




Challengers or the Establishment? How Populists Talk About Populists

Jakob Schwörer, Belén Fernández-García & Manuela Caiani



To cite this article: Jakob Schwörer, Belén Fernández-García & Manuela Caiani (2023): Challengers or the Establishment? How Populists Talk About Populists, German Politics, DOI: 10.1080/09644008.2023.2207014

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2023.2207014>

 View supplementary material 

 Published online: 05 May 2023.




 Submit your article to this journal 

 View related articles 

 View Crossmark data 



Challengers or the Establishment? How Populists Talk About Populists

JAKOB SCHWÖRER ^a, BELÉN FERNÁNDEZ-GARCÍA ^b and
MANUELA CAIANI ^c



^aInstitute for Political Science, Leuphana University, Lüneburg, Germany; ^bDepartment of Political Science, Public International Law and Procedural Law, Faculty of Law, University of Málaga, Málaga, Spain; ^cFaculty of Political and Social Sciences, Scuola Normale Superiore, Firenze, Italy


ABSTRACT

Several western European countries recently experienced the establishment of more than one populist actor in their party system. While we know how populists attack the political mainstream, we lack knowledge on how populists talk about other populist actors. Conducting content analysis of campaigning communication on Twitter and 23 interviews with populist MPs in Germany, Italy and Spain – countries characterised by the presence of various populisms – we find that populists demonise each other perceiving themselves as adversaries. Populists attribute a malicious and extremist character to the (populist) opponent when the latter is ideologically distant indicating the decisive role of host ideologies. Positive evaluations only occur by overlapping policy position. Some specificities emerge in Italy, where established populists behave more like the mainstream. Being populist as such does not unify political actors in the fight against the establishment: populists appear at least as hostile towards other anti-establishment parties as towards the mainstream.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 16 October 2022; Accepted 20 April 2023

In recent years, an increasing amount of scholarship is engaged in the communicative practice of populist parties (Ernst et al. 2017; Franzmann and Lewandowsky 2020). While the discussion about the ideological character of populism is still ongoing (Aslanidis 2016), we know quite well how populist actors talk about mainstream parties, elites and alleged non-native outgroups (Ivaldi et al. 2017; March 2017; Caiani and Císař 2018). Recent studies further broadened the perspective of populist communication assessing to what extent mainstream parties adopt populist or nativist content (Rooduijn, de Lange, and van der Brug 2014; Manucci and Weber 2017)

CONTACT Jakob Schwörer  Jakob.schworer@leuphana.de  Institute for Political Science, Leuphana University, Lüneburg 21335, Germany

 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2023.2207014>.

and how they talk about the populist radical right (Schwörer and Fernández-García 2021).

Populist communication consists of people-centred and anti-elitist messages accusing political elites of not acting in the interest of the people (Ernst et al. 2017; Wolinetz and Zaslove 2018). In the populists' worldview, politicians have lost their connection with the common people and are rather interested in their own well-being instead of the true need of the people, which they can't even recognise.

In western Europe, populists are seen as important challengers for centre-right and centre-left mainstream parties and strategies about how to deal with them are widely discussed (Abou-Chadi, Mitteregger, and Mudde 2021). Yet, while populist actors emerged in almost all western European democracies in the last decades, populist parties also compete against each other within the same party system. In countries like Italy, Spain and Germany, we are confronted with the co-existence of multiple populist actors with different host-ideologies claiming to speak in the name of the people and rebel against elites. While we know how these populist actors talk about the 'establishment', we lack knowledge how they talk about *each other*.

Drawing on a systematic content analysis on Twitter for recent national elections and 23 interviews with populist parties' representatives, this article investigates whether populists consider themselves as competitors or 'allies', which frames they use to justify their criticism against other 'anti-elitist' political actors and which discursive strategies are adopted to weaken the respective counterpart. We focus on populist competition in Italy, Spain and Germany where a second populist party recently emerged and challenged the populist dominance of the 'first' anti-establishment force.

In what follows, we first describe the main features of populism and populist discourses and trace conceptual boundaries. Second, approaching populism from an ideological and communicative point of view and building on the literature on negative campaigning (and concepts from social movement studies), we develop guiding hypotheses on the discursive behaviour of populist actors in competition with other populist forces. Third, after describing our methods and case selection, we show how populists talk about populists.

The findings indicate that the way populists deal with each other strongly depends on the host ideology, electoral success and on time (i.e. the 'age' of populist parties). Populists emphasise attacks towards electorally more successful parties. A sympathy towards populist newcomers hardly emerges – except few programmatic similarities in specific policy areas. Therefore, the 'populist' orientation per se does not provide a sufficient ideological foundation to engage in positive campaigning. Instead, the populist competitors are severely attacked rhetorically. Specificities primarily emerge in

Italy. Especially the established Forza Italia and to a lower extent the Lega make use of anti-populist rhetoric, while the M5S tries to attach the Lega to the political elite.

Populist Newcomers Against Established Populist Parties

While there is no disagreement about the existence of discursive features of populism and the content of populist messages (Aslanidis 2016; Ernst et al. 2017; Wolinetz and Zaslove 2018) the question whether populism should be considered as an ideology or worldview (Aslanidis 2016; Mudde 2007; Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017), a type of organisation, a rhetoric or political style (Caiani and Graziano 2022) is still vividly debated. We argue that populism has certain ‘values’ from which political positions can be deduced such as demands for direct democracy or against corruption. In line with Mudde, we consider populism as thin-centred ideology ‘that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, “the pure people” versus “the corrupt elite”, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people’ (Mudde 2004, 543). The populist worldview results in certain communicative elements (Ernst et al. 2019). Populist parties question the character, behaviour and intentions of other political parties opposing them to the needs of the honest people. Such allegations and antagonisms between the people and elites are easy to communicate for populists as political outsiders fighting against the old political establishment. But this becomes more difficult when they are confronted with political newcomers who, for their part, pretend to embody the will of the people as opposed to the vested interests of the old parties. What do ‘old’ populist parties accuse new populist parties of when they enter the parliamentary scene and vice versa? And which discursive dimensions might be mobilised by the two populist competitors?

The first question this study attempts to address refers to the main targets of populists’ attacks. How important is campaigning against other populist actors compared to the rest of the parties? Literature on negative campaigning offers useful expectations about the triggers of attacks towards competing parties (Elmelund-Præstekær 2008; Haselmayer 2019). In particular, two factors – according to the vote- and office-seeking nature of parties – can be considered to determine the targets of opposition: the ideological closeness to the other party and the latter’s electoral strength. In multiparty systems that require coalition governments, it can be expected that parties do not refer frequently to parties which are ideologically close, because negative campaigning towards potential coalition partners may make government participation more difficult.

The electoral success of parties is an additional factor influencing how often they talk about others: challenger parties would rely on negative

communication towards potential winners of the election (Haselmayer 2019). The logic behind that argument is that electorally dominating parties need to be weakened, which may work by using negative campaigning to demobilise supporters. Centre-left mainstream parties, for example, demonise radical right parties, only when the latter experienced an electoral breakthrough (Schwörer and Fernández-García 2021). Populists may therefore be expected to criticise particularly the electorally most successful parties in the polls and refrain from frequently attacking electorally weaker actors.

H1a/b. The more parties are ideologically distant (a) and electorally successful (b) the more likely populist parties refer to them.

Furthermore, ideological distance may not only determine the frequency of references to competing populist actors but also the type of reference (positive vs. negative). Social movement studies have shown that parties and movements with a similar ideological background or issue-focus (i.e. same aim in a specific policy area) may also collaborate at least in certain policy fields (Hutter 2014). In this regard, southern European countries like Greece and Italy recently experienced populist coalition governments consisting of ideologically different actors. In the case of Greece, for example, besides the anti-establishment orientation, a common ‘anti-Memorandum’ and anti-austerity agenda favoured the formation of the coalition government in 2015 between SYRIZA and ANEL (Markou 2021a).

While the populist orientation may therefore facilitate collaboration and positive engagement between parties – although only sporadically – the host ideology is however considered to determine populists’ behaviour to a higher extent (Rydgren 2017). In this regard, populism is considered a ‘thin’ ideology with a restricted core (Mudde 2004) but it needs to be combined with a (thicker) ‘host’ ideology (e.g. socialism or nativism) ‘that specifies its appearance as right- or left-wing’ (Loew and Faas 2019, 496) and that determines who belongs to the people and the elite. Whereas left-wing populist movements identify the ‘people’ in socio-economic terms, such as the working class exploited by the bourgeois elite, right-wing populism refers to the ethnic nation.

Positive evaluations of populist competitors should rather be the exception, if the two competitors have a different ideological profile and emphasise different issues. Chapel Hill Expert Survey data (Seth et al. 2022) provides an overall ideological left-right score including GALTAN and economic issues (‘Irgen’) and regarding issue emphasis, we know that a salient *issue* for populist parties is Euroscepticism (Pirro and Taggart 2018).¹ Therefore, we can expect, as in the Greek example, that a common critical stance towards the EU results in more positive engagement between populists.

H2a/b. The closer populist parties are ideologically (a) and the more common their position on European integration (b), the more likely positive references towards each other occur.

Third, the host ideology of populist actors may further determine the *type* of attack towards other political actors (Katsambekis 2017; Rydgren 2017). For the populist radical right, this ideology is often considered nativism holding that ‘states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are threatening to the homogenous nation-state’ (Mudde 2007, 19). On the other hand, for populist left parties are often considered ‘democratic socialism’, being located on the left of social democrats, rejecting capitalism and demanding a transformation of the economy (March 2017). While the former emphasise cultural issues and define the people in cultural, religious or ethnic terms, the latter construct the people in socio-economic and inclusionary terms (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012). We therefore expect that left-wing populists are likely to criticise the economic agenda of right-wing populists which neglect the poorer parts of society; while the populist radical right primarily accuses their populist competitors of not taking a tough stance on immigration.

Regarding the Italian M5S, predictions are more difficult, due to its eclectic and flexible nature (Manucci and Amsler 2018; Mosca and Tronconi 2019). Yet, on the economic dimension, the party emphasises left-wing politics while not totally rejecting nativist content (Schwörer 2016; Mosca and Tronconi 2019). For example, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey classifies the M5S as the most leftist party in Italy – besides the far left ‘Sinistra Italiana’ – regarding its ideological stance on economic issues in 2019 (Seth et al. 2022). Accordingly, criticising the economic agenda of right-wing populists may still be a feature of the M5S.

H3a/b: Left-wing populist actors (Podemos; M5S*; Linke) use ‘economic’ frames² to attack the populist competitor (a); while nativists (Vox; Lega; AfD) use cultural frames.

The last hypothesis addresses the impact of the status as populist newcomer. If one core discursive feature of populism is detaching political competitors from the people and accusing them of bad intentions (Ernst et al. 2019), we assume that this is easier to conduct for new populist challengers, which did so far not collaborate with other parties. Portraying the populist newcomer as corrupt and close to elites is more difficult to sell for established populist actors, which further are expected to moderate their discourses as soon as they are integrated into the system (Caiani and Graziano 2022). Established parties might make use of an ‘anti-populism’ discourse (Stavrakakis 2014), a rhetorical reaction according to which the populist competitors are portrayed as irresponsible, demagogical, immoral or irrational (Markou

2021b) – accusations we rather expect to come from mainstream parties than from populists. Schwörer (2021) found, for instance, that the established Forza Italia regularly labels the M5S ‘populist’. In this respect, we expect that populist newcomers make use of the classical anti-elitist and people-centred allegations framing the established populist actors as the political establishment, while the latter does so less often and rather refers to anti-populist rhetoric.

H4a/b: Populist newcomers accuse established populists of belonging to the elite and ignoring the needs of the people (a); Established populists less frequently accuse populist newcomer to be the establishment using anti-populist rhetoric (b).

Research Design

Our case selection was meant to focus on positive cases according to our research question (i.e. at least two populist parties) and allow for sufficient variation on the dimensions we considered relevant for influencing the way (e.g. positively or negatively) populists talk about other populist competitors. Therefore, for the case selection, we first need countries in Europe with at least two relevant populist parties in the same party system. Secondly, while this is the case in several countries (particularly Eastern Europe), we also need to select populist parties of different ‘age’ and different host-ideologies (i.e. socialists and nativists), as these two aspects are considered to have impact on discourses about competitors. Finally, in order to make the conditions stable (i.e. the formulae *ceteris paribus*) we preferred to limit our investigation to a certain regional area (Western Europe), in order to avoid too broad variations in terms of political and discursive opportunities of the context (Caiani 2023). We further exclusively focus on countries where populist parties have not been in government during the period of analysis since incumbent status is expected to have a particular large impact on campaigning towards political competitors (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016; Fernández-García and Luengo 2020).³ As a result of these theoretical reflections, we choose populist parties in Italy, Germany and Spain, having each both relevant left-wing and populist radical right parties according to the Popu-list (Rooduijn et al. 2019): Lega and the economically left-wing M5S in Italy; AfD and the Die Linke in Germany and Vox and Podemos in Spain. Some country specificities have been also taken into account: While the populist orientation of Berlusconi’s Forza Italia (FI) is less clear, we further assess how FI talks about the M5S and vice versa.⁴ While Brothers of Italy is also sometimes considered as populist radical right party, during the period of analysis (regarding the content analysis) it played a minor political role achieving only 4 per cent of the votes in the 2018 general election.

We select the first election campaign after the entry of the new populist party in parliament (2018 for Italy; 2021 for Germany). In Spain, Vox was not represented yet in the national parliament before the election from April 2019 but entered the Andalusian parliament in December 2018 with 10.96 per cent and played a crucial role in the formation of the regional centre-right government. In sum, all countries under analysis, are characterised by the presence of a populist party, which entered the national parliament years before the populist newcomer emerged while none of them was in government, allowing to investigate the discursive reaction of old vs. new populist actors. The case selection is summarised in [Table 1](#).

We primarily focus on populist communication on social media (i.e. Twitter) considering this arena as a most likely case of ‘negative’ communication and populist messages (Ernst et al. 2019). We analyse Tweets on Twitter of parties and their leaders during national election campaigns (2021 for Germany, 2019 for Spain and 2018 for Italy).⁵ Unlike more institutional text sources like election manifestos, campaigning on Twitter is used by populist parties to attack political competitors (Krämer 2017).⁶

Methodologically we use a partially computer-based content analysis. First, a dictionary is created including keywords that might refer to the respective competing populist party or their candidate (e.g. ‘M5S’, ‘Stelle’, ‘Maio’).⁷ Through the advanced search tool from Twitter, we search for Tweets containing at least one of the keywords. Second, the content of the Tweets containing a keyword is analysed *manually* to trace the concrete meaning and type of allegation (i.e. ‘frame’). Both, the text of the Tweet as well as attached visual images containing texts are considered. The Tweets published by parties and leading candidates towards other populist actors sum up to 1.620 Tweets.⁸ Most of the categories that capture the content of discourses are created inductively, since assumptions about the way

Table 1. Case selection.

Country	Party	Twitter ID	Period
Italy	Lega	@LegaSalvini	3 September 2017 to 3 March 2018
	Matteo Salvini	@matteosalvinimi	
	Luigi di MaioM5S	@luigidimaio@Mov5Stelle	
	Forza Italia	@forza_italia	
Germany	Silvio Berlusconi	@berlusconi	25 March 2021
	Linke	@dieLinke	
	Susanne Hennig-Wellsow	@SusanneHennig	25 September 2021
	Janine Wissler	@Janine_Wissler	
	AfD	@AfD	
	Jörg Meuthen	@Joerg_Meuthen	
Spain	Tino Chrupalla	@Tino_Chrupalla	27 October 2018 to 27 April 2019
	Podemos	@PODEMOS	
	Pablo Iglesias	@PabloIglesias	
	Vox	@vox_es	
	Santiago Abascal	@Santi_ABASCAL	

how populists talk about populists are lacking (category system is available in the online appendix). We applied these categories (i.e. analytical guidelines/codebook) to conduct the content analysis, focusing on: (a) The presence of criticism regarding the character, aims and behaviour of the populist competitor (e.g. by portraying it as corrupt and dishonest or by questioning its competence); (b) negative evaluations of policy positions (e.g. economic agendas); (c) classical populist allegations (Ernst et al. 2019) (i.e. belonging to political elites; not acting in the people's interests); (d) 'anti-populist' allegations referring to criticism usually expected from the political establishment, such as being rebellious and not behaving according to conventional standards; (e) demonising claims labelling competitors as extremists, violent, not democratic. The unit of measurement is the single Tweet, while the unit of analysis is all Tweets containing a reference to the respective populist competitor. Hence, the percentage of the respective categories illustrates their share on the total amount of Tweets towards a party.

For the sake of inter-coder reliability, we opted for Cohen's Kappa. For each 'negative' category, we selected a random number of coded Tweets as well as a random sample of Tweets criticising the opponent but not according to the same category. A second coder not involved in the project was instructed to code the sample according to the same coding procedure. A respective table with the reliability scores and percentage agreement can be found in the Appendix. Regarding all categories inter-coder reliability is at least substantially consistent (Landis and Koch 1977).

To enrich the data from our content analysis and to detect attitudes not covered by official campaigning language, we further conduct 23 in-depth interviews with party representatives (between September and November 2021). Interviews are meant not to generate representative data on populists' attitudes, but to have a different access to populists' perceptions of populist competitors understanding and detecting further motivations, frames and justifications. In line with existing approaches, we choose semi-structured questionnaires instead of pre-defined responses allowing politicians to express themselves and to minimise the voice of the researcher (Blee and Taylor 2002; Salgado and Stanyer 2019). The whole questionnaire can be found in the online appendix. We provide insights into the interviews within the text of the analytical part that show similarities and differences with the Twitter content. Yet, the tables and figures containing numeric data are based on the content analysis from Twitter. The questionnaire was administered online. Knowing that response rates are particularly low among politicians (Cowley 2021) we contacted all MPs from the national parliaments via email with a link to an online interview.⁹ The interview focuses on various questions aiming at detecting the MPs relationships with politicians from the competing populist party and their opinion towards it.¹⁰

Analysis

Looking at the actual saliency of attacks towards the populist competitor (H1), [Figure 1](#) shows the absolute number of references (party and leaders together) to any of the four major competing parties (accumulated for party and leaders). In Spain, the respective populist competitor is less frequently attacked by Vox and Podemos than any other party, suggesting that it is not perceived as the main opponent. Regarding Vox, it criticises most often the PSOE, which received the highest vote share during the six months prior to the election (on average 26.2 per cent)¹¹ followed by the second largest party, the PP (20.48 per cent) while references to Podemos and Cs do not exactly match with the predicted votes (Podemos: 15.1 per cent; Cs: 18 per cent). The later can be explained by the fact that the right-wing Cs is ideologically closer to Vox than Podemos.

Ideology and electoral strength seem also to explain references to other parties by *Podemos*. Despite the fact that the centre-left PSOE is the electorally most successful party during the election campaign, *Podemos* primarily attacks the centre-right PP. The argument that negative campaigning towards potential coalition partners may be counterproductive is very

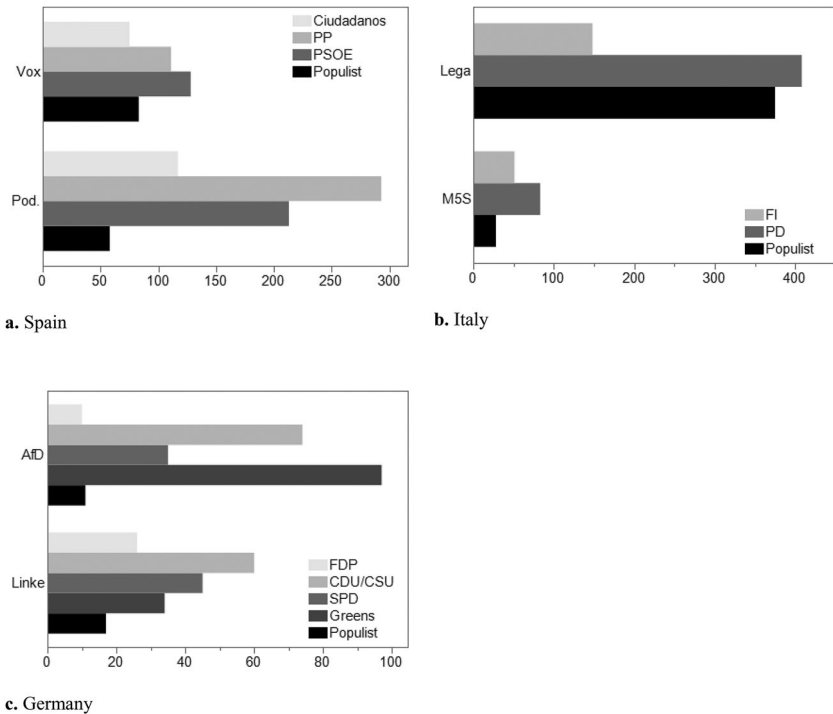


Figure 1. Number of Tweets towards competing political parties.

evident in the case of Podemos: already during the election campaign, its leader expressed his intention to form a government with the PSOE.¹² The fact that Cs is more often criticised than Vox but less frequently than the PP can again be explained by the electoral performance of the three right-wing parties (Vox: 8.7 per cent; Cs: 18 per cent; PP: 20.5 per cent).

Also in Italy, electoral strength of competitors and the ideological orientation seem to determine how frequently opponents are referred to (H1a/b). The Lega hardly talks about the centre-right ally Berlusconi and its party but emphasises on campaigning against the centre-left PD. Despite scoring a bit higher in the polls, the ideologically ambiguous M5S (27.7 per cent) is slightly less often criticised than the PD (24.2 per cent) constituting Lega's traditional opponent on the left. Nevertheless, the findings clearly state that the populist newcomer M5S is considered as a relevant political competitor by the Lega. As expected, the M5S mostly attacks the electorally strongest competitor PD (24.2 per cent) followed by the second strongest party FI (15.5 per cent) while the Lega (14.3 per cent) is less mentioned. The particular small number of references to the Lega may further be explained by the pure populist orientation of the M5S lacking a host ideology. Since it is primarily populism what characterises the M5S – unlike in the case of Podemos, Vox and Lega – it may consider the populist Lega as a potential ally for coalitions – what actually became true after the election.

Compared to populist competition in Italy and Spain, German populist parties and leaders hardly attack each other on Twitter. Together with the FDP, Die Linke is hardly addressed by the AfD and its leaders followed by the SPD, CDU/CSU and the Greens. Electoral success seems to account for these frequencies since the FDP (11.5 per cent) and Die Linke (7 per cent) scored lowest in the polls over the six months while the SPD (17.7 per cent) and particularly the CDU/CSU (25.6 per cent) were predicted larger vote shares. Only the fact that the AfD attacks the Greens more often than the CDU/CSU, despite lower vote shares (20.5 per cent), cannot be explained by electoral success but by the large ideological distance between the AfD and the Greens.

Also in line with the electoral success hypothesis, Die Linke less frequently refers to the AfD (10.8 per cent) and FDP (11.6 per cent) while SPD (17.7 per cent) and CDU/CSU (25.6 per cent) are more often addressed. That the Greens are less frequently referred to than the SPD (despite higher vote shares, 20.4 per cent) is not fully in line with our expectation.

Figure 2 confirms that electoral success plays a crucial role determining the frequency of references to other parties. The scatterplot shows a strong and positive correlation between populist radical right ($r = 0.87$; $p < .001$) and left parties' ($r = 0.78$; $p < .01$) references to competing parties and the latter's vote shares according to the average poll scores. We cannot observe similar correlations regarding the *ideological* orientation of parties.

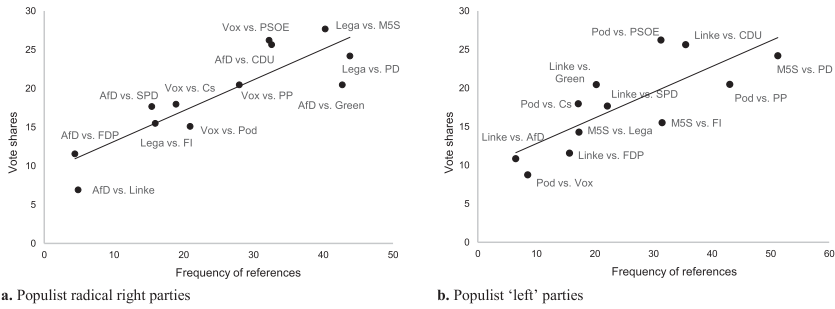


Figure 2. Frequency of references and vote shares of competitors (cross-national scatterplots). Note. Frequency of references is calculated as the share of Tweets about a respective party on the total share of references to other parties. Vote shares are calculated as the average of all polls published during the election campaign (data from Politico).

Using CHES data regarding the overall ideological left-right orientation (Irgen), we see an even negative correlation for left populists.¹³ That means that electoral success of parties primarily determines populist parties' main competitor. But as mentioned above, exceptions can be explained by ideological difference or closeness.

But *how* do populist parties talk about other populists? While we assumed that negative references prevail, we also considered that ideological proximity leads to sporadic positive framing of the other (H2). Figure 3 shows the percentages of positive and negative evaluations of the populist competitor. The figure shows little variation. Unsurprisingly, negative references are dominating and account for 90–100 per cent of references towards the populist competitor. Positive framings are very exceptional and can only be observed among the Lega (1.6 per cent of all Tweets talking about the M5S) and the AfD (9.1 per cent of its Tweets towards Die Linke).¹⁴ The positive references should not be understood as a general agreement with positions of the competitor but rather acknowledge its popularity (e.g. Lega (13/1/2018): 'Di Maio and Salvini preferred leaders of Italians') or consider potential collaboration (Lega (30/10/2017): 'without winners I could call Grillo'). Based on CHES data on overall ideological orientation ('LRGEN'), Podemos and Vox as well as Die Linke and the AfD are equally distant (7.8 points) while Lega and M5S are ideologically much closer (4.01 points). The same accounts for standpoints towards European integration ('EU_POSITION').¹⁵

While the behaviour of the Lega can therefore be explained by issue overlaps and ideological closeness to the M5S, positive references from the AfD towards Die Linke appear surprising.

The respective AfD Tweet (18 May 2021) quotes a Facebook post from a local branch of Die Linke (Osnabrück Land), which makes immigration from

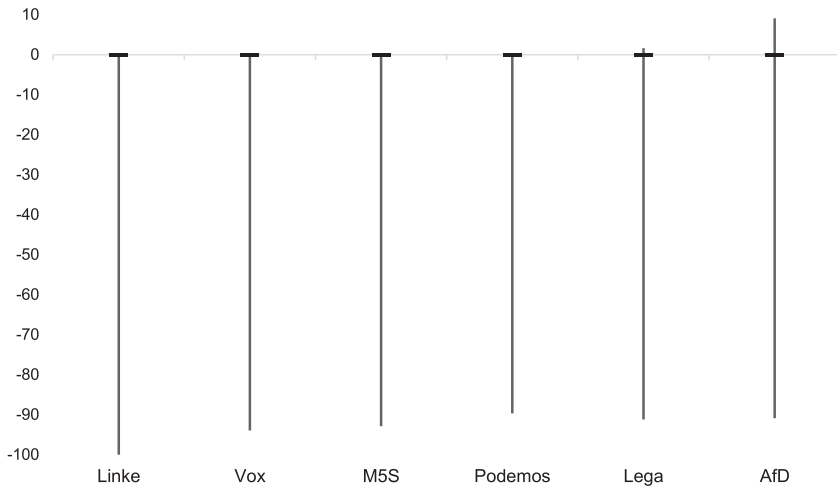


Figure 3. Negative and positive references to populist competitors. Note: Share of negative (–) and positive (+) references to the competing party on the total amount of Tweets towards the populist competitor. Neutral stances are not illustrated (e.g. mentioning poll results without further commenting).

‘Islamic countries’ responsible for anti-Semitism in Germany, commenting with the words ‘Refreshingly honest, dear Linke’. A positive attitude towards the more nativist part of Die Linke among Sahra Wagenknecht and Oskar Lafontaine also became evident in an interview with an AfD deputy (ID 12) who complained about the supposed ‘dismantling’ of Wagenknecht and Lafontaine by the party. Also, other respondents (ID14) express sympathy towards Wagenknecht: ‘She understood that solidarity has limits’. In this sense, the positive reference towards Die Linke can indeed be explained by an issue overlap regarding anti-immigration positions, but only concerning a minority within the left party. Several respondents further emphasised positively the foreign policy positions of Die Linke regarding NATO and Russia (ID12).

In contrast, the two Spanish populist parties coincide in expressing that they have nothing in common with their counterparts, emphasising in both cases their ideological distance. As a Vox deputy explains in the interview (ID 17), Vox ‘is absolutely different from Podemos in its ideological discourse’. In the case of Podemos, in addition to pointing out the ideological differences in economic, sociocultural and territorial matters, a respondent further rejects the ‘unrepentant anti-Europeanism’ of Vox (ID 8). Ideological closeness and similar positions on salient issues therefore seem to be necessary factors for a less hostile relationship between populist parties while ideological distance increases hostility (confirming H2). Being populist as such does not lead to positive forms of engagement.

Moving on with negative references among populists, we look whether ideological orientations further determine specific forms of content-related critiques (e.g. socio-economic vs. cultural framing; H3). As illustrated in Table 2, Podemos is the only party regularly criticising its far-right populist competitor of anti-social politics on Twitter. Also in the interviews, Podemos' deputies warn against Vox's agenda which aims to privatise public services and dismantle the welfare state for the benefit of 'the richest and the oligopolies'. Occasionally also the M5S raises similar allegations, however only towards the centre-right FI. Yet, M5S' respondents emphasised their opposition to right-wing social and tax policies of the Lega (ID8; ID11; ID15) and 'unregulated liberalism' (ID11). Die Linke does not use any of these critiques, only attributing an extremist and racist character to the AfD. However, responses from the online survey show that deputies from Die Linke indeed mention the supposed anti-social agenda of the AfD (as 'neoliberal' ID4; ID11), together with the anti-democratic, racist and fascist character of the party which is highlighted in more detail and more frequently.

While also the FI sometimes accuses the M5S of anti-social ideas (e.g. cuts in pensions), it primarily criticises its *pro-welfare* agenda. In this respect, FI and Berlusconi is almost the only actor attacking a supposed left-economic agenda on Twitter (although a Lega MP criticised the 'welfarism' ('assistenzialismo') of the M5S and its 'Citizens' income' in the interview; ID4). Rather surprisingly, the pro-market oriented AfD also accuses Die Linke of anti-social policies (i.e. 'contributing to the economic decline of the eastern part and of doing politics against workers'). Yet, in the interviews, the welfare agenda is criticised. One deputy (ID13) explains that Die Linke 'makes politics for people who do not want to work'.¹⁶ AfD politicians further accuse the party of 'nationalisation, little business sense, permanent criticism of industrious people' (ID18) and expect 'tax increases and regulatory frenzy' (ID14) once the party gains power. Although not of the party's main argument, Vox also harshly attacks Podemos' economic interventionism, which will provoke,

Table 2. Content-related accusations.

Party	<i>Versus</i>	Are anti-social	Are pro-welfare	Are not nativist
Lega	M5S	0.27 per cent (1)	0.27 per cent (1)	10.67 per cent (40)
FI	M5S	3.65 per cent (8)	31.51 per cent (69)	0.46 per cent (1)
M5S	Lega	0	0	3.57 per cent (1)
M5S	FI	5.88 per cent (3)	0	1.96 per cent (1)
Podemos	Vox	17.24 per cent (10)	0	0
Vox	Podemos	0	0	4.82 per cent (4)
Linke	AfD	0	0	0
AfD	Linke	18.18 per cent (2)	0	27.27 per cent (3)

Note. Share of content on the total amount of Tweets towards the respective party (accumulated for party and its leader). Numbers in bracket reflect the number of Tweets classified according to the respective category.

according to a MP (ID17), ‘an unprecedented economic crisis and the flight of international capital from Spain’.

We further confirm populist radical right parties’ emphasis on nativist allegations (i.e. not being nativist enough), which is also highlighted in several interviews with far-right MPs from all parties. A Lega MP (ID4) criticised the uncritical position of the M5S towards immigration of ‘illegals’ and an AfD politician accuses Die Linke of pursuing ‘mass immigration of Muslims, who should dutifully and gratefully vote for the left’ (ID18, also 12).

Hence, confirming H3, the host ideology plays a crucial role influencing the types of critique towards populist competitors – even though character-based allegations are more important (as we will see below). Interestingly, Vox does not criticise Podemos’ stances on the immigration issue but its pro-feminist agenda and its supposed support for separatist movements (in 4.82 per cent of all Tweets towards the party) what is also confirmed by the interviews. This shows the particular character of Vox compared to other populist radical right parties, which emphasises anti-feminist, strongly traditionalist and centralist discourses (Ferreira 2019).

We further assume that populist newcomers talk differently about established populists than the latter about new populist challengers. The picture emerging from Figure 4 – showing the frequency of each party discourse,

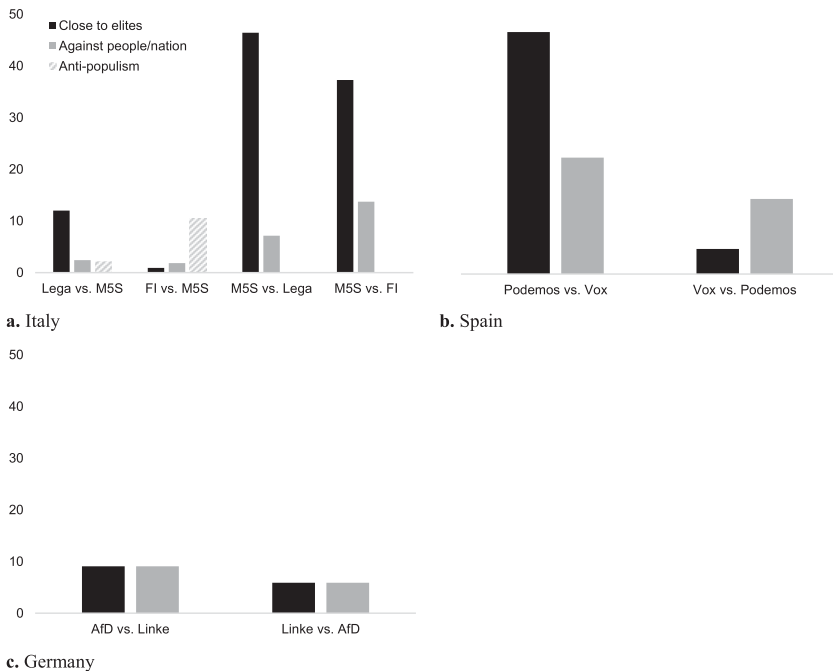


Figure 4. Populist and anti-populist discourses about populist competitors.

on the total number of Tweets referring to the competing party – is a bit more complex. For the Italian case, the hypothesis can be confirmed. It is mostly the M5S accusing the Lega and FI of belonging to the establishment or having relationships with any kind of elites (mostly political but also economic). This further becomes evident in the interviews, as some M5S deputy expects ‘policies that serve powerful groups at the expense of the citizens’ once the Lega becomes part of the government (ID8, also ID 15, 11).

Also the Lega as established populist actors sometimes places the M5S close to elites but much less frequently than the M5S (12 per cent vs. 46 per cent). Furthermore, neither the Lega nor FI frequently questions that the M5S acts in the people’s interests while the M5S is doing so regularly. The FI – and to a lower extent also the Lega – sometimes makes use of anti-populist discourses accusing the M5S of being a protest party, ‘rebels’ or of insulting politicians. Yet, the anti-populist category is restricted in being used only by established populists in *Italy*.

Among the Spanish parties, we see a reverse picture. While Podemos can be considered the more established populist party (participating in national elections for the third times in 2019) – it attacks Vox with more populist accusations than vice versa. Almost every second Tweet about Vox portrays the party as close to elites – more specifically as being ‘a copy’ of the centre-right PP. A very considerable number of Tweets towards Vox (22.4 per cent) further detaches it from parts of the people for instance by claiming that it ignores the needs of the poor. Within our sample, Podemos is the only established populist party that accuses the populist newcomer of acting against the people. However, the fact that Vox is a right-wing split from the centre-right PP may facilitate portraying the former as close to the political establishment, as one interviewee suggests (ID8). Vox as populist newcomer hardly portrays Podemos as elitist but denies that it acts in the people’s or nation’s – interest (serving the ‘villa bourgeoisie’, ID21).

In Germany, we are confronted with less references to populist competitors in general. Among them, only one attaches the competitor to the establishment while detaching it from the people. This narrative is more nuanced in the interviews. Several Linke MPs (ID4; ID9; ID11; ID12) reject the claim that the AfD represents the will of the people by stating that ‘their contents are contrary to the will of the “common” people’ (ID9). One AfD deputy (ID18) even acknowledges that die Linke ‘want to get something out for the poor and Hartz IV recipients. Unfortunately [...] the figureheads are interested in keeping their posts’ (see also ID 12).

Table 3 summarises the findings from Figure 4. In sum, our fourth hypothesis is only fully confirmed for Italy – where the gap between *established* and *new* populists is perhaps most evident – while we observe exactly the opposite in Spain. In Germany, populist attributions do not seem to play a relevant role for both, new and more established populist actors.

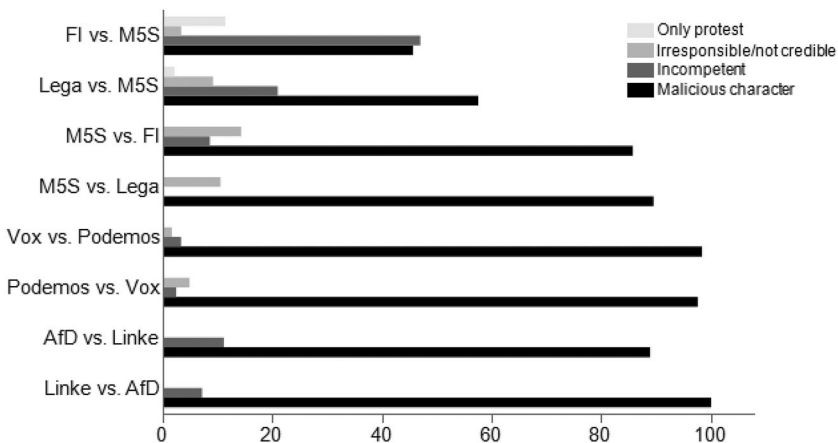
Table 3. Summary of (anti-)populist discourses against competitors.

Actor	Established/ new	Allegation: Close to elite	Allegation: Far from people	Anti-populist allegation
Lega/Salvini	Established	+	–	+
FI/Berlusconi	Established	–	–	++
Linke/leaders	Established	+	+	–
Podemos/ Iglesias	Established*	+++	++	–
M5S/Di Maio	New	+++	+	–
Vox/Abascal	New	+	++	–
AfD/leaders	New	+	+	–

Note: - does not occur, + hardly/occasionally occurs, ++ occurs frequently, +++ dominant discourse.

*While Podemos still is a young party it is the more established one compared to Vox having successfully participated at four national elections.

As mentioned above, a distinction can be made between content-related (e.g. economic agendas) and non-content-related critiques, focusing on the character or behaviour. Regarding the latter, our analysis identifies several subcategories. [Figure 5](#) shows the percentage of non-content-related tweets classified according to one of these codes (party and leader together). As seen, populists mostly attribute a malicious character to their competitor framing it as immoral, criminal, violent, extremist and acting against the national/people's interests ('demonising' discourses questioning the legitimacy of others (Van Heerden 2014)). Except FI in Italy, this is the dominating category. Die Linke attributes a malicious character to the AfD in all respective non-content-related Tweets (e.g. extremist and/or racist). Also the AfD portrays Die Linke as close to extremism even as close to Islamic terrorists. Also, the interviews revealed an emphasis on character-based accusations. All respondents from Die Linke for instance, emphasise an

**Figure 5.** Non-content-related forms of critique.

extremist, fascist and anti-democratic orientation of the AfD and most of them actually seem to struggle with this emotionally. After describing how AfD politicians started a hate campaign against a MP from the centre-right CDU, one deputy (ID12) adds: ‘It has been so unbearable at times that I get physically sick and have to leave the debate room – and that is literally. (...) I feel quite often transported back to the 30s ... and I ask myself whether our democracy is really militant enough’. On the other hand, MPs from the AfD highlight the ties and ideological closeness of Die Linke to the former GDR state party SED and a supposed anti-democratic, authoritarian, extremist and violent character (e.g. ID 12, ID14, ID13).

Interestingly, also some interview partners of the M5S demonised the Lega as racist (ID8). These demonising discourses are also the most frequent attacks in the Spanish interviews. Vox is for instance described by a Podemos MP as ‘ultra, radical, inhuman, racist, *facha*’ (ID 9).

For the established Lega and FI, other allegations than demonisation occur equally frequent. Both actors claim that the populist newcomer is incompetent or not able to govern due to a lack of experience or because its politicians supposedly never achieved anything in their lives. This discourse ((in)ability to govern) is hardly present in Germany and Spain. In sum, it is again established populists in Italy that show a different behaviour hardly using the demonisation frame (malicious character) compared to established populists in Germany and Spain.

Last, [Figure 6](#) builds on the above-mentioned distinction between content-related (positions) and non-content-related critiques (attributing a

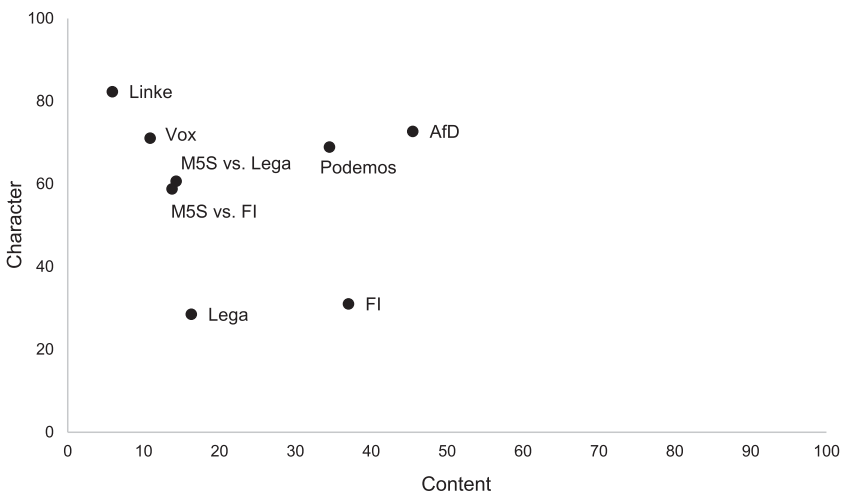


Figure 6. Content-related Tweets versus character-based messages. Note. Share of content- and character-based critique on the total amount of Tweets towards the respective party (accumulated for party and its leader).

negative character or behaviour). The figure shows the share of content- and character-based critiques against the populist competitor on the total amount of Tweets towards it. We see that almost all populists emphasise on attacks on the character/behaviour of their populist competitors. The only exception is FI in Italy communicating content-related critiques. In line with the previous findings, this might indicate that parties' age and government experience indeed matter. FI is one of the oldest parties in Italy emerging in the early 1990s meaning that a moderation effect might have tamed and 'mainstreamed' the party. The so-called inclusion–moderation thesis assumes that populist parties tame their positions and discourses when they establish themselves in the party system, especially through government participation (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016; Schwörer 2022). While one might argue that the Lega is even older than the FI and participated in several governments, the former experienced a major transformation in 2014 from a regionalist to a populist radical right party under Salvini (Albertazzi et al. 2018). But still, also the Lega is less engaged on character-based critique than other populist parties.

Thus, the emergence of a second populist actor might not necessarily lead to more 'established' discourses among the 'first' populist party, if the later did not participate in national governments or still considers itself as political outsider. This might further depend on the degree of institutionalisation and the number of years acting in the party system. While Podemos and Die Linke have been the 'first' populist actors in their countries, the parties are still younger in terms of years compared to the Italian FI and – at the time of the Twitter analysis – the parties had no experience in national government.

Discussion

This study aimed at analysing the discursive behaviour and attitudes of populists towards each other, a quite neglected issue in populism studies. To guide our analysis, we built on assumptions from a variety of literature, such as negative campaigning, populist communication and inclusion–moderation effects. First, the *electoral success* of competing populist parties seems to influence how frequently populist actors talk about each other. If competing populists are electorally successful, they are more frequently attacked. While *ideological distance* might play a role under certain conditions, the electoral performance emerged as a key factor determining the quantity of references towards competitors.

We identified *rejection* as the main pattern of how populists talk about each other. Populist parties do not ally discursively in their fight against the establishment but consider themselves as enemies. Being populist does not provide a sufficient ideological fundament for cooperation – only if populists agree on certain issues or are ideologically close on the cultural or economic

dimension positive references can occur. As the Italian case shows, long-established populist actors may behave more like the mainstream (Albertazzi and Vampa 2021) by using anti-populist accusations (Stavrakakis 2014) if they count on government experience and are established forces for decades.

In terms of content, confirming our expectations, the populist radical right complains about multicultural positions of left-wing parties while the later criticises the right-wing economic agenda of the former. While that highlights *the role of host-ideologies*, these content-related discourses are not particularly salient. The dominating framing is the ‘demonising’ discourse, especially among those parties that are more ideologically distanced from each other (Podemos and Vox; AfD and Die Linke) – reinforcing the role of host ideologies. This leads radical right and left-wing populist parties to emphasise the supposed ideological extremism of the populist opponent, considering it as an anti-democratic evil to be fought: a ‘fascist’ or ‘Nazi’ threat for the populist left, and a ‘communist’ or ‘violent left-wing extremist’ threat for right-wing populists. This ‘ideological’ demonisation makes it difficult for a common populist agenda to exist – with the exception of the ideologically less divided temporary coalition between Lega and M5S. Thus, while anti-elitist accusations may play a less relevant role for more institutionalised populist parties, the moralistic and Manichean nature of populist discourse, as well as the host-ideology, facilitate demonisation of the opponent in ideological terms.

The only cases behaving in an ‘unpopulist’ way accusing the populist competitor of being ‘rebellious’ and ‘incompetent’ are Forza Italia and – to a lesser extent – the Lega. Furthermore, it is only FI emphasising critique on *policies* instead of the *character* of populist opponents. As already indicated, the degree of institutionalisation seems a reasonable explanation (‘age’ and government experience) in line with studies on inclusion–moderation effects (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016). Time (including government participation) and learning processes of political actors might therefore be a decisive – and often neglected – variable determining the behaviour of populist actors (e.g. De Lange and Art, 2011; Gillan and Edwards, 2020; Weber 2017). In this context, we should take into consideration that especially populist parties in Italy are the actual mainstream and positively integrated into the political system (Zulianello 2020). Speaking with Vampa and Albertazzi (2021), Forza Italia and the Lega are a clear case of established populism unlike populist parties in Germany (especially the AfD), which are still challengers due to their exclusion from executive power or negative integration into the system (Zulianello 2020).

In sum, we found different factors (electoral success/ideology) influencing how populists talk about each other and that the expected dynamic between established and ‘new’ populist parties (‘inclusion’) is mostly found in Italy where the established populists are indeed the oldest and most integrated

parties with substantial government experience. Populist parties may not change their behaviour immediately after gaining seats. Instead, moderation is a longer-term process. Future research might focus on populist parties' discursive strategy towards different ideological actors like conservative, social democratic, liberal and green parties.

Notes

1. Euroscepticism is not per definition inherent to populism in Europe but often a consequence of its anti-elitism and emphasis on national sovereignty (radical right) and rejection of neoliberal globalisation (far left) (Pirro, Taggart, and van Kessel 2018; Plaza-Colodro, Gómez-Reino, and Marcos-Marne 2018).
2. Borrowed by social movement studies, 'frames' refer to the cognitive schemes used by political entrepreneurs to interpret and give meaning to the social and political reality (for an application to populism: Caiani and della Porta 2011).
3. It is also worth noticing that our mixed method approach including qualitative data collection required a good language knowledge of our cases.
4. Forza Italia is considered 'populist' in Van Kessel (2015) but not in Norris and Inglehart (2019). Brothers of Italy is considered populist in Norris and Inglehart (2019) but not in Van Kessel (2015). How Lega talks about FI is not assessed since they form electoral alliances before the respective elections.
5. To collect a substantial number of Tweets, six months before the last national election are considered.
6. Social media can create protected spaces for political actors, which are less hesitant to criticise political competitors (ibid.).
7. Based on Schwörer (2021) and developed further (see Appendix).
8. AfD and Die Linke are led by a dual leadership. We analyse both of the party leaders.
9. In particular, for Italy we contacted senators and regional deputies. For both Lega and M5S, we contacted deputies from Lombardy, Latium, Campania and Sicily and for the Lega additional politicians from Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Piedmont, Apulia and Calabria. For Spain, regional deputies in Valencia, Madrid, Murcia and Asturias were invited to participate in the survey. From the AfD, we contacted MPs from the 2017–21 and 2021–25 legislature. Unsurprisingly, the response rate was low – except deputies from Die Linke in Germany.
10. We received four responses from the AfD, seven from Die Linke, four responses from Vox, two from Podemos, two from the Lega and four from the M5S. Further information can be found in the online appendix. The multi-lingual questionnaires and the (anonymised) responses are available from the author upon request.
11. According to data from Politico: <https://www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/spain/>.
12. https://www.lasexta.com/noticias/nacional/elecciones-generales/iglesias-pide-a-sanchez-un-gobierno-en-coalicion-tras-el-28a-sea-cual-sea-la-diferencia-de-escanos-video_201904025ca3af130cf2eaaa4d02e30b.html.
13. ($r = -0.49$), which is not significant ($p > .05$).
14. However, this equals only one Tweet since the AfD hardly talks about Die Linke.

15. On the 1–7 scale, Lega and M5S have the most equal position in this respect (distance of 1.68 points) while AfD and Linke (2.81) as well as Vox and Podemos (distance of 3.58 points) are more divided on the issue.
16. All surveys including the responses are available on request.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jakob Schwörer is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Political Science at the Leuphana University, Lüneburg. He has been a visiting researcher at the Center for Research on Extremism (C-Rex) at the University of Oslo, the Department of Government at Uppsala University and the University of San Francisco in Quito. His research focuses on party politics, populist and nativist communication, and the reaction of mainstream parties to the electoral success of populist parties.

Belén Fernández-García is postdoctoral researcher at the University of Málaga. She obtained a Degree in Political Science and Public Administration with a National Award for Excellence in Academic Performance, and a Master degree in Social Problems, Direction and Management of Social Programs at the University of Granada. Her principal research interests lie in the area of political parties, populism and political communication.

Manuela Caiani is Associate Professor in Political Science at the Scuola Normale Superiore, affiliated scholar at the Cosmos Center for Social Movement Studies (SNS) and associated faculty at the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) in Vienna. Her research focuses on social movements and europeanisation; far-right politics; extremism online; right-wing and left-wing populism; movement-parties and qualitative methods of social research.

ETHICS APPROVAL STATEMENT

The research is in line with the journal's ethical standards.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE MATERIAL FROM OTHER SOURCES

No permissions for other sources were needed.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data is available on request.

ORCID

Jakob Schwörer  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9081-4849>

Belén Fernández-García  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1000-1504>

Manuela Caiani  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2174-6579>

References

- Abou-Chadi, Tarik, Reto Mitteregger, and Cas Mudde. 2021. *Left Behind by the Working Class? Social Democracy's Electoral Crisis and the Rise of the Radical Right*. Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
- Akkerman, Tjitske, Sarah L. de Lange, and Matthijs Rooduijn. 2016. "Inclusion and Mainstreaming? Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in the new Millennium." In *Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe: Into the Mainstream?*, edited by Tjitske Akkerman, Sarah L. de Lange, and Matthijs Rooduijn, 1–28. London: Routledge.
- Albertazzi, Daniele and Davide Vampa, eds. 2021. *Populism and New Patterns of Political Competition in Western Europe*. London: Routledge.
- Albertazzi, Daniele, Arianna Giovannini, and Antonella Seddone. 2018. "No Regionalism Please, We are Leghisti! The Transformation of the Italian Lega Nord under the leadership of Matteo Salvini." *Regional & Federal Studies* 28 (5): 645–671.
- Aslanidis, Paris. 2016. "Is Populism an Ideology? A Refutation and a New Perspective." *Political Studies* 64 (1): 88–104. doi:10.1111/1467-9248.12224.
- Blee, Kathleen M. and Verta Taylor. 2002. "Semi-Structured Interviewing in Social Movement Research." In *Methods of Social Movement Research*, edited by Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg, 92–117. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Caiani, Manuela. 2023. "Framing and Social Movements." *Discourse Studies* 25 (2): 195–209. doi:10.1177/14614456231154734.
- Caiani, Manuela, and Ondřej Císař. 2018. "Radical Right Movement Parties in Europe. An Introduction." In *Radical Right Movement Parties in Europe*, edited by Manuela Caiani and Ondřej Císař, 3–10. London: Routledge.
- Caiani, Manuela, and Donatella della Porta. 2011. "The Elitist Populism of the Extreme Right: A Frame Analysis of Extreme Right-Wing Discourses in Italy and Germany." *Acta Politica* 46: 180–202. doi:10.1057/ap.2010.28.
- Caiani, Manuela, and Paolo Graziano. 2022. "The Three Faces of Populism in Power: Polity, Policies and Politics." *Government and Opposition* 57 (4): 569–588. doi:10.1017/gov.2022.4.
- Cowley, Philip. 2022. "How to Get Information out of Members of Parliament (Without Being Told off by the Speaker)." *Political Studies Review* 20 (2): 236–242. doi:10.1177/14789299211042167.
- De Lange, Sarah L., and David Art. 2011. "Fortuyn Versus Wilders: An Agency-Based Approach to Radical Right Party Building." *West European Politics* 34 (6): 1229–1249.
- Elmelund-Præstekær, Christian. 2008. "Negative Campaigning in a Multiparty System." *Representation* 44 (1): 27–39. doi:10.1080/00344890701869082.
- Ernst, Nicole, Sven Engesser, Florin Büchel, Sina Blassnig, and Frank Esser. 2017. "Extreme Parties and Populism: An Analysis of Facebook and Twitter Across Six Countries." *Information, Communication and Society* 20 (9): 1347–1364. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2017.1329333.
- Ernst, Nicole, Sina Blassnig, Sven Engesser, Florin Büchel, and Frank Esser. 2019. "Populists Prefer Social Media Over Talk Shows: An Analysis of Populist Messages and Stylistic Elements Across Six Countries." *Social Media + Society* 5 (1). doi:10.1177/20563051188233.

- Fernández-García, Belén, and Oscar Luengo. 2020. "Populist Contagion or Anti-Elitism in Opposition? PSOE's Response to the Emergence of Podemos." *Revista Española de Ciencia Política* 54: 13–37. doi:10.21308/recp.54.01.
- Ferreira, Carles. 2019. "Vox Como Representante de la Derecha Radical en España: Un Estudio Sobre su Ideología." *Revista Española de Ciencia Política* 51: 73–98. doi:10.21308/recp.51.03.
- Franzmann, Simon T., and Marcel Lewandowsky. 2020. *Populismus? Populismen! Programmatische Heterogenität rechtspopulistischer Parteien in Westeuropa*. Bonn: Akademie für Forschung und Lehre praktischer Politik (BAPP).
- Gillan, Kevin, and Gemma Edwards. 2020. "Time for Change." *Social Movement Studies* 19 (5–6): 501–515.
- Haselmayer, Martin. 2019. "Negative Campaigning and its Consequences: A Review and a Look Ahead." *French Politics* 17 (3): 355–372. doi:10.1057/s41253-019-00084-8.
- Hawkins, Kirk A., and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2017. "The Ideational Approach to Populism." *Latin American Research Review* 52 (4): 513–528. doi:10.25222/larr.85.
- Hutter, Swen. 2014. *Protesting Culture and Economics in Western Europe. New Cleavages in Left and Right Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ivaldi, Gilles, Maria E. Lanzone, and Dwayne Woods. 2017. "Varieties of Populism Across a Left-Right Spectrum: The Case of the Front National, the Northern League, Podemos and Five Star Movement." *Swiss Political Science Review* 23: 354–376.
- Katsambekis, Giorgos. 2017. "The Populist Surge in Post-Democratic Times: Theoretical and Political Challenges." *The Political Quarterly* 88 (2): 202–210. doi:10.1111/1467-923X.12317.
- Krämer, Benjamin. 2017. "Populist Online Practices: The Function of the Internet in Right-Wing Populism." *Information, Communication and Society* 20 (9): 1293–1309. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2017.1328520.
- Landis, Richard J., and Gary G. Koch. 1977. "The Measurement of Observer Agreement for Categorical Data." *Biometrics* 33 (1): 159–174.
- Loew, Nicole, and Thorsten Faas. 2019. "Between Thin- and Host-Ideologies: How Populist Attitudes Interact with Policy Preferences in Shaping Voting Behaviour." *Representation* 55 (4): 493–511. doi:10.1080/00344893.2019.1643772.
- Manucci, Luca, and Michi Amsler. 2018. "Where the Wind Blows: Five Star Movement's Populism, Direct Democracy and Ideological Flexibility." *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana Di Scienza Politica* 48 (1): 109–132. doi:10.1017/ipo.2017.23.
- Manucci, Luca, and Edward Weber. 2017. "Why the Big Picture Matters: Political and Media Populism in Western Europe Since the 1970s." *Swiss Political Science Review* 23 (4): 313–334. doi:10.1111/spsr.12267.
- March, Luke. 2017. "Left and Right Populism Compared: The British Case." *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19: 282–303. doi:10.1177/1369148117701753.
- Markou, Grigoris. 2021a. "Populism in Government. The Case of SYRIZA (2015–2019)." In *Populism in Global Perspective: A Performative and Discursive Approach*, edited by Pierre Ostiguy, Francisco Panizza, and Benjamin Moffitt, 178–198. London: Routledge.
- Markou, Grigoris. 2021b. "Anti-Populist Discourse in Greece and Argentina in the 21st Century." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 26 (2): 201–219.

- Mosca, Lorenzo, and Filippo Tronconi. 2019. "Beyond Left and Right: The Eclectic Populism of the Five Star Movement." *West European Politics* 42 (6): 1258–1283. doi:10.1080/01402382.2019.1596691.
- Mudde, Cas. 2004. "The Populist Zeitgeist." *Government and Opposition* 39 (4): 541–563.
- Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2012. *Populism in Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2019. *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pirro, Andrea L., and Paul Taggart. 2018. "The Populist Politics of Euroscepticism in Times of Crisis: A Framework for Analysis." *Politics* 38 (3): 253–262. doi:10.1177/0263395718770579.
- Pirro, Andrea L., Paul Taggart, and Stijn van Kessel. 2018. "The Populist Politics of Euroscepticism in Times of Crisis: Comparative Conclusions." *Politics* 38 (3): 378–390. doi:10.1177/0263395718784704.
- Plaza-Colodro, Carolina, Margarita Gómez-Reino, and Hugo Marcos-Marne. 2018. "Does host ideology shape populist parties' attitudes towards the EU? The links of populism and Euroscepticism in Southern Europe." *Revista Internacional De Sociología* 76 (4): 1–16. doi:10.3989/ris.2018.76.4.18.003.
- Rooduijn, Matthijs, Sarah de Lange, and Wouter van der Brug. 2014. "A Populist Zeitgeist? Programmatic Contagion by Populist Parties in Western Europe." *Party Politics* 20 (4): 563–575. doi:10.1177/1354068811436065.
- Rooduijn, Matthijs, Stijn Van Kessel, Caterina Froio, Andrea Pirro, Sarah de Lange, Daphne Halikiopoulou, and Paul Lewis. 2019. *The PopuList: An Overview of Populist, Far Right, Far Left and Eurosceptic Parties in Europe*. <http://www.popu-list.org>.
- Rydgren, Jens. 2017. "Radical Right-Wing Parties in Europe: What's Populism got to do with it?" *Journal of Language and Politics* 16 (4): 485–496. doi:10.1075/jlp.17024.ryd.
- Salgado, Susana, and James Stanyer. 2019. "Perceptions of Populism and the Media. A Qualitative Comparative Approach to Studying the Views of Journalists and Politicians." In *Communicating Populism*, edited by Carsten Reinemann, James Stanyer, Toril Aalberg, Frank Esser, and Claes H. de Vreese, 17–33. London: Routledge.
- Schwörer, Jakob. 2016. *Populismi. Il 'Movimento 5 Stelle' e la 'Alternativa per la Germania'*. Rome: Bibliotheka.
- Schwörer, Jakob. 2021. "Don't Call me a Populist! The Meaning of Populism for Western European Parties and Politicians." *Electoral Studies* 72. doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102358
- Schwörer, Jakob. 2022. "Less Populist in Power? Online Communication of Populist Parties in Coalition Governments." *Government & Opposition* 57 (3): 467–489. doi:10.1017/gov.2021.2.
- Schwörer, Jakob, and Belén Fernández-García. 2021. "Demonisation of Political Discourses? How Mainstream Parties Talk About the Populist Radical Right." *West European Politics* 44 (7): 1401–1422. doi:10.1080/01402382.2020.1812907.
- Seth, Jolly, Ryan Bakker, Liesbet Hooghe, Gary Marks, Jonathan Polk, Jan Rovny, Marco Steenbergen, and Milada Anna Vachudova. 2022. "Chapel Hill Expert

- Survey Trend File, 1999–2019.” *Electoral Studies* 75. doi:[10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102420](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102420).
- Stavrakakis, Yannis. 2014. “The Return of ‘the People’: Populism and Anti-populism in the Shadow of the European Crisis.” *Constellations (Oxford, England)* 21 (4): 505–517. doi:[10.1111/1467-8675.12127](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12127).
- Vampa, Davide, and Daniele Albertazzi. 2021. “Conclusion.” In *Populism and new Patterns of Political Competition in Western Europe*, edited by Davide Vampa and Daniele Albertazzi, 269–287. London: Routledge.
- Van Heerden, Sjoerdje C. 2014. *What did you Just Call me? A Study on the Demonization of Dutch Political Parties Between 1995 and 2011*. University of Amsterdam.
- Van Kessel, Stijn. 2015. *Populist Parties in Europe: Agents of Discontent?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Weber, Edward. 2017. “Populist Parties in Switzerland and Their Integration Into the Establishment.” Conference Paper Presented at NCCR Democracy Final Workshop.
- Wolinetz, Steven B., and Andrej Zaslove. 2018. “The Impact of Populist Parties on Party Systems.” In *Absorbing the Blow: Populist Parties and Their Impact on Parties and Party Systems*, edited by B. Wolinetz Steven and Andrej Zaslove, 3–23. London: ECPR Press.
- Zulianello, Mattia. 2020. “Varieties of Populist Parties and Party Systems in Europe: From State-of-the-art to the Application of a Novel Classification Scheme to 66 Parties in 33 Countries.” *Government and Opposition* 55 (2): 327–347. doi:[10.1017/gov.2019.21](https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2019.21).