

The relationship between populism and national identity: A scoping review

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Abstract

There is growing research on the relationship between populism and national identity, but findings remain conceptually and methodologically fragmented. This scoping review synthesizes quantitative evidence from 69 manuscripts (87 studies, 232 associations). Following JBI and PRISMA-ScR guidance, we charted study characteristics and used thematic content analysis to classify populism as demand-side (attitudes/beliefs, sentiments/evaluations, endorsement/voting) or supply-side, and national identity as secure versus defensive forms. Evidence is concentrated in Europe ($\approx 69\%$ of studies) and relies mainly on cross-sectional designs ($\approx 75\%$), with fewer experimental ($\approx 16\%$) and longitudinal studies ($\approx 7\%$). Across operationalizations, populism shows consistent positive links with defensive national attachments (e.g., nationalism, national narcissism), especially for voting/endorsement and affective evaluations of populist actors. In contrast, associations with secure national identification (e.g., national satisfaction/pride) are mixed, often null or negative, depending on measurement and modeling choices. Overall, the findings provide a comprehensive evidence mapping that can inform future research on populism and identity.

KEYWORDS

national identity, populism, populism-identity link, populist attitudes, scoping review, voting behavior

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between populism and national identity is a critical area of study for understanding contemporary political dynamics. On the one hand, Political Science has been the discipline at the forefront of the study of populism, extensively examined through ideational,

strategic, and discursive-performative approaches (Aslanidis, 2015; Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Moffitt & Tormey, 2014; Mudde, 2017; Weyland, 2001, 2017). On the other hand, national identity has been a preferred object of study of Social Psychology, according to which it is defined as a fundamental component of group belonging and intergroup relations, primarily through the lens of the Social Identity Theory (Haslam et al., 2020; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Despite the significance of both concepts for the respective disciplines, empirical research on the interplay between populism and national identity remains fragmented and inconsistent.

Populism has increasingly attracted academic attention in recent years (Hunger & Paxton, 2022). There is a wide consensus around Mudde's (2004) definition of populism as a thin-centered ideology that juxtaposes "the pure people" against "the corrupt elite" and claims that politics should reflect the will and sovereignty of the people. This ideational perspective conceptualizes populism as a multidimensional construct comprising core elements such as anti-elitism (disdain for corrupt political elites), support for popular sovereignty (the belief that power should be transferred to ordinary people), and a Manichean worldview (a binary perception of society as a struggle between "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite" or other threatening outgroups) (Akkerman et al., 2014; Castanho Silva et al., 2018; Mudde, 2004; Müller et al., 2017).

Building on this ideational approach, scholars have developed new methods to examine both the demand for populism and the supply of populism (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Rovira Kaltwasser et al., 2017). Demand-side populism, that is, how citizens endorse populist worldviews and support populist actors, has been widely studied across different contexts in regard to mass-level populist attitudes, sentiments, and voting behaviors (Akkerman et al., 2014; Oliver & Rahn, 2016). An example of the study of populism on the demand-side comes from a study conducted by Jungkunz et al. (2021), who used data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module 5. Conducted between 2016 and 2020, this module includes survey items specifically designed to assess populist attitudes at the individual level and encompasses data from 30 countries across Asia, Europe, and the Americas, providing a comprehensive cross-national perspective on how populist sentiments influence electoral behavior. Researchers have used this dataset to explore the relationship between populist attitudes and voting patterns. The authors found that while populist attitudes are present among voters in various political systems, their influence on voting behavior varies depending on contextual factors. Specifically, populist attitudes often predicted voting for populist parties in countries where these parties were in opposition, but failed to predict vote choice for populist parties in countries where they were already in power. Furthermore, this pattern remained consistent across different measures of populist attitudes employed in the study (Castanho Silva et al., 2020; Wuttke et al., 2020).

The demand-side populism is opposed to supply-side populism, i.e., the classification and understanding of how parties and leaders promote populist narratives (Bonikowski & Gidron, 2016; Hawkins, 2009). One significant contribution to the empirical measurement of populism on the supply-side of politics is the Populism and Political Parties Expert Survey (POPPA), developed by Meijers and Zaslove (2021). This cross-national survey provides data covering 28 European countries on the degree to which political parties across Europe exhibit populist characteristics. By relying on expert assessments, POPPA evaluates party positions along key dimensions of populism, including Manichean worldview, people-centrism, general will, and indivisible people. The survey's findings reveal that populism is not confined to radical right-wing parties but is also present among radical left and centrist parties, challenging the notion that populism is ideologically monolithic. The survey represents a major advancement in quantifying populist supply, addressing some of the conceptual and operational inconsistencies that have historically plagued the field (Meijers & Zaslove, 2021).

Despite these conceptual and methodological advances, populism remains a notoriously elusive concept, often criticized for its fluidity and chameleon-like qualities (Benveniste et al., 2016). This conceptual vagueness has significant implications for empirical research, particularly when assessing its relationship with other constructs such as national identity. Recent methodological critiques have highlighted persistent challenges in the measurement of populism, including (i) issues related to the choice, design, and operationalization of attitudinal survey items; (ii) inconsistencies in the assessment of party-level populism; and (iii) instrument biases that make some measures more effective for capturing certain varieties of populism than others (Olivas Osuna & Rama, 2022). These limitations hinder the comparability of findings across studies and obstruct theoretical progress in the field. As such, a systematic mapping of how populism is conceptualized and measured—particularly in relation to national identity—is both timely and necessary.

To fully grasp the empirical nuances of the populism-identity link, it is equally important to clarify the concept of national identity. Psychological research has long established that individuals have a fundamental tendency to derive identity from group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). One key group of reference for many individuals is their national ingroup, making national identity a central aspect of self-concept. National identity is generally defined as the part of an individual's self-concept derived from their knowledge of being a member of a national group, along with the evaluative and emotional significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981). Contemporary social identity work further emphasizes that identification is multidimensional, typically involving self-definition (e.g., centrality) and self-investment (e.g., solidarity, satisfaction/pride; Leach et al., 2008). Importantly, expressions of national attachment do not map neatly onto a single evaluative meaning: national pride and attachment can coexist with either inclusive orientations or exclusionary and status-protective motivations (Brewer, 1999; Cichocka, 2016; Schatz et al., 1999). In political science, nations are often conceptualized as “imagined communities” constituted through shared narratives, symbols, and institutions that enable members to experience a sense of horizontal belonging despite never meeting most fellow nationals (Anderson, 2016). This view aligns with contemporary syntheses of nationalism that emphasize the political and institutional production of national membership, boundaries, and continuity over time (Mylonas & Tudor, 2021). Framing the nation as a socially constructed group in this sense helps situate psychological approaches to national identification within broader interdisciplinary debates.

To organize this heterogeneous literature, we draw on prior distinctions between relatively secure/constructive versus defensive forms of ingroup positivity (e.g., Cichocka, 2016; Golec de Zavala et al., 2013; Leach et al., 2024). In this framework, secure national identities refer to favorable evaluations of the national ingroup that do not inherently imply superiority, entitlement, or hostility toward outgroups. They tend to reflect a genuine positive regard for one's national ingroup without intergroup hostility and typically include national ingroup satisfaction (i.e., feeling positively about being a member of the national group) and constructive patriotism (i.e., pride in one's country without implying superiority or exclusionary tendencies; Schatz et al., 1999). By contrast, defensive national identities refer to forms of national attachment that are bound up with superiority claims, perceived entitlement, or hypersensitivity to criticism and misrecognition (Cichocka, 2016; Golec de Zavala, 2023). National narcissism,¹ for example, has been conceptualized as a defensive expression of national identification that entails an exaggerated belief in the ingroup's greatness, coupled with a conviction that others fail to recognize or appreciate its true value

¹We use the term national narcissism to refer to collective narcissism applied to the national context, following recent usage (Abou-Ismaïl et al., 2023; Cichocka et al., 2023; Cislak et al., 2024; Cislak & Cichocka, 2023; Gronfeldt et al., 2023; Rogoza, Marchlewska, Molenda, et al., 2025; Rogoza, Marchlewska, Rogoza, et al., 2025; Sternisko et al., 2023).

(Golec de Zavala et al., 2009). Recent work further characterizes national narcissism as a group-based ego-enhancement strategy, through which individuals regulate self-worth by defending an inflated image of the ingroup and seeking external recognition (Cichocka & Cislak, 2020). This functional perspective helps explain why national narcissism tends to align with status-protective political orientations and may therefore show more consistent links with populism than more secure forms of national identification. National narcissism has been consistently linked to intergroup hostility (Cai & Gries, 2013; Cichocka et al., 2017, 2018; Golec de Zavala et al., 2016; Golec de Zavala & Cichocka, 2012; Lyons et al., 2010). Similarly, nationalism, which has been typically defined as a belief in the superiority of the national ingroup and a desire for it to dominate over other nations (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Sidanius et al., 1997), has been associated with hostility toward outgroups more than secure forms usually are (Blank & Schmidt, 2003; de Figueiredo Jr. & Elkins, 2003; Huddy & del Ponte, 2019; Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; Mummendey et al., 2001).

We use these categories to structure the current review. At the same time, we acknowledge critiques that the boundary between “secure” and “defensive” categories is not always sharp, because national identity is often politically contested and context-dependent (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Sapountzis, 2008). Measures can also blend components of attachment and superiority, and the same label (e.g., “patriotism” or “national pride”) may capture different meanings across instruments and settings. Accordingly, we treat these categories as an organizing heuristic rather than mutually exclusive “types” of national identity. In our coding, measures were classified based on (a) their theoretical definition in the source study, and (b) the content of scale items, with particular attention to whether items explicitly indexed superiority, entitlement, resentment/misrecognition, or outgroup derogation (coded as defensive) versus attachment/satisfaction without superiority or exclusion (coded as secure).

Recent research has increasingly highlighted the social identity dimension of populism (Aslanidis, 2020; Bos et al., 2020; Obradović et al., 2020; Stathi & Guerra, 2021). However, the relationship between populism and national identity remains empirically inconsistent. Some findings indicate a positive relationship when national identity is measured in defensive terms, such as national narcissism (Lantos & Forgas, 2021; Marchlewska et al., 2018). However, others report a negative association between national identification and support for populist parties (Lobera, 2020) or populist movements such as Brexit and Polesxit (Cislak et al., 2020; Marchlewska et al., 2018). Still, some studies find no significant association, suggesting that national identification is unrelated to populist voting preferences for leaders and parties, including Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Marine Le Pen, Donald Trump, La France Insoumise, and Rassemblement National (Marchlewska et al., 2018; Urbanska et al., 2021). Additionally, other lines of research have examined identity-related constructs, such as perceptions of realistic and symbolic threats and relative group deprivation, in relation to populist endorsement (Dennison & Turnbull-Dugarte, 2022; Mols & Jetten, 2016). Because threat perceptions and relative deprivation are conceptually related to national identity but not equivalent to it, we treat these constructs as correlates of national identity and report them as supplementary analyses rather than as core indicators of national identification.

Given these inconsistencies, the interplay between populism and national identity remains a complex yet critical area of investigation. Despite increasing scholarly interest in this topic, no systematic synthesis has mapped the scope and nature of the available evidence. Given the diverse conceptualizations and subsequent methodological approaches used to measure both populism and national identity, a scoping review is necessary to synthesize the full scope of existing research. This approach will provide a comprehensive overview of current knowledge, identify knowledge gaps, and highlight avenues for future investigation (Munn et al., 2018, 2022; Peters, Marnie, et al., 2020).

Thus, this scoping review aimed to (1) identify, map, and summarize the available quantitative research on the association between populism and psychological variables related to national identity, (2) clarify the extent (size), range (variety), and nature (characteristics) of the existing knowledge on this topic, and (3) identify which dimensions of populism and national identity are most strongly associated across studies. By providing a comprehensive overview, this review aimed to guide future empirical and theoretical developments on the populism-identity link and set the stage for new research directions.

METHOD

Protocol

Given the fragmented and interdisciplinary nature of research on populism and national identity, a scoping review was selected as the most appropriate method to methodically map the available evidence and clarify how different dimensions of national identity and populism are examined and interrelated (Munn et al., 2018). This review follows the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) methodology for scoping reviews (Munn et al., 2022; Peters, Godfrey, et al., 2020; Peters, Marnie, et al., 2020) and is reported in line with PRISMA-ScR guidelines (Tricco et al., 2018). A protocol was preregistered on the Open Science Framework (OSF; access https://osf.io/6cdu3?view_only=9cc799760d0b4217b615b24c363e5346).

Inclusion criteria

We used the JBI's Population-Concept-Context (PCC) framework to define the inclusion criteria (Peters, Godfrey, et al., 2020). There were no restrictions regarding participant demographics (Population). The Concept of interest was the relationship between populism (e.g., attitudes, voting intentions) and national identity (e.g., patriotism, nationalism), assessed via quantitative methods. Studies were included from a broad range of disciplines (e.g., psychology, political science, sociology), and from any geographic or cultural setting, without restrictions on publication date (Context).

Records were eligible if they: (1) addressed populism and national identity; (2) measured (or experimentally manipulated) populism; (3) included a measure (or manipulation) of psychological variables related to national identity; (4) reported an association between both constructs; and (5) followed a quantitative approach and design (observational, experimental, or quasi-experimental). We included publications in English, French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. See Table 1 for full inclusion and exclusion criteria.

To ensure conceptual clarity, studies focusing exclusively on immigration attitudes were excluded unless populism was explicitly referenced. Similarly, studies on adjacent ideological and psychological constructs, such as extremism, terrorism, conspiracy beliefs, or authoritarianism, were excluded unless they directly addressed populism. Regarding national identity, we excluded articles centered on nativism, chauvinism, or religious identity without a clear link to national identification. In addition, we explored a set of theoretically adjacent constructs (e.g., ethnic identity, threat perceptions, and national nostalgia) as correlates of national identity. These are reported in the supplementary materials to ensure conceptual clarity.

TABLE 1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria considered for the screening stage.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Relates both constructs (populism and national identity)	Doesn't relate or include both constructs
Contains a quantitative measure (or experimental manipulation) of populism (e.g., populist attitudes, populist beliefs, populist endorsement, populist voting intentions) or at least one of its dimensions (e.g., Manicheanism, anti-elitism, popular sovereignty/people-centrism, and homogeneity)	Doesn't measure or manipulate populism
Has a quantitative measure (or manipulation) of psychological variables related to national identity (e.g., identification with the national group, patriotism, nationalism, national narcissism)	Lack of measures or experimental manipulations related to national identity
Contains an association indicator between the two constructs	No association measure between the two constructs
Follows a quantitative approach and study design (e.g., observational, quasi-experimental, and experimental research designs)	Qualitative studies (e.g., phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory) and review articles (e.g., systematic reviews, scoping reviews, evidence syntheses, narrative reviews, qualitative syntheses)

Search strategy and information sources

An initial exploratory search (EBSCOhost and SCOPUS) helped identify relevant keywords and informed the final search strategy (Appendix SI). This strategy was revised by the review team and refined by soliciting feedback from experienced researchers in the topic and/or in the methodology. The search terms covered populism, national identity, and quantitative research. On July 15, 2024, we searched six indexing services: EBSCOhost, b-ON, SCOPUS, Web of Science, SciELO, and ProQuest Dissertation and Theses. The search covered title, abstract, and keywords, and was restricted to peer-reviewed articles and dissertations. Reference lists of included studies were also hand-searched.

Evidence screening and selection

Results were imported into EndNote for de-duplication and uploaded to Rayyan (Ouzzani et al., 2016) for screening. Screening was conducted in two stages. First, two reviewers (GF and CC) independently screened titles and abstracts after piloting 30 randomly selected citations. Interrater agreement was 91.65% and Cohen's Kappa was .80, which represents a strong level of agreement (McHugh, 2012). In the second phase, both reviewers independently screened the full texts. Disagreements were resolved by consensus, with a third reviewer (MPM) consulted when needed. Reasons for exclusion were recorded.

Data charting process

A data-charting table was developed in Excel to guide information extraction. Two reviewers (GF and CC) pilot-tested the tool on 10 randomly selected publications. Data were then extracted independently by three members (GF, PN, CC), with regular meetings to discuss any adjustments needed due to the iterative nature of scoping reviews (Pollock et al., 2023). The first author reviewed all extractions and consulted with MPM when necessary.

Data items

Following scoping review guidelines (Khalil et al., 2021), we extracted: (1) Study characteristics: title, authors, year, journal, country, document type, discipline, data collection method, objective(s); (2) Sample: participants description, sample size, age, gender, inclusion/exclusion criteria; (3) Method: design, dataset type, measures (content/dimensions, item number, scale, source, type of stimuli); (4) Experimental method (if applicable): randomization, control condition, design, manipulation description, IVs/DVs, manipulation checks, moderators/mediators; and (5) Results: summary of results and role of populism and identity (e.g., IV, DV, moderator, mediator).

Synthesis of results

We first report a descriptive analysis of trends in publication year, disciplines, location, sample, and design. Then, studies were grouped by type of national identity and populism examined. Findings were synthesized narratively, with tables and figures used to present frequencies and patterns across studies.

RESULTS

Articles flow

After removing duplicates, 1410 citation results were identified. In title and abstract screening, we excluded 1024, leaving 386 potential papers for full-text retrieval. Sixteen papers were inaccessible, and of the remaining 370, 306 were excluded during full-text review. An additional five papers were identified through reference searching, resulting in 69 included manuscripts (Figure 1).

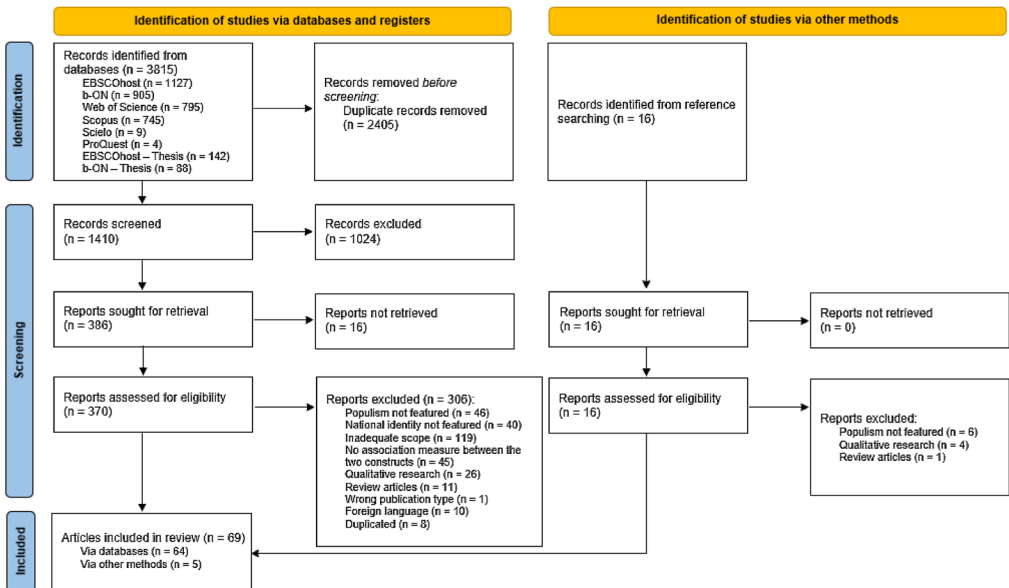


FIGURE 1 PRISMA flow diagram displaying data collection process.

Study characteristics (article information, sample, method, and findings) are available on [OSF](#).

Bibliometric analysis

A total of 69 documents were selected for data extraction.

Temporal and disciplinary patterns

The manuscripts span from 2008 to 2024, with over half (57%) published from 2021 onwards. As [Figure 2](#) shows, there is a substantial rise in the number of publications studying the relationship between national identification and populism. Most publications come from Political Science ($n = 29$) and Psychology ($n = 24$), followed by Sociology ($n = 13$), Communication ($n = 2$), and Social Sciences (miscellaneous, $n = 1$) ([Figure 3A](#)). All but one were journal articles.

Because several documents reported multi-study papers, the 69 manuscripts covered 87 studies, from which we extracted 232 relationships between identity and populism variables.

Geographical context

Of the 87 studies, most were conducted in Europe (69%, $n = 60$), followed by North America (17%, $n = 15$), Asia (9%, $n = 8$) and Oceania (1%, $n = 1$). Three studies (3%) drew on global samples covering multiple continents (e.g., Cichocka et al., 2023).

Study designs and data collection

Most studies employed a cross-sectional design (75%, $n = 65$), followed by experimental (16%, $n = 14$), longitudinal (7%, $n = 6$), and quasi-experimental designs (2%, $n = 2$) ([Figure 3B](#)). Data collection modes were mainly online questionnaires (62%, $n = 54$), face-to-face interviews (18%, $n = 16$), and archival research (7%, $n = 6$) ([Figure 3C](#)). Less frequent methods included online or phone interviews, pen-and-paper surveys, mail questionnaires, and lab experiments (6%, each $n = 1$), with three mixed-method and three unclear cases (7%).

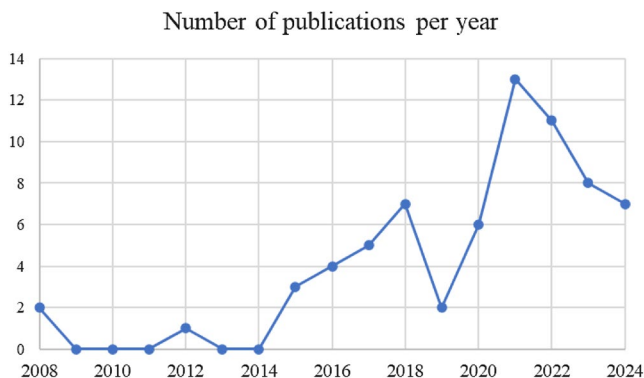


FIGURE 2 Mapping the number of publications per year.

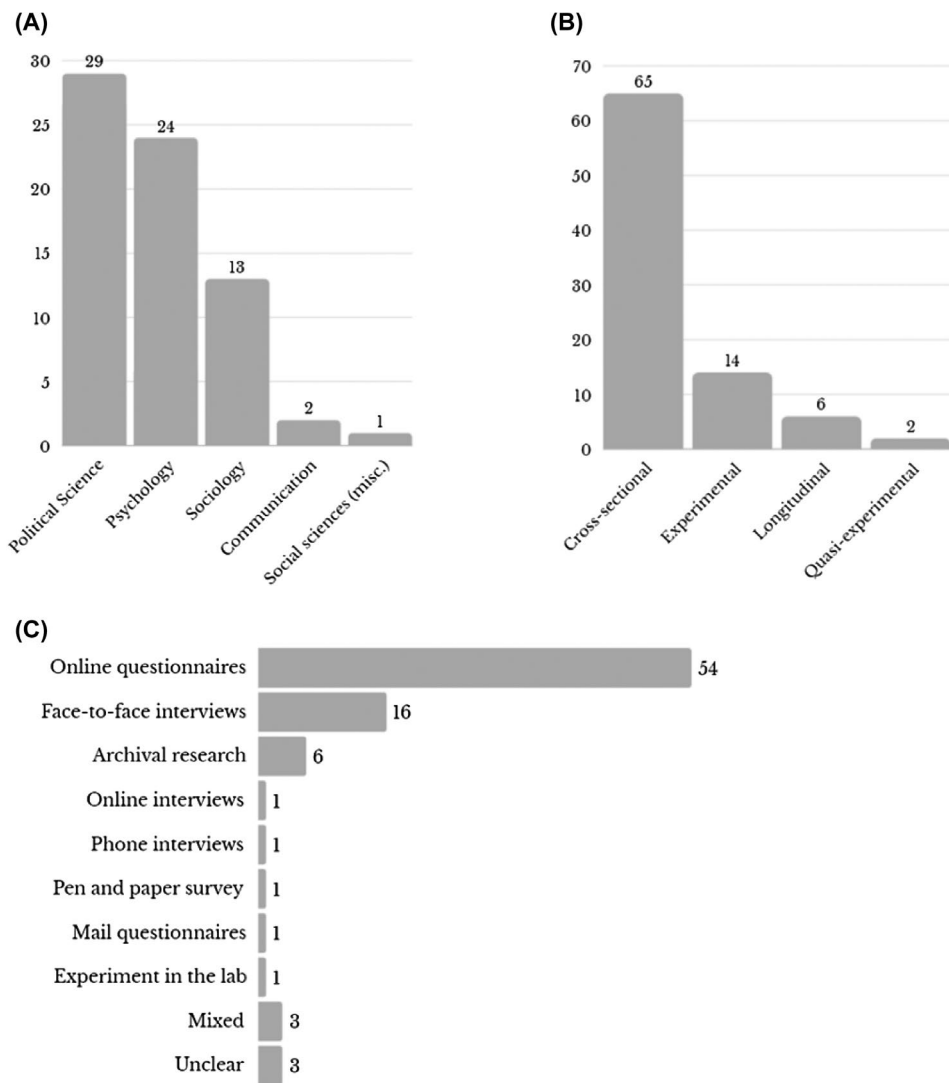


FIGURE 3 Mapping the total number of manuscripts by disciplines. (A), the Study Designs (B), and the Modes of Data Collection (C).

There were 44 studies using original data and 43 using available datasets. Among those with original data, online questionnaires predominated (84%, $n=37$), with fewer using face-to-face interviews, mail surveys, archival research, or lab experiments. Studies using available datasets often relied on large-scale projects such as the European Social Survey (ESS; e.g., Ferrari, 2021), European Values Study (EVS; e.g., Dunn, 2015), or American National Election Studies (ANES; e.g., Lee, 2017), using primarily online or face-to-face formats (40% and 35% of the studies, respectively).

Sample characteristics

Ten studies did not report sample size. Among those that did, the total sample comprised 879,502 participants ($Median=1061$, $range=73-156,174$). Age was unreported in 39 studies and

gender in 34. For those providing this information, the median age was 43, with most studies including younger, middle-aged, and older adults; 10 included adolescents (13–18 years). Regarding gender, 54.21% of participants identified as female, 41.98% as male, and 3.81% as non-binary or preferred not to say.

Findings of available evidence on the populism-identity link

This review identified 232 associations between populism and national identity, extracted from 87 studies reported across 69 manuscripts.

A total of 222 measures of populism were analyzed through thematic content analysis, combining inductive (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2006) and deductive approaches (e.g., Vala, 1986). We classified these into supply-side populism ($n=11$)—referring to how parties and leaders promote populist ideas through discourses, platforms, or manifestos—and demand-side populism ($n=211$)—focusing on voter attitudes, evaluations, preferences, and electoral behavior (see Table 2). Demand-side populism was further subdivided into: (a) populist attitudes and beliefs ($n=49$), (b) populist sentiments and evaluations ($n=34$), and (c) populist voting behavior ($n=128$).

For national identity (see Table 3), 223 measures were identified and grouped into: (a) secure identities ($n=74$), (b) defensive identities ($n=81$), and (c) perceptions of threat ($n=68$). To increase transparency, we provide an overview of the measures included in secure and defensive identity categories (Table 4). Across the included studies, secure national identities were most often operationalized as national identification (typically via multi-item social identification scales capturing ties, solidarity, and positive feelings toward the national ingroup), alongside more specific components such as ingroup centrality and ingroup satisfaction. Additional indicators included emotional attachment/closeness to the nation, exclusive national self-categorization, and several forms of national pride, ranging from single-item pride to domain-specific pride (e.g., democracy, history, army, science, sports, fair treatment). By contrast, defensive national identities were primarily captured through measures of nationalism (from established questionnaires and large-scale survey batteries to party-level placements and coded nationalist rhetoric), as well as national narcissism (standard versions of the Collective Narcissism Scale and adaptations/translations). Studies also used related defensive indicators such as national sentiment (including critical/defensive evaluative items) and chauvinism, and in smaller subsets constructs such as civilizationism (text-analytic coding of manifestos/tweets) and Christian nationalism (endorsement of a religious-national fusion).

Secure identities primarily reflect non-competitive national attachment and favorable evaluations of the ingroup without implied superiority (e.g., national ingroup satisfaction, national pride). Defensive identities capture competitive or status-protective forms of national attachment that emphasize ingroup superiority, entitlement, or grievance about external recognition (e.g., nationalism, national narcissism).

We then examined how these identity categories intersected with different forms of populism. These intersections formed the basis for subsequent sections (see Table 5), where we detail methodological aspects and patterns of findings. Most of the evidence focuses on voting behavior and national identity. In contrast, only a few studies examined the relationship between populist supply and secure identities, and none explored its connection to threat perceptions (Figure 4). What comes next is a detailed description of each block of studies, presented in order of prevalence.

The following sections focus exclusively on studies examining the intersection between populism and national identity in its strictest sense. Additional analyses exploring variables conceptually related to national identity (e.g., collective nostalgia, civic and ethnic conceptions of nationhood, perceived threat) are presented in the supplementary materials (see

TABLE 2 Categorization of the populism measures ($n=224$) into main and subdimensions.

Dimension	Subdimension	Measure	<i>N</i>
Supply	–	Populism in speeches	4
		Populism (countries governed by populists)	2
		Indicator of party family – Far Right	4
		Classification of the party families – RRP	1
Demand	Populist attitudes and beliefs	Populist attitudes	26
		Populist beliefs	1
		Populist thin ideology	9
		Support of populism/ support for populist attitudes	1
		Populist attitudes (People-centrism)	1
		Populist attitudes (Anti-elitism)	1
		Contempt toward the elites of society	4
		Confidence in the government	2
		Responsibility-oriented populism	1
		Rights-oriented populism	1
		Attitudes to welfare chauvinism	1
		Welfare chauvinism and exclusionism	1
	Populist sentiments and evaluations	Feeling of being closest to a populist party	13
		Party identification	2
		Party sympathy	1
		PRRP sympathy (Populist Radical Right Parties)	1
		Trump thermometer rating	1
		Trump trait evaluation	1
		Trump vs. Cruz feeling thermometer gap	1
		Trump vs. Jeb Bush feeling thermometer gap	1
		Trump vs. Rubio feeling thermometer gap	1
		Satisfaction with Brexit	1
	Populist voting behavior	Radical right-wing party preferences	3
		Support for the alt-right	4
		Support for the referendum's outcome	4
		Voting behavior	14
		Vote choice	4
		Voting preferences in the 2016 general elections	3
		Intention to vote for a populist party	1
		Support for populist parties	1
		Switch toward a populist party (2017–2019)	1
		Past voting for a populist presidential candidate in 2017 presidential elections	1
		Voted for an RPP (right-wing populist parties) in the last election	10

(Continues)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Dimension	Subdimension	Measure	N
		Vote for Populist Radical Right Parties	7
		Preference for radical right-wing populist parties	5
		Far right party support	2
		Intention to vote ER (Extreme-Right)	1
		Probability to Vote (PTV) for Vox	1
		Support for Fidesz	8
		Vote recall (probability of having voted for VOX in the last general elections)	1
		Voting for AKP	1
		Voting for Dawn (Usvit)	3
		Voting for Podemos	1
		Partisan vote choices – Voting DPP/KMT	4
		Voting for the Hungarian Fidesz Party	3
		Voting for the right-wing Hungarian Jobbik party	3
		Voting for the right-wing Polish PiS party	3
		Jarosław Kaczynski vote in presidential elections	2
		Law and Justice vote in parliamentary elections	2
		Far-left vote	3
		Far-right vote	3
		Nationalist vote	4
		Opposition to Immigration	1
		Voting for Trump	1
		Preference for Donald Trump	3
		Support for the Capitol Hill raid	3
		Support for Trump's candidacy regardless of democratic procedures	3
		Support for Donald Trump's 2024 Presidency	3
		Brexit support	3
		Brexit vote	4
		Support for Brexit – i.e., referendum vote intentions	1
		Voting Leave – Brexit	2
		Voting Leave – Poxxit	6
		Percentage of vote Remain (RemainPcnt)	1
		Pro-majority collective action	5

Tables S1–S4). These are presented as complementary explorations of correlates of national identity, given that although empirically related, they are not conceptually equivalent to national identity.

TABLE 3 Categorization of the national identity measures ($n=225$) into main dimensions.

Dimension	Measure	N
Secure identities	National identification	28
	Nation-state identity	13
	National ingroup satisfaction	7
	National ingroup centrality	2
	National ingroup solidarity	1
	Individual self-stereotyping	2
	National pride	16
	National positivity	2
	Civic citizenship	1
	Civic national identity	1
	Creedal nationalism	1
Defensive identities	National narcissism	30
	Nationalism	25
	Nationalist identification	2
	Ardent nationalism	1
	Restrictive nationalism	1
	Christian nationalism	1
	Hindu nationalism	1
	Ethnic nationalism	2
	Ethnic national identity	1
	Ethnic citizenship	1
	National nostalgia	6
	Low national pride	1
	National identification (critics and praises)	1
	Civilizationism	4
	British national sentiment	3
	Chauvinism	1
Perceptions of threat	Relative deprivation	26
	Symbolic threat	19
	Realistic threat	12
	Perceptions of threat	6
	Identity threat	2
	Immigrant threat	3

Populist voting behavior and national identities

Most of the collected evidence (approximately 42%) explored how secure and defensive national identities relate to populist voting behavior, assessed through vote recall or intentions to support populist politicians, parties, movements, or policies. We identified 47 associations with defensive identities and 37 with secure identities.

TABLE 4 Overview of the measures included under each identity category.

Category	Construct	Source	Example of items
Secure	National identification	Social Identification Scale (Cameron, 2004)	"I have a lot in common with other Poles", "I feel strong ties to other Polish people", "In general, I'm glad to be Polish"
		Smeekes et al. (2018) – adapted from Kosterman and Feshbach (1989)	"Being French is an important part of who I am" and "I feel a sense of solidarity with France"
		Postmes et al. (2013)	"I identify with being [...]"
		-	"I identify as [nationality]" (Postmes et al., 2013) and "Being a [nationality] is an important reflection of who I am"
		-	Indicating that American Identity is very or extremely important to them: 1 (Extremely important) – 5 (Not important)
		Ellemers et al. (2002)	"Do you feel [British]?", "Being [British] is an important part of who I am," and "Do you feel at home in [the UK]?"
		National Identification Scale (Huddy & Khatib, 2007)	-
		Thomas et al. (2015)	"I feel strong ties with other Turkish people," "In general, I am glad to be a Turkish," "Being a Turkish is an important part of myself," and "I have a lot of common with Turkish people"
		Jasinskaja-Lahii et al. (2009) and Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007)	I feel myself to be Austrian; I feel that I'm part of the Austrian society; I am proud of being a member of the Austrian society; I feel strongly connected to Austria, I feel connected to the Austrian culture
		-	Whether a respondent felt him/herself to be exclusively an Italian citizen
National ingroup centrality	Centrality subscale of the Social Identity Scale (Cameron, 2004)	-	The author asked survey respondents to say whether they feel very close, somewhat close, not very close, or not close at all to their nation.
		-	"Being from my national group is an important reflection of what I am.", "Being from my national group is not important for how I think of what type of person I am.", "I have a strong feeling of belonging to my national group.", "In general, being from my national group has little to do with the way I feel about myself.", "Being from my national group is not a central factor of my social relations.", "In general, being from my national group is an important part of my self-image."

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Category	Construct	Source	Example of items
National ingroup	National ingroup satisfaction	Ingroup satisfaction subscale of the Ingroup Identity Scale (Leach et al., 2008)	"I am glad to be a member of my national group"; "I think that members of my national group have a lot to be proud of"; "It is pleasant to be member of my national group"; and "Being a member of my national group gives me a good feeling"
	National ingroup solidarity	Leach et al. (2008) social identification scale (Polish adaptation by Jaworska, 2016)	-
	Nation-state identity	-	Feeling Spaniard/ feeling of belonging to Spain
	Individual self-stereotyping	Original (Heinisch & Jansesberger, 2023)	Authors used a question which asked respondents to rate how emotionally attached they felt to their country
National positivity		-	Viewing oneself as a prototypical American
		-	Participants were presented with five sliders in a randomized order – HU to represent Hungary, the national in-group, etc. Participants were instructed to look at each of these stimuli and place the slider anywhere between 0 (negative emotions) and 100 (positive emotions) indicating the emotions they feel when seeing them.
National pride		RoBERTa, developed by Liu et al. (2019)	Whereas some candidates decry the decline of the nation, others praise its virtues, ascribing them to the core principles of the American creed.
		Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Pride in the nation's present: asking how proud people are to be a country's national
		Original (Fabrykant, 2020)	"How proud are you to be a [given respondent's country] citizen?"
		-	"I am proud to be German."
National pride (Pride in democracy)		Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Respondents were asked how proud they are of the country in this domain: Pride in democracy
	National pride (Pride in Political influence)	Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Respondents were asked how proud they are of the country in this domain: Pride in Political influence
	National pride (Pride in economic achievement)	Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Respondents were asked how proud they are of the country in this domain: Pride in Economic achievement

(Continues)

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Category	Construct	Source	Example of items
Defensive	National pride (Pride in social security)	Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Respondents were asked how proud they are of the country in this domain: Pride in social security
	National pride (Pride in Scientific achievement)	Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Respondents were asked how proud they are of the country in this domain: Pride in Scientific achievement
	National pride (Pride in sports)	Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Respondents were asked how proud they are of the country in this domain: Pride in sports
	National pride (Pride in arts)	Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Respondents were asked how proud they are of the country in this domain: Pride in arts
	National pride (Pride in army)	Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Respondents were asked how proud they are of the country in this domain: Pride in army
	National pride (Pride in History)	Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Respondents were asked how proud they are of the country in this domain: Pride in History
	National pride (Pride in fair treatment)	Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	Respondents were asked how proud they are of the country in this domain: Pride in fair treatment
	Nationalism	Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) Patriotism and Nationalism Questionnaire	“Other countries have done some great things, but it takes Germany to do things on a grand scale”
		European Social Survey (2014)	Very Close to Country: “How close do you feel to [country]?”
			Way of Life: “How important should it be for [immigrants] to be committed to the way of life in [country]?”
Billig (1995)			Follow Traditions: “It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions”
			Nationalist rhetoric divides the political field into a binary frame of “homeland” and “foreigners” (the “national self” and “national others”), which are understood to be locked in a zero-sum competition
-			“Some people say the following things are important for being truly [NATIONALITY]. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is?” – to have been born in [COUNTRY], to have [COUNTRY]’s ancestry, and to have lived for a long time in [COUNTRY].

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Category	Construct	Source	Example of items
National narcissism		-	Captures whether or not respondents believe it is important to follow traditions and customs, with higher values indicating a stronger commitment to tradition
		ISSP National Identity Modules in 1995, 2003 and 2013	1. I would rather be a citizen of the Netherlands than of any other country in the world. 2. The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the Dutch. 3. People should support the Netherlands even if it is in the wrong.
		-	Sweden should limit the import of foreign products in order to protect its national economy; Sweden should limit immigration in order to protect our national way of life; International organizations are taking away too much power from the Swedish government.
		Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016) Original (Immerzeel et al., 2016)	Using latent class analysis of 23 variables to establish profiles Consider the same parties, and place them on the scale that concerns the degree of cosmopolitanism or nationalism within party programs (0 = Strongly advocates cosmopolitanism, 10 = Strongly advocates nationalism).
		Original (Bastos & Mercea, 2018)	Two expert coders classified tweets along the ideological polarity Globalism-Nationalism
		Original (Varshney et al., 2021)	Love for India: The government should punish those who do not say “Bharat Mata ki Jai” [Victory to Mother India] at public functions. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
		Collective Narcissism Scale (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009)	“I will never be satisfied until Poles get all they deserve”, “It really makes me angry when others criticize Poles”, “If Poles had a major say in the world, the world would be a much better place”
		Golec de Zavala et al. (2009) – short version	-
		Golec de Zavala et al. (2009) translated in French (Bertin et al., 2021)	-

(Continues)

TABLE 4 (Continued)

Category	Construct	Source	Example of items
	National sentiment	Heath et al. (1999)	"Britain has a lot to learn from other countries in running its affairs," "I would rather be a citizen of Britain than of any other country in the world," "There are some things about Britain today that make me ashamed to be British," "People in Britain are too ready to criticize their country," and "The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like the British."
	Chauvinism	Original (Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022)	"Generally speaking [COUNTRY] is a better country than most other countries"
	Nationalist identification	CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas)	(1 = identifies mainly or exclusively as Spanish, 0 = plurinational or regional identity)
	Civilizationism	Original (Cerrone, 2023)	Automated text analysis – to identify when a civilization-related word was used in a party manifesto or tweet. Then the author read these passages to identify references to "our civilization," "European civilization," and "Western civilization." Also phrases in which elements of a shared culture—including history, values, and identity—were attributed to civilization. Then used this to construct a refined list of terms and repeated a dictionary-based search – to identify the relevant passages in the party manifestos and tweets.
	Christian nationalism	-	"The federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation," "The federal government should advocate Christian values," "The federal government should enforce strict separation of church and state" (reverse), "The federal government should allow the display of religious symbols in public spaces," "The success of the United States is part of God's plan," and "The federal government should allow prayer in public schools."

TABLE 5 Frequencies of links under analysis by populism and national identity categories.

Populism categories	National identity categories		
	Secure	Defensive	Perceptions of threat
Populist voting behavior	37	47	36
Populist sentiments and evaluations	19	8	5
Populist attitudes and beliefs	12	7	20
Supply-side populism	2	8	0

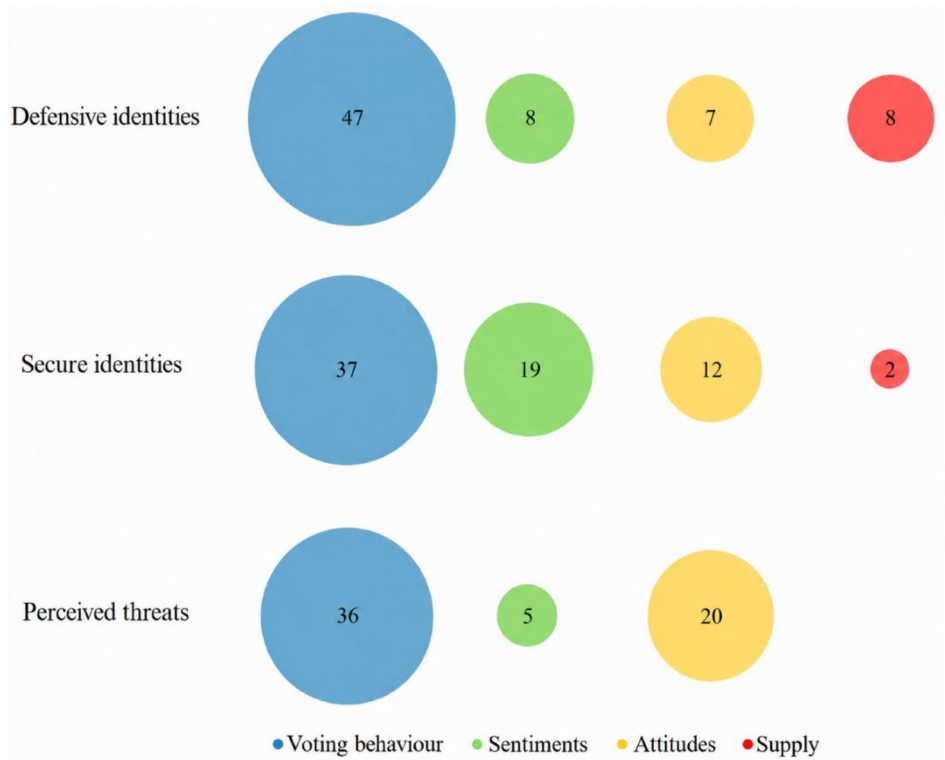


FIGURE 4 Visual representation of the intersections between populism and National Identity.

Defensive national identities

The link between defensive identities and populist voting behavior was explored in about a quarter of the available evidence. Research designs included 44 cross-sectional, two experimental and one quasi-experimental study. Most results ($n=42$) showed positive associations between defensive identities and populist voting (e.g., Green et al., 2022). Nationalism was the most studied form, positively predicting voting for Trump (Bonikowski et al., 2021; Whitehead et al., 2018) and for right-wing populist parties, such as the Spanish Vox party (Turnbull-Dugarte et al., 2020), the Polish Law and Justice (PiS) party, the Hungarian Jobbik party, and the Hungarian Fidesz party (Ding & Hlavac, 2017). This relationship held true for both past (Eger & Valdez, 2015) and future voting intentions (Dunn, 2015). Additionally, nationalism on tweets predicted the Leave vote in the Brexit referendum (Bastos & Mercea, 2018).

National narcissism was another frequently studied expression of national identification ($n=19$), also consistently predicting support for populist figures like Viktor Orbán (Lantos &

Forgas, 2021), Jarosław Kaczyński (Marchlewska et al., 2018), and Donald Trump (Federico & Golec de Zavala, 2018; Marchlewska et al., 2018), even when undemocratic methods were endorsed (Keenan & Golec de Zavala, 2021). National narcissism further predicted votes for populist parties such as the Law and Justice (Marchlewska et al., 2018) and Fidesz (Lantos & Forgas, 2021), and support for populist movements, including support for the Capitol Hill raid on January 6, 2021 (Keenan & Golec de Zavala, 2021) and voting intention for leaving the EU in the Brexit referendum (Cisłak et al., 2020; Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Marchlewska et al., 2018) and potential Polesxit (Cisłak et al., 2020).

No significant associations were found between defensive national identities (i.e., nationalism) and voting for the Czech populist party Dawn (Ding & Hlavac, 2017), or for Dutch parties such as the *Socialistische Partij* (SP), *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV), *Democratisch Politiek Keerpunt* (DPK) and *Trots op Nederland* (TON) (Van der Waal & De Koster, 2018).

In sum, 42 of 47 associations indicated positive relationships between defensive national identities and populist voting, with five non-significant links. See Table 6 for study characteristics.

Secure national identities

We found 36 associations between secure forms of national identity and populist voting across 10 papers, predominantly using cross-sectional designs (97%, $n = 35$). Results were mixed: 17 non-significant, 10 negative, and nine positive.

One example of this mixed pattern is a study from Lubbers and Smeekes (2022) on national pride. Using data from the ISSP's National Identity module across 12 European countries, the authors differentiated voters of radical right parties from voters of other parties ("far left," "social-democrats," "liberals," "right-wing conservatives," and people who did not vote) on several domains of national pride. They found that pride in sports, the nation's history, the army, and scientific achievements positively predicted radical-right voting, while pride in democracy and political influence predicted lower support. Other pride dimensions, such as economic achievement and fair treatment, showed no significant association. General national pride—how proud people are to be a country's national—increased the likelihood of voting for the radical right compared to abstention or voting for the radical left.

Similarly, Lantos and Forgas (2021) found a weak positive link between ingroup positivity and past vote for Orbán in 2014 elections, though national positivity did not predict voting intentions for Orbán in 2018. In Taiwan, Shyu (2008) found that national identity was unrelated to vote choices in 1992 and 1996 presidential elections but became a significant predictor in 2000 and 2004 elections, where voters were more likely to vote for Chen Shui-bian, a populist candidate.

The most common form of secure identity was general national identification, often measured by scales such as Cameron's (2004) Social Identification Scale that measures a mix of national ingroup centrality, satisfaction, and solidarity. Studies indicated that this identification type did not predict past voting for populist presidential candidates in the 2017 French elections (either Jean-Luc Mélenchon or Marine Le Pen; Urbanska et al., 2021) and prospective preference for Donald Trump in US elections (Marchlewska et al., 2018). Also, it was unrelated to voting intentions for populist parties, such as La France Insoumise or Rassemblement National, and with vote switching from 2017 to 2019 (Urbanska et al., 2021). Furthermore, national identification negatively predicted Brexit voting preferences (Cisłak et al., 2020; Marchlewska et al., 2018), with studies showing a weak negative effect of secure national identity on intentions to vote Leave, though this effect was not significant in a smaller sample of British Embassy professionals in Poland.

When analyzed separately, ingroup centrality and satisfaction were unrelated to the Brexit vote (Golec de Zavala et al., 2017). Ingroup satisfaction was also unrelated to voting for Jarosław Kaczyński, voting for the PiS in Poland (Marchlewska et al., 2018), or supporting the Capitol Hill raid (Keenan & Golec de Zavala, 2021), but negatively predicted support for

TABLE 6 Synthesis of studies examining the association of populist voting behavior with defensive national identities.

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Bastos and Mercea (2018)	UK	565028 messages	Percentage of vote Remain (RemainPent)	Hanretty (2017); Huyen Do et al. (2015)	Nationalism	Original	The explanatory variable (Globalism–Nationalism) is significantly correlated with the results of the referendum. Regression: the polarity Globalism–Nationalism has a modest albeit significant explanatory power
Bonikowski et al. (2021)	USA	782–2341	Voting preferences in the 2016 general elections	Original	Ardent nationalism	Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016)	Restrictive and ardent nationalism are both positively associated with intention to vote for Trump – adherence to ardent nationalism was significantly predictive of voting for Trump over Clinton in the general election
Bonikowski et al. (2021)	USA	782–2341	Voting preferences in the 2016 general elections	Original	Restrictive nationalism	Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016)	Restrictive and ardent nationalism are both positively associated with intention to vote for Trump – adherence to restrictive nationalism was significantly predictive of voting for Trump over Clinton in the general election
Cislak et al. (2020) – Study 1	Poland	635	Voting Leave – Polexit	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009) – short version	National narcissism predicted voting Leave significantly and positively
Cislak et al. (2020) – Study 2	Poland	219	Voting Leave – Polexit	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	National narcissism predicted it significantly and positively
Cislak et al. (2020) – Study 3	Poland	73	Voting Leave – Polexit	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	For both countries national narcissism, but not national identification, positively predicted voting for leaving the EU
Cislak et al. (2020) – Study 3	UK	60	Voting Leave – Brexit	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	For both countries national narcissism, but not national identification, positively predicted voting for leaving the EU
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Poland	Doesn't say	Voting for the right-wing Polish PiS party	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (Dichotomous)	European Social Survey (2014)	Each of the three measures of restorative nationalism is positively associated with voting for the PiS, and the coefficients are statistically significant
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Poland	Doesn't say	Voting for the right-wing Polish PiS party	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (0–10)	European Social Survey (2014)	Each of the three measures of restorative nationalism is positively associated with voting for the PiS, and the coefficients are statistically significant

(Continues)

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Poland	Doesn't say	Voting for the right-wing Polish PiS party	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (1–5)	European Social Survey (2014)	Each of the three measures of restorative nationalism is positively associated with voting for the PiS, and the coefficients are statistically significant
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Hungary	Doesn't say	Voting for the right-wing Hungarian Jobbik party	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (Dichotomous)	European Social Survey (2014)	Each of the three measures of restorative nationalism is positively associated with voting for Jobbik, and the coefficients are statistically significant
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Hungary	Doesn't say	Voting for the right-wing Hungarian Jobbik party	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (0–10)	European Social Survey (2014)	Each of the three measures of restorative nationalism is positively associated with voting for Jobbik, and the coefficients are statistically significant
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Hungary	Doesn't say	Voting for the right-wing Hungarian Jobbik party	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (1–5)	European Social Survey (2014)	Each of the three measures of restorative nationalism is positively associated with voting for Jobbik, and the coefficients are statistically significant
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Hungary	Doesn't say	Voting for the Hungarian Fidesz Party	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (Dichotomous)	European Social Survey (2014)	Restorative nationalism is positively associated with voting for Fidesz
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Hungary	Doesn't say	Voting for the Hungarian Fidesz Party	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (0–10)	European Social Survey (2014)	Restorative nationalism is positively associated with voting for Fidesz
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Hungary	Doesn't say	Voting for the Hungarian Fidesz Party	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (1–5)	European Social Survey (2014)	Restorative nationalism is positively associated with voting for Fidesz
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Czech Republic	Doesn't say	Voting for Dawn (Usvit), a right-wing populist, euroskeptic party in the Czech Republic	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (Dichotomous)	European Social Survey (2014)	No measure of restorative nationalism is correlated with voting for Dawn

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Czech Republic	Doesn't say	Voting for Dawn (Usvit), a right-wing populist, euroskeptic party in the Czech Republic	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (0–10)	European Social Survey (2014)	No measure of restorative nationalism is correlated with voting for Dawn
Ding and Hlavac (2017)	Czech Republic	Doesn't say	Voting for Dawn (Usvit), a right-wing populist, euroskeptic party in the Czech Republic	European Social Survey (2014)	Nationalism (1–5)	European Social Survey (2014)	No measure of restorative nationalism is correlated with voting for Dawn
Dunn (2015)	Austria	626	Preference for radical right-wing populist parties	It is not clear	Nationalism	It is not clear	Exclusive-nationalism consistently predicts RRP party support
Dunn (2015)	Belgium	963	Preference for radical right-wing populist parties	It is not clear	Nationalism	It is not clear	Exclusive-nationalism consistently predicts RRP party support
Dunn (2015)	Denmark	908	Preference for radical right-wing populist parties	It is not clear	Nationalism	It is not clear	Exclusive-nationalism consistently predicts RRP party support
Dunn (2015)	The Netherlands	955	Preference for radical right-wing populist parties	It is not clear	Nationalism	It is not clear	Exclusive-nationalism consistently predicts RRP party support
Dunn (2015)	Switzerland	470	Preference for radical right-wing populist parties	It is not clear	Nationalism	It is not clear	Exclusive-nationalism consistently predicts RRP party support
Eger and Valdez (2015)	14 Western European countries	54,925	Vote for radical right party	Original	Nationalism	It is not clear	Nationalist attitudes increase the odds of voting for parties identified as radical right. Believing it is important to follow traditions/customs also has a significant effect – Conclusion: Contemporary parties oppose multiculturalism and increasingly favor a traditional, national way of life

(Continues)

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Federico and Golec de Zavala (2018)	USA	1459	Vote choice	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009, 2013)	Consistent with expectations, Trump voters scored higher in CN ($M = .64$) than those who voted for other candidates ($M = .52$)
Federico and Golec de Zavala (2018)	USA	1459	Vote choice	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009, 2013)	Those high in CN were significantly more likely to vote for Trump – this indicates that going from the lowest to the highest CN level is associated with a 30% increase in the probability of voting for Trump
Golec de Zavala et al. (2017) – Study 1	UK	280	Brexit vote	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009, 2013) – 5-item scale	National narcissism was positively related to the perceived threat of immigrants. The indirect relationships between national narcissism, right wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation via the perceived threat of immigrants were significant
Golec de Zavala et al. (2017) – Study 2	UK	226	Brexit vote	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009, 2013) – 5-item scale	The analyses indicated that national narcissism, right wing authoritarianism and social dominance were independently related to the Brexit vote via the perceived threat of immigrants
Green et al. (2022)	UK	9323	Support for Brexit – i.e., referendum vote intentions	It is not clear	British national sentiment	Heath et al. (1999)	British national sentiment positively predicted support for Brexit
Keenan and Golec de Zavala (2021) – Study 1	USA	308	Support for Trump's candidacy regardless of democratic procedures	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2013)	American collective narcissism is associated with endorsing Trump extending his presidency using undemocratic means; standardized coefficients show that national narcissism is by far the strongest predictor

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Keenan and Golec de Zavala (2021) – Study 2	USA	302	Support for the Capitol Hill raid	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2013)	The analysis revealed a significant association between national narcissism and support for the Capitol Hill raid; Standardized regression coefficients and partial correlations again showed national narcissism to be the strongest predictor
Lantos and Forgas (2021) – Study 1	Hungary	284	Support for Fidesz (in 2014)	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	National narcissism and ingroup positivity both independently predicted Fidesz support in the 2014 elections
Lantos and Forgas (2021) – Study 1	Hungary	284	Support for Fidesz (in 2018)	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	Only national narcissism was a significant predictor of Fidesz support (Fidesz support in the 2018 election was the outcome variable)
Lantos and Forgas (2021) – Study 2	Hungary	265	Support for Fidesz (in 2014)	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	Fidesz support in 2014, in Step 1, was predicted only by national narcissism, with age, gender, and relative deprivation having no significant effect
Lantos and Forgas (2021) – Study 2	Hungary	265	Support for Fidesz (in 2018)	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	Fidesz support in 2018, in Step 1, was again significantly predicted by national narcissism, but not by age, gender, or relative deprivation
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	Several european countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	Chauvinism	Original	Chauvinism reaches significance only where the center parties are compared to the radical right, which indicates that voters who are more chauvinist are more likely to vote for the radical right than for center, liberals
Marchlewska et al. (2018) – Study 1	Poland	1007	Law and Justice vote in parliamentary elections	It is not clear	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2013)	In Step 2, authors introduced national narcissism and found its positive effect on Law and Justice vote
Marchlewska et al. (2018) – Study 1	Poland	1007	Jaroslaw Kaczynski vote in presidential elections	It is not clear	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2013)	In Step 2, authors introduced national narcissism and found its positive effect on Kaczynski vote
Marchlewska et al. (2018) – Study 2	UK	497	Brexit support	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	In Step 2, authors introduced national narcissism and found its positive effect on Brexit support

(Continues)

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Marchlewska et al. (2018) – Study 2	UK	497	Brexit support	Original	National narcissism (mediator)	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	The indirect effect of the perceived long-term in-group disadvantage on Brexit support via national narcissism was significant – Relative to baseline, reading about the long-term disadvantage of the national in-group increased support for Brexit, and this relationship was accounted for by national collective narcissism (and not nonnarcissistic identification) In Step 2, authors introduced national narcissism and found its positive effect on preferences for Trump
Marchlewska et al. (2018) – Study 3	USA	403	Preference for Donald Trump	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2013)	Nationalism clearly had an influential role in predicting support for VOX (H4), with identification with a Spanish identity (vis-à-vis a more plurinational or a regional identity) exhibiting a substantively important and statistically significant increase in the PTV for VOX
Turnbull-Dugarte et al. (2020)	Spain	5943	Probability to Vote (PTV) for Vox	CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas)	Nationalist identification	CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas)	As hypothesized and observed in the case of the PTV, nationalist identification increases the likelihood of voting for VOX
Turnbull-Dugarte et al. (2020)	Spain	5943	Vote recall (probability of having voted for VOX in the last general elections)	CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas)	Nationalist identification	CIS (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas)	If controlled for various potential confounders, nationalism didn't drive voting for populist left parties – nationalism is not or even negatively related to voting for a populist party
Van der Waal and De Koster (2018)	The Netherlands	1296	Vote choice – for populist left	Original	Nationalism	ISSP National Identity Modules in 1995, 2003 and 2013	If controlled for various potential confounders, nationalism didn't drive voting for populist right parties – nationalism is not or even negatively related to voting for a populist party
Van der Waal and De Koster (2018)	The Netherlands	1296	Vote choice – for populist right	Original	Nationalism	ISSP National Identity Modules in 1995, 2003 and 2013	

TABLE 6 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Whitehead et al. (2018)	USA	1501	Voting for Trump	Values and Beliefs of the American Public Survey (BRS, 2017)	Christian nationalism	It is not clear	Christian nationalism is positively and significantly associated with voting for Trump. The data point toward Christian nationalism operating primarily as an independent factor predicting voting for Trump in 2016

Trump's candidacy regardless of democratic procedures (Keenan & Golec de Zavala, 2021). Individual self-stereotyping (viewing oneself as a prototypical American) positively predicted support for Trump's candidacy regardless of democratic procedures and was unrelated to support for the Capitol Hill raid. Lastly, national solidarity was associated with lower support for Podemos (Lobera, 2020).

Bonikowski et al. (2021) demonstrated that creedal nationalism (emphasizing subjective identification with the nation and respect for laws and institutions) negatively correlated with Trump support, as it significantly predicted intentions to vote for Clinton over Trump in 2016.

Overall, results for secure identities were less consistent than for defensive identities, showing varied directions depending on the context and operationalization. See Table 7 for full details.

Populist sentiments and national identities

This set of studies focused on affective responses (i.e., emotions, sentiments, and feelings) toward populist figures, parties, or movements. We identified 19 associations with secure identities and eight with defensive ones.

Defensive national identities

All studies examining defensive identities found positive relationships with populist sentiments. Kulin and Johansson Sevä (2024), using a representative Swedish sample, found that right-wing populist supporters scored higher on nationalist attitudes.

Two studies examined affective responses to Brexit. One found that, in two cross-sectional studies, national narcissism correlated with and predicted emotional reactions to the referendum's outcome (Golec de Zavala et al., 2017), while another found that a defensive British national sentiment (e.g., "People in Britain are too ready to criticize their country") predicted satisfaction with Brexit (how happy or disappointed they were that the UK voted to leave the EU (Green et al., 2022)).

At the leadership level, a US study explored national narcissism's impact on Trump thermometer ratings, showing that higher national narcissism led to a 27% increase in positivity toward Trump. It also predicted more favorable trait evaluations of Trump (e.g., "warm", "honest", "competent", "reckless", and "insincere"), with a 22% increase in positive trait attributions as national narcissism increased (Federico & Golec de Zavala, 2018).

Finally, Cichocka et al. (2022) demonstrated that White collective narcissism, alongside political conservatism, significantly predicted positive attitudes toward the alt-right in two studies.

Overall, evidence indicates a clear positive relationship between populist sentiments and defensive identities.

Secure national identities

Of 20 associations, 13 came from a single study (Heinisch & Jansesberger, 2023) that examined the support base of populist radical right (PRRP) and populist radical left (PRLP) parties across 13 European countries using ESS data. Respondents rated their emotional attachment to the country and indicated whether they felt closest to a specific party. Findings showed that national identity positively predicted the feeling of being closest to PRRP in Switzerland (SVP), the UK (UKIP), Norway (Progress Party), and Sweden (Sweden Democrats). However, no significant relationship was found for Austria (FPÖ), Germany (AfD), Finland (Finns Party), France (FN), and the Netherlands (PVV). For PRLP, national identity negatively impacted closeness to Italy's 5 Stars, with no significant association for Spain's Podemos, the

TABLE 7 Synthesis of studies examining the association of populist voting behavior with secure national identities.

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Bonikowski et al. (2021)	USA	782–2341	Voting preferences in the 2016 general elections	Original	Creedal nationalism	Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2016)	In the baseline model, creedal nationalism is negatively associated with Trump support, compared to support for Clinton – Creedal nationalism is a consistent and significant predictor of respondents' intention to vote for Clinton
Cislak et al. (2020) – Study 1	Poland	635	Voting Leave – Polexit	Original	National identification	Social Identification Scale (Cameron, 2004)	National identification predicted voting Leave significantly and negatively, while national narcissism predicted it significantly and positively
Cislak et al. (2020) – Study 2	Poland	219	Voting Leave – Polexit	Original	National identification	Social Identification Scale (Cameron, 2004)	National identification predicted voting to leaving the EU significantly and negatively
Cislak et al. (2020) – Study 3	Poland	73	Voting Leave – Polexit	Original	National identification	Social Identification Scale (Cameron, 2004)	For both countries national narcissism, but not national identification, positively predicted voting for leaving the EU
Cislak et al. (2020) – Study 3	UK	60	Voting Leave – Brexit	Original	National identification	Social Identification Scale (Cameron, 2004)	For both countries national narcissism, but not national identification, positively predicted voting for leaving the EU
Golec de Zavala et al. (2017) – Study 1	UK	280	Brexit vote	Original	National ingroup centrality	Centrality subscale of the Social Identity Scale (Cameron, 2004)	The direct and indirect effects of national identification were not significant – When national narcissism and other covariates were entered into the equation the direct and indirect effects of national identification were reduced – National identification did not predict the Brexit vote
Golec de Zavala et al. (2017) – Study 2	UK	226	Brexit vote	Original	National ingroup satisfaction	Ingroup satisfaction subscale of the Ingroup Identity Scale (Leach et al., 2008)	The direct effect of national attachment on the referendum vote was not significant. When national narcissism was entered as a covariate this effect (indirect effect) became non-significant

(Continues)

TABLE 7 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Keenan and Golec de Zavala (2021) – Study 1	USA	308	Support for Trump's candidacy regardless of democratic procedures	Original	Individual self-stereotyping	It is not clear	Individual self-stereotyping was treated as a control variable. It was positively associated with support for Trump's candidacy regardless of democratic procedures
Keenan and Golec de Zavala (2021) – Study 1	USA	308	Support for Trump's candidacy regardless of democratic procedures	Original	National ingroup satisfaction	Leach et al. (2008)	National satisfaction was treated as a control variable. It was negatively associated with support for Trump's candidacy regardless of democratic procedures
Keenan and Golec de Zavala (2021) – Study 2	USA	302	Support for the Capitol Hill raid	Original	Individual self-stereotyping	It is not clear	No significant association between individual self-stereotyping and support for the Capitol Hill raid
Keenan and Golec de Zavala (2021) – Study 2	USA	302	Support for the Capitol Hill raid	Original	National ingroup satisfaction	Leach et al. (2008)	No significant association between national satisfaction and support for the Capitol Hill raid
Lantos and Forgas (2021) – Study 1	Hungary	284	Support for Fidesz	Original	National positivity	It is not clear	National narcissism and ingroup positivity both independently predicted Fidesz support in the 2014 elections
Lantos and Forgas (2021) – Study 1	Hungary	284	Support for Fidesz	Original	National positivity	It is not clear	Only national narcissism was a significant predictor of Fidesz support (Fidesz support in the 2018 election was the outcome variable)
Lobera (2020)	Spain	1123	Voting for Podemos	It is not clear	National ingroup solidarity	It is not clear	Individuals expressing higher levels of feeling of belonging to Spain are less likely to support Podemos. – A lower vote for Podemos among those expressing higher levels of feeling of belonging to Spain.
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride (Pride in democracy)	It is not clear	Pride in democracy consistently lower the likelihood to vote for the radical right.
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride (Pride in Political influence)	It is not clear	Pride in the country's political influence in the world consistently lower the likelihood to vote for the radical right.

TABLE 7 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride (Pride in economic achievement)	It is not clear	Does not reach significance in each of the contrasts
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride (Pride in social security)	It is not clear	Does not reach significance in each of the contrasts, only when contrasting specific parts of the electorates; Pride in a country's social security system decreases the likelihood to vote for the radical right (mainly as in contrast to a vote for left-wing parties)
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride (Pride in Scientific achievement)	It is not clear	Does not reach significance in each of the contrasts, only when contrasting specific parts of the electorates; Pride in technological and scientific achievements increase the likelihood to vote for the radical right in most of the contrasts that are studied
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride (Pride in sports)	It is not clear	Does not reach significance in each of the contrasts, only when contrasting specific parts of the electorates; Pride in sports successes increase the likelihood to vote for the radical right in most of the contrasts that are studied
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride (Pride in arts)	It is not clear	Does not reach significance in each of the contrasts, only when contrasting specific parts of the electorates; Pride in a country's arts decreases the likelihood to vote for the radical right (mainly as in contrast to a vote for left-wing parties)
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride (Pride in army)	It is not clear	Does not reach significance in each of the contrasts, only when contrasting specific parts of the electorates; Pride in the army successes increase the likelihood to vote for the radical right in most of the contrasts that are studied

(Continues)

TABLE 7 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride (Pride in History)	It is not clear	More pride in the nation's history decreases the likelihood not to vote and decreases the likelihood to vote for the radical left, the center left, the center right and the conservative right in favor of a vote for the radical right – Support hypothesis that pride in the history of the nation relates to a higher likelihood to vote for the radical right
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride (Pride in fair treatment)	It is not clear	Does not reach significance in each of the contrasts
Lubbers and Smeekes (2022)	12 European countries	Doesn't say	Voting Behavior	Original	National pride	Original	National pride decreases not voting and voting for the radical left as compared to voting for the radical right, but has a small effect on the other contrasts, which indicates that it does not distinguish the electorates of the center left, center right and conservative right from the radical right
Marchlewska et al. (2018) – Study 1	Poland	1007	Law and Justice vote in parliamentary elections	It is not clear	National ingroup satisfaction	Leach et al. (2008) social identification scale (Polish adaptation by Jaworska (2016))	The relationship between identification and Law and Justice vote became nonsignificant, indicating that non-narcissistic national in-group positivity was not associated with the Law and Justice vote.
Marchlewska et al. (2018) – Study 1	Poland	1007	Jarosław Kaczyński vote in presidential elections	It is not clear	National ingroup satisfaction	Leach et al. (2008) social identification scale (Polish adaptation by Jaworska (2016))	The effect of identification on Kaczyński vote became nonsignificant, indicating that non-narcissistic national in-group positivity was not associated with the populist vote.
Marchlewska et al. (2018) – Study 2	UK	497	Brexit support	Original	National identification	Social Identification Scale (Cameron, 2004)	Non-narcissistic identification was a negative (albeit marginally significant) predictor of Brexit support.
Marchlewska et al. (2018) – Study 3	USA	403	Preference for Donald Trump	Original	National identification	Social Identification Scale (Cameron, 2004)	After introducing collective narcissism, we found a nonsignificant effect of identification. – when we adjusted for national collective narcissism we did not find a significant relationship between non-narcissistic identification with Americans and their preference for Trump.

TABLE 7 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Shyu (2008)	Taiwan	904	Partisan vote choices – Voting DPP/KMT (1992)	It is not clear	National identification	It is not clear	National identity was not a significant predictor for their partisan vote choices
Shyu (2008)	Taiwan	872	Partisan vote choices – Voting DPP/KMT (1996)	It is not clear	National identification	It is not clear	National identity was not a significant predictor for their partisan vote choices
Shyu (2008)	Taiwan	1091	Partisan vote choices – Voting DPP/KMT (2000)	It is not clear	National identification	It is not clear	in comparing voters of the KMT and of the DPP as shown in Table 11, national identity was a significant predictor – those who had a stronger Taiwanese national identity were more likely to support the DPP candidate
Shyu (2008)	Taiwan	1183	Partisan vote choices – Voting DPP/KMT (2004)	It is not clear	National identification	It is not clear	People's education, national identity ... have significant effects on their vote choices – people with a Taiwanese national identity were less likely to vote for the KMT (more for DPP)
Urbanska et al. (2021)	France	562	Past voting for a populist presidential candidate in 2017 presidential elections	It is not clear	National identification	Smeekes et al. (2018) – adapted from Kosterman and Feshbach (1989)	National identification did not predict populist voting.
Urbanska et al. (2021)	France	562	Intention to vote for a populist party	It is not clear	National identification	Smeekes et al. (2018) – adapted from Kosterman and Feshbach (1989)	National identification did not predict populist voting.
Urbanska et al. (2021)	France	562	Switch toward a populist party (2017–2019)	It is not clear	National identification	Smeekes et al. (2018) – adapted from Kosterman and Feshbach (1989)	National identification did not predict populist voting.

(Continues)

Netherlands' Socialist Party, and Ireland's Sinn Féin. Overall, national identity positively influenced feeling closest to four of nine populist parties on the radical right and negatively influenced closeness to one of four radical left parties.

In the US, Lee (2017) used a feeling thermometer to examine how, and why, some voters favored Trump over other Republicans, finding that strong attachment to American identity did not predict favorable assessments of Trump. Similarly, Golec de Zavala et al. (2017) found that, although positively correlated, secure national identity did not predict support for the Brexit referendum's outcome in the UK. They used scales by Cameron (2004) and Leach et al. (2008) to assess centrality and satisfaction dimensions of national identity, examining emotional responses (e.g., happiness, disappointment, disgust) toward the referendum's outcome.

Another US-based study with a nationally representative sample assessed support for the alt-right, measuring respondents' feelings on a 0–100 scale (from negative to positive). Results showed that positive attitudes toward the alt-right were predicted by White identification, measured with Postmes et al.'s (2013) scale, a finding replicated in a following study (Cichocka et al., 2022).

In sum, evidence indicates a clear positive relationship between defensive identities and populist sentiments, whereas findings for secure identities were mixed: 11 non-significant, eight positive, and one negative. Table 8 provides detailed study characteristics.

Populist attitudes and national identities

This group of studies focuses specifically on populist attitudes and beliefs, measured at the individual level (e.g., people-centrism, anti-elitism), through self-report instruments that assess endorsement of core populist dimensions.

Defensive national identities

We identified seven associations, with five showing positive links. National narcissism emerged as a strong predictor in three of them, with (Manunta et al., 2022, 2024) finding that it positively predicted populist thin ideology. One study by Elad-Strenger and Kessler (2024) found that nationalism positively predicted feeling contempt toward elites. In Turkey, Uysal (2022) found that national identity tied to national “successes and failures, critics and praises” significantly interacted with populist attitudes concerning pro-refugee policies.

Conversely, defensive national sentiment was unrelated to populist attitudes in the UK (Green et al., 2022) and India, where Hindu nationalism did not predict populist attitudes (Varshney et al., 2021). This finding can potentially be influenced by the study's use of a non-validated populism measure, unlike others using validated measures (e.g., Akkerman et al., 2014; Manunta et al., 2022).

Secure national identities

Twelve associations were identified, with 10 indicating positive links. All employed cross-sectional designs. General national identification—measured by scales from Ellemers et al. (2002), Huddy and Khatib (2007), Smeekes et al. (2018), and Thomas et al. (2015) (e.g., “Being French/British/Turkish is an important part of who I am”)—was positively associated with populist attitudes in Italy (Pellegata & Visconti, 2021), France (Urbanska et al., 2021), and Indonesia (Fossati & Mietzner, 2019).

Three studies examined the link between populist attitudes and national pride, focusing on satisfaction and positive feelings toward one's national group and one's membership in it (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Using EVS data from 2008 and 2017, Fabrykant (2020) found that national pride was also positively associated with confidence in the government. Additionally, Uysal et al. (2024) found that higher endorsement of populist beliefs predicted

TABLE 8 Synthesis of studies examining the association of populist sentiments with secure and defensive national identities.

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Cichocka et al. (2022) – Study 3A	USA	2000	Support for the alt-right	Original	Collective narcissism	Collective Narcissism scale (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009).	Perceiving immigration restrictions as not racist (vs. racist) was indeed a significant predictor of support for the alt-right movement. Also found that both White collective narcissism and White identification were predictors of positive attitudes toward the alt-right.
Cichocka et al. (2022) – Study 3A	USA	2000	Support for the alt-right	Original	National identification	Postmes et al. (2013)	Perceiving immigration restrictions as not racist (vs. racist) was indeed a significant predictor of support for the alt-right movement. Also found that both White collective narcissism and White identification were predictors of positive attitudes toward the alt-right.
Cichocka et al. (2022) – Study 3B	USA	2938	Support for the alt-right	Original	Collective narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	White collective narcissism was associated with more positive attitudes toward the alt-right.
Cichocka et al. (2022) – Study 3B	USA	2938	Support for the alt-right	Original	National identification	Postmes et al. (2013)	White identification was associated with more positive attitudes toward the alt-right.
Federico and Golec de Zavala (2018)	USA	801	Trump thermometer rating	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009, 2013)	There was a significant relationship between NN and Trump ratings – this indicates that going from the lowest to the highest CN level was associated with a 27% increase in positivity toward Donald Trump
Federico and Golec de Zavala (2018)	USA	806	Trump trait evaluation	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009, 2013)	NN was again related to trait evaluations of Trump, corresponding to a 22% increase in positive trait attributions as one goes from the lowest to the highest level of NN.
Golec de Zavala et al. (2017) – Study 1	UK	280	Support for the referendum's outcome	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009, 2013) – 5-item scale	National narcissism indirectly predicted support for the outcome of the referendum via the perceived threat of immigrants – national narcissism and right wing authoritarianism were the main predictors

(Continues)

TABLE 8 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Golec de Zavala et al. (2017) – Study 1	UK	280	Support for the referendum's outcome	Original	National ingroup centrality	Centrality subscale of the Social Identity Scale (Cameron, 2004)	The direct effect and indirect effects of national identification were not significant – When collective narcissism was entered as a covariate, the direct and indirect effects of national identification were reduced (from marginally significant to nonsignificant) – National identification did not predict the Brexit vote or support for referendum's outcome
Golec de Zavala et al. (2017) – Study 2	UK	226	Support for the referendum's outcome	Original	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009, 2013) – 5-item scale	The analyses indicated significant indirect effect of national narcissism on support for the referendum's outcome via the perceived threat of immigrants
Golec de Zavala et al. (2017) – Study 2	UK	226	Support for the referendum's outcome	Original	National ingroup satisfaction	Ingroup satisfaction subscale of the Ingroup Identity Scale (Leach et al., 2008)	The direct effect of national attachment on the referendum vote was not significant. – When national narcissism was entered as a covariate this effect (indirect effect) became nonsignificant
Green et al. (2022)	UK	10,173	Satisfaction with Brexit	It is not clear	British national sentiment	Heath et al. (1999)	British national sentiment positively predicted satisfaction with Brexit
Heimisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – FPÖ (Austria)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	There is no significant association between feeling closest to FPÖ party and nation-state identity – General result: Identity effects are present in all but three parties (Podemos, Socialist Party, Linke) – conclude that territorial identity matters greatly to the supporters of populist parties, especially those of the radical right.
Heimisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – SVP (Switzerland)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	Nation-state identity has a significant positive effect on feeling closest to a majority nationalist PRRP – There is a significant association between feeling closest to SVP and nation-state identity
Heimisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – AfD (Germany)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	There is no significant association between feeling closest to AfD party and nation-state identity

TABLE 8 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Heimisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – Finns (Finland)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	There is no significant association between feeling closest to Finns party and nation-state identity
Heimisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – FN (France)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	There is no significant association between feeling closest to FN party and nation-state identity
Heimisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – UKIP (UK)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	Nation-state identity has a significant positive effect on feeling closest to a majority nationalist PRRP – There is a significant association between feeling closest to UKIP and nation-state identity
Heimisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – PVV (Netherlands)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	There is no significant association between feeling closest to PVV party (NL) and nation-state identity
Heimisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – Progress Party (Norway)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	Nation-state identity has a significant positive effect on feeling closest to a majority nationalist PRRP – There is a significant association between feeling closest to Progress Party and nation-state identity
Heimisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – Sweden Democrats (Sweden)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	Nation-state identity has a significant positive effect on feeling closest to a majority nationalist PRRP – There is a significant association between feeling closest to Sweden Democrats and nation-state identity

(Continues)

TABLE 8 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Heinisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – Podemos (Spain)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	There is no significant association between feeling closest to Podemos party and nation-state identity
Heinisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – 5 Stars (Italy)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	Nation-state identity has a significant negative effect on feeling closest to a nation-level PRLP – There is a significant association between feeling closest to 5 Stars and nation-state identity
Heinisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – Socialist Party (Netherlands)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	There is no significant association between feeling closest to SP party (NL) and nation-state identity
Heinisch and Jansesberger (2023)	13 European countries	-	Feeling of being closest to a populist party – Sinn Féin (Ireland)	Original	Nation-state identity	Original	There is no significant association between feeling closest to Sinn Féin party and nation-state identity
Kulin and Johansson Sevä (2024)	Sweden	3040	Party sympathy	It is not clear	Nationalism	It is not clear	Rightwing populist in Sweden clearly distinguish themselves by scoring comparably high relative to other groups of party supporters on the measure capturing nationalist attitudes
Lee (2017)	USA	934	Trump vs. Rubio feeling thermometer gap	It is not clear	National identification	It is not clear	Strong attachment to an American identity was not predictive of positive assessments of Trump.

TABLE 8 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Lee (2017)	USA	937	Trump vs. Cruz feeling thermometer gap	It is not clear	National identification	It is not clear	Strong attachment to an American identity was not predictive of positive assessments of Trump.
Lee (2017)	USA	933	Trump vs. Jeb Bush feeling thermometer gap	It is not clear	National identification	It is not clear	Strong attachment to an American identity was not predictive of positive assessments of Trump.

greater national pride, and Capelos et al. (2024) reported that national pride significantly predicted populist attitudes in a representative English sample.

Another study conducted by Uysal (2022) in Turkey showed that populist attitudes moderated the negative effect of national identity on support for pro-refugee policies, with stronger populist attitudes decreasing pro-refugee support.

In a study distinguishing subtypes of populism, Guan and Yang (2021) examined rights-oriented populism (similar to the populism present in most European countries in that it is anti-elitist) and responsibility-oriented populism (focused on individuals' responsibility for their country and has ideological roots in China's sociopolitical circumstances). National identity positively influenced responsibility-oriented populism, while showing a weaker association with rights-oriented populism. Another study (Abadi et al., 2024) analyzed the influence of national identity on the people-centrism and anti-elitism dimensions of populist attitudes, finding that national identity positively predicted people-centrism and negatively (though weakly) predicted anti-elitism.

In summary, most studies found positive associations between national identity and populist attitudes, both for defensive (5/7) and secure (10/12) identities. The studies' measures and findings are provided in Table 9.

Supply-side populism and National Identities

Defensive national identities

Supply-side studies (i.e., those examining the offer of populism through the discourses, platforms, and manifestos) were associated with defensive identities in eight instances. Overall, the relationship across studies was positive.

The earliest study, by Immerzeel et al. (2016), explored the distance between European Radical Right Populist (RRP) parties and other party families on three policy issues, including nationalism within party programs. Findings indicated that RRP parties are the party family that scored highest on nationalism. Cerrone (2023) further examined civilizational discourse in the manifestos and tweets of Far-Right parties, showing that these parties were significantly more likely than other party families to invoke civilizationism on Twitter and in their manifestos.

At the speech level, Bonikowski et al. (2022) used neural language models to analyze 2956 presidential campaign speeches from 1952 to 2020, revealing that populism in campaign speeches was positively correlated with expressions of low national pride (i.e., portraying the nation in a negative light), with the authors arguing that low-pride claims support populist discourse. Jenne et al. (2021) expanded on this by examining populism and nationalism in speeches from chief executives (presidents and prime ministers) across 30 European and North American countries, confirming that populist and nationalist frames often align, particularly in the industrialized West, although some speeches were highly populist but non-nationalist, and vice-versa.

Generally, supply-side studies suggest a positive relationship between defensive identities and populism, with one exception (Cichocka et al., 2023), which found no link between populism and national narcissism. The authors showed that countries with populist leaders in government were not necessarily higher in national narcissism. This outlier could reflect the specific context of government-level analysis rather than the more typical party or speech levels. Further research is needed to determine whether this is a one-time effect or if there is indeed a difference in supply-side effects on identity when assessed through different levels or systems. Overall, the evidence indicates a consistent and positive relationship between supply-side populism and defensive national identities, particularly at the party and speech levels.

TABLE 9 Synthesis of studies examining the association of populist attitudes with secure and defensive national identities.

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Abadi et al. (2024)	15 European countries	7726	Populist attitudes (People-centrism)	Mixed: adapted from Castanho Silva et al. (2020)	National identification	Ellemers et al. (2002)	There is a positive, albeit weak, correlation between Social Identity and People-Centrism
Abadi et al. (2024)	15 European countries	7726	Populist attitudes (Anti-elitism)	Mixed: adapted from Castanho Silva et al. (2020)	National identification	Ellemers et al. (2002)	Negative correlation between Social Identity and Anti-Elitism
Capelos et al. (2024)	UK	483	Populist attitudes	Castanho Silva et al. (2018)	National pride	It is not clear	Populist attitudes, unlike reactionism, have ... a much weaker association with pride (09); não diz nada sobre a regressão, mas é significativa – National pride prediz de forma significativa populist attitudes
Elad-Strenger and Kessler (2024) – Study 1	Germany	382	Contempt toward the elites of society	Original	Nationalism	Kosterman and Feshbach (1989)	Nationalism was a covariate (controlled for in the analysis). Nationalism positively predicted feeling contempt toward the elites of society
Fabrykant (2020) – EVS 2017	Several European countries	Doesn't say	Confidence in the government	It is not clear	National pride	Original	There is a positive correlation between the variables; the correlation between national pride and confidence in government is slightly weakened compared to 2008
Fabrykant (2020) – EVS 2008	Several European countries	Doesn't say	Confidence in the government	It is not clear	National pride	Original	There is a positive correlation between the variables
Fossati and Mietzner (2019)	Indonesia	1422	Populist attitudes	Van Hauwaert and van Kessel (2018); Akkerman et al. (2014)	National identification	It is not clear	First, populist attitudes are comparatively strong in Indonesia, with about half of the population holding views associated with a populist rejection of established politics. Support for populist attitudes is indeed higher among those who feel very close to Indonesia (53%) than in other respondents (46%).

(Continues)

TABLE 9 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Green et al. (2022)	UK	2594	Populist Attitudes	It is not clear	British national sentiment	Heath et al. (1999)	British national sentiment was unrelated to populist attitudes
Guan and Yang (2021)	China	1061	Responsibility-oriented populism	Mixed: adapted from Schulz et al.'s (2017)	National identification	National Identification Scale (Huddy & Khatib, 2007)	Responsibility-oriented populism is positively associated with national identification – Multiple regression: national identification ... have significantly positive effects on the formation of responsibility-oriented populism.
Guan and Yang (2021)	China	1061	Rights-oriented populism	Schulz et al.'s (2017)	National identification	National Identification Scale (Huddy & Khatib, 2007)	This type of populism is significantly correlated with national identification – negative correlation between rights-oriented populism and national identification. In the Chinese context, people who hold rights-oriented populist and anti-elitist sentiments show less of a sense of national identification and national belonging
Manunta et al. (2022) – Study 1	France	458	Populist thin ideology	POP-This: Manunta & Becker, manuscript under preparation	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009); translated in French (Bertin et al., 2021)	There is a significant positive correlation between the variables: National narcissism is a significant predictor of populist thin ideology
Manunta et al. (2022) – Study 2	France	1050	Populist thin ideology	POP-This: Manunta & Becker, manuscript under preparation	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009); translated in French (Bertin et al., 2021)	There is a significant positive correlation between the variables
Manunta et al. (2024)	Chile, France, Italy, Romania, and the United Kingdom	9105	Populist thin ideology	POP-This: Manunta & Becker, manuscript under preparation	National narcissism	Bertin et al. (2021); Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	National narcissism were positive direct predictors of populist thin ideology

TABLE 9 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Pellegata and Visconti (2021)	Italy	1323	Attitudes to welfare chauvinism	It is not clear	National identification	It is not clear	Having an exclusively Italian identity, expressing a negative evaluation of Italy's membership of the EU, and being concerned about immigration are associated with preferences for restricting access to social security benefits by foreigners.
Urbanska et al. (2021)	France	562	Populist attitudes	Spruyt et al. (2016) & Pew Research Centre	National identification	Smeekes et al. (2018)	Positive correlation between populist attitudes and national identification
Uysal (2022) – Study 1	Turkey	190	Populist attitudes	Akkerman et al. (2014); Rothmund et al. (2020); Spruyt et al. (2016)	National identification (critics and praises)	Leach et al.'s (2008) and Mael and Ashforth (1992)	The effect of interaction between national identity and populist attitudes on supporting pro-refugee policies was significant – The negative effect of national identity on support for pro-refugee policies tends to increase for higher levels of populist attitudes. – populist attitudes moderates the relationship between national identity and support for pro-refugee policies
Uysal (2022) – Study 2	Turkey	306	Populist attitudes	Akkerman et al. (2014); Rothmund et al. (2020); Spruyt et al. (2016)	National identification	Thomas et al. (2015)	Populist attitudes moderates the effect of national identity on the supporting pro-refugee policies – National identity was not significant at lower levels of populist attitudes and at the mean level of the populist attitudes, however, it predicted negatively supporting pro-refugee policies for higher levels populist attitudes
Uysal et al. (2024)	Germany	3268	Populist beliefs	It is not clear	National pride	It is not clear	Populist beliefs predicted higher national pride

(Continues)

TABLE 9 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Varshney et al. (2021)	India	24,092	Populist attitudes	Mixed: adapted from Hawkins et al. (2012); Vehrkamp and Wratil (2017); Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel (2018); Castanho Silva et al. (2018)	Hindu nationalism	Original	Hindu nationalism does not have a statistically significant effect on populism. Respondents who are Hindu nationalist are not likely to be populist. – At the level of mass attitudes, populism and Hindu nationalism are quite distinct phenomena; they remain distinct at the level of popular attitudes

Secure national identities

Only two papers investigated the relationship between supply-side populism and secure forms of national identity. One study found that the more political candidates expressed a secure national attachment, such as national pride, the less they used populism in their speeches (Bonikowski et al., 2022). The other study, once again measuring populism at the government level, found no significant relationship between supply-side populism and secure national identities (Cichocka et al., 2023).

Study characteristics are presented in Table 10.

Experimental studies with manipulations of populism or identity

This set of studies comprises papers that experimentally manipulated aspects of populism or national identity to observe their causal effects on attitudes and behaviors associated with these constructs. By analyzing these studies separately, the review aimed to move beyond correlational evidence and better identify potential causal relationships between populism and national identity constructs.

In one experiment conducted in Germany, participants who received a “highly marginalized” feedback concerning their German identity expressed higher contempt toward elites than those who received “lowly marginalized” feedback (Elad-Strenger & Kessler, 2024). Finally, Keenan and Golec de Zavala (2021) demonstrated a connection between national narcissism and support for populist leaders over democratic leaders, though this was not observed with national ingroup satisfaction.

An Australian study investigated the impact of realistic and symbolic threat narratives on support for populist policies, finding that both narratives produced similar effects, regardless of the threat type (Mols & Jetten, 2016). In related research (Hameleers & Schmuck, 2017), demonstrated that blame attributions in populist online messages, particularly those blaming elites or immigrants for negative developments on the highly salient issue of the economy, strengthened populist attitudes among individuals who identified with the message source.

Other studies have experimentally examined the effects of exposure to populist communication. Schmuck et al. (2017) exposed the treatment group to political poster ads from Austria's FPÖ party and neutral filler ads, while a control group viewed commercial ads. They found that exposure to right-wing populist ads triggered feelings of discrimination among young Muslims, decreasing self-esteem and national identification, which, in turn, increased hostility toward majority members. The authors found no direct effect of populist ad exposure on national identification but observed that ad exposure led to feelings of discrimination, which indirectly decreased national identification.

Another study presented participants with a fictitious newspaper article on the 2019 European elections that included either a populist message, a nativist message, or a control condition. The study revealed that populist respondents exposed to populist messages did not display greater perceived threat than those exposed to a neutral message. However, populist voting intention was a significant predictor, as those who voted (or had the intention to vote) for a populist party exhibited increased immigrant threat (Rooduijn et al., 2021).

Finally, Bos et al. (2020) examined the effects of populist messages on persuasion and mobilization. While they found no mobilizing effects, the anti-elitist framing was shown to be persuasive in advancing populist arguments. They also tested whether relative deprivation moderated these effects, finding that while relative deprivation did not enhance the persuasive impact of populist frames, it did influence the mobilizing effects of both anti-elitist and anti-immigrant frames.

These studies collectively highlight the nuanced effects of manipulating populist and identity cues, showing that while defensive and exclusionary identities often interact positively

TABLE 10 Synthesis of studies examining the association of populist supply with secure and defensive national identities.

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Bonikowski et al. (2022)	US	-	Populism in speeches	RoBERTa, developed by Liu et al. (2019)	National pride	RoBERTa, developed by Liu et al. (2019)	Are highly correlated ($r = .47$)
Bonikowski et al. (2022)	US	-	Populism in speeches	RoBERTa, developed by Liu et al. (2019)	National pride	RoBERTa, developed by Liu et al. (2019)	Both are negatively associated
Cerrone (2023)	US	1063	Indicator of party family – Far Right	Manifesto Project database (Burst et al., 2020)	Civilizationism	Original	Results for logistic regressions for civilizational discourse in party manifestos: Nationalist party manifestos are significantly more likely to feature civilizationism than manifestos from most other party families.
Cerrone (2023)	US	1063	Indicator of party family – Far Right	PopuList developed by Rooduijn et al. (2019)	Civilizationism	Original	Results for logistic regressions for civilizational discourse in party manifestos: The PopuList's dichotomous coding, displayed in the right-hand panel of Figure 2, confirms that civilizational discourse is significantly more common in farright manifestos.
Cerrone (2023)	US	666,000	Indicator of party family – Far Right	Manifesto Project database (Burst et al., 2020)	Civilizationism	Original	Results for logistic regressions for civilizational discourse in party tweets: conservative and nationalist parties are significantly more likely to invoke civilizationism on Twitter than members of other party families
Cerrone (2023)	US	666,000	Indicator of party family – Far Right	PopuList developed by Rooduijn et al. (2019)	Civilizationism	Original	Results for logistic regressions for civilizational discourse in party tweets: robustness of the finding when dichotomously distinguishing between far-right parties and all others.
Cichocka et al. (2022)	56 countries	50,757	Populism (countries governed by populists)	Populism in Power database (Kyle & Meyer, 2020)	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009) proposed by Ardag (2019)	Populism was unrelated to national narcissism. Thus, authors found no evidence that countries with populist leaders would be higher on national narcissism.
Cichocka et al. (2022)	56 countries	50,757	Populism (countries governed by populists)	Populism in Power database (Kyle & Meyer, 2020)	National identification	Postmes et al. (2013)	The results for national identification as the second criterion variable showed that it was unrelated to populism

TABLE 10 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Populism measure	Source (populism)	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Immerzeel et al. (2016)	25 countries	870	Classification of the party families – RRP	Ennsers (2012) classification & Klingemann et al. (2006)	Nationalism	It is not clear	The RRP family scores higher on nationalism: Comparing the average positions of RRP with the other party families' positions, the gaps on the immigration and nationalism policy domains are generally the largest. – The scores of the neoconservative group are closest to the RRP on the ideological RRP issues; After the neo-conservative parties, the conservatives have the smallest gap with the RRP; Conservative and Christian democratic parties are substantially more likely to have a position close to RRP's position on nationalism compared with the social democrats; Liberal parties stand appreciably closer to RRP on law and order compared with social democrats, but not on immigration and nationalism; Only the greens show a significantly larger distance with RRP on nationalism than the social democrats and RRP.
Jenne et al. (2021)	30 European and North American countries	128 leader terms	Populism in speeches	Hawkins (2009)	Nationalism	Billig (1995)	Although not as high as the correlation between the two dimensions of nationalism, it confirms the conventional observation that populist and nationalist frames are often articulated together, particularly in the industrialized West. The three leaders mentioned already—Lukashenko, Erdoğan, and Orbán—are the clearest examples. Some speeches are highly populist but non-nationalist; an even greater number are highly nationalist but nonpopulist.

TABLE 11 Synthesis of experimental studies using manipulations for national identity.

Study	Location	Sample size	Design	Manipulation of identity	Populism measure	Source (populism)	Summary of results
Elad-Strenger and Kessler (2024) – Study 3	Germany	109	2 Unifactorial, Between-subjects	Highly vs. lowly marginalized feedback	Contempt toward the elites of society	Original	The analyses revealed significant univariate effects for the manipulation on contempt toward the elites – As hypothesized, those who received the “highly marginalized” feedback reported higher contempt toward the elites than those who received the “lowly marginalized” feedback
Hameleers and Schmuck (2017)	Austria and the Netherlands	646	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Blame attributions in populist online messages (blaming the elites or immigrants) made by a populist politician	Exclusionist populist attitudes	It is not clear	Messages blaming the elites or immigrants bolstered citizens' populist attitudes, but only for those who supported the source of the message. – Blame attributions to immigrants did not significantly affect exclusionist populist attitudes. However, source support exerted significant positive effects: attributions of blame to immigrants communicated by a populist politician activated exclusionist populist attitudes among citizens with higher levels of source support
Hameleers and Schmuck (2017)	Austria and the Netherlands	646	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Blame attributions in populist online messages (blaming the elites or immigrants) made by a populist politician	Anti-establishment populist attitudes	It is not clear	Blame attributions to immigrants positively and significantly affected anti-establishment populist attitudes among those who supported the populist source, which points to a spill-over effect of blame attributions to populist attitudes toward the establishment.

TABLE 11 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Design	Manipulation of identity	Populism measure	Source (populism)	Summary of results
Hameleers and Schmuck (2017)	Austria and the Netherlands	646	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Blame attributions in populist online messages (blaming the elites or immigrants) made by an ordinary citizen	Exclusionist populist attitudes	It is not clear	A significant and positive two-way interaction effect of ordinary citizens' immigrants blame attribution and source identification on the exclusionist dimension of populist attitudes – This means that the more participants identified with the ordinary citizen who attributed blame to immigrants on his Facebook page, the stronger their exclusionist populist attitudes
Hameleers and Schmuck (2017)	Austria and the Netherlands	646	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Blame attributions in populist online messages (blaming the elites or immigrants) made by an ordinary citizen	Anti-establishment populist attitudes	It is not clear	A spill-over effect of blame attributions to immigrants on anti-establishment populist attitudes was identified
Mols and Jetten (2016) – Study 1	Australia	80	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Realistic threat vs. symbolic threat political narratives	Opposition to Immigration	Mixed: adapted from Pettigrew and Meertens (1995) and Guimond and Dambrun (2002)	Political narrative had no main effect on opposition to immigration.

(Continues)

with populist messages, the impact of secure identities is less straightforward and context-dependent. Study characteristics are detailed in [Tables 11](#) and [12](#).

Synthesis of results

This review found 69 papers investigating the association between populism and national identity, in a total of 232 relationships. Most of the studies used a cross-sectional design and were carried out using online questionnaires, mainly in the fields of Political Science and Psychology. Most have examined this association by looking at the impact of identity on populism ($n = 192$), while only 22 analyzed the reverse causal effect. Nonetheless, only 30 were experimental. In this section, we provide a synthesis of the six groups of studies we have found.

The synthesis revealed that *populist voting behavior* tends to be positively linked to defensive identities, with nationalism and national narcissism predicting populist voting for figures like Trump and parties like Fidesz and Law and Justice; national nostalgia also increased PRRP support. However, the link with secure identities displayed mixed results. Associations varied by form of pride (e.g., pride in history predicted radical-right voting, while pride in democracy did not).

Similarly, *populist sentiments* were consistently positively related to defensive identities, with studies showing national nostalgia and national narcissism linked to greater sympathy for right-wing populist parties and figures, whereas findings for secure identities were mixed, with national identity positively predicting support for some populist radical-right parties but not others, while it showed no clear relationship with Trump.

Thirdly, results showed a strong link between *populist attitudes* and defensive identities, with national narcissism and ethnic identity as significant predictors of populist attitudes. Also, positive relationships were found between populist attitudes and secure identities, primarily with national identification and national pride.

Fourthly, studies on *supply-side populism* showed that populist parties evoke more defensive identities, like nationalist and civilizational rhetoric, in their programs and platforms than other party families. Also, the more political candidates express secure identities like national pride, the less populism they use in their speeches. These findings were consistent at the party and speech levels, not at the governmental level of analysis.

Then, studies crossing *populism with perceptions of threat* found that both symbolic and realistic threats were predictors of populist voting behavior, especially for radical-right parties, though symbolic threats tended to have a stronger effect. For populist attitudes, findings showed that relative deprivation and national identity threats positively predicted populist attitudes, with populist attitudes, in turn, increasing perceptions of economic and cultural threats. For sentiments, relative deprivation enhanced identification with the right-wing populist party AfD and decreased identification with the populist left-wing Die Linke.

Finally, experimental studies demonstrated that the exposure to populist messages did not influence perceived threat but indirectly decreased national identification in specific groups. Though populist mobilizing effects were limited, relative deprivation moderated the mobilizing effects of populist frames.

Overall, there is a clearer pattern of positive associations between populism and defensive identities, not so clear with secure identities. This inconsistency of secure identities will be further discussed. Also, there are opposite effects of defensive (e.g., national narcissism) and secure (e.g., national identification) identities on populism, in cases such as support for Brexit, preference for populist actors like Trump, Kaczynski, and the Law and Justice party. Furthermore, there is a lack of experimental studies on the topic and of studies outside the European context.

TABLE 12 Synthesis of experimental studies using manipulations for populism.

Study	Location	Sample size	Research design	Manipulation of populism	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Bos et al. (2020)	15 European countries	7286	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Anti-elitist frame	Relative deprivation	It is not clear	The single identity frames are not moderated by relative deprivation. – Relative deprivation does not enhance the persuasive impact of populist identity frames.
Bos et al. (2020)	15 European countries	7286	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Anti-immigrant frame	Relative deprivation	It is not clear	The single identity frames are not moderated by relative deprivation. – Relative deprivation does not enhance the persuasive impact of populist identity frames.
Bos et al. (2020)	15 European countries	7286	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Right-wing populism	Relative deprivation	It is not clear	The single identity frames are not moderated by relative deprivation. – Relative deprivation does not enhance the persuasive impact of populist identity frames.
Bos et al. (2020)	15 European countries	7286	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Anti-elitist frame	Relative deprivation	It is not clear	The impact of both the anti-elitist frame as well as the anti-immigrant frame is conditioned by relative deprivation.
Bos et al. (2020)	15 European countries	7286	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Anti-immigrant frame	Relative deprivation	It is not clear	The impact of both the anti-elitist frame as well as the anti-immigrant frame is conditioned by relative deprivation.
Bos et al. (2020)	15 European countries	7286	2 × 2, Between-subjects	Right-wing populism	Relative deprivation	It is not clear	The impact of the combined cues is not conditioned by relative deprivation.
Keenan and Golec de Zavala (2021) – Study 3	USA	217	4 Unifactorial, Within-subjects	Leadership vignettes (populist vs. democratic)	National narcissism	Golec de Zavala et al. (2009)	National narcissism significantly favored the populist leader over the democratic leader
Keenan and Golec de Zavala (2021) – Study 3	USA	217	4 Unifactorial, Within-subjects	Leadership vignettes (populist vs. democratic)	National ingroup satisfaction	It is not clear	Ingroup satisfaction was non-significantly associated with the democratic leader (vs. populist), though the confidence intervals indicate a leaning toward the democratic leader.

(Continues)

TABLE 12 (Continued)

Study	Location	Sample size	Research design	Manipulation of populism	National identity measure	Source (national identity)	Summary of results
Rooduijn et al. (2021) – Study 2	The Netherlands	1007	3 Unifactorial, Between-subjects	Populist message	Immigrant threat	Original	Among those who do not support populist parties, there are no significant differences between those who were exposed to a populist vignette and those who were assigned to the control condition: respondents in both conditions reported similar anti-immigration attitudes. Those who do support populist parties, on average, tend to hold significantly more negative attitudes about immigration. More surprisingly, however, we observe no significant differences across the two experimental conditions among supporters of populist parties: populist respondents exposed to a populist message do not report greater hostility toward immigrants than those who read a neutral text
Schmuck et al. (2017)	Austria	145	2 Unifactorial, Between-subjects	Political poster ads by the FPÖ	National identification	Jasinskaja-Lahti (2009) and Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007)	Authors found no direct effect of ad exposure on national identification – however, mediation analysis confirmed the significant indirect effect of the right-wing populist ad on national identification via perceived discrimination: exposure to right-wing populist ads triggered the feeling of being discriminated against, which decreased individuals' national identification

Post hoc explorations

To better understand the inconsistency in the positive vs. neutral vs. negative relationship between secure identities and both populist sentiments and populist voting, we conducted post hoc analyses.

For populist sentiments, we described 11 non-significant, eight positive, and one negative associations. We note that the only negative association was observed in Italy in the context of a populist radical left party. Differences between countries with positive or non-significant associations appeared to align, at least partly, with variables such as EU membership, political culture, and neutrality. Specifically, countries showing non-significant associations were typically characterized by full European Union (EU) membership and strong alignment with EU policies (e.g., Austria, Germany, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Ireland). In contrast, countries where positive associations emerged between populist sentiments and secure national identity tended to be either non-members of the EU (e.g., Switzerland, the UK, Norway, and the USA) or maintain a looser connection to EU institutions (e.g., Sweden), emphasizing sovereignty and independence. Sweden also falls within this group, despite being an EU member, as it retains its national currency and exhibits a more limited integration with EU frameworks, particularly in terms of monetary policy. This reflects differences in terms of political culture: positive-association countries often display a more decentralized or individualistic political culture (e.g., Swiss direct democracy, Brexit in the UK), whereas non-significant-association countries tend to exhibit greater centralization and alignment with collective EU strategies.

Regarding neutrality versus integration, countries in the positive-association group (e.g., Switzerland, Sweden) showed a stronger tradition of neutrality or limited involvement in global alliances. Meanwhile, the non-significant group was characterized by deeper integration into EU and NATO structures (e.g., Germany, France, the Netherlands).

In terms of political systems and governance styles, all positive-association countries have long-standing democratic traditions, with Switzerland standing out for its direct democracy approach. On the other hand, countries with non-significant associations are mainly composed of republics with a parliamentary system (Austria, Germany, Finland, Ireland) or a semi-presidential system (France), as well as two constitutional monarchies (The Netherlands, Spain).

In contrast, the relationship between populist voting and secure identities did not reveal a clear pattern across variables such as EU membership, political culture, neutrality versus integration, and political systems. It also did not distinguish by other country-level variables considered, such as economic development and stability, average salaries, quality of life, levels of qualification, or immigrant influx.

An analysis of the measurement instruments used in these studies also failed to identify a consistent pattern. Original, adopted, and mixed measures were distributed across groups without showing systematic differences. For example, the Leach et al. (2008) scale appeared in both the non-significant and negative groups. However, one noteworthy finding emerged: studies reporting non-significant or negative relationships between populist voting and secure identities often utilized validated scales of national identity (17/28 cases; e.g., Cislak et al., 2020; Keenan & Golec de Zavala, 2021; Marchlewska et al., 2018); in contrast, studies reporting a positive association between the two consistently employed unclear or non-validated measures (9/9 cases; e.g., Lubbers & Smeekes, 2022; Shyu, 2008).

Furthermore, previous studies have shown that it is necessary to control for the negative components of national identities to isolate the unique contribution of the secure dimension (e.g., Cichocka, 2016; Wagner et al., 2012). As such, we examined those studies that co-assessed secure and defensive identities. Across the evidence base, eight studies assessed secure and defensive components of national identification simultaneously (Bonikowski et al., 2021;

Cichocka et al., 2022, 2023; Cislak et al., 2020; Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Keenan & Golec de Zavala, 2021; Lantos & Forgas, 2021; Marchlewska et al., 2018). Overall, these studies suggest that defensive forms (e.g., national narcissism; restrictive/ardent nationalism) show robust positive associations with populism-related outcomes (e.g., support for populist leaders/parties and Brexit), whereas associations for secure identification indicators (e.g., national identification, national satisfaction, ingroup positivity, creedal nationalism) are often reduced to non-significance or become negative once defensive components are included in the same model.

DISCUSSION

This work provides an extensive, comprehensive analysis of the relationship between populism and national identity by synthesizing a substantial cross-national body of evidence. Through a scoping review approach, it systematically maps the available research, categorizing different conceptualizations and methodological approaches to better understand the dynamics of this relationship. In doing so, this work contributes to both theoretical and methodological advancements in the study of populism and national identity, particularly within the field of social psychology.

One of the key contributions of this review is the organization of existing findings into a structured typology. By categorizing different dimensions of populism (i.e., supply-side populism, populist attitudes, populist sentiments, and populist voting behavior) and national identity (i.e., secure identities, defensive identities, perceptions of threat), this study offers a framework that clarifies the complexity of this relationship. Given the considerable variation in how populism and national identity have been conceptualized and operationalized across studies, this typology provides a useful reference for future research aiming to refine theoretical models in both political science and social psychology. Therefore, this study sets a new direction for studying the populism-identity relationship.

Additionally, this review highlights the inconsistent relationship between secure forms of national identity (e.g., patriotism, national ingroup satisfaction) and populism. While defensive identities, such as national narcissism, consistently display positive associations with populism (Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Lantos & Forgas, 2021; Manunta et al., 2022, 2024), the evidence regarding secure identities is more mixed. The heterogeneity of findings for secure national identities is consistent with work showing that secure and defensive components share variance and that the association of secure identity with political outcomes can change when defensive components are modeled simultaneously (e.g., Cichocka, 2016; Wagner et al., 2012). In our review, studies that measured both components often showed that the secure dimension (e.g., national identification/satisfaction, ingroup positivity) became null or negative once national narcissism or exclusionary nationalism was accounted for (e.g., Cislak et al., 2020; Golec de Zavala et al., 2017; Keenan & Golec de Zavala, 2021; Marchlewska et al., 2018). This pattern suggests that mixed evidence for secure identities may partly reflect differences in whether studies isolate the unique contribution of secure identification versus variance shared with defensive or exclusionary attachments. Future research would benefit from routinely measuring both components and modeling their unique and shared variance to clarify when inclusive national attachment is unrelated, protective, or context-dependent in relation to populism. These inconsistencies underscore the need for further investigation to determine the conditions under which secure forms of national identity relate to populist attitudes, supply, and political behavior. Future research should explore moderating factors, such as socio-economic status, geographic location (urban vs. rural), and political context, which may help explain the inconsistency of secure identities. A potential systematic review followed by a meta-analysis could explore interactions between potential moderators and identify the conditions that clarify this relationship.

The functional perspective on national narcissism may also help explain why defensive identities show more consistent links to populism than non-defensive forms. If national narcissism operates as a group-based ego-enhancement strategy aimed at securing external recognition and protecting an inflated ingroup image (Cichocka & Cislak, 2020), then populist rhetoric, which is often centered on misrecognition, grievance, and the restoration of a “betrayed” people, may be particularly appealing because it offers both an explanation for perceived status loss and a legitimizing frame for antagonism toward elites and outgroups. In contrast, more secure forms of national identification (e.g., ingroup satisfaction or constructive patriotism) reflect attachment that is less contingent on external validation, which may help explain the more heterogeneous and context-dependent associations observed for these measures.

Beyond these interpretive implications, the review also points to several methodological limitations in the existing literature that constrain comparability and causal inference. First, there is a lack of standardization in the measurement of both populism and national identity. The review identified a wide range of instruments used to assess these constructs, with some studies employing non-validated measures or failing to specify the instruments used. This inconsistency makes it difficult to compare findings across studies and highlights the need for greater methodological rigor and uniformity in future research.

Second, there is a notable reliance on cross-sectional designs, which limits causal inference. While many studies establish associations between populism and national identity, they do not provide evidence for causal mechanisms. Experimental and longitudinal studies remain scarce, making it difficult to determine whether populism influences national identification, whether national identity shapes populism, or whether both are reciprocally related. Given the increasing recognition of the social identity dimension of populism (e.g., Aslanidis, 2020), future research should prioritize experimental and longitudinal methodologies to clarify these causal relationships.

Third, the geographic scope of existing studies is relatively narrow, with most research focusing on European and North American contexts. While these regions are politically relevant for studying populism, there is a need to extend this research to diverse cultural settings to examine whether the patterns observed in Western democracies hold in different political and social environments.

This scoping review also identifies underexplored dimensions of the relationship between populism and national identity. Notably, while much research has focused on populist voting behavior in relation to national identities, fewer studies have examined how populist supply interacts with secure national identities. Additionally, no studies explicitly examined the link between populist supply and threat perceptions, leaving a gap in understanding whether (and how) national identities are associated with this form of populism.

Moreover, this review highlights the importance of investigating how populist narratives activate and mobilize individuals' identities. While existing studies have examined the impact of identity on populist voting, attitudes, and sentiments (e.g., Marchlewska et al., 2018), further research is needed to explore how political leaders and parties use populist rhetoric to shape national identification. There is a lack of experimental studies in general, and particularly of experiments that clarify if and under which conditions populist appeal strengthens or weakens national identification.

Despite its contributions, this review has some limitations. First, as a scoping review, it does not provide a systematic assessment of effect sizes or causal relationships. While it effectively maps the existing literature, future systematic reviews or meta-analyses are necessary to quantitatively assess the strength and direction of the associations identified. Second, while the review reflects disciplinary diversity—incorporating contributions from political science, psychology, and sociology—it does not reflect geographical and cultural diversity, as the majority of the studies were conducted in European and North American settings. This geographical concentration limits the generalizability of findings

to non-Western populations, particularly those with different political systems and relationships to national identity. As Henrich et al. (2010) cautioned, generalizing from Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) populations to humanity as a whole is problematic, given that these populations represent a small and unrepresentative portion of the world's population (around 12%). The limited engagement with scholarship produced in and about non-Western countries likely constrains the diversity of perspectives and shapes the dominant theoretical and methodological frameworks in the literature on the populism-identity link and, by extension, in our review. Lastly, many studies relied on convenience samples—often university students—raising concerns about external validity and representativeness, as these samples tend to overrepresent younger and more highly educated samples compared to the general population. Although some large-scale surveys were included, future work should prioritize more diverse and representative sampling strategies to ensure broader applicability of findings.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this scoping review synthesized 69 manuscripts (87 studies, 232 associations) to clarify how populism and national identity have been conceptualized, operationalized, and empirically linked across disciplines. By organizing the evidence into a typology that distinguishes supply-side and demand-side populism and differentiates between secure and defensive forms of national identity, we provide a clearer map of what the literature is (and is not) actually comparing. Across this body of work, the most robust pattern is a consistent positive association between populism and defensive forms of national identity (e.g., nationalism, national narcissism), whereas associations involving more secure or constructive forms of national identification are mixed and context-dependent, suggesting that their political meaning varies across settings, measures, and analytical specifications. Methodologically, the field remains constrained by heavy reliance on cross-sectional designs, heterogeneous and sometimes insufficiently specified measurement approaches, and a geographically uneven evidence base concentrated in European and North American contexts, all of which limit causal inference and broader generalizability. Taken together, the review underscores the need for greater conceptual precision, improved and more transparent measurement practices, and stronger causal designs (especially experimental and longitudinal work), alongside wider coverage of political and cultural contexts. These steps are essential for building more cumulative theory about when, and through which psychological and political mechanisms, national identity becomes aligned with populist attitudes, sentiments, and electoral behavior.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in OSF at https://osf.io/ae3c4?view_only=f19629efdd5941f78e5b1f53ff17ad42.

TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

This review was preregistered on the OSF page, including the research questions, methodology, and planned data analysis and presentation (https://osf.io/6cdu3?view_only=9cc799760d0b4217b615b24c363e5346). The full data extraction table is also openly accessible on OSF (https://osf.io/ae3c4?view_only=f19629efdd5941f78e5b1f53ff17ad42).

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