The media as secret helpers?
- Analysing the mass media’s handling of populist party communication during the 2014 EP election campaign

Franzisca Schmidt
University of Bern
Institute of Media and Communication Studies

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Research Questions

Visibility in the media…

- enhances recognition and legitimacy (e.g. Ellinas 2010)
- helps mobilizing voter support (e.g. Koopmans & Muis 2009)

> Did populist party communication have an influence on a party’s visibility in the print media during the 2014 EP elections?

Are anti-immigrant types of populist party communication – i.e. excluding and nationalist populism – particularly successful in enhancing a party’s visibility in the print media?

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Definition

Populism as a political **communication style**
(Jagers & Walgrave 2007)

> 3 components:

— alleged proximity to and identification with the population *appeal to the people*

— criticism of and distrust in the (political) elites *elite-critique*

— ostracism of ‘the others’ *exclusion*
Populism and Media Logic

> Journalists act as gatekeepers
  — base their selection on news factors to which they assign a certain news value
  (Galtung & Ruge 1965, Østgaard 1965)

> News factors
  — characteristics of news stories that contribute to making them newsworthy
  (e.g. Kepplinger 2008)

> Populism is said to be of high news value
  (e.g. Plasser & Ulram 2003, Mazzoleni 2003)
# News Value of Populist Communication

## Element of Populism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of Populism</th>
<th>News Factors (e.g. Schulz 1976; Staab 1990)</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>people reference</td>
<td>cultural proximity, ethnocentrism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elite critique</td>
<td>personal influence, conflict / controversy, potential damage, actual damage (crime)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exclusion</td>
<td>conflict / controversy, potential damage, actual damage, crime, ethnocentrism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Dimension

- **proximity**
- **identification**
- **status**
- **valence (negativity)**

### Populism Types

- **anti-elitist populism**
- **full populism** (populism with exclusive element)
The more news factors a story satisfies, the higher the probability that it will be selected for publication. (Galtung & Ruge 1965)

Populist messages carry a lot of news factors

- they attract attention within the process of journalistic selection and so do the parties that are communicating in this way!

H1: A party is expected to become more visible in the news media the more often it applies a populist communication style.
Assumption
Excluding Populism

> The more news factors a story satisfies, the higher the probability that it will be selected for publication (additivity hypothesis).

(Galtung & Ruge 1965)

H2: A party is expected to become more visible in the news media if it applies a full populist communication style (i.e. with an exclusive element) rather than if it applies a populist communication style that is ‘only’ anti-elitist.
European Context

Q03: Do you see yourself as...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>(nationality) only</th>
<th>(nationality) and European</th>
<th>European and (nationality)</th>
<th>European only</th>
<th>total 'European'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Standard-Eurobarometer 81 – European Citizenship- Spring 2014

> horizontal dimension: question of identity perception

> identities can be multi-layered
(e.g. Hermann & Brewer 2004)

> most of the people hold national identities
Assumption

Nationalist Populism

> national appeals reach large numbers of people (e.g. Eurobarometer 2014)

> national appeals tap feelings of solidarity and identification (e.g. Tarrow 1998)

→ ‘cultural proximity’ and ‘ethnocentrism’ are news factors with higher news value, if they involve national identification

H3: A party is expected to become more visible in the news media if applies national populism than if it applies populist communication that refers to the community of Europeans.
Austria, Germany, France, Greece

> quantitative content analysis of press releases
  — all political parties that reached more than 3% in the last elections
  — Europ* / europ* / EU and relevant acronyms (2x)
  — 12 weeks prior to the 2014 EP elections

> 1 Greek, 3 German, 2 French coders

> 3 populism variables
  — indices for degree, type and level of populism for each of the 27 parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Krippendorff’s α</th>
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<th>French</th>
<th>Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>peopref</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>antiestab</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exclusion</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Austria, Germany, France, Greece

> quantitative content analysis of quality newspapers
  — 12 weeks prior to the 2014 EP elections
  — 1 right- and 1 left-leaning newspaper per country
  — EU-related political news articles
  — coded up to three political actors per article that were expressing a political opinion

> 3 Greek, 8 German, 4 French coders

> ‘Visibility’
  — party (exponent) expresses a political opinion within a news article at least *once*

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<th>French</th>
<th>Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>political actor 1</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>political actor 2</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>political actor 3</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedure

- linear OLS regressions
  - percentage of a party’s populist communication in press releases on its visibility in newspaper
- controlled for number of vote shares
Results I

N=27 parties; linear OLS regressions: numbers besides arrows indicate non-standardized regression coefficients; numbers near boxes indicate explained variances; all regressions have high values for VIF (<2.0), indicating that severe multicollinearity effects are not present; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001
Results II

N=27 parties; linear OLS regressions: numbers besides arrows indicate non-standardized regression coefficients; numbers near boxes indicate explained variances; all regressions have high values for VIF (<2.0), indicating that severe multicollinearity effects are not present; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001
Conclusion and Outlook

> Were the media ‘secret helpers’ of the populists, because they granted them media attention as a result of their populist party communication?

> Journalists do not only take into account the news factors of a message

— Political parallelism? Mediasystems?
— Mediatype?
— Country-differences?

> Is visibility alone sufficient?

> Apart from a party’s visibility in the news: are their actual populist messages reflected by the media too?
Thank you!

franzisca.schmidt@ikmb.unibe.ch

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