

Effects of cross-cutting exposure on populist & anti-immigration attitudes

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Rising trends in populism around the globe

- Increasing success of (radical right-wing) populist parties in Europe and beyond
- Supply side of populism
- Demand side of populism
- Mechanisms of electoral support for populist parties

Populism

Mudde 2007: 23

“**thin-centered ideology** that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘**the pure people**’ versus the ‘**corrupt elite**’, and which argues that **politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people**”

Populist “attitudes”

(Akkerman et al. 2014; Hawkins et al. 2012)

- **A set of ideas or beliefs** that make voters more responsive to populist elements of party appeals
- Provides an **important individual-level mechanism of whether voters may indeed opt for a populist party or not** at the face of resentment towards established political systems

Correlates of populist attitudes and issues of transmission

- **Do key antecedents (e.g., high anti-immigration attitudes) always translate into populist attitudes (therefore support for right-wing populist parties), or rather do they effectively need boundary conditions to be translated into populist support?**

Issues of transmission

- We focus on interpersonal political communication -- that is, the horizontal communication about public affairs that takes place between ordinary citizens.
- Does cross-cutting exposure affect citizen attitudes on these matters?

Opposing predictions

- **Deliberative theory & cross-cutting exposure**
 - Cross-cutting exposure attenuates the impact of anti-immigration attitudes on populist attitudes
- **Motivated reasoning & biased processing**
 - Cross-cutting exposure exacerbates the impact of anti-immigration attitudes on populist attitudes



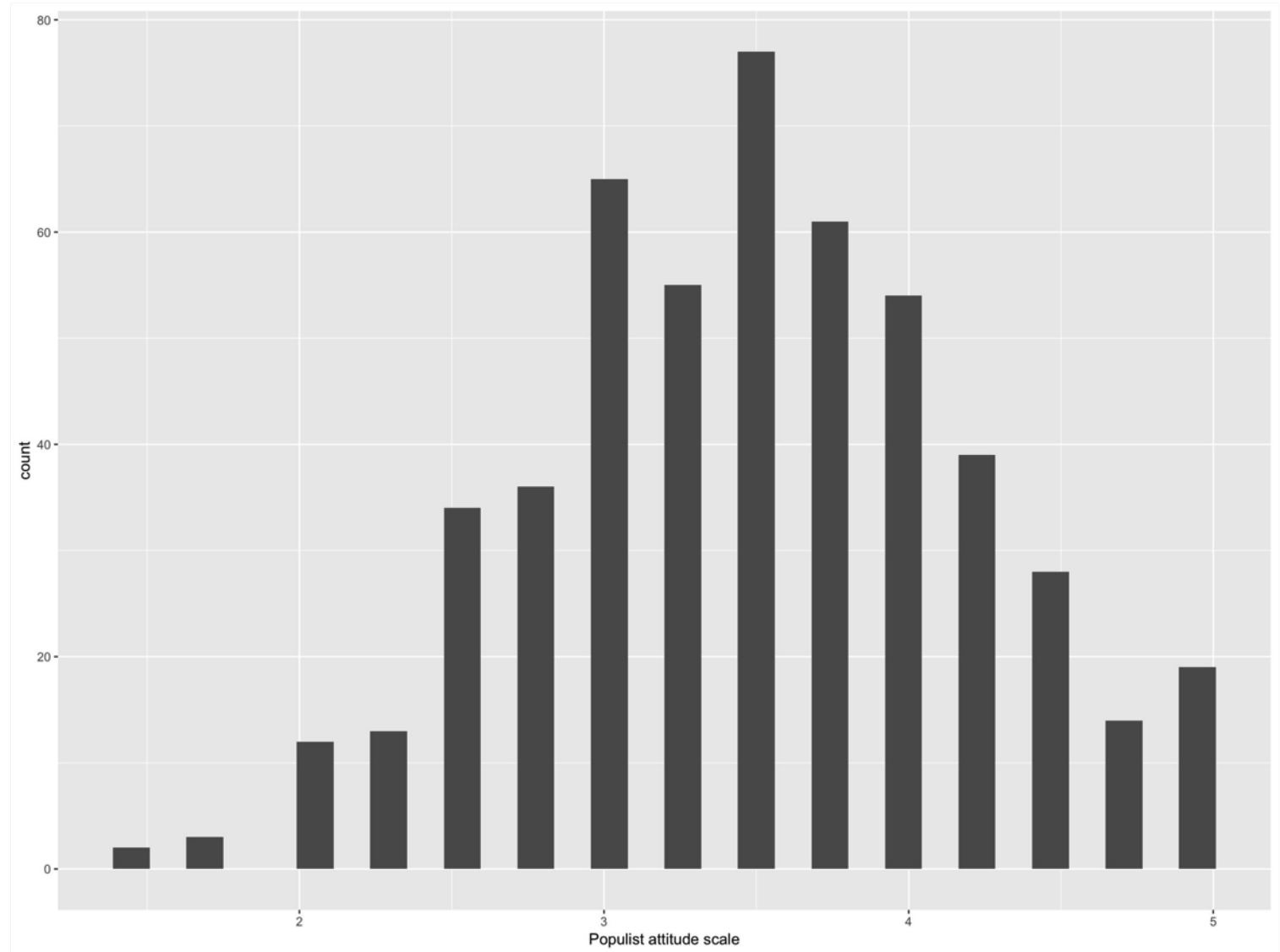
Case study - Austria

- Austria has one of the strongest and most successful right-wing populist parties in Europe: the Freedom Party of Austria (FPOE) has had continued electoral success since 1986, reaching 26% of the vote in 2017
- **PUMA survey module III**
 - 15.9.2017 - 31.10.2017
 - Representative survey data (N = 512)

Distribution of populist attitudes

1 to 5 scale: Alpha = .67; M = 3.49, SD = .72.

- “Elected representatives should obey the will of the people”
- “The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions”
- “I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialized politician”
- “Elected officials talk too much and take too little action”

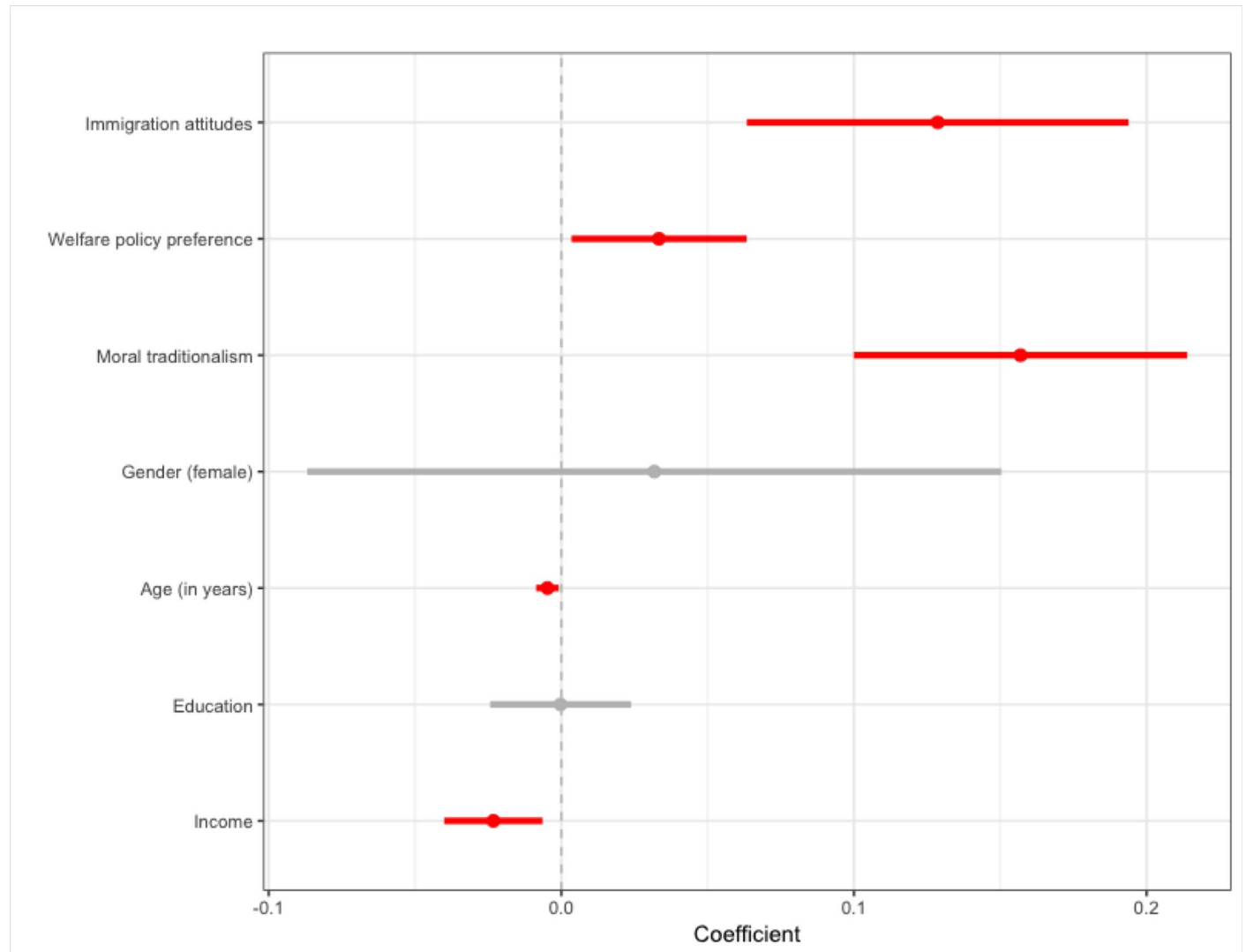


1. Over 70% of our sample already score higher than the middle value of the scale
2. Non-negligible share of Austrian holds rather strong support for populist attitudes

Correlates of populist attitudes

Several policy attitudes (welfare & immigration) and personal values provide a good predictive value in understanding populist attitudes

- Demographics
- Welfare preference (less tax & less benefits)
- Moral traditionalism
- Immigration attitudes
 - “Culture enriched by foreigners” (high = *negative*)
 - “Should limit no. of immigrations”

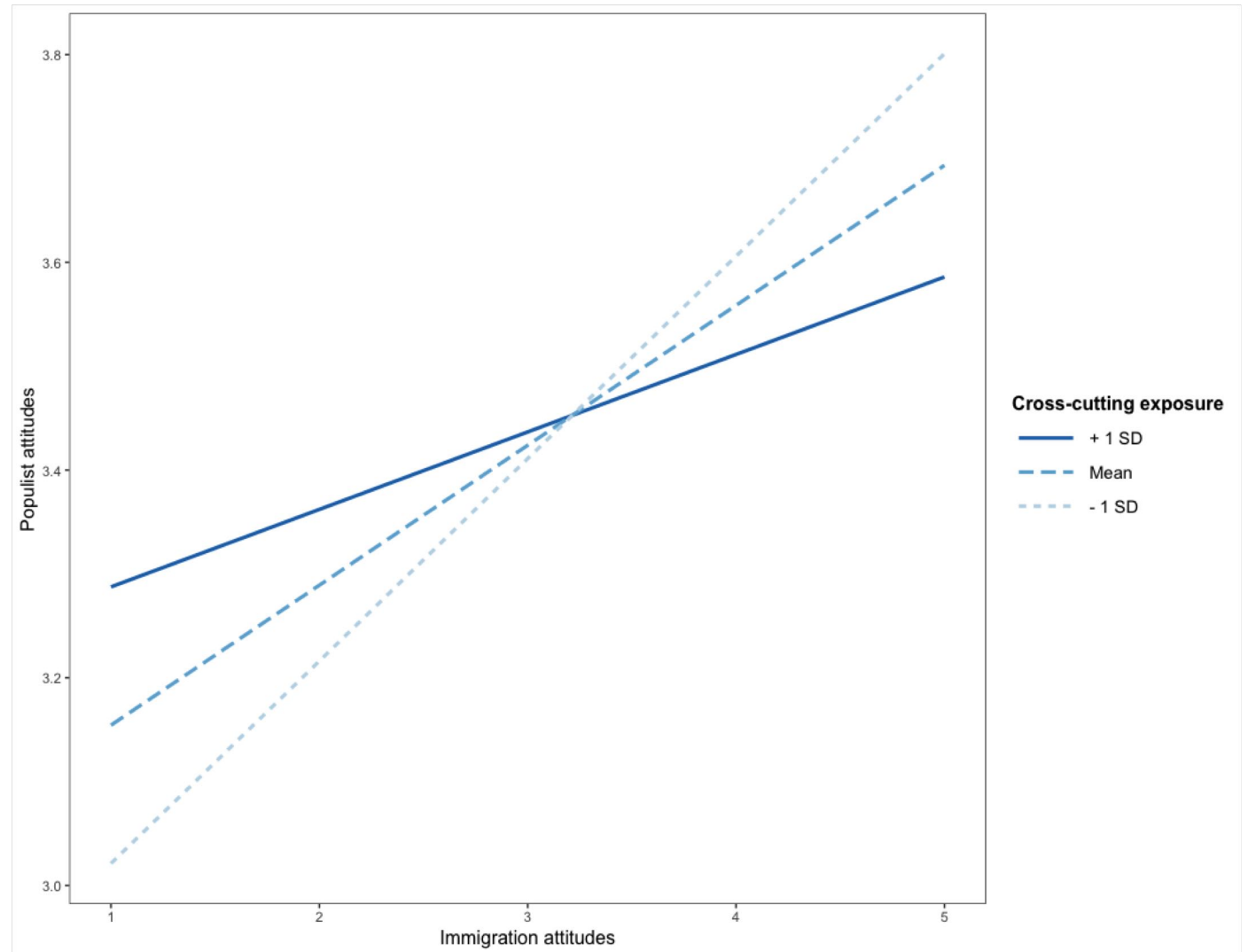


Support for populist idea (“populist attitudes”) has systematic relationship with one’s symbolic policy preferences

Effects of cross-cutting exposure

Cross-cutting exposure:

- **Weighted average of exposure to disagreement**
 - With family and close friends
 - With coworkers and acquaintances
 - Weighted by discussion frequency, and then averaged across two types of discussants

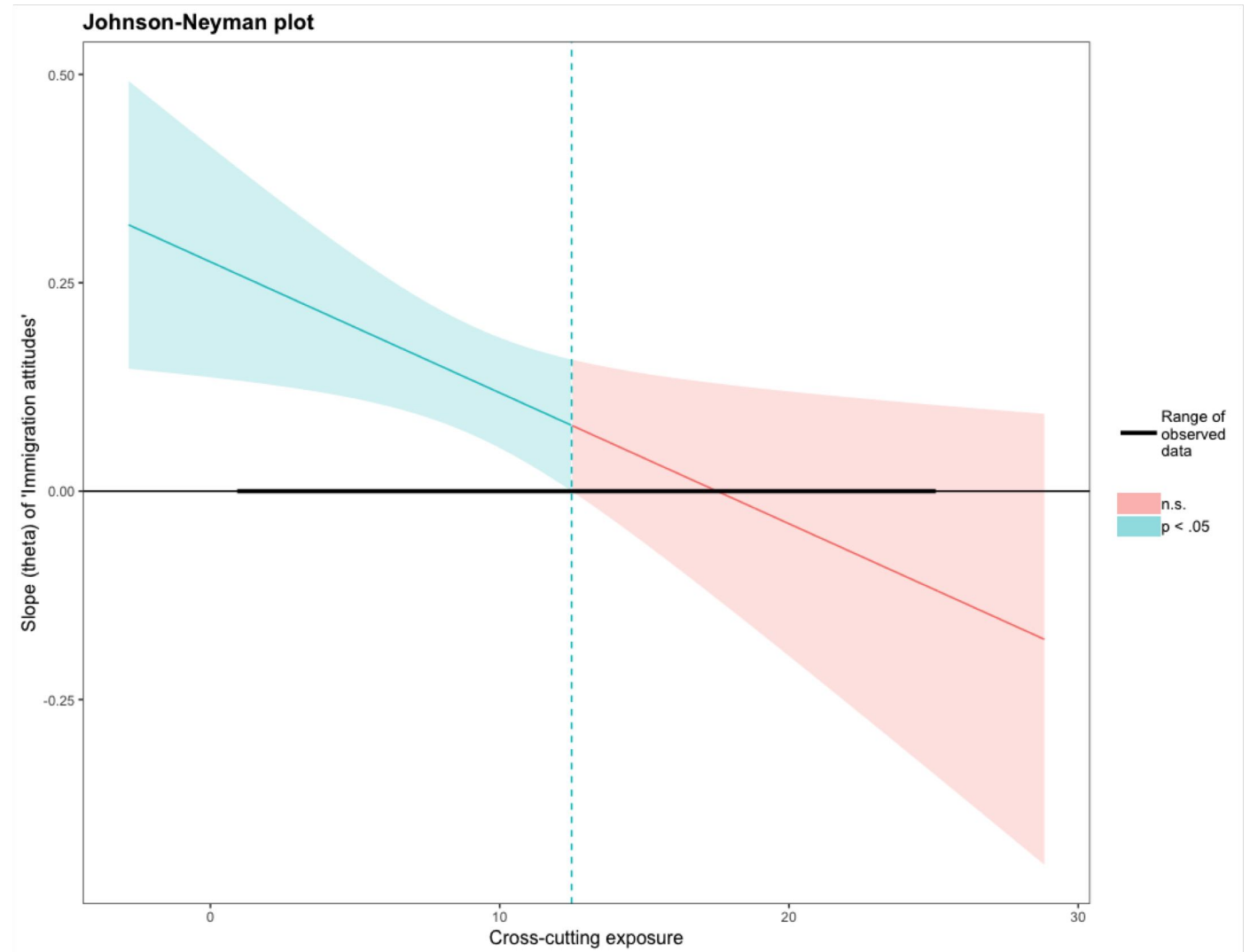


More exposure to disagreement attenuate the effect of immigration attitudes on endorsement of populist ideas

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Conclusion

- One's economic and cultural policy preferences affect an individual's endorsement of populist ideals
- Focus on social communication about public affairs that takes place between ordinary citizens
- Does cross-cutting exposure affect citizen attitudes on these matters?
- IT DOES!