

The Role of Identity and Emotions as Predictors of Populism

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Acknowledgments

In embarking on a doctoral program, there seems to be a widely held perception that our existence revolves solely around the unending cycle of writing papers, conducting research, teaching, and attending classes. All this effort converges in pursuing only one goal: becoming a doctor. It is as if the intricacies of life simply fade away to make room for this more profound aspiration. If one is fortunate, this scenario may indeed unfold with seamless precision, seamlessly intertwining life and academic pursuits, with only occasional disruptions for conferences or the thrill of a new citation. However, in my personal experience, the reality of life's complexities never ceased to be present. Amidst the relentless academic commitments, I confronted the ebb and flow of significant relationships. I grappled with moments of profound grief and struggled to overcome the difficulty of expressing myself in a new language. Nevertheless, amidst these challenges, I was fortunate to encounter new and kindred spirits who provided the strength and support needed for recovery.

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Abstract

Over the years, scholarly research on populism has predominantly centered around three primary domains: the typology and conceptualization of the phenomenon, the sociopolitical and economic factors that cause the emergence of populism, and the dynamics of populism across different ideologies and countries. Less attention, though, has been directed toward comprehending the underlying mechanisms through which these causes influence populism. This work contributes to a deeper understanding of these mechanisms. In Study 1, the research shows how White American identity mediates the relationship between conservative media and populism. It emphasizes that the impact of conservative media on populism is not solely direct but operates through the mediating role of national and racial identity.

Through an experimental design, Study 2 explores the impact of different emotions (pride, hope, nervousness/anxiety, and anger) on support for populist policies and the mediating role of White American identity. The findings shed light on the complex interplay between emotions, self-identification, and policy preferences. Results indicate that emotions play a significant role in shaping individuals' support for populist policies. Specifically, participants experiencing pride, hope, and nervousness/anxiety showed a positive effect with support for populist policies. This study has important implications for understanding the role of emotions in shaping intergroup dynamics and political attitudes.

Keywords: populism, conservative media, identities, intergroup emotions, political attitudes, policy preferences, ideological media

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Appeal of Populism

In his bestseller *Fear: Trump in the White House*, the well-known investigative journalist Bob Woodward describes a meeting in 2010 consisting of conservative activist David Bossie, right-wing film producer Steve Bannon, and Donald Trump. This gathering aimed to discuss how Donald Trump should run for President of the United States as a candidate for the Republican Party. According to Woodward, Bossie pointed out during this encounter of the critical times that American politics were going through due to the Tea Party and its sweep around the country:

Populism was a grassroots movement to disrupt the political status quo in favor of everyday people...

Populism was for the common man, knowing the system is rigged. It was against crony capitalism and insider deals, which were bleeding the workers.

"I love that. That's what I am," Trump said, "a popularist." He mangled the word.

"No, no," Bannon said. "It's populist."

"Yeah, yeah," Trump insisted. "A popularist." (2018: 2,4)

Trump was referring to being popular with the people. Still, his advisors were suggesting something else – they were talking about political tactics appealing to ordinary citizens tired of established elite groups. In the words of the political scientist Benjamin Moffitt (2016), a

political style that is very appealing in contemporary politics as it becomes more mediatized and spectacular.

This political strategy worked well for Donald Trump, who was elected President of the United States six years later against all predictions, using nationalist rhetoric promising to defend the interests of real Americans from immigrants and other minorities. Yet this phenomenon is not exclusive to the U.S. Many populist governments have been rising worldwide, overcoming various political scenarios, and responding to different crises and realities. Thus, there are populist regimes with different ideologies and schools of thought. In Europe, for instance, populism on the left was exacerbated due to citizens feeling indignant after the financial crisis in 2008 and is represented by the political parties Podemos in Spain, Syriza in Greece, and Bloco de Esquerda in Portugal. On the other hand, right-wing populist parties like the National Front in France, the Freedom Party in the Netherlands, and the Authentic Finns in Finland are more nationalistic and xenophobic. The British UKIP adopts some liberal ideas on economic issues alongside other nationalists. At the same time, Viktor Orbán's government in Hungary is corporatist in economic terms and believes that the State must correct the market based on Christian morality.

In Latin America, populist governments have emerged as a reaction against poverty and because of people's disenchantment with political institutions due to corruption and economic inequality. Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, Evo Morales in Bolivia, and Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela are left-wing figures with a socialist and anti-imperialist discourse, promoting an economic model controlled by the State. On the other hand, Jair Bolsonaro, former president of Brazil and a previous army officer, represents an extreme right-wing populism well known for his racist, homophobic, and macho statements.

The growth of populism and citizens' support of populist politicians generate critical questions: Why are citizens choosing leaders that openly support racism and homophobia and

promote authoritarian rules when human freedoms and egalitarian rights are some of the significant conquests of modern societies? Why are people supporting inexperienced politicians with crude communication styles and unethical standards that may harm democracy?

Scholars like Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2017) argue that this support is motivated by a backlash against the cultural changes linked to the rise of postmaterialist values of self-expression that threaten traditional or materialist standards. Consequently, the evolution of progressive values like cosmopolitanism, ecologism, gender equality, and self-realization are not equal among different groups of people but are marked by generational, social, and educational gaps that produce strong tensions between values in specific groups. According to the authors, those tensions have triggered a counterrevolutionary backlash, especially among the older, less educated, male and White groups, who experience a sense of social deterioration and feel affected by the displacement of traditional norms that have been familiar to them and therefore form an electoral base potentially vulnerable to populist messages.

A different approach is put forward by de Vries & Hoffmann, (2018) who argue that the critical element to understanding the populist voter is fear instead of values, specifically the fear of globalization. In their study examining 28 countries in the European Union, they found that people are afraid of globalization because it is closely linked to immigration. The authors argue that populist voters oppose the European Union, do not trust politics and institutions, are unsatisfied with the way democracy is working, do not support same-sex marriage, and think that there are too many foreigners in their own countries.

An economic perspective is proposed by the Argentinian political theorist Ernesto (Ernesto, 1977; Laclau, 2005), who emphasizes the role played by economic grievances and inequalities in driving populist movements. According to the author, populist movements emerge when marginalized groups feel economically excluded and seek to challenge the existing power structures. These types of leaders construct a discourse that appeals to the needs

and aspirations of marginalized groups. They aim to unite a diverse set of necessities under a common political identity, framing the struggle as "the people" against "the elites" or "the establishment." Laclau (2005) emphasizes the importance of signification and language in populism. He argues that populism relies on "empty signifiers" that can be filled with a range of meanings and desires. These empty signifiers, such as "the people" or "the will of the people," allow populist leaders to create a broad political identity that appeals to diverse groups with different concerns.

Another approach seeking to explain the rise of populism, especially after the Second World War, focuses on the social and economic changes that have occurred with the growth of modernization, globalization, and deregulation of the economy. The 20th-century industrial and national capitalism has been transformed into post-industrial and global 21st-century capitalism, where jobs have been relocated to places where the prices yield the highest comparative advantage, leaving many low- and medium-skilled workers unemployed. Transnational mobility and the political destabilization of many African and Middle Eastern countries have promoted immigration to and within Europe (Bauman, 2004; Fukuyama, 2018). These transnational mobilities go hand in hand with substantial changes in the arrangements between the economy and society. Increasing economic deregulation, globalization, and privatization have extended the principles of competition and market exchange to domains of life previously governed by informal and embedded ties of reciprocal exchange. This, among other factors, has led to increasing social inequalities and decreasing solidarity and societal integration between social groups. With individualized careers and risks, employees increasingly need to become entrepreneurs, competing for jobs and social recognition (Fukuyama, 2018). Even those who have been able to keep their jobs feel the pressure of an increased workload and flexibility – "a game of hire and fire with very few rules attached" (Bauman, 2004: 27). These structural changes are likely to have accelerated in the aftermath of the financial crisis in the European

Union and the politics of austerity. Citizens most affected by these social and economic changes, such as blue-collar workers, the retired, the less educated, the self-employed petite bourgeoisie, and public-sector bureaucrats, have been identified as making up the most significant proportion of the electoral supporters of populist parties (Norris, 2005).

These changes, however, cannot fully explain the lure of populist parties, as several studies have pointed out (Eatwell & Mudde, 2004; Minkenberg, 2000; Norris, 2005). The United States, for instance, is an interesting case. By 2016, the year of Donald Trump's presidential election, the apprehensions along the border with Mexico had declined to their lowest level since 1971 (Eatwell & Mudde, 2003; Passel, 2016). Furthermore, attitudes against immigration and multiculturalism, measured at the national level, are just lightly correlated with the electoral success of Donald Trump (Norris, 2005). Additionally, there does not seem to be a robust association between unemployment levels and the popularity of populist parties within a country. Populist parties have succeeded in northern and central European countries, where unemployment rates are below OECD (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) averages, and welfare systems can compensate for those negatively affected by globalization and neoliberal policies (Swank & Betz, 2003).

These shortcomings point to other, more psychological and attitudinal factors or collective mechanisms mediating between structural changes and the success of populist parties (Mileti et al., 2016; Minkenberg, 2000). Existing research has suggested that anti-immigrant attitudes, authoritarian behaviors, and political dissatisfaction are the most reliable predictors of electoral success in the case of populism (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2001). Yet, the conditions and mechanisms underlying citizens' perceptions of threat and vulnerability still need to be explored or have been studied as separate phenomena. This study posits that White American identity, in interaction with emotions, is a crucial link connecting the perceived threat to the structural and attitudinal precursors driving support for populist parties and politicians. The

research investigates whether White national identity and emotions predict populist support in the United States, examining potential mediation or moderation effects. Furthermore, the study examines how conservative media consumption reinforces identities that shape populist support. Through these analyses, the research aims to enhance our comprehension of the intricate interplay among identity, emotions, media, and the appeal of populism.

This research comprises two distinct studies. The first study involves secondary data analysis using the American National Election Studies dataset. In this study, I posit that the relationship between conservative media and populism in the United States is mediated by White American identity. Additionally, emotions play a moderating role, either strengthening or weakening the connection between conservative media and White identity.

In simpler terms, I suggest that when individuals encounter information that echoes the rhetoric of a populist leader, consistently emphasizing a particular national identity, their response will be influenced by how closely this aligns with or contradicts their own identity. If the information aligns with their identity, it evokes positive emotions like enthusiasm, bolstering their sense of belonging to their group and increasing support for populism. Conversely, if the information goes against their identity and paints the country's state in a negative light, it tends to trigger negative emotions such as anxiety or anger, that may weaken their connection to their group.

Figure 1.

Conceptual Diagram Proposed

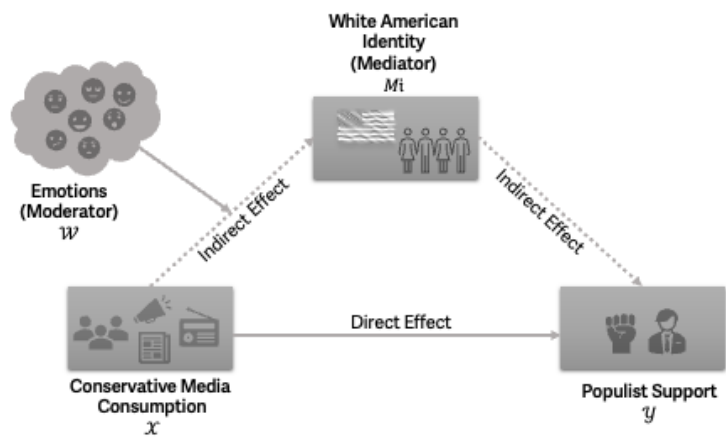
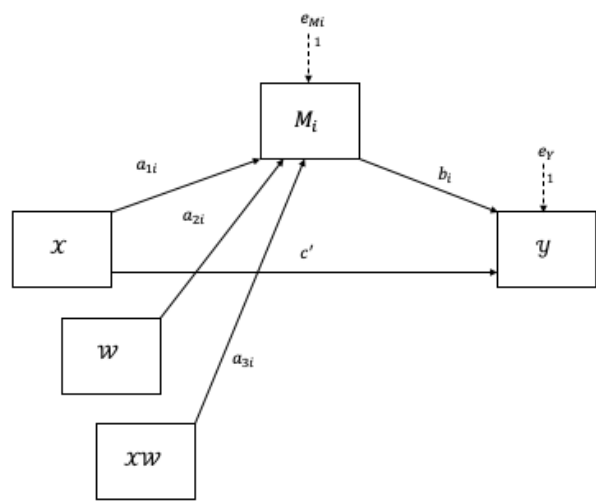


Figure 2.

Statistical Diagram Proposed



How does this happen? Emotions serve a dual role in identity, acting both as an outcome and a valuable resource for regulation. Positive or negative emotions are integral in validating one's identity or not. This, in turn, impacts the decision to retain or relinquish that identity, helping to mitigate the associated gains and costs in the process (Kaplan, 1986). Therefore, I propose that when an individual consumes conservative media, they self-evaluate their own identity. This introspection leads to emotional reactions regarding the state of their country in relationship with their identity. If the individual's positive response prompts a sense of enthusiasm, it reinforces the identity verification process.

Consequently, their political identity is affirmed and strengthened due to their heightened confidence in it. This, in turn, influences their support for a populist leader. On the contrary, if the self-evaluation is negative, the opposite outcome will occur.

The second study is a web-based experiment involving 408 American participants, designed to delve into the underlying mechanisms governing the relationship between emotions, White identity, and the impact of populist policies. This exploration is facilitated through manipulating emotions to better understand the dynamics at play.

There are two critical distinctions in study two compared to the study one. First, the experiment moves beyond assessing support for a broad concept of populism and instead focuses on gauging support for specific policy proposals presented by populist leaders or parties. These proposals aim to address their supporters' concerns, adding a practical dimension to the evaluation of populism. This approach seeks to measure the backing for populism when it materializes in policies that directly affect individuals' lives.

Second, this study employs the manipulation of acute emotions, characterized by their short-term and immediate nature in response to events or stimuli, such as a video, in this case. This manipulation allows for examining short-term reactions when identity is challenged or supported. It also considers a broader spectrum of individual emotions, going beyond the

dichotomy of positive and negative emotions to encompass a more comprehensive range of emotional responses.

By incorporating these elements, these studies aim to provide a nuanced understanding of how emotions, White identity, and the concrete influence of populist policies intersect, shedding light on the complex dynamics that underlie these relationships.

Literature Review

Brief History of Populism

If there is a consensus among social scientists about the word populism, it's that defining the concept is inherently challenging. The term has a history marked by uncertainties in its definition and concerns about its application. These issues have raised ongoing academic discussions and sparked worries about how the term is used in everyday politics. The lack of a clear meaning and different interpretations have resulted in its usage in multiple situations, raising doubts about its general understanding.

To go beyond a simple definition, scholars like Frei and Rovira-Kaltwasser (2011) have conceptualized the history of populism, analyzing the concept under three different stages: the time in history, the governments that are taken as a reference, and the definitions that are given to this concept. Hence, the first stage in the emergence of populism was marked by adopting a populist self-identifying label. During the late 19th century, specific political movements began to label themselves as populist, a categorization that was subsequently embraced by certain intellectuals. What united these populist movements was their response to the modernization processes, frequently leading them to be considered extreme reactionaries. Two examples of political activities that illustrate this stage are the Russian *Narodniki* and the American People's Party.

The Russian *Narodniki* constituted an urban movement that emerged during the mid-1870s under the leadership of intellectuals. The philosophies of Herder and Rousseau influenced these figures, consequently fostering an idealized view of life within rural communities. Their ideology was both romantic and reactionary but also had the distinct characteristic of taking distance from economic and political elites, calling for the mobilization of the population to confront capitalism and the *czarist* system. In this sense, this movement bears certain similarities to anarchism and socialism, to the extent that Lenin considers them a significant complement to the democratic order (Canovan, 1984).

The American populist movements from the end of the 19th century began as a response to industrialization, which was perceived by part of the population as favoring large monopolies. This situation created discontent with the growing concentration and centralization of power within the federation and the broader capitalist system. These movements articulated the concerns of landowners and small farmers from the southern and western regions of the United States.

The culmination of these populist movements in the United States occurred with the establishment of the People's Party in 1891, which advocated for various causes, including the direct election of senators, women's suffrage, the implementation of a progressive tax system, and the introduction of mechanisms for referendums and popular initiatives for legislation. Although this party didn't necessarily represent a unified class solidarity among small rural communities, it did advocate for greater self-governance in response to an increasingly centralized and bureaucratic structure of central power.

Frei & Rovira-Kaltwasser (2011) indicate that populism during this period refers to specific social movements rooted in agrarian ideologies that advocate for the direct participation of the populace. Theoretically, the notion of 'people' employs a semantic category to portray a romanticized societal image that places inherent value on the past, characterized by the

assertion of community self-determination and the insistence on a direct relationship between the citizens and the government. Populism during this phase, in this context, highlights the disparity between the power held by those in the government and the collective aspirations for self-determination among the people. It emphasizes the plea of certain groups for increased recognition and autonomy within a society that is progressively organized around highly depersonalized and bureaucratized institutions.

The second stage of populism, proposed by the authors, has occurred as a result of Latin America's modernization processes. In 1929, this continent suffered one of the major economic crises in history, where the region encountered significant difficulties in maintaining its export activities. This gave rise to an urgent necessity to establish a new development model. This circumstance paved the way for a socio-political environment that facilitated the emergence of new regimes, frequently characterized as populist within the social sciences.

Influenced by modernization theories and structural-functionalism, governments such as Juan Domingo Perón's in Argentina and Getúlio Vargas's in Brazil were used to conceptualize populism as a specific stage in Latin American development. One of the main characteristics of this phase was the involvement of urban middle classes and industrial-commercial elites with the local economy and the political structure. It encompasses establishing a state-committed relationship that brings together different societal classes and adopting a government strategy focused on replacing imports, rallying the populace in the nation's name, and raising leaders with charismatic and personalized characteristics. It is important to note that this developmental stage has manifested differently throughout the Latin American region. At its core, populism was defined by implementing organizational, rhetorical, and somewhat redistributive tactics to benefit the general population. These strategies weren't solely economic promises, as they also symbolized some instances of participation.

The third and final stage of populism is directly linked to the emergence of the so-called 'Third Wave of Democratization' (Frei & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2011). In the 1990s and early 21st century, populism was understood as a logic of political action applicable to different ideological models with three characteristics. First, a political style built upon a close bond between political leaders and their followers (Knight, 1998; Canovan, 1981). Second, a period that proclaims the utopia of instant solutions to long-standing problems (Canovan, 1981; Hermet, 2003); and third, the development of a strategy for acquiring and exercising power, where a charismatic leader governs without the checks and balances of the institutions inherent to the rule of law. (Weyland, 2001). This logic revolves around creating heterogeneous coalitions through charismatic and paternalistic leadership, avoiding redistributive or clientelist methods to maintain the bond with the electorate.

Conceptual Approaches in the Literature of Populism

In political science and sociology, four traditions can be distinguished in the study of the concept: 1) the ideational approach, which views populism as a "thin" ideology (Mudde, 2004; Stanley, 2008); 2) the political-strategic approach, which focuses on the actions of political leaders who seek or exercise power (Weyland, 2001); 3) the discursive approach, which places more emphasis on how populist demands and assertions are articulated and who is responsible for them (Deegan-Krause & Haughton, 2009); and 4) the performative approach, which incorporates a sociocultural dimension and emphasizes the political style of populism (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014).

From the ideational approach, one of the most prominent definitions comes from Cas Mudde (2004), who argues that populism is a "thin" ideology that sees society as divided into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups – the "pure people" against the "corrupt elite" – and advocates for the direct expression of the general will. In contrast to "thick" or more

comprehensive ideologies, populism wouldn't provide a complete vision of how to solve political, social, and economic issues. The beliefs and attitudes at the core of populism's ideology are not fully developed or defined. Therefore, the concept needs to be combined with other classical ideologies, such as nationalism or socialism.

The political-strategic approach, inspired by the principles of agency and bounded rationality by Herber Simon (1955), focuses on the role of an opportunistic leader who can adapt to specific contexts and take advantage of the available resources. Weyland (2001) argues that populism occurs as a political strategy when the leader seeks or exercises governmental power through the deinstitutionalized or direct support of many disorderly followers. This approach helps to explain why populists take advantage of a crisis to strengthen their control and the rapid growth and decline of these movements due to the actions of their leaders.

The discursive approach posits that populism is a logic of political articulation and, therefore, prompts a focus on how contents are communicated (Laclau, 2005). For Laclau, populist discourses aim to construct a particular meaning of the "people" based on the dichotomization of the social space through an internal boundary that separates it from "other." This discourse relies on establishing clusters of demands that contribute to the homogenization of a heterogeneous group of individuals, generating a new common political identity based on antagonism toward this "other" (Laclau, 2005; (Howarth et al., 2003)). The populist discourse seeks to construct "the people" as the union of those opposed to a social "other" (typically elites, immigrants, or minorities) and those who struggle against different, yet equivalent, forms of subordination or exploitation (Laclau, 2005; Laclau & Mouffe, 2014)

Lastly, the performative approach emphasizes the affective and relational elements between the leader and the people and between them and the "other". Similar to Laclau, they associate populism with the creation of cleavages and identities. However, in this case, they stress that populist narratives aren't constructed in a vacuum but are influenced by prior social

and cultural experiences and the specific context in which they occur (Rivero, 2023; Riveros, 2022). Populism is a political style based on the affirmation and performance of the antagonism between people and elites, the use of bad manners, the spectacularization of crises, and the self-presentation of the populist leader as an outsider, someone who uses a coarse and aggressive style (Moffitt, 2016; Ostiguy et al., 2020).

Despite the theoretical discrepancies among the various traditions, most conceive populism as a social construction (Kim, 2017), and there is a high degree of compatibility and complementarity among them. For instance, proponents of the ideational approach argue that from a practical standpoint, the differences between "thin ideology" and "discourse" are minor (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). Similarly, the political strategy and performative approaches emphasize the importance of context and crises. These are not only linked to the origins of many populisms, but they are also partly dramatized, reconstructed, and propagated by populist leaders to generate and capitalize on citizens' discontent with the elites (Moffitt, 2016)

In conclusion, most authors acknowledge the presence of a core set of attributes common to many populist movements—such as the Manichean interpretation of society, anti-elitism, the idealization of the people, and moral condemnation of political adversaries—which is evident through the discourses and actions of populist leaders (Moffitt, 2016).

Effects of Populism on Democracy

There is a question of whether populism should be considered a threat or a corrective tactic for democracy (Canovan, 2002; Mudde et al., 2012). From a positive standpoint, some scholars contend that populist movements can enhance civic participation, foster accountability among elites for their actions, advocate for marginalized voices, and disrupt the existing political establishment. Consequently, populism may serve as a mechanism for democratic

reform by elevating the voices of people who perceive themselves as inadequately represented by the ruling elite. (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018).

However, democracy entails a complex decision-making procedure, frequently intertwined with representative and parliamentary systems. Therefore, populist movements could potentially capitalize on the public discontent with political institutions, advocating for an untraditional form of democracy that operates beyond established institutional frameworks and traditional political elites. This is problematic because populists do not necessarily reject representation but oppose those they see as wrong representatives. Thus, “populism without representation can exist” ((Müller, 2017):29). Additionally, populist actors emphasize the power of the majority, which can undermine liberal democratic principles like minority rights and the balance of power.

Although a definitive consensus remains elusive, it is not unreasonable to argue that the predominant perspective implies that populism constitutes a challenge to democracy. A notable contemporary proponent of this viewpoint is the French scholar Pierre Rosanvallon (2021), who posits that populism ought to be regarded as a warped departure from the principles and mechanisms of representative democracy. This is due to its capacity to generate a novel political division, obstructing the development of stable political coalitions.

Moreover, the ascent of populism has the potential to create a dichotomy between populism and anti-populism, surpassing traditional political confrontations that flourish in a novel political landscape (Ostiguy, 2017; Rosanvallon, 2021; Stavrakakis, 2018). Illustratively, instances such as Trump versus anti-Trump in the United States, Fujimorism versus anti-Fujimorism in Peru, or Chavism versus anti-Chavism in Venezuela exemplify how populist leaders, when implementing substantial changes advocated by their supporters but vehemently opposed by their detractors, can leave a lasting imprint. This imprint manifests as a polarized electorate, primarily arising not from programmatic disparities but from enduring psychological

affiliations that produce robust group distinctions, both favorable and unfavorable (Meléndez & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019)

Populism and Mass Media

Populist movements and leaders worldwide have taken advantage of the power of both traditional and social media to disseminate their messages, mobilize supporters, and challenge established political order. Mazzoleni, Stewart & Horsifield (2003) have outlined a process to understand how the relationship between media and populism is constructed.

The first stage consists of laying the groundwork, where media indirectly heightens societal psychological insecurities, sensationalizing stories for profit, exacerbating negative public sentiments toward politics, and creating an informational environment where populist movements take advantage of citizens' fears.

The second stage, or insurgent phase, occurs when populist candidates begin to receive extensive and often free media coverage. Whether sympathetic or critical, the tone of the information becomes less relevant as the public becomes increasingly familiar with populist rhetoric. As public tediousness increases, the novelty and drama of the populist figure are sensationalized to the point of normalization and legitimacy. Once the populist leader has gained a lot of attention and has validated their role in the political realm, the third stage will come with a decline in media attention. Here, the media will moderate their importance, portraying them as an insignificant competitor until the fourth stage, when media attention decreases even more until it disappears.

While Mazzoleni, Stewart, and Horsifield (2003) do not distinguish in their model the role that different media types play in the sensationalization of the populist leader during the insurgent phase, it is essential to consider the size and scope that populist messages could attain when they find ideologically aligned news outlets. Mainly if such outlets reproduce the message

following a system of beliefs instead of a system of factuality. This relationship is more complex in the United States due to the historical division between two very different information production styles.

Ideological media and populism in the United States

When examining conservative media in the United States, it is often Fox News and Rush Limbaugh of the 1980s and 90s that immediately come to mind. However, the roots of this media landscape extend far beyond those well-known names and periods. As Nicole Hemmer, a political historian, highlights in her work (2016, 2022), the inception of the modern conservative media establishment can be traced back to the midcentury—a time when it emerged in response to an era characterized by a pervasive "objective neutrality." (Brownell et al., 2017; Schulman & Zelizer, 2017).

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the United States, like many other countries, boasted a press that openly aligned with specific political factions. However, as the twentieth century commenced, the landscape shifted with the rise of commercialized newspapers, presenting two contrasting approaches to journalism. The first was the emergence of "muckraking" journalism, embodying a belief in the press's capacity to expose government corruption and advocate for policy reforms and regulations. Concurrently, "objective" journalism took hold in 1896 when Adolph Ochs purchased *The New York Times*, heralding a reporting style centered around accuracy, fairness, impartiality, independence, and a commitment to public welfare (Hemmer, 2017).

As journalism underwent professionalization, objectivity emerged as a critical element in newspaper reporting, extending its influence on radio and television. Objectivity encompassed a set of professional standards and represented a worldview grounded in factual accuracy. As Nicole Hemmer notes, "The truth of reporting was best understood by its realism:

How well did it conform to actual observable events?" (2017, p.128). However, alongside this development, conservative activists put forth an alternative perspective on facts and knowledge. They challenged the legitimacy of objectivity and instead emphasized ideological integrity as a replacement under the argument that they could discern the source's trustworthiness by looking into its ideological agenda rather than tracking the record of its factuality.

As they fought media bias, conservative activists took it upon themselves to establish and promote ideological media platforms, offering audiences an alternative reality to the notion of objectivity and a distinct set of values for discerning truth. Instead of focusing on impartiality, they posited that biases were inherent among all individuals involved in media organizations. Furthermore, their mission involved exposing the purported objectivity of liberal media as a farce. Employing anecdotal evidence, statistics, and watchdog organizations, conservatives sought to persuade the American public that objectivity served as a mere facade wielded by mainstream media to conceal their ideological agenda (Hemmer, 2017). This phenomenon foreshadowed the rise of figures such as Donald Trump, who popularized "fake news" to scorn media organizations that dared to critique his performance.

During the early 20th century, conservative media professionals boasted elite educational backgrounds and were accustomed to being taken seriously while wielding some degree of influence. However, as their ideology veered towards more radical paths in the 1950s and 1960s, they were marginalized and disempowered. According to Hemmer (2017), following Barry Goldwater's defeat in the 1964 presidential election, conservative media made a strategic shift to connect with their audience in a more populist manner.

This transition gave rise to a first generation of conservative media activists who embraced an oppositional identity, allowing conservatives to identify as outsiders. They crafted what can be described as an "elite populism," enabling media activists to present themselves as representatives of an oppressed minority (which, by the mid-1960s, they perceived as an

oppressed majority) despite having access to traditional sources of economic, social, and political power (Schulman & Zelizer, 2017, p.232).

Based on these historical developments and asymmetrical strategies between ideological camps, I expect:

H1: Conservative media will directly and positively affect populist support.

Impact of Conservative Media on the American Landscape

Despite the influence of conservative media on the American public opinion landscape, research about the topic has been relatively scarce. Two studies developed by Jamieson & Capella (1996, 2000) about Rush Limbaugh and his audience and different radio hosts, Fox News and the Wall Street Journal, have shown how specific conservative speakers employ provocative and divisive language to vilify their political adversaries, accusing rival information outlets of being influenced by liberals, and presenting tightly structured narratives that often exclude contradictory facts or viewpoints. According to the authors, Limbaugh distinguished himself by focusing on liberal figures and domestic political matters and his technique of using other media sources to counter their arguments. Furthermore, the radio host reinterprets stories from what he calls liberal media and reframes them to a conservative point of view, hoping to “free” their listeners from liberal influences in case they encounter alternative sources. One surprising and essential result from these authors' research revealed that listeners of Limbaugh from the 90s also sought information from diverse sources and didn't exhibit significantly intensified emotional reactions to news events. However, listeners did report feeling more politically divided from liberals compared to those who didn't listen to conservative media.

H2: Conservative media will have a direct and positive effect on White American Identity.

Donald Trump and His Discourse about American Greatness

Populist movements often employ identity politics to construct a narrative that pits the “people” against a perceived “other” or an “elite.” This “us vs. them” strategy creates a sense of collective identity among supporters, a common interest in opposition to a specific group or establishment. One of the most common strategies of Donald Trump's rhetoric was, and still is, the promise that Americans will reclaim their greatness. But to whom was Trump talking to when he appealed to America? Who was part of the America he mentioned? A content analysis of the former president's discourse reveals how he has addressed the White working class's concerns with their declining position in society, emphasizing issues such as American workers being victims of globalization, drawing moral boundaries toward illegal immigrants, and stressing the role of working-class men as protectors of women (Lamont et al., 2017). Thus, the idea of recovering the American economy was transformed into a message about rescuing the White race (Appadurai et al., 2017). However, the transmission of saving White America not only found a good reception among the White working-class voters without higher education, who were signaled at the beginning as the demographic that propelled Donald Trump to the presidency. Data would show later that the promise went further to other groups as well, middle-class Whites, with or without higher education (Bhambra, 2017). His support also extended to American economic elites, as well as within the Republic Party, among its leaders and members alike (Skocpol & Hertel-Fernandez, 2016). Thus, Donald Trump made White identity prominent, priming a feeling of in-group solidarity among this group of people, but at the same time, marking clear boundaries with the out-groups: undocumented, immigrants, refugees, and people of color. He capitalized his success on the fact that White racial attitudes are a central feature of American partisan politics. As political scientist Ashley Jardina (2021) has shown in her research about White racial attitudes, “there are two independent forces at play in electoral

politics. The first is the animus that some Whites hold towards racial and ethnic minorities, and the second is the desire of some Whites to protect their racial group and to maintain power and privilege (2020, 1555)".

H3: White American Identity is a strong predictor of support for populism.

H4: The relationship between conservative media and populism will be mediated by White American Identity

White Identity

Traditionally, sociological approaches to White identity have been centered in three main areas. In the first place, there is the historical account, which examines how the boundaries of whiteness have evolved over time and how the definition of whiteness has changed to encompass various ethnicities (Foley, 1997; Jacobson, 1999).

The second approach revolves around the deconstruction of White privilege, which focuses on the institutional benefits of whiteness and analyzes the complex and multifaceted nature of White identities (Hartigan, 2000; McDermott, 2006; Morris, 2005; Sweetland, 2002). This line of work plays a critical role in unveiling whiteness, mainly when systems of racial dominance are frequently concealed behind color-blind and egalitarian rhetoric (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Sears et al., 2000). Finally, a third approach is primarily rooted in post-modern perspectives, and it explores how White identities are fragmented by various social factors, including class, gender, sexuality, and local physical context. These studies extend the findings of historical accounts that document the fluid nature of White racial identities and support the argument that they are not innate, nor are they solely determined by skin color or physical attributes. Instead, White identities are products of social construction, shaped by both small-

scale and large-scale societal influences and interactions across time and space (Hartigan, 1999; Morris, 2005).

Much of the literature on racial and ethnic identity stems from the psychological tradition. This field considers identity construction as something that occurs during childhood and adolescence. Erickson (1968) argues that the formation of identity is an unconscious phenomenon that occurs during childhood and proceeds through a crisis during adolescence. The author also maintains that attaining a positive or healthy identity hinges on individuals perceiving their identity as a successful component within a broader group identity.

One prominent model often referred to within this area is the White racial identity development model created by Janet Helm (1990, 1995). This theory focuses on the system of beliefs that emerge in response to the dominant society categorizing individuals into racial groups. In a context such as the United States, where belonging to a racial group influences an individual's social status, it is presumed that the process of developing racial identity occurs to everyone. For White individuals, this process involves becoming aware of their whiteness, acknowledging this aspect of their identity as socially meaningful and personally significant, and ultimately adopting a realistic and positive perspective on whiteness that does not rely on notions of inherent superiority. Helms (1995) has identified six stages of identity that characterize the pattern of White individuals when responding to racial situations in their environment. Contact, disintegration, reintegration, and autonomy represent different ways in which people may deal with their racial identity. Scholars from this area aim to understand how White individuals perceive their racial group, how they navigate discussions of race, and how these factors shape their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors regarding issues related to race and ethnicity.

Social psychology scholars have also developed a very prolific area of study that aims to explain how implicit bias and stereotypes affect White individual's perceptions and

interactions with individuals from different racial backgrounds. Studies in this area explore how White individuals may hold implicit biases related to race (Devine, 1998; Greenwald & Krieger, 2006) and how these biases can manifest in various contexts, such as hiring decisions (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004), criminal justice, and everyday social interactions (Kinder, 1986; Kinder & Sears, 1981; Kam & Kinder, 2009)

Identity Theory and Emotions

Identities are mental frameworks that include traits, attitudes, behaviors, associations, and objectives related to a specific social category. They play a crucial role in fostering a sense of coherence and belonging within a group, allowing individuals to align their everyday actions (Burke & Stets, 2022). Individuals possess an array of distinct social identities, varying in their status and significance. Together with personal identities, collective identities constitute an individual's overall self-concept (Stets, 2004, 2005).

The literature about identity theory and how identity interacts with emotions is composed of three emphases. First, the structural domain delves into how an individual's identity and behavior are influenced by the overarching social structures they are embedded in (Stryker, 1980, 2004). From this perspective, emotions play a critical role in shaping social networks, as individuals who share similar emotional experiences are more inclined to initiate and sustain social connections (Stryker, 2004). When positive emotions are associated with a particular identity, individuals tend to invest more time in it, foster additional relationships, and expand their social networks. Conversely, negative emotions are expected to have the opposite impact, discouraging the establishment and growth of social networks.

Second, the interactional domain emphasizes how identities are upheld and negotiated during social interactions with others (McCall & Simons, 1978). According to the authors, emotions come into play when a significant aspect of one's identity is challenged during social

interactions, particularly when others fail to support one's expression of that identity. This challenge tends to give rise to negative emotions, and individuals can employ various tactics to alleviate these unfavorable feelings. One of these tactics involves relying on "short-term credit," whereby individuals temporarily accept that their identity expression is not receiving support from others. Still, it had been supported in the past. Thus, people drown in this metaphoric "line of credit" to endure the lack of support, interpreting it as a one-time occurrence. Another strategy is selective perception, where individuals focus on cues that reinforce their identity while disregarding cues that seem to undermine it. Additional strategies may also include: a) Blaming others in the situation for not validating one's identity and criticizing or penalizing individuals for their lack of support; b) Disassociation from an unsuccessful identity performance by asserting that it wasn't a real intention; c) The transition to an alternative identity that aligns with the situation expectations, or simply, the disengage from the interactions altogether. In essence, these strategies provide means for individuals to avoid the distressing emotion linked to identity disapproval (McCall & Simons, 1978).

Lastly, the perceptual domain sheds light on the internal dynamics within an individual, including the processes related to identity verification that significantly shape their behavior (Burke & Stets, 2022).

Burke (1991, 1996) claims that emotions indicate the extent to which the perception of the self, aligns with the established standards associated with an identity in a situation—continuous alignment or identity verification results in positive emotions. Conversely, constant misalignment or non-verification leads to negative emotions. Moreover, the author argues that when an individual encounters negative emotion, they cannot sustain this emotional state indefinitely because it poses a risk to the stability of their identity control system. As a result, individuals will employ diverse tactics to escape this negative emotional state, which may involve altering their behavior or adopting a different perspective. In his later work (Burke,

1997), he would call coping responses to these behavioral and cognitive approaches. The goal remains the same: to reestablish a congruence between how one perceives oneself in each situation and the established standards linked to an identity.

In sum, in the context of identity theory, emotions stem from how people present themselves by their identities and how much they believe others perceive them as aligning with the expectations associated with a specific identity within a given situation. When individuals receive affirmation and acknowledgment for the identity they assert in a situation (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 2004) or when others within that situation share the same perception of their identity (Burke & Stets, 2009), they tend to experience positive emotions, and the significance and visibility of the identity can rise. On the other hand, if there's an absence of support for one's identity, individuals tend to elicit negative emotions, and the importance and visibility of that identity may decline.

H5: The effect of conservative media on populism through White American identity will be moderated by emotions.

Emotion as Anticipation in Identity Theory

Emotions have been explored not only as an outcome of the identity formation process but also as a critical resource that is used in different situations. In identity theory, resources encompass anything that sustains individuals, ranging from basic needs like food and education to emotional or material support from others (Freese and Burke, 1994). Thus, incorporating emotions into the identity verification process requires considering both the feelings a person brings into a situation and how emotions from earlier can impact emotions later. When individuals enter an interaction with positive emotions, they are more inclined to interpret feedback from others in a way that confirms their identity. Conversely, entering an interaction with negative emotions may predispose individuals to interpret feedback in a manner that

challenges their identity. Research suggests that people in a particular emotional state tend to focus on details that align with that state (Forgas, 1995), potentially influencing the current verification process by biasing it.

Furthermore, previous identity verification experiences, or the lack thereof, within an ongoing encounter can also influence subsequent identity verification in that same encounter. Emotions stemming from past experiences affect current interactions and shape future encounters and the anticipated emotions individuals expect to experience. These anticipated emotions result from expectations of positive or negative outcomes based on similar past interactions and assessments of the resources available in future interactions (Kemper, 2006).

The significance of anticipated emotions within the identity theory framework lies in people's ability to anticipate and make predictions regarding identity verification in future interactions. Such anticipations can stem from past verification experiences in similar situations, leading individuals to feel optimistic about forthcoming interactions. Conversely, individuals might evaluate their available resources and foresee challenges in verifying an identity in a future setting, resulting in apprehension about what lies ahead. This illustrates how emotions during an interaction can have multiple origins, including those that precede the initial stages of the identity process.

Early research has indicated that individuals in a positive emotional state are more inclined to confront threatening or negative feedback willingly (Trope et al., 2001; Trope and Pomerantz, 1998) thus positive emotions work as a resource, serving to buffer the emotional toll associated with receiving unfavorable information. When applied to the context of the identity formation process, positive emotions, for instance, can serve as a valuable resource, effectively managing the adverse emotions that surface when individuals undergo identity non-verification. This conceptualization of positive emotions aligns with the notion that high self-

esteem is a resource for individuals, offering a protective buffer during challenging and stressful situations (Cast and Burke, 2002).

Theoretical Approaches to Emotions and Politics

Political Psychology Perspective

From a psychological standpoint, three theoretical approaches dominate the literature about emotions and politics today: Appraisal, approach-avoidance, and neuroscience (Brader & Marcus, 2013).

Appraisal theories suggest that emotions result from an individual's evaluation or appraisal of a situation or event in their environment. According to this theory, emotions are not simply automatic reactions to stimuli but rather arise from the individual's interpretation and assessment of what is happening around them (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Both conscious and unconscious appraisals are possible.

One of the most prominent appraisal theories often cited in the political communication area is proposed by Lazarus (1991). He suggests that emotions arise from a two-step process. First is the primary appraisal, where individuals determine whether a situation is relevant to their well-being or goals. If it is, the person then proceeds to a secondary appraisal, assessing his ability to cope with the situation. Thus, the specific emotion an individual feels results from these assessments. For instance, if a person perceives a situation as threatening and is unable to handle it, they might experience fear or anxiety.

Numerous studies utilize appraisal theories to pinpoint the underlying factors and elucidate the origins of various emotions linked to political outcomes (Brader, Groenendyk & Valentino, 2010; Valentino, Brader, Groenendick, Gregorowicz & Hutchings, 2011). Even so, up until now, most of this research has yet to develop a full appraisal process. Instead, it often

adopts specific aspects of appraisal theory that are relevant to the emotions being studied for a given research inquiry (Brader & Marcus, 2013).

The approach-avoidance theory links emotions to an individual's inclination to approach or avoid specific things or situations in the environment. According to this theory, affect arises when people rapidly assess whether a stimulus or situation is desirable or aversive (Eagley & Chaiken, 1993; Damasio, 1994). Affects influence whether people like or dislike an experience and drive people's behaviors, guiding them to either engage with or withdraw from the stimuli in question. The approach-avoidance theory highlights how human evaluations and motivational tendencies are pivotal in shaping emotional experiences and guiding actions in response to the world around them.

Political communication scholars have found that this approach is beneficial for simplifying the emotional experience, focusing on positive-negative dimensions of affect. However, affective subjective experience needs to be better described by more than single valence dimensions (Taber & Young, 2013; Marcus, 2003).

Finally, a neuroscience approach proposes that emotions result from complex interactions among various brain regions and neural pathways. They emphasize the role of brain structures like the amygdala, prefrontal cortex, and insula in processing emotional information and generating emotional responses. Neural process theories suggest that emotions involve a rapid and coordinated activation of neural circuits that assess sensory input, evaluate its significance, and produce appropriate emotional reactions. These theories have contributed significantly to our understanding of how the brain processes emotions, with ongoing research shedding light on the intricate neural mechanisms that underlie emotional experiences and their impact on behavior and cognition.

One of the most prevalent theories from this approach is Affective Intelligence (Marcus, Neuman & Mackuen, 2000), which conceptualizes affect and reason as two complementary

mental states. The authors distinguish between two systems associated with the brain limbic region: the disposition and the surveillance system. These two brain systems manage specific stimuli that people learn to associate with good or bad consequences, guiding (often unconsciously) strategic choices about behavior. This dual system is mutually engaged in leading thought and behavior. Despite these systems often functioning below the level of consciousness, they are distinct information-processing systems.

The disposition system governs behavior by monitoring primarily positive reinforcement and establishing tendencies. It demands an assessment of the effort, the prospects of success, the current stock of resources, and feedback on the success and failure of the sequence of actions. The emotions of the disposition system provide this guidance. Shifts toward elation strengthen the motivation to expend effort and improve confidence in a successful outcome. Changes in the direction of depression weaken the incentive to expend effort and undermine assurance that the outcome will prove successful. This calculus is translated into a summary disposition towards the action.

On the other hand, the surveillance system scans the environment for novelty and sudden intrusion of threat. It serves to warn individuals when they cannot rely on past learning to handle what is now an alert notice that something is strong and poses some risk. This system uses emotions to signal the consequences of its ongoing analysis. It generates moods of calmness, on the one hand, and anxiety, on the other. The focus is on attentional processes (Marcus, Neuman & Mackuen, 2000).

The theory of Affective Intelligence evolved from an initial focus on two dimensions (anxiety-enthusiasm) (Marcus & Mackuen, 1993; Marcus et al., 1998) to the current three-dimensional view (anxiety, enthusiasm, and anger) (MacKuen, Wolak, Keely & Marcus, 2010; Marcus, 2003). In political communication, enthusiasm has provided plausible explanations for how and when people become engaged in politics in different forms and their reliance on

identifications and convictions (Brader, 2006; Marcus et al., 2000). Anxiety has generated answers about attention and learning (Brader, 2006; MacKuen, Marcus, Neuman & Keely, 2010) and anger about aggressive and defensive actions to protect identifications and convictions (Huddy et al., 2007; McKuen et al., 2010).

H5a: High levels of enthusiasm will amplify the relationship between conservative media and populism through White American identity.

H5b: High levels of anger will amplify the relationship between conservative media and populism through White American Identity.

Political Sociology Perspective

Traditionally, this area's research has centered on the role of emotions in political processes and how public sentiments, rhetoric, and emotional appeals influence collective actions, social movements, and political outcomes. From this view, emotions are not mere individual experiences but social forces that play an essential part in shaping political ideologies, policies, and the broader political realm.

Modern sociological theories of emotions are divided into two main types: cultural and structural. Cultural theories view emotions not merely as biological reactions but as social feelings deeply influenced by a society's cultural elements, including its norms, values, ideas, and beliefs. These emotions develop within the framework of structured social interactions and are acquired through socialization processes (Gordon, 1990; Illouz et al., 2014; Robinson, 2014). Thus, each society possesses its distinct emotional culture with its emotional lexicon, guidelines for experiencing and displaying emotions, and criteria that dictate what feelings should be experienced and how they should be expressed, varying according to specific situations and social roles (Hochschild, 1979, 1990). Nevertheless, while culture shapes

emotional encounters and expressions, it doesn't rigidly dictate them. Whether it's to conform to societal norms, manage dynamic deviations (Thoits, 1985), adapt to occupational demands, or gain advantages in social interactions, individuals can strategically regulate both their emotions (Hochschild, 1979, 1983) and their outward emotional displays (Goffman, 1959; Lively and Weed, 2014).

Structural theories of emotions aim to elucidate the emotions individuals experience during social interactions, particularly emphasizing the unique characteristics of these relationships. Emotions result from real, anticipated, recollected, or imagined outcomes of social relationships (Kemper, 1978, 1992). Kemper introduces two fundamental relational dimensions in this context: power and status. Actors wielding power or acquiring it during interactions tend to encounter positive emotions like satisfaction, confidence, and security. In contrast, those with lower relative power levels often grapple with negative emotions such as fear. Similarly, individuals enjoying high status or receiving deference from others tend to experience positive emotions like pride. In contrast, those lacking quality or witnessing its loss often grapple with negative emotions such as shame. Thamm (2004) seeks to extend Kemper's social relational theory by offering more intricate specifications regarding the structural conditions that trigger specific emotional responses. These conditions hinge on whether the self and the other parties meet their expectations and receive rewards because of their interactions.

H5c: Low levels of anxiety will decrease the effect of conservative media on populism through White American identity.

Intergroup Emotions

The definition of collective emotions is rather inconsistent with the idea of them as a private or individual experience; however, there is considerable evidence that emotions are social as well, in the sense of being influenced by social factors like group membership or

identification (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000; Smith, 1993; Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007). Intergroup Emotions Theory (IET) is a conceptual framework within social psychology that seeks to unravel the intricate relationship between emotions and group dynamics. Developed by Diane Mackie and Eliot Smith in the early 2000s, IET aims to explore the specific emotional experiences that individuals undergo during interactions with members of their group (in-group) as well as members of other groups (out-groups).

A central assumption of IET is that individuals experience distinct emotions in response to in-group and out-group members. In-group positive emotions like love and pride are typically associated with favorable interactions among members of the group, resulting in a sense of membership and belonging. In contrast, interactions with members of other groups may elicit negative emotions such as prejudice, anger, or fear, often stemming from perceived threats or competition. Moreover, IET posits that emotions are pivotal in shaping intergroup relations, including prejudice, discrimination, and conflict. For instance, the experience of empathy and positive feelings toward out-group members can lead to improved intergroup relations. At the same time, the persistence of negative emotions like anger or fear can fuel hostility and perpetuate intergroup biases.

When people self-categorize as members of a group with specific characteristics, they are also doing a process of self-stereotyping. As a result, people's attributes, attitudes, emotions, and behavior tend to converge toward those prototypical of their group (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). In that respect, several studies have shown that categorized individuals report the emotions they believe to be typical of their group (Leonard et al., 2011; Mackie et al., 2000; Miller et al., 2004; Tam et al., 2007).

Emotions, Moods, and Feelings, what is the difference?

In emotion analysis, it is essential to distinguish between emotions, moods, and affect as these concepts pertain to a higher level of scrutiny. At the individual level, emotions are identifiable and specific feelings, such as joy, happiness, pride, anger, guilt, and sadness. They arise in response to discernible stimuli, including events, objects, or interpersonal affiliations (Frijda, 1993, 2007; Izard, 2009). Conversely, moods are less precise and involve vague feelings that span the spectrum from positive to negative. They often lack a concrete link to any eliciting stimulus and may not always be consciously recognized by the individual (Ekkekakis, 2012; Frijda, Lewis & Haviland, 1993). Affect is an overarching category encompassing emotions, moods, and other constructs relevant to the realm of emotions.

When examining emotions within a group context, it is crucial to consider how they manifest collectively. Building upon previous definitions, this research defines group emotions as those feelings that emerge individually due to social interactions within or involving a group. This relationship is inherently tied to group membership but does not necessarily require the physical presence of others or simultaneous exposure to emotional triggers. Group emotions come to the forefront, for instance, when individuals within a nation collectively experience pride during events like the Fourth of July in the United States. Similarly, citizens may individually share the same emotional response, such as anger, in reaction to proposals like police defunding or tax increases, even when not physically together (Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007).

Acute vs. Latent Emotions

Group emotions can be acute or chronic (Smith, Seger & Mackie, 2007). Acute emotions refer to short-term emotional reactions that are often intense and immediate in response to specific events or situations. These emotional responses are typically tied to specific triggers, such as a joyful celebration, a frustrating setback, a sudden loss, or a frightening encounter.

Acute emotions are characterized by their relatively brief duration and their intense, often visceral, feelings. One key feature of acute emotions is their immediate and event-driven nature. They arise swiftly in response to a specific stimulus or situation and are tightly linked to that event. For example, the exhilaration experienced by a political party team after winning an election or the frustration that follows a traffic jam are instances of acute emotions. These emotions are highly perceptible, and individuals can often pinpoint the exact cause of their emotional response. Acute emotions are associated with heightened physiological responses, such as increased heart rate, changes in facial expressions, and the release of neurotransmitters like adrenaline. These physiological reactions can enhance the encoding of memories related to the emotional event, making them more memorable in the short term (Delvaux, Van Coillie, Tuerlinckx & Van Mechelen, 2009).

On the other hand, latent emotions are characterized by their longer lasting and enduring nature. They are not tied to specific events or triggers but rather represent an individual or group's prevailing emotional state over an extended period. Latent emotions can persist for weeks, months, or even years, contributing to a consistent emotional climate. Latent emotions are often shaped by a combination of factors, including memory, a person's personality, life experiences, social context, and overall well-being. They are less event-specific and more reflective of an ongoing emotional backdrop. These enduring emotional states contribute to the emotional climate or atmosphere of a group or an individual's life. A group characterized by chronic positivity and enthusiasm may foster a collaborative and supportive environment. In contrast, a family marked by chronic tension and conflict may face ongoing challenges in communication and cohesion.

Attitudes

Some authors define attitudes as a different type of emotional response (e.g., Deonna and Teroni, 2015). However, in this project, we understand attitudes as a multidimensional construct that reflects a person's evaluation, emotional disposition, and behavioral tendencies toward an object, person, group, issue, or concept, like populist support for this research (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). It encompasses various beliefs, feelings, and predispositions that individuals hold about various aspects of their social world.

Attitudes are typically composed of three primary components: 1) Cognitive, which involves an individual's beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions about the object of their attitude. It encompasses judgments, assessments, and knowledge related to the target, reflecting what a person thinks about it. 2) Affective, which pertains to the emotional responses or feelings associated with the target. It includes likes, dislikes, preferences, and emotional reactions toward the object. 3) Behavioral involves behavioral intentions, inclinations, or predispositions toward the object. It reflects an individual's readiness to engage in specific actions or behaviors related to the target, such as supporting, opposing, or avoiding it.

Attitudes can be shaped through various processes, including socialization, direct experiences, exposure to persuasive messages, and cognitive processes (Hogg & Vaughan, 2009). Attitudes can also change over time in response to new information, altered beliefs, or shifts in emotional responses. This malleability is influenced by factors such as the credibility of the source of information and the perceived relevance of the attitude object.

To study the relationships outlined above, I conducted the studies that follow.

Study 1

Methods

Data

For Study 1, I used 2020 data from the American National Election Survey (ANES).

The ANES Time Series Study is a continuation of a series of studies conducted since 1948 to enable analysis of public opinion and voting behavior in U.S. presidential elections. The 2020 study consisted of an interview during the weeks before the November 3, 2020, general election (the “pre-election interview”) and, in most cases, a second interview with the same respondent during the weeks after the election (the “post-election interview”). That year’s study used a mixed-mode design with self-administered online questionnaires (n=7,782), telephone interviews (n=139), and two-way video interviews conducted on the Internet (n=359), with a total pre-election sample size of 8,280. The study featured re-interviews with respondents to the ANES 2016 Time Series Study and with respondents to the 2020 General Social Survey (GSS) and fresh samples. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this study did not do traditional face-to-face interviewing. Respondents typically spent over an hour answering hundreds of questions on many topics before the 2020 general election, and most completed a similarly lengthy questionnaire after the election. Invitations to participate were sent via email and mail, with mail invitations including a \$10 cash incentive and all invitations promising \$40 upon completion of the online survey. Non-respondents were offered increased incentives of \$100 later in the field period, and respondents from groups with low re-interview rates were targeted explicitly with \$200 offers during the final two weeks of the field period. Regarding the GSS sample, it was exclusively included in the post-election study and consisted of respondents who had previously participated in the General Social Survey. The study conducted a pre-election survey with respondents between August 18, 2020, and November 3, 2020.

Election day was November 3, 2020. As many of the same respondents as possible were re-interviewed in a post-election survey conducted between November 8, 2020, and January 4, 2021 (American National Election Studies, 2021).

The analysis of Study 1 was based on data from 1,598 respondents from the ANES 2020. We selected a subpopulation of people who self-identified as White, non-Hispanics. The models were fitted in SPSS and Stata using the option for complex samples to include weights as indicated in the codebook of ANES.

Measurements

Dependent Variable: Populist Attitudes

Acknowledging that populism is a contested concept and has been defined differently by different authors (e.g., Laclau, Mudde, Weylan, Conovan, Moffitt), in this research, we are going to conceptualize populist attitudes as a set of political beliefs, values, and sentiments that underlie an individual's affinity for populist ideas and movements. Three core aspects characterize these attitudes: 1) Anti-establishment sentiment, mistrust or hostility toward established political elites, institutions, and systems. 2) Emphasis on the people. Populist attitudes prioritize the interests, rights, and voice of the "ordinary people" or the "silent majority"; 3) Manichean point of view, which divides the world into good and evil (Hawkins, 2009).

The populism scale utilized within the American National Election Studies (ANES) to assess populism in the United States was originally developed by the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). It contains seven questions that are a good proxy for our definition of populist attitudes. The authors, however, divide the set of seven questions into two

dimensions: attitudes toward political elites and attitudes toward representative democracy (Hobolt et al., 2016). See Table 1.

Table 1.

Items for populism included in the ANES 2020

<i>Attitudes Toward Political Elites</i>
V202410 Politicians do not care about people.
V202411 Most politicians are trustworthy (R)
V202412 Politicians are the main problem in the U.S.
<i>Attitudes Towards Representative Democracy</i>
V202409 Compromise in politics is selling out.
V202413 A Strong leader in government is good.
V202414 People should make policy decisions.
V202415 Politicians only care about the rich.

Yet, this scale has garnered substantial criticism and scrutiny in subsequent analyses due to problems of design and operationalization of attitudinal items. See Castanho Silva et al. (2020), Osuna, Jose & Rama Jose (2022), Van Hauwaert et al. (2020) for a discussion about the CSES scale and other competing measures of populist attitudes.

Bearing in mind those criticisms, a validation of the ANES scale was made using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to know whether the data support the hypothesized model and if the populist attitudes that are represented in a set of questions (Table 1) can be used in an additive scale with one dimension.

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) has assessed the suitability of each item within the scale to ensure the robustness and coherence of the measurement instrument. The primary objective was to identify a parsimonious and interpretable set of items that accurately captures the underlying constructs of interest.

The analysis shows that one item, V202413, displays a factor loading of less than 0.3 in all EFA iterations, indicating a limited association between the item and the underlying construct(s) being measured (see Table 2).

Table 2.

Rotated Factor Loadings and Unique Variances for Initial EFA

Variable	Factor loadings	
	1	Uniqueness
V202410	0.71	0.49
V202411	0.57	0.67
V202412	0.61	0.61
V202409	0.34	0.88
V202413		0.96
V202414	0.41	0.83
V202415	0.63	0.60

Note: The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an orthogonal varimax with Kaiser normalization rotation. Pattern coefficients < 0.3 are not shown.

Based on the previous analysis, I eliminated variable V202413 from the scale for several reasons: 1) The low factor loadings suggest that it contributes minimally to the measurement of

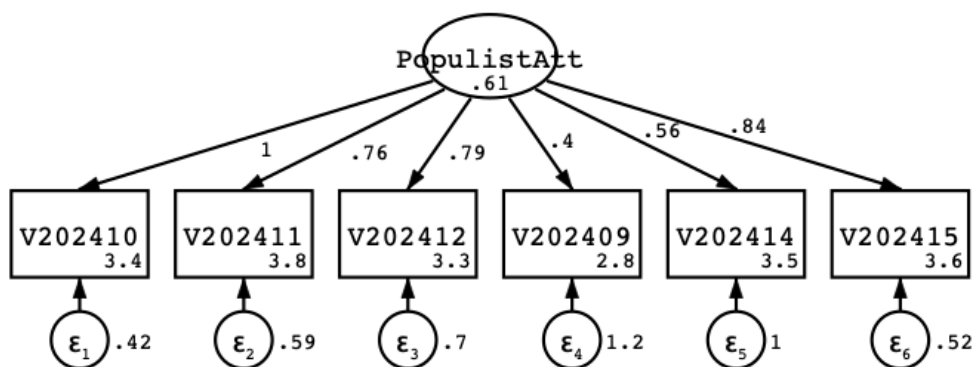
the underlying construct; 2) The elimination of this item results in a more concise and interpretable measurement model; and 3) By removing an item with consistently low factor loadings, the internal consistency and reliability of the scale can be improved.

This decision is consistent with best practices in scale development and EFA methodology, as it promotes the creation of a more robust and refined measurement tool.

To confirm the one-factor structure proposed, I have specified the factor that underlines the responses to these six items; all are indicators of populist attitudes. I stated that the covariance of the six items is fully explained by the single latent variable plus the unique variance of each item (See Figure 3).

Figure 3.

CFA for six-item populist attitudes scale, non-standardized coefficients



The specified one-factor CFA demonstrates an appropriate model fit ($SRMR=0.033$ $CD=0.789$). A low SRMR, like our case, indicates a good fit, with values closer to zero indicating a better fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Since the model was fit with svy: prefix in Stata due to survey weights used for ANES data; only stats (residuals) are valid. The coefficient of

determination indicates that approximately 78.9% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the dependent variables in the model. This implies that this set of questions explain well the theoretical factor of populist attitudes. Coefficient alpha for the additive scale 0.725, which shows internal consistency and reliability for the measure of populist attitudes we have created.

Moderator Variable: Emotions

In this study, we utilize an emotion word battery designed to assess individuals' emotional responses concerning their nation, specifically the United States. This novel battery was introduced as part of the 2020 American National Election Studies (ANES) and encompasses nine distinct emotions strategically designed to operationalize three latent affective appraisals: levels of enthusiasm, levels of fear, and levels of anger (Brader et al., 2019). The conceptual and empirical foundations of this battery are rooted in the Theory of Affective Intelligence (Marcus et al., 2017; Brader et al., 2019; Marcus et al., 2019).

The Theory of Affective Intelligence posits that three preconscious appraisals underlie the array of emotions individuals experience when exposed to various stimuli, whether new or familiar, in the present or recalled from past experiences or envisioned in future scenarios. Among these three appraisals, two are pervasive: levels of enthusiasm, which span from lethargy to enthusiasm, and levels of anxiety, which range from calm to anxious. The third appraisal, termed "aversion" by the authors, encompasses emotions from irritation to outrage.

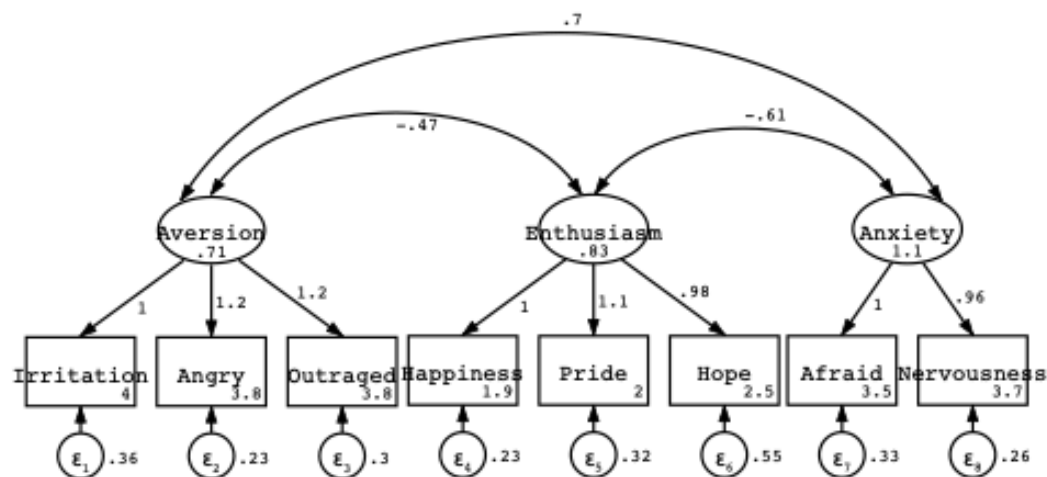
Table 3.***Questions of Emotions ANES 2020***

<i>Item</i>	<i>Question – Scale 1 to 5 (1. Not at All - 5. Extremely Important.)</i>
V201115	How hopeful R feels about how things are going on in the country?
V201116	How afraid R feels about how things are going on in the country?
V201117	How outraged R feels about how things are going on in the country?
V201118	How angry R feels about how things are going on in the country?
V201119	How happy R feels about how things are going on in the country?
V201120	How worry R feels about how things are going on in the country?
V201121	How proud R feels about how things are going on in the country?
V201122	How irritated R feels about how things are going on in the country?
V201123	How nervous R feels about how things are going on in the country?

To confirm the factor structure proposed by the Theory of Affective Intelligence in the ANES data, I validated the scale using a confirmatory factor analysis CFA to know whether the data supports the hypothesized model.

Figure 4.

CFA for Affective Intelligence Scale with Three Factors, non-standardized coefficient



The specified one-factor CFA demonstrates an appropriate model fit ($SRMR=0.023$ $CD=0.95$). Since the model was fit with svy: prefix in Stata due to survey weights used for ANES data, only stats (residuals) are valid. The coefficient of determination indicates that approximately 95% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the dependent variables in the model. This means that this set of questions explains well the theoretical approach to emotions from the Theory of Affective Intelligence, which divides emotions into three factors: aversion, enthusiasm, and anxiety. Alpha coefficient for the subscales: 0.89, 0.87, and 0.87, respectively.

Enthusiasm: Happiness, Pride, and Hope

Pride, hope, and happiness are good examples of the theoretical tension that exists in labeling emotions to assign meaning to daily life experiences and scientific categories that mark distinct psychological processes. They are examples of what are often called positive or "feel-good emotions" and are associated with pleasurable feelings. Happiness often refers most directly to feelings of pleasure and may describe a positive mood or general satisfaction with life (Fredrickson et al., 2003). Hope implies a prospective orientation, yearning for better things. Pride, in contrast, is a more retrospective feeling of pleasure and confidence resulting from one's success (Huddy et al., 2013). Based on those definitions, I wanted to treat these emotions as distinct variables, and yet the results of the EFA have shown that using more than one factor is not empirically supported by the data (only 1 factor had an eigenvalue >1). Then, an additive index of positive emotions/enthusiasm (following the Theory of Affective Intelligence) with the three variables was created ($M=2.12$, $SD=.995$, $range=1$ to 5). Coefficient alpha was computed to assess reliability (0.87)

Political psychologists have shown that enthusiasm, often quantified through scales that encompass self-reported emotions like hope, pride, enthusiasm, and happiness, plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' engagement with political processes. It serves as a motivating force behind political action, intensifying reliance on pre-existing beliefs and convictions when making political decisions (Brader, 2006; Marcus et al., 2000; Valentino et al., 2011). Notably, enthusiasm can be elicited through relatively superficial means, such as the charismatic gesture of a politician or the incorporation of music and positive emotions in campaign advertisements (Brader, 2006).

Anxiety: Fear and Nervousness

Fear is a product of an emotional surveillance system within the framework of the Affective Intelligence Theory. This system actively monitors the environment for potential threats and adjusts behavioral responses accordingly. Fear can arise as an instinctive reaction to specific types of events that signal potential danger. Additionally, feelings of uncertainty can trigger anxiety, as the unknown often carries the potential for harm (Huddy et al., 2013; Marcus et al., 2000). Fear operates by momentarily disrupting ongoing behavior, redirecting attention, and altering cognitive activities to focus on addressing the perceived threat. It prompts individuals to actively seek information related to the threat and reconsider their courses of action to address the situation effectively (Le Doux, 1996).

The impact of fear on memory is intricate and multifaceted. Research suggests that fear can both enhance the encoding and recall of information while also potentially interfering with these processes. In the realm of political psychology, scholars have illustrated that fear can be triggered by events, individuals, and policies at the core of political life (Valentino et al., 2008). These triggers encompass scenarios like the loss of expected political candidates or policy positions, portrayals of out-groups, and depictions of terrorist attacks (Brader et al., 2008; Brader et al., 2010; Gadarian, 2010).

Aversion: Anger, Irritation, Outrage.

The theory of affective intelligence characterizes aversion as a cluster of emotions encompassing anger, disgust, contempt, and hatred. It is activated by the same disposition system responsible for generating enthusiasm. Aversion is specifically triggered when familiar, disliked, or perceived threatening stimuli come into play (MacKuen et al., 2010). Anger serves as a motivating force compelling individuals to act against the perceived agent responsible for their discontent, thus promoting a corrective response. This emotional reaction, however, tends

to be confrontational rather than deliberative, inhibiting the consideration of new perspectives in favor of pre-existing convictions. Consequently, anger has been observed to boost political participation (Valentino et al., 2009, 2011; Weber, 2013) and encourage engagement in protest (van Troost et al., 2013). It also tends to foster support for punitive and aggressive policies (Gault and Sabini, 2000; Huddy et al., 2007; Petersen, 2010), along with heightened superficial information processing and greater reliance on pre-established convictions (Huddy et al., 2007; MacKuen et al., 2010).

Mediation Variable White American Identity

ANES questions about identities include multiple items that assess individuals' feelings of attachment, identification, and pride in being White and American (See Table 4.)

American culture has been deeply influenced by European traits, incorporating values and practices stemming from the European Enlightenment, Anglican Protestantism, and Western Colonialism. These include “individualism, personal responsibility, a strong work ethic, deferred gratification, self-enhancement, mind over body, self-control, and the mastery of nature” (Perry, 2000:23). High identification to answers from the importance of being White, American, or being born in the United States suggests a deep investment in a White racial perspective that perpetuates Eurocentric ideals and behaviors while downplaying the significance of race (Feagin, 2013).

Another performative proxy for understanding White racial identity is people's attitudes toward the importance of English and speaking “proper English.” Language use has long been used as an indicator of acculturation (Anderson et al., 1993; Barona & Miller, 1994) and serves as a performative means for individuals to express their identity to others (Sweetland, 2002). Hegemonic American whiteness presupposes a certain proficiency with “proper” American English and an understanding of the appropriate context in which specific words can be used

(McDermont, 2006). Hegemonic whiteness idealizes standard American English as the official language of the United States and expects that newcomers should learn and employ this specific English (Sweetland, 2002).

Knowledge of ethnic ancestors' cultural practices can also serve as a manifestation of White racial identity (Landrine & Klonof, 1996; Phinney 1992). Perry (2002) suggests that White material culture encompasses elements such as specific foods, ceremonial parades, state and country fairs, and cultural products.

Table 4.

Questions for Additive Index of White American Identity

<i>Item</i>	<i>Question – Scale 1 to 5 (1. Not at All - 5. Extremely Important.)</i>
V202499x	<i>How important is being White to R's identity?</i>
V202504	<i>How important is being American to R's identity?</i>
V202421	<i>How important to have been born in U.S?</i>
V202422	<i>How important to have American Ancestry?</i>
V202423	<i>How important to be able to speak English?</i>
V202424	<i>How important to follow American's customs?</i>

This research acknowledges that the scale of White American Identity proposed in this research serves as a suitable proxy for the concept under examination but recognizes certain imperfections, as elucidated below. First, the scale overlooks the dynamic nature of White racial identity, which follows a developmental trajectory, as outlined by Helms (1990). This trajectory involves individuals evolving from a state of being largely unaware of their racial status to

increased awareness of their identity as White. Consequently, the scale measures White American identity as a static entity, emphasizing the importance individuals assign to specific aspects of their culture, while neglecting the notion of identity as an ongoing process.

Second, the scale heavily relies on respondents' self-identification, thereby capturing only their personal identity and failing to account for the social dimension of identity (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Tajfel, 1982). Consequently, it lacks inquiries regarding respondents' interactions with others and their enactment of their identity within a broader social context.

Lastly, despite incorporating demographic variables as controls in the statistical analysis, the scale does not encompass questions that explore how White national identities may be fragmented or influenced by various social dimensions, including class, gender, sexuality, and physical space (Hartigan, 1999). This omission limits a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between White American identity and these social positions.

There are many reasons behind the decision to employ this scale despite its limitations. It is widely acknowledged in the social science field of research that no measure is perfect due to the inherent limitations of measurement tools. As Ackerman & Kanfer (2009) point out, all measures, whether they assess psychological constructs, physical phenomena, or other variables, involve some degree of abstraction and simplification. This abstraction often involves the exclusion of certain nuances or complexities present in the phenomena being studied. Furthermore, De Vaus (2002) highlights that researchers must make trade-offs when selecting measures, considering factors such as cost and feasibility, which can introduce imperfections into the measurement process.

Additionally, very often, researchers are confronted with the reality that the selected database may only offer a single, albeit imperfect, measurement for the construct of interest. In such cases, the decision to use the database-provided scale is pragmatic, as it ensures that the study can leverage the available data effectively. Seeking alternative measures or scales outside

the database might not be feasible or may result in data gaps that could compromise the study's validity and integrity.

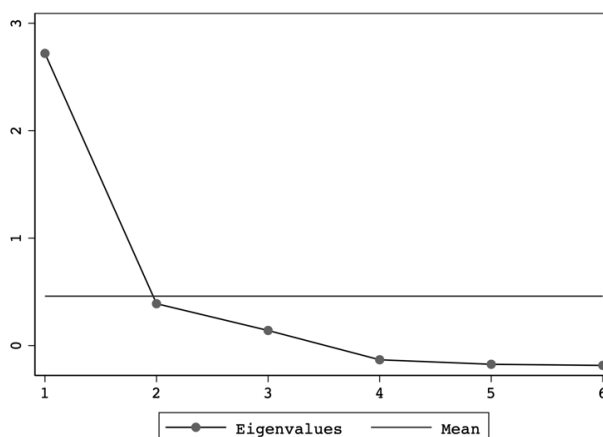
Moreover, utilizing the scale provided within the ANES database is a judicious choice to maintain consistency and alignment with the existing dataset. By doing so, I adhere to established data collection methods, facilitating comparisons with prior research that utilized the same dataset. Consistency across studies is a fundamental principle in research (Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2012).

Finally, the decision to use the scale recognizing its limitations aligns with the ethical guidelines for conducting research with existing datasets (Wieczorek & Gordijn, 2022). Furthermore, the transparent acknowledgment of the scale's limitations is a testament to the commitment to rigorous and ethical research practices (American Psychological Association, 2010). Discussing these limitations candidly in the research findings demonstrates a dedication to conducting research with integrity and full disclosure in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA).

The final variable included in the model was constructed with the four items that were categorized in the survey as a proxy of national identity and two more questions that ask responders how important it is for them to be White/American. To test that this set of variables has a unidimensional structure, visual inspection of the scree plot (see graph 2), parallel analysis from the principal components (only 1 factor had an eigenvalue >1), and factor analysis were used. Afterward, an index of White American identity with the six variables was created ($M=2.68$, $SD=.74$, $range=1$ to 5). Coefficient alpha was computed to assess reliability (0.80).

Figure 5.

Scree Plot of Eigenvalues After Factor for White American Identity



Independent Variable: Conservative Media

This index was created based on respondents' self-reported consumption of various media outlets and shows. The included sources comprise a range of radio and TV programs, as well as specific news outlets: Daily Caller, Fox News, Breitbart, The Jim Bohannon Show, The Dana Show, The Savage Nation, The Hugh Hewitt Show, The Mike Gallagher Show, The Glen Beck Program, The Mark Levin Show, The Dave Ramsey Show, The Sean Hannity Show, Rush Limbaugh Radio Show, Fox and Friends, The Story with Martha MacCallum, The Ingraham Angle, The Five, Tucker Carlson Tonight, Hannity TV. Respondents were asked to report their consumption or exposure to these media sources. This index serves as a composite measure of respondents' self-reported engagement with these specific media outlets and shows. It provides an aggregated view of their consumption patterns within this set of sources. Alpha de Cronbach 0.94

Table 5.***Descriptive Statistics Exogenous Variables Included in all Models from Study 1***

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N / %</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Age	1598	50.5	16.51	18	80
Education	1598				
Less than High School	2.13%	.021	.144	0	1
High School	10.58%	.105	.307	0	1
Some post-High School	31.60%	.316	.465	0	1
Bachelor's Degree	31.41%	.314	.464	0	1
Graduate Degree	24.28%	.242	.428	0	1
Sex	1598				
Male	47.31%	.473	.499	0	1
Women	52.69%	.526	.499	0	1
Social Class	1598				
Lower Class	4.32%	.0431	.203	0	1
Working Class	31.29%	.312	.463	0	1
Middle Class	58.57%	.585	.492	0	1
Upper Class	5.82%	.058	.234	0	1
Income	1,598	13.5	6.28	1	22
Religion	1,598	2.96	1.50	1	5
Place of Living	1598				
Rural	15.14%	.151	.358	0	1
Small Town	24.84%	.248	.432	0	1
Suburb	32.67%	.326	.469	0	1
City	27.35%	.273	.445	0	1

Party Id	1598				
Strong Democrat	23.41%	.232	.422	0	1
Not very Strong Dem	9.25%	.095	.293	0	1
Independent - Dem	12.46%	.131	.337	0	1
Independent	7.67%	.077	.267	0	1
Independent - Rep	10.89%	.108	.311	0	1
Not very Strong Rep	12.46%	.122	.327	0	1
Strong Republican	23.87%	.232	.422	0	1
Political Interest	1,598	3.084	.776	1	4
Democratic Satisfaction	1,598	2.628	.709	1	4
Relative Deprivation	1,598	3.506	.936		

Table 6.*Matrix of Correlations of Variables Included in the Models Study1*

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
(1) Age	1.000														
(2) Education	0.024	1.000													
(3) Sex	-0.038	0.014	1.000												
(4) Social Class	0.161	0.398	-0.048	1.000											
(5) Income	-0.013	0.303	-0.061	0.448	1.000										
(6) Religion	0.234	-0.072	0.038	-0.023	-0.018	1.000									
(7) Place of Living	-0.090	0.192	-0.010	0.155	0.049	-0.187	1.000								
(8) Party Id	0.090	-0.183	-0.084	-0.045	-0.036	0.430	-0.277	1.000							
(9) Political Interest	0.198	0.167	-0.120	0.147	0.070	-0.010	0.119	-0.138	1.000						
(10) Democratic Satisfaction	0.180	-0.014	-0.001	0.095	0.090	0.164	-0.051	0.150	-0.014	1.000					
(11) Conservative Media Diet	0.184	-0.069	-0.138	0.029	0.010	0.276	-0.116	0.482	0.153	0.089	1.000				
(12) White American Id	0.280	-0.168	0.016	-0.027	-0.059	0.354	-0.234	0.494	-0.098	0.156	0.300	1.000			
(13) Anxiety Emotions	0.025	0.133	0.132	0.065	0.001	-0.215	0.136	-0.495	0.187	-0.188	-0.242	-0.285	1.000		
(14) Aversion Emotions	0.026	0.133	0.047	0.068	0.018	-0.223	0.151	-0.442	0.271	-0.207	-0.175	-0.257	0.746	1.000	
(15) Enthusiasm Emotions	0.050	-0.117	-0.109	-0.047	0.009	0.335	-0.164	0.594	-0.058	0.169	0.407	0.396	-0.605	-0.551	1.000

Moderation, Mediation and Conditional Process Analysis

In the realm of social sciences research, the primary focus often lies in examining the interplay between two variables, with the goal of determining causality or the likelihood of an event occurring under certain conditions. However, merely establishing associations, even causal ones, may fall short of providing a profound comprehension of the issue at hand. Recognizing this, it is widely acknowledged that a deeper insight into a phenomenon emerges when researchers not only investigate whether variable X influences variable Y but also examine the intricacies of how X exerts its influence on Y. This entails exploring the specific circumstances or conditions under which X impacts Y and when it does not. Mediation, moderation, and conditional process analyses play a pivotal role in addressing such inquiries. These analytical techniques comprise a toolkit that equips researchers with the means to uncover the underlying mechanisms and conditions that shape the relationships between variables.

Mediation analysis examines the process through which an independent variable (X) influences a dependent variable (Y) by considering the mediating variable (M). It seeks to ascertain whether the mediating variable partially or fully accounts for the observed association between the IV and DV (Hayes, 2017).

Moderation analysis, on the other hand, examines whether the strength or direction of a relationship between two variables is influenced by a third variable, known as the moderator (Baron & Kenny, 1986). A moderator intervenes in the original relationship, affecting the relationship's magnitude or significance.

Finally, conditional process analysis combines moderation and mediation to examine the entire process by which an IV influences a DV, considering potential moderating factors. It allows to investigate whether the mediation model (i.e., the role of the mediator) varies under different conditions defined by the moderator. This approach helps to identify when the

mediation process is stronger or weaker, as well as whether the mediator operates differently across different levels of the moderator.

In this study, our chosen methodology will enable us to explore whether the association between conservative media consumption and populism is mediated by White national identity. Additionally, we aim to examine how the presence of specific emotions may either attenuate or amplify the strength of this relationship.

Analyses and Results

Direct Effects

Hypotheses 1 to 4 were empirically examined using PROCESS macro model 4, version 4.1, within SPSS 28, employing bias-corrected 95% confidence ($n = 10,000$) (Hayes, 2012). This analytical approach serves the dual purpose of investigating direct relationships: one between conservative media and populism, another between conservative media and White American identity, and a third between White American identity and populism. Additionally, it affords insights into whether an indirect effect exists, elucidating whether conservative media influences populism through the mediation of White American identity (See Fig. 4 and 5.). Exogenous variables from Table 5. were included in the model as covariates.

Figure 6.

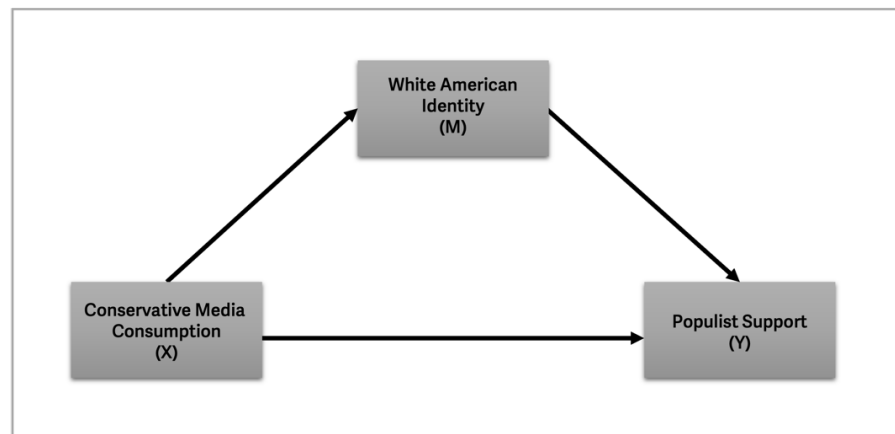
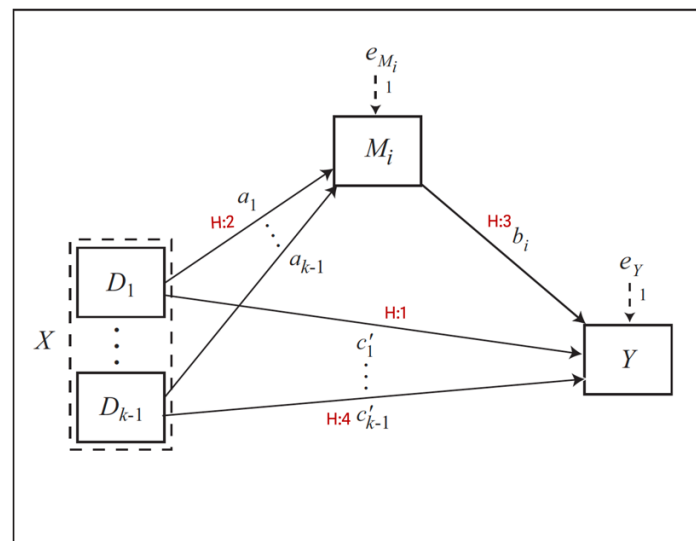
Conceptual Diagram Model 1

Figure 7.

Statistical Diagram Model 1

The statistical analysis reveals a significant direct effect of conservative media on populism ($\beta = .494$, $SE = .179$, $p < .006$), indicating that individuals who consume more conservative media tend to exhibit higher levels of support for populism. This finding supports hypothesis 1. Additionally, conservative media has a marginally significant effect on White

American identity, providing partial support for hypothesis 2 ($\beta = .343$, $SE = .181$, $p < .058$.)

Finally, White American identity has a positive effect on populism, suggesting that higher White American identification leads to higher support for populism, which confirms hypothesis 3 ($\beta = .070$, $SE = .248$, $p < .004$.)

Mediating Effects

The results also show an indirect effect of conservative media on populism through White American identity, which indicates that part of the effect of conservative media on populism operates indirectly through White American identity (*Effect: .0243, BootSE .016, CI [-.0006 .0613]*). This finding confirms our hypothesis 4, which predicted that the relationship between conservative media and populism will be mediated by White American Identity. (See Table 7. for detailed results)

Table 7.

Direct and Indirect Relationships between Conservative Media, White American Identity and Populism

<i>Direct Relationships</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficient</i>	<i>t-Values</i>
H1: Conservative Media → Populism	.4946**	2.751
H2: Conservative Media → White American Id	.3439*	1.891
H3: White American Id → Populism	.0708**	2.85

<i>Indirect Relationship</i>	<i>Direct Effect</i>	<i>Indirect Effect (SE)</i>	<i>Confidence Interval</i>		<i>t Value</i>
			<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	
H4: Conservative Media → White American Id → Populism	.4946	.0243(.016)	-.0006	.0613	1.518

Note: Level of confidence intervals: 95.000. Number of bootstraps sample for percentile bootstraps confidence intervals: 10000.

Moderation Mediation Effects

Hypotheses 5, 5a, 5b, and 5c, predicted that emotions will play the role of moderators, while White American identity will play the role of mediator. To test that, I applied a moderation mediation and conditional analysis using the PROCESS macro model 7, v4.1 in SPSS version 28 with bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals ($n = 10000$) (Hayes, 2012). This method will facilitate the exploration of causality and directionality, shedding light on the underlying mechanisms by which emotions, White American identity, and conservative media exert influence on populism. Additionally, the moderation mediation analysis will help to understand the boundaries, conditions, and influencing factors that modulate the connections between variables. This approach will enable the identification of circumstances in which these associations may be amplified, attenuated, or even reversed.

The hypothesized moderated mediation was tested in three different models using a bootstrapping approach to assess the significance of the indirect effects at differing levels of the moderator. Conservative media consumption was used as a predictor variable, with White American identity as a mediator. The outcome variable was populism, and emotions were included as moderators following the categorization by Marcus et al. (2000) (aversion, anxiety, and enthusiasm). Moderated mediation analyses tested the conditional indirect effect of a moderating variable (i.e., enthusiasm emotions) on the relationship between a predictor and an outcome variable (i.e., populism) via potential mediators (i.e., White American identity.) (See Figure 6 and 7. For visual guidance.)

Figure 8.

Conceptual Diagram Model 2

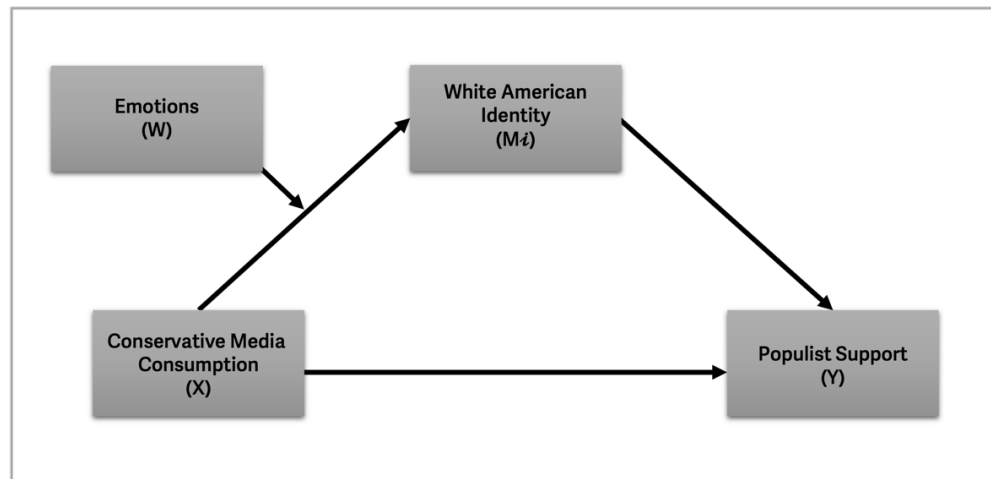
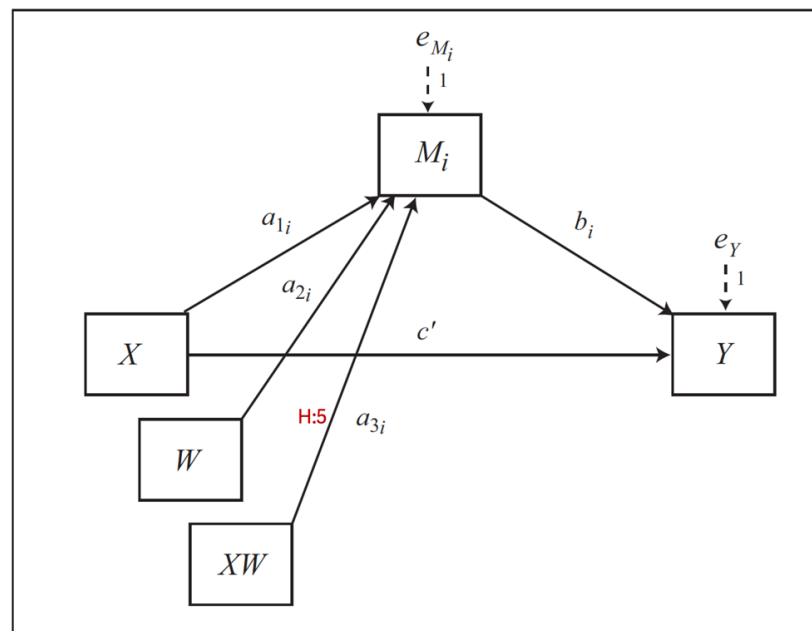


Figure 9.

Statistical Diagram Model 2



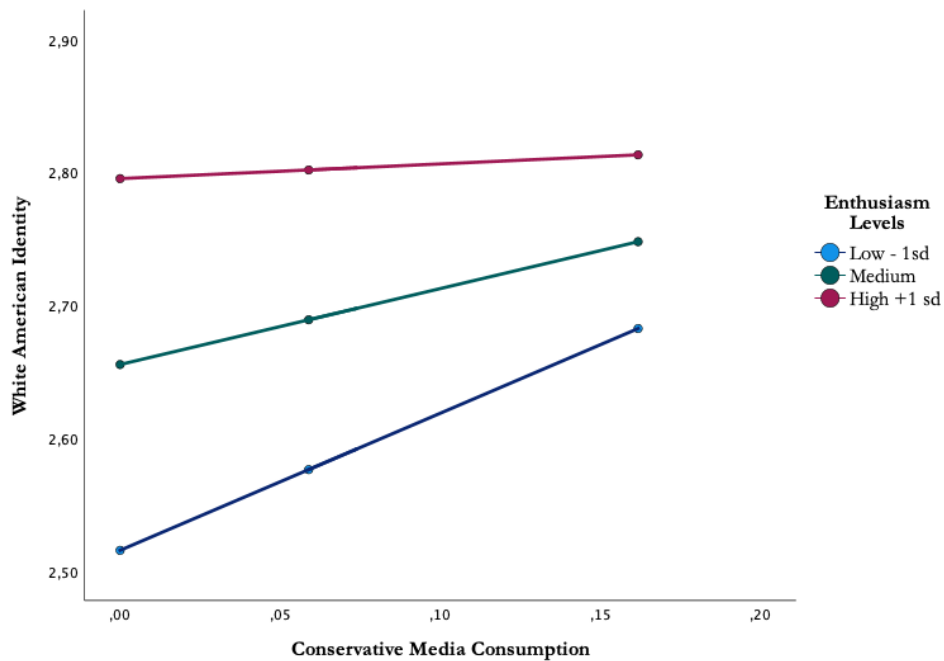
Note: Conditional indirect effect of X on Y through $M_i = (a_{1i} + a_{3i}W)b_i$

Direct effect of X on Y = c'

Hypothesis 5 predicted that the effect of conservative media on populism through White American identity will be moderated by emotions, which is confirmed in detail by the results below, where the outcomes are separated by group enthusiasm, anger or aversion, and anxiety.

Enthusiasm as moderator

Enthusiasm has a significant impact on White American identity ($\beta = .141$, $SE = .024$, $p < .000$). The interaction effect between conservative media and positive emotions is negative and significant ($\beta = -.465$, $SE = .143$, $p < .001$). Low and average levels of enthusiasm produce a moderation effect. Figure 8 illustrates a steeper gradient observed at lower levels of positive emotions. This indicates that the influence of conservative media on White American identity is more pronounced and significant when positive emotions are low or at an average level. In other words, the impact of conservative media on populism through White American identity is stronger when individuals experience lower levels of enthusiasm; this is contrary to what I've predicted in hypothesis 5a.

Figure 10.***Conditional Effect of Conservative Media at Different Levels of Enthusiasm***

An intriguing finding, not discernible from the graph above but evident through the Johnson-Neyman test of significance regions of the moderator, is that the impact of enthusiasm exhibits significance from a low to moderate level but subsequently vanishes. However, when enthusiasm reaches a very high intensity, the effect becomes significant again, albeit in a negative direction. This implies that with extremely high levels of enthusiasm, the influence of conservative media on populism through White American identity undergoes a reversal.

Figure 11.

Moderator value (s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance regions:

Positive	Effect	se(HC0)	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
1,000	1,037	,325	3,190	,001	,399	1,676
1,211	,943	,300	3,139	,002	,354	1,532
1,421	,848	,276	3,068	,002	,306	1,390
1,632	,753	,254	2,966	,003	,255	1,251
1,842	,658	,233	2,823	,005	,201	1,115
2,053	,563	,215	2,624	,009	,142	,984
2,263	,468	,199	2,352	,019	,078	,859
2,474	,373	,187	1,993	,046	,006	,741
2,490	,366	,187	1,962	,050	,000	,732
2,684	,278	,180	1,548	,122	-,074	,631
2,895	,184	,177	1,034	,301	-,165	,532
3,105	,089	,180	,492	,623	-,265	,442
3,316	-,006	,188	-,033	,974	-,375	,362
3,526	-,101	,200	-,506	,613	-,493	,291
3,737	-,196	,216	-,909	,363	-,619	,227
3,947	-,291	,234	-1,242	,214	-,750	,169
4,158	-,386	,255	-1,512	,131	-,886	,115
4,368	-,481	,278	-1,731	,084	-1,025	,064
4,579	-,576	,302	-1,908	,057	-1,167	,016
4,653	-,609	,310	-1,962	,050	-1,218	,000
4,789	-,670	,327	-2,052	,040	-1,311	-,029
5,000	-,765	,353	-2,170	,030	-1,457	-,073

The overall moderated mediation model was supported with the index of moderated mediation¹ = -.156 (95% CI = [-.255, -.061]). As zero is not within the CI, this indicates a significant moderating effect of enthusiasm on conservative media on the indirect effect of White American identity. The conditional indirect effect was strongest in those who have low levels of positive emotions (effect = .346, SE = .108, 95% CI = [.138; .565]).

¹ Measure used to assess the extent to which the relationship between an independent variable (Conservative Media) and a dependent variable (Populism) is moderated by a mediator (White American Identity). It helps to determine whether the mediating effect of White American identity on the conservative media and populism relationship varies under different levels or conditions of the emotion.

Table 8.***Moderation Mediation Analysis Enthusiasm***

<i>Direct Relationships</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficient</i>	<i>t-Values</i>			
Conservative media → White American Id	1.556***	3.436			
White American Id → Populism	.0708**	2.85			
Conservative media → Populism	.4946**	2.751			
Conservative media * Enthusiasm → White American Id	-.4649**	-3.233			
<i>Indirect Relationship</i>	<i>Direct Effect</i>	<i>Indirect Effect (SE)</i>	<i>Confidence Interval</i>		<i>T Value</i>
			<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	
Conservative media →White American identity → Populism	.4946	.0404(.0217)	.0059	.0899	1.86
<i>Probing Moderated Indirect Relationship</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Confidence Interval</i>		<i>T Value</i>
			<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	
Low level of enthusiasm (-1sd)	.0730***	.0352	.0148	.1524	2.07
Average level of enthusiasm	.0404**	.0218	.0052	.0891	1.85
High level of enthusiasm (+1sd)	.0078	.0143	-.0188	.0392	0.54
Index of moderated mediation	-.0329	.0158	-.0689	-.0069	-0.20

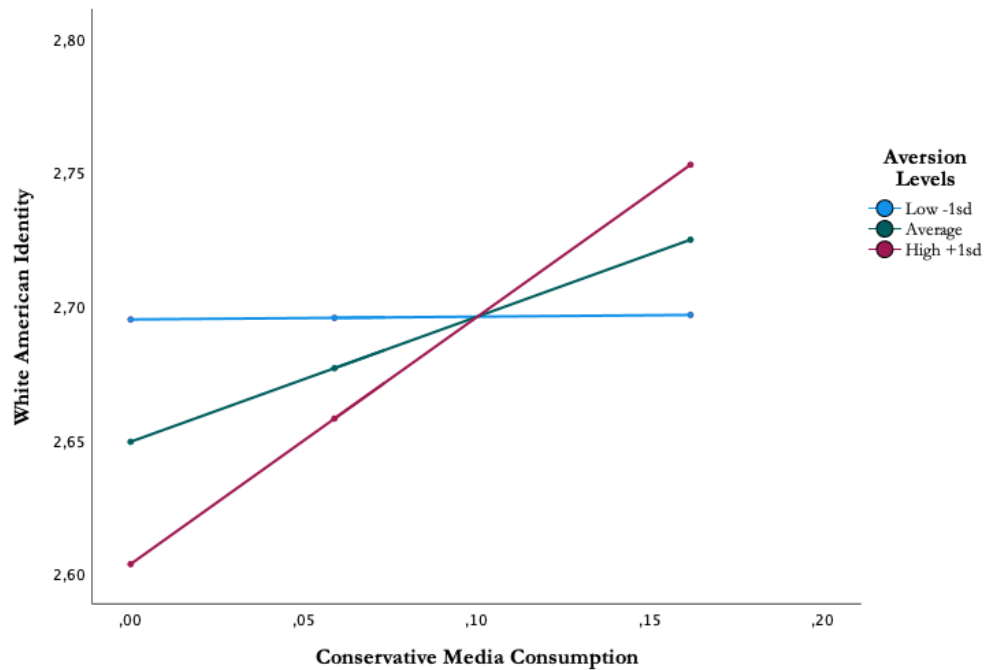
Note: Level of confidence intervals: 95.000. Number of bootstraps sample for percentile bootstraps confidence intervals: 10000. * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

Aversion (Anger) as a moderator

Anger exhibits a marginally negative effect on white American identity ($\beta = -.0408$, $SE = .0203$, $p < .0451$). The interaction effect between conservative media and anger is positive and significant ($\beta = .4068$, $SE = .1283$, $p < .0016$). High and average levels of anger produce a moderation effect.

Figure 11. reveals a significant gradient, particularly at higher levels of anger. This observation suggests that the impact of conservative media on white American identity is more pronounced and substantial when individuals experience average or intense levels of anger. Put simply, the influence of conservative media in shaping white identity is stronger when individuals experience heightened anger, thereby confirming hypothesis 5b.

The overall moderated mediation model was supported with the index of moderated mediation = .0288 $SE = .0.145$ (95% $CI = [.0054 .0618]$). Since the confidence interval (CI) does not include zero, it indicates a statistically significant moderating effect of anger on the indirect impact of conservative media through white American identity.

Figure 12.***Conditional Effect of Conservative Media at Different Levels of Aversion (Anger)*****Table 9.*****Moderation Mediation Analysis Aversion***

<i>Direct Relationships</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficient</i>	<i>t-Values</i>
Conservative media → White American Id	.4271*	-2.373
White American Id → Populism	.0708*	2.729
Conservative media → Populism	.4946*	2.744
Conservative media * Aversion → White American Id	.4552**	3.135

<i>Indirect Relationship</i>	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Confidence Interval</i>		<i>T</i>
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Effect (SE)</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Value</i>
Conservative media → White American identity → Populism	.4946	.0339(.0190)	.0039	.0771	1.78

<i>Probing Moderated Indirect Relationship</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Confidence Interval</i>		<i>T</i>
			<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Value</i>
Low level of Aversion (-1sd)	.0032	.0144	-.0260	.0328	.0222
Average level of Aversion	.0339*	.0190	.0039	.0771	1.78
High level of Aversion (+1sd)	.0646**	.0315	.0130	.1343	2.05
Index of moderated mediation	.0322	.0163	.0064	.0702	1.97

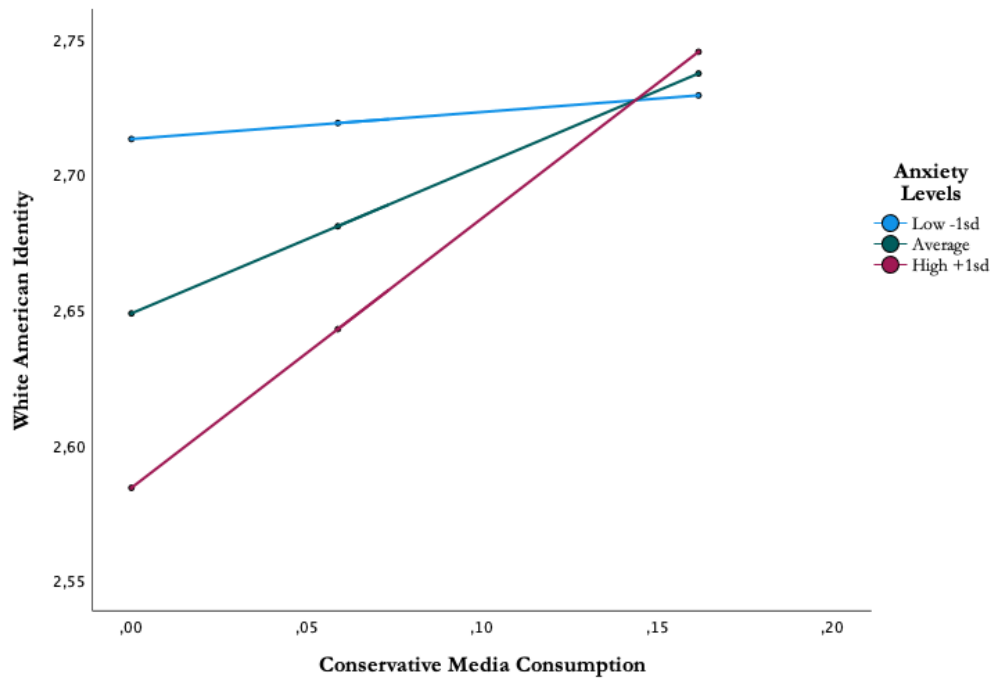
Note: Level of confidence intervals: 95.000. Number of bootstraps sample for percentile bootstraps confidence intervals: 10000. * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

Anxiety as a moderator

Contrary to our anticipated outcomes in hypothesis 5c, the findings reveal a significant negative impact of anxiety on white American identity ($\beta = -.0623$, $SE = .0223$, $p < .0054$). However, an interaction effect between conservative media and anxiety is observed, which is positive and significant ($\beta = .4330$, $SE = .1498$, $p < .0039$). High and average levels of anxiety produce a moderation effect.

In Figure 12, a significant slope is observed, especially at higher levels of anxiety. This finding suggests that the influence of conservative media on white American identity is more prominent and substantial when individuals experience moderate to intense levels of anxiety. In other words, the impact of conservative media in shaping white identity is stronger when individuals are more anxious.

Figure 13.

Conditional Effect of Conservative Media at Different Levels of Fear

. The overall moderated mediation model was supported with the index of moderated mediation = .0306 $SE = .0.161$ (95% $CI = [.0055 .0681]$). As zero is not within the CI, this indicates a significant moderating effect of fear on conservative media on the indirect effect via white American identity. The conditional indirect effect was strongest in those with high levels of fear ($effect = .0704$, $SE = .0345$, 95% $CI = [.0153 .1489]$).

Table 10.***Moderation Mediation Analysis Anxiety***

<i>Direct Relationships</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficient</i>	<i>t-Values</i>
Conservative media → White American Id	-1.041*	-2.052
White American Id → Populism	.0708**	2.729
Conservative media → Populism	.4946**	2.744
Conservative media * Anxiety → White American Id	.4330**	2.889

<i>Indirect Relationship</i>	<i>Direct Effect</i>	<i>Indirect Effect (SE)</i>	<i>Confidence Interval</i>		<i>T Value</i>
			<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	
Conservative media → White American identity → Populism	.475	.0387(.0208)	.0062	.0864	1.86

<i>Probing Moderated Indirect Relationship</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Confidence Interval</i>		<i>t Value</i>
			<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	
Low level of anxiety (-1sd)	.0070**	.0152	-.0230	.0394	0.460
Average level of anxiety	.0387***	.0208	.0062	.0864	1.86
High level of anxiety (+1sd)	.0704	.0345	.0153	.1489	2.04
Index of moderated mediation	.0306	.0161	.0055	.0681	1.90

Discussion

This study provides important insights into the complexity of relationships between conservative media, white identity, emotions, and populism. Previous research and theoretical developments had already provided information about the impact of each single variable in populist support. This analysis goes beyond that, uncovering the mechanism through which these variables work together and influence specific outcomes.

These results show, as we have predicted, that white American identity mediates the relationship between conservative media and populism. It sheds light on the psychological and sociocultural processes by which exposure to conservative media shapes individuals' identification with white American identity, which, in turn, contributes to their support for populist ideologies. This knowledge enhances our understanding of the specific pathways through which media influences political attitudes and behaviors. It highlights that the impact of conservative media on populism is not solely direct but operates through the mediating role of a national and racial identity.

Considering how individuals disassociate themselves from deeply ingrained identity poses an important question that requires further research. However, for now, we know that emotions act as a moderator between the predictor variable and the mediator, the type and intensity of emotion plays a fundamental role in how individuals make their identities salient, providing information that could help to identify the specific conditions to enhance or mitigate the effects of the white American identity on populism.

A question arose during this discussion regarding whether the moderator mediation effect only occurs in the presence of conservative media as a predictor. A quick examination of the model replacing the conservative variable for a liberal media variable reveals that the

significance of the interaction effect between media*anger/aversion and media*enthusiasm disappeared ($\beta = -.182$, $SE = .152$, $p = .232$; $\beta = 2.23$, $SE = .160$, $p = .163$); Additionally, while the mediation of white American identity still occurred between the predictor variable and the outcome variable, both direct and indirect effect were negative ($effect = -0.74$, $SE = .054$, 95% $CI = [-.182; .031]$), suggesting that for each unit of increase in liberal media diet, there is a corresponding decrease of 0.74 units in populism through white American identity. This analysis calls for further investigation but sheds light on two crucial points. Firstly, it reveals that the influence of conservative/liberal media on populism is partially explained by its impact on white American identity. Secondly, it highlights the contrasting outcomes between an ideological media diet and an "objective" or factual oriented media diet, despite being mediated by the same mechanisms. These findings stress the complexity of media effects and the importance of considering the ideological nature of media in understanding its influence on populism.

This study also yielded unexpected results for hypotheses 5a and 5c. Hypothesis 5a predicted a significant and positive effect of high levels of enthusiasm through white American identity, but the result was the opposite. Only low levels of enthusiasm or exceptional high levels had an indirect impact on populism.

The rationale behind this expectation came out from two theoretical reasons. From the identity theory perspective, we know that when an individual enters in interaction with positive emotions, they are more inclined to interpret positive feedback from others in a way that confirms their identity and increase their self-esteem and reinforce the idea of their good position in society. Enthusiasm has also the potential to enhance ingroup favoritism and strengthen the "us vs. them" mentality, where people prioritize their group while excluding or devaluing outgroup members.

On the other hand, from the political psychology perspective, particularly from the theory of Affective Intelligence, we expected that high levels of enthusiasm will have a positive effect on populism through white American identity, because previous research has shown that enthusiasm is a motivating force for political action and reinforce previous beliefs and preexisting conditions (Marcus, 2017.)

Four potential explanations for the unexpected results merit further research for validation and are worth noting for future directions. Firstly, it is possible that enthusiasm diminish individuals' sense of threat or concern. Particularly for white Americans, who may perceive their identity or social standing as being threatened in specific contexts, in positive emotions could attenuate the motivation to safeguard or strengthen their identity.

Secondly, it is possible that enthusiasm redirect individuals' attention away from their group identity. When people experience positive emotions, their focus may expand to encompass more inclusive or universal aspects of their identity, thereby reducing the prominence or significance assigned to their white American identity. This diminished salience could result in a negative interaction between positive emotions and white American identity.

Third, positive emotions may give rise to cognitive dissonance when they clash with preexisting beliefs or attitudes. If individuals with strong white American identities harbor negative or conflicting beliefs about certain issues or groups, the experience of positive emotions could engender internal tension or discomfort. This cognitive dissonance may contribute to a negative interaction between positive emotions and white American identity.

These findings may have been influenced by the timing of the ANES data collection on emotional responses. It took place during a period when the nation was still grappling with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and while people were in a transitional phase between the presidencies of Donald Trump and Joe Biden.

One of the few silver linings of the pandemic was the increased sense of solidarity among people, which fostered a greater sense of unity among Americans and a heightened focus on the well-being of vulnerable groups in society (Cappelen, 2020). This newfound solidarity could have diminished the perception of threat and competition among different social groups, as everyone was equally vulnerable during the pandemic. Being a white American did not provide immunity from the risks of infection and death, as the virus did not discriminate. Additionally, the general levels of positive emotions among the population were already low due to the challenging circumstances created by the pandemic.

Hypothesis 5c predicted a positive effect of anxiety on populism through the mediator variable, but the results showed the opposite. The effect was more significant with high or average levels of fear.

Our argument draws upon research indicating that when individuals experience anxiety, they are less inclined to rely on established beliefs such as national identification or ideology (Brader, 2005; MacKuen, Marcus, Neuman, & Keele, 2007; Vasilopoulos & Marcus, 2018). Additionally, studies have found that intergroup anxiety specifically motivates individuals to distance themselves from an outgroup and reduces their desire to confront or attack the perceived offending outgroup (Dumont, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003). These findings provide the rationale behind hypothesis 5c, suggesting that anxious individuals would disengage from ingroup identification and avoid supporting politicians or parties engaged in hostile behavior against an outgroup.

One potential explanation for our findings may lie in the nature of the confrontation associated with supporting populist politicians. Fear/anxiety could cause disengagement and at the same time could cause that people look for more information to reconsider their course of action. In any case, people response will depend of the context where this feeling arises. Fear and anxiety during a violent conflict, where individuals are risking their lives, is vastly

different when the consequences are less severe, such as experiencing verbal aggression or discrimination.

Further research should delve into political scenarios and contexts where fear elicits specific reactions, such as more involvement in the conflict through a deeper identification with the in-group or a fight or flight response, to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play in political scenarios.

Chapter 2

Introduction

Following an introductory chapter that elucidates the interplay between conservative media, White identity, and emotions in shaping support for populism, it is imperative to transcend the limitations of relying solely on survey methods that capture conscious responses regarding political emotions without any preceding stimulation or priming.

As noted in the literature review, individual emotions are not solely driven by automatic responses but are also influenced by the collective sentiments of the groups they are part of (Cialdini et al., 1976). Therefore, it becomes essential to examine how independent variables influence dependent variables when individuals are exposed to content that either challenges or validates their identity. Additionally, it is crucial to investigate whether White American identity continues to mediate this relationship and, if so, to understand the specific conditions under which this mediation occurs.

This study goes beyond merely measuring populism as an approach, ideology, or style. Instead, it shifts the focus towards measuring specific policy proposals put forward by populist leaders or parties to address the grievances of their supporters. The reason behind this shift is that populism, as an ideology or approach, can be ambiguous and subject to interpretation. On the other hand, examining populist policies allows for a more objective assessment of people's reactions because the implementation and outcomes of these policies have a direct impact on people. By analyzing populist policies, we can gain a clearer understanding of their effects and implications, offering a more concrete and practical perspective on how populism manifests in governance and engenders support from the general population.

Conducting an experimental design is the most suitable approach for this purpose as it enables the manipulation of independent variables while minimizing the potential for reverse causality and confounding variables.

Experiments are widely regarded as the gold standard method for establishing causality due to key reasons. First, randomization, which minimizes the influence of confounding variables by distributing their effects equally among different groups, enhances the internal validity of the study. Secondly, the manipulation of independent variables allows for a precise examination of their effects on the dependent variable, providing a stronger foundation for establishing causal relationships. Lastly, the replicability of experiments enables researchers to test the robustness and generalizability of their findings. By conducting replications in different settings, with diverse populations and contexts, researchers can establish the consistency of causal relationships. These strengths of experimental designs contribute to their credibility and reliability in establishing causal links (Campbell & Stanley, 2015).

Study 2

Participants and design

This web-based experiment, consisting of 408 participants, aims to explore the underlying mechanism behind the relationship between emotions, White American identity, and the influence of populist policies through emotional manipulation. The experiment was conducted employing Centiment Research Services from June 15th to 20th, 2022. The final sample comprises 408 White American participants, with an average age of 46 years old. Although the group is not representative of the entire nation, it includes a diverse range of participants in terms of gender (52% women), social class (56% self-identified as working class), place of residence (24.75% residing in rural areas), party identification (23.28%

Republican and 39% identifying as independents), education (23% holding a bachelor's degree), and representation from 49 states of the US in the final dataset.

In addition, the sample intentionally included individuals with different degrees of White American self-identification. To assess this, a scoring system was developed based on self-identification questions like those used by ANES (American National Election Studies), which were also incorporated in the previous model. The scoring system assigned a maximum of 60 points to individuals who scored very high on all the questions, while those who scored very low received a minimum of 12 points. Based on these scores, we categorized participants into three levels of self-identification: low (participants who scored 20 points or less), medium (those who scored greater than 21 but less than 41), and high (individuals with a score exceeding 41). Consequently, the final sample consists of individuals representing three different levels of white American self-identification: 22 percent categorized as low identifiers, 56 percent as medium identifiers, and 22 percent as high identifiers.

Participants were enlisted by the research company through an email inviting them to take part in a "public opinion survey" from the comfort of their homes. Before the emotional manipulation phase, participants completed a demographic questionnaire and responded to the self-identification scale. To ensure that the subsequent political questions wouldn't influence their future responses or contaminate the manipulation, a distraction task was introduced for three minutes. In this task, participants engaged in a visual detailed memory game aimed at accumulating points, with everyone programmed to achieve the same score. This task created a noisy interference, intentionally limiting the capacity to retrieve information from long-term memory (Wais & Gazzaley, 2014).

Following the distraction task, participants answered another set of questions related to their media consumption and completed an attention check. If they successfully passed the

attention check, they were randomly assigned to one of the five conditions: anger, fear, hope, pride, or control.

The stimulus materials for this study consisted of videos created using segments from existing political ads (See Appendix 1). Each ad was carefully designed and tested to evoke a specific emotion. Participants in the control group did not watch any video.

In the positive emotion videos, the focus was on highlighting national identity. For instance, in the pride condition, America was portrayed as a "Land of Heroes," "a place where greatness is born, destinies are forged, and legends come to life". The video showcased beautiful pictures and landscapes, and powerful sentences such as "America is the place where anything can happen. America is the place where anyone can rise..." were included to evoke a sense of pride and positivity.

In the hope condition, the video strongly emphasizes the resilience of Americans in overcoming crises and their ability to contribute to making America a better place to live. The United States is portrayed as a "Land of Promises," focusing on prioritizing America and its citizens, rejecting international agreements, and generating more job opportunities for the nation's people.

The video showcases individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds and various occupations, including members of the army, veterans, and police officers, all expressing their optimism for a brighter future for themselves and their families under President Trump's leadership. The overall message conveys hope and positivity, encouraging viewers to believe in the potential for a better tomorrow.

In the anger condition, the video highlights numerous external threats to the United States, visually portraying "radical Islamic terrorists" and depicting violence at the immigration border with people attempting to enter aggressively. Testimonies from Hispanics admitting their crimes in the US and making jokes about them are also shown. The video accuses

democrats of enabling China to "steal" American jobs, allowing criminals into the United States, and raising taxes. Moreover, the video places significant emphasis on blaming China for the pandemic and portrays the country as a communist enemy. It further includes a segment where President Joe Biden is seen toasting and celebrating a new agreement with the Chinese President. Lastly, the video makes the assertion that President Biden is an ally of Osama Bin Laden.

The nervousness/anxiety video focuses on internal threats to the United States. It highlights the "radical left" and showcases images of prominent figures such as Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio Cortes. The video includes footage of riots, with people engaging in destructive behavior such as breaking windows and setting cars on fire. Additionally, famous individuals are shown attacking President Donald Trump, with Johnny Depp making the statement: "when was the last time an actor assassinated a President?". The video also raises concerns about defunding the police, illustrating scenarios where individuals in distress, such as victims of crimes like rape, murder, or home invasion, might not receive immediate police assistance when seeking help. Furthermore, the video features testimonials from individuals who have been forced to close their businesses, facing poverty and lacking access to necessities. The overall message aims to evoke fear and apprehension about the potential consequences of certain political ideologies.

After watching the video, participants were asked an attention check question to determine if they grasped the main emphasis of the video. If they answered correctly, they proceeded to the next set of questions. The subsequent screen inquired about the emotions they experienced while watching the video, prompting them to select two emotions they felt most intensely as Americans citizens. Participants were asked to rate the strength of these emotions, providing valuable information about the specific emotions and their intensity.

If a participant's responses contradicted the expected emotions corresponding to their assigned group stimulus (e.g., someone in the fear group indicating they felt hope), the survey concluded. However, if their responses were congruent, a second set of questions was presented. For instance, if a participant mentioned feeling anger and fear, they were given descriptions of both emotions. They were then asked to select the emotions that closely aligned with what they experienced while watching the video. If their selected emotions matched those of their assigned group, the individual continued with the survey; otherwise, the survey concluded (see the complete questionnaire in Appendix 1).

In the last part of the experiment, participants responded to a final set of questions concerning populist policies. After completing these questions, they were extended gratitude for their participation, and the web page was subsequently closed.

Measures

Populist Policies Measurement

Policymaking is an aspect of populism that has not received enough attention. The scholarship on populism research has focused on political actors and discourses of populism (Bartha et al., 2020). As a result, there is no existing scale to measure populist policy preferences to date. For this work, I operationalized the variable based on the theoretical argument that populist leaders use Manichean language and adversarial frames to legitimize policy decisions like the menace of dangerous immigrants to promote increased law-and-order measures. Populist discourses may also portray socially marginalized, unpopular minorities as enemies of the "real people" (Bartha et al., 2020). Based on this, I consider that the following questions from the American National Election Survey (ANES) represent a good proxy of specific features of populism policymaking (See Table 8). I understand that populist leaders

tend to take policy decisions about different topics than minorities and securitization; and that those decisions vary according to context and time, but I'm going to employ these aspects as they are policy preferences that many populist leaders have in common (Pappas et al., 2009)

Table 11.

Questions and Scales Used for Populist Policies Measure

<i>Question</i>	<i>Scale</i>
1. Should federal spending on tightening border security to prevent illegal immigration be increased, decreased, or kept the same? ($M=3.144$, $SD=1.34$)	Should it be [increased/decreased] a lot or a little? 5. Increased a lot 4. Increased a little 3. Kept the same 2. Decreased a little 1. Decreased a lot
2. Which comes closest to your view about what government policy should be towards unauthorized immigrants now living in the United States? ($M=2.428$, $SD=1.158$)	1. Allow immigrants to remain in the United States and eventually qualify for US citizenship without penalties. 2. Allow immigrants to remain in the United States and eventually qualify for US citizenship, but only if they meet certain requirements and passing background checks. 3. Have a guest worker program that allow unauthorized immigrants to remain in US to work, but only for a limited amount of time. 4. Deport all unauthorized immigrants to their home countries.

	5. Treat all unauthorized immigrants as a felon and send them back to their home country
3. How important is that news organizations are free to criticize political leaders? ($M=2.151$, $SD=1.192$)	5. Not at all important 4. Slightly important 3. Moderately important 2. Very important 1. Extremely important
4. How willing should the United States be to use military force to solve international problems. ($M=2.747$, $SD=1.089$)	5. Extremely willing 4. Very willing 3. Moderately willing 2. A little willing 1. Not at all willing
5. Would be helpful or harmful if US president could work on the country's problem without paying attention to what Congress and the courts say? ($M=2.654$, $SD=1.287$)	5. Very helpful 4. Somewhat helpful 3. Neither helpful nor harmful 2. Somewhat harmful 1. Very harmful
6. Do you favor/oppose the death penalty for people convicted of certain crimes? ($M=3.171$, $SD=1.394$)	5. Favor a lot 4. Favor a little 3. Neither Oppose nor Favor 2. Oppose a little 1. Oppose a lot
7. Do you favor or oppose elected officials restricting journalist's access to information about government decision making? ($M=2.205$, $SD=1.216$)	5. Favor 4. Somewhat favor 3. Neither Oppose nor Favor 2. Somewhat Oppose 1. Oppose
8. Do you favor/oppose allowing refugees that who are fleeing war, persecution, to come to the U.S. ($M=2.169$, $SD=1.165$)	1. Favor 2. Somewhat Favor 3. Neither Favor nor Oppose 4. Somewhat Oppose

	5. Oppose
9. What should happen to immigrants who were brought to the U.S illegally as children and have lived here for at least 10 years and graduate from high school? <i>(M=1.948, SD=1.158)</i>	1. Favors a great deal they should be allowed to live and work in the US 2. Favors a moderate amount they should be allowed to live and work in the US 3. Undecided 4. Favors a moderate amount they should be sent back. 5. Favors a great deal they should be sent back
10. Do you favor or oppose building a wall on the U.S border with Mexico? <i>(M=2.745, SD=1.582)</i>	1. Oppose 2. Somewhat Oppose 3. Neither Favor nor Oppose 4. Somewhat Favor 5. Favor
11. How important do you think that everyone in the United States learns to speak English <i>(M=3.044, SD=1.394)</i>	1. Extremely important 2. Very important 3. Moderately important 4. Slightly important 5. Not at all important

To validate the scale, a CFA was specified using a one-factor model with eleven items. The CFA demonstrated that the data supported the specified model. ($\chi^2 = 73.602$ $df = 20$, $p < 0.00$, $CFI = 0.95$, $RMSEA = 0.05$, and $SRMR = 0.04$). Coefficient alpha was computed based on the model results to assess reliability (0.824). Index of Populist Policies ($Mean = 2.58$, $SD = .770$)

White American Identity

The same set of questions used in Study 1 was also employed to construct the index in this study. ($Mean=2.87$, $SD=1.06$) Coefficient alpha was computed based on the model results to assess reliability (0.92).

Table 12.

Questions and Scales Used for White American Identity

Questions	Scale
1. How important is being white to R's identity? 2. How important is being American to R's identity? 3. How important to have been born in the U.S? 4. How important to have American Ancestry? 5. How important to be able to speak English? 6. How important to follow American customs?	1. Not important at all 2. A little important 3. Moderately important 4. Very Important 5. Extremely Important

The following tables present the descriptive and correlations for the variables included in the analysis:

Table 13*Descriptives of the Variables Included in the Analysis*

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	408	46.32	16.9	19	88
Sex					
Male	189	.4632	.4992	0	1
Female	214	.5245	.5000	0	1
Non-Binary	5	.0122	.1101	0	1
Education					
Less than High Sch	13	.0318	.1758	0	1
High School	102	.25	.4335	0	1
Some College	97	.2377	.4262	0	1
Associate degree	41	.1004	.3010	0	1
Bachelor's degree	97	.2377	.4262	0	1
Master's degree	44	.1078	.3105	0	1
Doctoral Degree	7	.0171	.1300	0	1
Professional Degree	7	.0171	.1300	0	1
Income	408	6.297	3.46	1	12
Social Class					
Lower Class	55	.1348	.3419	0	1
Working Class	160	.3921	.4888	0	1
Middle Class	180	.4411	.4971	0	1
Upper Class	13	.0318	.1758	0	1

Place of Living					
Rural	101	.2475	.4321	0	1
Suburban	199	.4877	.5004	0	1
Urban	108	.2647	.4417	0	1
Ideology	408	4.407	1.613	1	7
Party Id					
Republican	95	.2328	.4231	0	1
Democrat	154	.3774	.4853	0	1
Independent	133	.3259	.4693	0	1
Other	26	.0637	.2445	0	1
White American Id	408	2.757	1.038	1	5
Policies	408	2.583	.771	1	5

Table 14.***Matrix of Correlations Variables Included in the Analysis***

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1) Age	1.000									
(2) Sex	0.222	1.000								
(3) Education	-0.182	-0.135	1.000							
(4) Income	-0.006	-0.066	0.403	1.000						
(5) Social class	-0.049	-0.168	0.326	0.528	1.000					
(6) Place of Living	0.027	0.034	0.102	0.056	0.056	1.000				
(7) Ideology	0.094	0.192	0.130	0.191	0.048	0.130	1.000			
(8) Party id	0.099	0.105	-0.119	-0.065	-0.161	0.041	0.230	1.000		
(9) Self Identity	-0.289	-0.269	-0.097	-0.280	0.048	-0.056	-0.513	-0.249	1.000	
(10) Policies	-0.091	-0.190	-0.191	-0.267	-0.016	-0.070	-0.640	-0.215	0.746	1.000

Data Analysis

A one-way ANOVA was used as a first step to compare the effects of four different emotions on populist' policy support. The results revealed a significant effect of emotions on support for populist policies [$F(4, 403) = 6.801, p < 0.001$]. The effect size, eta squared (η^2), was .063, indicating a medium-size effect. Post hoc comparisons were conducted using Turkey's HSD test. The comparison revealed significant differences between pride ($M=2.692$; $SD=.7330$) and anger ($M=2.315$; $SD=.7818$); between hope ($M=2.94$; $SD=.6043$) and anger; between hope and fear ($M=2.60$; $SD=.774$); and between anger and fear. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that different emotions (anger, fear, hope, pride) have the same effect on populist policies. Since the experiment didn't have the same amount people in each group, a homogeneity test of the variances was necessary.

Table 15.

ANOVA Results of Emotions on Populist Policies

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Between Groups	15.289	4	3.822	6.801	.0001
1	Within Groups	226.486	403	.562		
	Total	241.775	407			

Table 16.***Descriptive Statistics for Populist Policies***

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	95	2.597	.7694	2.440	2.753
Pride	57	2.692	.7330	2.497	2.886
Hope	54	2.941	.6043	2.775	3.108
Anger	108	2.315	.7818	2.166	2.464
Anxiety	95	2.606	.7741	2.449	2.764
Total	408	2.582	.7707	2.507	2.657

The homogeneity of variances assumption was assessed using Levene's test for the variable '*mean (unstandardized items)*.' The Levene test results indicated that variances were equal across groups for all assumptions: based on the mean ($F(4, 403) = 1.957, p = .100$), based on the median ($F(4, 403) = 1.571, p = .181$), based on the median with adjusted degrees of freedom ($F(4, 397) = 1.571, p = .181$), and based on the trimmed mean ($F(4, 403) = 1.904, p = .109$). Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met, and subsequent analyses proceeded with the assumption of equal variances."

Even though each video used on the manipulation elicited a different type of emotional response, all of them have one thing in common: they primed a sense of group membership that was under threat by internal or external enemies, or that was rewarded with the promise of a better future or the warrant of being part of a great country. For that reason, we hypothesize that self-identification will mediate the relationships between emotions and populist policies, having a positive and significant impact on them.

In the case of hope, if that emotion is perceived as a threat to the cultural or social identity of another group, it can lead to defensive reactions or to intense competition between

groups for limited resources or opportunities. Pride, on the other hand, can lead to a sense of arrogance, which may result in condescending attitudes towards other groups, and to the reinforcement of stereotypes and negative attitudes towards the outgroups. Likewise, in certain cases, group pride can lead to collective narcissism, where the group becomes overly focused on its own grandiosity and importance. This can make it difficult to cooperate or empathize with other groups' perspectives (Petersen, 2012)

Regarding negative emotions, anger can contribute to the dehumanization of the out-group, viewing them as less than fully human. This devaluation of the other group's members can justify mistreatment and harm. In the face of fear and anxiety, individuals may display ingroup favoritism, showing more positive attitudes and support for their own group while expressing hostility or suspicion towards the out-group (Petersen, 2012). Thus, we expect that positive and negative emotions mediated by self-identification will produce more support for populist policies.

Mediation Analysis

To confirm the hypothesis, a mediation, and conditional analysis using the PROCESS macro model 4, v4.1 in SPSS version 28 with bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals ($n = 10000$) (Hayes, 2012) was used.

The hypothesized mediation was tested in a model using a bootstrapping approach to assess the significance of the indirect effects at differing levels of the mediator variable. The factor variable emotions composed of four different groups (anger, nervousness/anxiety, hope, and pride) was used as a predictor, with white American identity as a mediator. The outcome variable was populist policies.

The model with white American Identity as the dependent variable has an R-squared of 0.41, indicating that approximately 41% of the variance in self-identification is explained by

the predictor variables. The F-test (F(HC4)) is statistically significant ($p < 0.000$), suggesting that the model is a good fit for the data.

In respect to the model with the outcome variable populist policies, it has an R-squared of 0.6187, indicating that approximately 61% of the variance in policies is explained by the predictor variables. The F-test (F(HC4)) is statistically significant ($p < 0.000$), suggesting that the model is a good fit for the data.

As we were expecting, the analysis suggests that pride, hope, and nervousness/anxiety have positive indirect effects on populist policies through their impact on white American identity. This suggests that individuals who experience higher levels of pride, hope, or nervousness/anxiety may be more likely to identify themselves strongly as White Americans, which, in turn, may lead to increased support for populist policies. Surprisingly, the direct effect of anger on populist policies is not significant, and it does not have a significant indirect effect through White American identity either (Table 11).

Table 16.

Mediation Analysis

<i>Direct Relationships</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficient</i>	<i>t-Values</i>
Pride → White American Id	.0506***	3.704
Hope → White American Id	.0482**	3.260
Nervous/Anxiety → White American Id	.0277*	2.163
Anger → White American Id	-.0085	-.4701
White American Id → Populist Policies	.5112***	9.435
Pride → Populist Policies	.0506*	3.701
Hope → Populist Policies	.0328*	3.116
Nervous/Anxiety → Populist Policies	.0438***	3.807

Anger → Populist Policies	.0243*			2.222	
<i>Indirect Relationship</i>	<i>Direct Effect</i>	<i>Indirect Effect (SE)</i>	<i>Confidence Interval</i>		<i>t Value</i>
			<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	
Pride →White American Id → Populist Policies	.0335	.0253(.007)	.011	.041	3.61
Hope → White American Id →Populist Policies	.0387	.0241(.008)	.009	.040	3.01
Nervous/Anxiety →White American Id → Populist Policies	.0438	.0141(.006)	.001	.027	2.35
Anger → White American Id → Populist Policies	.0243	-.0031(.006)	-.016	.009	-.516

Discussion

This study explored the impact of different emotions (pride, hope, nervousness/anxiety, and anger) on support for populist policies, as well as the mediating role of white American identity in this relationship. Our findings elucidate the complex interplay between emotions, self-identification, and policy preferences.

Results indicate that emotions play a significant role in shaping individuals' support for populist policies. Specifically, participants experiencing pride, hope, and nervousness/anxiety showed a positive effect with support for populist policies, while those experiencing anger did not exhibit a significant direct effect on policy preferences. The fact that anger didn't have a significant impact on populist policies could be due to the lack of relationship between emotion and white American identity. For instance, in the case where individuals exposed to the anger-inducing video experience the emotion not due to a perceived threat to their identity but rather as a response to perceived unfairness and discrimination depicted in the video, the emotion may have a different effect. Instead of reinforcing their identification with the ingroup, it could

potentially lead to a sense of distance from their own group. Anger, in this context, may prompt individuals to question or challenge aspects of their ingroup's behavior or values that they find unjust, thereby creating a psychological distance between themselves and their ingroup. This response could reflect a willingness to stand against discriminatory actions within their own group and align themselves with more inclusive and fair perspectives. More research should be done to further investigate what is required to understand the underlying mechanisms.

We proposed that self-identification as White Americans would mediate the relationship between emotions and support for populist policies. Our mediation analysis revealed that White American identity partially mediated the effects of pride, hope, and nervousness/anxiety on populist policy preferences. This indicates that when individuals experience higher levels of pride, hope, or nervousness/anxiety, they are more likely to identify strongly as White Americans, which, in turn, leads to increased support for populist policies.

Our study has important implications for understanding the role of emotions in shaping intergroup dynamics and political attitudes. The positive indirect effects of pride, hope, and nervousness/anxiety on populist policies through white American identity highlight the importance of considering group identities when examining the impact of emotions on policy preferences. Moreover, our results suggest that emotions can influence political behavior not only directly but also through their impact on self-identification with specific social groups.

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, there are some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study focused on a specific cultural context (White American identity) and specific emotions, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations and emotional experiences.

Future research could expand the investigation to include a more diverse range of emotions and different cultural or ethnic groups to explore how emotions and self-identification interact across various contexts.

In conclusion, our study highlights the importance of emotions and group identity in shaping support for populist policies. Pride, hope, and nervousness/anxiety were found to have positive indirect effects on populist policy preferences through their impact on white American identity. However, anger did not show a significant effect on policy preferences or self-identification. These findings contribute to our understanding of the complex intergroup dynamics and political attitudes, emphasizing the need for further research to uncover the underlying mechanisms of emotional influences on political behavior.

Major Findings

The outcomes from Study 1 strongly align with our initial predictions, confirming that white American identity acts as a mediator between the influence of conservative media and populism. These results offer a deeper understanding of how conservative media exerts its impact on populism by illuminating the intricate psychological and sociocultural processes that steer individuals' alignment with white identity. Consequently, this alignment contributes to their endorsement of populist ideologies. This insight enriches our comprehension of the precise mechanisms through which media shapes political attitudes and behaviors, emphasizing that the link between conservative media and populism operates not exclusively through direct means but rather through the intermediary role of a national and racial identity.

Currently, we acknowledge the role of emotions as moderators between the predictor variable and the mediator. The type and intensity of emotions crucially influence how individuals make their identities relevant, offering valuable insights for identifying circumstances that might amplify or mitigate the effects of white American identity on populism.

Study 1 also revealed unexpected outcomes. Hypothesis 5c, envisaging a positive indirect effect between fear/anxiety and populism through the mediator variable, yielded a contrary result. Significantly, the effect intensified with high or average levels of fear.

Our proposition draws from research indicating that anxiety prompts individuals to rely less on established beliefs like national identity or ideology. Furthermore, studies suggest that intergroup anxiety propels individuals to distance themselves from an outgroup, tempering their inclination to confront or oppose the perceived opposing faction. This rationale underscores hypothesis 5c, implying that anxiety individuals might disengage from ingroup identification and abstain from supporting politicians or parties engaged in hostile behavior against an outgroup.

Possible explanations for these findings might lie in the nature of the confrontation linked to endorsing populist politicians. Investigating anxiety amid intergroup relations during violent conflicts is markedly different from exploring fear's impact in less severe scenarios, like verbal aggression or discrimination. Future research should probe political contexts where anxiety elicits distinct reactions, such as a fight or flight response, to gain deeper insights into anxiety's dynamics in political realms.

Hypothesis 5a, predicted a significant, positive indirect effect between high positive emotion levels and populism through white American identity, yielded an unexpected outcome. Only low levels of positive emotions showed an indirect impact on populism.

This anticipation sprang from the potential of positive emotions to bolster ingroup favoritism and amplify the "us vs. them" mentality, a strategy frequently employed by populist politicians to prioritize their own group while downplaying outgroup significance. Studies also suggest that an excessive focus on positive emotions within one's own group can lead to neglecting outgroup needs or concerns.

Three potential explanations for these unforeseen outcomes warrant further research for validation and future exploration. Firstly, positive emotions like hope and pride might dampen individuals' sense of threat or concern. Particularly for white Americans, who may perceive their identity or social standing as challenged in specific contexts, positive emotions could diminish motivation to protect or reinforce their identity.

Secondly, positive emotions might divert individuals' attention away from their group identity. Experiencing positive emotions might broaden people's focus to encompass more inclusive or universal facets of identity, thereby diminishing the importance of white American identity. This could contribute to a negative interaction between positive emotions and white American identity.

Lastly, positive emotions could spark cognitive dissonance when they conflict with existing beliefs or attitudes. If individuals with strong white American identities harbor negative or conflicting beliefs about specific issues or groups, positive emotions might generate internal tension. This cognitive dissonance may contribute to a negative interaction between positive emotions and white American identity.

The findings of study 2 highlight the significant role of emotions in shaping support for populist policies, mainly centered in issues of immigration and securitization. Notably, feelings of pride, hope, and nervousness/anxiety were positively associated with support for such policies. However, anger did not directly impact policy preferences significantly. This could be due to the absence of a link between anger and white American identity. If anger arises not from perceived threats to identity but from perceived unfairness or discrimination, it may lead to questioning ingroup behavior and values, potentially distancing individuals from their group. This response might reflect a readiness to challenge discrimination and align with fair perspectives within their group. Further research is needed to unravel these mechanisms.

The study proposed that self-identifying as White Americans mediates the relationship between emotions and support for populist policies. Mediation analysis confirmed that White American identity partly mediates the effects of pride, hope, and nervousness/anxiety on populist policy preferences. This suggests that heightened pride, hope, or nervousness/anxiety drives stronger identification as White Americans, subsequently fostering greater support for populist policies. This insight illuminates how emotions and identity intertwine to influence political preferences, shedding light on the pathway through which emotions steer support for populist agendas.

Implications and further directions

Identities: from “us” vs. “them” to “we”

While I update some old data for this discussion, a recent poll from *The New York Times* and the Sienna College about the 2024 presidential campaign shows how former President Donald J. Trump is significantly outperforming his competitors in the race for the Republican presidential nomination. The survey shows that Trump's lead extends across almost all demographic categories and geographical regions, as well as within each ideological faction of the Republican Party. Despite mounting legal challenges, the concerns regarding his legal situation appear to have been dismissed by Republican primary voters. His substantial lead cuts across gender, age groups, political leanings, educational backgrounds, and urban, suburban, and rural settings (Goldmacher, 2023)

The typical rivalry among candidates in a presidential race would be considered a customary aspect of democratic processes. However, the situation takes a distinct turn when the frontrunner in polls is not only embroiled in multiple criminal cases but also faces serious allegations. Beyond the immediate implications, this scenario raises questions about the broader consequences for both the country and the democratic system that elects such politicians.

Our findings demonstrate how the strategy employed by Mr. Trump in the United States directly and indirectly primes white national identity to support among his voters. Through a consistent message centered around "America First" and a strong emphasis on safeguarding domestic employment opportunities, he resonated with a demographic perceived as vulnerable and in need of protection from external forces. Interestingly, other populist leaders around the world have recurred to the same strategy but with a different identity. For instance, former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro, known as the "Trump of the Tropics," has used a nationalist and anti-globalist rhetoric, highlighting issues such as crime and corruption, to resonate with the identity of a "true Brazilian" who seeks a return to conservative values (BBC News, 2018). Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has emphasized the importance of protecting Hungary's Christian heritage and European identity. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has drawn on a blend of Islamic and nationalist identity to consolidate his support base. He has promoted a narrative of restoring Turkey's historical greatness and resisting Western interference, appealing to a sense of pride in Turkey's unique identity (The Guardian, 2019). The problem is that while the strategy of making identities salient can forge a sense of belonging, they can also have the potential to deepen societal divisions and amplify polarization, which impedes collaboration on critical policy matters and undermines the sense of unity necessary for a healthy democracy. What then becomes the pathway to effectively contend with populist parties and politicians? This inquiry demands comprehensive exploration. While it warrants deeper research, given our understanding that accentuating identities serves as an efficacious persuasion strategy for political campaigns, it is prudent to investigate whether emphasizing more inclusive identities could be as impactful as the straightforward appeal to white American identity. This shift would involve altering the narrative from an "us" versus "them" delineation to a more encompassing "we," fostering a sense of inclusivity that extends to all. Such an endeavor seeks to create a shared collective

identity where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel embraced and integrated into the broader narrative of societal unity. By probing the viability and effects of this alternative approach, we can potentially uncover methods to counteract the divisive allure of populist rhetoric and reforge a sense of common purpose within societies.

Ideological Media Matters

A particularly intriguing finding from study 1 highlights the significant role that conservative media plays in strengthening the white American Identity, subsequently influencing support for populist parties. Equally noteworthy is the observation that a shift in media consumption towards a more liberal (or factual) orientation weakens the impact of white American identity on populism. Those results speak of the importance of factuality for democracy.

In her work *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1973), Hannah Arendt argues that the target individual under totalitarian rule isn't necessarily the committed Nazi or Communist, but rather people who have lost the ability to differentiate between factual reality and fiction, and between genuine truth and falsehood. In the same way, nowadays the ideological media has not only contributed to the spread of misinformation and fake news, but to the construction of an alternative reality advancing and strengthening populist agendas by aligning their content with the core narratives and messages of populist movements, thus boosting their appeal and resonance. The role of ideological media in creating an "us vs. them" dichotomy aligns with the core of populism, which often pits "the people" against a perceived corrupt elite or other external threats (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014). By accentuating this division through selective reporting and emotionally charged content, ideological media fuels emotional engagement activating the identities that are central to populist movements (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011).

What can society do to counteract these effects? Firstly, more research should be conducted to understand why people are less drawn to factual reality, which could be linked to the prevalence of certain narratives and the avoidance of news.

Second, society needs a comprehensive and collaborative approach that encompasses media literacy, regulatory measures, and the cultivation of diverse media landscapes. Initiating media literacy education programs, particularly from an early age, equips individuals with the critical skills needed to discern between credible and misleading sources, identify biases, and recognize manipulation techniques (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). Transparency and accountability are essential; enforcing standards that require media outlets to disclose ownership, affiliations, and funding sources empowers consumers to assess potential biases (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Fact-checking initiatives and independent watchdogs bolster journalistic accountability and integrity. Also, facilitating a diverse media environment is fundamental. By supporting independent and community-based media outlets, as well as platforms fostering constructive discourse, a range of perspectives can counteract the echo chamber effect perpetuated by ideological media (Chadwick, 2017). Regulations that address misinformation, hate speech, and manipulation while respecting press freedom serve as guardrails for responsible media content (Tambini, 2017). Technology companies can contribute by implementing algorithms that counter the spread of misinformation and ensure balanced content on digital platforms (Guess, Nagler, & Tucker, 2019).

Encouraging open civic dialogue and strengthening critical thinking abilities can mitigate the divisive impact of ideological media (Kahan et al., 2017). Public engagement initiatives, debates, and forums that promote interaction between diverse viewpoints foster understanding and collaborative problem-solving (Sunstein, 2017). Additionally, supporting quality journalism through subscriptions, donations, and public funding sustains reliable sources of information that counter sensationalism and ideological bias (Picard, 2020).

A concerted effort involving governments, media organizations, educational institutions, technology companies, and civil society is imperative. Achieving a balance between freedom of expression and responsible media practices is key to cultivating an informed, engaged, and resilient society (Stroud, 2010). By the coordination of these strategies, societies can construct a healthier information ecosystem that upholds democracy and counters the negative effects of ideological media.

Disincentivizing Populism

Democratic systems have several alternatives at their disposal to discourage the support for populism and promote a more informed and responsible citizenry. Quality civic education stands as a fundamental pillar in this endeavor, equipping individuals with critical thinking skills and media literacy to discern between accurate information and sensationalist narratives (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008). Transparent and accountable governance plays a pivotal role as well, as governments that demonstrate responsible use of power and address citizen concerns can undermine the appeal of populism rooted in anti-establishment sentiment (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

Inclusive political participation is another avenue for democratic systems to counteract populism. By providing citizens with opportunities to voice their opinions and engage in decision-making, the allure of simplistic populist solutions can be diminished (Kornberg, 2005). Furthermore, robust media regulation supported by independent fact-checking and media literacy programs can empower the public to differentiate credible information from propaganda.

Economic and social inclusivity also play critical roles in reducing the appeal of populism. Policies that address economic inequality and social grievances can alleviate the sense of marginalization often exploited by populist leaders (Hawkins & Riding, 2020). By

prioritizing long-term policy planning over short-term populist promises, democratic systems can underscore their commitment to sustainable progress (Mény & Surel, 2002). Lastly, promoting cross-party cooperation and fostering spaces for rational debate can expose the shortcomings of populist rhetoric and reduce polarization (Taggart, 2004).

Incorporating these strategies tailored to specific contexts and challenges can contribute to dismantling the allure of populism and building a stronger, more resilient democratic society.

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Appendix 1

Transcripts and images from the videos used for manipulation

Video 1 Pride

America is a land of heroes
 a place where greatness is born
 where destinies are forged and where
 legends come to life.
 This is the home of Thomas Edison
 and Teddy Roosevelt,
 of many great generals, including
 Washington, Hershey Patton, and MacArthur.
 This is the home of Abraham Lincoln,
 Frederick Douglass, Amelia Earhart,
 Harriet Tubman, the Wright brothers,
 Neil Armstrong and so many more.
 This is the country where children learn names
 like Wider David Crockett and Annie Oakley.
 This is the place where the pilgrims landed at Plymouth,
 and where the Texas Patriots made their last stand,
 and the Alamo Nation was carved out of the vast frontier
 by the toughest, strongest, fiercest, and most determined
 men and women ever to walk on the face of the earth.

[Music]

Our ancestors braved the unknown,
 came the wilderness,
 settled the Wild West
 lifted millions from poverty, disease, and hunger;
 vanquished tyranny and fascism,
 ushered the world to new heights of science and medicine;
 laid down the railroads, dug out the canals,
 raised up the skyscrapers.

[Music]

Our ancestors built the most exceptional republic
 ever to exist in all of human history,
 and we are making it greater than ever before.

A new vision will govern our land, it's
 going to be only America first
 by Americans and higher America.
 No challenge can match the heart and
 fight, and spirit of America. We will not
 say our country will thrive and prosper again.
 We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones, and unite the

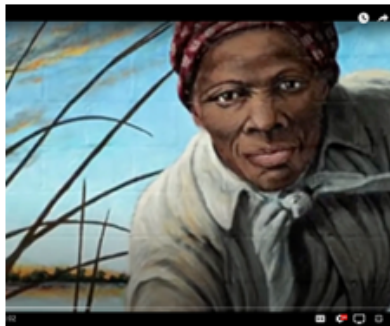
civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the earth.

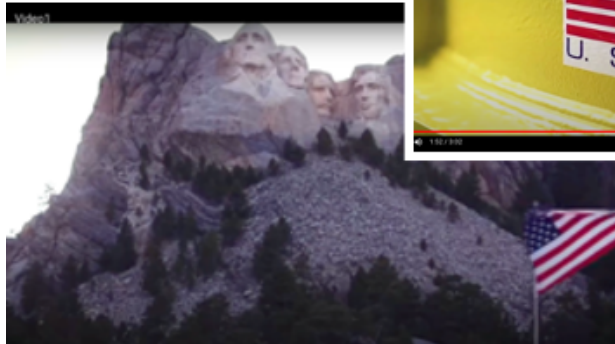
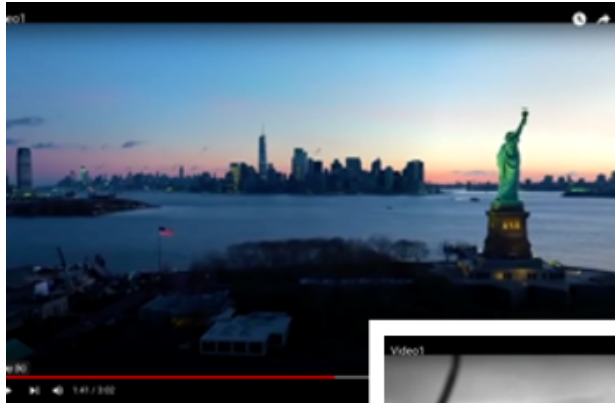
We will be protected by the great men and women of our military and law enforcement. We will bring back our job, we will bring back our borders, we will bring back our wealth, and we will bring back our dream.

We will face challenges, we will confront parties, but we will get the job done.

Together we will determine the course of America and the world for many, many years to come.

This moment is your moment it belongs to you!







Video 2 Hope

Promises and hopes narrated by the American People

This current administration had made hope possible

[Music]

We want this nation to continue to be the beacon of hope for the world

How many people said they're going to leave America if Donald Trump was elected,
they're all still here, and they're not going anywhere because we are in the land of the free

We will never ever sign bad trade deals, America first again,

America first, America's great usmca trade

this is a big win for the United States of America that's a great trade deal

We are going to lift the restrictions on the production of American energy

We will create millions of more jobs

Is the belief in a better tomorrow and creating a better future for our children

When I look in the eyes of my grandchildren, I want them to know that their papa was
not silent.

We will rescue kids from failing schools

by helping their parents send them to a safe school of their choice

We will completely rebuild our depleted military

the countries that we are protected

and a massive cost to us will be asked to pay their fair share

We will take care of our great veterans

like they have never been taken care of before

This guy, yeah, he saved me. Thanks to him I'm here today

He's giving people hope what he's doing for the poor people
what he's doing for everybody

We are going to appoint justices of the United States supreme court

As long as I'm president i will never defund your police that I promise you

it's time to deliver a victory for the American people

We are going to start winning again

[Applause]

It's called promises made promises kept

[Music]

In times of struggle we see the true greatness of the

American character,

Americans from all walks of life are rallying together to defeat the unseen
enemy

The President is talking about hope for people

they're doing things that have never been done before

this is record time for the development of vaccines

We're going to get through this and come out
stronger than ever before

Our message is to all Americans

we love them, we're with them and

we will not let them down



PROMISES & HOPE

NARRATED BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE







Video 3: Nervousness/Anxiety

Years ago, ideas that we talked about
were thought to be fringe ideas radical
ideas extremist ideas those ideas are
now mainstream I just don't even know
why there aren't uprisings all over the
country.

If you see anybody from that
cabinet in a restaurant
it is a beautiful store
and a gasoline station you get out and
you click on the crowd
and you push back on them.

Do something about your dad's
immigration practices
what's uncle tom but for white women who
disappoint other white women

One way you get rid of Trump is a crashing economy
so please bring on the recession.

When was the last time an actor assassinated
the president.

I have thought an awful
lot about blowing up the white house.

You have reached the 911 police
emergency line, due to defunding of the
police department we're sorry but no one
is here to take your call. If you're
calling to report a rape please press
one, to report a murder press two, to
report a home invasion press three, for
all other crimes leave your name and
number and someone will get back to you.
Our estimated wait time is currently
five days, goodbye.

Taxes crushing middle-class
Families.

Amnesty for 11 million illegal immigrants,
citizenship for 11 million undocumented
folks, reducing police funding.
Yes absolutely, the radical left has taken
over Joe Biden and the democratic party

don't let them take over a map.

350 billion dollar fund to help small businesses and its workers get through the shutdown it will be up to congress to restock it but democrats blocking. Pelosi: that move this morning they asked for a quarter of a trillion dollars in 48 hours I said well I don't I don't think so. They objected and I congratulate the senate democrat's.

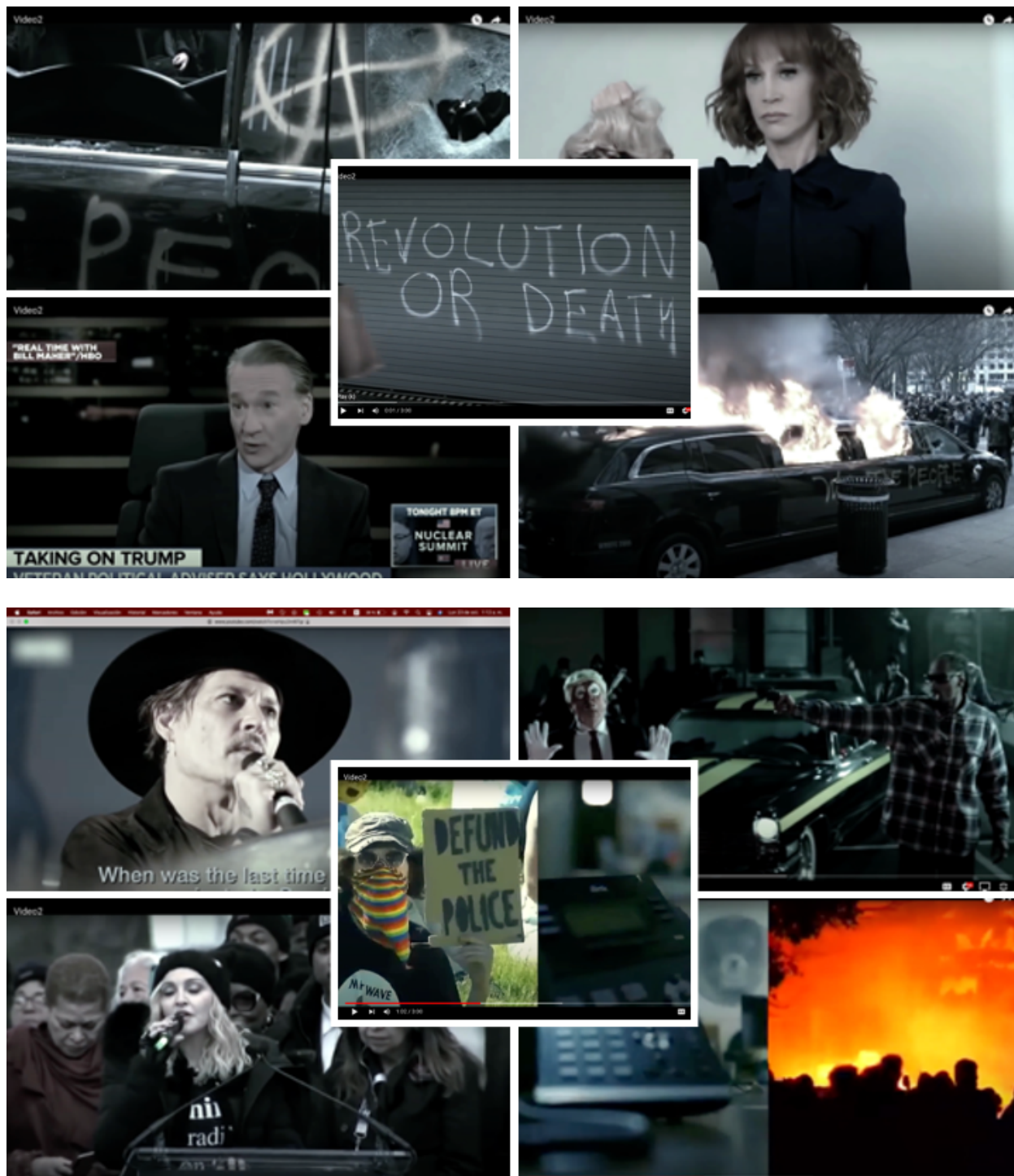
Speaker blaze what are you going to share with us from your home chocolate candy.

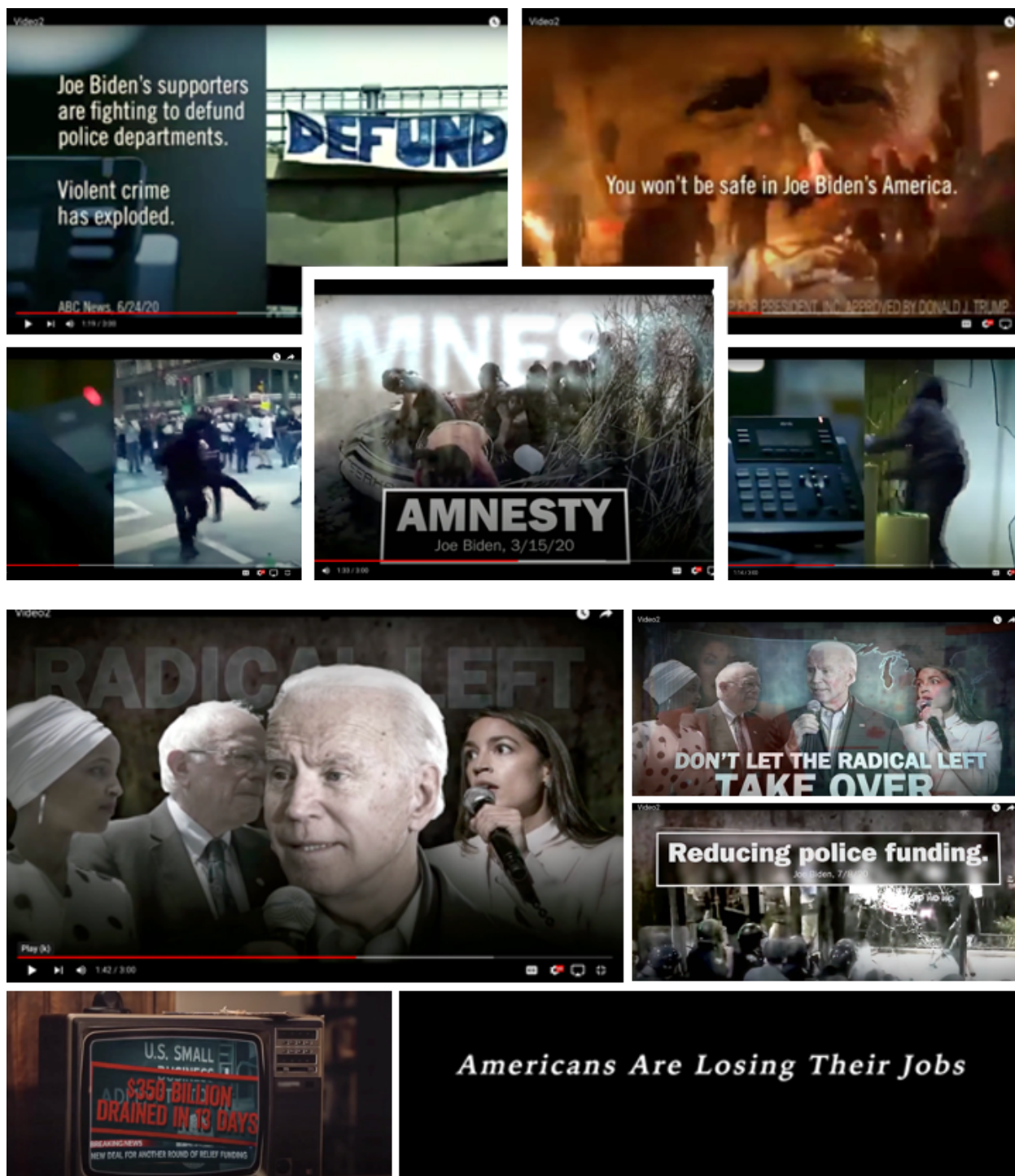
Thousands have been forced to wait for hours at food banks all across the country.

Oh my god chocolate and then we have some other chocolate here we just got to restock the ice cream. You don't want to eat up everything all that one time.

I can't do it much longer
I am trying so hard for what we say
enjoying having to admit that yeah
we're starving and I like it better than
anything else taping this segment there
are 22 million people out there this
specific program is about stopping job
losses today.

Other people in our family look for some other flavors but right now his survival move you don't know where that next something else will come from I don't know what I would have done if ice cream were not invented, I just wondered







Video 4: Anger

They pretended something else but Donald
Trump calls it radical Islamic terrorism
that's why he's calling for a temporary
shutdown of Muslims entering the united
states until we can figure out what's
going on

He'll probably cut the head off
Isis and take their oil and he'll stop
illegal immigration by building a wall
on our southern border that Mexico

We will kill more police officers

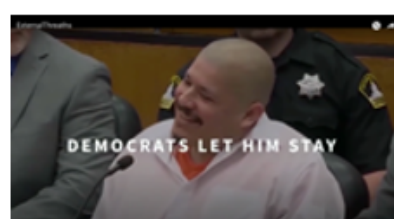
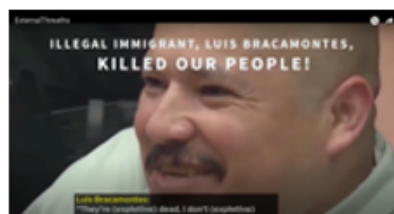
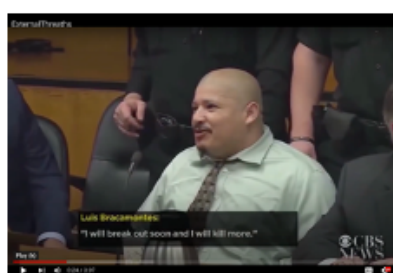
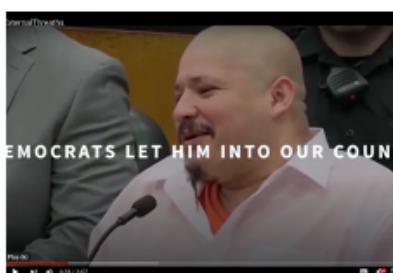
In our economy Biden supports massive tax
increases on working families, trade
deals that let China and Mexico steal
our jobs, amnesty for illegal immigrants
competing for American jobs.
America would become diminished and weak just like Biden.

A virus affected millions, crush the
world economy. One nation deserves to
blame: China, they lied about it, covered
it up. Joe Biden coddles china, he
criticized president Trump's travel ban
accused him of their hysterical
xenophobia, he voted for most favored
nation status and spent decades letting
them steal our jobs.

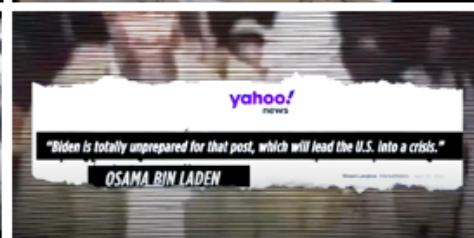
What a beautiful history we wrote together.
Joe Biden won't stand up to china he never has
He never will.

He received endorsement by Osama Bin
Laden after our brave warriors took him out.
Joe Biden china's candidate
Iran's candidate
and Osama's candidate
is going to evolve

Since the outbreak the communist party has been
mobilizing overseas organizations to buy
local supplies and send them to china.
It is in our self-interest that china continues to
prosper the beautiful history we wrote
together.







Appendix 2

Survey questionnaire

INTRO

Greetings!

This survey is looking to gain a better understanding about American's preferences.

Please give us your honest opinions, remember that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Rest assured that your data will be kept confidential. Only larger aggregated themes that emerge from the data are used by the researchers, who wouldn't have access to the identity of the responder.

If you agree to participate in this research click the button to continue.

1.Demo-Birth What is your year of birth?

67

2. Demo-Sex What is your sex?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Non-binary / third gender (3)
- ☐ Prefer not to say (4)

Page Break

3. Demo-LivingArea Do you live in an Rural, Suburban or Urban area:

- ☐ Rural (1)
- ☐ Suburban (2)
- ☐ Urban (3)

4. Demo-State In which state do you currently reside?

▼ Alabama (1) ... I do not reside in the United States (53)

5. Demo-Class How would you describe your social class?

☐ Lower Class (1)

☐ Working Class (2)

☐ Middle Class (3)

☐ Upper Class (4)

68

6. Demo-Incom Information about income is very important to understand. Would you please give your best guess? Please indicate the answer that includes your entire household income in (the previous year) before taxes.

▼ Less than \$10,000 (1) ... \$150,000 or more (12)

Page Break

7. Demo-Educ What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

▼ Less than high school degree (1) ... Professional degree (JD, MD) (8)

8. Demo-Race. What is your racial or ethnic identification:

☐ White (9)

☐ Black or African American (10)

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (11)

☐ Asian (12)

☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (13)

☐ Hispanic or Latino (15)

☐ Other (14)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Ideology

9. Conservat-Liberal Here is a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

Very

Conservative

Very

Liberal

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

69

Ideology ()

10. Party ID Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

☐ Republican (1)

☐ Democrat (2)

☐ Independent (3)

☐ Other (4)

End of Block: Ideology

Start of Block: Self-Categorization

11. Self-Cat 1 How important is being White to your identity?

☐ Not at all important (1)

☐ Slightly important (2)

☐ Moderately important (3)

☐ Very important (4)

☐ Extremely important (5)

70

12. Self-Cat 2 How important is being American to your identity?

☐ Not at all important (1)

☐ Slightly important (2)

☐ Moderately important (3)

☐ Very important (4)

☐ Extremely important (5)

71

13. Attachement 1 How close do you feel to America?

☐ Not Close at All (1)

☐ Slightly Close (2)

☐ Moderately Close (3)

☐ Very Close (4)

☐ Extremely Close (5)

14. Attachement 2 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:

I would rather be a citizen of America than any other country.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (4)
- ☐ Strongly agree (5)

Page Break

72

15. Pride 1 How proud are you of America?

- ☐ Not Proud at All (1)
- ☐ A Little Proud (2)
- ☐ More or Less Proud (3)
- ☐ Very Proud (4)
- ☐ Extremely Proud (5)

16. Chauvinism 1

How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement: The world would be a better place if people from other countries were more like Americans.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (2)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

Page Break

73

17. Chauvinism 2

How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement: America is a better country than most other countries.

☐ Strongly disagree (1)

☐ Somewhat disagree (2)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

18. Nativism 1

How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement: To be truly American it is important to have been born in the U.S.

☐ Strongly disagree (1)

☐ Somewhat disagree (2)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

Page Break

74

19. Nativism 2

How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement: To be truly American it is important to speak English

☐ Strongly disagree (1)

☐ Somewhat disagree (2)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

20. Nativism 3

How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement: To be truly American it is important to follow American traditions

☐ Strongly disagree (1)

☐ Somewhat disagree (2)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

Page Break

75

21. Multiculturalism How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:

It is better if groups adapt and blend into the larger society rather than maintain their customs and traditions.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (4)
- ☐ Strongly agree (5)

22. Multiculturalis2 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:

American culture is generally harmed by immigrants.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (4)
- ☐ Strongly agree (5)

End of Block: Self-Categorization

Start of Block: Distraction_task

Timer Timing

First Click (1)

Last Click (2)

Page Submit (3)

Click Count (4)

76

23. Task Now you are going to complete a short memory task. Please follow the screen' indications. The survey will auto-advance once it is complete. Good Luck!

End of Block: Distraction_task

Start of Block: Media

24. News Source What is your primary news source? Rank in order being 1 the most important and 5 the least important.

_____ Traditional news sources on TV, radio or in the Newspapers (CNN, Fox, NPR, The New York Times) (1)

_____ Digital Versions of the traditional News sources on the web, app or electronic newsletters (2)

_____ Digital-Only news sources like Google, Buzz Feed, Huff Post (4)

_____ Social Media (5)

_____ Offline word-of-mouth sources (6)

Q71 What is your primary news source? Rank in order being 1 the most important and 5 the least important.

_____ Traditional news sources on TV, radio or in the Newspapers (CNN, Fox, NPR, The New York Times) (1)

_____ Digital Versions of the traditional News sources on the web, app or electronic newsletters (2)

_____ Digital-Only news sources like Google, Buzz Feed, Huff Post (4)

_____ Social Media (5)

_____ Offline word-of-mouth sources (6)

Page Break

25. Media-Frequency How often do you read, watch or listen:

Never Always

0 1 2 3 4 5

77

CNN ()

Fox News ()

The New York Times ()

The Washington Post ()

Breitbart ()

Rush Limbaugh Show ()

The Daily Show ()

The Blaze ()

Al Jazeera America ()

Fox and Friends ()

BuzzFeed ()

Sean Hannity Show ()

NPR ()

Glenn Beck Program ()

Page Break

78

Attention_Check1 Please indicate your agreement with the following statement:

To show that you are paying attention, please respond with a "strongly agree"

☐ Strongly disagree (6)

☐ Somewhat disagree (7)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (8)

☐ Somewhat agree (9)

☐ Strongly agree (10)

End of Block: Media

Start of Block: Video_Pride

Video_Instructions Please watch carefully the following 3 minutes video and answer the subsequent questions.

Make sure that the volume of your computer is on.

The survey will auto-advance once the video is complete.

Page Break

Timing Timing

First Click (1)

Last Click (2)

Page Submit (3)

Click Count (4)

26A. Video_Pride

End of Block: Video_Pride

Start of Block: Post_Exposure_Measures

79

27. ManipulationChec In the video you just saw, what was emphasized?

- ☐ External Threats to the US (1)
- ☐ Internal Threats to the US (2)
- ☐ Hope for the Future of the US (3)
- ☐ Pride of America as a country (4)

28. Emotions As an American please mark the two main emotions you felt when watching the video ?

None

at all

Slightly Somewhat Moderately Quite

a bit

VeryMuch An

Extreme

Amount

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hope -Optimism ()

Anger-Outrage ()

Pride-Honor ()

Nervous-Anxiety ()

28a You said you felt anger and nervousness/anxiety when you were watching the video. Anger is often associated with a sense of something going wrong or feeling wronged, causing stress, frustration, and irritation. On the other hand, nervousness or anxiety typically involve feelings of tension and worrisome thoughts in response to real or perceived threats. Based on these descriptions, please identify the primary emotion you felt

during the video.

☐ Nervousness/Anxiety (1)

☐ Anger (2)

80

28b You said you felt hope and pride when you were watching the video. Hope is an optimistic state of mind that is based on the possibility, or the expectation of positive outcomes with respect to specific goals, to events or better circumstances for the future. On the other hand, pride is a feeling of honour and self-respect; a sense of personal worth derived from one's own achievements or the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated. Based on these descriptions, please identify the primary emotion you felt during the video.

☐ Pride (1)

☐ Hope (2)

Page Break

29.Self-AmericanPost How important is being American to your identity?

☐ Not at all important (1)

☐ Slightly important (2)

☐ Moderately important (3)

☐ Very important (4)

☐ Extremely important (5)

30.Self-WhitePost How important is being White to your identity?

☐ Not at all important (1)

- ☐ Slightly important (2)
- ☐ Moderately important (3)
- ☐ Very important (4)
- ☐ Extremely important (5)

81

End of Block: Post_Exposure_Measures

Start of Block: Populism

31.Populism_1 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:

People like me don't have any say about what the government does

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (4)
- ☐ Strongly agree (5)

32.Populism_2 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:

Most business and politics in this country are secretly controlled by the same few powerful people

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

Page Break

82

33. Populism_3 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:
Most politicians do not care about the people

☐ Strongly disagree (1)

☐ Somewhat disagree (2)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

34. Populism_4 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:
Our political system only works for insiders with money and power

☐ Strongly disagree (1)

☐ Somewhat disagree (2)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

Page Break

83

35. Populism_5 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:
Because of the rich and powerful, it becomes difficult for the rest of us to get ahead

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (4)
- ☐ Strongly agree (5)

36. Populism_6 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:
Most politicians are trustworthy

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (4)
- ☐ Strongly agree (5)

Page Break

84

37. Populism_7 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:
What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out on one's principles

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (2)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

Page Break

38. Populism_8 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:
Politicians are the main problem in the United States

☐ Strongly disagree (1)

☐ Somewhat disagree (2)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

85

39. Populism_9 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:
The people, and not the politicians, should make our most important policy decisions

☐ Strongly disagree (1)

☐ Somewhat disagree (2)

☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat agree (4)

☐ Strongly agree (5)

40. Populism_10

How widespread do you think corruption, such as bribery, is among politicians in the United States?

- ☐ Hardly Happens at all (1)
- ☐ Not very widespread (2)
- ☐ Widespread (3)
- ☐ Quite Widespread (4)
- ☐ Very Widespread (5)

End of Block: Populism

Start of Block: Populist Policies

86

41. P_P1 Should Federal spending on tightening border security to prevent illegal immigration be increased, decreased, or kept the same?

- ☐ Decreased (1)
- ☐ Somewhat Decreased (2)
- ☐ Kept the same (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Increased (4)
- ☐ Increased (5)

42. P_P2 Which come closest to your view about what government policy should be towards unauthorized immigrants now living in the United States:

- ☐ Allow unauthorized immigrants to remain in the United States and eventually qualify

for U.S citizenship, without penalties (1)

☐ Allow unauthorized immigrants to remain in the United States and eventually qualify for U.S citizenship, but only if they meet certain requirements and passing background checks (2)

☐ Have a guest worker program that allows unauthorized immigrants to remain in the U.S in order to work, but only for a limited amount of time (3)

☐ Deport all unauthorized immigrants to their home countries. (4)

☐ Treat all unauthorized immigrants as felons and send them back to their home country (5)

Page Break

87

43. P_P3 How important is that news organizations are free to criticize political leaders?

☐ Not at all important (1)

☐ Slightly important (2)

☐ Moderately important (3)

☐ Very important (4)

☐ Extremely important (5)

44. P_P4 How willing should the United States be to use military force to solve international problems?

☐ Not at all willing (1)

☐ A little willing (2)

☐ Moderately Willing (3)

☐ Very Willing (4)

☐ Extremely Willing (5)

Page Break

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45. P_5 Would it be helpful or harmful if U.S President could work on the country's problems without paying attention to what Congress and the courts say?

☐ Very Harmful (1)

☐ Somewhat Harmful (2)

☐ Neither Helpful or Harmful (3)

☐ Somewhat Helpful (4)

☐ Very Helpful (5)

46.P_P6 Do you favor/oppose the death penalty for people convicted of certain crimes?

☐ Oppose (1)

☐ Somewhat Oppose (2)

☐ Neither Favor or Oppose (3)

☐ Somewhat Favor (4)

☐ Favor (5)

Page Break

89

47.P_P7 Do you favor/oppose elected officials restricting journalists' access to information about government decision-making ?

- ☐ Oppose (1)
- ☐ Somewhat Oppose (2)
- ☐ Neither Favor or Oppose (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Favor (4)
- ☐ Favor (5)

48. P_P8 Some people have proposed that the U.S Constitution should be changed so that the children of unauthorized immigrants do not automatically get citizenship if they are born in this country. Do you favor or oppose?

- ☐ Oppose (1)
- ☐ Somewhat Oppose (2)
- ☐ Neither Favor or Oppose (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Favor (4)
- ☐ Favor (5)

Page Break

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49. P_P13 Do you favor or oppose allowing refugees that who are fleeing war, persecution, or natural disaster in other countries to come to live in the U.S?

- ☐ Oppose (1)
- ☐ Somewhat Oppose (2)
- ☐ Neither Favor or Oppose (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Favor (4)
- ☐ Favor (5)

50. P_P9 What should happen to immigrants who were brought to the U.S illegally as children and have lived here for at least 10 years and graduated high school?

▼ Favors a great deal they should be allowed to live and work in the US (1) ... Favors a great deal they should be sent back (5)

Page Break

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51. P_P10 Do you favor or oppose building a wall on the U.S border with Mexico?

- ☐ Oppose (1)
- ☐ Somewhat Oppose (2)
- ☐ Neither Favor or Oppose (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Favor (4)
- ☐ Favor (5)

52.P_P11 How much do you Agree or Disagree with the following statement:

American culture is generally harmed by immigrants.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)

- ☐ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (4)
- ☐ Strongly agree (5)

92

53. P_P12 How important do you think it is that everyone in the United States learns to speak English

- ☐ Not at all important (1)
- ☐ Slightly important (2)
- ☐ Moderately important (3)
- ☐ Very important (4)
- ☐ Extremely important (5)

End of Block: Populist Policies

Start of Block: Video_Internal_Threath

Video_Instructions Please watch carefully the following 3 minutes video and answer the subsequent questions.

Make sure that the volume of your computer is on.

The survey will auto-advance once the video is complete.

Page Break

Timing Timing

First Click (1)

Last Click (2)

Page Submit (3)

Click Count (4)

26C.IntTreaths

End of Block: Video_Internal_Threath

Start of Block: Video_Hope

Video_Instructions Please watch carefully the following 3 minutes video and answer the subsequent questions.

Make sure that the volume of your computer is on.

The survey will auto-advance once the video is complete.

93

Timing Timing

First Click (1)

Last Click (2)

Page Submit (3)

Click Count (4)

26C. Video_Hope

End of Block: Video_Hope

Start of Block: Video_External Threats

Video_Instructions Please watch carefully the following 3 minutes video and answer the subsequent questions.

Make sure that the volume of your computer is on.

The survey will auto-advance once the video is complete.

Page Break

Timing Timing

First Click (1)

Last Click (2)

Page Submit (3)

Click Count (4)

26D. Video_ExtTreath

End of Block: Video_External Threats

Start of Block: Control_Group

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28C. Emotions_Contr What emotions are you feeling right now?

If you are not feeling the emotion listed, please mark 0. If you are feeling the emotion, please rate the intensity of the feeling.

None

at all

Slightly Somewhat Moderately Quite

a bit

VeryMuch An

Extreme

Amount

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Hope -Optimism ()

Anger-Outrage ()

Pride-Honor ()

Nervous-Worried ()

29C.Self-AmericanPos How important is being American to your identity?

☐ Not at all important (1)

☐ Slightly important (2)

☐ Moderately important (3)

☐ Very important (4)

☐ Extremely important (5)

95

30C.Self-WhitePost How important is being White to your identity?

☐ Not at all important (1)

☐ Slightly important (2)

☐ Moderately important (3)

☐ Very important (4)

☐ Extremely important (5)

End of Block: Control_Group