

Political identities: The missing link in the study of populism

Party Politics

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journals.sagepub.com/home/ppq**Carlos Meléndez and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser**

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Abstract

Political identities are crucial for understanding electoral behavior: individuals who identify with a political party behave as loyal supporters who would hardly vote for competitors old or new. Although this is an obvious observation, it has received little attention in the study of populism—a set of ideas that not only portrays established political parties as corrupt and self-serving entities but also depicts “the people” as a homogenous and virtuous community that should run the government. In this contribution, we develop a novel theory that claims that populism can thrive only when an antiestablishment political identity exists. This identity denotes an emotional and rational repulsion toward all established political parties in a given country. We test our theory by analyzing original survey data from contemporary Chile. The empirical analysis reveals not only that a limited segment of the electorate holds an antiestablishment political identity coalesced by populism but also that there is a large segment of apertisans adverse to populism. These empirical findings have important consequences for the study of populism, particularly when it comes to analyzing its emergence and electoral potential.

Keywords

Chile, comparative politics, political identities, populism, voting behavior

Introduction

From Hugo Chávez in Venezuela to Viktor Orbán in Hungary, from Marine Le Pen’s National Front in France to SYRIZA in Greece, populist actors have become increasingly influential in the last decade. Consequently, public debate over and research on populism have grown explosively. One of the most welcome developments in the academic discussion is the increasing consensus on the definition of populism. This is a major achievement; as for decades, research on populism has been obstructed by an array of definitions and conceptual traditions that do not relate to one another and thus hinder the accumulation of knowledge (Rovira Kaltwasser et al., 2017: 1). Although some authors still use idiosyncratic definitions of populism, most contemporary scholars adhere to the “ideational approach,” in which populism is conceived of as a specific set of ideas characterized by a Manichean distinction between “the people” and “the elite” as well as the defense of popular sovereignty at any cost (Hawkins, 2009; Hawkins and Kaltwasser, 2017; Mudde, 2004; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017).¹ Despite some disagreement on the extent to which the key concept should be “discourse,”

“(thin-centered) ideology,” or “worldview,” all those who follow the ideational approach tend to propose a very similar definition of populism and are familiar with the work of Ernesto Laclau (2005), whose work has been quite influential in advancing this understanding of populism (e.g. Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014). This growing conceptual consensus has fostered a much needed dialogue between scholars working on different regions in order to analyze, for instance, the ambivalent relationship between populism and democracy (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012), the impact of the Great Recession on populism (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015), and the question of how to deal with populists in government (Rovira Kaltwasser and Taggart, 2016).

At the same time, recent scholarship on populism has relied on this growing conceptual consensus to develop

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new techniques to measure the demand for and supply of populism in various locales. Some authors have empirically studied the presence of the populist set of ideas in television programs (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007), newspaper articles (Rooduijn, 2014), and speeches of political actors (Hawkins, 2009). More recently, scholars have started to measure the extent to which the populist set of ideas is widespread among voters to help explain their electoral behavior (Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins et al., 2012; van Hauwert and van Kessel, Forthcoming).

Without doubt, the growing academic consensus on the definition of populism has generated novel insights into the phenomenon. Nevertheless, little empirical research on the relationship between populism and political identities has been produced so far. This is surprising as the populist set of ideas can be seen as a direct attack on the existing political identities of a given country. After all, the populist discourse is characterized by claiming not only that established political parties are corrupt and self-serving entities but also that the time has come to support new political forces that aim to give voice to “the people.” Consider the following statement of Pablo Iglesias, the leader of the leftist populist party *Podemos* in Spain:

[...] the political parties that have had power in our country have no allegiances other than to their money and they must be changed. Democracy is not choosing between Coke and Pepsi. When something does not work, one can choose something else that does work.²

As this example reveals, populism seeks to alter the existing electoral choices by breaking the electorate’s ties of loyalty to established political parties. This means that the rise of populism depends on the degree of identification by the voting public with the existing political parties. When the latter are able to win the hearts and minds of the electorate, there is little space for the emergence of populist forces.

However, populism does not thrive automatically in contexts where partisan loyalties are declining or in flux. The emergence of populism hinges on the existence of a very peculiar political identity, namely, an antiestablishment political identity. Only when voters systematically reject all mainstream existing parties and are ready to transform this rejection into a new political identity, there is fertile soil for the rise of populist forces that attack the establishment. As we will argue, antiestablishment political identities must not be confused with positive and negative political identities: rather than a psychological predisposition for or against *one* party in particular, an antiestablishment political identity is a generalized feeling and belief that *all* mainstream political parties are untrustworthy. Therefore, in this contribution, we are interested in advancing a new theoretical approach and providing empirical data to demonstrate the link between populism and political identities.

The rest of this article is structured as follows. In the next section, we present our theory, which claims that there is a logical relationship between an antiestablishment political identity and populism. After this, we argue that contemporary Chile is an ideal case study to test our theory, being characterized by a very stable political system in which the two primary political coalitions have growing difficulties maintaining their linkage with voters and restoring their credibility after massive corruption scandals. Subsequently, we explain and discuss the empirical approach, which relies on original survey data that allow us to measure populist attitudes, political identities, and their interaction. Finally, we come back to our theory and discuss its implications for the study of both populism and political identities.

Populism and political identities

Despite the growing public debate and academic research on populism, little has been written about the emotional and rational motives of voters adhering to the populist set of ideas. In other words, there is a dearth of knowledge about the micro-foundations of populism (Hawkins et al., 2017). Although it is true that many scholars have advanced theories that help to explain why populist leaders and parties have become more successful in recent decades in countries around the world, most of these theories are not directly related to populism per se, but rather to other phenomena that in principle lead to growing support for populist forces. This is particularly true in the European debate on populism, which until recently was focused mostly on a very specific type of populist forces: the populist radical right (Mudde, 2007). In fact, the most common theories advanced in the European discussion are useful for explaining the electoral success and failure of *new* political parties in general rather than that of populist forces in particular.

By way of illustration, let us briefly present in simplified form two widespread theoretical arguments in the European debate on the electoral rise of the populist radical right: the importance of organizational resources and the strategies of competition between mainstream political parties. In an excellent book, Art (2011) shows that the electoral fortune of populist radical right parties is linked to their capacity to recruit professional staff and high-skilled activists. However, this is possible only in those countries with a strong nationalist subculture and a mild reaction by mainstream political parties and civil society actors against the populist radical right. A key example is the electoral success of the populist radical right in Austria versus its electoral failure in Germany (Art, 2009). Another excellent book is the one written by Bornschier (2010), who argues that if mainstream political parties are able to include in their programs those issues that the populist radical right is willing to politicize, the capacity of the latter to win elections is very limited. Think, for instance, of the electoral

success of the populist radical right in France versus its electoral failure in Germany (Bornschieer, 2012).

Both Art's and Bornschieer's monographs are path breaking in the sense that they offer rich empirical material and interesting theoretical arguments to explain the variation in populist radical right party success across Western Europe. Nevertheless, the arguments they develop are useful for understanding the electoral fortune of *new* political parties in general rather than that of populist forces in particular. After all, any new political party—independent of its programmatic platform and political discourse—will perform better if it has the capacity to develop organizational resources (Art's argument) and works in an environment where mainstream political parties avoid the politicization of those issues which are being raised by the newcomer (Bornschieer's argument). Therefore, we are of the opinion that it is not far-fetched to suggest that existing research does not offer many (strong) arguments to better understand why *populist* forces have been able to win the hearts and minds of voters in some places and not in others. The missing link here is the examination of political identities at the individual level and the extent to which they can facilitate or hinder the rise of populism.

Let us begin by emphasizing the peculiarity of populism: it is a set of ideas that has a clear anti-elitist impetus. Those who adhere to populism maintain that the political establishment is dishonest and governs without taking into consideration the “true” will of the people. In this sense, populist voters can support different programmatic proposals, but they have the same understanding when assigning blame for the problems that the country is facing: the establishment. A paradigmatic example of this can be found in contemporary Greece, where a populist radical *right* party (ANEL) and populist radical *left* party (SYRIZA) have been able to form a government. Both parties have very different policy positions on topics such as the welfare state and moral issues, but they share views about the existence of a corrupt elite composed of the domestic oligarchy and traditional political parties as well as international institutions and foreign governments seeking to impose policies against the will of the Greek people (Aslanidis and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2016).

Seen in this light, populist forces can thrive under specific circumstances: when voters hold an antiestablishment political identity. A mere lack of identification or trust does not necessarily lead to an abhorrence of the existing political offers. “Citizens who do not identify with existing parties may simply opt out of democratic participation, or they may cast uninspired votes for traditional parties out of some combination of civic duty, habituation, or the absence of perceived alternatives” (Roberts, 2017: 289). In other words, the very formation of an antiestablishment political identity does not come out of nowhere. Its emergence is related to the capacity of political entrepreneurs to activate antiestablishment sentiments by employing populist

language to criticize elites in power for their alleged misbehavior and blame them for the citizenry's woes. This means that without populist agency, it is unlikely that voters will automatically develop an antiestablishment political identity.³ As Huddy (2001) has rightly indicated, the saliency of specific identities depends on their construction and politicization by skillful actors. Therefore, an antiestablishment political identity is not the same than a psychological disposition. Whereas the latter is a “[...] preexisting and relatively stable tendency to respond in a particular way to certain objects or events” (Stenner, 2005: 14), the former refers to a social category that is created by political actors aiming to generate an in-group and out-group distinction based on the repudiation of the established political parties (Abedi, 2004: 12; Barr, 2009: 31; Schedler, 1996: 294).

To better understand the particularities of antiestablishment political identity, it is crucial to reflect on the notion of party identification per se. *The American Voter* became a classic reference in the analysis of elections by arguing that vote choices are driven not necessarily by the electorate's retrospective assessments of those who have been in power but rather by the electorate's loyalties to existing political parties (Campbell et al., 1960). As Achen and Bartels (2016: 267–268) have recently indicated:

[p]artisan loyalty is a common, uniquely powerful feature of mass political behavior in most established democracies. [...] Partisanship] shapes voting behavior, of course. But beyond that, each party constructs a conceptual viewpoint by which its voters can make sense of political world.

In other words, political identities should be thought of as attachments to a party, which offer their voters a mental map whereby friends and enemies are distinguished, political positions are framed, and policy preferences are structured. Understood in this way, political identities are different from clusters of political attitudes and orientations. Political identities are emotional and rational attachments to specific in-groups (i.e. political parties) that are largely crafted and shaped by entrepreneurs and organizations that invest time and energy in socializing voters into the political world (Boix, 2007: 503). By contrast, political attitudes and orientations exist at the individual level independently of the actions of political leaders and parties.⁴

Curiously, the scholarly debate has overlooked *The American Voter's* assertion that party identification can be both positive and negative (Campbell et al., 1960). Whereas positive party identification denotes a psychological attachment of an individual to a political party, negative party identification refers to a psychological repulsion for a political party (Caruana et al., 2014: 2). As Medeiros and Noel (2013) have indicated, negative party identifications are the “forgotten side of partisanship.” Although only few works have explored this phenomenon in detail,

its existence may have significant consequences for electoral and political behavior, especially in a context where positive party identifications are declining or in flux. Positive and negative partisanship should be treated separately for at least one significant reason: research into political psychology reveals that negative feelings are received and processed differently than positive ones (Caruana et al., 2014: 2). Therefore, negative partisanship may be more powerful than positive identification (Baumeister et al., 2001) and may have different consequences for explaining political behavior (Zhong et al., 2008).

As we will show, negative identities are not simply the opposite of positive identities. After all, it could be the case that voters dislike one specific identity in particular without necessarily adhering to the opposite political identity. This means that overall, negative party identification has an autonomous and coherent structure. As such, negative party identification should coalesce around ideological and/or group identity appeals, should be predicted by ideological tenets, or should act as an efficient determinant of vote choice, elements that Medeiros and Noel have empirically examined in stable two-party systems (Medeiros and Noel, 2013). For example, negative identifications have emerged as efficient predictors for vote choice in the United States. Being anti-Democrat and being anti-Republican—coalesced around conservative and liberal issues, respectively—are stronger predictors than positive partisanship for explaining legislative election votes in favor of Republicans and Democrats, respectively (Abramowitz and Webster, 2016).

In multiparty systems, negative partisanship may not have a natural or coherent counterpart (Cyr and Meléndez, 2016). These systems permit the coexistence of various political parties, and in consequence, voters who identify with a specific party do not necessarily have an aversion toward other parties. In fact, in multiparty systems, it is not unusual for voters sympathize with parties that are close in programmatic terms (e.g. Social Democratic and Green parties), but voters can also develop a negative political identity toward a specific party due to their authoritarian tendencies (e.g. the populist radical right or communist parties). For instance, it is not far-fetched to suggest that Jacques Chirac obtained approximately 80% of the vote in the second round of the 2002 presidential elections in France not because a majority of voters were loyal supporters of him and his party, but rather because a vast portion of the French electorate held a negative political identity toward the other alternative: Jean-Marie Le Pen of the French National Front (Medeiros and Noel, 2013: 1023).

It is interesting to note that when disaffection from established political parties increases, voters with negative identification with a party may exceed those with a positive identification without necessarily bolstering its rivals' support or implying the automatic surge of alternative political forces that capitalize on citizens' dissatisfaction. Yet, the

most challenging scenario occurs when negative partisan identifications converge and voters end up rejecting all existing political parties. This kind of discourse can crystallize into a new type of political identification that works as a sort of master frame that can be thought of as an anti-establishment political identity. There is probably no better example of this type of scenario than Venezuela. This country was characterized by the existence of a highly institutionalized two-party system, which over time became increasingly corrupt and detached from civil society (Cyr, 2017; Hawkins, 2009; Morgan, 2011). As a consequence, the two established parties experienced growing difficulties winning the hearts and minds of voters, facilitating the rise of Hugo Chávez, a populist outsider with a radical discourse against the two preponderant parties and who ended up constructing a new political regime in the gray area between authoritarianism and democracy (Hawkins, 2016).

Although the notion of antiestablishment political identity sounds intuitively reasonable, its characteristics have not been explored deeply in either theoretical or empirical terms. In contrast to a regular negative political identity, which is characterized by the rejection of one specific party, an antiestablishment political identity consists of the repudiation of *all* dominant political parties simultaneously. In other words, people who hold multiple negative partisanship might end developing an antiestablishment identification that expresses the systematic rejection of the main options that the political system provides. However, as we stated before, this scenario does not occur spontaneously, but rather when political entrepreneurs employ the populist set of ideas to attack established political parties and construct a new electoral vehicle that does not necessarily rely on traditional ideological appeals (e.g. socialism or liberalism). After all, the populist set of ideas is characterized by attacking “the establishment” and defending the will of “the people.”

In order to develop our theoretical contribution to anti-establishment identification, we build upon Rose and Mishler's (1998: 218–224) classification of three types of political identities: open partisanship, negative partisanship, and closed partisanship. First, open partisans are individuals committed to a political party and who do not identify a party they reject. For example, they are positive identifiers who support party A and are indifferent to other political parties. Second, negative partisans are individuals who can name a party they would never vote for but are without a positive party identification. For instance, people who reject party B but do not endorse party A. Third, closed partisans are individuals who simultaneously develop a negative as well as a positive party identification. Let say, people who reject party B and, at the same time, endorse party A. Building on this seminal classification, we propose adding a fourth type, an “antiestablishment” identification on individuals who hold two or more negative partisanships

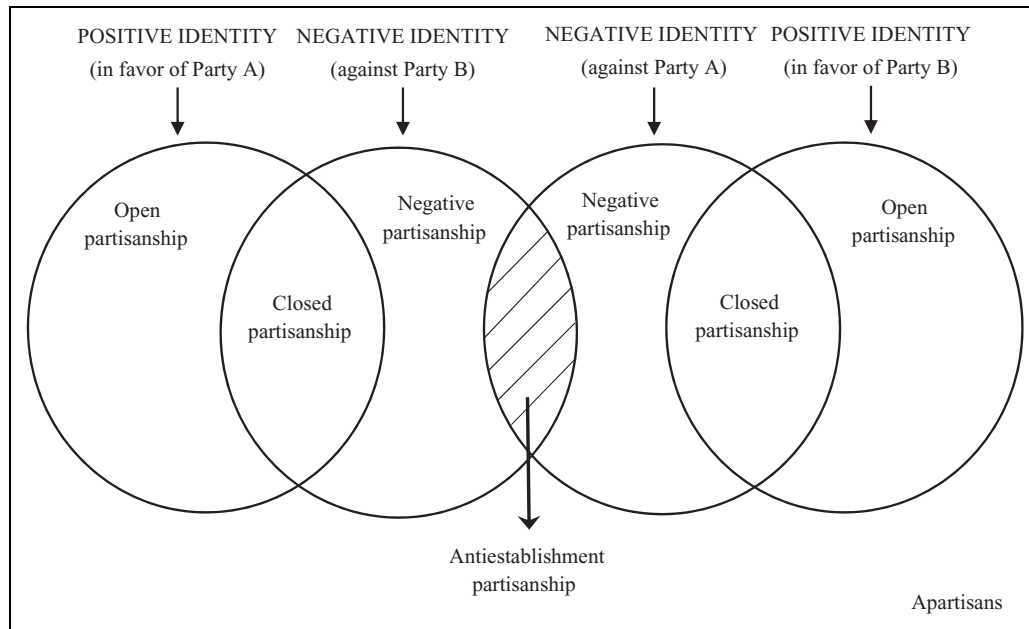


Figure 1. Different types of partisanship.

(depending on the characteristics of the party system) and lack any positive partisanship. Individuals who have one exclusive negative identification remain negative partisans.

It is worth indicating that individuals holding antiestablishment identifications are different from apartisans. While the former possess multiple negative identifications, the latter hold neither positive nor negative political identifications. According to various authors (e.g. Dalton, 2013; Klar and Krupnikov, 2016; Mair, 2013; Papadopoulos, 2013), structural changes affecting contemporary societies have led to decreasing levels of partisan identification across the world. Although this is not the place to delve deeply into this, it is important to note that there are two different understandings of apartisanship. On the one hand, apartisans can be thought of as voters who are not hostile but rather indifferent toward the existing political parties and consequently have little interest in politics, showing declining levels of electoral participation (Webb, 1996: 368). On the other hand, apartisans can be seen as voters interested in politics and behave thus as sophisticated independents, who judge the existing political offers and pick the best option regardless of the party brand (Dalton, 2013: 8). As we will see later on, these two different interpretations of apartisanship are not necessarily incompatible and are indeed quite useful in analyzing the relationship between populist attitudes and apartisanship.

In Figure 1, based on a two-party system setting, we graphically present the five types of partisanship—open, negative, closed, antiestablishment identities, and apartisans—discussed here. In the next section, we apply this classification to Chile, a country where rejection of the two traditional political coalitions (popularly known as “duopolio,” i.e. the duopoly) has increased in recent years.

Case selection: Why Chile?

As we explained above, our theory maintains that populist forces can become electorally successful only when an antiestablishment political identity is preponderant across the population. The reason for this is simple: as populism claims that the establishment is corrupt, it gains traction when significant swaths of the population are of the opinion that the existing political parties are dishonest and do not represent the “true” will of the people. Based on this theory, Chile represents an ideal negative case: a country in which we would expect populist forces to be prominent, but they are not, despite attempts to activate antiestablishment appeals in favor of populist candidates, such as Roxana Miranda in the 2013 presidential elections (Aguilar and Carlin, Forthcoming). Therefore, this case selection relies on the possibility principle, which “holds that only cases where the outcome of interest is *possible* should be included in the set of negative cases; cases where the outcome is *impossible* should be relegated to the set of uninformative and hence irrelevant observations” (Goertz and Mahoney, 2006: 178–179).⁵ That said, in this section, we are interested in explaining why Chile would be considered a place where the electoral success of populist forces is indeed possible.

In the academic literature on Latin American politics, Chile is normally characterized by the existence of a stable political system, with high levels of programmatic representation (e.g. Kitschelt et al., 2010; Levitsky and Roberts, 2011). After the transition to democracy in 1989, the country saw the consolidation of two political coalitions that fostered a process of political alignment along the left–right

axis of programmatic competition (Roberts, 2015). On one side is “Concertación” (or more recently “Nueva Mayoría”), a coalition of center-left political parties that were opposed to the Pinochet dictatorship and have been implementing gradual reforms of some elements of the inherited neoliberal model. On the other side, “Alianza” (or more recently “Chile Vamos”) consists mainly of two major center-right political parties that, because of their connections with the authoritarian regime and the business community, have been focused on protecting the inherited neoliberal model. As various scholars have pointed out, the rise of these two political coalitions is related to the formation of a democratic/authoritarian cleavage that was forged during the dictatorship, generating a split between supporters versus opponents of Pinochet’s regime and its legacy (e.g. Tironi and Agüero, 1999; Torcal and Mainwaring, 2003).⁶

Since the transition to democracy, Chile has been portrayed as a “poster child” for political stability and economic modernization. The political game is dominated by these two coalitions. Neither populist actors nor political outsiders are widespread and their capacity to win elections is very limited. Not coincidentally, Chile has one of the lowest levels of political volatility in Latin America (PNUD, 2014: 273). Moreover, the country has experienced sustained economic growth over the last two decades. While at the beginning of the 1990s, almost 40% of the population was living under the poverty line, this number decreased to approximately 8% in 2013 (Castiglioni and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2016: 4). Macroeconomic stability has been a pillar of every government and technocratic actors play a major role in policy design. The very fact that Chile’s current Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita at purchasing power parity is not far below those of Greece and Portugal, which lie at the bottom of the scale in Western Europe, shows the robustness of the country’s economy.

This short summary of Chile’s economic and political development after the end of Pinochet’s dictatorship gives little ground to think that populist forces could become preponderant. However, the country has seen the rise of various challenges to political representation in the last few years. While support for the democratic regime is quite stable, the levels of satisfaction with democracy have been declining steadily (PNUD, 2014: 54–55). In addition, there is little doubt that despite economic growth and political stability, inequality continues to be a major problem. Chile has the highest level of income inequality after government taxes and transfers among The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries and this level has experienced little change since 1989 (PNUD, 2017: 261). Citizens are certainly not pleased with this situation. Social movements and other actors have begun to politicize the issue of inequality, progressing to the point that the country has seen the outbreak of various waves of contention in the last few years and political parties seem no longer able

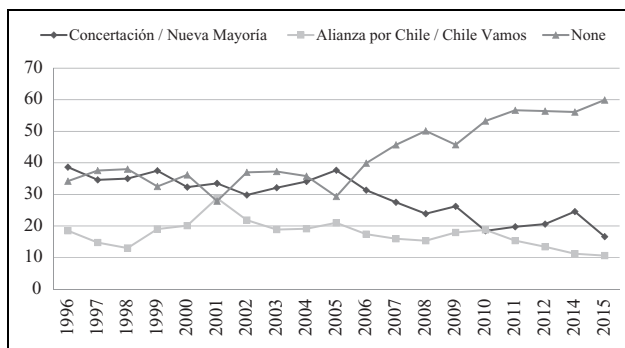


Figure 2. Identification with political coalitions in Chile, 1996–2015 (Centro de Estudios Públicos surveys).

to channel these new demands adequately (Donoso and von Bülow, 2017). It is not a coincidence that in the last parliamentary elections, four leaders of the 2011 student protests were elected to the lower chamber of congress.

What it is more interesting for the purpose of this article is that the two dominant political coalitions are having growing difficulties winning over voters. Although it is true that they dominate the political game, it is important to recognize that positive identification with them has been declining quickly (see Figure 2). Whereas in the mid-1990s, 35% and 15% of the population identified with the center-left and center-right coalition, respectively, this number declined to 17% and 11% in 2015. Considering trends in other Latin American countries, this degree of decline in positive partisanship is quite astonishing (PNUD, 2014: 287). Looking at it from the other direction, from the mid-1990s until today, the number of voters who do not identify with any political coalition in Chile rose from 38% to 60%.

Last but not least, several corruption scandals touching different actors in the political establishment exploded into public light in 2015, prompting investigations by the public prosecutor’s office (Matamala, 2015). To begin with, it came to the light that the son of the current president, Michelle Bachelet, was involved in a real estate speculation deal. Moreover, one of the most important business holdings in the country, Grupo Penta, has been accused of not only developing a tax evasion scheme but also of illegally financing one of the two main right-wing parties of the country. In addition, in 2015, it also surfaced that a leading mineral company controlled by a son-in-law of Pinochet has been financing various political parties. In summary, despite good indicators in terms of economic growth and political stability, there is little doubt that Chile has been experiencing growing challenges to democratic representation (Castiglioni and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2016). The political establishment is seen as increasingly illegitimate by large swaths of population and, in consequence, there are good reasons to expect that populist forces could become electorally successful. Indeed, after the transition to

Table 1. Factor analysis of populism questions.

Variable		Factor	Uniqueness	Mean ^a
P4I_A	The politicians in Congress need to follow the will of the people	0.73	0.46	3.93
P4I_B	The people not the politicians should make our most important policy decisions	0.71	0.48	3.69
P4I_C	The political differences between the people and the elite are larger than the differences among the people	0.67	0.54	3.83
P4I_D	I'd rather be represented by an ordinary citizen than an experienced politician	0.61	0.62	3.50
P4I_E	Politicians talk too much and take too little action	0.66	0.56	4.35
P4I_F	What people call "compromise" in politics is really just selling out on one's principles	0.59	0.65	3.62
Eigenvalue		2.66		

Note: Factor loadings over 0.50 highlighted.

^aThis column presents the mean for each of the populism questions. It is worth indicating that responses were gauged on a five-point scale (1 = *Very much agree* and 5 = *Very much disagree*) and to make the analysis simpler, we have reversed the values of these items.

democracy, some political actors have tried to capitalize on these antiestablishment sentiments for their presidential candidacies (e.g. Marco Enríquez-Ominami, Roxana Miranda, and Franco Parisi in the 2013 elections), collectively obtaining no more than 20% of valid votes since the 1990s.

Empirical evidence and discussion

Our empirical analysis relies on a set of questions included in the Universidad Diego Portales (UDP) face-to-face national survey conducted at the homes of respondents in October 2015; 1302 people were surveyed with probability proportional to population, using a sample that was stratified by region and zone (urban/rural); the resulting margin of error is 2.5% with 95% confidence interval and the design effect is 1.15; and the response rate was 65.4%. To measure populist attitudes, we rely on an inventory developed by various scholars (Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins et al., 2012; van Hauwert and van Kessel, Forthcoming). Table 1 gives results of a factor analysis of the results from the UDP survey in Chile. All six "populist" questions load heavily on the coalescing factor. To facilitate our analysis in the rest of this article, we use these

survey questions to create the respective index of populist attitudes. The index is the simple arithmetic mean of each of the six questions that loaded heavily in the factor analysis: P4I_A – P4I_F.

Building on an innovative measurement of positive and negative partisanship already tested in the Andean countries (Cyr and Meléndez, 2016), we propose calculating attachments to and rejections of each/both coalition(s): the "Nueva Mayoría" (center-left coalition) and the "Alianza" (center-right coalition). First, we label individuals positive identifiers—or "open partisans" per Rose and Mishler's (1998) classification—if they meet a demanding condition: if they would *definitively* vote for a candidate of the same coalition ("Nueva Mayoría" or "Alianza") in each of the three elections asked (for local government, House of Representatives and Senate). Second, we consider individuals as holding negative identities if they meet a similarly strict condition: if they would *definitively not* vote for a candidate of the same coalition ("Nueva Mayoría" or "Alianza") in each of the three elections asked. Third, if negative identifiers are categorized *simultaneously* as "anti-Nueva Mayoría" and "anti-Alianza," they are classified as expressing an antiestablishment identity. Finally, respondents who do not hold any positive or negative partisanship are characterized as "apartisans."⁷ Other categories may be also displayed by our operationalization (e.g. closed partisans), but for the purpose of the article, we focus on intense positive and negative partisanship.⁸

According to the proposed operationalization, 4.7% of Chileans belong to the group of "open Alianza" (or positive identifiers pro-Alianza) and 7.9% to "open Nueva Mayoría" (or positive identifiers pro-Nueva Mayoría). Negative identifiers are distributed in "anti-Alianza" (26.3%) and "anti-Nueva Mayoría" (21.8%); 12.9% of Chileans can be characterized as holding an antiestablishment identity and, finally, "apartisans" sum up 38.6% of the respondents (see Figure 3).⁹

As we explained previously, negative partisanship is not a mere rejection of specific party brands. Opposition to particular political parties is not the only defining element of negative identities. Theories of negative party identification maintain that ideology should be a significant determinant of "anti-identifiers" (Rose and Mishler, 1998). This expectation is reflected in negative party identifications that exist in Chile. Survey data suggest that most categories of negative identifiers—with relation to "Nueva Mayoría" and "Alianza"—are significantly explained by individuals' ideological self-placement. We performed binary logit models to establish the effect of ideology on positive partisans (in favor of Alianza and Nueva Mayoría), negative partisans, antiestablishment identifiers, and apartisans. Each political identification—our dependent variables—has been treated as a categorical dichotomy variable (e.g. anti-Nueva Mayoría identifiers as 1, and the rest of the sample as 0). We considered the analysis of ideological

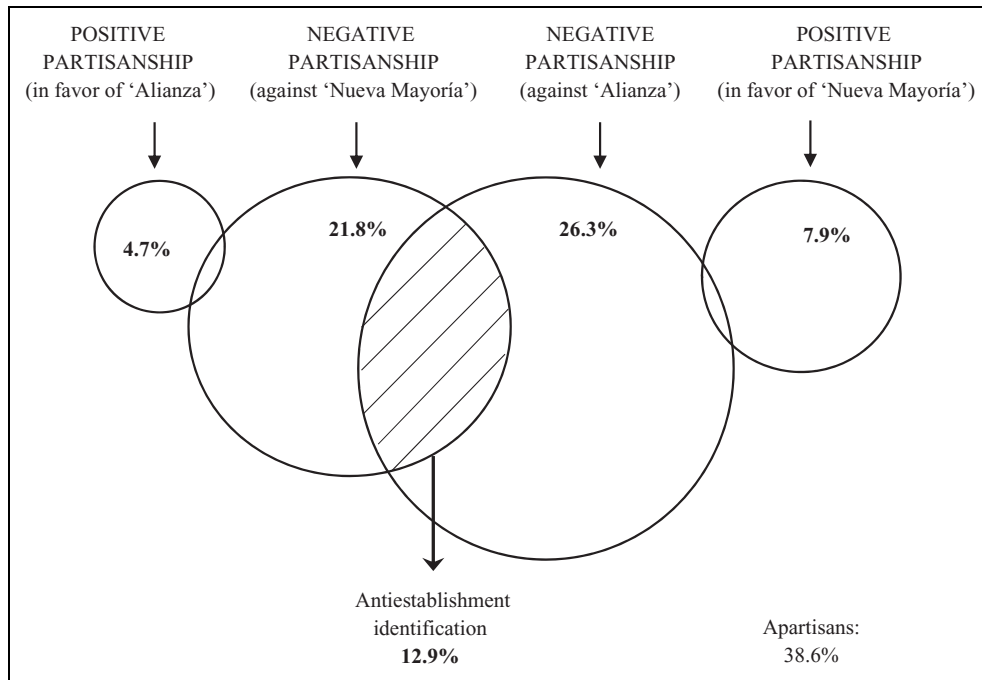


Figure 3. Different types of partisanship and their relative size in contemporary Chile.

influence on partisanship in two stages. First, we treated individuals' ideological considerations as a binary variable (1 for "ideological" individuals capable of placing themselves on the ideological spectrum) and calculated its impact on partisanship and apartisanship (model 1 through model 6). Second, we treated ideological self-positioning as a continuum (from extreme left—1—to extreme right—10—) and analyzed its impact on both positive and negative partisans as well as apartisans who can perceive themselves in ideological terms (model 7 through model 12).¹⁰

As expected, Chileans that hold positive partisanship (in favor of Alianza and Nueva Mayoría) and negative identifiers against Alianza are explained by their ideological background, controlling by regular socio-demographic variables.¹¹ Tables report coefficients and odds ratios, that is, the ratio of the odds of being an identifier (positive, negative, antiestablishment, or an apartisan) to the odds of not being that identifier, respectively (see Table 2).¹² Followers of Alianza (model 1) and Nueva Mayoría (model 2) and anti-Alianza identifiers (model 3) are ideological voters for whom the left–right continuum makes sense. For example, being able to self-position oneself in the ideological realm increases the odds of being a follower of Alianza by 2.2 times relative to the odds of not being an Alianza follower (model 1). Anti-Nueva Mayoría identifiers cannot be explained by the ideological/nonideological division (model 4). Moreover, individuals classified as holding an antiestablishment identity or just as apartisans tend to belong to the nonideological camp (models 5 and 6). This means that being able to identify oneself in ideological terms reduces the odds of holding an antiestablishment

identity in 0.6 times and reduces the odds of being apartisan in 0.3 times relative to the odds of not being an antiestablishment identifier or not being apartisan, respectively. Most of these relationships are statistically significant at a 99% confidence interval—antiestablishment identities are explained by the ideological/nonideological division at 90% statistical significance.¹³

When treating ideological self-perception as a continuum, it explains positive and negative partisanship with statistical significance, controlling by regular sociodemographic variables (see Table 2). As anticipated, an ideological self-positioning to the right increases the probability of having positive Alianza identification (model 7) and anti-Nueva Mayoría identification (model 10). One unit move to the right in the ideological scale increases the odds of being follower of Alianza by 1.7 times and increases the odds of being anti-Nueva Mayoría by 1.3 times relative to the odds of not being follower of Alianza or not being anti-Nueva Mayoría, respectively. In the same vein, an ideological self-positioning to the right decreases the odds of being a Nueva Mayoría identifier (model 8) and an anti-Alianza identifier (model 9). One unit move to the right in the conventional left–right scale decreases the odds of being follower of Nueva Mayoría by 0.7 times and decreases the odds of being anti-Alianza by 0.6 times relative to the odds of not being a follower of Nueva Mayoría or not being anti-Alianza, respectively. All these models (from model 7 through model 9) are statistically significant at 99% confidence interval, with McFadden's pseudo R^2 between 36% and 49%. Ideological self-perception fails at explaining antiestablishment identity (model 11) and

Table 2. Ideological self-positioning as a predictor for positive, negative, anti-establishment identifications, and apartisans.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	AL pos id	NM pos id	AL neg id	NM neg id	Anti Est	Apartisan
Ideology (yes/no)	0.809** (2.247)	1.065*** (2.901)	0.371** (1.449)	-0.151	-0.382* (0.682)	-1.102*** (0.332)
Income	0.414* (1.513)	-0.150	-0.278*** (0.757)	0.049	-0.125	0.191* (1.211)
Sex (female = 1)	0.300	-0.037	-0.178	-0.190	-0.313	-0.033
Age	0.015	0.024*** (1.024)	0.005	-0.005	-0.012* (0.988)	-0.003
Education	0.026	0.056	0.087* (1.091)	0.052	-0.004	-0.106** (0.900)
Constant	-5.341*** (0.005)	-4.281*** (0.014)	-1.281*** (0.278)	-1.176*** (0.308)	-0.783* (0.457)	0.375
McFadden's Pseudo R ²	0,05	0,05	0,01	0,007	0,02	0,1
N	1297	1297	1297	1297	1297	1297
Variables	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
	AL pos id	NM pos id	AL neg id	NM neg id	Anti Est	Apartisan
Ideology (continuum)	0.552*** (1.736)	-0.299*** (0.742)	-0.452*** (0.637)	0.279*** (1.321)	-0.123	-0.020
Income	0.311	-0.106	-0.164	0.190	-0.018	0.151
Sex (female = 1)	0.188	-0.147	-0.148	-0.366	-0.503* (0.604)	-0.037
Age	0.021* (1.020)	0.025*** (1.025)	0.01 (1.013)	-0.006	-0.011	-0.010* (0.990)
Education	-0.016	0.071	0.101* (1.106)	-0.058	-0.081	-0.060
Constant	-7.686*** (0.00001)	-1.991*** (0.137)	0.574	-2.460*** (0.085)	-0.375	-0.426
McFadden's Pseudo R ²	0.44	0.36	0.49	0.49	0.53	0.54
N	701	701	701	701	701	701

Note: Numbers reported are logistic coefficients. When these are significant, odds ratios are calculated and presented in parenthesis. NM: Nueva Mayoría; AL: Alianza.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 3. Populism as a predictor for positive, negative, and anti-establishment identifications, and apartisans.

Variables	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15	Model 16	Model 17	Model 18
	AL pos id	NM pos id	AL neg id	NM neg id	Anti Est	Apartisan
POPindex	0.193	0.210	0.312*** (1.366)	0.293*** (1.340)	0.446*** (1.562)	-0.334*** (0.716)
Income	0.446* (1.562)	-0.103	-0.261*** (0.770)	0.069	-0.122	0.212
Sex (female = 1)	0.276	-0.064	-0.185	-0.194	-0.288	0.020
Age	0.016* (1.016)	0.025*** (1.025)	0.006	-0.005	-0.012* (0.988)	-0.004
Education	0.052	0.087	0.101** (1.106)	0.043	-0.018	-0.139*** (0.870)
Constant	-5.803*** (0.003)	-4.662*** (0.009)	-2.404*** (0.090)	-2.383*** (0.092)	-2.676*** (0.069)	1.375** (3.949)
McFadden's Pseudo R ²	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04
N	1277	1277	1277	1277	1277	1277

Note: Numbers reported are logistic coefficients. When these are significant, odds ratios are calculated and presented in parenthesis. NM: Nueva Mayoría; AL: Alianza.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

apartanship (model 12). Overall, we know that anti-establishment identifiers and apartisans belong to the non-ideological camp. If left-right ideological considerations fail to explain around 50% of Chilean electorate, which principles or ideas coalesce them?

The lack of statistical relationship between ideological self-positioning in left-right terms and antiestablishment identity is not surprising, especially if the latter is associated with populist appeals.¹⁴ The empirical evidence supports our theoretical conceptualization of populism as an alternative set of ideas that might express voters' preferences beyond by their traditional ideological tenets. Accordingly, in models 13 through 18, we replaced

ideological self-placement (see models from 7 to 12) by the Populist Index presented above. We performed binary logit models to establish the effect of populist attitudes (measured as the index presented) on positive identifiers, negative partisans, antiestablishment identifiers, and apartisans (each of them treated as categorical binary-dependent variables). On the one hand, we found that populist appeals do not have a statistically significant effect on Alianza's (model 13) and Nueva Mayoría's followers (model 14). On the other hand, populist appeals do predict anti-Nueva Mayoría and anti-Alianza respondents (models 15 and 16, respectively). Moreover, Table 3 reveals that holding populist sentiments significantly increases the odds

of developing an antiestablishment identification (which was not explained by traditional ideological discrimination) and significantly diminishes the odds of being apartisan (which was not explained by ideological self-positioning). One unit increase on the populist index increases the odds of being antiestablishment identifier by 1.5 times relative to the odds of not being antiestablishment identifier and a one unit increase in the populist index decreases the odds of being apartisan by 0.7 times relative to the odds of not being apartisan. Populist sentiments represent the ideological glue that can articulate antiestablishment identifications and repel individuals lacking positive and negative identifications, explaining the political (de)attachments of little more than 50% of the electorate.

The empirical analysis reveals that conventional left–right ideological considerations play an important role for individuals who hold positive and negative identifications, but they are weakly associated with antiestablishment identifiers. Instead, the populist set of ideas is intrinsic to those with negative partisanship and for those disaffected with the political establishment and can also explain individuals who do not have any positive or negative identification. Ideological tenets—measured in the traditional left–right scale—and populist appeals act as mirror images: they both can explain negative partisanship, but while the former explain those also holding positive identifications, the latter explain those who reject the political establishment or simply those who do not identify (positively or negatively) with any political project.

Why do apartisans not have an inclination toward populist attitudes? As we stated above, this can be explained by the two different and complementary meanings of the very concept of apartisanship. On the one hand, according to the “apathetic” understanding (Webb, 1996), apartisans are not much interested in politics, so it should not surprise us that they are inclined to reject the populist set of ideas. After all, those who support populism believe in popular sovereignty and want to replace the establishment with a new political alternative. On the other hand, according to the “sophisticated” understanding (Dalton, 2013), apartisans are deeply interested in politics but they behave as independent voters who evaluate existing offers. In this very process of evaluation, populism should be of little help, since it provides a Manichean and moral language that does not facilitate making rational judgments about existing political offers.

In summary, the data presented and discussed here permit us to conclude that negative partisanship and apartisanship are prevalent in Chilean politics. Negative identifiers (35.2%)¹⁵ and apartisans (38.6%) greatly outnumber positive followers of the main coalitions (12.6%). Ideological considerations explain a modest share of the population (positive and negative partisans), while populist appeals can better explain individuals who hold negative partisanship, “double” negative partisanship, or lack any

partisanship. We have shown that holding populist attitudes increases the odds of advancing an antiestablishment political identity and, at the same time, decreases the odds of being apartisan. Interestingly, populism does not explain the existence of positive identifications. In other words, being a follower for the “Nueva Mayoría” or “Alianza” precludes the activation of populist sentiments.

Conclusion

Despite the growing academic and public interest in populism, no research has yet analyzed the link between populism and political identities. In this article, we address this research gap not only by developing a novel theory about the relationship between different types of partisanship and populist attitudes but also by providing empirical data to substantiate the theory. While it is true that we have examined only one case study, we hold that one can draw important lessons from this article for the study of both political identities and populism. Therefore, we would like to finish our article by highlighting its main contributions.

First, there is a growing amount of scholarship on democratic malaise across the world, which usually argues that political parties are experiencing increasing challenges and are losing their capacity to represent the ideas and interests of the electorate (Dalton, 2013; Klar and Krupnikov, 2016; Mair, 2013; Papadopoulos, 2013). While we share the general idea that political parties are under stress in various countries and regions, we also think that they continue to provide a link between the society and the state. However, to better understand the role of political parties today, it is crucial to analyze political identities. This means going back to the classic study *The American Voter* to examine positive and negative partisanship (Abramowitz and Webster, 2016; Campbell et al., 1960; Medeiros and Noel, 2013; Rose and Mishler, 1998). While the former denotes voters who are loyal supporters of a given party, the latter refers to voters who reject a specific party. As this contribution shows, by considering these two sides of partisanship, it is possible to get a much more accurate picture of how people relate to the political world.

Second, we propose a conceptual and empirical innovation by arguing that in addition to positive and negative political identities, one can take into account the existence of an antiestablishment political identity. This last signifies an emotional and rational repulsion toward every established political party in a given country. Although the very notion of “anti-establishment parties” has been gaining traction in the last few years (Abedi, 2004; Barr, 2009; Schedler, 1996), as far as we know, no study has developed either a conceptualization or a measurement of antiestablishment partisanship. In this contribution, we address this research gap by proposing a concept and measurement that works well in our case study and therefore could be employed by others in future research.

Third, this conceptualization of political identities allows us to distinguish two very different political profiles among non-partisans: on the one hand, antiestablishment voters who are politically interested and prone to populist appeals and on the other hand, apartisans who are apathetic and disinterested individuals who reject any political narrative, including populism. Although these two groups share their lack of identity with established parties, antiestablishment identifiers are politicized citizens, while apartisans are politically disengaged. Interestingly, this empirical finding resonates with the work of van Hauwert and van Kessel (Forthcoming), who in their analysis of nine European countries find that populist party supporters are not politically apathetic but rather have high levels of political interest.

Fourth, those who study populism have so far devoted little attention to its micro-foundations. Do people actually have populist sentiments? To answer this question, scholars have started to measure the extent to which the populist set of ideas is present at the individual level and whether these measures correlate with preferences for specific political forces (Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins et al., 2012; van Hauwert and van Kessel, Forthcoming). In this article, we employ a set of survey items, already applied in other countries, to measure populist attitudes with the aim of examining the link between populism and positive vis-à-vis negative partisanship. Our empirical findings reveal that left-right ideology better structures positive partisanship than does populism in the case study under scrutiny. At the same time, the populist set of ideas better explains both antiestablishment partisanship and apartisanship in comparison to ideological self-positioning.

Last, but not least, the main purpose of our article is integrating political identities into the study of populism. We advance a theory that only when voters systematically reject all mainstream parties and are ready to transform this rejection into a new political identity is there fertile soil for the rise of populist forces that attack the establishment. However, this situation does not arise spontaneously. It comes about with the emergence of skillful political actors, who employ the populist set of ideas to blame the establishment for the problems that “the people” are facing. In other words, without populist agency, it is difficult to see the rise of an antiestablishment political identity. This means that the larger the size of an antiestablishment identity, the easier it is for populist actors to obtain strong electoral results. That understood, the reason why contemporary Chile has not experienced the emergence of electorally strong populist contenders lies partly in the fact that only a limited segment of the voting public holds an antiestablishment identity.

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Notes

1. For a detailed discussion of this conceptualization, see Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013a, 2013b, 2017).
2. Interview with Pablo Iglesias published in *La Nueva España* on May 5, 2014.

[...] Los partidos que han tenido poder en nuestro país no tienen más patria que su dinero y hay que cambiarlos. La democracia no es tener que elegir entre Coca-Cola y Pepsi. Cuando algo no funciona se puede elegir otra cosa que sí funcione [...].

3. We are aware that this argument presents us with a chicken-and-egg situation, since we do not know a priori what comes first, the antiestablishment identity or the populist agency. Although it is true that one should expect a dynamic relationship between the two, our main idea is that the larger the size of an antiestablishment identity, the higher the chances that populist agency should succeed in the electoral arena.
4. Not by chance, some authors argue that growing levels of education have fostered the emergence of a new type of electorate, which shows declining levels of partisan identification and adopts new forms of political participation (e.g. engagement in interest groups or social movements) with the aim of expressing political attitudes and orientations (Dalton, 2013; Mair, 2013; Papadopoulos, 2013).
5. When considering this contribution as an example of a case study, we follow here Gerring's (2004) approach, according

to which case studies are ideal for undertaking exploratory research that opens avenues for future studies that can confirm or refute the advanced theory. Therefore, as we stress in the conclusion, our findings should be seen as preliminary evidence of the validity of novel theory that can be tested and improved by future studies.

6. Some scholars argue that the relevance of the democratic/authoritarian cleavage in the country has been declining over time (e.g. Bargsted and Somma, 2016; Luna and Mardones, 2010). Given that the data that we present here are only for 1 year, we cannot show evidence of variation over time in the size of positive, negative, and antiestablishment political identities in Chile. However, it is interesting to note that our measure reveals that there is a large segment of apertisans (approximately 40% of the electorate) and this probably hints at the decreasing saliency of the democratic/authoritarian cleavage at the mass level.
7. We include in this category individuals that responded “Don’t Know” or simply did not respond these batteries.
8. If negative identifiers hold—at the same time—a positive and a negative identification, they are classified as “closed partisans” (if they support “Alianza” and reject “Nueva Mayoría” at the same time, they are labeled as “closed Alianza”; if they support “Nueva Mayoría” and reject “Alianza” at the same time, they are labeled as “closed Nueva Mayoría”).
9. Our measurement of positive and negative partisanship does not discard that an individual may hold “double” political identities (e.g. “antiestablishment” identification is a double negative partisanship). Since our instrument is based on questions regarding voting intention in hypothetical elections, it is probable—and theoretically reasonable—that an individual may hold positive and negative partisanship, simultaneously (what Rose and Mishler define as “closed” partisanship). Actually, 2.53% of the sample qualifies as Alianza’s identifier and anti-Nueva Mayoría simultaneously and 4.84% as a Nueva Mayoría’s identifier and anti-Alianza simultaneously. What is not probable and theoretically unacceptable is that an individual may hold “double” contradictory identifications (e.g. “open” Alianza and “anti” Alianza, simultaneously). After a detailed analysis, we did not find any respondent with these contradictory characteristics.
10. The sample sizes corresponding to the two sets of models differ strongly due to the response rate of the question about ideology. In models 1–6, we operationalized ideology as a binary variable ($N = 1297$). In models 7–12, we operationalized ideology as a continuum (from 1 to 10), but it only applies to respondents that were able to position themselves in this scale ($N = 701$).
11. In all models, we employed regular sociodemographic variables as control variables. For income, we used Socio-Economic Group measurement as a proxy. This is an ordinal scale composed of six intervals (A1, A2, B, C, D, and E), based on a combination of salary, access to public services, household goods, and others. We reversed this scale for a better understanding of the relationships (from lower to higher income stages). Education is measured by the

respondents’ completed years of formal education. For sex, we categorized females as 1.

12. Odds ratios greater than one imply that increases in the independent variable raise the probability of being identifier; ratios less than one reduce it.
13. Although the respective R^2 coefficients of the models are less than 6%, we are not concerned with the predictive power of the models so much as the theoretical relationship between ideology and political identification.
14. In theory, the combination of populism and left–right ideological preferences can lead to four different profiles: rightist populism, leftist populism, leftist non-populism, and rightist non-populism. Nevertheless, for the case of Chile, leftist populism is more salient in comparison with the remaining three profiles, presumably due to the politicization of inequalities that has not been articulated by traditional leftist parties (Donoso and von Bülow, 2017; Roberts, 2016). We explored the relationship between ideology and populism by conducting regression analysis to identify the effect of ideological self-positioning on the populist index. The respective regression coefficient is negative and statistically significant at 99% confidence interval. However, the explanatory power of ideology is small, as shown by the regression coefficient (-0.04) and by the R^2 (0.009197).
15. Anti-Nueva Mayoría identifiers are 21.8% of the sample and anti-Alianza 26.3%. To calculate the total share of “negative identifiers,” we total both parts and subtract the intersection of antiestablishment identifiers (12.9%). The result is 35.2%.

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