

This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter edited by Toril Aalberg, Frank Esser, Carsten Reinemann, Jesper Strömbäck, and Claes H. de Vreese published by Routledge as *Populist Political Communication in Europe* on July 26, 2016. The book is available online at: <http://www.tandfebooks.com/doi/book/10.4324/9781315623016>

29. Citizens and Populist Political Communication. Cross-National Findings and Perspectives

Carsten Reinemann, Jörg Matthes, and Tamir Sheafer

Introduction

Despite populism gaining increasing scholarly attention across Europe in recent years, the literature reviewed in the country-specific chapters (Parts II-IV in this volume) reveals that our knowledge about the effects of populist communication on citizens is still scant. Of course, this is not to say that we have no idea about which citizens might be especially susceptible to the appeals, rhetoric, or policy proposals of actors using populist ways of communication or which elements of populism might be especially effective. However, most of the assumptions about who is affected, why they are affected, and by what kinds of message elements do not come from systematic studies focusing on the question of communication effects. Rather, these assumptions are derived from studies on voting behavior and the socio-demographic and attitudinal characteristics of those citizens choosing to cast their ballots in favor of a political party or candidate that is regarded as populist. However, drawing direct inferences from voter characteristics to the communicative processes underlying the success or failure of populist actors is just not possible.

Without taking into account the communicative messages actually sent by political actors, media, or fellow citizens; without analyzing individual media repertoires and the messages that actually reach citizens; without taking a look at the way citizens select, perceive, process, and interpret those messages; and without considering the way these perceptions are moderated or mediated by different kinds of citizen predispositions, the complex mechanisms behind the effects of populist communication will not be described and explained in a satisfactory way. Concepts and models that have been used in investigations of the uses and effects of political messages, media coverage, and interpersonal communication can provide valuable insights here and—if applied to populist communication—can help to answer some of the questions still open in the field of *populist* communication research.

In this third concluding chapter, we will draw on the preceding country-specific chapters (Parts II-IV) to discuss what we actually know about the relationship between citizens, populist parties, and candidates across European countries from a political communication point of view. We will then identify some of the major shortcomings of prior research and finally single out what we think are the most important routes for future research on the effects of populist communication that should be addressed by scholars in the years to come. We are convinced that this kind of research will provide important insights into the factors driving the success of populist political actors, shed more light on the needs, motivations, and attitudes of the citizens who ensure their success, help to clarify the role played by the media, and provide results that can help to estimate the importance of contextual, national-level macro factors vis-a-vis individual-level variables.

Citizens and Populist Communication— Findings Across Europe

Generally, much more is known about the characteristics of populist party voters than about communication effects in a more narrow sense. From most countries included in this volume, we have at least some empirical evidence from national election studies on the sociodemographic and attitudinal characteristics of those voters casting their ballots in favor of a populist party or candidate. In addition, several comparative studies analyze the profiles of right-wing populist voters, often on the basis of Eurobarometer data (e.g., Ivarsflaten, 2008; Oesch, 2008; Pauwels, 2014; Spier, 2010). Our knowledge is negligible, however, of some eastern, southern, and south-eastern European countries that lack a strong, well-founded social science and voter studies infrastructure. In these countries, information about voter characteristics is either scarce or largely based on the subjective observations of scholars, journalists, and politicians (e.g., Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Portugal, Slovenia). In contrast, particularly in countries with a larger political science and political communication community, with well-established and well-founded national election studies, and with successful populist parties, we find a lot of studies that allow us to describe the characteristics of typical voters—in particular, of right-wing populist parties and candidates (e.g., Austria, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom). Identifying left-wing populists does not seem to be as easy as identifying right-wing populists, and those regarded as left-wing populist (at least by some observers) have not been as successful as their right-wing counterparts until very recently (e.g., SYRIZA in Greece and Podemos in Spain). Consequently, knowledge about left-wing populist voters is typically sketchy and restricted to countries in which such parties have had at least some success (e.g., Germany, Ireland, Spain).

When it comes to studies that directly and systematically investigate the effects of populist actors' communication, of media coverage of those actors, and of any media coverage indirectly contributing to their success, only very few countries stand out. The same applies to studies disentangling the effects of various components of populist communication. Most of this kind of research was conducted over recent years in Austria and the Netherlands, due most likely to these countries having both highly successful populist political actors and empirically oriented scholars looking at populism from a political communication perspective. In the following, we will briefly discuss the overarching conclusions that we can draw from research across European countries with respect to the voters of populist parties and the effects of populist communication on citizens.

With respect to *sociodemographic predispositions fostering voting for populist parties*, almost 20 of the countries included in this volume yield at least some empirical findings. Because most of the studies published until recently refer to voters of right-wing populist parties, we will also focus on them in the following. Relevant studies report that among the more likely voters of most right-wing populist parties are men, younger people, voters with lower levels of education, (blue-collar) workers, and less-wealthy citizens having a lower socioeconomic status. These findings are in line with comparative studies on the behavior of voters of European right-wing populist parties (Pauwels, 2014; Spier, 2010). In some countries, however, this pattern is not so clear-cut or has been changing over time, or sociodemographic characteristics seem to play a significant role. For example, populist voters seem to be older in Denmark, Poland, and—at least as regards the Greater Romania Party—also in Romania; a shrinking of the gender gap has been reported for the Vlaams Belang in Belgium and the Danish People's Party in Denmark; in Poland, religiosity seems to correlate with voting for rightwing populist parties like the League of Polish Families and Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland; and several countries (including Denmark, Finland,

and Switzerland) report a gap between bigger cities and suburban and rural areas, with voters in rural areas typically being more likely to vote for rightwing populists.

However, comparing voter structures of populist parties on the basis of country-specific and comparative literature is difficult because they may be affected by varying definitions of populist parties, by substantial differences between parties, and by the fact that some characteristics were studied in some countries but not in others. Nevertheless, taking into account real comparative studies on voter structures, it is obvious that besides certain commonalities, there are also country- or party-specific aspects characterizing voters of right-wing populists.

But how can these correlations between sociodemographic variables and voting for populist parties be explained? One prominent argument is that certain sociodemographic variables indicate the likelihood of voters being negatively affected by processes of social and economic change. For example, less-educated members of the industrial working class may run a higher risk of being laid off when businesses are moved to countries with lower wages and lower social or environmental standards (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Oesch, 2008; Spier, 2010). Another example is the argument related to the often-found gender gap. It suggests that women are typically more reluctant to vote for extremist parties that are not regarded as socially acceptable; that gender gap is reduced, however, if the parties become more established and accepted across societies.

Based on studies made across Europe, we have been able to reach certain conclusions concerning *perceptual, emotional, and attitudinal predispositions that foster voting for populist parties*. There is evidence that subjective perceptions of social reality and the emotions generated by them might serve as better predictors of populist behavior and voting than objective measures of economic or class situation (Oesch, 2008; Spier, 2010). Among the perceptions and emotions mentioned in the reviewed literature are fears of social decline, feelings of injustice and indignation, feelings of social isolation, negative perceptions of economic and political conditions, and perceptions of economic, cultural, and security threats. For example, a study by Oesch (2008) showed that the strongest and most consistent predictor of right-wing populist voting among workers in five Western European countries was the perception of a *cultural* and not of an economic threat by immigrants (see also Ivarsflaten, 2008). Probably these perceptions contribute to (self)uncertainty, which, in turn, has been shown to motivate people to look for groups with simple stereotypes and leadership that is extreme, ideologically rigid, and authoritarian (Haller & Hogg, 2014).

Moreover, scholars have also looked at political attitudes and found that these seem to be more powerful in predicting right-wing populist voting than sociodemographics. These attitudes can be grouped into four categories at different levels of abstraction: (a) general attitudes about politicians, parties, and the political system (e.g., cynicism, distrust, dissatisfaction, efficacy); (b) attitudes more specifically indicating a citizen's political position (e.g., positions on the left-right spectrum, party identification); (c) attitudes related to specific issues or policy fields (e.g., the European Union, immigration, criminality); (d) attitudes referring to more general perspectives on society and politics (e.g., authoritarianism, nationalism, nativism/ ethnocentrism, quest for identity, and demand for cultural homogeneity). Recently, scholars have begun to develop ways to measure populism as an individual-level attitude (Akkerman, Mudde, & Zaslove, 2014; Rooduijn, 2014). However, the proposed scales differ considerably with respect to their items and dimensions. In addition, the scales contrast populism with a different set of other attitudes. For example,

Akkerman et al. (2014) contrast populism with pluralism and elitism, whereas Rooduijn (2014) contrasts his populism scale with nativism and authoritarianism.

From a political communication perspective, the apparently crucial role that perceptions of social reality and attitudes seem to play in explaining populist voting point to the potential role of the media and other sources of information. As numerous studies have shown, perceptions of social reality are often largely shaped by media coverage, and the media also have the ability to shape attitudes by selecting, commenting, or framing the news of the day. Thus, taking into account the media's portrayal of society seems to be important if populist perceptions and attitudes are to be explained.

In contrast to the characteristics of voters of populist parties and candidates, we know very little about the *effects of media coverage of populist actors and the effects of populist campaign communication* on citizens. Although there is a lot of research on the effects of political actors' communication and on the effects of coverage of candidates or parties in general, specific studies focusing on populists are scarce. This scarcity is all the more surprising since populism is frequently regarded as distinguishing itself from other kinds of political actors precisely by its rhetoric, its communicative style, or by the way it shapes public discourse. Nonetheless, only two countries (Austria and the Netherlands) have had more systematic attempts to track down related effects in recent years.

In the Netherlands, experimental research was conducted on the effects of media coverage of populists on, for example, populist actors' perceived legitimacy. The effects were influenced by individual-level moderators like education, cynicism, personal contact to immigrants, and subjective perceptions of threat (Bos, van der Brug, & de Vreese, 2013). In Austria, researchers studied the effects that populist anti-immigrant campaign posters using economic or symbolic/cultural threat appeals have on anti-immigrant attitudes. Here, too, potential mediators and moderators of effects were taken into account, including education, age, negative stereotypes about immigrants, and intergroup anxiety (Matthes & Schmuck, 2015). Interestingly, one of the studies did not look only at the effects on members of the majority but also at the effects on the immigrants who were the target of the populist campaign (Appel, 2012).

Citizens and Populist Communication—A Heuristic Model for Future Research

We have already pointed out that there is a general lack of research specifically addressing the effects of populist communication on citizens. Basically, most of extant research does not directly address the question of such effects or such effects are assumed rather than explicitly investigated. Instead of trying to disentangle potential sources of communicative influences that might contribute to populist voting or other kinds of effects, more or less direct conclusions are drawn from the patterns of populist messages about their perception by citizens and the effects they might produce. Such an overly simplistic and stimulus-response-like notion confuses various aspects of political communication processes and does not contribute to an adequate and nuanced picture of the pattern and mechanisms underlying the effects of populist communication on citizens. Obviously, from a political communication point of view, there are a lot of open questions when it comes to the effects of populist communication on citizens. But what exactly are the shortcomings in research and what could be done to remedy some of them?

In order to identify blind spots and areas that are less investigated, we propose a basic, heuristic, individual-level model that puts the citizen with his predispositions at the start of a

populist-communication process. This model follows other recent basic-effects process models (e.g., Valkenburg & Peter, 2013). Based on citizens' predispositions, citizens select certain party and media messages that are, of course, themselves affected by real-world developments. Via their patterns of selection, citizens create their individual information environments, which may include different sets of party and media sources. The structures of these environments can be described by indicators like size, political heterogeneity, or overlaps with the information sources of fellow citizens. For example, media selection may lead to open, politically diverse environments or to closed, politically homogeneous "echo chambers" and "filter bubbles," in which citizens are mostly confronted with consonant information (Colleoni, Rozza, & Arvidsson, 2014; Dvir-Gvirsman, Tsafati, & Menchen-Trevino, 2014; Pariser, 2011). The reception of those messages, which again may be moderated by individual predispositions, should then lead to certain immediate response states (e.g., arousal, emotions, priming), which serve as mediators of different kinds of emotional, cognitive, attitudinal, or behavioral communication effects. These effects may have further transactional effects since they might influence the predispositions of subsequent communicative behaviors.

Finally, the model hints at the relevance of contextual factors at the macro- and meso-level that must to be taken into account, especially in comparative research. For example, individual citizens are influenced by their personal social network through interpersonal communication and by their national political culture and public opinion. In addition, messages delivered through political, media, and interpersonal communication channels are provided by organizations that are themselves influenced by macro-level characteristics such as the competitive structure of political and media markets, electoral and political systems, and press freedom (Figure 29.1).

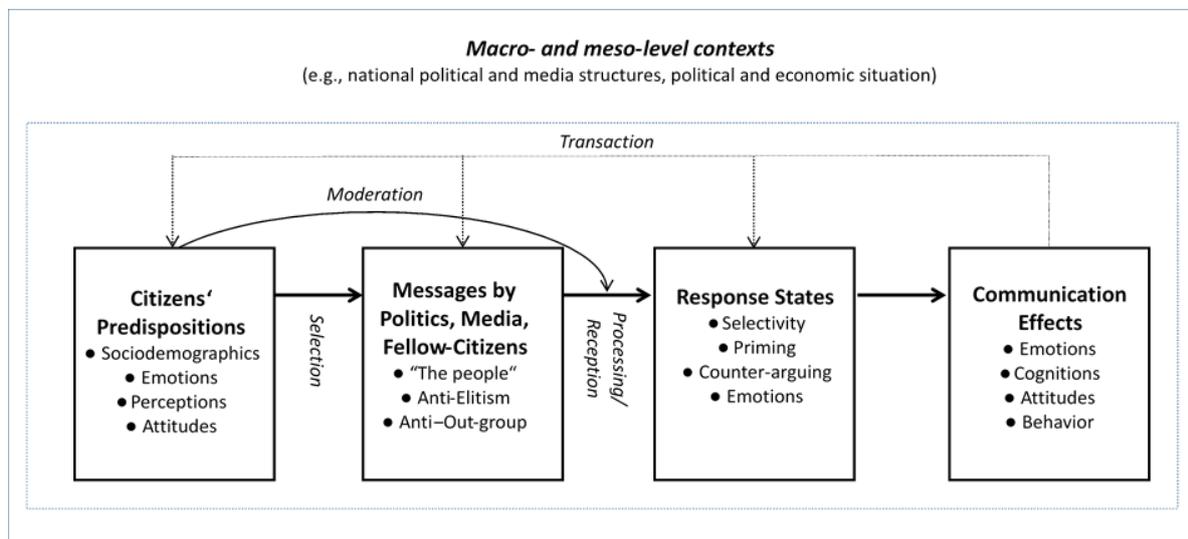


Figure 29.1 An individual-level model of the uses and effects of populist political communication.

Following the different components and phases suggested in this model, we will now discuss several shortcomings of prior research that point to various directions for future studies on citizens' populist political communication. In addition, we will add some comments on the research designs and methods that may be most suited for those studies:

Regarding *the consequences of citizen predispositions*, our literature review shows that there is a dire need for research. To a large extent, the information available to citizens determines their perceptions of parties and countries; yet, we know almost nothing about how populist attitudes affect both the selection of information sources and individual patterns of information acquisition. Only for Norway and the United Kingdom do we have any indication that voting for populist parties seems to be related to reading right-leaning tabloid newspapers (United Kingdom) or watching news and current affairs programs on certain commercial TV channels (Norway). Otherwise, we know very little about how intensively supporters of populist parties use different kinds of information sources—such as party propaganda, established mainstream media, alternative media, and interpersonal sources—or whether they prefer different media channels (e.g., TV, print, online), or whether their patterns of information acquisition and media use are different from those of other parties' supporters. We also have no indication as to whether populist supporters' information environment is especially homogenous ideologically or whether they might opt out of using established mainstream media to a greater degree than voters of other parties. Are citizens with populist attitudes and voting behavior trapped in their own "populist echo chamber"? Do they turn away from elite media and public service television? Do they get trapped in specialized online discussion forums? These questions are important ones that should be addressed by future studies.

Most citizens in Europe's democracies have mediated rather than personal experiences with populist actors; this issue is touched upon in various publications but has not translated into research that really takes it into account. Our knowledge regarding the effects of different *communication channels* is therefore scant indeed. Despite notable exceptions that look at interviews with populist actors published in the general media, for example, most studies look at populist parties' manifestos only. Though such studies are crucial when trying to identify how populist a party is, they tell us little about how the party is perceived by citizens simply because few citizens ever read party manifestos. Moreover, parties' public communication and their manifestos are often very different. For these reasons, we can assume that campaign communication (posters, spots, public appearances, social media activities, etc.) and media coverage of populist actors are likely to be much more important for citizens' perceptions of populists. For example, a party confronted with constant criticism by the majority of the mainstream media may have a hard time achieving success in the long term, or the media criticism might contribute to a closing of the party's ranks and be outweighed by the positive effects of the huge amount of coverage (as shown in Chapters 6 and 12 ('Sweden'; 'Switzerland')). Thus, in trying to explain the effects of populist communication, its often-mediated character has to be taken seriously.

Moreover, research does not distinguish between *populism by the media* and *populism through the media* (see Chapter 28 in this volume). Most importantly, only a few studies take into account the fact that, even media coverage not dealing itself with populists, might nevertheless contribute to their popularity (e.g., Bos et al., 2011). For example, by constantly criticizing established parties and the democratic system, the media can contribute to political cynicism and distrust; by negatively commenting on and framing questions about the European Union, the economic situation, minorities, and foreign powers, the media might foster associated negative feelings, perceptions, and attitudes; by overemphasizing the unique qualities and achievements of a social group or of their own nation, they might contribute to nativism, ethnocentrism, and nationalism. These outcomes mean that the media can contribute to populist success indirectly, without even mentioning populist actors (Boomgaarden &

Vliegenthart, 2007). Research looking at the power of communication in regard to populism should not have too narrow a perspective on potential media influences.

As we have seen across the various countries' literatures, content analysis, measuring and relating the various components of populist communication, is still scarce. But even less is known about which of the numerous *elements of populist communication* that are seen as essential in the literature (Chapter 2 in this volume) or that are used by politicians (see Chapter 27 in this volume) actually make a difference. In fact, there are not more than a handful of studies trying to disentangle the effects of these elements and their interaction (e.g., Bos et al., 2013). It is therefore still unclear whether elements of style and rhetoric or actual issue positions are key to the success of populist communication and what kinds of stylistic and rhetorical features might be influential. We do not know whether communication by populists themselves, media coverage of their activities, or media coverage of related issues is most influential. And finally, it also is unclear whether our general knowledge about the effects of rhetorical and stylistic features of politicians' communication and about other message characteristics that are popular in media effects research (but not yet discussed in the context of populism, such as verbal and visual framing) can be generalized to populist actors and their audiences. For example, studies not specifically dealing with populism have investigated the negativity effect, which proposes that negative information is weighted disproportionately high when compared to equidistantly valenced positive information (Kellermann, 1989). These studies have also looked at rhetorical strategies—for example, using evidence (Reinard, 1988), emotional appeals (Nabi, 2002), strategic ambiguity (Reinemann & Maurer, 2005), and classical rhetoric strategies such as metaphors (Sopory & Dillard, 2002).

Several researchers have suggested that populist actors often perceive mainstream media as part of the elite, as supporters of the established political powers, and thus as advocates of the status quo. Consequently, mainstream media and the journalists working for them are frequently the targeted by populists, particularly during campaigns when the populists feel that they are receiving unfair media treatment (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). This raises questions as to how populist party supporters perceive the mainstream media and how those perceptions influence the potential effects of those media. Research on trust in the media and media skepticism (e.g., Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Tsfati & Cappella, 2003), as well as literature on the effects of assumptions about presumed media influence (Gunther & Storey, 2003; Tsfati, 2007), can provide important insights here. For example, it has been shown that skepticism toward mainstream news media is related to the use of sectorial and extra-national news consumption (Tsfati & Peri, 2006). Another valuable strand of literature is research on perceptual biases of media that might, for example, be fostered by a strong identification with a certain group (Slater, 2007). Typically, strong identification with a group promoting a certain political cause contributes to stronger hostile media perceptions (Hartman & Tanis, 2013).

Media effects research has shown that communication by political actors, the media, and citizens can have a wide array of effects. *Response states and media effects* research on populist political communication should take notice of that fact. The effects include emotional effects on distinct emotions; cognitive effects on knowledge, perceptions of social reality, social identity, and the climate of opinion; attitudinal effects on the evaluation of politicians, parties, minorities, democracy, and so on; and behavioral effects on interpersonal communication, protest, and—of course—voter preferences. In addition, research has

demonstrated that these different types of effects are often closely related—for example, when it comes to the relation of reality perceptions, emotions, and behaviors.

Most research on support for populist actors, however, seems to focus on voting behavior. While this approach might seem justified to a certain extent because of the importance of the act of voting in democracies, the spectrum of potential populist communication effects is obviously much broader. Even more important, satisfactory explanations of communicative effects on populist voting will likely only be possible if the communicative effects on the factors that drive those voting decisions are also taken into account.

As we have stressed, the media do not only provide information about populist actors; they continue to be the most important source of information about the status quo in a society, about its problems, achievements, and perspectives. The way the media select, present, and frame their information is crucial for the way citizens perceive what is important in a society, who is responsible for problems and their solutions, and what should be done to solve the issues at hand. Numerous studies have shown that the picture of society as presented in the media does not necessarily show the real development of events and that citizens' perceptions tend to follow media coverage more closely than real-world developments (e.g., Funkhouser, 1973). Moreover, in free media systems with a diversity of news outlets, the media tend to focus on different issues and frame them differently because they serve different audiences or have a differing editorial line. Therefore, connecting macro-level developments (e.g., economic change, migration, etc.) to individual-level behavior (e.g., voting for populist parties), without taking into account how those macro-level developments were covered by the media, means that one is removing a highly important factor out of the equation.

In order to systematically track down the effects of populist communication and media coverage relating to populist success, it is necessary to combine two approaches: experimental research and field studies using longitudinal designs, in which the development of populist communication, relevant media coverage, or interpersonal communication is tracked over time and related to the development of citizens' emotions, cognitions, attitudes, or behavior over time on an individual level of analysis. Experimental research is especially well suited, for example, to investigating the relative impact of different elements of populist communication in a controlled setting. In just a few European countries, scholars have only recently begun to conduct such experiments with a special focus on populism, but many questions still need to be answered (see, e.g., Bos, van de Brug et al., 2013; Matthes & Schmuck, 2015). In contrast, longitudinal, individual-level analyses combining data on the content of the individual information environments and the changes in voters' mindsets have not yet been conducted with a special focus on populists. Generally, these kinds of studies typically use panel- or rolling cross-section-designs and provide especially strict tests of media effects (e.g., Kepplinger, Brosius, & Staab, 1991; Kleinnijenhuis, 1991; Slater, 2007). They take into account, for example, that the content of the media typically varies across outlets, that voters typically have individual patterns of information acquisition and are thus confronted with a differing information environment, and that the effects of information environments are dynamic.

Finally, while there are several studies that comparatively analyze the profile of right-wing populist voters across countries (e.g., Ivarsflaten, 2008; Oesch, 2008; Pauwels, 2014; Spier, 2010), the success of populist *communication* has not yet been investigated in a strictly comparative fashion. As the increasing amount of cross-national, truly comparative research in political communication suggests, not only individual-level but also meso- and

macro- level factors that might contribute to both populist communication effects and the success of populist political actors have to be considered on a theoretical level. Whereas most studies on populist voters seem to focus on individual-level explanations only, macro-level factors—like the situation of the political and media markets (e.g., fragmentation, strength of public service TV, freedom of press, commercialization, strength of TV vs. press), the economic situation, or cultural and historical factors—might provide valuable additional insights into the reasons for populist success. At the empirical level, truly comparative research means employing a cross-nationally equivalent operationalization and taking into account country-specifics (thus retaining what populism means in a particular national context).

Conclusion

Drawing on the national research that has been reviewed in this book, this chapter has more generally discussed what we know about the communication effects processes involved in populist political communication across European countries. In fact, our review leaves us with more questions than answers. Although we have a fairly good picture—at least in some countries—of the typical populist voter, only very few studies have systematically investigated the individual differential effects of specific elements of populist messages. This paucity signals a great need for effects research, and particularly for studies investigating effects in a comparative manner. Looking at citizen characteristics, perceptual, emotional, and attitudinal variables seem to be more powerful in explaining populist voting than simple sociodemographics, which suggests that the former should be the key predispositions, moderators, or outcomes to be considered in effects studies. Moreover, the discussion of the various variables points to the need for a comprehensive model that integrates both the message elements and voter characteristics that are discussed in populism research, and—most importantly—that tries to explain their relation. As a first step in that direction, we used a process model of media effects to identify several blind spots in populism research that should be addressed soon. These included (a) the role of certain predispositions as driving forces for the use of populist media and messages, (b) the effects of direct versus mediated populist communication, (c) the effects of media coverage of populism versus coverage-fostering populism, (d) the part played by different message elements and their configurations, (e) the role of factors moderating the processing and reception of messages, (f) the various kinds of possible effects, and (g) the part played by contextual factors. Finally, we reflected on the issue of methods and design, and came to the conclusion that cross-national experimental studies might prove valuable, being especially well suited for improving our sketchy picture of the effects of populist political communication.

References

- Akkerman, A., Mudde, C., & Zaslove, A. (2014). How populist are the people? Measuring populist attitude in voters. *Comparative Political Studies*, 47(9), 1324–1353.
- Appel, M. (2012). Anti-immigrant propaganda by radical right parties and the intellectual performance of adolescents. *Political Psychology*, 33(4), 483–493.
- Boomgaarden, H. G., & Vliegenthart, R. (2007). Explaining the rise of anti-immigrant parties: The role of news content in the Netherlands. *Electoral Studies*, 26(2), 404–417.
- Bos, L., van der Brug, W., & de Vreese, C. (2011). How the media shape perceptions of right-wing populist leaders. *Political Communication*, 28(2), 182–206.
- Bos, L., van der Brug, W., & de Vreese, C. (2013). An experimental test of the impact of style and rhetoric on the perception of right-wing populist and mainstream party leaders. *Acta Politica*, 48, 192–208.
- Colleoni, E., Rozza, A., & Arvidsson, A. (2014). Echo chamber or public sphere? Predicting political orientation and measuring political homophily in Twitter using big data. *Journal of Communication*, 64(2), 317–332.
- Dvir-Gvirsman, S., Tsfati, Y., & Menchen-Trevino, E. (2014). The extent and nature of ideological selective exposure online: Combining survey responses with actual web log data from the 2013 Israeli elections. *New Media & Society*. Advance online publication. <http://nms.sagepub.com/>.
- Funkhouser, G. R. (1973). The issues of the sixties: An exploratory study in the dynamics of public opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(1), 62–75.
- Gunther, A. C., & Storey, J. D. (2003). The influence of presumed influence. *Journal of Communication*, 53(2), 199–215.
- Haller, J. J., & Hogg, M. A. (2014). All power to our great leader: Political leadership under uncertainty. In J.-W. von Prooijen & P. A. M. van Lange (Eds.), *Power, politics, and paranoia. Why people are suspicious of their leaders* (pp. 130–149). Cambridge, England, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hartmann, T., & Tanis, M. (2013). Examining the hostile media effect as an intergroup phenomenon: The role of ingroup identification and status. *Journal of Communication*, 63(3), 535–555.
- Ivarsflaten, E. (2008). What unites right-wing populists in Western Europe? Re-examining grievance mobilization models in seven successful cases. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41, 3–23.
- Jagers, J., & Walgrave, S. (2007). Populism as political communication style: An empirical study of political parties' discourse in Belgium. *European Journal of Political Research*, 46(3), 319–345.
- Kellermann, K. (1989). The negativity effect in interaction: It's all in your point of view. *Human Communication Research*, 16(2), 147–183.
- Kepplinger, H. M., Brosius, H.-B., & Staab, J. F. (1991). Opinion formation in mediated conflicts and crises: A theory of cognitive-affective media effects. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 3(2), 132–156.
- Kleinnijenhuis, J. (1991). Newspaper complexity and the knowledge gap. *European Journal of Communication*, 6(4), 499–522.
- Kohring, M., & Matthes, J. (2007). Trust in news media. Development and validation of a multidimensional scale. *Communication Research*, 34(3), 231–252.
- Matthes, J., & Schmuck, D. (2015). The effects of anti-immigrant right-wing populist ads on implicit and explicit attitudes: A moderated mediation model. *Communication Research*. Advance online publication. <http://crx.sagepub.com/>
- Nabi, R. L. (2002). Discrete emotions and persuasion. In P. Dillard & M. Pfau (Eds.), *The persuasion handbook* (pp. 289–308). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Oesch, D. (2008). Explaining workers' support for right-wing populist parties in Western Europe: Evidence from Austria, Belgium, France, Norway, and Switzerland. *International Political Science Review*, 29(3), 349–373.
- Pariser, E. (2011). *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is hiding from you*. New York, NY: Penguin.
- Pauwels, T. (2014). *Populism in Western Europe. Comparing Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands*. Milton Park, UK: Routledge.
- Reinard, J. C. (1988). The empirical study of the persuasive effects of evidence: The status after fifty years of research. *Human Communication Research*, 15(1), 3–59.
- Reinemann, C., & Maurer, M. (2005). Unifying or polarizing? Short-term effects and post-debate consequences of different rhetorical strategies in televised political debates. *Journal of Communication*, 55(4), 775–794.
- Rooduijn, M. (2014). Vox populismus: A populist radical right attitude among the public. *Nations and Nationalism*, 20(1), 80–92.
- Slater, M. D. (2007). Reinforcing spirals: The mutual influence of media selectivity and media effects and their impact on individual behavior and social identity. *Communication Theory*, 17(3), 281–303.
- Sopory, P., & Dillard, J. P. (2002). The persuasive effects of metaphor: A meta-analysis. *Human Communication Research*, 28(3), 382–419.
- Spier, Tim (2010). *Modernisierungsverlierer? Die Wählerschaft rechtspopulistischer Parteien in Europa*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Tsfati, Y. (2007). Hostile media perceptions, presumed media influence and minority alienation: The case of Arabs in Israel. *Journal of Communication*, 57(4), 632–651.
- Tsfati, Y., & Cappella, J. N. (2003). Do people watch what they do not trust? Exploring the association between news media skepticism and exposure. *Communication Research*, 30(5), 504–529.
- Tsfati, Y., & Peri, Y. (2006). Mainstream media skepticism and exposure to sectorial and extranational news media: The case of Israel. *Mass Communication & Society*, 9(2), 165–187.
- Valkenburg, P. M., & Peter, J. (2013). The differential susceptibility to media effects model. *Journal of Communication*, 63(2), 221–243.