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

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APPENDICES CHAPTER 1

Appendix 1.A: Explaining cluster membership based on characteristics of the source and text

We conducted a multinomial regression analysis for which the three clusters were explained by characteristics of the media outlet and the text. In this analysis, membership to the different clusters was incorporated as dependent variable. The neutral cluster was treated as reference category. The largest newspapers, *NRC*, *de Volkskrant* and *de Telegraaf*, all positively and significantly predicted membership to the conflict dissemination cluster. This indicates that when these sources were identified, they were more likely to be in the conflict cluster than in the neutral cluster. The interpretative journalism cluster related differently to the media outlets. The broadsheet newspaper *NRC* was significantly less likely to belong to this cluster than to the neutral dissemination cluster. The tabloid newspaper *de Telegraaf* and the free newspaper *Metro*, in contrast, were more likely to be in the interpretative journalism cluster than in the neutral cluster. These findings indicate that journalists' interpretative stance emphasizing distrust in politics and society using a negative tone is more in sync with the style of tabloid newspapers than broadsheet newspapers. Regarding the texts' characteristics, we found that length, news genre, political topics, and election coverage all played a significant positive predictive role for the membership of the conflict dissemination cluster. This means that longer texts, election coverage, news and politics were more likely to be covered in the dissemination of conflict cluster than in the neutral dissemination cluster. The comparison between the neutral cluster and the interpretative journalism cluster points to a difference in the role of genres: the presence of the news genre negatively affected the chance of belonging to the interpretative cluster whereas it positively predicted membership to the dissemination of conflict cluster.

Table A1.

Multinomial logistic regression model explaining membership to classes

Class		B (SE)	Wald	OR		95% CI OR	
				Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Dissemination conflict	Constant	-2.87 (0.29)***	100.34				
	NRC	2.09 (0.29)***	50.95	8.05	4.54	14.26	
	Volkskrant	2.67 (0.29)***	82.51	14.38	8.09	25.56	
	Telegraaf	2.45 (0.30)***	68.48	11.62	6.50	20.78	
	Metro	1.25 (0.34)***	13.28	3.48	1.78	6.80	
	Elsevier	2.43 (0.34)***	51.20	11.36	5.84	22.11	
	Politics	0.28 (0.06)***	19.58	1.32	1.17	1.50	
	News	0.24 (0.08)**	9.47	1.27	1.09	1.49	
	Length	1.42 (0.13)***	126.22	4.14	3.23	5.30	
	Election	0.69 (0.12)***	35.72	1.99	1.59	2.49	
Interpretative journalism	Constant	-0.37 (0.13)**	8.94				
	NRC	-0.31 (0.15)*	4.48	0.73	0.55	0.98	
	Volkskrant	-0.03 (0.15)	0.05	0.97	0.72	1.30	
	Telegraaf	0.62 (0.15)***	15.48	1.85	1.36	2.51	
	Metro	0.49 (0.21)***	5.18	1.63	1.07	2.47	
	Elsevier	0.92 (0.21)***	19.87	2.51	1.68	3.77	
	Politics	0.32 (0.08)***	17.76	1.37	1.19	1.59	
	News	-1.20 (0.08)***	196.29	0.30	0.26	0.36	
	Length	1.03*** (0.12)	69.66	2.81	2.21	3.58	
	Election	0.64*** (0.13)	23.14	1.90	1.46	2.47	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.*Note.* CI = confidence interval; OR = odds ratio. Two-tailed tests. Unstandardized regression weights.

Standard errors reported between brackets.

The reference category for both clusters is the neutral dissemination cluster.

APPENDICES CHAPTER 2

Appendix 2.A: Census data compared to the data in sample

Table 2.A1

Census data compared to the data in sample

Variables		Sample	Census
<i>Gender</i>	Male	49.5	47.0
	Female	50.5	53.0
<i>Age</i>	20-39	27.2	25.5
	40-64	45.7	46.4
	>65	27.1	28.1
<i>Education</i>	Low	23.9	24.7
	Mid	39.7	41.4
	High	36.5	33.9

Note. Cell entries are percentages. The sample consists of 809 participants. Census data are obtained from the National Institute for Statistics (CBS) and cover the year 2015. Differences between sample data and census are not significant.

Appendix 2.B: Items Measuring Populist Attitudes

Anti-establishment populist attitudes. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*). A reversed-coded item is indicated by* (1) We, the ordinary Dutch people, share the same norms and values; (2) The will of the people should always be central in political decision making; (3) The people instead of politicians should make our most important policy decisions; (4) Ordinary people can't be trusted to make the right choices about our nation's problems; (5) Politicians are corrupt; (6) Politicians keep the promises they make to the people they claim to represent; (7) Politicians make decisions that harm the interests of the ordinary people; (8) Elected politicians are better able to make decisions for voters than ordinary citizens themselves*

Exclusionist populist attitudes. The following items were developed for the purpose of this study: (9) Immigrants are threatening the purity of our culture; (10) Immigrants cost our country a lot of money that should rather be invested in our own people (11) Our borders should be closed for immigrants; (12) Immigrants are responsible for a lot of our nation's problems; (13) I prefer spending my time with people who share my cultural beliefs; (14) People who are not contributing

to our society, should not receive any social benefits; (15) Social benefits such as unemployment benefits and health insurance benefits are given to people who don't really deserve it; (16) People who are not originally from our country, have no rights on our social benefits; (17) Our society distributes social benefits in a fair way; (18) All people who are in need deserve social benefits; (19) People with higher incomes should pay more tax money; (20) The ordinary people should have more influence in political decision making than corporations who only want to make profits.

Decisions to Discard Populist Attitudes Items

Looking per factor, we identified that some indicators fitted better than others. For the anti-establishment dimension, the following items did not fit well: *We, the ordinary Dutch people, share the same norms and values* ($\lambda = .30$); *Ordinary people can't be trusted to make the right choices about our nation's problems** ($\lambda = .35$); *Politicians keep the promises they make to the people they claim to represent** ($\lambda = .37$); *Elected politicians are better able to make decisions for voters than ordinary citizens themselves** ($\lambda = .45$); *The will of the people should always be central in political decision making* ($\lambda = .54$)

For the exclusionist dimension, the following items did not fit well: *I prefer spending my time with people who share my cultural beliefs* ($\lambda = .44$); *our society distributes social benefits in a fair way** ($\lambda = .32$); *All people who are in need deserve social benefits** ($\lambda = .19$); *People with higher incomes should pay more tax money* ($\lambda = .33$); *People who are not contributing to our society, should not receive any social benefits* ($\lambda = .44$)

Two potential explanations for the bad fit of these items can be foregrounded. First, from a methodological angle, it should be noted that five of the bad-fitting statements were reverse-coded. As they were not framed in binary 'good' in-group versus 'evil' out-group oppositions, these items not directly reflected a populist worldview. The other items with sub-optimal fit also not explicitly referred to the populist opposition between the morally 'good' people and the 'evil' others. These items may have been too 'empty' populist in the sense they only mentioned the in-group of the people without specifying the other.

Items Measuring Relative Deprivation

We measured participants' feelings of relative deprivation with three items on a 7-point scale ranging from (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*). (1) If we need anything from the government, ordinary people like us always have to wait longer than others; (2) I never received what I in fact deserved; (3) It's always the other people who profit from all kinds of benefits.

Items Measuring Control Variables

Education was measured by the following item: What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed? The seven categories included no formal education and different forms of lower, moderate and higher education consistent with the Dutch system.

Left-right self-placement was measured with the following item: In politics, people sometimes talk of “left” and “right”. Where would you place yourself on this scale, where 0 means the left and 10 means the right? 0 (Left), 10 (Right).

Support for European integration was measured with the following statement measured on a 7-point differential scale: European integration has not gone far enough yet (1)/has already gone too far (7).

Voting preferences were measured with the following item: For the following political parties, we would like you to indicate the chance you will ever vote for this party on a scale ranging from 0 (I think I will never vote for this party) to 10 (It is very likely I will once vote for this party).

APPENDICES CHAPTER 4

Appendix 4.A: Stimulus Materials for Experimental Conditions

Note: all articles are translated from Dutch into English. The original Dutch versions are available on demand.

Version 1 (no blame/no emotions) Dutch citizens witness worsening labour market situation

The labour market situation will only start to recover in at least two years from now. In 2014, the total number of jobs in The Netherlands will decrease further with 118.000, after which 2015 will be marked by a loss of another 100.000 jobs. These numbers were presented by the Labour market prognosis of the Dutch organization UWV, which does not elaborate on what consequences this decline in jobs has for Dutch citizens.

The image for the future: the prognosis does not provide any insights on if the economic recovery and citizens' initiatives will make a change after this period of decline. The statistics underline a tentative prediction: if the numbers can be trusted, the labour market situation will fully recover in 2016 according to the Labour market prognosis.

Version 2 (no blame/anger-frame) Dutch citizens outrageous about worsening labour market situation

The labour market situation will only start to recover in at least two years from now. In 2014, the total number of jobs in The Netherlands will decrease further with 118.000, after which 2015 will be marked by a loss of another 100.000 jobs. These numbers were presented by the Labour market prognosis of the Dutch organization UWV, which elaborates on how the decline in jobs results in feelings of anger among Dutch citizenry.

The image for the future: the prognosis provides insights on how the economic recovery and citizens' initiatives will make a change after this frustrating period of decline. The statistics underline this prediction: if persons blocking the goals of job seekers will be punished, the labour market situation will fully recover in 2016 according to the Labour market prognosis.

Version 3 (no blame/fear-frame) Dutch citizens afraid of worsening labour market situation

The labour market situation will only start to recover in at least two years from now. In 2014, the total number of jobs in The Netherlands will decrease further with

118.000, after which 2015 will be marked by a loss of another 100.000 jobs. These numbers were presented by the Labour market prognosis of the Dutch organization UWV, which elaborates on how the decline in jobs results in feelings of fear among Dutch citizenry.

The image for the future: the prognosis provides insights on how the economic recovery and citizens' initiatives will not make a significant change after this tense period of decline. The statistics underline this prediction: only when the interests of job seekers are better protected, the labour market situation will fully recover in 2016 according to the Labour market prognosis.

Version 4 (blame attributed to the EU/anger-frame) Dutch citizens outrageous about worsening labour market situation caused by EU's failing policy

The labour market situation will only start to recover in at least two years from now. In 2014, the total number of jobs in The Netherlands will decrease further with 118.000, after which 2015 will be marked by a loss of another 100.000 jobs. These numbers were presented by the Labour market prognosis of the Dutch organization UWV, which elaborates on how the decline in jobs, caused by EU's failing policy, results in feelings of anger among Dutch citizenry.

The image for the future: the prognosis provides insights on how the economic recovery and citizens' initiatives will make a change after this frustrating period of decline characterized by EU's failing policy. The statistics underline this prediction: if persons responsible for EU's policy blocking the goals of job seekers will be punished, the labour market situation will fully recover in 2016 according to the Labour market prognosis.

Version 5 (blame attributed to the EU/fear-frame) Dutch citizens afraid of worsening labour market situation caused by EU's failing policy

The labour market situation will only start to recover in at least two years from now. In 2014, the total number of jobs in The Netherlands will decrease further with 118.000, after which 2015 will be marked by a loss of another 100.000 jobs. These numbers were presented by the Labour market prognosis of the Dutch organization UWV, which elaborates on how the decline in jobs, caused by EU's failing policy, results in feelings of fear among Dutch citizenry.

The image for the future: the prognosis provides insights on how the economic recovery and citizens' initiatives will not make a significant change after this tense period of decline characterized by EU's failing policy. The statistics underline this prediction: only when the interests of job seekers are better protected by the EU, the labour market situation will fully recover in 2016 according to the Labour market prognosis.

Version 6 (blame attributed to the Dutch government/fear-frame) Dutch citizens afraid for worsening labour market situation caused by Dutch government's failing policy

The labour market situation will only start to recover in at least two years from now. In 2014, the total number of jobs in The Netherlands will decrease further with 118.000, after which 2015 will be marked by a loss of another 100.000 jobs. These numbers were presented by the Labour market prognosis of the Dutch organization UWV, which elaborates on how the decline in jobs, caused by the Dutch government's failing policy, results in feelings of fear among Dutch citizenry.

The image for the future: the prognosis provides insights on how the economic recovery and citizens' initiatives will not make a significant change after this tense period of decline characterized by the Dutch government's failing policy. The statistics underline this prediction: only when the interests of job seekers are better protected by the Dutch government, the labour market situation will fully recover in 2016 according to the Labour market prognosis.

Version 7 (blame attributed to the Dutch government/anger-frame) Dutch citizens outrageous about worsening labour market situation caused by Dutch government's failing policy

The labour market situation will only start to recover in at least two years from now. In 2014, the total number of jobs in The Netherlands will decrease further with 118.000, after which 2015 will be marked by a loss of another 100.000 jobs. These numbers were presented by the Labour market prognosis of the Dutch organization UWV, which elaborates on how the decline in jobs, caused by the Dutch government's failing policy, results in feelings of anger among Dutch citizenry.

The image for the future: the prognosis provides insights on how the economic recovery and citizens' initiatives will make a change after this frustrating period of decline characterized by the Dutch government's failing policy. The statistics underline this prediction: if persons responsible for the Dutch government's policy blocking the goals of job seekers will be punished, the labour market situation will fully recover in 2016 according to the Labour market prognosis.

Appendix 4.B: Items For Measures Moderators and Dependent Variables

Moderators

Identity attachment to nation state.

1. I am proud to be a Dutch citizen (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*)
2. I feel attached to the Dutch identity (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*)
3. I feel attached to a shared Dutch culture (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*)

Identity attachment to Europe.

1. I am proud to be a European citizen (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*)
2. I feel attached to the European identity (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*)
3. I feel attached to a shared European culture (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*)

Dependent Variables

Blame perceptions towards the EU and the Dutch government.

1. The open-ended question: You have just read an article that claims that the labour market situation is worsening throughout 2015 and 2016. Could you indicate who or what YOU believe is responsible for causing this situation? You can list all your thoughts in the space below.
2. The closed-ended question: In both the media and among citizens, there exists disagreement on who or what is responsible for causing the worsening labour market situation. Could you indicate to what extent YOU believe the following actors or situations are responsible for causing the worsening labour market situation on a (1 *not at all responsible* 7 *completely responsible*) scale?

Candidates for responsibility were listed as (appeared in a random order): The Dutch prime minister, employers in the Netherlands, Eastern European immigrants, politicians in the EU, the Dutch government, Geert Wilders, Mark Rutte, the PVV (political party), Dutch citizens, European citizens, the EU as institution, the VVD (political party), the president of the European Commission, the president of the European parliament, European politics, politicians in Den Hague, the European parliament, the European commission, Dutch government leaders

Populist attitudes.**The antagonist “good” people versus “bad” elites opposition (Antagonism)**

1. Politics is a struggle between the good and the evil (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*)
2. I would rather want to be represented by an ordinary citizen than by a specialised politician. (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*)
3. Politicians are corrupt (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*)

Politicians are (in)capable of representing the ordinary people (Representation)

4. Politicians keep the promises they make to the ordinary people (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*) (reverse-coded)
5. Politicians are able to solve the real problems facing the ordinary people (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*) (reverse-coded)
6. Politicians need to follow the will of the ordinary people (1 *completely disagree*, 7 *completely agree*)

Table 4.B1: Descriptive statistics for key measures dependent variables

Scale variable (all 7-point scales)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Blame perceptions EU	4.48	1.28	0.95 (7-items)
Blame perceptions Dutch government	4.76	1.28	0.95 (7-items)
Populist attitude: Representation	4.81	1.19	0.76 (3-items)
Populist attitude: Antagonism	4.04	1.19	0.58 (3-items)

APPENDICES CHAPTER 5

Appendix 5.A: Items For Measures Dependent Variable and Moderators

Dependent Variable

1. Could you indicate what the chances are that you will one time vote for the following party? If you think you will never vote for this party, fill in 0; if it is very possible that you will once vote for this party, fill in 100. We included the following Dutch political parties for the measurement of party preference: VVD, PvdA, PVV, CDA, D66, GroenLinks, SP.

Moderator: Identity attachment to nation state

(1 completely disagree, 7 completely agree)

1. I am proud to be a Dutch citizen
2. I feel attached to the Dutch identity
3. I feel attached to a shared Dutch culture

Moderator: Identity attachment to Europe (1 completely disagree, 7 completely agree)

1. I am proud to be a European citizen
2. I feel attached to the European identity
3. I feel attached to a shared European culture

Moderator: Political distrust/cynicism (1 completely disagree, 7 completely agree)

1. Politicians are primarily self-interested
2. To become prime minister, it is more important to have the right friends than the right abilities
3. Political parties are only interested in my vote
4. Politicians do not understand what matters to Dutch society
5. Politicians are capable of solving important problems facing Dutch society (reverse coded)

Appendix 5.B: Comparison Sample data and Census data

Table 5.B1

Census data compared to the data in sample

Variables		Sample	Census
<i>Gender</i>	Male	47.1	47.0
	Female	52.9	53.0
<i>Age</i>	20-39	34.8	24.5
	40-64	41.6	46.4
	>65	23.6	28.1
<i>Education</i>	Low	17.4	24.7
	Mid	41.0	41.4
	High	40.7	33.9

Note. Cell entries are percentages. The sample consists of 809 participants. Census data are obtained from the National Institute for Statistics (CBS) and cover the year 2015.

APPENDICES CHAPTER 6

Appendix 6.A: Example Stimuli

> Politics

New report CBS illustrates increase in crime rate over the next years

Published: November 1 2016 12:01 AM
Last update: November 3 2016 9:35 AM



By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

.....

The crime rate in the Netherlands will increase over the next years, because an increasing number of citizens will break the law. These conclusions can be drawn from an unpublished report by the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS).

According to the CBS, the crime rate will increase by ten percent in 2020. The same calculations show that this increase is related to trends already visible in previous years. The new numbers demonstrate that this trend will not end in the nearby future.

Based on these numbers, it can be concluded that the crime rate will further increase in the Netherlands in the years to come. To arrive at a clearer picture of the implications of these numbers, they will need to be interpreted in the light of new societal analyses.

> Politics

Our country is in danger: The influx of migrants causes increase in crime rate

Published: November 1 2016 12:01 AM
Last update: November 3 2016 9:35 AM



By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

.....

The crime rate in our country will increase over the next years, because an increasing number of fortune-seeking migrants will break the law – they see criminal activities as the fastest and easiest way to wealth. It is feared that the most violent types of crime will increase most. These conclusions can be drawn from an unpublished report by the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS).

According to the CBS, the crime rate will increase by ten percent in 2020. The same calculations show that this increase would not take place if the influx of migrants would be stopped. Or if migrants would earn their own income, instead of profiting and taking away the resources deserved by the hardworking people of our country.

Based on these numbers, a frustrating conclusion can be drawn: the ordinary people in our country who have to fight hard for their existence are attacked by those who are not prepared to work for the resources offered to them by our country. This is another situation showing that fortune-seeking migrants need to be refused in order to keep our country safe.

Figure 6.A1. Examples of stimulus material translated from Dutch (original). The picture on top depicts the stimulus used for the control condition in the second experiment. The picture below depicts the stimulus for the pro-attitudinal populist message.

Comparing populist and non-populist stimuli

The text below shows a comparison of a populist and non-populist pro-attitudinal message in the second experiment (translated from Dutch). Although both messages connect the same development to migrants, the migrants are only explicitly blamed for the development in the populist message. Moreover, the populist message emphasizes a moral and causal divide between the ordinary native people and the culpable migrants. The sentences that differ between both conditions are underlined.

Version 1: Our country is in danger: The influx of migrants causes increase in crime rate

The crime rate in our country will increase over the next years, because an increasing number of fortune-seeking migrants will break the law – they see criminal activities as the fastest and easiest way to wealth. It is feared that the most violent types of crime will increase most. These conclusions can be drawn from an unpublished report by the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS).

According to the CBS, the crime rate will increase by ten percent in 2020. The same calculations show that this increase would not take place if the influx of migrants would be stopped. Or if migrants would earn their own income, instead of profiting and taking away the resources deserved by the hardworking people of our country.

Based on these numbers, a frustrating conclusion can be drawn: the ordinary people in our country who have to fight hard for their existence are attacked by those who are not prepared to work for the resources offered to them by our country. This is another situation showing that fortune-seeking migrants need to be refused in order to keep our country safe.

Version 2: The Netherlands is in danger: A lot of migrants end up in criminal behavior

The crime rate in the Netherlands will increase over the next years, because an increasing number of migrants will break the law – they see this as their only way of survival. It is feared that the most violent types of crime will increase most. These conclusions can be drawn from an unpublished report by the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS).

According to the CBS, the crime rate will increase by ten percent in 2020. The same calculations show that this increase would not take place if the influx of migrants would receive more care. Or if migrants would be allowed to earn their own income, instead of being forced to seek other ways of generating income.

Based on these numbers, a conclusion can be drawn: the crime rate in the Netherlands will increase in the years to come. This is another situation demonstrating the importance of thinking about the safety net that should be provided to migrants that are coming to the Netherlands in great numbers.

Appendix 6.B: Measures populist attitudes and relative deprivation

Anti-establishment populist attitudes. (1) The ordinary people instead of politicians should make our most important policy decisions; (2) Politicians in government are corrupt; (3) Politicians make decisions that harm the interests of the ordinary people; (4) The ordinary people should have more influence in political decision making than corporations that only want to make profits.

Exclusionist populist attitudes. (1) Immigrants are threatening the purity of our culture; (2) Immigrants cost our country a lot of money that should rather be invested in our own people; (3) Our borders should be closed for immigrants; (4) Immigrants are responsible for a lot of our nation's problems; (5) Social benefits such as unemployment benefits and health insurance benefits are given to people who don't really deserve it; (6) People who are not originally from our country, have no rights to receive our social benefits

Perceived relative deprivation. (1) If we need anything from the government, ordinary people like us always have to wait longer than others; (2) I never received what I in fact deserved; (3) It's always the other people who profit from all kinds of advantages offered in society; (4) The government doesn't do enough for people like me, others are always advantaged; (5) When there is an economic downturn, we are the first to be its victims.