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*The content, effects, and mechanisms of blame attribution in populist communication*

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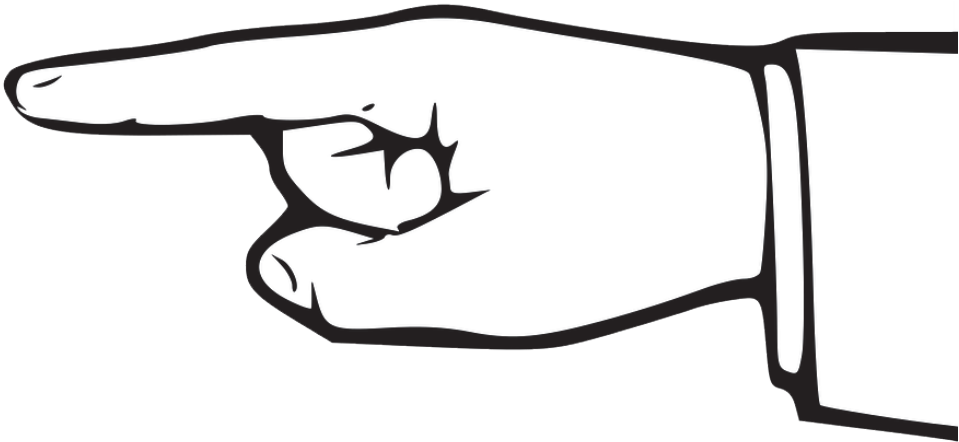
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## CHAPTER 2



# **To Whom are “the People” Opposed? Conceptualizing and Measuring Citizens’ Populist Attitudes as a Multidimensional Construct<sup>5</sup>**

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## ABSTRACT

Previous research has measured populist attitudes as a one-dimensional concept, tapping into the distinction between the ordinary people and the corrupt elites. With growing differentiation of populist viewpoints across the globe, this uni-dimensional approach may no longer reflect the multifaceted reality of the people's populism. Most importantly, albeit paramount in right-wing populist rhetoric, *exclusionist* perceptions of others threatening the monocultural nation of the people are typically not captured in one-dimensional conceptualizations. To assess more precisely how populist attitudes are structured, we collected original survey data ( $N = 809$ ) among a representative sample of Dutch citizens. Using Multidimensional Scaling and Confirmatory Factor Analysis, we propose a two-dimensional structure: anti-establishment and exclusionism. This study further demonstrates how salient these different populist attitudes are among *which* voters.

Populism is a widespread phenomenon across the globe. In Europe, many democracies have witnessed the rise of populist political parties. In Latin America, populism has been an influential political force for more than a century (Conniff, 1999). Populist movements can be placed on both the left and right end of the political spectrum. Syriza in Greece, for example, is regarded as a left-wing populist party that challenges the political and economic elites on the EU level. The freedom parties in The Netherlands and Austria, however, are described as right-wing populist movements that oppose the elites *and* exclude certain segments of the people from the ordinary people's native in-group. Based on populism's contextual differences, Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013) argue that populism in Europe may be defined as exclusionary, whereas Latin American populism is inclusionary.

During the last decades, populism has received extensive attention in the scientific literature. However, in trying to decipher the concept, extant research has predominantly focused on the populist ideology, style or discourse by analyzing the degree of populism of political parties, their manifestos, and media content (e.g., Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Rooduijn, 2014b). To better understand how these populist ideas communicated on the *supply-side* resonate with sentiments and attitudes held by the people on the *demand-side*, this chapter aims to theoretically and empirically explore the dimensional structure of populist attitudes. Doing so, we can explore the extent to which populist political parties actually tap into an attitudinal structure held by the electorate (Zaller, 1992). Moreover, in line with issue voting literature, the precise mapping of citizens' populist attitudes may explain *why* some people vote for *specific* exclusionist, anti-establishment or complete populist parties whereas others oppose them (e.g., Himmelweit, Humphreys, & Jaeger, 1985).

In lieu of a shared definition of populism, scholars at least have reached consensus that it is a relational concept. Populist rhetoric revolves around the construction of a homogenous in-group, commonly referred to as ‘the ordinary people’, opposed to a culprit out-group blamed for causing the crisis facing the people (Canovan, 1999; Mudde, 2004; Taggart, 2000). The moral and causal distinction between the blameless ‘good’ people and culprit ‘evil’ out-groups in times of a perceived crisis distinguishes populism from mainstream politics (e.g., Rooduijn, de Lange, & van der Brug, 2014).

Recently, scholars have started to measure populism as an individual-level attitude (e.g., Akkerman, Mudde, & Zaslove 2014; Hawkins, Riding, & Mudde, 2012). This attitude has been conceptualized as the perceived antagonism between the pure people and the corrupt elites. Although these studies provided convincing foundational evidence that citizens hold populist perceptions related to their populist party preferences, they do not explore one important component of populist rhetoric: people’s *exclusionist* perceptions of the heartland. Such exclusionist populist perceptions tap into the divide between the native people and threatening others, such as immigrants accused of unfairly profiting from the people’s welfare, or refugees posing a threat on the people’s cultural values or national security (e.g., Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). This exclusionist component is paramount in right-wing populist rhetoric (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). We therefore expect that, just like anti-establishment populism, exclusionist populism has an attitudinal base (Zaller, 1992). By incorporating citizens’ perceptions of a moral and causal divide between the pure people and culpable societal out-groups, this study aims to expand measures proposed by Akkerman et al. (2014) and Hawkins et al. (2012). Against this backdrop, the comprehensive research question this chapter aims to answer is: How are populist attitudes structured among citizens?

Extant literature on the supply-side of populist communication and party positions has distinguished different types of populism congruent with our extended conceptualization (e.g., Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). Overall, the different distinguished subtypes of populism boil down to two core components that stress the antagonistic relationship between the people and the other: either the *vertical* opposition of the people to culprit elites or the *horizontal* opposition of the good people’s in-group to evil societal out-groups (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007).

To investigate whether this core distinction holds on the demand-side of voters, this study draws on survey data collected among a representative sample of citizens ( $N = 809$ ). Using multidimensional scaling and confirmatory factor analysis, we found that populist attitudes are essentially structured by two dimensions: anti-

establishment and exclusionism. Additionally, we explored the common and differential foundations of populist attitudes on the distinguished dimensions, which sheds important light on the question whether citizens with populist attitudes on the two core dimensions are appealed differently to the host ideologies typically associated with populism on the left and right.

## **MAPPING POPULIST ATTITUDES: A THEORY-DRIVEN APPROACH**

### **Anti-establishment Populist Attitudes**

Rooted in the perception of a severe crisis situation, populist ideas attribute blame to out-groups for causing the ordinary people's problems (Hameleers, Bos, & de Vreese, 2016; Laclau, 1977). In line with this conceptualization, populism depicts the ordinary people as relatively powerless as they do not have the agency to solve the structural problems caused by the elites or societal out-groups. The elites, in contrast, are accused of having too much corrupting power.

Populism is thus essentially a relational concept, revolving around the moral and causal connection between the good and innocent 'us' versus the evil and culprit 'them' (e.g., Akkerman et al., 2014; Canovan, 1999; Mudde, 2007). Many scholars therefore argue that the popular sovereignty of the general will is a necessary but insufficient indicator of populism (e.g., Hawkins, 2009; Mudde, 2004). According to these scholars, the *opposition* between the blameless 'us' and the culprit 'them' defines populism (e.g., Mudde, 2007). This opposition can be shaped both horizontally (e.g., the other is *amongst* the people) and vertically (e.g., the other is *above* the people) (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007).

The first dimension conceptualized in this chapter, anti-establishment, taps into the vertical relationship by opposing the good ordinary citizens to the culprit elites (Akkerman et al., 2014; Jagers & Walgrave 2007). This first dimension is in line with extant conceptualizations of populist attitudes proposed and validated by Akkerman et al. (2014) and Hawkins et al. (2012). There are two types of elitist enemies that can be perceived as threatening the people from above: the political establishment (e.g., the government) and non-political elites (e.g., the economic elites).

The perceived antagonism between the people and the political establishment articulates distrust in mainstream politicians who are not acting on behalf of the people (Ruzza & Fella, 2011). This oppositional stance entails the perception of being silenced by the hegemony: the politicians reside in their ivory tower far-removed from the problems experienced by the ordinary people on the street (e.g., Mudde, 2004; Taggart, 2000). Instead of prioritizing their own interests, the corrupt

politicians should listen to the ordinary people.

Anti-establishment populist attitudes may also involve the people's opposition to non-political elites, most saliently the economic elites that are assumed to hinder the ordinary people's well-being (De Koster et al., 2013). In line with this, left-wing populism is argued to be economic inclusionist and, consequentially, opposed to profit-maximizing economic elites (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012). Left-wing populism therefore contends that social resources should be accessible to everyone in need. This access is, however, blocked by economic elites and large corporations that are not fairly redistributing the nation's wealth among the ordinary, hardworking people. To incorporate this salient left-wing stance in our conceptualization, we also measured the people's opposition to economic elites, such as large corporations. Taken together, anti-establishment populist attitudes tap into the people's opposition towards self-interested, corrupt elites who are not acting on behalf of, but rather against, the will of the ordinary people they *should* represent.

### **Exclusionist Populist Attitudes**

Beyond shifting blame from the 'good' people to 'evil' elites, populist ideas may also point the finger at societal out-groups accused of causing the ordinary people's crisis on a cultural-symbolic or economic level (de Koster et al., 2013; Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016). Right-wing populist actors, for example, frequently accuse immigrants of profiting from the native in-group's resources (e.g., Oesch, 2008). Responding to this salient right-wing populist component, the second dimension of populist attitudes distinguished in this chapter concerns *exclusionism*. In contrast to anti-establishment populism, exclusionist populism constructs the other as being *amongst* the people (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). This horizontal 'people versus societal out-groups' divide can be articulated in different ways. Following extant literature on right-wing populist parties around the globe, these enemies are mainly constructed as immigrants, ethnic minorities or profiteers from the people's welfare (e.g., Taggart, 2004).

In line with this, the first component of exclusionism emphasizes the pure people's opposition to others on a cultural and symbolic level (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008). Others are *horizontally* constructed as undesired segments of the population, such as immigrants or people whose cultural or religious orientations differ from the in-group (e.g., Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). The exclusionist dimension of populist attitudes thus revolves around the in-group threat posed by people who do not belong to the in-group of the populist heartland, such as refugees or immigrants (Taggart, 2000).

The second type of a populist horizontal out-group excluded from the people is rooted in an economic threat, for example posed by profiteers of the in-group's

resources. This conceptualization of the populist other ties in with *welfare state populism*, which may be most salient in European contexts (De Koster et al., 2013; Oesch, 2008). Welfare state populism does not oppose the principle of redistributing resources to people in need, but argues that resources are redistributed to people who do not *deserve* help from the heartland. Immigrants or people who receive unemployment benefits do not have the same rights as the ordinary hard-working citizens who have contributed to the wealth of the nation (Oesch, 2008; Derks, 2004; Jaeger, 2006). This perception on redistribution is thus inherently *populist* and *exclusionist*: the ordinary, native people deserve help whereas others should not be allowed to profit from the hardworking ordinary people's resources. Not in the last place *because* these others caused the ordinary people's crisis by depriving them from their wealth.

Although the exclusionist dimension is related to nativism, right-wing authoritarianism, and ethnocentrism (e.g., Bizumic et al., 2009; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010), it differs from such conceptualizations by its construction of a truly Manichean outlook on society: the in-group is perceived of as 'good' and innocent while different 'evil' societal out-groups are blamed for the in-group's problems (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008). We argue that it is *exactly* this causal and moral relationship between the people and the other that makes this dimension essentially populist, rather than a host ideology supplementing the thin core of anti-establishment populism.

The conceptualization of populist attitudes proposed in this chapter should allow for the measurement of populist attitudes as a *matter of degree*. Hence, citizens may interpret societal issues from a more or less populist frame of reference on one or both of the hypothesized dimensions. Some citizens may, for example, have strong populist attitudes on the anti-establishment dimension *only*. In that case, their views largely resonate with the viewpoints of left-wing populist parties (March, 2007). Others may have strong populist attitudes on *both* dimensions, which is more closely related to the 'complete populism' of many right-wing populist parties in Europe that articulate the people's opposition to *both* immigrants and elites, such as the French Front National or the Dutch Freedom Party (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). Hence, extending extant conceptualizations focusing on anti-elitism, our two-dimensional model of populist attitudes should be better able to map the attitudinal structure underlying populist ideas, while accounting for contextual differences in inclusionary and exclusionary populism throughout the globe (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013).

### Relative Deprivation at the Core of Populist Attitudes

To more precisely understand the appeal of populism on the demand-side of voters, it is crucial to understand *which* citizens are most likely to be populist on *what* dimensions. In line with recent empirical research, it may be argued that populist attitudes are rooted in perceptions of relative deprivation (e.g., Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016). Relative deprivation can be defined as a perceived unfair distribution of society's collective goods: the ordinary hardworking citizens 'like us' never get what they deserve from society, whereas 'others' always gain profit without giving anything in return (e.g., Hogg et al., 2010).

Populist attitudes and relative deprivation can theoretically be connected in the light of the 'losers of modernization thesis' (e.g., Elchardus & Spruyt 2016; Kriesi et al., 2006; Kriesi, 2014). This thesis postulates that people who experience to have lost something that has been taken away by profiting others, are appealed most to populist ideas. The perception of a severe crisis forms the foundation for citizens' experience of relative deprivation: the deprived ordinary people feel that their in-group is victimized more by the crisis than the others that caused the crisis in the first place. In the midst of societal crises such as the threat of economic decline, these vulnerable, deprived people should be appealed most to populist ideas that voice *their* grievances of being worse off (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016).

As the others accused of depriving the ordinary people can be constructed both vertically (i.e. the elites take tax money away from our elderly people) and horizontally (i.e. immigrants take our jobs), we expect that perceived relative deprivation provides the common core for *both* dimensions of populist attitudes. We therefore hypothesize: *Citizens with higher anti-establishment and exclusionist populist attitudes have stronger perceptions of relative deprivation* (H1).

### The Appeal of Host Ideologies among Citizens with Populist Attitudes

Populism has commonly been defined as a 'thin' ideology, which can be supplemented by a plethora of host ideologies (Mudde, 2004; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). In line with this, the core idea of a moral and causal divide between the 'good' people and the 'culprit' other can be enriched by issue positions that give substance to the divide between 'us' and 'them'. But what 'host ideologies' may appeal most to citizens with anti-establishment and exclusionist populist attitudes?

For inclusionary populism, such as in Latin America, all ordinary people can be perceived of as being united against the common enemy from above (March, 2007; Rooduijn et al., 2014). That is, the elites who do not care for or represent the needs of the ordinary people (e.g., Canovan, 1999). Although left-wing stances postulate that collective resources *should* be accessible to everyone who needs them, populist ideas emphasize that the self-interested elites are not redistributing society's collective



resources in a fair manner (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012). Against this backdrop, economic inclusionism provides a salient host ideology that may supplement the ideational core of populism. But which part of the populist electorate should be attracted to it?

Citizens with anti-establishment populist attitudes may be appealed to both left-wing and right-wing host ideologies. Citizens with exclusionist populist attitudes, however, are by definition opposed to left-wing issue positions, as they perceive that certain segments should be excluded from the ordinary people's heartland (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). Therefore, the host ideology of economic inclusionism/equality should appeal more to citizens with anti-establishment populist attitudes than those with exclusionist populist attitudes.

People with exclusionist populist attitudes are opposed to people that live amongst them in society. For these people, the perceived in-group threat comes from *within* the nation. Economically, this threat is captured in perceived relative deprivation. Immigrants and refugees are, for example, accused of taking more than they deserve. Hence, exclusionist populism can be connected to a chauvinist perception on the redistribution of collective resources. On a cultural level, however, the out-group threat stems from a different root: the perception that the out-group has a substantially different, backwards, undesirable, or even dangerous cultural background (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008). The host ideology connected to constructing the ordinary people's opposition to societal out-groups can thus be understood as nativism: the people perceive their in-group's culture as superior and consequentially feel empowered to demand assimilation of immigrants moving to 'their' nativist heartland. Hence, citizens with exclusionist populist attitudes may not only want to remove societal out-groups, they may also envision themselves as the managers of their heartland, entitled with the power to tolerate some well-adjusted 'others' above those that are unwilling or unable to integrate.

To explore the extent to which the issue positions of citizens with anti-establishment and exclusionist populist attitudes resonate with the host ideologies typically associated with populist ideas, we pose the following research question: To what extent are people with anti-establishment and exclusionist populist attitudes appealed to different issue positions that reflect the host ideologies related to populism on the left and the right? (RQ1)

### **Data and Measures**

To empirically assess whether populist attitudes can be structured along the two theoretically proposed dimensions, we draw on survey data that was collected in The Netherlands in July 2015. Institutional Review Board approval was confirmed on June 23, 2015. TNS NIPO collected the data by means of a web-based survey.

To ensure that participants are willing and able to adequately respond to survey items without being routinized, panel members of this agency are not allowed to participate in more than three surveys a month. From a large online panel of 124,000 citizens representative of the Dutch voting population, 1,425 citizens were invited to participate in the survey. These eligible participants over 18 years were randomly selected and received an invitation via e-mail or telephone. 809 participants completed the survey, which results in a response and cooperation rate of 57 percent (AAPOR RR1 and COOP1). Upon completion, participants were rewarded with credits from the research organization, which they could use to buy vouchers. The sample was by and large representative of the population in terms of age, gender, region, family size, social class, and voting behavior (see Appendix 2.A for a comparison of the sample with census data). The mean age of participants was 51.07 years ( $SD = 17.25$ ), 48.5% was female and 23.9% was lower educated.

To measure the two dimensions of populist attitudes, we used a battery of 20 survey items. These items are a mix of existing and newly developed statements. For the anti-establishment dimension, we derived items from previous research on populist attitudes (Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins et al., 2012; Rooduijn, 2014a). Additionally, we included items measuring the people's opposition to economic elites (Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012). The measures of exclusionist populism were newly developed for the purpose of this study. These items were informed by theory on right-wing exclusionist populism, nativism and anti-immigration attitudes (e.g., Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). However, by explicitly referring to the Manichean outlook constructing the ordinary, native people as innocent and the horizontally opposed other as culprit, these items were adjusted to reflect populist attitudes (e.g., Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008). Together, our items aimed to reflect the contextual variety of populism by incorporating both inclusionary and exclusionary populist positions. All items were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). Higher scores on the items indicate stronger populist perceptions. The order of all items was randomized to exclude the possibility of order effects. All items retained in the analysis are included at their exact wording in the results section (see Appendix 2.B for all measured items).

Based on three items, we constructed a 7-point scale of perceived relative deprivation (Eigenvalue = 2.23; 77 percent explained variance; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .85$ ; see Appendix 2.B for item wordings). Left-wing economic inclusionism was measured with the following item: *Some people believe that income differences in our country should increase. Others believe they should decrease. Off course, people also have opinions anywhere between these extremes. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 1(income differences should increase) to 7(income differences should decrease)?*

Right-wing nativism was measured with the following item: *In the Netherlands, some people believe that immigrants can live here while keeping their own culture. Others believe they should fully adjust to our cultural values and beliefs. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 1 (immigrants can keep their own culture) to 7 (immigrants have to fully adjust to our culture)?*

We included measures of age, gender, education, left-right self-placement, occupation, voting behavior, political knowledge, and EU integration as controls (see Appendix 2.B for the exact wording of these items).

**Analysis** Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) was used to assess whether the data supported the hypothesized number of dimensions. Next, we estimated the hypothesized factor structure with Confirmatory Factor Analysis in Structural Equation Modeling. We used maximum likelihood estimation to analyze the models. Standardized factor loadings higher than .60 were regarded as satisfactory for the fit of indicators (e.g., Kline, 2011). OLS-regression models were estimated to explore the foundations of populist attitudes on both dimensions.

## RESULTS

### Estimating the Two-dimensional Structure of Populist Attitudes

First, as robustness check, we tested an alternative five-dimensional structure of populist attitudes, which consisted of all separate components highlighted in extant populist literature: people centrality, anti-political elites, anti-economic elites, exclusionism, and welfare state chauvinism. This model did not fit the data well:  $\chi^2(160) = 964.82$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 6.03$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; RMSEA = 0.08, 90% CI [0.07, 0.08]; CFI = 0.86. The problematic discriminant and convergent validity of this model tentatively confirmed our prediction that populist attitudes are essentially structured by the *vertical* distinction between the people and the elites and the *horizontal* opposition between the people and societal out-groups.

In the next step, the multidimensional scaling procedure supported this hypothesized two-dimensional structure of populist attitudes. As indicated by the scree-plot of stress values in Figure 2.1, a two-dimensional solution explains the data substantially better than a one-dimensional one. The fit improved less substantially moving from two to three dimensions. The explained variance of the two-dimensional model is excellent ( $R^2 = 0.94$ ). Based on this outcome, we further estimated the substance of the dimensional structure of populist attitudes with Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

As second robustness check, we assessed whether exclusionist populist attitudes were empirically distinct from exclusionist-nativist perceptions. To do so, we compared the hypothesized model with an alternative factor structure that included

nativist perceptions as indicators of the exclusionist dimension, which fitted significantly and substantially worse ( $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 499.99, p < 0.001$ ). In line with our expectations, we found that the newly developed measure of exclusionist populist attitudes tapped into a different construct than related nativist perceptions, which may indeed be interpreted as a host ideology separate from the ideational core of populism.

The two-dimensional structure demonstrated good model fit:  $\chi^2(23) = 34.09$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.48, p = 0.06$ ; RMSEA = 0.024, 90% CI [0.00, 0.04]; CFI = 0.99. Two minor theoretically driven specifications were made to the model. As shown in Figure 2.2, two error correlations were added to the exclusionist dimension. First, the error terms of the items *Immigrants are threatening the purity of our culture* and *Immigrants are responsible for a lot of our nation's problems* were correlated, which was based on the theoretical consideration that immigrants are framed as the cause of the people's problems in both items. Second, we added a correlation between the error terms of the items *Our borders should be closed for immigrants* and *Social benefits such as unemployment benefits and health insurance benefits are given to people who don't really deserve it*. This error correlation is theoretically justifiable as both items tap into people's perceptions of limited moral rights reserved for others: immigrants and profiteers do not deserve to be part of the heartland and should therefore not be tolerated.

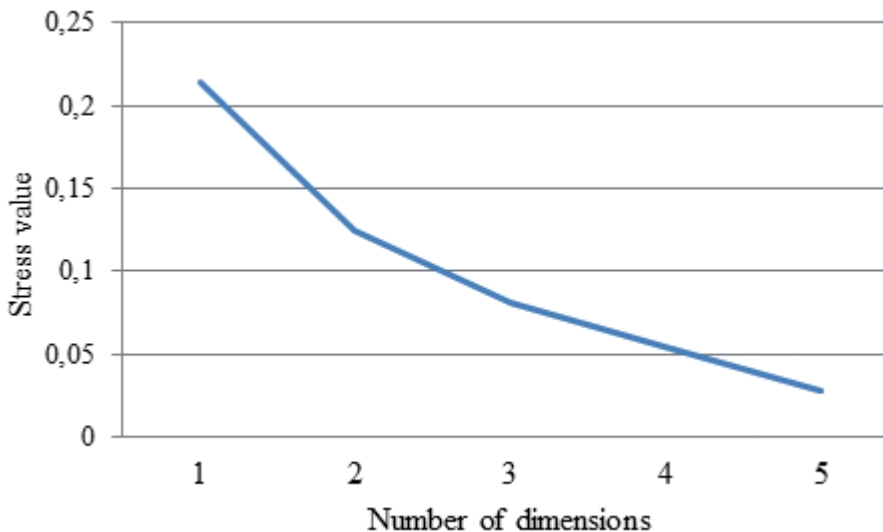


Figure 2.1 Scree plot of decreasing stress values resulting from the MDS-analysis.

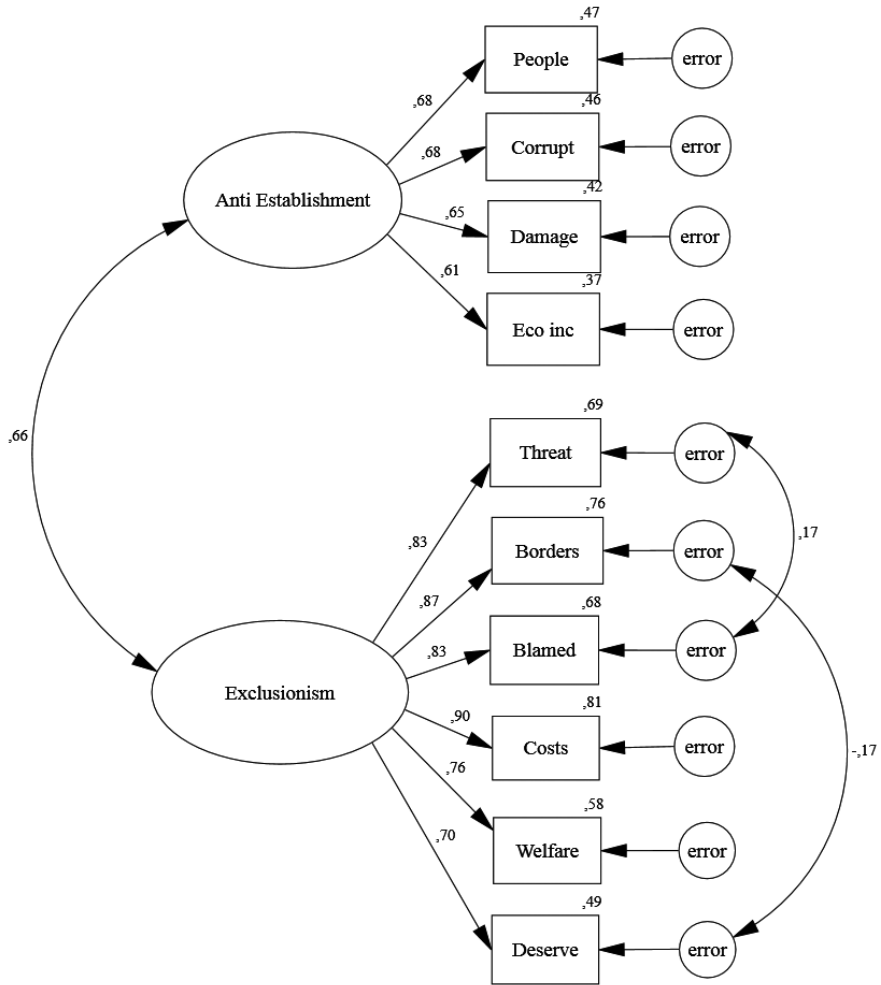
The two-dimensional structure of populist attitudes consists of ten items. The first dimension, anti-establishment, consists of the following four items: *The people instead of politicians should make our most important policy decisions* ( $\lambda = .68$ ); *Politicians in the government are corrupt* ( $\lambda = .68$ ); *Politicians make decisions that harm the interests of the ordinary people* ( $\lambda = .65$ ); *The ordinary people should have more influence in political decision making than corporations that only want to make profits* ( $\lambda = .61$ ). The second dimension, exclusionism, consists of the following six items: *Immigrants are threatening the purity of our culture* ( $\lambda = .83$ ); *Our Dutch borders should be closed for immigrants* ( $\lambda = .87$ ); *Immigrants are responsible for most of our nation's problems* ( $\lambda = .83$ ); *Immigrants cost our country a lot of money that should be invested in our own people* ( $\lambda = .90$ ); *Social benefits, such as unemployment benefits and health insurance benefits, are given to people who don't really deserve it* ( $\lambda = .70$ ); *People coming from outside the Netherlands should not receive any social benefits* ( $\lambda = .76$ ).

As indicated by the standardized regression coefficients reported above, the convergent validity of the two-dimensional model is satisfactory. The correlation between both dimensions was moderately strong ( $r = .66$ ). Comparing the two-dimensional model with a unidimensional solution in which both factors were merged, model fit decreased substantially and significantly:  $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 209.97$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , which indicates a good discriminant validity. Hence, as predicted, populist attitudes cannot be regarded as a unidimensional construct. In line with the conceptualization of complete populism on the supply-side, both dimensions tap into substantially different, but related components of the populist discourse on the demand-side of voters (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007).

### The Degree of Populism among the Electorate

Now we have identified the two dimensions structuring populist attitudes, the next step is to assess the degree of populism among the electorate. First, we constructed 7-point scales for both dimensions: *vertical anti-establishment populism* (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .71$ ,  $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ) and *horizontal exclusionist populism* (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ,  $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 1.47$ ). As indicated by the mean scores, citizens' average populist perceptions were higher than the midpoint of the scale for both dimensions. This deviation from the midpoint was strongest for the anti-establishment dimension.

In Table 2.1, we compared populist party voters with voters for established parties in the government and opposition on their mean scores on both dimensions. As shown in this table, voters for the right-wing complete populist party PVV scored significantly and substantially higher on *both* dimensions of populist attitudes than voters for established parties or the left-wing party SP. Voters for the SP scored significantly higher on the anti-establishment dimension than voters for parties in



**Figure 2.2** Graphical depiction of the two-dimensional structure underlying populist attitudes. Model fit:  $\chi^2(23) = 34.09$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.48$ ,  $p = 0.06$ ; RMSEA = 0.024, 90% CI [0.00, 0.04]; CFI = 0.99. Reported estimates are standardized regression coefficients, correlations and squared multiple correlations. Two theoretically justified error correlations were added within the exclusionist factor.

government. Non-voters scored just as high on the anti-establishment dimension as voters for the left-wing party SP. Non-voters, however, were significantly more exclusionist than voters for the establishment. Voters for the two parties in government were significantly *less* populist on the anti-establishment dimension than voters for *both* populist parties. But how can people with populist attitudes be described *beyond* their specific voting behavior?

### **The Roots of Perceived Relative Deprivation**

Table 2.2 reports the results of the OLS-regression analyses for each dimension separately. In support of hypothesis 1, the more people experienced feelings of relative deprivation, the stronger their populist attitudes on both the anti-establishment ( $b = .31, SE = .03, p < .001$ ) and exclusionist dimension ( $b = .40, SE = .03, p < .001$ ). Populist attitudes thus have a common core: irrespective of the out-group opposed to the in-group of the ordinary people, perceived relative deprivation lies at the heart of populist sentiments on both dimensions (see Table 2.2).

### **Host Ideologies Resonating with Populist Attitudes**

In the next step, we explored to what extent citizens with populist attitudes on the anti-establishment and exclusionist dimension can be distinguished based on their positions regarding the host ideologies of economic inclusionism and nativism. First, as can be seen in Table 2.2, the results indicate that participants with stronger anti-establishment attitudes did not have significantly stronger perceptions of economic inclusionism ( $b = -.01, SE = .03, p = n. s.$ ). Citizens with stronger exclusionist populist attitudes, however, *opposed* economic inclusionism ( $b = -.08, SE = .02, p < 0.001$ ). This means that the host ideology of economic inclusionism was not salient for participants with higher anti-establishment populist attitudes, whereas it was *opposed* among participants with exclusionist populist attitudes.

It can be expected that nativism as a host ideology only fits the exclusionist dimension of populist attitudes. As can be seen in Table 2.2, participants with stronger exclusionist populist attitudes indeed articulated support for the position that that immigrants should fully adjust to the nativist culture of their in-group. This host ideology was not salient among participants with anti-establishment populist attitudes.

Taken together, these results point to the construct validity of our conceptualized two-dimensional model: exclusionist populist attitudes are related to, but empirically distinct from, right-wing nativism. People with exclusionist populist attitudes opposed economic inclusionism, whereas this issue was not salient among citizens with anti-establishment populist attitudes. In line with extant research, the common foundation that provides the fertile soil for populist attitudes to root is perceived relative deprivation.

**Table 2.1** Comparing mean scores on both dimensions of populist attitudes for different vote choices

Vote choice	PVV (right-populist)	SP (left-populist)	Government	Opposition	Non-Voting	Total
<i>Dimension</i>						
Anti-establishment	4.97 <sub>a</sub> (1.04)	4.34 <sub>b</sub> (1.10)	3.88 <sub>c</sub> (1.06)	3.49 <sub>d</sub> (0.99)	4.25 <sub>b</sub> (1.01)	4.03 (1.11)
Exclusionism	5.39 <sub>a</sub> (0.97)	3.24 <sub>b</sub> (1.49)	3.61 <sub>c</sub> (1.39)	3.00 <sub>b</sub> (1.39)	3.99 <sub>d</sub> (1.34)	3.70 (1.47)
<i>N</i>	59	65	292	158	192	809

*Note.* Standard deviations are reported in parentheses below means. The included governmental parties are: VVD and PvdA. The included opposition parties are: CDA, D66, GroenLinks, SGP, CU and PvdD. Means with differing subscripts within rows differ significantly at the  $p < .05$  level based on independent samples t-tests. Both dimensions were measured on 7-point scales.

**Table 2.2** Describing populist citizens

Variable	Anti-establishment		Exclusionist	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Intercept	2.21***	0.29	1.33***	0.26
Gender (female)	0.01	0.07	-0.15*	0.06
Age	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Education (higher)	-0.03	0.10	-0.14	0.09
Working Class	0.01	0.10	-0.12	0.08
Relative deprivation	0.31***	0.03	0.40***	0.03
Voting establishment 2012	0.03	0.10	0.09	0.09
Voting populist party 2012	0.52***	0.15	0.24	0.14
Non-voting in 2012	0.26*	0.11	0.11	0.10
Political knowledge	-0.04	0.04	-0.08*	0.03
Left self-placement	0.06	0.11	-0.22*	0.01
Right self-placement	-0.11	0.09	0.13	0.08
Left-inclusionist	-0.01	0.03	-0.08***	0.02
Right-nativist	0.01	0.03	0.20***	0.03
Anti EU-integration	0.06*	0.02	0.07**	0.02
PVV Preference	0.03*	0.01	0.11***	0.01
SP Preference	0.03*	0.01	-0.01	0.01
Adjusted $R^2$	0.35		0.66	
<i>F</i>	21.34***		72.84***	
<i>N</i>	809		809	

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$ .



## DISCUSSION

Populism is a multifaceted concept. It can be both inclusionary and exclusionary, and it can be attached to left-wing and right-wing stances (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). Populism's ideational core revolves around the moral and causal divide between the people and both horizontally and vertically constructed others that are blamed for the ordinary people's problems (e.g., Laclau, 1977; Taggart, 2000). Although different types of populism incorporating this variety of the people's enemy have been distinguished on the supply-side of populist parties or communication, no such differentiation exists for populist attitudes (e.g., Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). Therefore, we argued that a one-dimensional approach to populist attitudes is insufficient. To better understand to what extent populist parties on the left and right tap into an attitudinal structure held by citizens, this chapter has conceptually and empirically explored the multi-dimensional structure of voters' populist attitudes.

Grounded in theory on the supply-side of populism, and extending traditional measures of populist attitudes (e.g., Akkerman et al., 2014), we proposed a two-dimensional structure of populist attitudes, consisting of anti-establishment and exclusionism. This model was tested empirically and demonstrated a good fit with the data. Using the populist attitudes scales, we measured populist attitudes as a matter of degree, and the findings of our study allowed us to assess *how* populist the people actually are on the different dimensions.

This study demonstrates that citizens' populist perceptions resonate with their *particular* populist party preference. Although some scholars disagree on whether the Socialist Party (SP) can be categorized as a populist party (e.g., March, 2007; Rooduijn et al., 2014), we found evidence that citizens who voted for this party are significantly more populist on the anti-establishment dimension than people who voted for parties in the government or opposition. People who opposed the elites *and* immigrants and profiteers from the welfare state voted for the PVV, a right-wing "complete" populist party. Voters for populist parties are thus not simply protest voters, as some assume. Rather, they vote for populist parties because they agree with the *specific* statements they communicate (e.g., Van der Brug et al., 2000). The populism expressed by parties on both the left- and right-wing of the supply-side was thus congruent with the populism of the people on the demand-side.

Using the two-dimensional conceptualization, we further investigated the common core underlying populist attitudes, as well as the host ideologies that appealed to citizens with populist attitudes. After controlling for the 'usual suspects' such as age, gender, education, political knowledge, and occupation, we found that *both* dimensions were strongly rooted in feelings of relative deprivation. This finding ties in with previous literature on populism arguing that people's perceptions of getting

less than they deserve provides a fertile breeding ground for populist viewpoints (e.g., Elchardus & Spruyt, 2012). This finding also ties in and extends the ‘losers of modernization’ hypothesis, which postulates that the experience of loss relative to others is salient amongst people supporting populism (e.g., Kriesi et al., 2006).

Next to this common core, we found that people with exclusionist populist attitudes opposed economic inclusionism, whereas they had stronger nativist sentiments. People with exclusionist populist attitudes can thus be distinguished from those with anti-establishment populist attitudes: their nativist perceptions of a pure, monocultural heartland are not shared by citizens with anti-establishment populist attitudes. This connects to the differentiation of inclusionist and exclusionist populism identified by Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2013).

People with stronger anti-establishment populist attitudes were not appealed to economic inclusionism. This can be explained in the light of populism’s ‘thin’ definition: the ordinary people’s opposition to the elites forms the common core of populist sentiments (e.g., Mudde, 2004). Right-wing, complete populism thus contains *both* anti-establishment and exclusionist sentiments (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). Therefore, citizens with populist attitudes on the anti-establishment dimensions can be appealed to host ideologies on both the left and right, whereas those with exclusionist populist sentiments are essentially not appealed to left-wing ideologies.

Advancing research on populist attitudes, we thus found evidence for the existence of a populist attitude distinct from exclusionism, which is in line with the conceptualization proposed by Akkerman et al. (2014). However, we also identified an exclusionist populist attitude distinct from the anti-establishment dimension. We can therefore no longer assume that populist attitudes revolve around the opposition between the blameless people and culprit elites. To precisely relate the people’s populism to the plethora of populist political parties on the left and right, as well as citizens’ political viewpoints, *both* dimensions are needed.

Our study has some limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, we deduced our conceptualization of populist attitudes mostly from theory on the supply-side of populism. It could well be the case that this approach overlooks dimensions that only exist among populist citizens. However, we linked our theoretical exploration with the rich literature on populism, and we assured that the variety captured in the core definitions of the concept was reflected in our attitudinal approach. Future research may build further on this by inductively exploring the populism of the people using qualitative methods, such as individual interviews or focus groups.

Second, we measured populist attitudes in one single European country, a context that mostly hosts exclusionary, right-wing populism. For this reason, it can be

argued that populist attitudes are structured differently in countries with inclusionary populism, most saliently in Latin America. However, we defined populism by its lowest common denominator, which allows for contextual differences in expressing the ‘people versus an out-group divide’. In other words, citizens in Latin America may score higher on the anti-establishment dimension and lower on the exclusionist dimension whereas this may be the other way around for European citizens. As our two-dimensional model measures populist attitudes as a matter of degree on these two core dimensions, future comparative research may shed more light on how contextual differences are reflected in citizens’ positions on the dimensions of populist attitudes, for example by proposing a typology of exclusionary and inclusionary populisms on the demand-side of voters.

Because we only used ten of the 20 measured items in our final model, another limitation concerns the sub-optimal fit of some measures used in this study. We can propose two explanations for the bad fit of some items measured in this study. First, some items not concretely defined the populist ‘us versus them’ master frame. As populism revolves around the moral distinction between some favored in-group and some specific others, the populist distinction should be stated concretely in each item measuring populist attitudes. Second, some items were reverse-coded, which may have harmed the interpretability of these items as indicators of populism (see Appendix 2.B for a more detailed evaluation).

All in all, this study has demonstrated that a multidimensional structuring of populist attitudes allows for both theoretical and empirical refinement of the concept. Based on this study’s findings, we can no longer assume that ‘the’ populist citizen can be defined by his or her ‘people versus elites’ perceptions. Rather, the variety on the supply-side of populism is congruent with the different manifestations of the people’s populism. Future research can build further on this by assessing the discrepancy or overlap between populism of the sender-side and receiver-side.

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