on immigration.

Polish immigration policy, including under populism, is much more liberal. The 2015 migrant crisis occurred under a liberal Civic Platform government and had little effect on Poland. The liberal government did not receive asylum seekers from the Middle East, nor did it express positive views on immigration. PiS frequently employs more negative rhetoric on Muslim immigrants. Jarosław Kaczyński for example warned that migrants carry diseases.³¹ However,

³⁰ Commissioner of Human Rights of the Council of Europe report available at: <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-hungary-from-4-to-8-february-2019-by-dunja-mija/1680942f0d>

³¹ Jan Cienski "Migrants carry 'parasites and protozoa,' warns Polish opposition leader" Politico. October 14, 2015

both during and since the migrant crisis, few refugees from North Africa and the Middle East have sought asylum in Poland, making this a rhetorical rather than a policy issue. Unlike Hungary, Poland's economy is reliant on labor migration. Thus, despite the negative rhetoric on immigration from both liberals and populists, both welcomed millions of immigrants from neighboring Ukraine and Belarus. Here too strategic interests played a key role in shaping policy over populist preferences. Importantly though, the East European migrants are viewed by the Polish people as white, European, and Christian, and therefore not a target of xenophobic populist rhetoric.

Despite similarities in political style, populist Hungary and Poland's policies diverged when their strategic interests diverged. This was evident in the case of energy policy, where structural differences and variations in threat perception of Russia led to Poland to continue diversification and Hungary to choose increased dependence on Russia. In the case of immigration policy, despite the populist rhetoric, Poland chose to accept millions of immigrants to fulfill economic needs, whereas Hungary restricted its immigration policy.

5 Conclusion

Populists employ belligerent rhetoric that targets rivals, both real and manufactured, and promotes a closed system agenda. As a result, scholars and popular discourse attribute specific policy agendas to populist-led states and over-inflate their importance in the international system. Our theory suggests that RRP in government will not significantly vary in their foreign policies from similar non-populist states, and moreover, will not share similar policies with other

RRPs that have different core interests. As our analysis demonstrates, the mechanism behind the theory is twofold. First, the globalized international system is highly interdependent, reinforcing foreign policy continuity and making changes costly. Second, populism itself is unlikely to change a state's perception of its core interests. RRP is inherently inward focused, in that it mobilizes domestic populations using identity cleavages that usually have little impact on foreign policy. Populism is a thin ideology that does not prescribe a foreign policy agenda.

The populist states in our study did enact significant domestic policy change, and employed belligerent rhetoric. These two outcomes do have a significant affect on human rights, an important aspect of international behavior that we do not examine here. However, we find that RRP in power do not pursue a "populist" economic and security foreign policy orientation. When compared to non-populist led states, RRP are not more belligerent, do not enact the closed system policies that they promote, and do not generally alter their formal and informal networks. The majority of observed foreign policy changes were not unique to populist-led states. The most notable example is increased relations with China, which is the result of China's increased engagement on the world stage since the 1990s. When we compared two similar RRP states, Hungary and Poland, we found that where strategic core interests differed, so did their policies, regardless of populist governance. This supports our theory, that strategic core interests rather than populism shaped security and economic foreign policies of populist led states.

Constraints resulting from interdependence can be more or less stringent according to the level of state integration in the global economy and international institutions, and to specific economic contexts. EU members, like the states we examine, are restricted in foreign policy independence

in some areas, although as we have shown they do demonstrate significant policy variation where core interests diverge. A state's ability to adjust its foreign policy orientation will depend on its specific economic structure, which determines its level of vulnerability to external changes. For example, commodity-exporting states are more easily able to adjust trading partners and international networks because their products have generally stable demand. Great powers too are less vulnerable, as they can shape the rules of international engagement. As a result, populist leaders will be less constrained than in the cases we presented here. However, they still face systemic constraints and remain inwardly focused, and thus are unlikely to fully shift their international behavior.

Our research elucidates broader processes in the international system. First, our findings should be viewed within the context of the current multipolar structure of the international system. Because states are not sufficiently incentivized to "pick a side", there is no direct connection between leadership ideology and international orientation. Both Russia and China have displayed increasingly interventionist foreign policies that do generate new networks. However, they do not necessarily replace traditional relationships, and they are not limited to populist-led states.

Second, as globalization accelerated in the past several decades, the world experienced a rise in social pressures and demands to change the international system. These pressures are a counter movement to disembedded liberalism (Ruggie 1982; Snyder 2019) or the insulation of economic decisions from political institutions and thus from election outcomes. These two movements, globalization on the one hand and calls for protectionism on the other, are reminiscent of the *great transformations*, that according to Karl Polanyi, led to the collapse of the international

system in the interwar period (Polanyi 1944). Our paper demonstrates that populist governments do not in fact implement policies that counter globalization. Contrary to popular expectations, RRP states do not enact economically isolationist policies and do not act to change the nature of the international system in other ways.

This does not preclude such changes in the long-term. First, as Brexit demonstrates, non-populist leaders face pressures that may result in policy changes without populists in government (the rejection of an EU constitution in the early 2000s is a similar occurrence). Second, changes to the international distribution of power can reshape the strategic interests of states, which may favor new types of leaders, and it is possible that a critical mass will indeed change state incentives sufficiently to lead to overall change.

Our research also contributes to literature on populism as an independent variable. We find that understanding populism in its broadest terms, as an anti-establishment ideology, is less useful to explain international outcomes. Instead, we suggest understanding populism as a form of political strategy (Jansen 2011). The ways in which populist mobilization is sustained once in power is far more consequential to explaining the policy choices of populist leaders.

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Appendix

Table A1 Case Comparison

Country	Poland	Lithuania	Hungary	Croatia
Populism in Government ¹	2005-2007; 2015-	No	2010-	No
Population (millions) ²	37.9	2.8	9.7	4.1
GDP per capita current USD ³	15,445	19,071	16,150	14,234
EU membership	2004	2004	2004	2013
Communist past	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes but not as part of Soviet Bloc
Democracy Since - ⁴	1991	1991	1990	2000

¹ Data on populism was compiled from the following databases:

² Total Population, 2018, WBG Databank

³ GDP/cap current USD, 2018 Data, WBG Databank

⁴ Based on POLITY/IV

Table A2 Hungary and Croatia - Selected UN Votes Compared to Great Powers

	Hungary	Croatia	Russia	US	China	Germany
Session 72 2017-2018						
A/RES/72-84 2017 Work of the special committee to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territory	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/72-156 Combatting Glorification of Nazism	A	A	Y	N	Y	A
A/RES/72-13 Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/72-59 Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons	N	N	A	N	Y	N
A/RES/72-153 Report of the Human Rights Council	A	A	Y	A	Y	A
A/RES/72-189 Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/72-178 The Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A/RES/72-190 Human Rights in Crimea	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/72-191 Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/72-280 Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia	Y	Y	N	Y	A	Y
Session 67 2012-2013						
A/RES/67-20 Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/67-64 Convention on	N	N	A	N	Y	N

the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons							
A/RES/67-118 Work of the special committee to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territory	A	A	A	N	Y	A	
A/RES/67-154 Combatting Glorification of Nazism	A	A	Y	N	Y	A	
A/RES/67-182 Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	
A/RES/67-165 Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	
A/RES/67 - 219 International Migration and Development	A	A	Y	N	Y	A	
A/RES/67-217 Towards a new international economic order	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	
A/RES/67- 262 The Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	
A/RES/67-268 Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia.	Y	Y	N	Y	A	Y	
Session 62 2007-2008	During this session Hungary is not populist						
A/RES/62-51 Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons	N	N	A	N	Y	N	
A/RES/62-80 Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People	No vote recorded	A	A	N	Y	A	
A/RES/62-106 Work of the special committee to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and	A	A	A	N	Y	A	

other Arabs of the Occupied Territory						
A/RES/62-151 Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
A/RES/62-154 Combating Defamation of Religions	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
A/RES/62-168 Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/62-169 Situation of human rights in Belarus	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/62-184 International Trade and Development	N	N	A	N	Y	N
A/RES/62-220 Global Efforts to the Total Elimination of Racism	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
A/RES/62-222 Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/62-249 Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia	Y	No vote recorded	N	Y	A	A
Session 57 2002-2003						
A/RES/57-94 Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons	N	N	A	N	Y	N
A/RES/57-107 Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/57-195 Resolution against Racism	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
A/RES/57-205 Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
A/RES/57-223 Right to Development	A	Y	Y	N	Y	A
A/RES/57-230 Status of Human Rights in Sudan	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/57-232 Status of Human Rights in Iraq	Y	Y	A	Y	A	Y

Session 52 1997-1998						
A/RES/52-39C Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons	N	A	A	Y	Y	N
A/RES/52-49 Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/52-119 Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference.	N	N	N	N	Y	N
A/RES/52-133 Human Rights and Terrorism	A	Y	Y	A	Y	A
A/RES/52-136 Right to Development	A	A	Y	N	Y	A
A/RES/52-139 Situation of Human Rights in Kosovo	Y	Y	N	Y	A	Y
A/RES/52-142 Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
A/RES/52-143 Situation of Human Rights in Cuba	Y	Y	A	Y	N	Y
A/RES/52-147 Situation of Human Rights in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	Y	Y	N	Y	A	Y
A/RES/52-169F Emergency Assistance to Sudan	N	Vote not recorded	Y	N	Y	N

Table A3 Poland Lithuania Selected UN Votes Compared to Great Powers

	Poland	Lithuania	Russia	US	China	Germany
Session 72 2017-2018						
A/RES/72-84 2017 Work of the special committee to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territory	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/72-156 Combatting Glorification of Nazism	A	A	Y	N	Y	A
A/RES/72-13 Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/72-59 Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons	N	N	A	N	Y	N
A/RES/72-153 Report of the Human Rights Council	A	A	Y	A	Y	A
A/RES/72-189 Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/72-178 The Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
A/RES/72-190 Human Rights in Crimea	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/72-191 Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/72-280 Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia	Y	Y	N	Y	A	Y
Session 67 2012-2013						
A/RES/67-20 Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/67-64 Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons	N	N	A	N	Y	N

A/RES/67-118 Work of the special committee to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territory	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/67-154 Combatting Glorification of Nazism	A	A	Y	N	Y	A
A/RES/67-182 Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/67-165 Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
A/RES/67 - 219 International Migration and Development	A	A	Y	N	Y	A
A/RES/67-217 Towards a new international economic order	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
A/RES/67- 262 The Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/67-268 Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia	Y	Y	N	Y	A	Y
Session 62 2007-2008						
A/RES/62-51 Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons	N	N	A	N	Y	N
A/RES/62-80 Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/62-106 Work of the special committee to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the Occupied Territory	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/62-151 Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
A/RES/62-154 Combating Defamation of Religions	N	N	Y	N	Y	N

A/RES/62-168 Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/62-169 Situation of human rights in Belarus	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/62-184 International Trade and Development	N	N	A	N	Y	N
A/RES/62-220 Global Efforts to the Total Elimination of Racism	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
A/RES/62-222 Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/62-249 Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia	Y	Y	N	Y	A	A
Session 57 2002-2003						
A/RES/57-94 Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons	N	N	A	N	Y	N
A/RES/57-107 Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/57-195 Resolution against Racism	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
A/RES/57-205 Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
A/RES/57-223 Right to Development	A	A	Y	N	Y	A
A/RES/57-230 Status of Human Rights in Sudan	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y
A/RES/57-232 Status of Human Rights in Iraq	Y	Y	A	Y	A	Y
Session 52 1997-1998						
A/RES/52-39C Convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons	N	N	A	Y	Y	N
A/RES/52-49 Committee on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People	A	A	A	N	Y	A
A/RES/52-119 Respect for the principals of national	N	N	N	N	Y	N

sovereignty and non-interference						
A/RES/52-133 Human Rights and Terrorism	A	A	Y	A	Y	A
A/RES/52-136 Right to Development	A	A	Y	N	Y	A
A/RES/52-139 Situation of Human Rights in Kosovo	Y	Y	N	Y	A	Y
A/RES/52-142 Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
A/RES/52-143 Situation of Human Rights in Cuba	Y	Y	A	Y	N	Y
A/RES/52-147 Situation of Human Rights in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	Y	Y	N	Y	A	Y
A/RES/52-169F Emergency Assistance to Sudan	N	N	Y	N	Y	N