

# Asian Schools

## Working Papers

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### *What Influences the Differences between Voters who Vote Populists and who don't?*

*An Analysis of Effects of Voting Behavior on the Rise of Populist Communication*

**Dr. Uuganbayar Tumurkhuu**

Graduate School of Business, Mongolian  
University of Science and Technology

**Dr. Myagmarsuren Dashzevge**

Vice-President of Development Policy and Planning,  
Mongolian University of Science and Technology

Working  
Paper **#1**

## What Influences the Differences between Voters who Vote Populists and who don't? An Analysis of Effects of Voting Behavior on the Rise of Populist Communication

Dr. Uuganbayar Tumurkhuu, Graduate School of Business, Mongolian University of Science and Technology  
Dr. Myagmarsuren Dashzevge, Vice-President of Development Policy and Planning, Mongolian University of Science and Technology

*These days, the rise and success of populist parties and leaders are posing a serious threat to both established and unconsolidated democracies. Many studies have focused on defining and conceptualizing populism, identifying its rise and causes, and investigating its impact on democracy. However, less studies have been conducted on measuring populist attitude in post-communist countries. This study addresses this gap by studying whether specific factors in post-communist Mongolia's context are associated with difference between those who vote for populists and who abstain from voting for them. To achieve this research goal, we turned three abstract concepts: (1) democratic value, (2) satisfaction on political institution, and (3) view on immigration into measurable variables. To examine the reliability and validity of these measurable variables, we performed internal consistency and factor analysis. Then, we run independent samples T-tests and one-way ANOVA to explore what explains significant differences between voters who have higher preferences and who have lower preferences for populist candidates and parties. This study finds that voters who prefer strong leader in the government and direct democracy practices are more likely to vote for populist candidates. It is also found that voters who think immigration is good to this country and younger generation (age group 18-29) are less likely to vote for populist candidates.*

### **Keywords:**

*Voters; populist candidates; populist discourse; democratic value, satisfaction on political institution, strong leader, direct democracy.*

## Introduction

Today the number of populist leaders and political parties in power is increasing significantly at rapid pace. Recent scientific evidences show that populist parties and leaders have almost doubled over the past decade. This electoral success of populist leaders and parties has posed a serious threat to both established and unconsolidated democracies. More seriously, populist leaders in ruling parties and governments can weaken party institutionalization, accountability of democratic governance and institutional checks and balances of younger democracies like Mongolia.

Since the risk of harmful effects of populism over democracy elevates acutely, the number of researches on populism has increased dramatically. Many researches have focused on conceptualizing populism (Weyland, 2001; Mudde, 2004; Stravakakis & Katsambekis, 2015). Some research attempt to explore what factors cause its rise and successes (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Mény & Surel, 2002; Mudde, 2007 Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). Recently researchers studied the effects of populism on political system, government and public policy (Akkerman, 2012; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). There have been few researches on measuring populist attitudes among voters (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012; Hawkins, Riding, & Mudde, 2012; Stanley, 2011; Akkerman, Mudde & Zaslove, 2014). In this study, we seek to understand what factors influence the differences between those who vote for populists and who don't vote for them.

For the research design, this study applies mixed method including both qualitative and quantitative research. This research begins with semi-structured qualitative interviews of 10 participants. The primary goal of the in-depth interview is to hear how these participants evaluate and vote for candidates and also identify whether they voted for populists or abstained from voting for them in the last election. Most importantly, based on the findings and knowledge learned from these interviews, we devised questionnaire items for my survey research. For the qualitative data analysis, we applied content analysis and discourse methods as well as apply QDA Miner Lite for data coding. we employed SPSS for analyzing the meanings of frequently occurred codes and categories. The content and discourse analysis gave me a big picture, so that we were able to gain more in-depth understanding about producers and audiences of populist communication.

For the quantitative data, we conducted a survey research of 168 Mongolian voters through surveys. Using the data from this survey, we performed independent samples T-test to gauge whether there is statistically significant difference between voters who vote for populists and who abstain from voting for them. This statistical T-tests also aim to identify who are more and less likely to vote for the populists.

## Literature on Populism

Populism has been a research topic for a long time. Since the populist leaders and parties increase in the world, the research on populism is increasing among scholars at a steady pace. Many researches have focused on defining populism (Mudde, 2004; Akkerman, 2012; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013; Zaslove, 2008). Most of the definition of populism refer to people-centrism that juxtaposes the people against the elite (Mudde, *The Populist Zeitgeist*, 2004). They also stress two opposites of populism: pluralism and elitism (Hawkins, Riding, & Mudde, 2012). These two opposites are useful concepts that describe the unique characteristics of populism. Elitism defines the elite as a moral group. Pluralism see society as a “heterogeneous collection of groups and individuals” with different views.<sup>1</sup>

According to the common understanding of scholars, populism is thin-centered ideology that doesn't meet the same level of socialism and liberalism in consistency and intellectual refinement (Mudde, 2004; Akkerman, Mudde, and Zaslov, 2014).<sup>2</sup> Populism is always linked to other ideological elements. Right-wing populist parties often stress the term “nativism” that is based on the narrow ethnic definition portraying who are the members of the “pure people” (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). This is an “exclusionary version of populism”. Left-wing populist parties is dependent on the socialism that depict the “pure people” as the people who have little status in society. Many researches argue that populism is more moralistic (Mudde, 2004). They emphasize the Manichean characteristics of populism that presents the people as a morally good group and the elite as a corrupt and self-serving group. This moralistic meaning shows the populism's ambivalent relationship with liberal democracy. Populists argue that everybody should follow the general will of the people. In this way, it advocates minimal democracy policy that rely on majority rule or popular sovereignty. However, the popular sovereignty of populism is contrasted with the liberal democracy since it disfavors minority rights, separation of power, and rule of law.

Much of literature of populism focus on measuring populism. The most frequently used concept that is applied to measure populism empirically is ideational approach (Mudde, 2004). This is a very concise definition, so that researchers can operationalize them precisely and easily. This approach consider populism as a moral battle between “will of the good” and “the corrupt elite”. According to the measurement based on the ideational approach, the measurement should cover all the components of populism: homogeneous ordinary people, general will of the people, the juxtaposition between the ordinary people and the corrupt elite, and a moral struggle between the good and the bad (Rooduijn, 2018).

Another key initiative for measuring populism involves measuring populism via surveys. They utilize items that measure “salience of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric” and the “salience of reducing political corruption”. However, they don't include all components of ideational approach. It doesn't describe precise difference between the populism and adjacent concepts such as corruption and referendums. The expert survey (CHES) was employed to measure the populism in Latin America.

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1 Mudde, C. (2004). *The Populist Zeitgeist*. *Government and Opposition*, 39(4), 541-563. doi:10.1111/j.1477-7053.2004.00135.x

2 Ibid.

Hawkins developed the most innovative research design for measuring populism with a clear definition of populism.<sup>3</sup> He utilized three distinct political attitudes: populism, pluralism, and elitism (Hawkins, Riding, & Mudde, 2012). This design using these three attitudes allowed him to increase the validity of his populism measurement. It was a significant progress to improve the populism measurement and significantly influenced the future studies on populist attitude.

Many scholars have studied the supply side of populism. Their studies focus on identifying the presence of populist discourse in party manifestos, newspaper articles, TV, and speeches of politicians (Rooduijn, 2018; Manucci and Weber, 2017; Bonikowski & Gidron, 2015). The supply side is related to political communications of populist political parties, personalist politicians, and social movements.

Demand side of populism has been one of important topics for scholars who study populism. These studies have aimed to explore the existence of populist attitude among voters (Akkerman, Mudde, & Zaslove, 2014; Hawkins, Riding, & Mudde, 2012). Their findings show how the support of populist radical right parties and left right parties have increased. They gauge this phenomenon with the economic grievance, cultural backlash, and anti-establishment political forces (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). The economic grievances are related to the nativism tendency of populist radical right (Mudde, 2007). The idea claims that nonnative or aliens have become a threat to the homogeneity of the native "pure people." They also show that the economic grievance occurs in association with losers of neoliberal globalization (Arzheimer, 2011). Research findings show that cultural backlash is closely related to the support for the political parties that advocate nativism in connection with the rise of immigration and multiculturalism (Inglehart & Norris, 2016). Some research results indicate that "dissatisfied citizens" with the performance of all mainstream political officeholders are more likely to vote for populist parties (Voogd and Dassonneville, 2020). They argue that populist parties win the support of dissatisfied voters, because the anti-elitism discourse of populist parties could be the most attractive alternative to the dissatisfied voter. However, scholars argue that the support for the anti-elitism discourse of populist parties is not sustainable, because this support of dissatisfied voters is instable and volatile.

## How can We Measure Populist Attitudes in Post-communist Mongolia?

As it is mentioned in the above section, many studies on populism have focused on measuring populist attitudes and on the rise of higher preferences for populist parties among dissatisfied voters. However, less studies have been conducted on exploring differences between voters who vote for populist parties and who abstain from voting for them in post-communist countries. This research aims to address this gap. In this study, we are investigating why some Mongolian voters are more susceptible to populist communication and vote for them and why other voters are less susceptible. The second important goal of this research is to identify concepts that will be used for measuring and revealing latent variables for their political preferences. To achieve this goal, first we reviewed previous studies on populist attitudes

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3 Hawkins, K. A., Riding, S., & Mudde, C. (2012). Measuring populist attitudes. Political Concepts Committee on Concepts and Methods Working Paper Series, 55, 1-35.

and their best practices. Then we took interviews to know what country-specific conditions should be considered in elaborating measurement concepts for this study. In the next section, the concepts, indicators, and measures of this study are selected, elaborated, and operationalized.

## **Mongolia's Journey towards Democracy: Challenges and Trend**

In the late 1980s, communist bloc collapsed in East Europe and the Soviet Union's political dominance and influence in Mongolia greatly declined. Consequently, political pluralism and multi-party system emerged gradually in Mongolia (Batbayar, 2003). Soon in 1990, Democratic Revolution occurred in Mongolia with hunger strike of Democratic Union (DU). As a further consequence, the Politburo of Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) resigned in March of that year. Then, the amendment was made to the constitution of that period. With those events, Mongolia's journey toward Democracy began.

The first multi-party free general election took place in July, 1990. This was the end of single-party system where the MPRP's monopoly of political rule lasted for nearly 70 years. Over that period, only MPRP had designed, developed, and run political and economic institutions in Mongolia. In 1992, Mongolia adopted a new constitution that legitimized political pluralism and representative democracy. It is also known as the first Democratic Constitution of Mongolia.

The hegemony of MPRP lasted until 1996 after the collapse of communism. It began when MPRP won 85% of seats in the Mongolia's first multi-party election that was held in July, 1990. After the People's Great Khural adopted the new constitution, the first presidential election of popular vote took place in 1993. Ochirbat Punsalmaa, President of that period, was elected as the first President of Mongolia who was elected by the popular direct vote. He was a member and incumbent of MPRP until the presidential election, but he ran as the candidate of democratic opposition in that election. However, that victory didn't end the political dominance of MPRP which occupies the super majority seats of the People's Great Khural.

In 1996, a significant event occurred in the history of Mongolia's representative democracy. Democratic Union Coalition under the leadership of Elbegdorj Tsakhia, chairman of Democratic Party (DP) won their first historic victory in the election for the State Great Khural in that year. They won 50 out of 76 parliamentary seats (General Election Commission of Mongolia, 2017). It was the first parliament election when MPRP became minority in the State Great Khural. With this victory, the history of two strong opposing political forces began in Mongolia.

Until 2016 parliament, DP and its allies had been the strongest opposing force against MPRP. The political position of MPRP is center-left. Democratic Party and its allies are center-right. The political platforms of these two parties are completely different. However, their campaign promises have been very similar. Both MPRP and DP often promise to increase social welfare programs significantly to win in elections. For example, the two parties implemented several ineffective social welfare cash handout programs

such child money and money for newly married couples to keep campaign promises of 2004 and 2008 elections. The government cancelled the one-time welfare program for newly married couples since it caused the increase of fake marriages in 2009 (Tseened., 2010). These two big parties influence campaign of small political parties. Many small parties choose social welfare policy to compete with these two big parties.

Besides social welfare promises, political clientelism and patronage emerged and developed during competitions between these two big parties over the last two decades. A recent research indicates that MPRP and DP candidates rely more on electoral gifts and personal politics during election campaigns (Lauren Bonilla & Tuya Shagdar, 2018). In 2018, at a press conference, the National Police Agency stated that “it is investigating a case of a car with a significant amount of cash and election campaign material was discovered” (BTI, 2018). Many Mongolians say that in Mongolia, it is common for incumbents to appoint their party members, supporters, friends, and relatives to government and public jobs on the basis of voting loyalty. Such political clientelism and patronage issues have become key challenges to Mongolian democratization.

During the last decade, populism has dramatically increased and erupted as a key political communication that significantly caused the election result in Mongolia. In 2017, Democratic Party candidate Khaltmaa Battulga won in the presidential election with 50.61% of the vote, defeating Miyegombo Enkhbold from the Mongolian People’s Party (MPP – former MPRP). Researchers claim that Democratic Party candidate Khaltmaa Battulga is a politician who greatly utilizes populist discourse (Munkhtsetseg, 2019; Myadar, Orhon; Jackson, Sara, 2019). Some scholars argue that populism has two contrasting consequences in Mongolia: “negative one based on unrealistic promise” and “positive one based on the public interest” (Gerelt-Od Erdenebileg, Ariunbold Tsetsenkhoo, Ganbat Damba, 2020). Their research suggests that “negative populism” influences the misuse of public funding. These research facts show that populism has been developing as a deviant political approach to influence voters for private purpose of winning in an election in Mongolia.

Recently, serious situation has appeared. This is the emergence of dominant political party. It emerged with a landslide victory of the Mongolian People’s Party (MPP – former MPRP) in the seventh parliamentary election in 2016. MPP won 65 seats of the 76-member parliament. In 2020, the MPP won a super overwhelming victory again by winning 62 seats in the eighth parliamentary election. MPP candidate Khurelsukh Ukhnaa won the presidential election by receiving 68% of the total vote in June, 2021. The percent of votes he won is the largest share of votes since Mongolia transitioned to multi-party competitive election system. Experts think that Khurelsukh’s victory has given much more power to the MPP’s monopoly of rule although he must relinquish his party affiliation according to the relevant law (Anand Tumurtogoo, David Stanway, 2021). These recent events raise a question whether Mongolia is going toward a dominant party and will gradually transition to a hegemonic party system in the long run. It is still early to make a conclusion. It is also uncertain on what would happen in the future. These sequential landslide victories of MPP suggest that we should investigate how MPP win overwhelming votes and study whether the MPP’s victories are associated with populism.

## Methodology and Variable Operationalization

This study utilizes mixed approach that includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. This research began with qualitative interviews with 10 participants. The qualitative interview aims to explore the patterns that may portray how two different groups of voters make voting decisions. The interview had open-ended questions, so that we can learn more from the research participants. We used QDA Miner Lite software to analyze the interview transcripts, generate codes from them, and group these codes into categories. During the analysis of interview transcripts, we focused on recording the occurrence of meanings that relate to populism and coding them. While we were coding the meanings, we revealed several important categories or patterns that portray the behavior of Mongolian voters. We found out six categories: (1) corrupt elites, (2) strong leader in the government), (3) neutral position on immigration, (4) low satisfaction with authorities, (5) democracy value, and (6) vote on the basis of individual candidate’s quality evaluation. We grouped the codes we generated from the interview transcripts into these six categories (see table 1). We see these six categories as main patterns that describe the voting behavior among Mongolian voters. They helped me to gain more in-depth understanding on the differences of how two distinctive groups of voters evaluate the candidates they would vote.

*Table 1. Categories and Codes Generated from the Interview Transcripts*

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	CODES	COUNT
<b>PATTERNS</b>			
<b>CORRUPT ELITES</b>	Blaming ruling elite and special interest groups for political corruption and economic inequality between ordinary people and minor rich group.	- Specific interest groups - Economic inequality because of corrupt elites	- 2 - 3
<b>STRONG LEADER IN THE GOVERNMENT</b>	Considering a strong leader as a solution for improving economic inequality and fighting corruption.	- Decisive and charismatic leader - Voting strong leader’s team - Supporting strong leader rather than parties	- 4 - 4 - 4
<b>DIFFERENT OPINIONS ON IMMIGRATION</b>	More positive attitudes and less controversy on immigration.	- Positive attitude on the immigrant investors - Positive effect of immigration - Negative attitude on immigration	- 6 - 3 - 3
<b>LOW SATISFACTION WITH AUTHORITIES</b>	Increasing dissatisfaction among voters on the performance of the Government, State Great Khural, and Political Parties.	- Dissatisfied with the government - Dissatisfied with the parliament - Not transparent policy - Dissatisfied with political parties	- 9 - 1 - 1 - 1
<b>DEMOCRACY VALUE</b>	Level of support and preference for the democratic system	- Supporting liberal democracy - Supporting some strict rules of socialist rule	- 5 - 2

<b>VOTE ON THE BASIS OF CANDIDATE PERSONAL QUALITY EVALUATION</b>	Voting behavior that relies on the evaluations of voters more on personal quality of candidates rather than parties.	- Voting realistic individual promises	- 3
		- New candidate	- 2
		- Education and skills	- 3
		- Personality	- 1
		- Pragmatic promises	- 3
		- Recognized candidate	- 1

## Variable Operationalization

After completing the coding and categorization of interview transcripts, we made concept operationalization to define the variables we would study and measure in this research. We began the concept operationalization with the variables that would measure and find out whether a given voter vote for a populist politician or abstain from voting him or her in the last election. Based on the findings of categories in the table 1, we selected and elaborated the variables for measuring the votes for populist politicians and parties. As it is shown in the table 1, the interview findings indicate that most of Mongolian voters are more likely to blame high ranking elites in the government for the economic inequality and increasing impoverishment among ordinary citizens. While we were having interview with participants, many participants said that they voted for a strong leader who is more likely to fight against ruling corrupt elites and control special interest group for protecting the interest of the nation and restore economic equality. Thus, in this research, we are going to employ the concepts: “people-centrism” and “anti-elitism” for measuring whether a research participant vote for a populist candidate or a populist party in elections. We turned these abstract concepts into more measurable variables by operationalizing them. The table 2 clearly shows how these concepts are defined in this study.

## Indicators for the Frequency of Populist Discourse

After precisely defining “people-centrism” and “anti-elitism”, we worked on identifying the indicators that would be utilized for measuring these two concepts. In this research, these two concepts refer to populist communication or discourse that separates society into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups: the people and the corrupt elite. Thus, it is essential to measure how frequently a political actor or a candidate of a given election use populist rhetoric or discourse. The existing literature indicate that populist political actors or candidates frequently use populist discourse to win voters’ supports. In connection with this aspect of populism, we were going to ask the participants of this research to tell me how frequently the candidates he or she voted in the last election use populist discourses. To obtain the answers of participants to this question, this study employs five items. You can find them in the table 2. We elaborated some of them and also utilized items developed by previous studies (Akkerman, Mudde, & Zaslove, 2014; Hawkins, Riding, & Mudde, 2012). Participants were asked to rate their agreement with the five statements of populist discourses on the five-frequency scale ranging from 1(never) to 5(always).

Table 2. Concept Operationalization – Populist Discourse of Political Actors

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	VARIABLE	QUESTIONS
<b>PEOPLE-CENTRISM</b>	This is a populist discourse praising the virtue and sovereignty of the people and expressing closeness to the people as well as demanding power to the people.	Frequency of populist discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I and our party will fight roughly against the corrupt elites for the interest of the people.</li> <li>- I and parliament members in the State Great Khural need to follow the will of the people.</li> <li>- The people should win.</li> </ul>
<b>ANTI-ELITISM</b>	This is populist discourse blaming elites for the social and economic failures	Frequency of populist discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The people suffer from economic inequality because of a few interest groups</li> <li>- The power of a few special families prevents our country from making progress</li> </ul>

Source: Here we use both our own items and items taken from Hawkins and Akkerman et al, but we modified and improved on some items from Hawkins and Akkerman et al for the context and purpose of this study.

## Indicators for Satisfaction and Preferences on Political Institutions, Democratic Values, and Immigration Issues

After defining concepts, variables, and indicators that would be used for identifying whether a voter voted for a populist candidate or didn't vote, our study focused on identified concepts that can be used for measuring voters' satisfaction on political institutions and preferences on democratic value and immigration issues. We applied interview information to select and elaborate the concepts, variables, and indicators. Here we argue that voters' preferences on democratic value and immigration issues, and satisfaction on the performances of political institutions could influence their preferences on populist political actors. As it is shown in the table 3, three core concepts: satisfaction with political institutions, democratic value, and individual view on immigration are utilized for measuring voters' preferences and satisfaction. First, participants were asked to rate their agreement with a satisfaction statement about the performance of political institutions on five-point Likert scale ranging from 1(very dissatisfied) to 5(very satisfied). Then, they were asked to rate their agreement with three statements that aim to measure the preferences of voters on democratic value on five-point Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). Finally, they were asked to rate their agreement with a statement regarding immigration issue on five-point Likert scale ranging from 1(very bad) to 5 (very good).

Table 3. Concept Operationalization - Voter Preferences

CONCEPT	DEFINITION	VARIABLE	QUESTIONS
<b>SATISFACTION WITH POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS</b>	This is a respondents' subjective evaluation on the performances of political institutions and the political elites.	Rate of Agreement with the questions on 5-point Likert Scale	How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the performances of the following organizations? - Government - State Great Khural - Political Parties
<b>DEMOCRATIC VALUE</b>	Democratic value is the preference for a democratic system over non-democratic forms of governance (Kołczyńska). <sup>4</sup>	Rate of Agreement with the questions on 5-point Likert Scale	- Having a strong leader in the government who doesn't bother with both parliament and election is good to the economic growth of Mongolia and promote justice. - Having a direct democratic where the people, not politicians make the most important national decisions via referendum is good to the economic growth of Mongolia and promote justice. - Having neoliberal Democracy is better than any other form of government in building justice and inclusive economic growth.
<b>INDIVIDUAL VIEW ON IMMIGRATION</b>	This is individual subjective view on the impact of immigration.	Rate of Agreement with the questions on 5-point Likert Scale	- Is immigration bad thing or good thing for this country?

Source: Here we use both my own items and items taken from the World Value Survey and Asia barometer, but we modified and improved on some items for the context and purpose of this study (Haerpfer, et al. (eds.), 2020<sup>5</sup>; Asian Barometer Survey, 2014).

4 Kołczyńska, M. (2020). Democratic values, education, and political trust. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 61(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715220909881>

5 Haerpfer, C., Inglehart, R., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano J., M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin & B. Puranen et al. (eds.). 2020. *World Values Survey: Round Seven – CountryPooled Datafile*. Madrid, Spain & Vienna, Austria: JD Systems Institute & WWSA Secretariat. [doi.org/10.14281/18241.1](https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.1)

## Survey and Sampling

### Questionnaire

We created a survey with 15 questions that measure variables we chose through the operationalization in the above section. To measure the people-centrism and anti-elitism, we created a questionnaire including 5 statements of populist discourse that are shown in the Table 7. The first section of the questionnaire asks participants to say how frequently the candidates whom they voted in the last election use populist discourses. The second section of the questionnaire measure participants' satisfaction on political institutions, preferences on democratic value, and views on immigration. The items of voters' satisfaction are listed in the Table 7.

### Participant Selection

For the survey research, participants were selected via snowball sampling. The snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where initial participants recruit other research participants. We don't know who voted for the populist candidate or party and who abstained from voting for them. Therefore, the snowball sampling was the most appropriate sampling for me to select participants in this research.

First, we identified the primary potential participants in the population. Therefore, we selected the snowball sampling. Next, we asked participants to recommend other participants. Then we recruited other participants based on the recommendation of the primary participants.

In this research, quantitative approach was utilized. Survey was employed to collect data. Before taking survey from entire sample, pilot test was conducted. Totally, 40 people of four age groups who were equal in numbers participated in the pilot test. We improved the questionnaire on the basis of findings of pilot test.

After improving the questionnaire, the full survey was carried out. Totally, 168 voters were surveyed in the full survey. The database of the survey was created in SPSS. Independent t-test and ANOVA were applied to examine mean difference between two groups who vote for populist candidates and who abstain from voting for them.

### Internal Consistency and Factor Analysis

Before testing hypotheses of this study, we examined the quality of questionnaire items for counting the frequency of populist discourse through internal consistency analysis using a Cronbach alpha. As it is shown in the table 4, internal consistency among 5 items that measure the frequency of populist discourses of a politician is very high with 0.942 score of Cronbach alpha. The table 5 shows that internal consistency is high among three items for measuring the level of voter's satisfaction on the performances of political institutions and government. Their Cronbach's alpha is 0.709.

Table 4. Internal Consistency of items for Measuring Populist Discourses

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.942	.942	5

Table 5. Internal Consistency of items for Measuring Voters' Satisfaction with Performance of Political Institutions

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.709	.709	3

After the internal consistency analysis, factor analysis was performed for examining the validity of questionnaire items. It was used for describing the variability among observed variables for measuring the frequency of 5 items for measuring populist discourses and 3 items for measuring voter satisfaction on performances of political institutions. The result of the Table 6 indicates that there are two components with eigenvalues that are higher than 1. This output indicates that there are two latent factors or two groups of questions.

As it is shown in the Table 7, the first latent or component affects the questions from 1 to 5 most. They have the highest factor loadings to the component 1. Their loadings range from 0.880 to 0.929. Therefore, the items from 1 to 5 should be clustered into the first latent factor. It is labeled as "populist discourses". The items 6-8 are highly correlated to the second latent factor. Their loadings to the second factor range from 0.731 to 0.840. Thus, they must be clustered into the second latent variable or second component. In this research, the second component is labeled as "voter's satisfaction". The outputs of factor analysis indicate that the validity of questionnaire items of this research is very high.

Table 6. Factor Analysis - Eigenvalue Results

**Total Variance Explained**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.073	50.907	50.907	4.073	50.907	50.907	4.069	50.860	50.860
2	1.916	23.945	74.852	1.916	23.945	74.852	1.919	23.992	74.852
3	.662	8.271	83.123						
4	.460	5.753	88.876						
5	.413	5.157	94.033						
6	.217	2.712	96.745						
7	.162	2.031	98.776						
8	.098	1.224	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7. Two groups of items: (1) Populist discourses and (2) Voter Satisfaction

	Component	
	1	2
The people suffer from economic inequality because of a few interest groups.	.929	
I and our party will fight roughly against the corrupt elites for the interest of the people	.912	
iThe power of a few special families prevents our country from making progress	.900	
I and parliament members in the State Great Khural need to follow the will of the people	.883	
The people should win	.880	
Government		.840
Political Parties		.810
State Great Khural		.731

The findings of Cronbach’s alpha and factor analysis show that the variables for measuring populist discourse have very high reliable internal consistency and have high accuracy, so that they are able to measure the frequency of populist discourses and voter satisfaction as a set of underlying variables. Due to this output, I managed to reduce individual items into a manageable and understandable single dimension or factor that can be called “populist communication”. It allowed us to smoothly measure and identify whether a given politician or party is a populist or is not a populist.

## Hypotheses and Statistical Tests for Comparing the Mean Difference between Two Groups

### Hypotheses

According to the patterns elaborated from the interview data, it is very feasible that voters who prefer a strong leader in the government are more susceptible to the populist discourses than voters who evaluate education background and support more realistic promises.

**Hypothesis 1:** Voters who prefer to vote a strong leader in the government are more likely to vote for a populist politician or party than voters who evaluate education background and campaign promise quality of candidates.

While we were taking an interview and surveys, we observed that many people who voted for a populist politician prefer to say that it is good to introduce direct democracy practices in which people decide on policy issues. They argue that direct democracy practice is very useful to increase the people’s engagement in preventing corrupt elites to shape policy in their favorite ways. Based on this pattern, we proposed the second hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 2:** Voters who highly support practices of direct democracy are more likely to vote for a populist politician or party than voters who view direct democracy practices as an unreliable and wrong way in choosing the best policy alternatives.

Most of interview participants said that they are dissatisfied with performances of the government and parliament. They complained that the elite and parliament members work for their specific interest groups, not for the people. However, it is necessary to test whether this scenario is accepted with the analysis of survey research. Therefore, the third hypothesis is proposed on the basis of this pattern.

**Hypothesis 3:** Voters who are strongly dissatisfied with the performances of incumbent party, incumbent president, and parliament members are more likely to vote for a populist politician or party than voters who are more satisfied.

The interview findings don't show any evidences that different views on immigration influence the support for populism in different ways. Some studies of existing literature suggest that there is a significant correlation between the cultural anxiety and success of populist parties (Inglehart and Norris, 2016). Therefore, we decided to test whether this correlation exists in the post-communist context of Mongolia.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is statistically significant association between the rate on the impact of immigration and a vote for a populist candidate.

While we were taking survey, it is observed that younger generation and most especially students are less likely to be susceptible to populist discourses. Most of older generation over 50 years who have experiences of socialist period with strong leaders and strong rules are more likely to be susceptible to populist communication. Based on this observation, I formed the final hypothesis of this study.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is a significant positive association between the age of voters and vote for a populist politician or party in the context of Mongolia.

## Statistical Tests and Results

In this study, participants are divided into two distinct groups who vote for a populist candidate and who abstain from voting for a populist candidate on the basis of mean score measures of 5-point Likert-type scale. The participants whose mean scores of Likert-type responses range from 1 to 3.4 are assigned to the voters' group who abstained from voting for populist candidates or parties in the last election. The rest participants whose mean scores of Likert-type responses range from 3.5 to 5 are assigned to the voters' group who vote for populist candidates. We labeled the group not voting for populist candidates with the value "0" in the dataset and labeled the group voting for populist candidates with the value 1. As it is shown in the Table 8, among 168 participants of this survey, 107 participants are assigned to the group voting for populist candidates and 60 participants are assigned to the group not voting for populist candidates. There is 1 missed response.

Table 8. Group Statistics

Voter status	N
Group voting for a populist candidate	107(63.7%)
Group not voting for a populist candidate	60(35.7%)

## Hypothesis 1 and Mean Comparison between Two Voters' Group

Independent-Samples T test was employed for testing the first hypothesis. This parametric test compares mean scores of two independent groups to examine whether there is statistically significant difference between these two different groups. As it is shown in the tables 9-10, the test results show that there is statistically significant difference between the two groups of voters who vote for populist candidates and don't vote for them. This study found that voters who prefer a strong leader in the government to a weak leader are more likely to vote for a populist politician or party ( $3.56 \pm 1.32$ ) than voters who evaluate quality of education background and campaign promises of candidates ( $2.62 \pm 1.54$ ),  $t(165) = -4.174, p=0.000$ .

Table 9. Group Statistics

Candidate status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Group voting for a populist candidate	107	3.56	1.319	.127
Group not voting for a populist candidate	60	2.62	1.541	.199

Table 10. Independent Samples T-test for examining the Hypothesis 1

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	dF	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	7.555	.007	-4.174	165	.000	-.944	.226	-1.391	-.497
Equal variances not assumed			-3.995	107.311	.000	-.944	.236	-1.413	-.476

## Hypothesis 2 and Mean Comparison between Two Voters' Group

Independent-Sample T-test was also applied to test the second hypothesis. The tables 11-12 show that there is statistically significant difference between the two groups of voters. In the below Table 12, the p-value is 0.000, implying that the difference in means between two groups is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, we could interpret this result that voters who highly support practices of direct democracy are more likely to vote for a populist politician or party ( $3.63 \pm 1.107$ ) than voters who view direct democracy practices as an unreliable and wrong way in choosing the best policy alternatives ( $2.45 \pm 1.358$ ).  $t(164) = -6.080, p=0.000$ .

Table 11. Group statistics

Voter status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Group voting for a populist candidate	106	3.63	1.107	.108
Group not voting for a populist candidate	60	2.45	1.358	.175

Table 12. Independent-Sample T-test for Examining the Hypothesis 2

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	dF	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	7.480	.007	-6.080	164	.000	-1.182	.194	-1.566	-.798
Equal variances not assumed			-5.747	103.479	.000	-1.182	.206	-1.590	-.774

## Hypothesis 3 and Mean Comparison between Two Groups of Voters

According to the outputs in the tables 13-14, there are no any strong evidences showing that there are statistically significant association between the satisfaction of voters with political institution and vote for a populist candidate or political party. The p-value is 0.814 for the political and government institutions implying that the differences in means between the two groups of voters are not statistically significant at the 0.05 levels. This result indicates that there is no statistically significant association between the voters' satisfaction with political institutions and voter's choice for a populist candidate. There is no

statistically significant difference between the two groups of voters, because both groups of voters are strongly dissatisfied with the performances of the Government, State Great Khural, and political parties.

Table 13. Group Statistics

Candidate status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Group voting for a populist candidate	107	2.0623	.69005	.06671
Group not voting for a populist candidate	60	2.0889	.72061	.09303

Table 14. Independent-Samples T-test for Examining the Hypothesis 3

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	dF	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.334	.564	.235	165	.814	.02658	.11308	-.19669	.24985
Equal variances not assumed			.232	117.921	.817	.02658	.11448	-.20011	.25328

### Hypothesis 4 and Mean Comparison between Two Groups of Voters

As it is shown in the tables 15-16, the p-value is 0.000 at the 0.01 level. This result means that there is statistically significant difference in means between the rate on the impact of immigration and a vote for a populist candidate. The output shows that voters who think the immigration will have good impacts on this country are more likely to vote for an unpopulist candidate than voters thinking that immigration is bad.

Table 15. Group Statistics

Candidate status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Group voting for a populist candidate	107	2.85	.810	.078
Group not voting for a populist candidate	60	3.40	.764	.099

Table 16. Independent Samples T-test for the Hypothesis 4

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	dF	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.124	.726	4.292	165	.000	.550	.128	.297	.802
Equal variances not assumed			4.364	128.523	.000	.550	.126	.300	.799

## Hypothesis 5 and Mean Comparison among Four Age Groups

For the hypothesis 5, there are four age groups. Thus, it was impossible to use the Independent Samples T-test that measures the difference of two groups. Therefore, one-way ANOVA test was utilized for testing the hypothesis 5. The dependent variable for the hypothesis 5 is voter choice for a populist candidate. Here the frequency of candidate's use of populist language is counted to identify whether a given group of age is more or less likely to vote for populist candidates who frequently use populist communication. The outputs that are shown in the tables 17-19 and figure 1 imply that there are statistically significant differences in means among four age groups as determined by one-way ANOVA  $F(3, 163) = 4.915, p = 0.003$  as follows as:

- The Tukey post hoc test found that the age group 30-39 ( $3.67 \pm 1.31, p = 0.029$ ), age group 40-49 ( $3.81 \pm 1.02, p = 0.008$ ), and age group over 50 ( $3.81 \pm 1.66, p = 0.007$ ) are more likely to vote for populist candidates, compared to age group 18-29 ( $2.83 \pm 0.22$ ).
- There is statistically significant difference between the age group 18-29 and age group 30-39 at the level 0.05 ( $p = 0.029$ ).
- There is statistically significant difference between the age group 18-29 and age group 40-49 at the level 0.01 ( $p = 0.008$ ).
- There is statistically significant difference between the age group 18-29 and age group over 50 years at the level 0.01 ( $p = 0.007$ ).
- There is no statistically significant difference between the age group 30-39 and age group 40-49 at the level 0.05 ( $p = 0.968$ ).
- There is no statistically significant difference between the age group 30-39 and age group over 50 years at 0.05 level ( $p = 0.968$ ).
- There is no statistically significant difference between the age group 40-49 and age group over 50 years ( $p = 1.000$ ).

Table 17. Descriptive for ANOVA Test of Four Age Groups of Voters

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
18-29	42	2.8286	1.44193	.22249	2.3792	3.2779	1.00	5.00
30-39	42	3.6714	1.30800	.20183	3.2638	4.0790	1.00	5.00
40-49	41	3.8098	1.01779	.15895	3.4885	4.1310	1.00	5.00
over 50	42	3.8095	1.65748	.25575	3.2930	4.3260	1.00	5.00
Total	167	3.5281	1.42579	.11033	3.3103	3.7460	1.00	5.00

Table 18. ANOVA Test Results for Comparing the Mean Differences among Four Age Groups of Voters

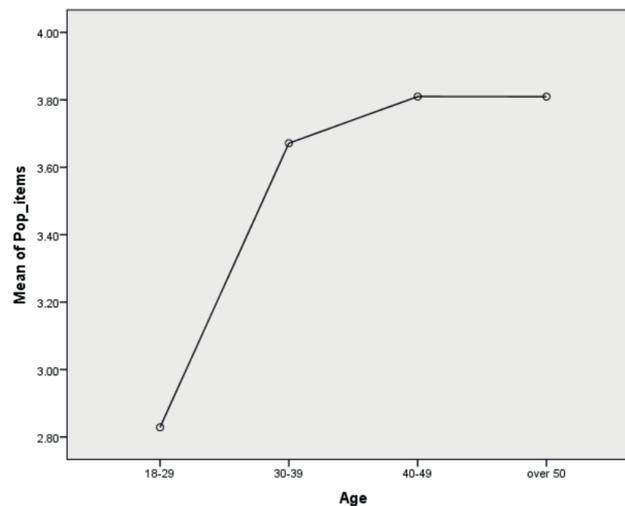
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	27.994	3	9.331	4.915	.003
Within Groups	309.464	163	1.899		
Total	337.458	166			

Table 19. ANOVA Test Results for the Comparisons of Four Age Groups of Voters

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
18-29	30-39	-.84286*	.30068	.029	-1.6233	-.0624
	40-49	-.98118*	.30251	.008	-1.7664	-.1960
	over 50	-.98095*	.30068	.007	-1.7614	-.2005
30-39	18-29	.84286*	.30068	.029	.0624	1.6233
	40-49	-.13833	.30251	.968	-.9236	.6469
	over 50	-.13810	.30068	.968	-.9186	.6424
40-49	18-29	.98118*	.30251	.008	.1960	1.7664
	30-39	.13833	.30251	.968	-.6469	.9236
	over 50	.00023	.30251	1.000	-.7850	.7855
over 50	18-29	.98095*	.30068	.007	.2005	1.7614
	30-39	.13810	.30068	.968	-.6424	.9186
	40-49	-.00023	.30251	1.000	-.7855	.7850

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 1. Means Plots



## Conclusion

Studies that study populist attitudes and success of populism are growing dramatically. However, there are still less studies that study what influences the difference between voters who vote for populist parties and who abstain from voting for them. In this study, we investigated why some Mongolian voters are more susceptible to populist communication and vote for populist candidates and why other voters abstain from voting for populist candidates.

First, we examined whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the preference for a strong leader and vote for a populist candidate. This study established that voters who prefer a strong leader in the government to a weak leader are more likely to vote for populist candidates compared to voters who evaluate the quality of education background and campaign promise of candidates.

Second, this study found that higher preference for direct democracy have a statistically significant effect on the susceptibility to populist discourse. The statistical test results of hypothesis 2 also suggests that voters who highly support direct democracy are more likely to vote for populist candidates. This study has demonstrated that people who oppose direct democracy practices are less likely to vote for populist candidates.

Third, while examining the hypothesis 3, we found that there is no statistically significant difference between satisfaction with political institutions and support for populist candidates. Descriptive statistical analysis suggests that both groups are strongly dissatisfied with the Government, parliament, and political parties.

Finally, this study found that people who think immigration is good to Mongolia are less likely to vote for populists compared to the people who think immigration is bad. One-way ANOVA test shows that younger generation who belongs to age group 18-29 are less likely to be susceptible to populist discourses.

As mentioned above, generally this research has made four important contributions. First, it has discovered that two groups of voters differ significantly in their preference for a strong leader, direct democracy, and immigration with each other. The difference is statistically significant. Second, it has explored that people who have higher preference for a strong leader and direct democracy, and dislike immigration are more likely to vote for populist candidates. It is also found that people who don't support a strong leader and direct democracy are less likely to vote for populists. Third, this research has found that younger generation who refer to age group 18-29 are less susceptible to populist discourse. Fourth, through this study, we designed, developed, and tested questionnaire items that can measure whether a voter voted or didn't vote for populist candidates.

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## PARTNERS

