"How the past influences the vote of the Radical Right Populist Parties in Germany, Poland and Spain"[1]

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Populist parties often mobilize through politics of historical memory, offering a nostalgic and sometimes reinvented vision of the past. However, the connection between populism and the past remains underexplored in the literature. In this article, we aim at filling this gap by analysing original comparative survey data, gathered in early 2020 as part of the H2020 RePast Project by analyzing how the past influences the vote of the radical right- populist parties (AfD, PiS and Kukiz'15 and Vox) in Germany, Poland and Spain. Our results show that this cultural element is present in the discourses of all four parties, no matter the differences between the conflicts of the past they appeal to. We also show that the discourses about the past contribute positively to their electoral support. Finally, we illustrate how the dynamics vary in each according to the different nature of the conflict and the differences in the party systems.

Keywords: Populism, Electoral Behaviour, Memory

Introduction

Populist parties often mobilize through politics of historical memory, offering a nostalgic and sometimes reinvented vision of the past. More specifically, through their discourse, "ideological constructs of heritage and memory, rendered immutable and natural, are mobilized to shape new racialized understandings of 'the people'" (De Cesari, Bosilkov, and Piacentini 2020:27). The construction of narratives about that past are built to provide justification and legitimacy to these political parties.

Despite the great interest of literature in populism in recent years, the connection between the uses of the past in the electoral field remains underexplored. In comparative research, the sources of populist mobilization have mainly been searched in socio-economic and political-institutional explanations but less so in cultural factors. One important recent exception is the study by Caramani and Manucci (2019), who trace a link between the re-elaborations of the past in countries that have been through fascist experiences, and the electoral fate of right-wing populist parties in eight West European countries: Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. They conclude that, when the discourse of these parties builds around "culpabilisation", or "heroization", their electoral performance is limited. If it is "cancellation" they emphasize – meaning… - the effect is not clear. They find that the most successful strategy when appealing to the past is "victimisation".

We aim at contributing to this literature by extending our analysis to other sorts of conflicts (not necessarily linked to fascism) and by looking deeper into the individual behaviour of the voters. We compare four parties in three countries in which radical right populist parties have used references to rather different conflicts of the past. Our objective is to see a) whether there impact of this strategy is successful, regardless of the type of conflict and b) which are the dynamics of the vote related to the different conflicts. In Germany, we focus on the appeal to the postunification period (from 1990 onwards) by Alternative for Germany (AfD). Compared to Nazi period and the Holocaust – which is the conflict most of us would think about – this is not a violent conflict. However, as we will see, the remaining inequalities between former East and the West Germany since that founding moment are increasingly perceived as such, and are gaining ground in the mobilizing strategies of AfD. In the case of Poland, we will focus

on the anticommunist discourse of two parties, Kukiz and PiS. The conflict, in this case, is internal, and refers to the division between the communist elite, and the people. Finally, in Spain, we analyse how Vox has incorporated references to the sides confronted during the civil war, and what should be done nowadays about it.

If we translate our objectives into hypotheses, the first one states that (H1) references to past conflicts are a defining element of radical right populist parties in Germany, Poland and Spain. The second one would be based in Caramani and Manucci' conclusion about reference to the fascist legacy triggering the success of right-wing populist parties (2019). If this is the case, (H2) we should be able to find a positive impact at the individual level of the attitudes that are consistent with those discourses. However, the histories and conflicts on which those discourses are based, as well as the party systems and the electoral competition between parties, differ in each of these countries. This leads as to expect that (H3) the dynamics by which citizen's attitudes towards the past translate into vote for radical right populist parties will be different in each case. We will develop this third hypothesis later one, once we will examine the historical background and the way the past is used in the discourses of the four parties.

Three different pasts that are still present

As mentioned earlier, the discourses that we will compare and analyse are based on very different kinds of conflicts. In this section we want to contextualize each of these historical backgrounds and to show how the radical-right populist parties are using that past nowadays to mobilize votes.

In the case of Germany, we look at how the AfD'S discourse about the period "after" the reunification of West and East Germany in 1990 finds resonance amongst voters. This period may not be perceived by many as a "conflict" and receives much less scholarly attention that the memory of the Holocaust (Beattie, 2007:3). However, important economic and social differences still persist between the two parts. These diverging living conditions in German regions are an increasingly important issue. While districts with high average income are exclusively located in the west of Germany, East

German districts have faced an important outflux of people, often young, well-educated, and female, to the west (Franz et al, 2019:290; Stelzenmüller, 2019). These economic and social differences have translated into a feeling of grievance, and are even related to a different national identity of East Germans (Kubiak, 2019). This is well reflected in the fact that in eastern states such as Brandenburg and Saxony, 59% and 66% of those polled, respectively, agreed that "East Germans are second-class citizens." (Stelzenmüller, 2019). Some authors have considered that this east-west division is as important as the memories about the Holocaust and (post-)colonialism (Müller 2007 cit. Beattie, 2007:3). But, what is even more interesting, this conflict also interacts with the one around the Holocaust and the way it was dealt with in West Germany: "While many commentators have deemed the policy of openly dealing with the past a success, they have also claimed that the problem of the double division between East and West and within East Germany has probably been exacerbated by this very policy and remains to be solved" (Müller, 2001:249). Overall, the idea that Germans needed to listen to each other's stories and to embrace the divided past does not seem to have been accomplished (Beattie, 2007:7-8). Everyday images of the GDR in the media seem to contribute to this feeling of alienation as they are almost always about dictatorship. "This is why some East Germans do not find their picture of the past within the media and do not feel at home in reunited Germany, yet" (Meyen and Rüdiger, 2014:15).

In the case of Poland, we analyse the effectiveness on the vote for PiS and Kukiz'15 of the parties' discourses that refer to the period of the Polish People's Republic (1947-89), which was under a communist administration that counted on the support of the USSR from 1952 onwards. The division during this period positioned the active supporters of the Polish United Workers' Party, on the one hand, and the rest of the population, on the other. The opposition was formed both by some active political opponents - such as the trade union Solidarity, groups associated to the Catholic Church, and Nationalists (Osa, 2001) – and also by opponents that did not engage in open political struggles. One of the characteristics of the communist regime in Poland that seems to be relevant for the populist discourse about that period nowadays is the fact that "nomenklatura as a ruling class was isolated and unable to reproduce itself" (Eyal and Twonsly, 1995:730)".

In Spain, we focus on how Vox refers to the civil war (1936-39) and if this has any positive impact on their electoral success. The Spanish Civil War resulted from a major internal conflict in which ideological, social, religious and regional cleavages intermeshed. The origins of the war are in a coup d'état led by a group of rebellious generals (often referred to as the "Nationals") against the Republican government. On the side of the Republican Army were also other leftist and anarchist political parties and trade unions, and they counted on the support of the Soviet Union and the International Brigades formed by volunteers from European countries and the United States. The Nationals, on their side were counted on the support of and important part of the military, conservative groups, monarchists, and received help from the German and Italian armies. In 1939 the Nationals won the war and established a dictatorship that would last for almost 40-years. During the war, besides the deaths in the war front, there were many others in the rear front of both bands although, according to historians, the victims in the Republican side outnumbered those in the National side. As a result of these, an estimated 200.000 disappeared in extra-judicial executions. During the dictatorship the defeated were submitted to displacement, torture, imprisonment, and death. The transition to democracy was based on the "self-transformation" of the non-democratic regime, and a series of "pacts" between the elites of the old regime and of the democratic opposition parties. One of the most relevant agreements reached during the transition consisted on an Amnesty act that implied the liberation of left political prisoners, but also the impossibility to condemn the crimes committed for political reaons between 1936 and 1977. The objective was to reach a "final reconciliation" by looking to the future and forgetting the past. This strategy was influence by both the balance of power at the team, and the fear of creating an environment conducive to a new social division and a backward motion in the democratization process. During the 80s and most of the 90s there were barely any references to the past in political discourses. However, since 2000, some associations – mainly the Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica - started to search, identify and open the common graves that remained untouched since the times of the civil war and the first years of the dictatorship. This started to generate a culture of memory in society that, together with the absolute majority of the Popular Party after the 2000 elections, put increasing pressure on the left wing political parties to take action on the issue (Aguilar

and Humlebaek, 2002:132). The victory of the Socialist Party in 2004 meant an acceleration of activity around historical memory measures, culminating in the Law on Historical Memory, which was passed in Parliament in 2007. This law was opposed by part of the radical left (ERC) and by the Popular Party on the right. As soon as this last one won the elections in 2011 the measures that had been initiated in accordance with the law were paralyzed. The PP argues that the issues related to the past were solved during the transition, and that reopening the debate about the victims of human rights abuses in the past risks reopening the wounds of the civil war. But, as soon as the Socialist Party came back to power in 2018 – this time under the leadership of Pedro Sanchez – memoralistic initiatives were re-enacted, being Franco's exhumation in November 2019 the most characteristic of this period so far. In general terms the Socialist party, Podemos, the left-wing parties and the nationalist parties of the Basque Country and Catalonia seek in their discourses to compensate the victims, while the PP, Ciudadanos or Vox maintain discourses that refer to the transition and the idea of leaving the past behind.

Radical Right Populist parties and their use of the past

Research on right-wing populist parties has focused on ideological elements such as nationalism or nativism in their minimal definition (Mudde, 2007:15). However, we do not find comparative and systematic studies that analyse the presence of the memory of the past in these right-wing parties. As Caramani and Manucci nave noted it is unusual that research on collective memories establishes a link between these and party politics (2019: 1160). In order to fill-in this gap, in this section we will identify those elements in the discourses or current right-wing populist parties in Germany, Poland and Spain that refer to the conflicts of the past and, especially so, to the periods described in the previous section. In the next section we will analyze whether these discourses find a correlate in their electoral support.

AfD in Germany

Afd run in a federal election for the first time in 2013 and got representation for the first time in the European elections of 2014. In its beginnings it showed a combination of "soft Euroscepticism with economic liberalism and socially conservative policies" (Azheimer, 2015). It was from 2015 onwards that it adopted a typical radical right populist party with increasing references to the German nation and the German people, against immigrants, and against the established parties the political class, as well as the media (Lees, 2018; Arzheimer and Berning, 2019).

In 2017 it became the third largest party in Germany with 12, 6% of the votes in Germany overall, and 22% if we focus only in East Germany. Right now, AfD has gained entry to all 16 regional German parliaments and it is the second-largest party in terms of electoral support in all of the five Eastern regional parliaments (Dostal, 2019; Weisskirchen, 2020:3). Two of these successful results took place in the regional elections in Saxony and Brandenburg in a very symbolic moment: some weeks before the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The reasons behind are multifaceted, and have to do with both socio-economic differences (unemployment, social disintegration and migration to the West - especially of young women -, closure of loss-making businesses), and political and cultural ones related to representation and feelings of a lack of recognition (Weisskirchen, 2020:7; Ricter and Quent, 2019).

In the discourse of AfD the past has become increasingly present. The party directly uses the vocabulary of the demonstrations of 30 years ago when calling on East German voters to "resist", and to "complete the revolution" (Stelzenmüller, 2019). During the 2019 regional elections, AfD clearly politicized the division between the East/West divide (Hockenos, 2019). This division has been capitalized by AfD, who appeals to "second-class citizens".   With the slogan "let's complete the change" the referred to the change ("Wende") in 1989. This has had a contagious effect and Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is an East German herself, when she acknowledged the deep divide in a speech on the 29th anniversary of reunification: "We have to learn to understand that, and why, reunification was not an unequivocally positive experience for many people in the eastern German states" (idem).

PiS and Kukiz'15 in Poland

The past has been always present in the political discourse and in public sphere in Poland. Both the memory of World War II and of the communist regime of the People's Republic of Poland (PRL) form part of the daily life of Poles. Less recurrent, although still relevant for today's political divisions, are the historical remittances related to the partitions of Poland during the long 19th century (Jasiewicz, 2009). However, unlike communist successor parties or the right-wing liberal ones, who tend to focus on modernization and the future, only the populist radical right parties (PRRPs) mobilize their bases by constantly referring to the past, offering a nostalgic and sometimes reinvented vision of the country's history. According to Wysocka (2009), 'the Polish story of populism is the story of historical divisions that were deeply rooted in society: communism versus opposition, later post-communism versus post-solidarity movements (which themselves were divided)'.

Two parties that merit the label "radical-right populist parties". These are PiS(Law and Justice) and Kukiz'15 (the name refers to the leader and to the year in which it obtained it took off). PiS emerged from a dissident element of Solidarity around Jarosław Kaczyński, former head of President Wałęsa's chancellery. Since 2001 PiS (Law and Justice) has concentrated on tackling communism and decommunising the state (Stanley and Cześ, 2019:73). One of its prominent arguments is that "Poland's pacted transition was simply a compact between the communist-era nomenklatura and liberal Solidarity, with the former yielding power to the latter, in exchange for impunity for past crimes and opportunities for enrichment under the new regime" (idem).

Kukiz was created in 2015 after its leader - rock singer Paweł Kukiz -came third in the Presidential elections that same year. Although internally heterogeneous, its best organized members come from right wing nationalist movements and its discourse is basically defined by nativism, and by rejecting "partitocracy" and foreign interventions (Stanley and Cześnik, 2019:76; see also Engler, Pytlas, and Deegan-Krause, 2019). Although it has drifted from more extreme options to moderate ones, even joining the Polish Coalition (Koalicja Polska) with the agrarian Polish Peasant Party before the 2019 elections, it still uses the anti-communist message, often presenting its opponents as continuators of the old regime. For instance, the party leader, Paweł Kukiz, recently said in a televised interview: "I am in a war for citizens, for my children, for my grandchildren,

not only for mine, but for all. A war that is to lead to the end of the communist system, a war with the post-communist system. […] The media keep repeating that Poland has been free since 1989, that the Polish People's Republic ended then. If it had ended, Cimoszewicz and Miller [Polish prime ministers from the successor of the Communist Party SLD, Alliance of the Democratic Left] would not be in the European Parliament now" Kukiz (2019).

PiS and particularly its leader - Jarosław Kaczyński - who have mastered the art of mobilization of the memory of the past, invoking 'a specific albeit totalizing mythology of the national past to gain control over the present, including its political aspect' (Kubik and Kotwas, 2019: 458). Historical grievances related to the communist regime and, especially, to the consequent democratic transition and growing economic inequalities (both objective and subjective) are exploited in a crafty manner by PiS through a populist definition of a 'network' of privileged people of the ex-communist elite, business and media, supposedly running the country against the interests of the common people. Kaczyński's road to power was reliant on a Manichean simplification, reinterpretation and even denial of some aspects of Polish history in search for a 'positive nostalgia for a guilt-free past' (Göpffarth, 2020) that resonates with parts of Polish society after centuries of troubled history.

The narrative portraying Poles as purely victims of history is not something new – the myth of Poland as a martyr, suffering for other countries' sins was quite extended during the partitions and is still present in the culture of post-war Poland, characterized by the fusion of Catholic religion and national identity (Grzymała-Busse, 2015). However, on top of reinforcing collective victimhood of Poles who suffered Nazi and Soviet occupations, PiS divided Poles into two antagonistic camps. Broadly speaking, on the one side, always according to PiS, is the liberal part of the society, who governed Poland after the 1989 Round Table 'deal' with the communist (which granted privileges to the old elites) but never represented the interests of the true Pole – Catholic (Kaczyński even described that part of the society as 'Poles of the second sort'). On the other side, the conservative, traditional, and anti-communist part of the society holds the true Polish soul. In this divisive line, PiS (just as Hungary's Fidesz) 'paints its main opponents as the heirs of the pre-1989 communists and apparatchiks' (Bakke and Sitter, 2020: 8). In 2005,

PiS used lustration of the public sphere as a key instrument to gaining and consolidating power. Today, the witch hunt is more precisely aimed at an imagined 'cast' of ex-communist judges, with views of gaining an absolute control over the judiciary exposed to fierce attacks since PiS entered the government in 2015. In today's Poland, references to World War II and to the communist regime are a constant in the Polish public TV news outlet. In Mazzini's (2019) words, now, 'memory is everywhere. It is no longer the politics of the past; it is an integral part of the politics of the present'.

Vox in Spain

Spain, until recently, was an exception, together with Portugal and Ireland, to the rise of radical right populist parties (Alonso and Rovira, 2015). However, in 2018, Vox, created in 2013, gained electoral representation in the regional elections of Andalusia with 11 per cent of the votes. In this region, the party supported the government coalition between PP and Ciudadanos which aimed at ousting the Socialist party from power after more than 36 years. A few months later, in April 2019, the party obtained more than 10 per cent of the votes in the general elections. Facing the impossibility of forming a government, another general election was held in November 2019 in which it increased its support to 15% becoming the third party in the national Parliament. As in Andalusia, Vox has prioritized pacts with PP and Ciudadanos to remove the left from the institutions.

The economic and political crisis led to the electoral success of two new parties: Podemos and Ciudadanos. The reason behind Vox's success has had more to do with the Catalan territorial crisis (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2019; Turnbull-Dugarte et. al, 2020). Vox is very critical with the Catalan separatist threat and proposes the suspension of the autonomous independence of the Catalan region as well as the prohibition of any party with separatist objectives. On the Catalan question, we find its preference for authoritarianism and Spanish nationalism (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2019: 2, 3). In addition, it should be added its nativism and authoritarian vision of society, attached to the values of law and order (Ferreira, 2019). While the consideration of VOX as a radical right party conceits a high degree of agreement (Ferreira, 2018; Turnbull-Dugarte, 2019; Turnbull-Dugarte et. al, 2020), there is no consensus in the literature regarding the categorization of Vox as populist party. Althogh some are clear about its populist defining elements

(Rooduijn et al. 2020; Turnbull-Dugarte, 2019; Turnbull-Dugarte et. al, 2020), others argue that, in the case of Vox, populism is not as explicit as in other cases in Europe, and that the elements that do point in this direction, are subordinate to its nationalist rhetoric (Ferreira, 2019).

One of the aspects that was pointed out as a possible barrier to the advance of extreme right-wing parties in Spain was the legacy of the Franco dictatorship (Torres, 2016; Ruiz, 2017). However, there are links between the party and that legacy that do not seem to be as much of an obstacle as some used think. The party leader himself, Santiago Abascal, is a friend of the honorary president of the National Foundation Francisco Franco, the great-grandson of Franco, Luis Alfonso de Borbón (Rodríguez, 2019). He has also created the foundation for the Defense of the Spanish Nation (Denaes), some of whose publications profess admiration for Franco and deny that he was a dictator (Albin, 2019). Despite these connections, the Vox leader, when he is asked if he worries about being considered a nostalgic for Franco regime, replies: "We're not worried. We're in favour of the freedom to comment on history. I'm sure there are people in Vox who are critical of Franco, others who don't have a position on Franco and others who defend Franco's legacy. Everyone has a place in Vox, because we don't tell Spaniards what they should think about the past" (Fernández-Miranda, 2019). In fact, the party often refers to its defence of freedom, even when referring to the dictatorship: "This is a matter for historians and we are firm supporters of freedom and that everyone can say what they want" (Carvajal, 2019).

Vox's discourse is radically against the historical memory law which includes different measures of moral recognition to the victims of human rights abuses during the civil war and the dictatorship, as well as to the recent the exhumation of the dictator's remains. Vox understands that Spanish democracy is now complete and no law is needed on this issue. The party points out that the law of historical memory is "an instrument to divide Spaniards between the good and the bad ones" (Público, 2019). Its criticism of historical memory is one of the key issues in Vox's political discourse (Casals, 2018). Although the argument for criticizing the law of historical memory is to consider that the PSOE imposes its vision about the nation, Vox has presented a proposal for a law of concord in the Andalusian parliament with the intention of imposing its own

vision of the nation. With this initiative, the party seeks to differentiate itself from the PP and Ciudadanos by setting out a clear strategy with respect to the past in which only the crimes committed during the civil war will be contemplated, leaving out the period of the dictatorship. Another key element in the discourse of Vox is to try to put the victims of both sides are put on an equal level: "The fallen Spaniards died for an idea of Spain that, wrong or not, was a notion of what they thought was best for their country" (Ramírez, 2020). This view is completed by a praise of the 1978 Constitution, the Crown and the politicians "who transcended their differences in pursuit of Spain's prosperity and historical continuity" (Munárriz, 2020). In its discourse, Vox appreciates the consensus reached in the transition not to use the past politically. However, Vox refers quite often to the past adopting a much less discreet position than that of other parties of the right such as PP or Ciudadanos. In fact, regarding the exhumation of Franco's remains, Vox criticized these two parties for their silence (González, 2019).

Citizens' attitudes about past conflicts and the vote for radical right populism

So far we have found evidence for our first hypothesis, which claimed that references to the past were a defining element of this kind of parties. This finding would need to be confirmed in other countries, but it does apply to all our cases. In this section, we want to address whether those discourses are effective. In other words, whether they are successful in mobilizing the vote of those citizens with attitudes that are in consonance with those views of the past. In order to test this second hypothesis, we have analysed an individual survey data produced within the framework of the RePast H2020 project "Strengthening European integration through the analysis of conflict discourses: revisiting the past, anticipating the future". This survey was carried out during the first months of 2020 in 9 countries with a traumatic past, including Greece and Spain[2]. We have designed a statistical model based on a binary logistic regression

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[2] The countries are Germany, Poland and Spain which are analysed in this paper and also Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, the Uk (Northern Ireland), and Kosovo. For each country, a representative sample of the population of citizens aged 18 or over has been selected: 1005 respondents in Germany, 1003 in Poland and 1000 in Spain. The data collection has been carried online in Germany and Poland and with a mixed survey method (online and telephone surveys) in Spain. The field work took place in early 2020, specifically between March 6 and March 27 in the case of Germany, between March 9 and March 27 in Poland and between March 6 and April 8, in Spain.

for each country where the dependent variable measures whether a person has voted in the last parliamentary elections for AfD, Vox, PiS or Kukiz'15, respectively, or not[3]. In the case of Poland, the voters of PiS and Kukiz'15 are pooled together[4].

The key independent variables aim at measuring the impact of different factors on the vote of radical right populist parties, some of which have already been confirmed by previous research[5]. The first group has to do with sociodemographic characteristics of the voters such as age, gender, education, habitat size or unemployment[6]. Research so far has shown that the voters of right-wing populist parties tend to be young (Stockemer, Lentz, and Mayer, 2018), men (Harteveld et al. 2015), have low levels of education (Ivarsflaten and Stubager, 2013), live in the rural areas (De Lange and Rooduijn, 2015), and belong to the group of what has been called the "losers of globalization", referring to those in risk of losing their job, or who have already lost it (Kriesi et al., 2006). The second group of factors is formed by values and attitudes. We expect a right-wing ideology to be positively related to support for these parties. According to previous research, we also expect to find that those who hold Eurosceptic attitudes (Werts, Scheepers, and Lubbers 2013), nativist feelings (Mudde 2007) and who reject immigration, especially linked to Muslim countries/religion, will be more inclined to for these parties (Ivarsflaten, 2008). In addition, we have included other variables that could also be behind the electoral support to AfD, Vox and PiS/Kukiz'15. These are attitudes of support for authoritarianism (Norris and Inglehart 2019), of national pride, and populist attitudes (Akkerman, Mudde & Zaslove , 2014; Castanho Silva et al., 2018; Castanho Silva et al., 2020)[7]. Following Castanho Silva et al. (2018), when measuring the

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[3] These two categories were coded 1 and 0 respectively. Abstainers, those who do not know whether they voted or not, and those who don't answer the question, are omitted from the analysis.

[4] Although Kukiz'15 lost some of its anti-establishment appeal from the 2015 elections and joined the Polish Coalition (Koalicja Polska) with the agrarian Polish Peasant Party in the 2019 poll, as most scholars classify it as both populist and far right, we decided to include it in the analysis of PRRP voting in Poland. We also rerun the models excluding Kukiz'15 and the results were very similar.

[5] Table A1 in the Appendix shows the descriptive statistics for all variables.

[6] Age is a continuous measure, gender (1=female), education (1=University), habitat size (11-point scale running from under 1,000 to over 2 million), unemployment (1=unemployed).

[7] Placement on the left-right scale (1=extreme left; 7=radical extreme right), evaluation of EU membership (1=a good thing for the country), attitudes toward Muslim migrants (1=should be accepted without restrictions; 2=should be accepted but with restrictions; 3=should not be accepted), support for authoritarianism (1=democracy is always preferable; 2=under some circumstances, an authoritarian government can be preferable to a democratic system; 3=for people like me, it does not matter whether we have a democratic or authoritarian regime), national pride (1=very proud of the nation), and measures of three populist attitudes: people-centrism (1=strongly agree that "The will of the people should be the

different dimensions of populist attitudes we have tried to capture people-centrism, anti-elitism, and Manichean views (instead of anti-pluralism), as this last dimension may be especially related to views about divisions of the past.

There is a third group of factors, that is at the core of our proposal, and whose impact on right wing populist vote has not been tested before. These are attitudes that are clearly directed towards the conflicts of the past. We want to see if, in all 3 cases (Germany, Poland and Spain), the citizens that have attitudes about the conflicts analysed (post-unification, the People's Republic of Poland, and the civil war, respectively) that are in line with the position of AfD, PiS/Kukiz'15 and Vox, respectively, are more likely to vote for them regardless of the other factors just mentioned. If we find they do, this will be a strong argument for considering these amongst the defining characteristics of the right wing populist voters. Two variables are included in our model for this purpose. The first one measures to what extent the voters attribute the responsibility over the conflict to one of the sides of the conflict (the West in Germany, the Communists in Poland and the Republicans in Spain)[8]. The second, measures what reconciliation means for them. Respondents were given the possibility to choose one of four potential meanings: "Forgetting the past and moving on"; "Forgiveness among different sides"; "Reparations to those who have suffered from past injustices"; "Commitment to dialogue between the different sides"[9].

Table 1 shows the coefficients of three binary logistic regressions where the dependent variable is having voted in the last parliamentary elections for AfD, Vox or PiS/Kukiz'15 in columns 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The results confirm that these parties are attractive for the youngest voters. However, our results show that, as the electoral support of these parties grows and extends to different groups of the population, the defining characteristics of these voters become more diluted. We do not find a general effect of education, the size of habitat, or being unemployed. Education, living in a rural

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highest principle in this country's politics"), anti-elitism (1=strongly agree that "The government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves") and Manicheism (1=strongly agree that "I can understand people who stop talking to a friend because of their political opinions").

[8] The degree of responsibility of West Germans, the Republicans and the Communists, for the conflicts related to the German Reunification, the Spanish Civil War, and the People's Republic of Poland (PRL) period, respectively (0=not responsible at all; 10=totally responsible).

[9] 1="Forgetting the past and moving on"; 2= "Forgiveness among different sides"; 3=" Reparations to those who have suffered from past injustices" ; 4= "Commitment to dialogue between the different sides".

area, and unemployment only in Poland, and gender has a weak impact only in Spain. Unsurprisingly, the results also show that those with a right-wing ideology. Holding Eurosceptic attitudes also contributes to the support of AfD and Vox.[10] We find that the voters of the three parties - although slightly less so in the case of Vox - are very reluctant to accept immigrants coming from Muslim.

We confirm the impact of support for authoritarianism: those for whom it does not matter whether they live in a democratic or authoritarian regime are more prone to support AfD, Vox, PiS and Kukiz'15. National pride is a significant predictor of voting for Vox, PiS and Kukiz'15, and AfD to a lesser degree, confirming the strong nationalist character of these parties. Lastly, populist attitudes also have an impact. However, different dimensions of these seem to be acting in each case. When we look at support to AfD it is voters with attitudes shwoing people-centrism and a Manichean outlook that feel attracted by it. In the case of PiS and Kukiz'15, it is basically people-centrism that has a positive impact. However, we did not find any significant effect of populist attitudes in Spain, confirming the idea that Vox is somewhat less populist than PRRPs from other countries (Ferreira, 2019). The case of Poland also shows a peculiarity with respect to populist attitudes which might be explained by the fact that a populist party is in government (PiS since 2015). Anti-elitism actually hinders the probability to support PiS and Kukiz'15. Supporters of parties in government evidently will be less likely to think that "the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves" compared to supporters of challenger parties.

Table 1. Vote for AfD (German), PiS and Kukiz '15 (Poland) and Vox (Spain)

	Germany	*Poland*	*Spain*
Age	**-0.03****	**-0.02***	**-0.03***
Female	0.03	0.27	-0.57
University education	-0.39	**-0.69****	-0.31
Habitat size	-0.11	**-0.15****	0.01

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[10] The evaluation of EU membership is a variable that measures attitudes towards the EU through the perception of benefits brought by the EU. Given that in Poland the material benefits are still direct and very large, this result is not inconsistent with the strong effects of Euroscepticism and detachment from Europe on PRRP voting in this country found elsewhere (Santana, Zagórski, and Rama, 2020)

Unemployed	0.10	**4.00*****	-0.17
L-R ideology self-placement	**1.33*****	**0.96*****	**1.10*****
Positive evaluation of EU membership	**-2.62*****	-0.14	**-0.73+**
Attitudes towards Muslim migrants			
(*ref. Be accepted without restrictions*)			
- Be accepted but with restrictions	0.26	0.33	**1.66***
- Not be accepted	**2.29*****	**1.64****	**1.68+**
Support for authoritarianism			
(*ref. Democracy is always preferable*)			
- Under some circumstances, an authoritarian	0.29	0.32	-0.15
- For people like me, it does not matter whether	**1.51***	**1.01+**	**1.34+**
National pride	**0.90***	**0.63***	**0.99***
People-centrism	**1.48*****	**0.52+**	-0.64
Anti-elitism	-0.21	**-1.13*****	0.43
Manicheism	**1.69*****	0.44	0.88
Degree of responsibility of West Germans /Republicans/the Communists for the conflict	**0.16***	0.04	**0.15***
Meaning of reconciliation			
(*ref. forgetting about the past and moving on*)			
- Forgiveness among different sides	**1.16+**	**0.66+**	-0.11
- Reparations to those who have suffered from	0.60	**0.66+**	0.02
- Commitment to dialogue between the different	**1.39****	0.22	-0.08
Constant	-7.85***	-4.42***	-8.07***
Observations	580	584	623
Pseudo R^2	0.589	0.445	0.427
Log lik.	-109.92	-206.81	-109.31

Source: own elaboration based on RePast Survey.

Notes: Coefficients of logistic regression models with vote for other parties as reference. Standard errors in parentheses; + p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Moving on to the key independent variables related to the memories of the past, blame attribution to one side of the conflict is significant in Germany (West Germans) and in Spain (Republicans). This finding is in line with our expectations that voters attitudes (and party discourses) about the past are a defining aspect of right-wing populism. However, the history and the characteristics of the conflicts in each country

are difficult to capture in such a homogenizing instrument such as a survey. We find that, in Poland, there is not impact of blame attribution on the vote to PiS/Kukiz'15. Why? We see that there is very little variability in the answer to this question: almost 90% think that the Communists were responsible (chose 5 or more in a 0-10 scale were 0 is "not responsible at all" and 10 is "totally responsible") (see also Table 1 in Annex). This is unsurprising given that the communist regime is treated by most Poles as an imposition from abroad (USSR). Importantly, communist successor parties or more broadly leftist parties are weak in today's Poland, and thus our dependent variable compares right wing populist parties with other parties that, to a great extent, are supported by voters who also blame the communists, what might explain why the effect is insignificant for Poland. In other words, in some countries the nature of the conflict allows the population to blame an external enemy and ignore internal divisions of the past. In the case of Poland, as we saw before, the blame is put in the "elite", which is a way to exclude most of the population ("the people") from having any responsibility in the conflict. In fact, when we include the feeling of victimhood of the whole nation (Poles have suffered more in history than other nations), this variable proves to be significant.

Regarding the meaning of reconciliation, our results in the model show that there is some effect, but this is weaker than that of the previous variable. Also, we find greater heterogeneity in the effect of this variable depending on the country. The voters of AfD understand a reconciliation based on dialogue and forgiveness between different sides. This is probably explained by the fact that the reunification was a non-violent conflict. In Poland, Kukiz'15 and PiS voters associate reconciliation to reparations to those who have suffered from past injustices, as well as to forgiveness. The interpretation of this finding is more unclear. In part, reparations may have to do with the perception that the one to blame – and the one responsible for these reparations – is external to the Polish nation. But it is not that clear that it is the USSR (or Russia today) that forgiveness would apply to . In the case of Spain, we find to impact of the different meanings of reconciliation on the likelihood to vote for Vox. This is an unexpected finding for us, as we expected that the reconciliation for Vox supporters were based on the idea of forgetting the past and moving on following the transitional agreement. This finding is

probably explained by the similarity between Vox voters and those of the *Partido Popular* (see Table 2 in Annex).

Conclusion & Discussion

The political use of the past is a defining characteristic of populist parties that has been underexplored by the literature so far. We have seen that all four parties, in all three countries here analysed refer explicitly to conflicts of the past in order to mobilize around these divisions. This dimension of their discourse helps them build an idea or nation, or people that is electorally successful. We have shown that in all three countries the attitudes toward the past that are in line with those expressed in the discourses of the parties have a positive influence in vote, even if they show peculiarities in each case that have to do with the nature of each conflict. This impact is independent of that of other variables, and deserves being analysed in greater detail when defining radical right wing populism.

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Appendix

Table 1. Side responsible of conflict (Mean 0-10)

			Germany			
	CDU	SPD	AfD	FDP	The Left/ Left Party	Alliance -- 90/The Greens
West Germans	6,2	6,3	6,2	6,1	6,9	6,0
East Germans	5,7	5,8	5,5	6,4	5,7	5,0
			Poland			
	Law and Justice	Civic Coalition	Left	Polish People's Party	Kukiz 15	Confederation
Communists	7,7	7,0	6,8	6,4	7,6	7,5
Anticommunists	4,4	4,2	4,8	4,8	4,5	4,1
			Spain			
	PSOE	PP	VOX	Podemos	Ciudadanos	
Republicans	5,3	6,3	7,1	5,3	6,4	
Nationals	7,4	5,8	5,3	8,4	6,7	

Source: Own elaboration based on RePast Survey

Table 2. Meanings of reconciliation.

Germany						
	CDU	SPD	AfD	FDP	The Left/ Left Party	Alliance -- 90/The Greens
Forgiveness among different sides	12,4	14,3	15,7	14,3	8,9	14,2
	21	20	17	7	8	18
Forgetting the past and moving on	30,8	27,9	41,7	44,9	22,2	21,3
	52	39	45	22	20	27
Reparations to those who have suffered from past injustices	14,8	15,0	15,7	8,2	16,7	15,0
	25	21	17	4	15	19
Commitment to dialogue between the different sides	42,0	42,9	26,9	32,7	52,2	49,6
	71	60	29	16	47	63

Poland						
	Law and Justice	Civic Coalition	Left	Polish People's Party	Kukiz 15	Confederation
Forgiveness among different sides	24,0	22,6	21,8	24,0	23,3	27,5
	60	60	31	6	7	11
Forgetting the past and moving on	20,8	31,3	29,6	36,0	20,0	12,5
	52	83	42	9	6	5
Reparations to those who have suffered from past injustices	40,0	17,4	16,2	28,0	40,0	40,0
	100	46	23	7	12	16
Commitment to dialogue between the different sides	15,2	28,7	32,4	12,0	16,7	20,0
	38	76	46	3	5	8

Spain					
	PSOE	PP	VOX	Podemos	Ciudadanos
Forgiveness among different sides	14,5	29,4	19,7	9,9	28,2
	36	35	13	10	20
Forgetting the past and moving on	28,5	56,3	60,6	20,8	39,4
	71	67	40	21	28
Reparations to those who have suffered from past injustices	40,6	6,7	10,6	52,5	21,1
	101	8	7	53	15
Commitment to dialogue between the different sides	16,5	7,6	9,1	16,8	11,3
	41	9	6	17	8

Source: Own elaboration based on RePast Survey