How the Media Shape Perceptions of Right-Wing Populist Leaders

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Abstract

It is often argued that right-wing populist party leaders are dependent on the media for their public image, which in turn, is key for their electoral success. This study tests this assumption by comparing the effects of the media coverage of two Dutch right-wing populist leaders with the effects of the coverage of leaders of established parties, in a real-life setting by tracking campaign developments in the Dutch 2006 national election campaign. We combine panel survey data (n=401), with repeated measurements of the party leaders' public images, with a systematic content analysis of 17 media outlets (with a total of 1,001 stories), on the basis of the media consumption of individual respondents. Our results show significant effects of the content of media coverage on the public image of political leaders. However, only in one case (out of ten) is there a significant difference between right-wing populist party leaders and leaders of other parties in the strength of media effects. It thus seems that leaders of right wing populist parties are just as dependent upon the media as leaders of other parties. The findings are discussed in the light of extant research on right-wing populist parties and media populism.

Keywords: Populism, Media Effects, Leadership, Right-Wing Populist Parties, Electoral Behaviour

How the Media Shape Perceptions of Right-Wing Populist Leaders

Party leaders play an important role for all political parties. They are the most visible representative of the party in the media and as such they determine to a large extent their party's image among the public and other politicians. While this is true of all parties, there are two theoretical reasons to expect that party leaders are particularly important for right-wing populist parties. The first reason is that these parties are new. Within the context of the mediatization (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999) and popularization of politics leaders of new parties are even more dependent upon the media to provide them with a platform than leaders of more established parties which are netter known by the public. Through image management (McNair, 1995) and adaptation to the media logic right-wing populist party leaders seek the attention of the media, especially in the insurgent phase of their party's career (Stewart, Mazzoleni, & Horsfield, 2003).

A second, albeit somewhat related reason, is that these parties are very loosely organised around the central leader. Many of these parties do not even organise formally as a party organisation, which is in line with their anti party rhetoric (e. g., Mudde 2007; Taggart 2000). Due to the, oftentimes, ad hoc formation of these parties their political programs are usually limited and their party organizations weak and highly centralized. Consequently, these parties need a strong leader not only to lead the party internally, but also to bring across the message and image of the party (e.g., Carter, 2005; Eatwell, 2003; Kitschelt, 2007; Pappas, 2008; Weyland, 2001). In order to be successful electorally, these right-wing populist party leaders do not only have to be known by the public, they also need voters to have a positive image of them (AUTHORS, in press-b): they need to be perceived to be effective, and legitimate.

In order to get media attention leaders of right-wing populist parties have to be somewhat extra-ordinary in their behaviour, style, or in their messages: "it is a truism that the media simply cannot ignore what is newsworthy, and clearly newsworthy are the politicians who defy the existing order, with their abrasive language, public protests, and emotive issues" (Mazzoleni, 2003, pp. 6-7). Thus, on the one hand, they might employ populist rhetoric or a

populist style (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). On the other hand, these leaders also have to appear authoritative by displaying their knowledge on issues addressed. Recent research has indicated that successful right-wing populist leaders have managed to reach a delicate balance between appearing unusual and populist, or anti-establishment, to gain news value, and still appear authoritative (AUTHORS, in press-a).

However, whether right-wing populists really are dependent upon the media for their public image, and whether they differ from mainstream party leaders in this respect, has never directly been tested. In this article we address this scientific gap by testing the effects of the media coverage of right-wing populist leaders on changes in the perception of these leaders in a dynamic setting by tracking campaign developments. We contribute to extant research in several respects. First of all, we add to the growing research field on right-wing populist parties by taking a closer look at media effects on perceptions for leaders of these parties. Secondly, we do not only look at one specific aspect in the coverage of these leaders, such as prominence or visibility, or tone of coverage, but build a parsimonious model including three dimensions in the depiction of these leaders: their prominence, their authoritativeness – which refers to how knowledgeable a politician appears to be – and the extent to which they use a populist style or adhere to populist ideology. Thirdly, we draw on previous research on the public image of right-wing populist leaders in which two aspects were found that are important for their electoral success: effectiveness and legitimacy (AUTHORS, in press-b). All (new) party leaders, right-wing populist or mainstream, have to be perceived to be effective, i.e., able to affect policies or influence the public debate, in order to be seen as a serious political contestant. However, right-wing populists also need to be perceived to be legitimate, not posing a threat to democracy, because they in particular run the risk to be identified with the extreme right. In this article we use effectiveness and legitimacy as dependent variables and explain over-time variations by looking at media coverage. And finally, by connecting the results of an extensive content analysis with panel

survey data we test media effects in a real-life setting by studying people as they encounter information on a daily basis (De Vreese & Semetko, 2004).

In sum, in this article we answer the following research question: to what extent are perceptions of right-wing populist party leaders, in terms of their perceived effectiveness and legitimacy, affected by the media coverage of these leaders, in terms of prominence, populism and authoritativeness? See figure 1 for the conceptual model.

<Figure 1 about here>

As a research venue, we use the Dutch national parliamentary elections of 2006, in which several right-wing populist parties participated. We employ panel survey data in which perceptions of two right-wing populist party leaders and four mainstream party leaders are measured twice, two months prior to and the night before the elections. These are: Geert Wilders (Freedom Party) and Marco Pastors (One Netherlands), Jan Peter Balkenende (Christian democratic CDA), Wouter Bos (labour party PvdA), Mark Rutte (liberal party VVD) and Femke Halsema (green party GroenLinks). To assess media coverage, we use systematic content analyses of 17 media outlets of the eight weeks before the elections, with a total of 1,001 stories.

The Media Dependency of Right-Wing Populist Party Leaders

Most citizens never meet a politician in real life. They acquire their image of political leaders through the mass media, either directly or indirectly by means of interpersonal communication about newspaper articles, or programs on radio or TV. Within the context of mediatization (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999) all political parties and their party leaders are thus dependent upon the media for the dissemination of their ideas, and the shaping of their image (Sheafer, 2001).

However, common wisdom and an abundance of literature on the right-wing populist party family could lead us to believe that right-wing populist party leaders rely even more than mainstream party leaders on the media for their image (Mazzoleni, Stewart, & Horsfield, 2003). Especially because they are often new to the political spectrum they need the media to be known

by the electorate: (positive) media coverage is crucial for their electoral breakthrough (see for instance Art, 2007; Deutchman & Ellison, 1999; Mudde, 2007). Moreover, the strong charismatic populist leaders, whom these parties are known for, can exert a larger influence on changes in their image than other, mainstream, party leaders. Their (party) populist style, shares the key traits of media logic, including personalization, emotionalization, and an anti-establishment attitude (Plasser & Ulram, 2003), and can therefore lead to exaggerated media attention from which they can profit (Mudde, 2007).

On the other hand, research on the right-wing populist party family has shown that these parties and their electorates do not differ that much from mainstream parties. Support for right-wing populist parties is motivated by the same ideological and pragmatic considerations as support for other parties (Van der Brug, Fennema, & Tillie, 2000; Van der Brug, Fennema, & Tillie, 2003) and leader effects are of the same size and sometimes even smaller (AUTHORS, in press-b; Van der Brug & Mughan, 2007). And there are other, media-centric, reasons to not expect larger media effects for right-wing populists compared to mainstream party leaders. In "countries with highly nativist, authoritarian, and populist media" with "a relatively populist radical right mainstream (…) it can be very difficult for populist radical right parties to differentiate themselves from the established parties and (…) fully profit from the media discourse" (Mudde, 2007, p. 249). And in other cases we see a hostile attitude from the media towards right-wing populist parties .

In this article we test the effects of the media on the image of right-wing populist party leaders and make a comparison with mainstream party leaders to see which of the two views holds: are right-wing populist party leaders more or equally dependent on the mass media compared to mainstream leaders? We look at two aspects in the image of party leaders: effectiveness and legitimacy.

Party Leaders' Effectiveness and Legitimacy

Most electoral research indicates that voters make a reasoned choice when they vote, which means that they take into account the consequences of their choice (Lupia & McCubbins, 1998). Therefore, they prefer party leaders who are able to reach certain goals (AUTHORS, in press-b; Van der Brug, Fennema, & Tillie, 2005). We make a distinction between two types of goals: that a message is heard (expressive goals) and that policies are affected (pragmatic goals). Voters who value pragmatic goals find it important that a party leader is influential and thus take into consideration whether they think a party leader is able to affect public policies – through participation in government or by being effective as an opposition party. The prime goal of expressive voters is that their voice will be heard. For them it is important that a politician is publicly visible, can be heard in public discussions and sets the media agenda. Perceived effectiveness of party leaders is important for right-wing populists as well as mainstream leaders (AUTHORS, in press-b).

We also know that voters in general prefer party leaders who do not intend to radically change or overthrow the democratic representational system (AUTHORS, in press-b; Van der Brug, et al., 2005). However, because of the (fascist) anti-democratic and anti-constitutional legacy of some right-wing populist parties (Carter, 2005), these parties may be identified with the extreme right, which could lead voters to assess some right-wing populists as illegitimate. Even though potential voters for these party leaders may be critical of the political establishment, most of them will not want to see the democratic system endangered. It is therefore important for right-wing populist party leaders "(1) to make clear that they belong neither to the political establishment nor to the camp of anti-democratic forces; (2) to make credible that they do oppose the political elite – but the political elite only and not the liberal democratic system" (Schedler, 1996: 302).

Party Leaders' Media Coverage: Prominence, Authoritativeness and Populism

To appear effective and legitimate, right-wing populist party leaders need the media as a platform. Eatwell (2003, p. 69) argues that to appear legitimate an important role is reserved for

"the party (…), especially its leaders and 'intellectuals', in constructing discourse. And to appear effective, access to the media is key to create the impression that a party leader can affect policy or the public debate (Eatwell, 2003).

It is generally argued and found that media coverage of political candidates or of campaigns in general, affects candidate support: it is through the mass media that voters hear and see the political candidates, and it can therefore be expected that the media has an effect on a voter's perception of candidates (see for instance Benoit, Hansen, & Verser, 2003; Domke, et al., 1997; Kleinnijenhuis, van Hoof, Oegema, & de Ridder, 2007; Mendelsohn, 1996). In this article we focus on two important aspects in the media coverage of political candidates: visibility, or prominence, and candidate attributes.

First of all, agenda-setting theory predicts that media salience issues affect the public salience of issues. This logic also extends to political candidates so that the salience in the media can affect the public salience of candidates (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Shaw, 1972): party leaders who are less prominent in the mass media will have a hard time convincing voters they, and their standpoints, matter. Additionally, especially in a (Western European) multiparty context each voter's knowledge about the issues and the characteristics of the various, often ideologically similar, politicians is dependent upon their ability gaining media attention, as research has shown (Hopmann, Vliegenthart, De Vreese, & Albaek, in press; Oegema & Kleinnijenhuis, 2000; Semetko & Schoenbach, 1994): party leaders have to compete for the attention of the media as well as the voter.

Moreover, according to the second-level agenda-setting theory, the media do not only tell us *who* to think about, but also *how to think* about them (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997). By making certain attributes, properties, qualities or characteristics, of political candidates more salient the media shape candidate image or evaluation (Funk, 1999; Kiousis, 2005; McCombs, et al., 1997). In this article we look at argumentation style and rhetoric as cognitive elements of candidate characteristics (Ghanem, 1997) and argue that the effects of

these attributes on candidate perception can vary across candidates (Funk, 1999), most specifically between two types of politicians: right-wing populist and mainstream party leaders.

When studying the content of the media appearances of right-wing populist leaders, we distinguish between three dimensions that can theoretically be expected to affect their public image: prominence, populism and authoritativeness.

Prominence. The first, and most important, dimension is prominence, the amount of media attention for a politician (Watt, Mazza, & Snyder, 1993). It is generally assumed that more prominent news messages, i.e., news messages that "are allotted more print space or time in broadcasting" (Watt, et al., 1993, p. 415) exert a larger influence on issue (or actor) salience, "that is, the ease with which these issues can be retrieved from memory." (Scheufele, 2000: 300) Therefore, when it comes to these right-wing populist parties and new parties in general, the more prominent a politician is in the mass media, the greater the likelihood that voters will know him or her (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Hopmann, et al., in press). Additionally, prominence makes a small party relevant for voters: when they get more attention they are possibly perceived as a party that is taken seriously and able to get in power, which is why we expect voters to be more positive about party leaders' effectiveness when they are more prominent in the media. Moreover, it can be argued that party leaders are in a certain way legitimized by mass media when they pay more attention to them: "any media coverage advantages contentious political figures; it enhances their visibility and furthers their ends, by producing some kind of public legitimation" (Stewart, et al., 2003, p. 236). This leads to the following hypothesis: More prominent right-wing populist party leaders are perceived to be more effective (H1a) and more legitimate (H1b) than less prominent right-wing populist party leaders.

Populism: rhetoric and style. The second dimension we distinguish is populism, which has two components: a populist style and a populist rhetoric (or substance). Research has shown that substantive aspects in populists' rhetoric have to be set aside from populist style elements in

media coverage (AUTHORS, in press-a). In this study we will therefore include both aspects of populism.

The *populist rhetoric* consists of an anti-establishment appeal or anti-elitism, and the celebration of the heartland, which is, according to Taggart (2000, p. 95), a place "in which, in the populist imagination, a virtuous and unified population resides". Populism "considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite' and (…) that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (Mudde, 2004, p. 543). We assume that right-wing populist party leaders that are able to gain "anti-establishment credentials" (Schedler, 1996, p. 298) by being anti-elitist will have a hard time to appear effective (H2a) and legitimate (H2b). By criticizing the elite they position themselves outside the main realm of politics. As a result it will be more difficult for them to appear to be able to be effective in politics. Additionally, the problem with an oppositional stance towards mainstream politics is, as said before, that party leaders have to be able to make clear that they only oppose the elite and not the democratic system.

Moreover, we have no clear expectations with regard to the effects of appeals to the 'heartland'. On the one hand we could expect a positive effect from appeals to the 'heartland' on effectiveness and legitimacy, since talking about the 'common man' through human interest stories could appeal to voters. On the other hand appeals to the heartland could be perceived as populist rhetoric which can have a negative effect on the public image of right-wing populists. Therefore, we pose a research question: RQ1: What is the effect of right-wing populist party leaders' appeals to the heartland on the perceived effectiveness and legitimacy of right-wing populist party leaders?

In addition to these substantive components of populism, we also include *populist style* elements in our models. Populists, and their followers, claim to be reluctant politicians, who only engage in politics because of a perceived extreme crisis. In the case of right-wing populism problems related to immigration are at the heart of this perceived crisis (Mudde, 2004; Taggart,

2000). This corresponds with what Albertazzi (2007, p. 335) calls "dramatisation": the "need to generate tension in order to build up support for the party (…) by denouncing the tragedies that would befall the community if it were to be deprived of its defences." We therefore expect their leaders to refer to a (perceived) crisis situation. Another aspect of the populist style is "ordinariness" (Stewart, et al., 2003, p. 228), "straightforwardness, simplicity and clarity", (Taggart, 2000, p. 97), "man in the street communication styles" (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008, p. 2) and "friend versus foe" rhetoric (Weyland, 2001): populists use simple and strong language. Accordingly, we foresee them not to hesitate in bringing their message across, and to emphasize decisiveness and fast and strong measures and use intense language. A final aspect of the populist style is the emphasis on the strong (charismatic) party leader. Generally, populist movements are organized around a central leader, without whom the party organization would fall apart (e.g.,Weyland, 2001). Moreover, these leaders often have authoritarian traits: they refer to themselves as the crisis manager and have an ambivalent relation with democratic leadership (Taggart, 2000). As a result we argue that party leaders who adopt a populist style will more than others present themselves as problem managers or be presented as such.

In general we expect right-wing populists who are presented in a more populist style to be perceived as more effective (H3a). The use of clear and simple language and the emphasis on strong leadership will lead voters to have more confidence in the effectiveness of the party leader (Dewan & Myatt, 2008). On the other hand, we expect right-wing populist party leaders who are depicted to use a populist style also to be perceived to be less legitimate (H3b), since voters will associate their populist style with their right-wing ideologies and anti-democratic appeal.

Authoritativeness. The third dimension we focus on is authoritativeness, which refers to how knowledgeable a politician is about the political topics discussed. Because voters base their electoral preference (partially) on substantial grounds, it is essential for party leaders to get their ideological message across; they have to be able to convey their position on a set of core issues. Moreover, voters will prefer a party leader who is also able to convince others, especially

within parliament or within the broader political realm. To be authoritative in this interpretation is thus highly related to being persuasive: to what extent can the party leader convince voters that he or she has a strong case, i.e., is credible (Hovland & Weiss, 1951)? We argue that party leaders are more authoritative when they use arguments and when they elaborate on their viewpoints (O'Keefe, 1998). In this article we look at two aspects of arguments: reference to statistics and information-source citation. Even though experimental evidence is inconclusive as to whether quantitative evidence is convincing (O'Keefe, 1998, 2002; Reynolds & Reynolds, 2002), the first aspect can be seen as evidence of the substantial knowledge of the source. As for the second, when referring to other sources as evidence, one's own credibility is enhanced (O'Keefe, 1998; Reinard, 1998; Reynolds & Reynolds, 2002) and it can also be seen as evidence of substantive knowledge on the topic. Finally, we look at the extent to which right-wing populists propose solutions to the problems raised and assume that politicians who bring up problems and do not come with suggestions to overcome them are perceived to have a lack of knowledge on the issues addressed. Landau et al. (2004, p. 1137) find that "when reminders of one's vulnerability and mortality are highly salient" support is higher for leaders that are able to help people manage their fears. Overall, we assume that right-wing populist party leaders who are presented as being more authoritative in the mass media, are perceived as more effective (H4), since a party leader who appears to be more knowledgeable will also be more able to convince others in parliament and/or in public debate.

Differences Between Party Leaders. Finally, by comparing the effects of media coverage variables on the perception of two right-wing populist leaders with the perception of four mainstream party leaders, we also assess the difference between the two leader types. As we have argued above there are two views on this: on the hand it is expected that right-wing populist party leaders are more dependent on the media, whereas on the other one could expect no differences. Correspondingly, in this article we pose a research question: Are there any

differences between the effects of the media on the image of right-wing populist leaders compared to mainstream leaders? (RQ2).

Research Setting. Our study was conducted in the Netherlands, where the 2006 election campaign provides an excellent case to test our theoretical expectations. During these elections several ideologically resembling right-wing populist parties participated. In this study, we focus on the leaders of two of these parties, for which we have data available: Marco Pastors (EenNL - 'One NL'), who was not successful electorally, and Geert Wilders (PVV: Partij voor de Vrijheid - Freedom Party) who won nine seats in parliament, and is still successful to date. Both parties were new to the political scene in 2006, which provides an excellent test for the media dependency thesis: it is in times of electoral breakthrough that these parties are assumed to be more dependent upon the media and possible media effects are assumed to be more pronounced (Mudde, 2007).

Both parties satisfy the two most important criteria Mudde (2007) draws up for defining right-wing populist parties. They address nativism in their programs by proposing a halt to immigration, sending back sentenced immigrants or fundamentalists, and promoting or defending the Dutch identity or culture. Moreover, both leaders can be considered to be populist because they proposed measures to simplify the representative democratic order by decreasing the government, bringing back the number of seats in parliament or in the senate (or abolishing the latter) and by introducing more direct forms of democracy such as referenda. It is this populist nature that sets this party family aside from right-wing extremist parties, such as separatist or neo-nazi parties.

However, these parties and their leaders should not be categorized as extremist or fringe parties. In fact, the right-wing populist party family is the only new successful European party family since the Second World War (Mudde, 2007): some of these parties have been very successful and in some cases they even participated in government coalitions. Moreover, unlike in the US where there are dual spaces of communication, and fringe parties make use of non-

mainstream outlets, in the European proportional representation systems these right-wing populist parties not only represent a large part of the constituency, they also compete with mainstream parties in the same electoral market and therefore make use of the same mass media outlets.

Method

In this study we use two types of data. First of all, we employ two-wave panel survey data to assess the changes in the public image of (right-wing populist) party leaders and secondly, we use content analysis data to investigate the media coverage of these leaders. We combine these two studies in one analysis and follow Barabas & Jerit (2009) in their approach which "(1) incorporates media content in the analysis, (2) conducts intra-individual comparisons to limit omitted variable bias, and (3) studies people as they naturally encounter information" (Barabas & Jerit, 2009, p. 73).

Panel Data

The survey data set we used was collected by COMPANY in collaboration with UNIVERSITY and NEWSPAPER. These data were gathered in the period of the 2006 Dutch parliamentary elections. The first respondents were approached in February 2006 (n=1,115, response rate is 66%). In this article two subsequent measurement time points were used: September 2006 (n=870, recontact rate is 78%), and November 2006 before the Election Day (n=703, recontact rate is 81%). The data were gathered using computer-assisted self-interviewing (CASI). Our data are by and large representative of the Dutch population. Appendix B shows that our respondent data mirror census data in terms of age, gender, and education. Because our main dependent variables were only measured for a subsection of the panel, we could only use 401 of the 703 respondents. Of this somewhat small sample we did not want to lose more respondents due to item non-response, which is why we resorted to multiple imputation. For this we used Amelia II, a computer program developed by Honaker, Joseph, King, Scheve and Singh (1998) (see King, Honaker, Joseph, & Scheve, 2001).[i]

To test the unidimensionality of our scales, we employed a method known as Mokken Scaling, which is a probabilistic version of the better known Guttmann scale (e.g., Jacoby, 1991; Mokken, 1971; Van Schuur, 2003).[ii] (See for the descriptives the Appendix.)

Variables. Our two *dependent* variables are direct measures of effectiveness and legitimacy of all party leaders included in the analysis, each of which was measured with two variables on seven-point scales, at two points in time[iii]. Mokken scale analysis showed that effectiveness forms a strong scale (H=0.79 at t-1 and H=0.76 at `t1) and legitimacy forms a medium scale (H=0.38 at t-1 and H=0.30 at t1).[iv]

Our key *explanatory* variable is 'media exposure', which is a summary score of the exposure to the various media outlets included in the analysis, measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 'never' to '(almost) daily'. We use this variable to estimate the individual exposure to the media coverage of the party leaders included in the analysis. In addition, we used several control variables. First of all, we control for party preference, a variable measured with a ten-point scale ranging from 'I will never vote for this party' to 'highly likely that I will once vote for this party'. To control for internet campaigning we included a measure on the extent to which respondents used the internet to obtain political news. Moreover, because the social context is often demonstrated to have a separate impact, apart from media effects (Beck, Dalton, Greene, & Huckfeldt, 2002; Mendelsohn, 1996), we control for the extent to which respondents talked to family or friends about politics in the last seven days (the latter both measured on the same 5-point scale). Finally, because preference for and perceptions of right-wing populist parties may be influenced by ideological standpoints, we incorporated two ideological items. The first one is left-right distance, which is measured as the distance between a voters' position on a 10-point left-right scale and the perceived position of a party on that same scale (1=left; 10=right). We also included an item that tapped the position of the respondent on the immigration issue, ranging from '1: Immigrants and ethnic minorities should be allowed to stay in the Netherlands while keeping their own culture' to '7:Immigrants and ethnic minorities should adjust themselves

fully to the Dutch culture"[v].

Analysis

We reordered the data in a stacked form so that the unit of analysis is the respondent-party leader combination. Our dataset of 401 respondents contains evaluations of six political candidates, so that the stacked data matrix has 2406 (6 * 401) entries. This data reordering makes it possible to employ a research design that simultaneously accounts for inter-individual variation and intra-individual variation in the evaluations of different leaders.[vi]. In the new stacked data matrix, one respondent is represented by as many cases as there are party leaders included in the analysis. In this case these are the right-wing populists Geert Wilders and Marco Pastors on the one hand and the four most important established party leaders on the other[vii]. In the design of the stacked data matrix the independent variables indicate relationships between voters and parties rather than between voter characteristics (See for examples of the implementation of this method: AUTHORS, in press-b; Van der Brug, et al., 2000; Van der Brug & Mughan, 2007; Walgrave, Varone, & Dumont, 2006).

In this article, we propose the following simple regression model:

$$Public\_Image_{t1} = a + b_1 Public\_Image_{t-1} + b_2 Media\_Coverage + b_3 Control\_Variables + e$$

which states that the public image of a leader, in terms of his perceived effectiveness and legitimacy is first of all a function of his public image at t-1. By controlling for the public image at t-1 there are no theoretical reasons to include time-invariant demographic control variables. Secondly, we include several control variables (Party Preference, Immigration Issue, Political Internet Use and Interpersonal Communication) and individual exposure to media coverage, in terms of the authoritativeness, populism, prominence, the populist ideology of the party leader and the extent to which he refers to immigration topics. Since the nature of the stacked data matrix violates the assumptions of the OLS model, we employ a fixed-effects model in Stata ®, which is generally used for dealing with longitudinal or panel data (see for an overview Hsiao, 2003).

Content Analysis

We conducted a systematic content analysis of 17 Dutch media outlets – twelve mainstream media outlets: seven newspapers, three news programs, two current affairs programs; and five infotainment programs – from the end of September 2006 until the Dutch national elections of November 22 in the same year[viii], n=1,001. We included all news and current affairs programs during this period. Infotainment programs were only coded when party leaders were mentioned or interviewed. For the newspaper articles we conducted a search in Lexisnexis, the online newspaper database[ix], with keywords relating to the election campaign. We took a systematic sample of the newspaper articles found and coded 41% of the articles in our target population[x]. Eleven Dutch native speakers conducted the coding. The unit of analysis and the coding unit was the individual news story, characterised by a distinct overall issue focus. We included 74 items in a post-test and conducted an extra post-test on 35 items for indicators of authoritativeness and populism.[xi]. Overall, we found that the intercoder reliability of our new measures was acceptable (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002): percent agreement ranged from 66.84 to 98.19.

Measures. As for prominence, for each party leader the amount of attention within the item was coded by looking at the total number of words (newspaper) in the article or the length of the TV item (TV news and current affairs programs), and the page on which the article appeared, the consecutive number in the TV program or the reference in the leader. For infotainment programs the amount of attention for a party leader was measured by coding the situation in which he or she appeared: as the main guest in the show, as one of the guests sitting at the table during the whole show, as one of the guests sitting at the table during a part of the show or as part of a (short) video clip. To measure the impact of the coverage of the party leaders we constructed a formula to calculate the prominence of the appearance of a party leader in a item, based on Vliegenthart (2007) and Watt et al. (1993)[xii].

Whenever party leaders were coded as actors in campaign items, we also coded whether they discussed substantive issues. In these cases (n=534), we coded indicators of authoritativeness and populism. The indicators were formulated as statements and measured on dichotomous response scales.

We operationalised 'populist style' by measuring whether a certain party leader referred to a critical situation, emphasized decisiveness and fast and strong measures or was presented as such, presented him/herself as a manager or was presented as such. Additionally, we measured whether the party leader in question used intensifiers such as 'surely' and 'certainly' and whether he or she used hedges and hesitations. The Mokken scale analysis showed that these items form a medium scale (H = 0.46)[xiii]. Two additional indicators of populist rhetoric, 'anti-elitism', operationalised by coding whether party leaders critiqued the established political order, and 'heartland', operationalised by coding whether the party leader mentioned the man in the street, or the common man, were included in the analysis as separate variables.

Four items were developed to measure 'authoritativeness': whether the party leader in question used arguments, referred to statistics and/or other sources, and by coding whether the party leader proposed solutions for perceived problems[xiv]. The Mokken scale analysis showed that these five items form a medium scale (H=0.45).

Because of the possible association of immigration and integration news with extreme right ideology and thus a possible threat to democracy, we also need to control for media coverage of topics that have been a taboo in the past. In the last decade the Netherlands has seen drastic changes in the public discourse on the topic: salience has increased and the multiculturalist view has lost its support while there is more attention for Islam as a threat (Roggeband & Vliegenthart, 2007). Therefore we include a final variable, 'immigration topics', which was measured by coding the five most important policy topics related to each actor in a news item. For each party leader we coded the percentage of items in which immigration and/or integration was one of the main topics the party leader referred to. By including this variable we

control for possible spurious effects of style or rhetoric variables associated with substantial coverage.

Linking Survey Data to Content Data. For each respondent the media exposure was weighted on the basis of the media coverage variables, divided by the total media exposure to all the outlets, herewith computing the individual exposure to the various media coverage variables. We did this for all media coverage variables. As an example, we show the construction of the Populism-variable:

$$Populism_{party\_leaderi} = \frac{Populism_{party\_leaderi_{outleti}} \cdot Media\_exposure_{outleti}}{\sum Media\_exposure_{outletij}}$$

which represents the individual respondents' exposure to the populist style of the various party leaders. These weighted media exposure variables are thus contingent upon the media outlets each respondent uses, as well as on the amount of prominence, populist rhetoric and style, and authoritativeness of each party leader in each outlet[xv]. (See for the descriptives the Appendix.)

Results

First of all, appendix A shows the individual media exposure[xvi] to the prominence, populist rhetoric, populist style and authoritativeness of the various party leaders. If we take the most successful right-wing populist Geert Wilders as an example and compare him with the most successful mainstream party leader, Jan-Peter Balkenende, we see that the latter is perceived as more prominent: the individual media exposure to news items in which Balkenende appears is 12.71 (*M*), whereas it is -10.46 (*M*) for news items in which there is attention for Wilders. On the other hand we find that our respondents are more often exposed to the populist style of Wilders (*M*=0.32) than they are to the populist style of Balkenende (*M*=-0.39). And the same goes for authoritativeness: respondents are more often exposed to the authoritativeness of Wilders (*M*=0.31) than they are to the authoritativeness of Balkenende (*M*=0.03) Overall, we see that the differences between and within the two types of party leaders are substantial. We, however, cannot draw any conclusions about the media dependency of right-wing populists

based on these differences. In order to do so, we have to look at the relationship between the weighted media coverage variables and the perceived effectiveness and legitimacy of the various party leaders.

Moreover, the descriptives (see the Appendix) of our main variables show that perceived effectiveness and perceived legitimacy vary substantially over the various politicians. On average, we see that perceived effectiveness as well as perceived legitimacy is lowest among right-wing populists. Moreover, they also vary over time and change during the course of the campaign: For all party leaders, except for Balkenende, perceived effectiveness is lower at the end of the campaign, whereas perceived legitimacy is generally higher, except for Halsema (Greens). The variation in the dependent variables is also illustrated by the explained variance of the simple autoregressive model, in which effectiveness and legitimacy are only explained by their lagged values. The overall explained variance of this model is .596 for effectiveness at t1, and .382 for legitimacy at t1, which illustrates that other factors than the lagged value of the dependent variable can have an impact, such as media coverage variables.

Table 1 presents the effects of media coverage on the perceived effectiveness of party leaders. In the base model we find a significant positive effect of party preference on the dependent variable: the higher the preference for the party in question, the greater the positive change in effectiveness. In model II we find significant effects of two of our media coverage variables. First of all, the more prominent a political leader appears in the mass media, the greater the positive change in Effectiveness. Moreover, we find a negative effect of the coverage of party leaders using a populist style, and a positive effect from the depiction of an authoritative style. Finally, party leaders who are presented to make more appeals to the heartland, are perceived to be less effective.

<Table 1 about here>

In model III the interactions with the dummy right-wing populist party leader are given which forms a test for our hypotheses[xvii][xviii]. After all, our hypotheses focus on the effects of the

media coverage of *right-wing populist leaders* on the perception of these leaders. First of all, overall, we find that our media coverage variables lead to an 7.9% increase in the intra-individual explained variance and a 6.0% increase in the overall explained variance. Moreover, our findings support H1a which stated the expectation that more prominent right-wing populist party leaders are perceived to be more effective: the main effect is significant and there is no significant effect of the interaction with the dummy right-wing populist leader. This implies that the effect running from prominence to effectiveness is positive and significant for all party leaders, mainstream or right-wing populist. However, H2a (right-wing populist party leaders who are anti-elitist have a hard time to appear effective) receives no support: we find no negative effect from anti-elitism, as expected, but a small positive, yet insignificant effect, and no significant interaction effect: whether right-wing populist leaders are more or less anti-elitist in the media thus has no effect on the extent to which they are perceived to be effective. As for our second populist rhetoric-variable, we can answer RQ1 (that read "What is the effect of right-wing populist party leaders' appeal to the heartland on the perceived effectiveness and legitimacy of right-wing populist party leaders?"): there is no significant effect from appeals to the heartland on effectiveness (no significant main effect and no significant interaction effect) for right-wing populist party leaders (as well as mainstream party leaders). H3a, which stated that right-wing populists who are presented in a more populist style are perceived to be more effective, is also not supported: we do not find a positive effect from populism on effectiveness. Instead, we find that mainstream party leaders who are presented with a populist style in the mass media are perceived to be *less* effective (B=-1.352, SE =0.282, p<.001). However, this is not the case for right-wing populists: the positive interaction for these party leaders indicates that when they are perceived as more populist, it has a small positive yet insignificant effect on the change in their perceived effectiveness (B=0.634, SE=0.500). Finally, we do find support for H4, which stated that right-wing populist party leaders who are presented to be more authoritative in the mass media are perceived to be more effective: we find a positive significant main effect and no

significant interaction effect, which indicates that for all party leaders, whether right-wing populist or mainstream, being authoritative has a positive effect on their perceived effectiveness.

In Table 2 the results of the fixed effects analysis on the perceived legitimacy of party leaders are given. The first model indicates that changes in legitimacy are again affected by party preference. In the second model we find one significant effect from our media coverage variables: the more prominent a party leader is during the election campaign, the more legitimate he or she is perceived to be.

<Table 2 about here>

In the third model, we include reference to immigration topics as a control variable, because we assume that perceptions of legitimacy might also be affected by the extent to which party leaders are identified with taboo, or extreme right, topics, such as immigration topics. Inclusion of this variable renders the effect of prominence insignificant. Overall, in the fourth model, we find that inclusion of our media coverage variables leads to a 3.9% increase in the intra-individual explained variance and a 2.9% increase in the overall explained variance.

Finally, because we find no significant interactions between the dummy 'right-wing populist party leader' and our media coverage variables (see Model IV), we can conclude that the observed effects in model III are the same for all party leaders, right-wing populist or mainstream. We can now review our hypotheses. First of all, due to the insignificant main effect of prominence on perceived legitimacy we do not find support for H1b: right-wing populist party leaders who are more prominent in the mass media are not perceived to be more legitimate. Similarly, for our hypotheses regarding anti-elitism (H2b) and populist style (H3b) we find no support. We expected a negative effect running from anti-elitism and populist style to perceived legitimacy, and instead we find no significant effects, positive or negative, for mainstream party leaders as well as right-wing populists. And, our RQ1 (that read "What is the effect of right-wing populist party leaders' appeal to the heartland on the perceived effectiveness and legitimacy of right-wing populist party leaders?") can be answered: there is no significant

effect from appeals to the heartland on perceived legitimacy (no significant main effect and no significant interaction effect) for right-wing populist party leaders (as well as mainstream party leaders)[xix].

Finally, RQ2 asked "Are there any differences between the effects of the media on the image of right-wing populist leaders compared to mainstream leaders?". The answer is short: there are no differences, but one - the effect of populist style on the change in perceived effectiveness, which is negative for mainstream leaders and positive, yet insignificant, for right-wing populists. The assumption held in one part of the literature that right-wing populist party leaders are more dependent upon the media is *not* substantiated by the results: we do not find larger media effects for these leaders and among all the media effects tested we find only one significant difference with mainstream leaders, which is what can be expected by chance.

Discussion

This study tested the extent to which the image of right-wing populist leaders is affected by mass media coverage. As all party leaders, right-wing populists need the mass media to provide them with a stage from where they can convey their ideas to the public, but also, by displaying a certain style, to create an image that has a positive effect on their public perception. In this article we tested whether and to what extent the media are "friend or foe" (Mudde, 2007, p. 253) of these party leaders in a real-life setting combining an extensive content analysis with two-wave panel data. We find significant effects of right-wing populists' depiction in the media on the public's perception of these leaders. In other words: the media "do matter and can be pivotal" (Iyengar & Simon, 2000, p. 150): the media shape candidate image by making certain political candidates and/or their attributes more salient.

This study confirms Mudde's (2007) assumption that the media are both friend and foe at the same time. By linking the immigration issue to right-wing populist leaders they exert a *negative* effect on perceived legitimacy. This perceived legitimacy, however, is important for the electoral chances of these parties (AUTHORS, in press-b; Schedler, 1996; Van der Brug, et al.,

2005): most voters are not willing to support a party that is not supportive of liberal democracy. In the literature on this party family two sources are identified that affect the legitimization of these parties: mainstream political parties and the mass media (see for instance Art, 2007; Bale, 2003; Van Spanje & Van Der Brug, 2007). By paying attention to right-wing populist parties, their leaders and their main issues, the mass media indicate what is politically salient and thereby legitimize them. Yet, we find the opposite: by paying attention to right-wing populists and linking them to immigration topics these parties are instead associated with radical ideas. The common political wisdom that says '*any* publicity is good publicity', particularly popular among right-wing populist politicians (Mudde, 2007, p. 252), thus does not hold in this case.

It is, however, not inconceivable that reference to immigration topics does have a positive effect on a different dependent variable, such as support. After all, it has been found that higher salience of immigration topics increases public salience of the topic, and it is theorized that due to the issue ownership hypothesis parties that are associated with these topics are more preferred (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007; Walgrave & De Swert, 2004).

However, this study shows simultaneously that the media can also be a friend of right-wing populist leaders. In order to have electoral success it is important for them to appear to be influential, or effective (AUTHORS, in press-b; Van der Brug, et al., 2005). Our results show that to be seen as effective, whether in parliament or in the public debate, prominence, first of all, is key. This confirms our expectations: in order to be influential, party leaders need to be visible. Prominence makes a small and new party relevant for voters. When party leaders receive a lot of attention their party and its message is taken seriously: they are one of the parties that may get in power, or they are at least in sight of a number of seats in parliament. Hence, if voters want to influence the political game, voting for these parties is rational and will not lead to a lost vote.

Moreover, we find effects from argumentation style: it's not only the amount of attention for a party leader, that is important, it also matters *how* the party leader is portrayed, as it is stated

in the second-level-agenda-setting theory. We find that right-wing populist leaders who appear to be more authoritative by displaying their knowledge on the topics discussed, are perceived to be more effective. This confirms our expectation that right-wing populists, besides being extraordinary (in order to be newsworthy), also have to try to appear as 'normal' as possible by elaborating on their viewpoints (also see AUTHORS, in press-a). Moreover, using a populist style does not harm right-wing populists, yet it does not help them either. And, this is the one media effect that differs for right-wing populist leaders on the one hand, and mainstream leaders on the other: we find a significant positive interaction effect between populist style and the dummy right-wing populist leader. Whereas mainstream party leaders are evaluated negatively when they act populist, right-wing populist leaders are not punished for it. This is a striking result, especially in the light of the populist Zeitgeist in which "populist discourse has become mainstream in the politics of western democracies" (Mudde, 2004: 542): the populist rhetoric and style is more and more adopted by mainstream leaders, possibly in the hope of positively affecting their image and, subsequently, increasing electoral success. And, it also sheds light on the important question posed in the literature: how is the populist discourse received among voters (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007)? A possible explanation could be that voters associate populism with populist leadership, therefore, if mainstream leaders act populist it may be seen as strategic and insincere behaviour, which is subsequently evaluated negatively. This finding also shows that the effects of the same attribute – populist style – can vary across different political candidates (Funk, 1999).

One would expect that, the simple and direct populist style, containing appeals to "average Joe", could strike a cord with potential supporters of populist parties. Albertazzi (2007), for instance, finds that the discourse of right-wing populist parties depends on the nature of their constituency: the style is adapted to fit the needs of the heartland. Yet, even though we do not find evidence for a direct effect, it is very well possible that using a populist style or using populist rhetoric positively affects media attention, which in turns affects public perception of

these leaders. That is to say, due to "newsroom populism" (Plasser & Ulram, 2003) or media populism (Mazzoleni, 2003) the media "happen to be allied to populist movements by engaging with people's moods, catering to their entertainment needs, and harping negative stories" (Stewart, et al., 2003, p. 233). By being anti-elitist, by dramatizing, using simple and strong language, and emphasizing strong or charismatic leadership, right-wing populists use rhetorical and style aspects that cater to the needs of many media outlets, thereby ensuring prominence (Mudde, 2007). And it is mainly through prominence in the media that voters acquire a positive image of these leaders, by perceiving them to be more effective.

In general, we can say that the public image of right-wing populist leaders is mainly positively affected by prominence in the mass media. This prominence is often ensured by being extraordinary, or populist, and by being provocative, bringing up issues such as immigration and integration. Whereas the first strategy does not harm these leaders and seems wise in order to guarantee prominence, the latter is more problematic. How these results hold for leaders of right-wing populist parties beyond the insurgent phase of their career, should be pursued in future research.

Because these parties are often new and have a less stable electoral base, it is sometimes argued that they depend more than other parties upon the media for the formation of their image. On the other hand, the study on right-wing populist parties indicates little differences between right-wing populist and mainstream parties. In our study, we tested both views and, overall, find no evidence for the assumption that right-wing populists are more dependent on the media than others: there are no differences between right-wing populists and leaders of mainstream parties, when it comes to the extent to which they depend on the mass media. This finding connects to a growing body of research by Van der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie (2000; 2003) and AUTHORS (in press-b) in which it is demonstrated that preferences for right-wing populist parties are based on the same grounds as preferences for other parties. One of the main debates in the field of research on these parties is whether preference for right-wing populist

parties is an expression of either support, or protest (or both) (Mudde, 2007). Van der Brug et al. and AUTHORS demonstrate that voters for right-wing populist parties are just as rational as voters for any other – mainstream – party. They base their vote on the same, ideological, and pragmatic considerations and are not more than others persuaded by charismatic, effective or legitimate leaders. Our results (again) show that the preference formation does not differ between voters for right-wing populist or mainstream parties. Moreover, we find no evidence for the assumption that voters are attracted to these leaders *because* they are different: their populist style or rhetoric does not elicit any positive evaluations. In fact, they are judged by the same criteria as other party leaders are. The only thing that distinguishes right-wing populist leaders from others is their strategy in gaining media attention: their populist style resonates with media logic and does not put off voters. However, that certain parties use different media strategies does not make them intrinsically different than any other party with regard to their relationship with voters. In other words: right-wing populist parties are not in a league of their own, as is often assumed.

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Appendix A

Descriptives of main variables

	Prominence	Criticism	Heartland	Populism	Authoritativeness	Effectiveness t-1	Effectiveness t1	Legitimacyt-1	Legitimacyt1
Right-Wing Populist Party Leaders									
Geert Wilders	-10.46 (1.18)	-0.02 (0.06)	0.05 (0.08)	0.32 (0.27)	0.32 (0.31)	5.87 (3.05)	5.63 (3.08)	6.43 (2.79)	6.46 (2.78)
Marco Pastors	-11.68 (0.80)	0.03 (0.08)	0.08 (0.07)	-0.19 (0.31)	-0.21 (0.24)	5.14 (2.79)	4.92 (2.46)	6.53 (2.70)	7.07 (2.65)
Average	*-11.07 (1.18)*	*0.01 (0.08)*	*0.07 (0.08)*	*0.06 (0.39)*	*0.06 (0.39)*				
Mainstream Party Leaders									
J-P Balkenende	12.71 (7.42)	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.39 (0.13)	0.03 (0.22)	10.71 (2.73)	11.27 (2.31)	10.17 (3.06)	10.27 (2.97)
Wouter Bos	16.01 (8.22)	0.09 (0.08)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.12 (0.31)	-0.03 (0.17)	10.97 (2.19)	10.93 (2.26)	9.78 (2.90)	9.97 (2.86)
Mark Rutte	0.72 (4.14)	-0.01 (0.06)	0.01 (0.05)	0.30 (0.25)	0.09 (0.17)	9.10 (2.73)	8.48 (2.60)	9.37 (2.90)	9.67 (2.62)
Femke Halsema	-7.31 (2.45)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.06 (0.00)	-0.16 (0.29)	-0.20 (0.24)	7.94 (2.75)	7.75 (2.92)	9.72 (2.71)	9.72 (2.71)
Average	*5.53 (11.13)*	*0.00 (0.08)*	*-0.03 (0.04)*	*-0.03 (0.37)*	*-0.03 (0.23)*				
Total	0.00 (12.01)	0.00 (0.08)	0.00 (0.07)	0.00 (0.38)	0.00 (0.29)	8.29 (3.51)	8.17 (3.55)	8.66 (3.24)	8.86 (3.15)

Note. Entries are means, standard deviations in parentheses.

Appendix B

Survey Characteristics

The table shows that our respondent data mirror census data by and large in terms of age, gender and education.

	Dataset, n = 703	Census
Gender		
Male	50.1	49.0
Female	49.9	51.0
Age		
18-34	22.2	27.3
35-44	22.5	20.6
45-54	19.6	18.3
55-64	16.6	15.6
65+	19.1	18.3
Education		
Lower	33.7	32.0
Middle	38.6	40.1
Higher	27.7	28.0

Note. Census data concern 2006. Reference data were obtained from "Gouden Standaard", which is the reference instrument of the Dutch Market Research Association (MOA). These reference data are collected by the Dutch National Statistics Institute (CBS). Not all columns add up to 100 percent because of rounding to decimal places.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model

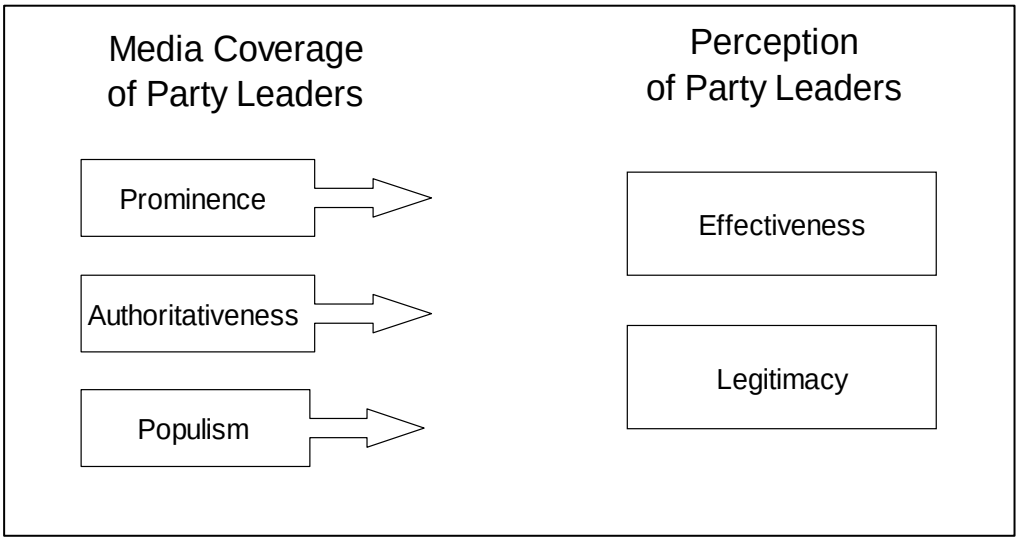

Table 1

Fixed Effects Regression Analysis Predicting Perceived Effectiveness at t1

	Model I	Model II	Model IV
Respondent Characteristics			
Effectiveness t-1	0.696 (0.023)***	0.460 (0.025)***	0.443 (0.026)***
Party Preference t-1	0.143 (0.023)***	0.135 (0.021)***	0.132 (0.021)***
Left-right distance	0.085 (0.038)	0.022 (0.021)	0.015 (0.028)
Immigration Issue	0.573 (0.589)	0.697 (0.544)	0.745 (0.541)
Political Internet Use	0.527 (0.652)	0.432 (0.588)	0.474 (0.557)
Interpersonal Comm.	0.196 (0.336)	-0.083 (0.303)	0.190 (0.317)
Media Coverage			
Prominence		0.088 (0.007)***	0.071 (0.011)***
Pop. rhetoric: Anti-elitism		0.438 (0.946)	1.247 (1.365)
Pop. rhetoric: Heartland		-3.678 (1.595)*	-3.059 (2.357)
Populist style		-0.712 (0.226)**	-1.352 (0.390)**
Authoritativeness		0.877 (0.375)*	1.300 (0.608)*
RWP leader			-0.259 (1.460)
Interactions			
RWP leader * Prominence			0.048 (0.127)
RWP leader * Anti-elitism			-1.081 (1.945)
RWP leader * Heartland			1.825 (3.236)
RWP leader * Populism			1.987 (0.746)*
RWP leader * Authoritativeness			-1.414 (0.832)
Intercept	2.426 (0.197)***	4.317 (0.213)***	4.669 (0.273)***
R-square			
Within	0.624	0.696	0.703
Between	0.315	0.259	0.248
Overall	0.561	0.617	0.621

Note. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients, standard deviations in parentheses. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<0.001

Table 2

Fixed Effects Regression Analysis Predicting Perceived Legitimacy at t1

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Respondent Characteristics				
Legitimacy t-1	0.522 (0.027)***	0.458 (0.030)***	0.425 (0.030)***	0.418 (0.028)***
Party Preference t-1	0.190 (0.021)***	0.157 (0.019)***	0.149 (0.019)***	0.145 (0.019)***
Left-right distance	0.051 (0.021)*	-0.010 (0.034)	-0.024 (0.024)	-0.032 (0.026)
Immigration Issue	0.496 (0.674)	0.562 (0.656)	0.624 (0.644)	0.611 (0.644)
Political Internet Use	-0.038 (0.699)	0.055 (0.644)	0.144 (0.662)	0.113 (0.631)
Interpersonal Comm	0.703 (0.502)	0.568 (0.519)	0.707 (0.486)	0.709 (0.532)
Media Coverage				
Prominence		0.030 (0.012)*	0.012 (0.007)	0.007 (0.010)
Pop. rhetoric: Anti-elitism		0.011 (0.888)	-0.433 (0.946)	-0.139 (1.536)
Popul. rhetoric: Heartland		-3.588 (2.500)	-0.930 (1.405)	-1.472 (2.470)
Populist style		-0.203 (0.187)	0.122 (0.204)	0.114 (0.431)
Immigration topics			-3.229 (0.526)***	-3.661 (4.235)
RWP leader				-3.580 (2.026)
Interactions				
RWP leader * Prominence				-0.242 (0.154)
RWP leader * Anti-elitism				-1.338 (2.845)
RWP leader * Heartland				3.635 (3.101)
RWP leader * Populism				-0.001 (0.811)
RWP leader * Immigration topics				3.040 (4.446)
Intercept	4.280 (0.245)***	4.795 (0.248)***	5.106 (0.270)***	5.170 (0.471)***
R-square				
Within	0.429	0.453	0.467	0.471
Between	0.226	0.215	0.218	0.216
Overall	0.376	0.393	0.405	0.407

Note. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients.
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<0.001

[i] See http://gking.harvard.edu/amelia/. Amelia produced 5 data sets in which missing values were imputed under different assumptions. For our analysis in Stata ® we made use of Ken Scheve's MI program to automatically compute the quantities of interest and the standard errors. An analysis of the unimputed data matrix leads to very similar results and the same substantial conclusions.

[ii] We used the program MSPWIN 5.0 (Molenaar, Van Schuur, Sijtsma, & Mokken, 2002) to perform the scale analysis.

[iii] Legitimacy was measured with the following two items:

To reach their goal some politicians are willing to ignore important democratic rules, while others will comply with these democratic rules under all circumstances. Below you see a number of current politicians. Could you tell me whether you think that they have always complied with the democratic principles and that they always will? (Responses could vary from 1 –Doesn't care about democratic rules – to 7 – Always complies with the democratic rules)

Sometimes people think a certain politician or party is dangerous. They are afraid that when that politician rises to power he or she will pose a threat to democracy. Others are of the opinion that this will not be the case. Below you will see a number of politicians. Imagine a situation in which this politician has risen to power - do you think that this politician would then pose a threat to democracy? (Responses could vary from 1 – If he/she rose to power he/she would pose a real threat to democracy – to 7 – If he/she rose to power he/she would definitely not pose a threat to democracy)

And effectiveness with:

Some politicians have great influence on governmental policy; others do not have a lot of influence. Could you indicate for each of the following politicians whether you expect they will exert little or a lot of influence after the elections? (Responses could vary from 1 – Will probably have little influence on policy – to 7 – Will probably have a lot of influence on policy)

Some politicians you don't hear from, whereas other politicians exert a lot of influence on public debates. How important have the following politicians been in the public debate? (Responses could vary from 1 –Does not shape the public debate at all – to 7 – Shapes the public debate to a large extent)

[iv] According to Mokken, the coefficient H (homogeneity of the items) has to be .30 or higher to be a scale. When H is higher than .50 it is a strong scale.

[v] Because they are very often included as important explanatory variables, we additionally ran analyses in which we included measures of political interest and political knowledge. However, because we control for the lagged variable, the effects of these variables on the dependent variable were not significant, which is why we left them out of the analyses presented in this paper.

[vi] To create the stacked data matrix the generic independent variables had to be linearly transformed. As a result their effects are positive.

[vii] We deliberately omitted Socialist Party (SP) leader Jan Marijnissen from the analysis, even though this party had great electoral success, the main reason being the populist nature of this party. We want to compare right-wing populist party leaders with leaders of established parties. Since the SP is often considered to be a left-wing populist party, we could have biased the results by including it in the group of established parties. We did however estimate our models with the SP included in the group of established parties, but this did not change and of the results substantively.

[viii] For more extensive information on the nature of the content analysis data see AUTHORS (in press-a).

[ix] http://academic.lexisnexis.nl/uva/

[x] Because of a shortage of newspaper articles in which right-wing populist leaders were coded as one of the actors, we coded all of the articles in which Geert Wilders and Marco

Pastors spoke about substantive matters. As a result, an extra 42 items were coded. These items were only used to estimate the positions of the right-wing populist leaders on the populism and authoritativeness dimensions.

[xi] See AUTHORS (in press-a) for a more detailed description of the intercoder-reliability check and the results.

[xii] See AUTHORS (in press-a) for the formula.

[xiii] The additional items referring to the ideological core of populism, anti-elitism and heartland, do not fit the scale.

[xiv] In the original scale we also included an item that measured whether the party leader referred to facts. However, due to low intercoder reliability results we had to exclude the item from the scale.

[xv] Because the content analysis data are limited and provide only limited variance, we unfortunately can not test interactions between the various aspects in the media coverage of right-wing populist leaders.

[xvi] These variables are centered around their mean in order to use them in interaction terms.

[xvii] The interactions are calculated by not using the original variables, but their deviations from the mean (Jaccard, Turrisi, & Wan, 1990).

[xviii] We understand combining the two very different right-wing populist party leaders Geert Wilders and Marco Pastors into one dummy called 'Right-Wing Populist Party Leader' might raise questions with the reader. Tests did confirm, however, that including a dummy for each right-wing populist party leader individually does not change the results. We did not choose for this solution, because we believe that including two dummies and thereby doubling the number of interactions in our analysis would not lead to a substantive addition and would make the presentation of our results even more complex.

[xix] It can be argued that audience segmentation can have a polarizing effect. I.e., media effects can differ between left-wing and right-wing parts of the electorate in such a way that the overall effect is insignificant. We have, however, tested for this and found that media effects are the same for audience members from all ideological backgrounds.