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**Understanding the Emergence of Populist Parties: A Review
of the Interconnected Factors Involving Individual
Resilience, Educational Levels, and Party Support –
A Case Study of Romania**

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Abstract

Populism is seen as a significant phenomenon in politics nowadays. Populist parties are gaining the backing of citizens in various countries. What are the individual key factors that contribute to the rise of populism? This article aims to provide a comprehensive answer starting from three key factors such as individual resilience, educational level, and party support. Therefore, we conducted research among 241 participants (civil servants from public administration) who agree to respond to an online questionnaire. Data were gathered via the Google Form platform. The questionnaire was structured following main objectives, such as: identifying the individual resilience level, respondents' level of trust, party affiliation and support, the perception of populism and populist promises perception, the importance of truth in politics, the voting intention and socio-demographic data. The research reveals that most of the respondents (93,4%) have a high individual resilience while 90% appreciated that in interpersonal relations the best attitude is to be cautious. Furthermore, even if the general belief is that populist promises expressed during electoral campaigns cannot be achieved, an average of 37,7% of the respondents indicated that populist parties could win the elections. As regards the honesty of political actors, 55,6% of the respondents indicated that political actors cannot be honest. For 65.1% of the respondents, political advisors are responsible for the lack of honesty and trust. The rise of populist parties is due to some aspects such as: lack of trust in the current political class, social economic context (poverty), and the level of education (lack of political culture). Additionally, this research highlights the role of educational levels in shaping populist party support. Individuals with lower levels of education tend to be more susceptible to populist messages due to limited access to critical thinking skills and political knowledge. Furthermore, individuals with higher levels of resilience tend to be more skeptical or critical regarding the truth of political parties or politicians. Likewise, individuals with higher levels of resilience tend to perceive populist

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promises as less achievable. This article contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors that could enlighten the increase of populist parties, often promoted as having a sovereigntist doctrine. By examining individual resilience, educational levels, and party affiliation, the study offers valuable insights into the dynamics of populism in this context.

Key words: political marketing, politics, populism, resilience, consumers behaviour

JEL classification: M38

1. Introduction

Populism became a trendy concept not only for public discourse, but also for academics. The attention given to it is in the context of the emergence of political entities promoting a certain type of discourse focused on frustrations and less on solutions. Through specific tools of political marketing and mass communication, populist parties spread their content towards citizens and society. Populist political entities do not offer solutions to problems, but only amplify the degree of citizens' dissatisfaction.

As Guriev and Papaioannou (2022, p. 754) citing Dornbusch and Edwards (1991) populism was a movement belonging to Latin American area. But nowadays it became a global phenomenon, rising in different countries. Some authors (Guriev & Papaioannou, 2022, p. 754) consider that populism rise is linked to the global economic crisis, pointing to some moments such as Tea Party movement in the US (2010), the paradigm of illiberal democracy in Hungary (2010), the elections for the European Parliament (2014), SYRIZA and independent Greeks (2015), Law and Justice Party in Poland (2015), Brexit (2016), Donald Trump election in the US (2017), Alternative for Germany – AfD (2017), Lega Nord and Movimento 5 Stelle (2018). In Romania, even if populist parties (AUR or PRM) failed to take over, they gained a significant popular support.

Several researchers (Bang & Marsh, 2018; Kriesi, 2014; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012) characterised populism as a political force expressing the lack of trust in democratic practices. BREXIT meant not only losing an EU member and increasing European citizens' scepticism upon union values and future, but also the rise of support for populist parties. Populists spread the belief in the sovereignty of the people and uniformly lament the perceived dysfunction of democracy, attributing this to the erosion of popular sovereignty and expressing concern about it term of an ongoing threat.

Based on their political rhetoric, populists might be perceived as true protectors of the constitutional framework that supports democracy. By asserting themselves as the authentic so-called vox populi, populists invoke the core principles upon which modern democracy is founded (Espejo, 2017). Urbinati (2013, p. 140) quoted Kazin (1995) as considering populism as a democratic expression of political life that is needed from time to time to rebalance the distribution of political power for the benefit of the majority. In this context, Urbinati (2013) interpret populism as having a certain periodicity.

Although an universally accepted definition of populism proves to be elusive, it is frequently construed as an ideological framework that dichotomises society into antagonistic factions, *the people* and *the elites*, as Mudde (2004, p. 543) stated that populism “is a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups «the pure people» versus «the corrupt elite» and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people”.

Therefore, as an ideology, populism reveals the key role of the people in politics, stating that they – the people – have been betrayed by the so-called elites. And it is imperative that the sovereignty of the people to be restored (Meny & Surel, 2002, p. 11). Furthermore, the betrayal outcome is the lack of trust of the people in the elites. Since there is no trust, the elites are perceived as the evil, while people are the good ones.

Populism was also seen as a political strategy (Weyland, 2001) or as a project of political renewal (Urbinati, 2013). For Weyland (2001, p. 14), the most accurate definition of populism is as a political strategy to express power. Therefore, it is a political strategy through which a leader exercises government power based on the support of large numbers of citizens. Based on this definition, the populist leader is a new entry, a charismatic individual that does not belong to the elites, and, the most important, he claims to be the representant of the *vox populi*. Urbinati (2013) stated that populism as an ideology is not enough to reveal the concept. In Urbinati’s (2013) approach, populism as a phenomenon needs two elements: a polarising ideology and a leader capable of gathering masses to govern in the name and for the people. Therefore, Urbinati (2013, p. 151) pointed out that those elements represent a project of political renewal back to the natural roots of democracy.

Populism has risen in accordance with socioeconomic developments brought by globalisation and economic disfunctions (Dorn et al., 2016). The establishment's political reaction has failed to mitigate the impacts of such processes and amplified them. Fetzer (2019) indicates that economic crisis outcomes (austerity, decreases in welfare) increased support for populist parties in the UK.

According to Grossman & Helpman (2021), the populist rhetoric relies on the mechanisms of social comparisons and indicating the guilt, wherein the dichotomy people vs. elite represents the strategic purpose of indicating the so-called enemy. In this regard, individuals who perceive themselves as oppressed by the elites are supporting populist parties (Altomonte et al., 2019). Populist messages may find greater acceptance among individuals with limited exposure to diverse perspectives due to a lower educational level. The absence of critical thinking skills in such contexts can contribute to the spread of populist narratives.

Populist parties frequently attract individuals who identify strongly with these movements, finding a sense of identity and belonging within.

These populist approaches were possible and validated by votes, due to the existence of a vast electoral pool with the ability to believe such messages. A specificity of this electoral pool could be corroborated with the theory according

to which, following the occurrence of some adversities, the level of individual resilience should be very low.

Based on the opinions presented, the emergence and development of populism and populist parties can be explained as an outcome of the socio-economic context (citizens having a high level of distrust in ruling elites, high level of polarisation, frustrations). As EconPol Forum (2024) summarises, populist groups share concerns about: economic insecurity, perceived political inequality, limited opportunities, and a cautious attitude towards multinational corporations. Populism thrives on mistrust of established institutions, ideas, and ideologies (Chang, 2024, pp. 3-4 in EconPol Forum, 2024).

Within the last century, the world's political context has witnessed a continuous cycle of political doctrines (Modelski, 1978), reflecting the social, economic, and technological changes of the age. In a time when major events (world wars, the cold war, and globalisation) marked the evolution of societies, political ideologies were constantly changing and evolving.

1.1 Romanian Political Context

Nowadays, the Romanian political scene can be highlighted with a similarity regarding the theory of political cyclicity and ideologies (the 20th century Marxism theory, the 21st century globalism theory, the Spanish flu, Sars-Cov-2).

Each historical period contained debates about the role of the state in providing public services and protecting citizens from major risks, prompting a reconsideration of economic, social, and health policy, with a focus on ensuring better preparedness for future health threats. Both the pandemic of 1920 and the pandemic of 2020 had the effect of diminishing the current of globalism, followed by a reasoned growth of political currents of the sovereignist, nationalist, and even populist type.

As regards Romanian political context, there are five parliamentary parties: PSD (social democratic doctrine), PNL (liberal doctrine), Forța Dreptei (neoliberal doctrine), UDMR (representative of Hungarians in Romania), and AUR (conservative doctrine).

Among all five parliamentary parties, the new entry party is AUR (five years old). At the same time, the AUR party reshaped the political scene in Romania, earning its reputation as a party with unionist visions, deeply anti-EU. Subsidiarily, without having a traditional political organisation or leaders with a certain political reputation, in the parliamentary elections of 2020 (elections organised during the pandemic generated by the SARS-Cov-2 virus) relying on an electoral campaign with populist accents and anti-vaxxers managed to get 9.08% of the votes. Based on that, it became a parliamentary party.

Why did the voters choose to produce this change, in the sense of giving a mandate to a party that has populist communication to the detriment of traditional parties? While there is much research explaining why voters vote for populists, there is less research on why citizens choose to keep them in their preferences in terms of voting intention and how social media reinforces their anti-establishment message. In this context, the use of social media platforms seems to be a modern tool for

boosting populist messages, which, as noted by Meny & Surel (2002), has historically been a key factor in populist movements.

The success of AUR offers a new perspective on the political landscape, highlighting the ability of a new party to align with widespread populist sentiments. AUR not only revived traditional populist themes, but did so with a more radical approach, positioning itself as a key player. The party maintains a steadfast antielitist stance, coupled with a robust anticorruption campaign, employing a flamboyant political style characterised by continual confrontation, verbal assaults, and extensive accusations.

Based on researchers' considerations (Meny & Surel, 2002; Mudde, 2004; Urbinati, 2013; Weyland, 2001), the AUR party and its leader can be perceived as populism one.

1.2 Romanian Electors' Landscape

The previous elections for the European Parliament took place on May 26, 2019. According to ROAEP (2019), the total number of Romanian voters registered on permanent electoral lists (people who have their domicile or residence in Romania) was, in 2019, 18.267.732 people.

On May 26th, at the elections for the European Parliament 49,02% from the total number of people with the right to vote equivalent to 8.954.959 persons voted. As for the Romanians living abroad, a number of 375,219 people voted.

Of the 13 political parties registered in the elections and the three independent candidates, only six political parties managed to exceed the electoral threshold of 5%: National Liberal Party (PNL) 27% (2,449,068 votes), Social Democratic Party (PSD) - 22.5% (2,040,765 votes), Alliance 2020 USR-PLUS (USR PLUS) - 22.36% (2,028,236 votes), Pro Romania Party - 6.44% (583,916 votes), Popular Movement Party (PMP) -5.76% (522,104 votes), Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR) 5.26% (476777 votes) (Rezultate Vot, 2019).

The upcoming elections for the European Parliament will take place on June 9, 2024. There will be 12 political parties and four independents running for 33 seats. In a survey carried out by INSCOP in May 2024, the voting intentions in the European Parliament elections were as follows: PSD-PNL - 43.7%, AUR-17.5%, United Right Alliance - 14.1 % (INSCOP, 2024). Of course, the INSCOP survey represents the intention, but it clearly shows the popular support for populist parties.

According to the Standard Eurobarometer 101 (European Commission, 2024), trust in the national government has declined three points to 33%. In Romania, 29% *tend to trust*, while 62% *tend not to trust* government. As regards citizen perception of seeing themselves as *national only*, there is a percentage of 37%, while 48% are *nationality and European*. As we can see, in Romania there is a significant percentage of citizens who are not fully satisfied.

2. Problem Statement

Some studies (Balibar et al., 1991) regarding extremist movements have found that fears of downward economic mobility and loss of social status created a significant mass support for populists. The global financial crisis has impacted the income of many Western countries. Therefore, a large part of society has faced a degree of poverty. At the same time, citizens have lost trust in the political system and how democracy works.

These adversities (frustration in relation to politicians, economic dissatisfaction, anxiety due to unexpected shifts in society) have contributed to political turmoil. As an outcome, anti-establishment leaders, parties, and movements have arisen, questioning fundamental values and institutions of democracies (Wike et al., 2019).

Based on the opinion by which populist parties exploit the social dissatisfaction of individuals, not having the ability to offer concrete solutions to existing problems, in this research we chose to analyse the perception and influence of some variables (individual resilience, trust in people and in the political parties, populist messages perception) in increasing the support of populist parties.

The variables used in this study were:

Individual resilience refers to the ability of a person to adapt and bounce back in the face of adversity, trauma, or stress. It involves the capacity to cope effectively with difficult situations, challenges, or setbacks, and to maintain mental and emotional well-being despite experiencing adversity.

Trust in people refers to the belief or confidence that individuals have in the reliability, honesty, and integrity of others. It involves the willingness to depend on others, to believe that they will act in a trustworthy manner, and to be vulnerable in interpersonal relationships.

Trust in political parties refers to the level of confidence individuals have in the integrity, truthfulness, and ethical conduct of political parties.

Perception of populist messages appeal to feelings of dissatisfaction, disillusionment, or marginalisation among segments of the population, offering a sense of empowerment and belonging to those who feel disaffected by mainstream politics or societal trends. However, they can also be divisive and polarising, exacerbating social tensions and undermining democratic norms and institutions.

Educational level refers to different educational opportunities and pathways available to individuals. These typically correspond to the number of years that a person spends in formal schooling.

2.1 Individual Resilience

For individuals, stressful situations are not only challenging, but also involve a variety of levels of trauma or anxiety. For instance, unemployment can be perceived as a significant trauma. In psychology, surmounting a trauma is related to a high level of individual resilience, meaning the process of adapting well in the context of an adversity (American Psychological Association, 2014, para. 4).

As Folke (2016) stated, communities are using resilience theory to debate the current *status quo* and construct and build possibilities for the future. Therefore, resilience is a multifaceted capacity to deal with adversities and bounce back, learning from negative experience, facilitating the fundamental process of evolving to well-being, an opportunity to adapt and overcome.

Populist parties tend to resonate with individuals experiencing insecurity, vulnerability, economic uncertainties, cultural anxieties, or perceptions of marginalisation. As Hooghe and Marks (2017) stated, those who feel left behind support populist parties. Therefore, individual resilience emerges as a key factor in shaping political affiliations and support.

Economic hardship and a decline in social status are key sociopsychological factors that drive support for emerging populist parties. These parties craft their messages, channelling dissatisfaction and resentment away from individuals and towards the political system. Those who have experienced any form of poverty are particularly prone to developing resentment towards social changes. As Enke (2018) stated, compared to conventional politicians, populist leaders set a greater value on emotionally and morally (belonging, trust, and tradition) compared to fundamental principles (equality, equity, and individual rights).

Resilience is essential in relation to political and social challenges. According to Brown (2021) research, people with high levels of resilience are less susceptible to political manipulation and more likely to form their own opinions.

2.2 Trust in People and Political Parties

As regards the concept of trust, it should be noted that there are two approaches: trust as a belief and trust as an attitude (Reiersen, 2017). So, based on that, trust is a key element in establishing a relationship or setting up an action.

Trust is described as a complex construct and an internalised value that dictates how an individual should perceive and behave toward others (Uslaner, 2002). It is a belief or expectation shaped by personal experiences and dependent on the trustworthiness of others (Paxton & Glanville, 2015). Various factors influence trust, including life experiences (Flanagan & Stout, 2010), cultural transmission (Dinesen, 2010), and individual psychological aspects.

Trust and distrust are two concepts that are very common to political discourses, especially as regards the populist parties. In this case, the political attribute of trust is when the direction is from citizens to political entities. Therefore, citizens are the subjects, while parties are the objects of political trust. Based on the observation that the future political party behaviour (after winning elections) is always characterised by a certain degree of uncertainty, political trust also includes citizens' vulnerability. In the political context, trust is the value of exchange between political promises and the vote.

2.3 Educational Level

Education is a fundamental driver of individual and societal development. The level of education attained by individuals significantly influences various aspects of their lives (economic prosperity, health, and social mobility). The educational level represents the educational opportunities and pathways accessible to individuals. These levels usually correspond to the amount of time a person spends in formal schooling.

Masten (2001) highlighted that education contributes to the development of the individual's internal resources, including the ability to adapt and manage stress. Thus, education can be considered a catalyst for resilience, providing a conducive framework for acquiring the necessary skills in the face of challenges. Relevant research shows that the level of resilience can influence an individual's political behaviour (Sousa et al., 2013). People with a high level of resilience are less likely to seek simplified messages, preferring a more balanced and analytical approach to political decision making.

Furthermore, Pausch et al. (2021) research explores how education level and individual resilience can influence susceptibility to populist party messages. The results indicate that individuals with higher education and higher levels of resilience are less likely to subscribe to populist discourses, being able to critically analyse and evaluate political information. Educational levels exert a further influence on the dynamics of populist support. Empirical evidence suggests that individuals with lower educational are more susceptible to populist appeals.

In summary, the twisted web of factors contributing to the rise of populist parties is highlighted in the Romanian context, emphasising the interplay between individual resilience, educational levels, and party membership. By reviewing these connections, we can gain insights into the sociopsychological dynamics for fuelling the attractiveness of populist movements.

Voters are conceptualised as consumer segments, categorized as loyal, regular, or potential, within the realm of political marketing. Concurrently, political actors are perceived as suppliers of political goods and/or services. The central objective of this inquiry is to elucidate the way political products ethically meet the demands of citizens, transcending mere manipulative marketing strategies geared toward short-term objectives.

3. Research Questions

Through this study we aimed to obtain some possible responses for the rise of populist parties based on the following variables: individual resilience, level of trust, and educational level, such as:

- a. Perception of trusting in political parties and individual resilience level
- b. Background environment and trusting in political parties
- c. The belief of populist promises are achievable and individual resilience level

4. Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach to examine a particular population. The instrument used is an online questionnaire distributed via *GoogleForms*, regarding the following aspects:

- The ego-resilience scale (ER89) which contains 14 items and is constructed in the form of a short personality inventory, each item being evaluated on a Likert scale (4 levels) (Block and Kremen, 1996);
- Auto-evaluation of trusting people;
- Perception of traumatic experiences (Covid-19 pandemic, economic situation, social context, political context) – Likert 5 points scale;
- Political participation and intention to express the political option;
- Evaluation of the political and consultants' truth perception;
- Factor contributing to the rise of populist parties (lack of trust, economic conditions, lack of political culture);
- Sociodemographic data (age, gender, level of education, political party affiliation or support for a political party)

The respondents were randomly selected from several public institutions. The data population in this study consisted of 241 respondents. The responses were interpreted using IBM SPSS Statistics v.23.

5. Findings

There were 268 respondents in total who filled out the online questionnaire, but there were only 241 valid responses. Therefore, the results of the sample in this study were 241 respondents. The survey consisted of 36 items and the value of Cronbach's Alpha for the survey was $\alpha = .763$.

5.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

Among the 241 respondents, the age distribution is from 19 to 72 (St.D = 9,666), the median being 48 and the mean 46,70. From the total of 241 respondents 57,3% are female and 42,7% male. As regards the level of education, the data population is represented as following: high school (27,4%), post-high school (7,9%), university degree (44,8%), master's degree (14,1%), PhD. (5,8%).

21,2% come from rural areas, while 78,8% come from urban areas. As regards employee status, we note that 74,3% are employees. The respondents indicated various levels of income, 83,8% mentioned that they have a medium level, while 12,4% a low level.

As regards the individual resilience level, 93,4% of the respondents indicated a high level. Furthermore, 90% mentioned that the best way to act in relation to others is to keep a prudent approach.

Of the total of respondents, 49.8% indicated that they do not hold the membership of any political party, while 44.0% stated that they are members of a political party, 6.2% preferring not to express their answer. Also, 50.6% indicated that they were sympathisers of a political party, while 43.2% said that they were not sympathisers.

From the perspective of the theory of individual resilience, 61.8% of the respondents mentioned the fact that there were discrepancies between the option expressed by voting in the previous elections and the result of the vote. In other words, the political party or the political person they voted for did not win the election. Therefore, it is assumed that they experienced a sense of frustration.

Regarding the trust in political parties, the recorded results demonstrate that, at the level of the respondents' perception, 60.5% are of the opinion that political parties or political persons do not tell the truth and therefore cannot be trusted. However, 72.6% of the respondents believe that honesty is very important regarding election promises.

Moreover, at the level of the perception, 55.6% of the respondents indicated that political parties and people cannot be honest. In other words, sincerity or honesty did not seem to be a quality of the political environment, an opinion expressed by 79.3%.

Based on the data obtained, we noticed that the respondents having a high level of individual resilience expressed their belief that populist promises cannot be fulfilled (Table 1).

Table 1. Crosstab Individual Resilience level and fulfilment of populist promises

Count				
		Populist promises are achievable		Total
		No	Yes	
Individual resilience level	Medium	12	4	16
	High	165	60	225
Total		177	64	241

Source: output generated by IBM SPSS Win v.23.

A percentage of 73.4% of respondents indicate that populist-type promises are not able to be achieved. In other words, they are aware that populist messages are misleading. And yet, elections to the European Parliament can be won by populist parties (43.2% of respondents), local elections (40.7% of respondents), parliamentary elections (39.8%), presidential elections (30.7%).

From the perspective of the respondents, the main reasons populist messages are accepted by the population are:

- Lack of trust in the current political class – 127 elections
- Poverty – 63 choices
- Lack of political culture – 57 elections

In other words, according to the respondents, the main causes that amplify the spread of populist messages and, implicitly, the increase in the popularity of populist parties find their answer in elements related to the economic context, education, and level of trust.

At the same time, 65.1% of the respondents identify this lack of honesty at the level of political consultant teams. In other words, from the desire to sell the political product and to obtain the maximum profit (a percentage of votes as high as possible), the teams of consultants use the so-called fabrication of the product to mislead the

consumers. In other words, citizens believe that, to achieve political goals, consultants distort the truth so that the "political product" they offer to consumers creates the impression that it meets the level of expectations.

But, despite all this, the real person responsible for the *purchase of a product* that does not meet the level of expectation is identified in the person of the consultants and by no means in the *political product*. However, the responsibility of keeping the electoral promises, translated into the key characteristics of the *product*, belongs to the political entity and not to the political consultants' team.

The existence of a high level of confidence in obtaining a high electoral score in the next elections correlated with the state of facts expressed previously, demonstrates the fact that society is not ready to purchase authentic products that satisfy the real needs of the consumer, there is a vicious circle, respectively, I purchase the product (meaning I vote for a political candidate) even though I am convinced that it does not satisfy my need and I do not even disagree with its quality.

5.2 Perception of Trusting in Political Parties and Individual Resilience Level

The correlation between individual resilience level and political parties (Table 2) are saying the truth is -0.624^{**} , which is highly significant (Sig.=,000, $p < 0.01$).

Table 2. Correlation between Individual Resilience level and Political parties are saying the truth

		Individual resilience level	Political parties are saying the truth
Individual resilience level	Pearson Correlation	1	-,624**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	241	241
Political parties are saying the truth	Pearson Correlation	-,624**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	241	241

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: output generated by IBM SPSS Win v.23.

There is a strong negative correlation (-0.624^{**}) between believing in the truth of political entities and the level of individual resilience. This suggests that individuals with higher levels of resilience tend to be more skeptical or critical in regard with the truth of political parties or politicians. It could indicate that individuals who possess greater coping mechanisms or psychological strength are more discerning about political messaging and less likely to take claims at face value.

5.3 Background Environment and Trusting in Political Parties

Based on the data collected, we noticed that respondents indicated the place of origin as being urban, there is the belief that political parties are not saying the truth (Table 3). Therefore, are not to be trusted.

Table 3. Crosstab place of origin and Political parties are saying the truth

		Count		
		Place of origin		Total
		Rural	Urban	
Political parties are saying the truth	Yes	19	31	50
	No	32	159	191
Total		51	190	241

Source: output generated by IBM SPSS Win v.23.

As regard the educational level, we noticed that a higher level of education (expressed by the last school graduated) indicates a low level of trust in political parties as saying the truth (Table 4).

Table 4. Crosstab educational level and Political parties are saying the truth

		Count					Total
		Educational level					
		High-school	Professional	B.A.	Master	PhD.	
Political parties are saying the truth	Yes	55	5	24	6	4	94
	No	11	14	84	28	10	147
Total		66	19	108	34	14	241

Source: output generated by IBM SPSS Win v.23.

The correlation between the background environment and trusting in political parties is -0.585^{**} (Table 5) also highly significant (Sig.=,000, $p < 0.01$). There is a strong negative correlation (-0.585^{**}) between the two variables. This suggests that individuals of certain backgrounds (urban environment) are less likely to believe in trusting in political parties. Environmental factors, such as socioeconomic status or cultural context, may play a role in shaping perceptions of political honesty.

Table 5. Correlation between background environment and trusting in political parties

		Individual resilience level	Political parties are saying the truth
Individual resilience level	Pearson Correlation	1	$-.585^{**}$
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	241	241
Political parties are saying the truth	Pearson Correlation	$-.585^{**}$	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	241	241

Note: **, correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: output generated by IBM SPSS Win v.23.

This could be explained by the fact that, in rural areas, access to various sources of information and, implicitly, to the associated threats (disinformation) is less likely

to occur. Moreover, in the context of the lack of information sources, the assessment related to the level of correctness is made following direct experience or reference to previous experience (analysis between the promises and what was delivered).

5.4 The Belief of Populist Promises are Achievable and Individual Resilience Level

The correlation coefficient between the individual resilience level and the perceived achievability of populist promises is -0.574^{**} (Sig.=,000, $p<0.01$) (Table 6). This indicates a moderately strong negative correlation between these two variables. This means that the observed correlations are unlikely to have occurred by chance. The negative correlation coefficient suggests that as individual resilience level increases, the perceived achievability of populist promises decreases, and vice versa. In other words, individuals with higher levels of resilience tend to perceive populist promises as less achievable, while those with lower resilience levels tend to perceive them as more achievable.

Table 6. Correlation between populist promises are achievable and individual resilience level

		Individual resilience level	Political parties are saying the truth
Individual resilience level	Pearson Correlation	1	-,574**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	241	241
Populist promises are achievable	Pearson Correlation	-,574**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	241	241

Note: **, correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: output generated by IBM SPSS Win v.23.

Higher levels of individual resilience can lead individuals to be more critical and discerning of political promises, including populist ones. Individuals with greater resilience might possess stronger coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills, enabling them to assess the feasibility of political promises more effectively.

This correlation implies that individuals with lower resilience levels may be more susceptible to believing in populist promises, potentially due to a greater tendency to seek simple solutions or a lower ability to critically evaluate political messages. Policymakers and political actors should consider the psychological characteristics of the electorate, such as resilience, when crafting and communicating policies and promises.

The negative correlation between individual resilience level and the perceived achievability of populist promises suggests that psychological factors play a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions of political messages. Individuals with higher resilience levels tend to be more skeptical of populist promises, while

those with lower resilience levels may be more inclined to believe in their achievability. Understanding these dynamics can help inform political communication strategies and policy-making processes to foster more informed and resilient societies.

6. Conclusions

There is a strong negative correlation between the belief in trusting in political parties and individual resilience level. Individuals with higher resilience levels tend to be more skeptical or critical of political parties saying the truth, potentially due to their ability to cope with challenges and setbacks more effectively.

The correlation between belief in political parties as saying the truth and the background environment indicates that individuals from certain backgrounds, particularly rural areas, are more likely to believe in political entities. This could be attributed to limited access to various sources of information and a reliance on direct experiences.

There is a moderately strong negative correlation between individual resilience level and the perceived achievability of populist promises. Individuals with higher resilience levels tend to perceive populist promises as less achievable, while those with lower resilience levels tend to perceive them as more achievable. This suggests that psychological factors, such as resilience, play a significant role in shaping perceptions of political messages.

Overall, these findings underscore the importance of considering psychological characteristics, such as resilience and political marketing procedures when analysing attitudes toward political messages and policy proposals. Policy makers and political actors should consider the complex interplay between individual traits and political perceptions to develop more effective communication strategies and political marketing policies.

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