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

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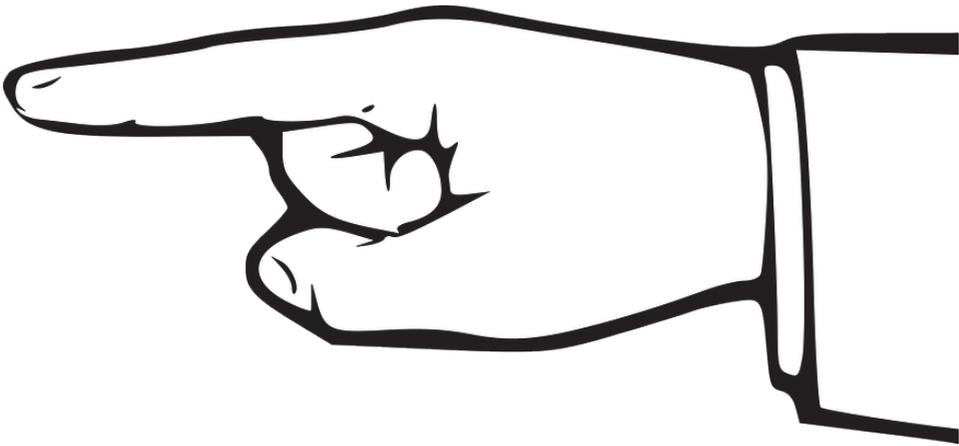
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Conclusion

A growing body of literature argues that populism is on the rise (e.g., Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Mudde, 2004). In the spirit of this ‘populist zeitgeist’ rationale, recent political and societal developments are increasingly interpreted as populist uprisings. To provide two examples, albeit not directly comparable, the election of Trump in the U.S. and the Brexit vote in the U.K. have both been interpreted as ‘victories for the populists’ (e.g., Kim, 2016). These events consequentially sparked a heated debate in public and media discourse.

In the midst of the success of these allegedly populist movements, this dissertation aimed to dissect the core components of the populist message to better understand *why* and *how* populist ideas are so persuasive, and in particular, how the media may have contributed to the spread of populist ideas among society. To do so, this dissertation has argued that the ideational core of populist messages – attributing blame for the ordinary people’s problems to the “corrupt” elites or “evil” societal out-groups – can be used by various actors inside and outside of the political realm, for example by the media and citizens.

The media are said to play a pivotal role in the pervasiveness and persuasiveness of populist ideas (e.g., Krämer, 2014; Mazzoleni, 2008). At the same time, a growing body of literature has argued that citizens can also hold populist perceptions *themselves* (e.g., Akkerman et al., 2014; Rooduijn 2014a). As an important next step in populism research, this dissertation argues that the populist expressions of the media and citizens do not exist in vacuums, as they are likely to be intertwined and causally related. To more precisely investigate *how* populist ideas communicated by the media affect the populist interpretations of citizens, this dissertation aimed to integrate the supply-side and demand-side of populist communication by raising the following three-fold research question: (1) How are populist blame attributions expressed in the media and (2) interpreted by citizens, and (3) how can populist blame attributions by the media affect citizens’ political perceptions?

Key findings

The findings of this dissertation can be summarized in four main conclusions. First, focusing on the *supply-side* of the media, this dissertation revealed that explicit populist blame attributions are relatively rare in media coverage. When populist blame attributions are used to cover news events, they are mostly present in conjunction with an interpretative journalistic style (Chapter 1). These populist blame attributions are more likely to be used by interpreting journalists of tabloid newspapers than journalists of broadsheet newspapers (Mazzoleni, 2008).

Second, on the *demand-side* of public opinion, this dissertation has extended previous research that conceptualized and measured populist attitudes as a one-dimensional construct (e.g., Akkerman et al., 2014). Doing so, I found that

citizens' populist attitudes are essentially structured by two core dimensions: anti-establishment and exclusionism (Chapter 2). These dimensions are strongly rooted in feelings of relative deprivation. In other words, citizens who perceive that they are worse off than other groups in society, are appealed most to populist ideas on *both* dimensions (Chapter 2 and 3).

Third, this dissertation has provided comprehensive insights into the effects of populist messages. The results presented in Chapter 4 through 6 demonstrate that when blame is attributed to the elites in government or the European Union, citizens are more likely to perceive these elites as culpable. In addition, people exposed to populist blame attributions have stronger populist attitudes and are more likely to vote for populist parties than people who are not exposed to such messages. The persuasiveness of populist blame attributions depends on the emotional framing of the message. In line with the appraisal theory of emotions, fear resulted in a stronger reliance on new information than anger (e.g., Brader, 2005; Kim & Cameron, 2011). This means that citizens are most likely to accept populist blame frames when fear is used as an emotional style (see Chapter 4).

Finally, it can be concluded that populist communication is not persuasive for all citizens. In Chapter 4, I found that citizens who identified with the actors attributed blame did not accept populist messages. In addition, I found that populist messages were only selected by a specific audience of relatively deprived citizens (Chapter 6). Perceptions of being worse off than others in society also play a key role in the *persuasiveness* of populist messages. In line with motivated reasoning, the populist attitudes of relatively deprived citizens are affected most by populist messages (Lodge & Taber, 2013; Lord, Ross & Leeper, 1979). Populist communication thus only positively affects the populist attitudes of citizens for whom the message is congruent with their priors.

Contributions to Main Discussions on the Supply-side and Demand-side

To explain the rise of populism throughout the globe, extant literature has focused on demand-side factors (e.g., Elchardus & Spruyt, 2016) or supply-side factors (e.g., Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Stanley, 2008; Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011). This dissertation provides important contributions to various debates on *both* the supply-side *and* demand-side of populist communication. At the intersection of these approaches, the findings provide important insights into the effects of and underlying mechanisms by which populist communication affects receivers' political attitudes.

Populist communication on the supply-side. This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the media's role in populist discourse on two different levels: (1) the *content* of populist blame attributions and (2) the *effects* of populist messages.

Populist media content. The concept of media populism has mainly been approached

from a theoretical perspective (Krämer, 2014; Mazzoleni, 2008). To date, the scarce empirical research on populism *by* the media did not find convincing evidence for a populist bias in journalistic media (Akkerman, 2011; Bos & Brants, 2004, Rooduijn et al., 2014). Extending this research, I found that the presence of media populism is highly contingent upon contextual factors. Populism *by* the media can thus be regarded as a journalistic niche, rather than a pervasive frame that has permeated traditional media coverage. Against this backdrop, it is no wonder that Akkerman (2011) was unable to point to a clear populist bias in the popular press in Britain and the Netherlands. Only when an interpretative journalistic style is used, the media themselves, in some cases, turn populist. In contrast to the strong theoretical claims on the omnipresence of populism in media discourse, the presence of media populism thus relies heavily on the reporting styles of journalists.

The central role played by journalistic agency provides relevant insights for the broader literature on interpretative journalism (e.g., Esser & Umbricht, 2014; Salgado & Strömbäck, 2011). Journalists who interpret societal issues beyond objective hard facts are most likely to frame issues in populist terms. This can be interpreted as evidence for a parallelism between interpretative journalism and media populism, which corroborates literature that links interpretative journalism to people centrality, conflict, and negativity in media reporting (Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2008). Interpretative journalism is thus conceptually and empirically connected to media populism. But in which outlets can we find these populist expressions?

Populist blame attributions are more likely to be used by journalists of tabloid newspapers than journalists of broadsheet newspapers. This supports the theoretical notion that media populism is primarily a feature of tabloid outlets (e.g., Krämer, 2014; Mazzoleni, 2008). The link between tabloid media and populism can be interpreted in the light of a resonance between populist ideas and media logic (Koopmans & Muis, 2009). In line with this reasoning, broadsheet newspapers are assumed to maintain a stronger relationship with the establishment whereas tabloid newspapers depend more heavily on the mass audience (e.g., Art, 2006; Klein, 1998; Mazzoleni et al., 2003). Therefore, tabloid media are assumed to devote more attention to the worldviews of ordinary citizens and populist politicians than broadsheet newspapers.

It can be concluded that tabloid media play a dual role in disseminating populist ideas. First, they may provide a central stage for populist actors to vent their rhetoric, for example because populist communication resonates with media logic (e.g., Esser et al., 2017; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Vossen, 2010). Second, in some cases, journalists interpret societal issues and news events in populist ways independently of populist actors outside of the media discourse, engaging in populism *by* the media (Bos & Brants, 2014).

Extending previous literature on populist communication, this dissertation further

proposes a three-fold typology of media populism. First, *people centrality media populism* can be distinguished. This conceptualization is in line with the most minimal definitions of populism that highlight the centrality of the ordinary people's will and representation in political decision-making (e.g., Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). The two other types incorporate populism's relational component stressing the divide between "us" and "them". Responding to the prevalent definitions of populism as a thin-cored ideology, *anti-elites media populism* revolves around the media's emphasis on a distinction between the good people and the corrupt elites (e.g., Mudde, 2004; Rooduijn, 2014a). Finally, attaching an exclusionist dimension to populism's relational core, *monocultural media populism* entails the journalistic construction of a divide between the "good" native people and "evil" societal out-groups (e.g., Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). But what are the effects of messages that incorporate such populist ideas when framing societal issues?

The media effects of populist messages. I found that the populist attitudes of citizens are affected by populist messages, which confirms the theoretical expectations postulated by Krämer (2014). This key finding links up to extant research that argues that populist communication is highly persuasive (e.g., Hawkins, 2010; Mudde, 2004; Rooduijn, 2014b). The mechanism by which populist blame attributions activate populist schemata among receivers can be interpreted within the framework of social identity theory (e.g., Sniderman et al., 2000; Tajfel, 1978). Social identity theory postulates that people ascribe positive qualities to their in-group and negative qualities to out-groups. These biases help people to maintain a positive image of the self in relation to others (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This process of social differentiation may foster "media-based othering" (Krämer, 2014). Media based othering implies that populist messages activate perceptions of a divide between the "blameless us" and the "culpable them" among receivers. In other words, blame attributions activate positive stereotypes of the ordinary people and negative stereotypes of out-groups, for example migrants who are blamed for taking away the resources of the native people (e.g., Dixon, 2008). Exposure to populist attributions of blame thus stimulates and activates populist perceptions among citizens. This key finding corroborates the literature on trait activation (Richey, 2012).

These activated populist schemata may eventually align citizens with the rhetoric of populist political parties. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that populist attitudes are strongly related to populist voting (e.g., Akkerman et al., 2014; Rooduijn, 2014a). Extending this research, this dissertation has demonstrated that populist messages positively affect citizens' populist party preferences. This process operates *via* the activation of populist blame perceptions. In line with issue voting literature, citizens who interpret societal issues from a populist mindset should thus be most inclined to vote for a political party (Zaller, 1992). This conclusion links up to the findings of Van

der Brug et al. (2000), indicating that people who vote for populist parties are, just like mainstream voters, motivated by instrumental factors. In other words, people may vote for populist political parties *because* they agree with the blame attribution rationale emphasizing that some groups in society are responsible for depriving the in-group of what they deserve.

However, citizens are not always consistently guided by blame attribution cues, as they may shift blame to other actors than proposed by the populist message. This attribution bias can be explained in the light of the literature on responsibility attribution, which has postulated that citizens find it difficult to understand who is responsible for specific societal issues. Attributing blame should be especially challenging in the intelligible context of EU-national multilevel of governance (Karp et al., 2003; Rudolph, 2003; Tilley & Hobolt, 2011). In support of this premise, I found that people do not always distinguish between different levels of responsibility when asked for their political perceptions.

These inconsistencies in people's blame perceptions can be explained in the light of schema theory, which predicts that if a specific component of a cognitive cluster is made salient (i.e., anti-elites populism), the complete network of related associations can be primed (e.g., Brewer & Nakamura, 1984). This means that populist messages attributing blame to the elites can activate populist attitudes on *both* dimensions. The lack of knowledge on governmental accountability is thus not always overcome by offering people cues on causal responsibility (Karp et al., 2003).

With regards to the effects of populist messages described here, it should (again) be noted that the active use of populist framing in traditional media outlets is a relatively rare event. This does, however, not mean that citizens are not exposed to populist messages in their daily lives. The core idea of populist blame attribution can be emphasized by a wide variety of actors in a plethora of messages in both offline and online outlets. Populist ideas can for example be present in political advertising (Matthes & Schmuck, 2015), political parties' broadcasts (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007) or online media outlets (Bartlett et al., 2011). Populist communication may thus have many faces beyond journalistic media.

The demand-side of populism. Populist ideas may not be omnipresent in traditional media coverage, but how about the presence of populist interpretations in public opinion? The focus on citizens' populist ideas links up to the field's relatively recent focus to measure populist ideas as individual-level attitudes (e.g., Akkerman et al., 2014; Hawkins et al., 2012). In the introduction of this dissertation, I have argued that traditional approaches to measuring populist attitudes do not take the people's opposition to societal out-groups into account. At the same time, this exclusionist component is part of the *same* blame attribution mechanism central to populism's ideational core.

Taking the people's perceived opposition to societal out-groups into account, this dissertation demonstrated that the extended two-dimensional conceptualization of anti-establishment and exclusionist populist attitudes was better able to explain the appeal of populist media among the electorate. In addition, this conceptualization provided more nuanced insights into the media effects of populist communication. Using this fine-grained distinction, this dissertation demonstrates that voters for populist parties are not simply driven by general discontent. Rather, these citizens cast their vote on *specific* populist parties motivated by the specific anti-establishment or exclusionist issue positions they communicate (e.g., Van der Brug et al., 2000; Zaller, 1992). People who vote for populist political parties are, just like voters for established parties, guided by agreement with their parties' societal interpretations of salient issues. This conclusion further underlines the relevance of regarding populist ideas as normalcy, responding to voters' instrumental desires (e.g., Van der Brug et al., 2000; Van der Brug & Mughan, 2007).

Integrating supply and demand: For whom is populism persuasive? This dissertation has revealed that citizens are guided by messages that attribute blame to the "corrupt" elites or "evil" societal out-groups. However, these effects were not demonstrated for all people. Some citizens are indeed more susceptible to persuasion by populist ideas than others. But how can we describe the audience that is most susceptible to persuasion by populist messages?

First of all, attachment to identity plays a crucial role in accepting populist messages. Only people who did not feel attached to the identity on the national level accepted blame attributions to the national government. Likewise, people who did not feel close to European identity accepted blame attributions to the European Union. Identity attachment thus functions as a perceptual screen (also see Hobolt & Tilley, 2014). Only when people do not feel close to the level that is attributed blame, they align their attitudes in messages-congruent ways. In line with the premises of social identity theory, people thus maintain a positive self-concept by absolving their in-group of responsibility (e.g., Tajfel, 1978).

In light of recent calls in the literature that have emphasized that selective exposure needs to be taken into account when studying media effects (e.g., Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Stroud, 2008), this dissertation revealed that populist messages only persuade that part of the electorate that is already aligned with populist views. In other words, forced exposure to counter-attitudinal media populism may activate pre-existing negative attitudes towards populist ideas. Populist ideas are positively reinforced among those exposed to attitudinal congruent populist content.

Extending these findings to democratic implications, selective exposure to media populism may thus foster political polarization among society (e.g., Stroud, 2008; Taber & Lodge, 2006). More specifically, citizens who select congruent views become

increasingly more populist whereas those with opposing views are primed in their counter-attitudinal beliefs. These findings link up to the literature on the polarizing potential of populist rhetoric, arguing that public opinion is divided by those citizens who strongly support populist ideas and others who strongly oppose such ideas (e.g., Afonso & Papadopoulos, 2015; Pappas, 2014; Quirk, 2011). Exposure to populist communication fosters this divide by activating the priors of both poles of the electorate.

Toward an Integrative Framework of Populist Communication

The introduction of this dissertation has pointed to a number of substantial inconsistencies prevalent in extant literature that has conceptualized and measured populism. In an attempt to enhance the conceptual clarity of the contested concept, this dissertation applied Occam's razor to reduce populism to its ideational core. This ideational core – populist blame attribution – was then measured as a matter of degree, both communicated on the supply-side of the media and expressed and interpreted by citizens on the demand-side.

Now that I have argued that populism needs to be detached from its ideological core and politically-charged meanings, one could argue that the concept may have become too empty; as a loose set of ideas disconnected from any conceptual core or framework. To contribute to a reconstruction of a new theoretical framework, it is important to rebuild populist communication as a meaningful theory at the intersections of different sides of communication.

To start with, the expression of populist ideas on the supply-side of online and offline media can be considered as an integral part of *journalistic media populism*: the ways in which journalists draw on their professional agency to frame societal issues using populism's ideational core of blame attribution. This ideational core can then be enriched by all sorts of contextual factors used to frame media content, such as affective framing or interpretative journalism. Next, on the demand-side, citizens may also interpret societal issues more or less independently from political actors and the media using their own populist interpretation frames, which is in line with the negotiated media effects paradigm (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). These populist attitudes can also be connected to contextual factors salient in the socio-political context of citizens, which relate to the host ideologies central to populism (Mudde, 2004). Perceptions of relative deprivation, for example, provide an important contextual factor surrounding citizens' populist interpretations on the two dimensions.

In online communities, the lines between citizens as senders and receivers are blurring (Ridings & Gefen, 2004). At the intersection of the supply-side and demand-side, citizens can be perceived of as mass-self communicators, shifting shapes between populist communicators and populist receivers (e.g., Castells, 2007). Online,

citizens may experience a safe space to articulate populist ideas, in the absence of a direct response from people that oppose their viewpoints (Hameleers, 2017). The technological affordances of asynchronicity and editability on social media channels allow ordinary people to express their populist sentiments without the fear of a direct negative response (e.g., Ellison & boyd, 2013).

These conceptual building blocks on the supply and demand-side can be integrated in a revised theoretical framework of populist communication (see Figure 7.1). This model describes populist ideas as part of the expressions and interpretations of all involved actors – at the crossroads of the supply-side and demand-side. As can be seen on the left part of the figure, the traditional media's role in articulating populist interpretations has been labeled as *Journalistic media populism*. This concept describes the process by which professional communicators actively engage in the expression of populist ideas by constructing the 'people versus out-group divide'. On the right end of the figure, citizens' *Populist interpretation frames* are inserted, which relate to their populist attitudes.

With the rise of social media, citizens are no longer passive receivers of one-sided messages. Rather, they have become consumers and producers of information at the same time, a process that can be described as prosumption (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010) or mass self-communication (Castells, 2007). This development has important ramifications for how citizens can express their populist views, being empowered to share their populist ideas with an imagined audience of likeminded others on social network sites (Bartlett et al., 2011). This last concept that both has supply-side and demand-side components can be labeled as *Populist mass self-communication*.

As can be noted, double-headed arrows are drawn between all three key concepts. Although this dissertation has empirically focused on the media effects of populist ideas, one could argue that this causal pathway can work in both directions. As argued by Rooduijn, van der Brug & de Lange (2016), people do not only vote for populist parties because they are unsatisfied with politics, they also become more discontent *because* of the rise of populist ideas. In a similar vein, the revised theoretical framework presented here allows the supply-side and demand-side of the populist discourse to influence each other, which also provides an important suggestion for future research to further investigate both sides of the causal pathways described in this theoretical model.

Does this model provide a complete picture to understand populist expressions? It could be argued that this model has omitted a large number of potential actors involved in populism, most importantly populist politicians and their political parties. However, these political actors, and others, can be located at the different concepts of the model. It has for example been found that politicians express their populist ideas on social media (e.g., Engesser et al., 2016). In that case, they engage

in populist (mass) self-communication. When politicians publish populist ideas in opinionated articles or party programs, their communication may be placed on the left-side of the figure, as their communication follows professional routines targeted at a dissemination of views from one-to-many. Contextual factors, such as the perception of a crisis situation or relative deprivation, can be connected to the different paths of the model, acting as a catalyst to facilitate the relationships between the different expressions of populist ideas on the supply-side and demand-side.

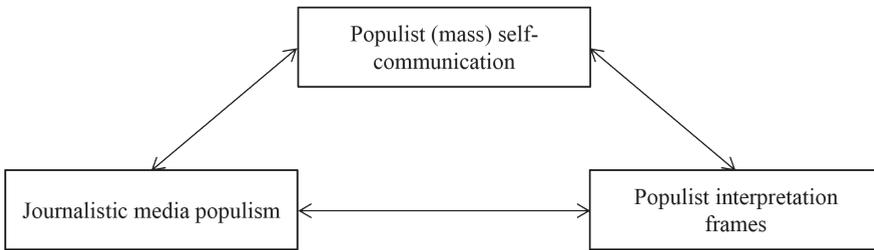


Figure 7.1 Theoretical framework for populist communication on the intersections of the supply-side and demand-side.

Limitations and directions for future research

Although this dissertation has provided important insights into the content, causes, and consequences of the expression of populism's ideational core, some important limitations concerning the external and internal validity of the claims made need to be emphasized here.

External validity. First of all, all chapters in this dissertation are based on data collected in the Netherlands only. Although this single-country context may be of less relevance for the experimental studies, it may have ramifications for the generalizability of the content analysis and survey data presented in this dissertation. In the diversified global landscape in which populism is rooted, one could expect important differences in the media's attention to, and expression of, populist ideas. In countries that have not (yet) witnessed the rise of electorally successful populist parties, the media may cover populist ideas differently. The premises of the life cycle model, for example, assume that the media may devote *more* attention to new, rising populist political parties compared to already established populist political parties (Herkman, 2015; Mazzoleni et al., 2003).

Alternatively, reasoned from an agenda-setting perspective, populist ideas may be used less by journalists when such interpretations do not resonate with political reality. Indeed, one of the factors that may create a favorable opportunity for populist communication to root in society is party issue ownership (e.g., Esser et al., 2017; Mudde, 2007). Specifically, in countries where topics owned by populist political parties are more salient, the media may devote more attention to populist viewpoints.

Another related factor that may be considered here is the presence of facilitating contextual factors, such as political scandals or crises. Indeed, there may be various contextual differences between countries that create discursive opportunities for populist communication to thrive (Esser et al., 2017). To provide more insights into such varying discursive opportunities for media populism, comparative research is highly welcome.

Research in countries that differ in contextual factors on the demand-side, such as the level of formal education, the proportion of refugees, the presence of scandals, issue ownership, and the economic situation, may also reveal alternative mechanisms by which citizens are affected by populist messages (e.g., Mudde, 2007). Providing a first attempt to study the effects of media populism using a comparative approach, a recent experimental study revealed no differences in the effects and mechanisms of populist blame attribution in Austria and the Netherlands (Hameleers & Schmuck, 2016). However, as one could argue that these Western European countries offer quite similar case studies, future research that incorporates a larger number of substantially different countries is highly needed.

In the midst of a changing media landscape, in which online political (self) communication has become increasingly more relevant, the dissertation's focus on offline, traditional media outlets may be considered as an additional limitation for external validity. The findings indicating that media populism is a relatively rare event, may simply be due to the fact that we zoomed in on the context of offline content only. Indeed, it has been argued that populist ideas are more frequently expressed online than in traditional journalistic content (Houtman & Achterberg, 2010). In addition, populist actors themselves also frequently use social media to disseminate their populist message to the electorate (e.g., Engesser et al., 2016). Still, as we focused on the effects and underlying mechanisms of populist messages in general, it is highly likely that the effects of the expression of the ideational core of populism are similar when communicated offline and online.

Another limitation concerns the choice to study the effects of populism's ideational core, rather than the indicators typically connected to it, such as charismatic leadership, a dramatized and simplified language, or the references to one-liners and common sense (e.g., Fennema, 2005; van der Brug & Mughan, 2007). However, these

elements can be attached to any form of communication, and are thus not necessarily populist. Hence, these contextual factors may facilitate populism, but they are not an essential part of its core message (e.g., Koopmans & Muis, 2009; van der Brug et al., 2000). The application of Occam's razor as a tool to provide conceptual clarity should not be regarded as a necessarily reductionist stance that aims to eliminate of all sorts of indicators that can be used to identify populism. Indeed, the various chapters of this dissertation do connect important contextual factors to populist communication, such as emotionalized communication and interpretative journalism.

Thus, analogous to prevalent approaches that have defined populism as a thin ideology supplemented by all sorts of host ideologies, this dissertation argues that the ideational core of populism can be rooted in all sorts of facilitating factors surrounding the presence of populism on the demand-side and supply-side. In that sense, using Occam's razor in defining the essentials of populism may even allow for a richer, more refined study of populism. Indeed, its ideological core can be attached to a wide range of contextual factors in the media and public opinion that differ between different countries across the globe.

Internal validity. A potential limitation concerning the internal validity relates to the direction of the causal relationships studied in this dissertation. In the three experiments, I tested the expectation that exposure to populist messages activates populist interpretation among receivers. However, I did not study alternative causal relationships with different dependent variables, such as the idea that populist messages foster discontent among citizens (Rooduijn et al., 2016), or a reversed causal relationship predicting that the populist interpretations among the public affect the populist framing of news events. However, the studies moved beyond the identification of a unidirectional flow of communication from the sender to the receiver of populist ideas, as I also independently explored the structure of citizens' populist interpretation frames. This dissertation thereby links up to the negotiated media effects paradigm (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Drawing further on this, future research may provide additional insights into how the populist interpretations of citizens and the media affect each other in a bi-directional flow of communication.

Another concern for internal validity relates to the causal claims made in the selective exposure experiments. These experimental studies did not allow for a random assignment of participants to treatment and control groups. Although I assessed which citizens are most likely to select populist content, and ruled out alternative explanations, the causal claims made on the effects of populist messages on populist attitudes should be interpreted with care. Nevertheless, across both forced and selective exposure environments, the findings of the experiments clearly demonstrate that attitudinal congruence plays a key role in the acceptance of populist messages. Despite these limitations, this dissertation provides the first contribution

pointing to the pivotal role of having the choice to select between various congruent and incongruent populist and non-populist options.

Final conclusion

Although this dissertation has limitations, it provides an important contribution to populism research by demonstrating *how* populist ideas are present in the media and public opinion. Moreover, this dissertation is one of the first contributions that provided insights into the mechanisms by which populist communication affects citizens' political perceptions. Extending this knowledge even further, this dissertation demonstrated *which* citizens are most likely to select, accept, or resist populist attributions of blame. On a more general note, it presented an integrated theoretical framework of populist communication on the sender and receiver-side. Future research can build on the foundations laid here to provide even more detailed insights into the content, consequences, and effects of populist communication to further contribute to the discussion on the alleged revival of the populist zeitgeist across the globe.

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