

# Populism and constitutional compliance

## An empirical assessment

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**Abstract:** Populist governance conflicts with the concept of constitutionalism. As a political project, populism rejects constraints on "the will of the people", often including those constraints that are indispensable to any liberal-democratic constitution. This is the first empirical study on how populism affects constitutional compliance. Employing novel indicators to measure both concepts, we find that not only the presence of populism in government negatively affects compliance with written constitutions, but that already the rise of populist parties in parliament erodes constitutional and political norms. The negative effects of populist governance seem to be mainly driven by populist movements with an economically left of center ideology.